

Why democracies fall

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I don't know about you, but I have become somewhat cynical of much of what I hear from many of the politicians these days. I have a hard time believing that they will be able to do everything they are promising they will do, and it's hard trying to discern the truths in who says what. I find myself checking and trying to verify any information I receive, including the following quotes.

Who penned the quotes below? If one were to put one's faith in the reliability of the internet, the obvious answer would be Alexander Tytler. Despite their frequent use, the author(s) of the quotes are unknown. The earliest usage I found was in the 1950's. President Ronald Reagan used the first quote in several speeches in 1964 and 1965, attributing it to "Fraser Tydler". The fatal sequence was used in a speech delivered by Eugene Wilson in 1950. It was years later that they were put together.

My research leads me to suspect that these quotes were probably coined by separate individuals in the first half of the twentieth century. The authors were probably not famous people or respected scholars, but rather private political thinkers who got their words in print, and whose words then happened to strike a chord in others. We may not be able to say for sure where the quotes came from, but I believe the substance of them stands – especially in what's happening around us in these times. Read and see what you think!

"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse (hand-outs) from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy..."

It makes one think and wonder what's happening in our lives today, and to wonder where we might be in the "fatal sequence":

"Great nations rise and fall. People go from bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to great courage, from courage to liberty, from liberty to abundance, from abundance to complacency, from complacency to apathy, from apathy to dependence, and from dependence back again into bondage."

It reminds me of what happened to the Israelites in their rise and fall from greatness to bondage, and then rise and fall again. It worries me about what might be happening in our country today. If the above statement is natural law, then we are doomed. My faith in God persuades me that, despite periods of weak leadership, it is still possible for us to check the downswing before it is too late.

Democracies fall when people turn to themselves and away from God. It is then that personal gain becomes the end all to be all and morals collapse in preference to personal desires. It is then when leaders will say anything to get elected and feel they can get away with just about anything.

The Scriptures tell us not to conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. God promises, "if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but like the psalmist, I trust in the name of the LORD our God.