

Series: Pathway Through the Psalms

THE NATIONS THAT FORGET GOD

PSALMS 9

Text: Psalms 9:17

Psalm 9:17

¹⁷ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

Introduction:

The German philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) knew that just because men and women learned about the past, that didn't mean they'd make better decisions about the future.

He once cynically commented, "What experience and history teach us is this—that people and governments never have learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it."

For years after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, America seemingly towered over the world as a great giant—economically, culturally and militarily.

But now since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, our armed services have clashed with the forces of Islamic extremism and terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the world.

Clearly America's present lone-superpower status is being increasingly challenged.

Could it be lost completely?

I say YES!

As we read:

Psalm 9:17

¹⁷ The wicked shall be turned into hell, **and all the nations that forget God.**

Sir John Bagot Glubb highly honored British general and historian better known as Glubb Pasha, wrote about the collapsed empires of the past. In his 1978 book *The Fate of Empires and the Search for Survival*, he described a common pattern fitting the history of some fallen empires. They went through a cycle of stages as they started, expanded, matured, declined and collapsed.

Though I think the downward slide occurs more so because of a spiritual slide here are the seven stages that Glubb noted:

1. The age of outburst (or pioneers).
2. The age of conquests.
3. The age of commerce.
4. The age of affluence.
5. The age of intellect.
6. The age of decadence.
7. The age of decline and collapse.

In the first two stages or ages, the warrior's adventuresome and manly values drive an empire to gain power as it conquers land from others.

Later on, during the following ages of commerce and affluence, businessmen and merchants—who normally value material success and dislike taking unnecessary risks—take over at the highest levels of society.

Their societies downplay the values of the soldier.

During these middle stages, empires stop taking more land and start building walls instead. They switch from the offensive to the defensive.

Conquest and later business investment promoted by the empire's unity builds the wealth that leads to the age of intellect.

During this fifth stage, the empire's leaders spent lots of money to establish educational institutions resembling modern universities and high schools.

During the age of intellect, schools may produce skeptical intellectuals who oppose the values and religious beliefs of their empires' early leaders.

The corrosive effects of material success encourage the upper class and the common people to discard the self-confident, self-disciplined values that helped to create the empire.

Then the empire eventually collapses.

Though these steps are clearly seen the underlying reason is that the nation forgets God.

Though these words were written the Israelites the principles are still the same.

Note:

1. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PEOPLE AND NATIONS (VS. 17)

Psalm 9:17

¹⁷ The **wicked** shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

These nations and people are described as being wicked.

The word wicked means: morally wrong; an actively bad person: ungodly, wicked, one that does wrong.

2. THOSE DEEMED WICKED (VS. 17)

Psalm 9:17

¹⁷ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that **forget God**.

The Bible has much to say about forgetting God and the danger of such action.

Deuteronomy 6:12

¹² **Then beware lest thou forget the LORD**, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 8:11-20

¹¹ **Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God**, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments,

*and his statutes, which I command thee this day: ¹² Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; ¹³ And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; ¹⁴ Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; ¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; ¹⁷ And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. ¹⁸ **But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God:** for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. ²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.*

Though these words were written the Israelites the principles are still the same.

3. THINGS DRIVING THE WICKEDNESS (FORGETTING GOD)

The article that I referenced a moment ago written by Glubb he states:

The growth of wealth and comfort clearly can undermine the values of character, such as self-sacrifice and discipline, that led to a given empire's creation.

Then the empire so affected by moral decline grows weaker and more vulnerable to destruction by forces arising inside or outside of it.

We will look at the God said was the reason that people forget Him I think it is interesting some of the key signs that Glubb noted:

1. Rampant sexual immorality, an aversion to marriage in favor of "living together" and an increased divorce rate all combine to undermine family stability.

This happened among the upper class in the late Roman Republic and early Empire. The first-century writer Seneca once complained about Roman upper-class women: "They divorce in order to re-marry. They marry in order to divorce."

The birthrate declines, and abortion and infanticide both increase as family size is deliberately limited.

Homosexuality becomes publicly acceptable and spreads, as was the case among the ancient Greeks before Rome conquered them.

2. Many foreign immigrants settle in the empire's capital and major cities.

The mixture of ethnic groups in close proximity in these cosmopolitan places inevitably produces conflicts.

