

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## Is America Nearing Fall of Rome Status?

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*The parallels between the historical decline and fall of Rome and the U.S. today are both eerie and grounds for concern. Pictured: A man wearing a Roman centurion costume takes part in a parade to celebrate Rome's founding in front of the Colosseum in Rome on April 23. Two days earlier, the city marked the 2,776th anniversary of its founding by King Romulus in 753 B.C. (Photo: AFP/Getty Images)*

America's financial mismanagement has gotten so bad that some say our country's decline is now inevitable, drawing parallels to the Roman Empire's collapse.

That comparison is unfair for two reasons. First, Rome had good roads that lasted over a millennium. Second, and more seriously, America has changed course before and hopefully still has time to do so again.

At the moment, however, America is moving in the wrong direction. New York City, a hotbed of leftist ideology and a microcosm of what's causing America's decline, recently announced it would cut police funding to spend \$12 billion more on illegal aliens. The streets may not be safe for U.S. citizens, but at least those here illegally will be comfortable.

New York was once the greatest engine of prosperity in the world, and now people are fleeing in droves. We haven't quite gotten to cows grazing in the Roman Forum, but entire swaths of once-thriving cities are now abandoned. Even the inhabited cities are in decline, with rising taxes outpaced by the crumbling institutions they allegedly fund.

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Left behind is lawlessness, dying communities, and a two-tiered society with the lower class living in progressive misery and insecurity while the rich retreat to luxurious enclaves.

Like Rome before it, New York is a valuable warning to America at large because our nation has been heading in the same direction as New York City—just moving slower.

To fund endless foreign wars and wasteful domestic spending, Rome devalued its currency to institute a hidden tax on its people.

Sound familiar?

That's because it's exactly what America has been doing for years. Financial mismanagement doomed Rome and now threatens America.

Confiscatory taxes drove commerce out of the Roman Empire, or underground in ragtag form, while idle laborers turned to bread lines. Today, excessive taxation and regulation sends jobs overseas, and the unemployed are on welfare.

Rome's failure to curtail its spending as it simultaneously throttled its own economy eventually turned the empire's finances into the equivalent of a Ponzi scheme. Debt rose at unsustainable and accelerating rates. Today, the United States has over \$33 trillion in federal debt, roughly a quarter-million dollars per household.

As decline set in, Rome doubled down on spending, borrowing, inflating, and war, using bread and circuses to tranquilize an angry and desperate populace.

Foreign wars were used to refocus the population on an external enemy and to export unemployed men. Soaring military expenditures meant there wasn't enough wealth left to finance actual military readiness, leaving the empire vulnerable to barbarian invasions on its unsecured borders.

Sound familiar?

As the unity of Rome deteriorated, tribalism took hold. Leftists have been making America tribal for years, grouping people based on how they look or any other immutable characteristic they can cash in for votes.

That makes assimilation impossible, robbing America of one of her strengths. It is unity, not diversity, that holds a melting pot together. That was true for the highly diverse Roman Empire, and it's true today for America.

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The financial and cultural decline of Rome holds a sobering lesson for us today because so many other nations have made the same mistakes and met similar fates. Fortunately, many have turned things around: the Renaissance in Europe, the Victorian era in Britain, the Meiji in Japan.

But it takes resolve, and it takes deep reform. For starters, the federal government needs to hand back the power it has seized from the people, both in terms of control and in confiscatory taxes. Until 1914, our government spent less than 5% of gross domestic product. Today, it's almost 40%.

Shrinking the government ends the deficits that drive the inflation that is crushing American families. It ends the slow bleed-out of our productive economy, small businesses and manufacturers, and the communities that depend on them.

Finally, reducing the federal government to its original scope solves many of our cultural battles, leaving choices to individual communities or the families involved.

As government grew, Americans have become alienated from their communities and our system. Many no longer believe in the rule of law or respect the civic culture that has built America. Instead, we get hateful propaganda that aims to divide us, such as the 1619 Project, and government censors who believe that, in Orwell's phrase, "he who can rewrite the past can dictate the future."

There is still time. Americans have faced worse odds and come out on top, from the Revolution to the Great Depression. But the window is closing. The longer we wait, the more victims will be left behind, with not even Roman roads to memorialize them.

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