

# The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire: A Deadly Parallel For America

Acts 17:22-31

**Kent Bailey**

God has made all individuals of one blood to dwell on the face of the earth and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. Insofar as the nations of the earth, God presides over their destiny as well as the seasons of their prosperity and adversities together with their national boundaries. God in His providence allows nations to rise and fall to bring about His divine will. One can definitely see that the purpose of God in all things was to induce humanity to obtain the very knowledge of Himself and His purpose for humanity. When nations collectively refuse to have God in their knowledge they ultimately bring destruction upon themselves as units of society and civilization. The Psalmist correctly observed that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

The concept of civil government is of divine origin. While God does not specify the type of civil government that nations must have, such government must base its existence upon morality, equity, and the fear of God. When nations forget God, they lose all sense of basic morality; they cease all civility and equity and thus lose their right to exist in this earth. Individuals have an accountability before God with reference to that of civil government and civil governments have an accountability before God to perform their responsibilities in providing for a common defense of their citizens in maintaining a civilized society (Matthew 22:17-21; Romans 13:1-7; Jude 4-8). When citizens of any nation promote a lack of basic civility in their actions, civil governments have a God-given responsibility by the sword to execute wrath on the evil doer even by the usage of capital punishment.

The phrase ***Fall of The Roman Empire*** is often misunderstood. There was no sudden cataclysmic event that ended this empire, which stretched from the British Isles to Egypt and Iraq. Instead the Roman Empire declined slowly and finally fell primarily as the result of decay from within. Just as the fall of Rome was not produced by a single event, the way that Rome fell was also complex. In fact, during the time of imperial decline, the empire actually expanded. The influx of conquered peoples and lands changed the structure of the Roman government. Emperors moved the capital city from Rome. Such created a division of east and west: The western capital was located at Milan and the eastern capital at Constantinople.

Rome began as a small settlement on the Tiber River in the center of Italy surrounded by more powerful neighbors. By the time Rome became an empire, the territory covered by the name ***Rome*** looked totally different. It reached its greatest extent in the second century AD. There are those who attempt to argue that the fall of Rome focuses on the geographic diversity and territorial expanse that the Roman emperors and their military had to control. However, in spite of the validity of such claims there remains a greater cause for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire: A moral decay from within and a rejection of the Biblical concept of God. These two specific problems created additional problems that brought about a collapse of Roman civilized society. When any society loses its civility toward one another they refuse to have a Biblical concept of God in their knowledge. When the Biblical concept of God is rejected no society can ultimately last. Rome lasted for one thousand years. It was built upon polytheistic paganism. It never collectively accepted the Biblical concept of God, thus Rome as a nation or an empire never had a basis for a continued existence. Again we return to our text of Acts 17:22-31 and the Old Testament reference of Psalm 9:17. When nations reject the Biblical concept of God and refuse to have Him in their knowledge, they will not accomplish God's purpose in governing their citizens in the way that God would have civil government to function, and thus do not have the God ordained right to continue within their sphere of existence. God does not work on our timetable; neither do we control God. Eventually, God will bring such nations to total defeat.

## ***Romans 1:18-32 States The Reasons of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire.***

In this passage Paul, as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, states the general charge in Romans 1:18-19. God demonstrates his wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of humanity who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. The reason: That which may be known of God is manifest in them for God has demonstrated such unto them. Such represents over-all general charges. Paul then gives specific charges:

***Romans 1:20-32 Becomes Very Specific:*** Here we note definite examples given by divine inspiration.

- Inexcusable ignorance. God has always provided revelation for us (1:20).
- Ingratitude leading to a refusal to worship God (1:21).
- Insolence leading to arrogance (1:22).
- Idolatry, exchanging the glory of God for idols (1:23).
- Immorality, growing into the most revolting type (1:24-27).
- Incurability, embracing wicked deeds to the point where they endorsed and defended individuals who sought to practice them (1:28-32).

***Note The Results That Rome's National Sins Had upon Their Society.*** When sins are not opposed they will finally be accepted and thus bring destruction upon the society that tolerates them.

- The empire grew weak because they permitted Germanic forces to attack them. The Roman leaders violated Romans 13:4.
- The empire grew weak because of open borders.
- Emperors lost interest in the welfare of the empire.
- Small businesses suffered when Romans began to use slaves to supply goods and services.
- Romans overspent on entertainment and luxuries.
- Roman soldiers brought home infectious diseases because of their immorality.
- Rome divided into political upheaval.
- Roman Empire grew so large that it became impossible to defend.
- Rome collectively rejected the Biblical concept of God and morality.

***There Is A Definite Parallel Between Rome And That of America.*** Nowhere in the New Testament does God offer salvation from sin through any political entity or nation. One never has nor ever will become a New Testament Christian by becoming a patriotic American. New Testament Salvation is found only through Christ by obedience to the gospel in the confines of the New Testament church.

However, let us remember that God has given the concept of civil government to provide for our civil needs just like he established the family to provide for societal needs and the church to be his agency for our spiritual needs. When civil government fails to perform in the role that God has assigned it to function with recognition of his power and authority, such government no longer has the blessings of God, nor the right to exist among civilized nations of the earth. Time and time again we read of the collapse of civil governments in the pages of secular history as well as with the plenary and verbally inspired word of God when God has destroyed them because of their rejection of Him.

# NEWS AND NOTES

**“I was sick, and ye visited me...” (Matthew 25:36)**

**Remember in Prayer:**

*Reginald Read* will be having a pacemaker inserted tomorrow, September 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Vicki Powell* will be having ongoing tests run in the coming days.