Because of their prominent locations within the empire, their influence greatly exceeds their percentage of the population. Here diversity plainly leads to divisiveness.

We see this today.

3. Both irresponsible pleasure-seeking and pessimism increase among the people and their leaders.

The spirit described in 1 Corinthians 15:32 spreads throughout society:

1 Corinthians 15:32

³² *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? **let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.***

As people cynically give up looking for solutions to the problems of life and society, they drop out of the system. They then turn to mindless entertainment, to luxuries and sexual activity, and to drugs or alcohol.

4. The government provides extensive welfare for the poor.

In the case of the city of Rome, which had perhaps 1.2 million people around A.D. 170, government-provided "bread and circuses" (food and entertainment) helped to keep the masses content. About one half of its non-slave population was on the dole at least part of the year.

True, helping the poor shows Christian compassion (Mark 14:7).

Mark 14:7

⁷ For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

But such help also can lead to laziness and dependency (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some which

walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. ¹² Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

Such problems are especially likely when the poor believe state-provided charity is a permanent right or entitlement.

Certainly we can see the similarities in our nation as mention above but note what God stated were signs of and the causes of forgetting Him

Deuteronomy 8:11-20

¹¹ Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in **not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes,** which I command thee this day:

¹² **Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; ¹³ And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; ¹⁴ Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;**

¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; ¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he

might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;
¹⁷ And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might
of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. ¹⁸ But thou
shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that
giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish
his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is
this day. ¹⁹ **And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the
LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve
them, and worship them, I testify against you this day
that ye shall surely perish.** ²⁰ As the nations which the
LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish;
because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the
LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 31:20

²⁰ For when I shall have brought them into the land
which I sware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk
and honey; and **they shall have eaten and filled
themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto
other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and
break my covenant.**

Though these words were written the Israelites the
principles are still the same.

Note these steps:

- Forget by not keeping and obeying God's commandments, judgments, and statutes.
- Forget where the blessings we enjoy come from.
- Forget where we came from.
- Fail to recognize our dependence on the Lord.
- Worship or respecting other gods.
- Become comfortable and complacent which leads to becoming contemptible.

Again we see these things going on today.

I close in briefly noting:

4. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED

We read in our text:

Psalm 9:17

¹⁷ *The wicked shall be **turned into hell**, and all the nations that forget God.*

Though many try to deny the existence of hell, it still exists.

Hell is a place of torments consisting of:

Crying

Wailing

Thirst

Darkness

Gnashing or grinding of teeth

Unquenchable fire

Wicked and vile people

Poem

*Hell the prison house of despair,
Here are some things that won't be there;
No flowers will bloom on the banks of Hell,
No beauties of nature we love so well;
No comforts of home, music and song,
No friendship of joy will be found in the throng;
No children to brighten the long weary night;
No love nor peace, nor one ray of light;
No blood-washed soul with face beaming bright,
No loving smile in that region of night;
No mercy, no pity, pardon nor grace,
No water, O God, what a terrible place!*

*The pangs of the lost no human can tell,
Not one moments ease - there is no rest in Hell!
Hell the prison house of despair,
Here are some things that will be there:
Fire and brimstone are there we know,
For God in His Word hath told us so;
Memory, remorse, suffering and pain,
Weeping and wailing, but all in vain;
Blasphemers, swearers, haters of God,
Christ rejecters while here on earth trod;
Murders, gamblers, drunkards and liars
Will have their part in the lake of fire;
The filthy, the vile, the cruel and mean,
What a horrible mob in Hell will there be!
Yes, more than humans on earth can tell,
Are torments and woes of eternal Hell!*

Close:

God is ever so merciful, but His patience in the face of our national sins is wearing thin. He has given His true servants a mission to warn the nations of what is coming.

Note Ezekiel 33:1-9:

Ezekiel 33:1-9

¹ Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
² Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: ³ If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; ⁴ Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. ⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. ⁶ But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. ⁷ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. ⁸ When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
⁹ Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

If modern nations repent, as the people of Nineveh did after the prophet Jonah delivered God's warning to

them, they can avoid the dreadful punishments prophesied to come.

The handwriting is on the wall, what will we now choose to do?