

Christian Reconstruction

Isaiah 61:4

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IMPENDING JUDGMENT

By Gary North

In recent years, a sense of foreboding has begun to overtake the West. The optimism of the "can-do" pragmatic liberals of the Kennedy years died in the jungles of Vietnam. What has replaced that older optimism is a kind of secularized version of "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Can-do liberalism couldn't, and its spiritual heirs have just about gone through their inheritance. (Liberalism taxes all kinds of capital, not just financial capital, and the result is national decapitalization)

There are several ways men have accommodated themselves to this sense of impending doom. One way is to deny the darkness. Men point to statistical indicators of national economic growth, or some other measure of prosperity, and they conclude that things are doing pretty well, so there is no cause for alarm. Ben Wattenburg's recent books are examples of this. Then there is the "imminent return" syndrome among religious groups, especially American Protestants. Jesus is supposedly coming soon, and all these dark signs are like holes in a sinking ship. We Christians have the lifeboats, however. Jesus will deliver us out of our misery. Another approach is the "end of civilization" syndrome. These people are the true pessimists. They see the end of the industrialized West, the coming of repressive barbarism (Chinese, Russian, or home-grown), and the collapse of the modern economy. Finally, we have the "clean sweep" advocates the crisis will destroy my group's enemies, and my group will be found on top when the dust, however radioactive it may be in the interim, finally settles.

Any of these syndromes is conceivably correct in its conclusions. What we should expect, however, is that there will "be more than one scenario (unless Jesus really does come to bail out the Christians). There is a big world out there, and many historical currents are operating. There are many possibilities open to the human race, some bad and some good.

At some point — or better, series of points — affairs come to a head. The direction of events becomes apparent. Alert observers in 1910-14 predicted the coming of a European war, and finally their fears were confirmed. The devastation that struck Europe in 1914-18 was inconceivable even to pessimists in 1913. The face of the world was permanently altered. Whole cultures disintegrated, and the rise of Bolshevism and Nazism brought decades of additional devastation. We still live under the shadow of that great war. Yet not everything was lost. Not all signs of progress ceased. Men forged ahead, especially in the area of technology. But, on the other hand, there is the hydrogen bomb, technology's highly efficient threat to the world of technology. And what if technology gets the cost of producing such a weapon down to the level where an Idi Amin can buy

or steal one?

The prophets of doom and the prophets of continuing progress can both look plausible for a while. There will come a time in the life of any given nation or culture, however, when the implications of its historical development become sufficiently obvious, so that the majority of men can see them. When civilizations fall, men wail the loss, but they recognize it. Even when the fall of a civilization takes centuries, as it did in Rome, the later citizens can look back and recognize the world they have lost. We cannot put off the day of cultural reckoning forever. For a man heavily invested on margin in the U.S. stock market in October of 1929, the day of accounting could not be delayed any longer. What resulted from that collapse (i.e., the depression which began before October 1929, but had not been obvious) was understood as a disaster by those living in the 1930's. The pessimists of the late 1920's were proven correct; the optimists were proven bankrupt.

Prophetic Preaching

The prophets of the Old Testament believed that there is a fixed relationship between the moral character of a nation and the external blessings or cursings visited by God on that nation. They believed in the reliability of biblical law. They knew that if people continue to cheat their neighbors, commit adultery, break up the family, and defy all lawfully constituted authorities, the land will be brought under judgment. They had no doubts in this regard. They recapitulated the teachings of Deuteronomy 28, warning their listeners that God's laws cannot be violated with impunity forever.

Twentieth-century preaching has neglected the outline of Deuteronomy 28. We find few pastors who are willing to stick their necks out and warn congregations that modern society faces the same sort of judgement that faced ancient Israel. They are unwilling to follow the logic of the covenant, namely, that similar sins result in similar judgments. While today's religious leaders are sometimes willing to speak of the impending judgement of God on the lawless members of society—a society from which all Christians will have been removed by a supernatural act of God—they are seldom ready to preach as the prophets did. They do not warn their listeners, as Jeremiah did, that they, too, are a part of contemporary society, and that they, too, are not immunized against God's wrath. If men have relied on the continuing profitability of today's economy, and the continuing functioning of today's bureaucratic structures, then they have put their capital at risk. They have rested and are resting on weak reeds.

Where is the warning being sounded? Where are the congre-

gations, let alone denominations, that are being alerted to the risks associated with cultural and economic collapse? Europe has suffered two great wars, several inflations, plus the pressures of Communist revolution, all since 1914. We have seen whole empires decimated in this century, whole peoples engulfed and destroyed — not just in the so-called Third World (Cambodia, for example), but in the civilized West. Yet the pastors in the United States, Canada, and other previously unscathed nations seem to believe that their societies possess some sort of theological “king’s x,” just because God has spared them in the past. The barbarians are at the gates, threatening the West with destruction, yet the overwhelming majority of pastors have not begun to alert their congregations of the need for prayer, national repentance, Christian reconstruction, and preparation for national disaster. They apparently do not believe that the law-order which prevailed in the Old Testament still has any effect. They do not recognize the threat, for example, of the magnitude of abortions worldwide: between 35 million and 50 million annually. In the United States, the figure is conservatively estimated at a million a year. How long do we expect God to withhold His wrath, if by crushing the humanists who promote mass abortion (including certain faculty members in supposedly orthodox seminaries), He might spare the lives of literally millions of innocents? Will God hesitate to bring us low, just because we have grown accustomed to indoor plumbing and central air conditioning, in the face of mass murder?

