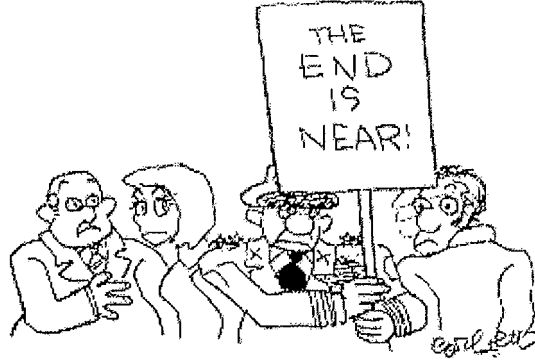


## CHAPTER 11

# The Coming Calamity



A **calamity** may be defined as an extraordinarily **grave** (serious) event marked by great loss and lasting distress and affliction. It is the opposite of **blessing** and **prosperity**.

A calamity can result from a national disaster, such as a great earthquake or tsunami or hurricane. A calamity can result from war, from an invading army or from the use of nuclear weapons. A calamity can result from economic problems. A wicked political leader can also cause a calamity, as was true in the case of Germany's wicked ruler, Hitler. God Himself can cause a national calamity. Here are some examples:

What calamity happened to the world's people in Noah's day? See Genesis chapter 7.

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What calamity did the Egyptians experience? See Exodus 14:23-31.

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What calamity did the people of Jericho experience? See Joshua chapter 6.

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What calamity did the people of Judah experience in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar? See 2 Kings chapter 25.

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Is the United States headed toward a great calamity? Why do nations decline and fall?

In the book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, completed in 1787, Edward Gibbon lists the following reasons for why the great Roman empire declined and fell:

1. The rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society. **Personal Question:** Am I helping to strengthen the home or disrupt the home (Colossians 3:18-21)?
2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace. **Personal Question:** Am I seeking to give little and get much (2 Thessalonians 3:10 and Acts 20:35)?

3. The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal. **Personal Question:** Am I a lover of pleasures more than a lover of God (2 Timothy 3:4)?
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within: the decadence (a great decline in morality) of the people. **Personal Question:** Do I strive to cultivate and uphold such virtues as honesty, truthfulness, loyalty, purity, fairness, wholesome language and uprightness (Proverbs 14:34)?
5. The decay of religion—faith fading into mere form—losing touch with life and becoming impotent to guide the people. **Personal Question:** Do I have the outer profession of Christianity without the inner life and power (2 Timothy 3:5)? Is my Christianity real to me every hour of every day (Philippians 1:21)? My faith must be real, not pretend.

Do these five reasons for the fall of Rome tell us anything about our present national situation? In light of how you answered the personal questions above, ***are you part of the problem?***

History repeats itself as time marches on. A study of history shows that the great civilizations of the world have averaged about 200 years before they have declined and fallen. How long has our nation existed (*Declaration of Independence*—July 4, 1776)? \_\_\_\_\_

The people of the world have followed this sad pattern:

<p><b>The people go...</b></p> <p>From slavery to spiritual faith                  From spiritual faith to courage                  From courage to liberty                  From liberty to abundance                  From abundance to selfishness                  From selfishness to apathy                  From apathy to dependence                  From dependence to slavery</p>	<p><b>Was this pattern true of the nation Israel (see Deuteronomy 8:11-20)?</b></p> <p>_____</p>
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Hegel once said, "History teaches us that man learns nothing from history." This sad truth is echoed by George Santayana: "Those who refuse to learn from history are condemned to repeat it."

Do you suppose that 200 years from now someone might write a book entitled, *The Decline and Fall of the United States of America*?

If and when a great national disaster should come, who (or what) is to blame for it? Should we blame our political leaders in Washington? Should we blame the oil-rich Arabs? Should we blame the Muslim terrorists? Should we blame the economy? **What is the real problem?** The real problem is not economic or political—it is *spiritual*.

According to Psalm 33:12, what made Israel such a blessed and prosperous nation (circle the correct answer)?

- a. They had a solid and stable economy.
- b. They had military superiority.
- c. They had the best kings and governmental leaders in the world.
- d. They had a great God in whom they trusted.

What motto is written and engraved on United States coins and dollar bills? \_\_\_\_\_ (This motto is mentioned in the third verse of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, a verse that is rarely sung.)



As long as we are doing what is engraved on these coins, our nation will be blessed. If most Americans should fail to live by our national motto, then we are destined for destruction! Those people who refuse to trust God are in trouble.

