



Proverbs 30:11-14

(11) "There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers; (12) those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth; (13) those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful; (14) those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives to devour the poor from the earth, the needy from among mankind.

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It is almost tangible—the feeling that a hammer-blow is about to fall. It is reinforced constantly—by news reports, images from the media, and direct personal experience—that the nation is coming apart at the seams and lurching wildly out of control.

We witness the political demagoguery of leaders seeking their own ends rather than the good of those they claim to serve. We see the rich and powerful grow richer and more powerful, unconcerned with the plight of the common man except where it threatens to inconvenience them. We watch as national borders dissolve and cultures collide with tremendous friction rather than smooth melding, as we are continually assured is possible. We cringe as the various topics of the day are debated nationally, ones that were unthinkable just a few decades ago. That these and many other national and personal travesties continue unabated cause many, we hope, to cry out, even if only in their minds, "How much longer can this madness continue?"

Instinctively, we know the answer: not long. Something has to give. The questions that remain are: How long do we have? How bad is it going to get? What will our nation look like afterward?

Scholars have long been aware that the history of a given people tends to repeat itself in predictable cycles. Of particular interest is the work of authors William Strauss and Neil Howe in their book, *The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy*. In it, Strauss and Howe chronicle nearly 600 years of Anglo-American history that has a definitive, repeated pattern. It begins with a **High** (a time of civic order, purpose, and peace, such as the post-WWII 40s and 50s), followed by an **Awakening** (when the human spirit grows restless and calls the present order into question, which was seen during the 60s and 70s), an **Unraveling** (when the culture and institutions break down, as they did during the 80s and 90s), and finally a **Crisis** (when the nation flounders in chaos and faces an existential threat). Each of these "turnings" of the cycle lasts an average of about 20 years. Once the Crisis is resolved, the nation enters another High, and the cycle repeats itself.

Strauss and Howe follow this cycle through the history of the British and American peoples. We are now at the tail end of the *seventh* iteration of this cycle, poised to enter what they term—interestingly enough—the "*Millennial Crisis*." Will there be an eighth cycle? Will the Anglo-American peoples find a way to refocus their energies and resources and emerge intact on the other side of this seventh crisis?

Historically, Crises have involved massive economic hardship and total war—a chilling thought, considering the weapons systems now in the hands of various international players. Six times in this identified history, the Anglo-American peoples have rallied, sacrificed, and applied themselves to overcome enemies and other hardships to ensure national and cultural survival.

But this seventh crisis has a major difference that urgently begs the question of whether there will be a victorious new beginning or the end of our national existence as we know it. By all accounts, during this seventh crisis, God is not welcome on the Anglo-American side.

The United States began systematically barring God from public mention during the 1960s, and we are already reaping the whirlwind. The Creator, who has blessed this nation beyond any people in history because of His promises to Abraham, has been shunned, and those who trust in Him have

been scorned. Christianity has given way to churchianity, where the focus is on packed stadiums of spectators, impressive incomes, and political outreach and activism. There is plenty of activity, but little biblical depth.

This is not to suggest that all previous generations of Americans were upright and moral. Clearly, they were not. But compared to the present, there was at least a common understanding that there was a God, that the Bible was His Word, and that the role of churches was to teach from the Bible and point the people to God. There was a common understanding of morality, even if it was not righteously adhered to. But this very basic foundation is now gone.

The picture is grim and getting worse. Even a national religious revival at this point—were it ever to come to pass—would be in name only. The national character is simply too soft. Barring God's intervention and direction, it would be easier to nail Jell-O to a tree than to turn these nations back to the Bible (see [Jeremiah 13:23](#)).

Nationally, without God on our side, our chances of coming through this crisis intact are slim indeed—especially if we as a nation are viewing Him as an [adversary](#)! However, *individually*, there is much that we can—and should—do. We may not be able to effect a national change, yet we can certainly put our own houses in order. We can strive to invite God into every area of our lives, seeking Him at all times and submitting to His will. We can apply ourselves to prayer and Bible study so that through this daily [contact with God](#), we learn how He thinks and how He operates. This will not guarantee immunity from hardship, but it will at least keep us in contact and alignment with the One who writes history and determines our place within in it (see [Psalm 62:11](#); [Isaiah 57:15](#)).

— David C. Grabbe

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[**The Coming Anglo-American Crisis**](#)

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