

Who Will Save America

by Johnathan Tate

America is in dire straits. Corruption can be found at the highest levels of government. Our national defenses are in shambles, as our military has been cut back time and again yet still been involved in numerous operations around the world which we have no interest in and which have stretched our forces far too thin. Eight-plus years of bad economic policy have brought this nation to the brink of recession. America's moral fabric has virtually collapsed, with drug use running rampant, sexual perversions of all kinds openly practiced, and much of the family structure has fallen by the wayside. Now, we have terrorist attacks that now threaten us at home. People are beginning to cry out for a savior - someone who will help America to be safe and strong. They are starting to act as if they are willing to give up many of our most cherished liberties to be protected.

America is not the first nation to call for someone or something to save them. Many of the problems in America have been paralleled in history in other great empires. Their people rejected democracy and self-government in favor of a quick solution to their problems. Depending on the leadership that took over, these nations either experienced a long era of piece (but with moral decay continuing) or a brief rise to glory. All of them, however, came crashing down when a strong adversary entered the picture, proving how much of a facade their security was. Two examples, Germany and Rome, shall be discussed here.

Post-World War I Germany was in shambles. Its economy experience some of the worst inflation in the history of the world. Joblessness was rampant across the nation. At the worst times, a wheelbarrow full of money might be just enough to buy a loaf of bread. Opportunistic politicians, as well as the man on the street, began to blame democracy itself for the nation's problems. Average people began joining groups calling for radical change in society and government. Finally, in 1933 the National Socialist party under Adolph Hitler rose to rule Germany through the use of propaganda, intimidation, and political maneuvering.

Nazi Germany's new government outwardly brought the nation to world prominence, raised its military to a first-rate force, and began calling for the redressing of the betrayals of the

Versailles Treaty which ended WWI. Underneath, however, the government was as corrupt as ever. Nazi party thugs harassed anyone who questioned any part of their program. Other races were hated for not being “pureblooded” and were rounded up, forced into slave labor, and slaughtered when they were of no use to the government. This nation was brought to its knees when it tried to introduce the totalitarian system into the rest of the world. Many of its enemies were the democracies of the world who fought to protect their way of life and won. Germany was in even worse shambles after WWII than it had been after WWI, and in order to survive at all was forced to become something totally new.

The Roman Republic was a mighty power of the Mediterranean which had defeated numerous enemies in the centuries before Christ. It also boasted of a deep republican tradition which grew out of the populace’s dislike of absolute rulers. For nearly five centuries, Rome was a nation based first and foremost upon the rule of law, not man. The people had more influence in the government here than in any other nation of the time. Civil rights were granted to more and more people as the government grew more participatory. Soon, though, corruption began to set in at the high levels of government. Voices for reform were silence (e.g. the Gracchi brothers) and ambitious Senators and generals began scheming for power. There had been contingencies for emergency power in the past, but these were always temporary. Finally, civil war broke out as various generals plotted how they would take control of Rome and its provinces. Julius Caesar, one of these generals, promised peace and the end to war if the populace would support him. Earlier, an informed public could have possibly removed the corrupt leaders for those who were dedicated to the good of the Republic. Now, it seemed too late. The public fell behind the romance of Caesar and the Senate made him dictator for life. He was killed by a final attempt to restore the Republic, but this backfired and made his family even more popular. His nephew and heir, Octavianus, soon led his own forces to victory over all his enemies and promised peace and security for Rome. The grateful Senate bestowed upon him the title of Emperor, replacing the ancient republic, which saw the rule of law, with a monarchy which promoted the rule of a man.

Augustus (Octavianus) did inaugurate an era of Roman greatness and peace known as the Pax Romana. Public morality was restored to a great degree as Augustus led a crusade against

vice. For two hundred years, there was peace and security. However, when one digs deep down, they can still see that Roman government was corrupt as ever. Generals continued to scheme and plot for the throne and led coup after coup. Even the adoption of Christianity could not turn the tide because it was too late. The facade of Roman stability collapsed as barbarians led continuous invasion which weakened and finally destroyed the Empire and plunged civilization into the dark ages.

As one can see from these examples, falling behind one man or one party and abandoning the rule of law is only covering up the problem, and in fact making it worse. Who will save America? Only the people can do this. The people still have a great deal of power compared to Rome and Germany. If the public were to try to get informed about the issues, learn as much as possible about their elected officials, and vote for candidates dedicated to the rule of law. We need to get our heads out of the sand, go to our voting booths, publicly make our stand known, and last but not least get on our knees and pray for another chance, lest we end up with a Hitler or an Augustus ruling this nation and leading us to our eventual demise.