

# The Rise and Fall of Civilizations: What Can History Teach Us?

## August 21, 2020

Introduction:

Ps 71:17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

Four Questions:

1. Who is Jesus?
2. What is the Church? (How do you define the Church?)
3. Who are its members?
4. Who says so?

Outline-

1. The Centrality of the work of Christ-  
[Creator/Incarnation/Life/Death/Resurrection/Ascension/Exaltation/Sovereign]
  - a. Hebrews 1:1-4 -present in creation and history
  - b. Colossians 1:14-20 -capable of reconciling all things to himself
  - c. Philippians 2:5-11 -every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord
2. An Old Testament lesson on Revivalism
  - a. Elijah on Mt Carmel- I Kings 18
    - i. When? c. 850 BC
    - ii. Fall of Samaria- 722 BC
    - iii. Fall of Jerusalem- 586 BC
  - b. Summer/Fall 1966
    - i. George Brunk II and tent revivals
    - ii. Disintegration of the Washington/Franklin Conference- 1968
3. Four Eras of "Peace" (Emphasis on the Sovereignty of God)
  - a. Pax Romana (27 BC – 180 AD)
    - i. The Hun Invasion of Europe
    - ii. The Foederati (Germanic/Barbarian "invasion" of the Roman Empire)
  - b. Pax Mongolica- (1200 AD – 1350 AD)
    - i. China "Conquered"??
    - ii. The rise of world trade (the Silk Road)
  - c. Pax Britannica (1815 AD – 1914 AD)
  - d. Pax Americana ?? (20<sup>th</sup> century or beginning in 1945)

4. Two Stories – the Sovereignty of God and Heroes
  - a. The Black Plague- 14<sup>th</sup> century
  - b. The Battle of Waterloo- 1815 (End of Napoleonic Era in Europe)
  
5. Defining Eras-
  - a. The Constantinian Heresy- 4<sup>th</sup> century AD
  - b. The Rise of Islam- 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD
  - c. The Crusades- c. 1100 – 1300 AD
  - d. The Reformation- 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> centuries AD
    - i. Erasmus and the Anabaptist
    - ii. Four tenets of the Reformation-
      1. A return in form and function to the positions and practices of the early church.
      2. The priesthood of all believers; no intermediary other than Christ is needed for salvation
      3. The Church is a community of believers; not a hierarchy of officials
      4. The Bible is final authority in questions of doctrine and practice
    - iii. Unintended Consequences -
      1. **Mass education became an ideal and goal**
      2. **The exaltation of the individual; personal conscience trumps group consensus**
      3. **The promotion of democratic ideas**
      4. **The exaltation of the family built on romantic love**
      5. **The separation of Church and State in matters of government**
      6. **The dignity of the laboring man; VOCATION is holy**
      7. **Laity participation in worship; the rise of hymnody**
      8. **The Birth of denominationalism**
      9. **The Seeds of Nationalism appeared... (Luther and alliances with German princes)**
      10. **The Seeds of Socialism were planted... (Destruction of monasteries and convents; confiscation of church property)**
  - e. The Great Migration- to the Americas
    - i. A fascination and opportunity for personal property for the penniless
      1. The end of a nobility and feudalism??

- f. WW-1
    - i. Humanism comes to maturity
    - ii. Nationalism bears fruit-
    - iii. Socialism becomes the socio-economic norm
      - 1. Medieval Era: the role of monasteries and convents
        - a. Recall Henry VIII and the confiscation of Church Property
      - 2. The receding influence of the Church; the rise of a new “savior” - GOVERNMENT care and protection
        - a. Consider what the Church has done with the elderly.
        - b. Consider our fascination with retiring...
    - iv. 20<sup>th</sup> century- unmitigated disaster toward paganism-
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6. And so...
  - a. Any genuine expression of Christ-following must embrace Radical, Unconditional Love that is being perfected in Jesus.
  - b. Any genuine expression of Christ-following must come to terms with the socio-economic dualism that we have bought into.
  - c. The future of Christianity lies in its capacity to create Kingdom communities that are relatively “close communities” who with open hearts are prepared to love their neighbor as themselves... all over the world. (reference Poland)
  - d. Mt 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.