

TRANSFORMED IN CHRIST



Ephesians

 **LifeGroups** FALL 2026
SEARCH • SEASON • LOVE • MULTIPLY

Paul Thanked God

- Paul thanked God for the faith, love and witness of the Ephesians
- Ephesians 1:15-16
- Paul's prayers focused on spiritual growth. And he did not cease remembering them (1:16). This isn't a prayer he prayed once or twice; it was a consistent prayer.

Paul Thanked God

- One thing Paul consistently prayed for almost every church was a prayer of thanksgiving.
- Even when he was writing to correct their behavior, in all but one of Paul's letters, he prayed thanks for his "spiritual children."
- They didn't have to have it all together for him to be thankful for them.

Paul Thanked God

- Paul wrote, “ever since I heard ... ,” but Paul hadn’t only heard about the Ephesians, he knew them personally.
- They were one of the churches he had helped develop. He spent many years there.
- He knew firsthand they had great faith and love, but he was emphasizing the fact that their reputation in their community was so positive.

Paul in Ephesus



Paul Thanked God

- Paul thanked God for both their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for all the saints—their fellow believers (1:15).
- These two belonged together: genuine faith in Christ produces love for His people.
- The Ephesians' faith and love were evident enough that word of them reached Paul even in prison (1:15).

Paul in Prison



Paul Prayed

- Paul prayed for the Spirit to give them wisdom and knowledge
- Ephesians 1:17-18a
- Paul prayed for his churches to have the wisdom that comes from the Spirit of God.

Paul Prayed

- Paul prayed that God would give the Ephesians the spirit of wisdom and of revelation.
- Revelation means “unveiling” or “uncovering”; using this word reiterates that true wisdom isn’t something we deduce on our own from logic or reason.
- Scripture tells us that God’s wisdom (“wisdom from above”) is not like human wisdom.

Paul Prayed

- Human wisdom leads to selfish ambition, but God's wisdom leads to godly behavior – humility, peace, mercy and love (James 3:13–17).
- God's wisdom is so great that it makes even the greatest human wisdom look like foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18–31). His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8–9; Jeremiah 51:15–17). God alone is the source of true wisdom (Proverbs 2:6).

Paul Prayed

- When God told Solomon he could ask for anything, Solomon asked for wisdom to be able to “discern between good and evil” because he knew it was the most valuable thing he could have to rule well (1 King 3:9).
- In the Hebrew, both “wisdom” and “knowledge” are more than just intellectual knowledge.

Paul Prayed

- First, Paul prayed for their knowledge of Christ Himself.
- This isn't just knowing about Jesus but knowing Him personally, which leads to wisdom.
- The more we know Jesus, the more we will know how to live as God wants us to live in this world.

Paul Prayed

- Jesus is the perfect “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). He is God in flesh, so if you want to know what God would say or do in any situation, look at Jesus.
- Paul said all he wanted in life was to know Christ.
- Everything else was garbage compared to knowing Him (Philippians 3:7–11).

Paul Prayed

- Paul prayed that God would give them wisdom and revelation so they would know Him better.
- This was not merely knowing more facts about God, but growing in a personal and intimate understanding of His character and will. Some may know the Bible backward and forward without truly knowing Christ because spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:12–14).

Paul Prayed

- Paul then described them as “having the eyes of their hearts enlightened.”
- “Enlightened” is passive: this was something God had done in them, not something they accomplished for themselves.
- The perfect tense indicates that this had already happened and that its results continued in their lives.

Hope and Power

- Paul prayed they might know the hope and power they had in Christ
- Ephesians 1:18-23
- Paul prayed for wisdom and knowledge for his beloved spiritual children because he knew the incredible value of knowing Christ.

Hope and Power

- The hope of His calling (verse 18):
- The word for “calling” here isn’t a calling to a career or feeling called by God to do something.
- It’s the word for divine calling or “invitation”; every time it is used in Scripture, it refers to God’s inviting us to salvation in Christ.

Hope and Power

- Paul used it again later to invoke them to “live in a manner worthy of the calling” and to talk about the unity of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1, 4).
- What Paul was praying for them to grasp was the incredible hope they had in Christ.
- Those of us who know Jesus have a hope unbelievers do not.

Hope and Power

- When our loved ones die, we grieve, but “not as those who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14).
- Our hope is knowing that when we die, we will rise again to new life with Jesus in heaven (John 11:25–26).
- And not just hope in the future kingdom but hope in an abundant life with Him in the here and now, too.

Hope and Power

- The riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints:
- The word for “riches” means an abundance of wealth. It is sometimes used in Scripture to talk about physical wealth, especially when talking about trusting in riches rather than God.
- But in Ephesians, it is used to talk about the abundance of God’s grace (1:7; 2:7; 3:8) and glory (1:18; 3:16).

Hope and Power

- Paul used a word for wealth to emphasize that our inheritance in Christ is worth far more than any wealth we could ever have on earth.
- The kingdom of God is like a pearl of great value that is worth trading everything you have for (Matthew 13:44–46).
- The sufferings of this world are nothing compared to the glory of heaven (Romans 8:18).

Hope and Power

- Jesus called us to store up treasures in heaven, not on earth (Matthew 6:19–21).
- Paul was praying we might understand just how great the riches of His kingdom are, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven (Luke 12:33).
- And not just a future inheritance in heaven but the spiritual blessings He gives us in the here and now, too.