The threat of judgment is spelled out clearly in Deuteronomy 28. The reality of judgment has been with us since 1914. The Soviet Union — the most consistent humanist regime in history — has escalated its pressures on the West, and by 1982 will probably be in a position to launch a successful first strike against America’s undefended missiles. Yet any pastor who would dare to mention the wisdom of buying dehydrated food, gold coins, and a home in a small town would be branded as an extremist. What is an extremist? A prophet. And you know what respectable priests and rulers did to the prophets.

Preparation for the Future

Back in the mid-1960’s, R.J. Rushdoony wrote a little booklet called *Preparation for the Future*. In that booklet he recommended buying silver coins (you could get them at face value then), American gold coins (a \$20 gold piece cost about \$50, not today’s price of well over \$650), and other basic necessities. He predicted continuing price inflation. In other words, he warned people about what was in store for them, and he offered concrete investment decisions that could have shielded his readers from the inflation crisis which has struck us over the last decade. Did pastors rush out to order copies for their congregations? Did he get invited to speak at the family church conferences around the nation? Did radio evangelists invite him to appear on their broadcasts to spread the message? Did the church pension committees bring him into give them advice on how to protect the retirees? Did the investment experts in charge of seminary trust funds follow his advice? Did anyone in a position of Christian leadership offer to have the booklet reprinted and distributed to every pastor on the in-house mailing list? The answer to all these questions is **easy: No!** All he got for his efforts was a pile of complaints from pastors who bothered to read it, and the thanks of the laymen who followed his advice. A few pastors did what he said, but they had one thing in common: small churches. The prestige priests were nowhere to be found, except on the side of the outraged critics who called him an extremist, an exaggerator, and unpatriotic. (Silver and gold were considered unpatriotic by man lemmings prior to 1978; now that the precious metals are so very

precious, and it is no longer possible for most Christians to afford very much gold or silver, the former critics no longer disparage gold; they just tell everyone that it’s too late to get on board. Conclusion: when “anti-patriotic” investments make their holders a pile of paper money, the investments no longer are unpatriotic. Success makes everything acceptable. Where are gold’s critics today? Ah, the wonders of pragmatism!)

Another strategy used by the critics of the prophets is the one used by gold’s critics: “W’s too late now.” Back when it wasn’t too late, they ridiculed the advice. Now that it has turned out to be fabulously profitable in retrospect, they complain that the horae is out of the barn. “That was a good idea back in 1971, but not now.” Well, who are they to judge? What were they advising back in 1971? How good is their track record? What makes them such experts? Why is their continual failure to **predict** the future accurately a good reason for believing them today?

Those of us who were correct in the 1960’s concerning the inflation of the 1970’s and whose recommendations have multiplied people’s capital by a minimum of seven to one (yes, even discounting for inflation), are still sounding the alarm. We are still saying that the judgment is coming, that the dollar is sinking, and that we should expect “business as usual,” or better put, “anti-business as usual,” from the Federal government. Little has changed. The big spenders are still spending, and the politics of constraint is limited to state and local politics. There has been no change of heart in Washington. Therefore, we can expect more of the same.

Then we come to our recommended strategies. These include gold, silver, a safe place outside the major cities, local barter societies, churches that are organized to deal with civil breakdown, food storage programs, and all the other preparations that are sensible preceding a war, a revolution, an economic collapse, or mass inflation. In other words, the strategies have not changed. The only difference is that today they are more expensive and more imperative. And what is the response of the theological and ecclesiastical experts? “These people were lucky when they predicted the rise in gold and silver, but they are still extremists, their luck has run out, they’ll be proven wrong soon, and we should not concern ourselves about their alarms.” In other words, those **who were wrong before** in denying our advice are **being** as consistent as we are; **they haven’t changed their assessment of the future. The difference is this: we “extremists” have an established, profitable track record. What we said would happen, and our critics denied, has happened.**

If you have said to yourself, “I should have bought gold when it was \$200 per ounce,” and then repeated the phrase all the way up, you’re using masochism to block your escape. We are telling you to do what you should have done before, not offer endless excuses about not having done it. It is not too late. The strategy is still sound. It is simply more expensive, and a lot of time has run out. But the time remaining is also running out.

If you are a pastor, and you don’t think your congregation wants to hear this kind of message, think about forming a new congregation. It won’t be difficult. Just start preaching like a prophet of God, and the losers will leave, or toss you out. Your income as a pastor is going to wipe you out anyway; better seek alternative income now, while you have the opportunity.

If you are a layman, and your pastor refuses to preach like a prophet, find a new church, or do what you can to get a new pastor. Being surrounded by Christian lemmings (grasshoppers, in Aesop’s fable) when the crisis hits will be unpleasant. You will need friends who are better prepared than lemmings in that dark day.