Let us learn from history. When Israel honored the Lord and His Word (Deuteronomy 28:1), what word described the nation (Deuteronomy 28:3-6)? \_\_\_\_\_ When Israel dishonored and disobeyed the Lord (Deuteronomy 28:15), what word described the nation (Deuteronomy 28:16-19)? \_\_\_\_\_ Why did God send **evil** and **calamity** and **disaster** upon the nation Israel (see 2 Chronicles 7:22; 34:24-25; Jeremiah 6:19)? \_\_\_\_\_ For the land and nation to be **healed**, what four things did the people of Israel have to do (2 Chronicles 7:14)?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

What prevented a great calamity from taking place in the wicked Assyrian city of Ninevah (Jonah 3:4-10)?

What are some things which are taking place in our nation today which indicate that our country is drifting farther and farther away from God and His Word?

Only God knows what the future holds for this nation, especially if Americans continue to go in their sinful and wicked ways. The following calamities are certainly possible and could happen on a national scale:

1. **War**, even on our native soil (see Chapter 8)
2. **Terrorist attacks** (see Chapter 7)
3. **Severe shortages** and even famine (see Chapter 3)
4. **An energy crisis**, due to a cut off of oil shipments (imports) resulting in a transportation disaster (see Chapter 2)
5. **Economic collapse** which would make the Great Depression seem like the Mini-Depression (see Chapters 4 and 5)

Note: During the Great Depression of 1929 and the early 1930's, the stock market crashed, the people panicked, many banks failed and there was massive unemployment of 25%.

6. **Government overthrow**, possibly preceded by an *anarchy* (a state of lawlessness due to the absence of governmental rule) and a reign of terror (see Chapters 6 and 7). Since the United States has had a reputation for being a free nation, the new government would probably not be an improvement. It could be a very oppressive government where individual freedoms would not be enjoyed (freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom to carry guns, etc.).

Often we think, "these things could never happen in our nation." But, are we immune to what has happened and is happening to other nations? Are we an exception to the rules and patterns of history? Remember, there was once a time when Americans thought it impossible that our nation could ever lose a war!

### How Can the Believer Face the Coming Calamity? (Psalm 46)



If and when the calamity comes, there will probably be a small remnant of true believers who love and fear the Lord. How can they survive in times of great catastrophe and trouble? The answer is found in Psalm 46.

In Psalm 46:1 we learn that "God is our R\_\_\_\_\_." Can you find two other verses in this Psalm that say the same thing? Verses: \_\_\_\_\_ The word "refuge" means a place of shelter, a place of protection, a place of safety. God, the all-powerful Creator, is

like a mighty fortress into which a believer may flee and be absolutely safe. (Martin Luther's great hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* is based on Psalm 46:1.)

The Bible does not promise to keep the believer out of trouble, but it does promise that in the middle of the trouble (or crisis), God will be there—the God who is our **refuge**, our **strength** and our **helper**!

The second verse of Psalm 46 says, "Therefore we will not F\_\_\_\_\_." We will not be afraid! Whatever might happen, we will not be afraid! No matter how serious the crisis or the calamity, we will not be afraid! Why is this true? (Don't forget verse 1.)

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In Psalm 46 verses 2 and 3, how many times do we find the word "**though**"? \_\_\_\_\_ The writer of this Psalm thinks of the worst possible things that could ever happen, and he says, even if the greatest crisis imaginable were to happen, we still will not fear. If all the mountains started moving and changing their position and falling into the sea, that would be quite a catastrophe! After the word "**though**" we can write in any possible calamity or crisis that may happen to this nation (or to you). Here are some examples:

"Though a strong nation should invade this country tomorrow..."  
 "Though the supermarkets may run out of food..."  
 "Though all the gas stations should run out of gas..."  
 "Though our nation should turn further and further away from God..."  
 "Though the doctor tells me I have only six months to live..."  
 "Though I don't know what the future holds..."

Can you think of others?

**Though all these things should happen, I will not fear!** Why not (verse 1)?

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My safety does not depend on my money, my government, my country, my supermarket, my car, my doctor or my health. My safety depends on the Creator-God who is my **refuge**! He is available to strengthen me in any crisis! He is available to keep me in any calamity! In the middle of the trouble God can be found! He is right there!

The living God wants me to "Be \_\_\_\_\_ and **know**" (Psalm 46:10) that God is my **refuge**!

In our next chapter we will learn how we should prepare for the coming crisis!

## HIS WILL WORTH SEEKING

