

Sunday, December 31, 2023—2024 And The Fourth Turning: A Believer's Guide For Understanding & Surviving The Current Crisis

Introduction

- On Christmas Day 2019 a member of my family predicted and asked me if I thought 2020 was going to be a great year for America.
- Today, we stand on the doorstep of New Year. A new opportunity. A chance to start over. A for resolutions, resolve, and chance to do things differently.
- I must be honest and say that I am not particularly optimistic about 2024. As I stated in the opening message from our Bible Conference in October the following issues from 2020 remain unresolved in the minds of many Americans not to mention Bible believing Christians.
 - Covid, Lockdowns, Vaccines
 - George Floyd, Riots, Monuments
 - Election & January 6
 - Wokeism & Cancel Culture
- Mix in the following from the intermittent four years.
 - Inflation
 - War In Ukraine
 - Bud Light, Target, & the Culture Wars
 - Open Borders
 - War In Israel
- Now in 2024 we are getting ready to run the whole thing back with the same case of characters and primary actors. It is hard to view the whole thing, 2024, with any sense of optimism.
 - Movie Trailer
- Periodically over the last decade I have used the 1997 book *The Fourth Turning: What The Cycles of History Tell Us About America's Next Rendezvous With Destiny* by William Strauss and Neil Howe to frame a discussion regarding the direction of our nation.
 - 2015—[How Did We Get to be in the Mess We In?](#)

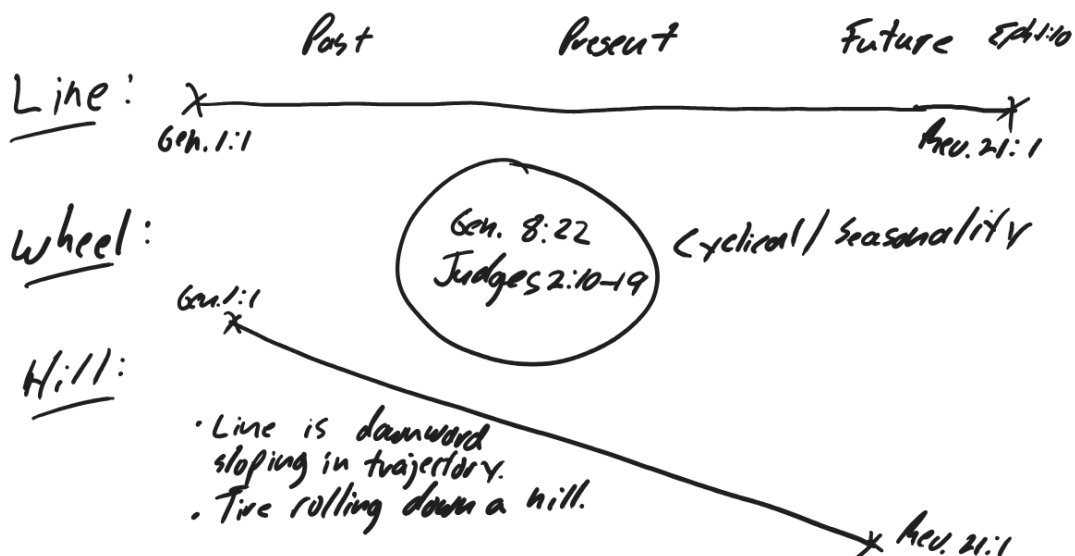
- 2016—[Understanding Roman America: The History of Its Future Fall](#)
- 2020—[The Present Distress & The Fourth Turning](#)
- This morning I would like to review some of this material and discuss where we stand in relation to it as we enter 2024. In order to accomplish this, we will cover the following points:
 - Review The Biblical Framework For Understanding History
 - 2024 & The Cycles Of American History
 - The Believers Response

Review The Biblical Framework For Understanding History

- In my message “How Did we Get to Be in the Mess We Be In?” I sought to establish a Biblical Framework for understanding history by using three simple concepts.
 - The Line—time originated in Genesis 1 and is advancing forward in linear fashion toward a prophesied end, the establishment of the new heavens and new earth. When the Dispensation of the Fullness of Time arrives the purpose for which God created time will have been fulfilled.
 - Genesis 1:1; Revelation 21:1; Ephesians 2:11-13, 7; Ephesians 1:10
 - The Wheel—while linearism remains the predominant model for understanding history, we must also recognize that God is also the author of cyclical seasonality. Consequently, to arrive at a complete paradigm of history, we must embrace the reality that as time moves forward linearly towards its prophesied end, cycles are also occurring. In secular terms we can observe this cyclicity in the following ways:
 - The business cycle in economics: peak, contraction, trough, expansion.
 - Chinese Dynastic Cycle—the rise and fall of nations throughout world history.
 - Genesis 8:22
 - Judges 2:10-19—the same cyclical phenomenon is observable within the only nation that God formed on earth, the nation of Israel. The middle section of the book of Judges presents seven cycles of apostasy, oppression, cry for deliverance, salvation, and rest. Israel vacillates between obedience and apostasy as the people continually fail to learn for their mistakes.
 - The Hill— while that we have seen that both cyclical and linear concepts are both Scriptural all that remains is to combine them into a single explanatory model. For