*Jim Spencer* is improving after his back surgery and is able to walk better with less pain.

*Nicole Nelson* will see doctors in Memphis concerning a liver transplant on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Virginia London* is waiting to hear from her doctors in Memphis about plans for surgery.

*Gretchen Pruitt* was able to come home to continue rehab, but she is still having a lot of pain.

*Mittie Stallings* is still very weak but is at home.

*Coy London’s brother and sister-in-law, Jimmy and Donna London*, were involved in a head-on collision and both are hospitalized with critical injuries.

*Sympathy goes to the family of Alta Allison Crawford, grandmother of Scott Pratt*. Her funeral is this afternoon in Pocahontas at the Pyburn Street church of Christ building, with visitation from 2-3 and funeral at 3.

**Please check the bulletin boards for updates on Prayer Request Lists. Please update us if needed. Also please pray for those directly and indirectly affected by Covid-19, and please keep us updated.**

*Jason Garland*

**In Other News:**

*We are happy to welcome Gary and Monica Hinds*, who have expressed the desire to place membership with us. They also want us to know that they are with a rapid response team in Georgia so they will be away at times.

*Together with their families, Kara Kee and David Stone invite you to their wedding ceremony here at the building, Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m., with reception to follow.* Masks are kindly encouraged. The invitation will be posted on the bulletin board.

*Bible classes will begin again with some changes on Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.* Class time will begin at 9:00 on Sunday morning as in the past. There will be some temporary room assignments that will be announced soon.

**Those Privileged To Serve**

**September 20, 2020**

**SUNDAY MORNING**

Song Leader: Micah Tindall  
Opening Prayer: Mark Wooten  
Closing Prayer: Stan Honeycutt  
Bible Reading: Craig Nelson  
Preacher: Terry Joe Kee

**LORD’S TABLE**

Presiding: Hal Baugh  
Mitch Mosley Ben Johns  
Scott Pratt Jimmy Powell  
Logan Snyder Ryan Manley

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Dan Nichols

**SUNDAY EVENING**

Song Leader: Micah Tindall  
Opening Prayer: Jerry Dodson  
Closing Prayer: Steve Stoker  
Preacher: Terry Joe Kee

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT**

**September 23, 2020**  
Song Leader: Randy Oden  
Opening Prayer: Jason Garland  
Closing Prayer: Mitch Mosley

**DEVOTIONAL SPEAKER**

**September 23, 2020**  
Terry Joe Kee

**NUMBERS FOR THE WEEK**

**Week Of**

**September 13, 2020**

Sunday Bible Study 78  
Sunday AM Worship 108  
Sunday PM Worship 88  
Wednesday Bible Study 88  
Contribution \$5,317

**“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. Galatians 2:20**

# The Friend of Truth



Greensboro Road church of Christ

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“Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Galatians 4:16)

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## KeeNotes

When someone is visiting and comes to any one of us and asks to see the minister, to whom do we send them? Does the church at Greensboro Road have only one minister? How many ministers does any church have? If we truly look at the word and how it is used in the New Testament, we must know that each and every one who is a Christian is a minister. Ministry is not something done to the church, but rather something done by the church. If we are seeking to follow in the steps of Jesus as we should, we will heed His statement in Matthew 20:28, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” The fear is that too many of God’s children today are looking to be ministered unto rather than ministering to others. The result of this is that many saints are no longer participants in the arena, but spectators in the grandstand.

Because of this attitude in the church we are delivering babes into Christ who never intend to graduate and mature; we are enlisting soldiers who never intend to fight the good fight of faith; we are registering racers who never intend to run. With some, if not many, our motto has become, “there he is Lord, send him.” The ship of Zion is no longer manned by a crew of volunteers working for the sheer love of the Captain of their salvation, but seeking to be steered by a pilot and maybe an assistant pilot while members see themselves as paying passengers who are going along for the ride.

It is amazing and sad to see how much dead timber and dead weight is being dragged along in the average church today. Dead timber produces no fruit and only moves when someone is dragging it. Somewhere along the way we have lost the very essence of what it is to be a Christian. The result is we have the richest accumulation of unused talent and the richest deposits of untouched ability of any work being done on earth today. If we are honest with our plea for the restoration of New Testament Christianity, the time has come for us to revolutionize our thinking. It is “high time” for every soldier to put on the whole armor of God and become active in the work that is set before us.

We must quit being spectators and get into the field of action. There are too many souls being lost every day and too few laborers in the field. We are all ministers of Jesus Christ or we are not His at all. Let us all go, stand, and speak the words of this life to all who will hear. (TJK)

**SHEPHERDS**

Dan Nichols  
Randy Oden  
Jody Pickens

**DEACONS**

Scottie Blanchard  
Jerry Dodson  
Mike Felts  
Jason Garland  
Marshall Lands  
Mark Wooten

**EVANGELIST**

Terry Joe Kee

**MISSIONARIES**

Michael Hughes  
Samrit Kammanee  
Arnold Kelley  
Guyana, South America  
Warren, PA

**SERVICES**

**SUNDAY**

Classes 9:00 a.m.  
Worship 10:00 a.m.  
5:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the Word of God  
*Romans 10:17*  
**Believe** the Word of God  
*John 8:24*  
**Repent** of your sins  
*Luke 13:3*  
**Confess** your faith in Jesus as the Son of God  
*Romans 10:9,10*  
**Be Baptized** for the remission of your sins  
*Acts 2:38*  
**Live faithfully**  
*Revelation 2:10*

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish....” Proverbs 29:18*

*God Give Us 2020 Vision in 2020*