accuracy's sake, the trajectory of our line is best illustrated by a downward sloping line. Drawing the line in this fashion sets the Christian view of history apart from other linear progressive models. Unlike the evolutionary or Marxian views of history, humanity is not improving but finding new ways and methods to rebel against God. In short, a complete Biblical view of history must contain the following three characteristics.

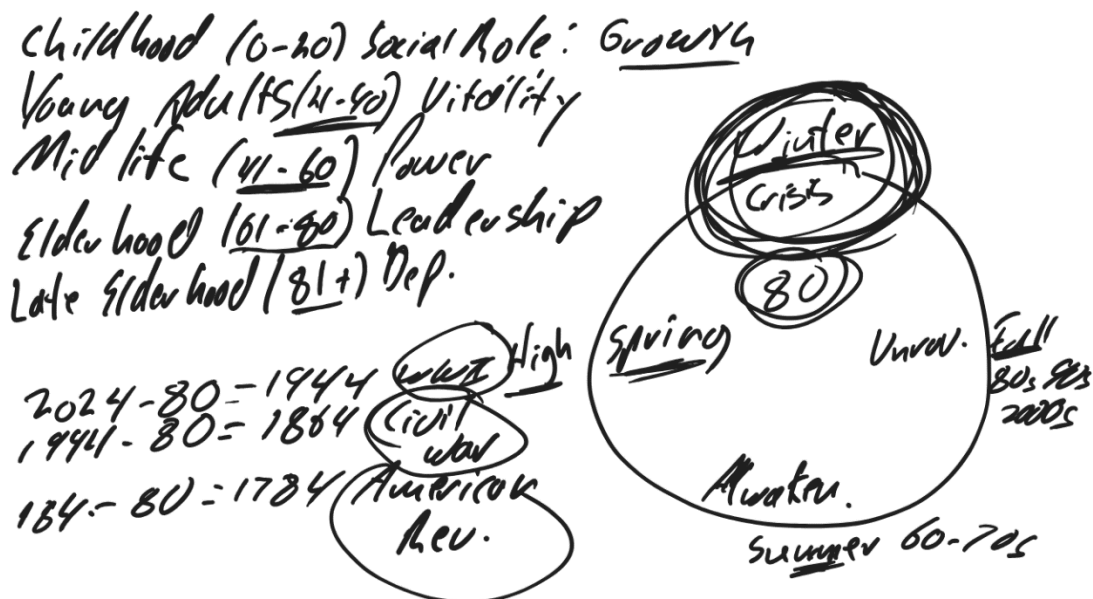
- First, it must reflect the God-ordained method of Bible study by adhering to linearism as its predominant explanatory model.
 - Second, it must recognize that God is also the author of the cyclical and make room for seasonality as God's linear plan unfolds.
 - Third, the linear progression and imbedded cyclicity must be understood to progress along a line that is downward slopping in its trajectory, thereby considering the Law of Human Collapse.
- This is best illustrated by envisioning a tire rolling down a hill. When the tire reaches the bottom, it will crash in catastrophe. This is where the course of this world is headed and only the return of Christ can remedy the situation. As believers we need to understand that we cannot alter or fix what has already been set in motion. All we are called to do is preach the word regardless of where the wheel is in its rotation or how far down the hill it is.



2024 & The Cycles Of American History

- While no one knows for sure when the dispensation of grace will end or how close the tire is to reaching the bottom of the hill. It is possible to know, to some degree, where a nation is at in terms of the seasonal rhythms of history.
- In 1991 William Strauss and Neil Howe wrote a book titled *Generations: The History of America's Future 1584 to 2069*. This book was followed up in 1997 by the publication of *the Fourth Turning: What the Cycles of History Tell Us About America's Next Rendezvous with Destiny*. Since the late 90s, their work has been applied to a host of fields including economics, leadership, and education. Strause & Howe were the first to identify Millennials as a major force in American political & social life (see *Millennials Rising*).
- While a full exposition of their work is beyond the scope of this study there are a couple of points that will help us understand our current situation. First, Strauss & Howe say that “Generations come in cycles. Just as history procures generations, so too do generations produce history.” Each generation possesses a different age location, peer personality, and lifecycle. At any given time in the life of a nation there are four different generations in existence each in its own phase of life.
 - *Childhood* (ages 0-20)—social role: growth (receiving nurture and acquiring values)
 - *Young Adulthood* (ages 21-40) social role: vitality (serving institutions and testing values)
 - *Midlife* (ages 41-60) social role: power (managing institutions and applying values)
 - *Elderhood* (61-80) social role: leadership (leading institutions and transferring values)
 - *Late Elderhood* (81+) social role: dependence (receiving comfort from institutions and remembering values)
- The nature of each generation is shaped in terms of where they are in relation to each of the four turnings.
 - High (Spring)—an upbeat ear of strengthening institutions and weakening individual, when a new civic order is established. Post WWII America.
 - Awakening (Summer)—a passionate era of spiritual upheaval when the civic order comes under attack from a new values regime. 1960s and Vietnam War Era
 - Unraveling (Fall)—a downcast era of strengthening individualism and weakening of institutions, when the old civic order decays and the new values regime implants. Culture Wars of the 1980s and 90s.
 - Crisis (Winter)—a decisive era of secular upheaval, when the values regime propels the replacement of the old civic order with a new one. Where we are currently at.
- According to Strauss & Howe it takes roughly 80 years to get through an entire cycle.

- 2024-80=1944—Great Depression & WWII
- 1944-80=1864—Civil War
- 1864-80=1784—American Revolution



- In 1997 Strauss and Howe predicted based upon the cycles of American history that a sometime between 2005 and 2025 American would enter experience a Fourth Turning crisis that would begin the process of fundamentally reshape our nation.
- The beginning of a Fourth Turning or Winter season is marked by marked by a “Spark”
 - “A spark will ignite a new mood. Today (1997), the same spark would flame briefly but then extinguish itself, its last flicker merely confirming and deepening the Unraveling-era mindset. This time, though, it will catalyze a Criss.” (272)
- Written in 1997 here is one of the scenarios given by Strauss and Howe that could spark a Fourth Turning Crisis between 2005 and 2025:
 - “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announce the spread of a new communicable virus. The disease reaches densely populated areas, killing some. Congress enacts mandatory quarantine measures. The president orders that National Guard to throw prophylactic cordon around unsafe neighborhoods. Mayors resist. Urban gangs batted suburban militias. Calls mount for the president to declare martial law.” (273)

- It is hard not to see 2020 as “the spark” that has shaped a new national mood on both sides of the political aisle. Read from pages 274 & 274.
- Everything we are going through right now is about a breakdown in trust and the post-WWII system of politics i.e., Globalism vs. Nationalism. The climax will remake society under and new social contract. This is perceived by forces on both sides thus our current politics.
- Regardless of who wins the 2024 election I see trouble on the horizon for our country.

The Believers Response

- Prepare for a new beginning. History never repeats itself exactly, but it does rhyme.
- II Timothy 3:13—expect things to get worse before they get better (don’t be reckless).
- Galatians 1:4—we cannot change where we are at in the cycle, and we stop anything from happening.
 - Getting angry with God won’t solve anything.
- Ephesians 5:14-16—we who know better, who understand that Paul is our Apostle, know how to rightly divided the word of truth, and understand the issues of the Grace Life need to remember:
 - Character is important.
 - That the only hope people have is found in the preaching of the cross. Prioritize one’s eternal state over their temporal politics.
 - That we are first and foremost members of the body of Christ before we are American Citizens. Our highest allegiance is to God and His Word.
 - That we are ambassadors for Christ who need to look at the world through scriptural eyes. We cannot hate the very people God is trying to save.
 - Follow Paul not only in doctrine but in ministry philosophy and practice.
- Ephesians 5:25—husbands and fathers need to lead their wives and families. Make sure your children are saved.
- I Timothy 6:6-8; Philippians 4:11-13—learn to rejoice and be content with base things of life.
- Philippians 4:5—be known of men for your moderation.
- Philippians 4:6—trust God to handle your fear & anxiety.
- Titus 2:12—we need to let Paul teach us how to live soberly in this present evil world.

- II Timothy 4:12—we need to preach the word regardless of the season in which we find ourselves.
- Colossians 3:1-2—we need to have our affections in order and set in the proper place.
- Isaiah 33:6—people will try and solve the problems facing them. When God's truth isn't there, they will solve them with things that don't produce stability. False doctrine leads to lies in your imagination.
- I Chronicles 12:32