Hope and Power

- The immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe (verse 19):
- Paul added the word “immeasurable” to “greatness” to describe the power we have in Christ – not just greatness, but immeasurable greatness.
- This is a compound word. Paul often created these to describe something about God beyond regular language.

Hope and Power

- It literally means “to throw beyond” the usual mark as in an athletic competition, above and beyond or exceedingly more.
- It's used twice in 2 Corinthians to describe the grace and glory of God (3:10; 9:14) and three times in Ephesians to describe the greatness of His power (1:19), the riches of His grace (2:7), and His love beyond all human comprehension (3:19).

Hope and Power

- Paul used big language to try to help us understand something bigger than we can really imagine. Even though it's beyond our understanding, he still spent five more verses elaborating on this amazing power.
- God demonstrated this power in Christ by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms—the place of supreme honor and authority (1:20).

Hope and Power

- His description becomes a hymn of praise to Jesus, which, like his last hymn, also builds phrase-by-phrase in glory:
- far above rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age, but in the age to come (1:21).

Hope and Power

- Paul's description of God's power reaches its climax in Christ's universal authority. God placed all things under Christ's feet and gave Him as Head over all things to the Church (1:22).
- Christ has been exalted as Lord over all creation, and no earthly or spiritual power rivals His authority. But this exalted Christ is also Head of His Church, which Paul calls His body (1:23).

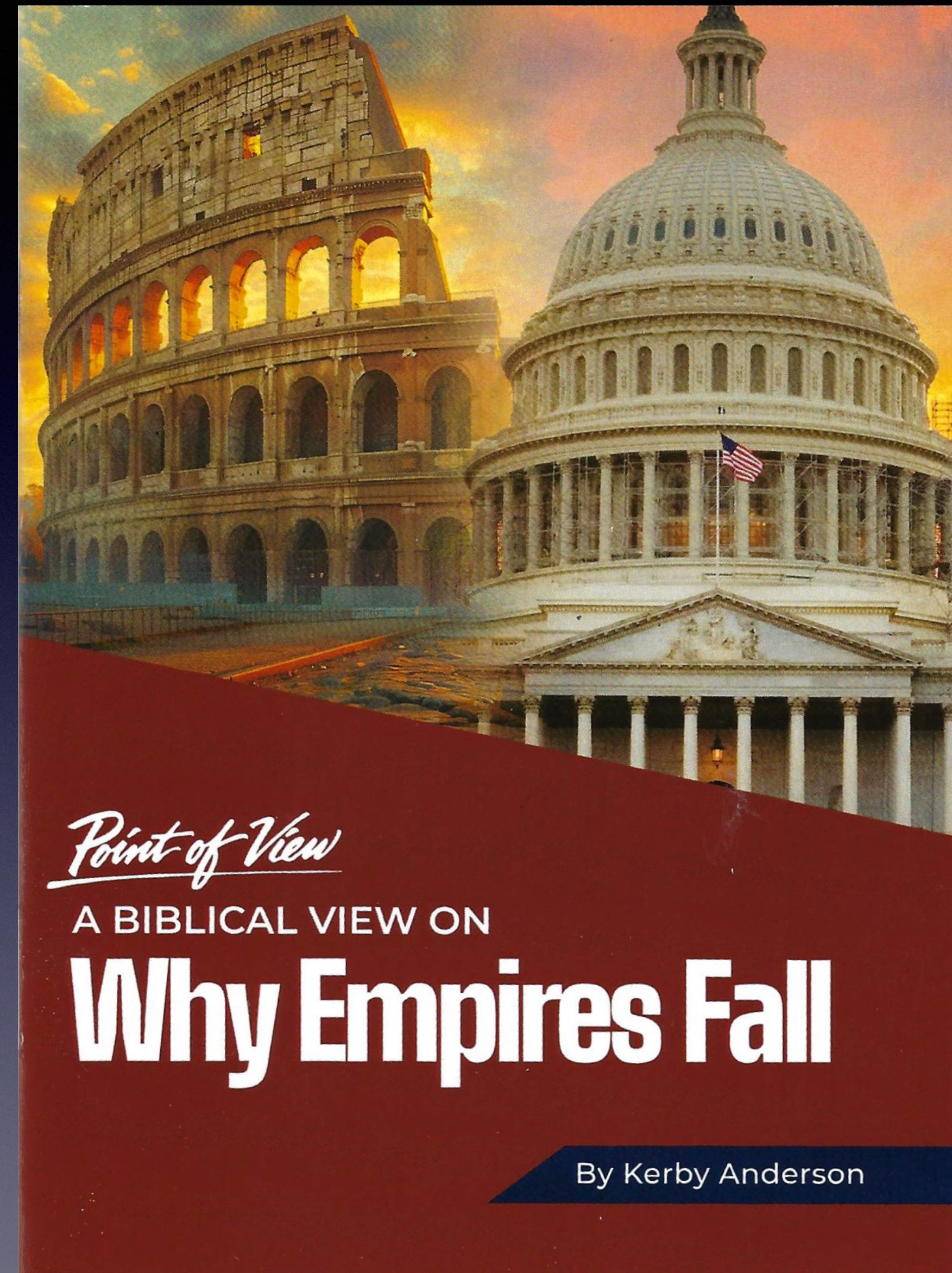
Hope and Power

- When we really know and trust in this, our lives will be different. We won't worry about the things of this world because our treasure is in heaven.
- It affects the way we live now. Living with an eternal perspective means prioritizing the things of eternity rather than the temporal things, focusing on the things above, not the things of this world (Colossians 3:2).

Hope and Power

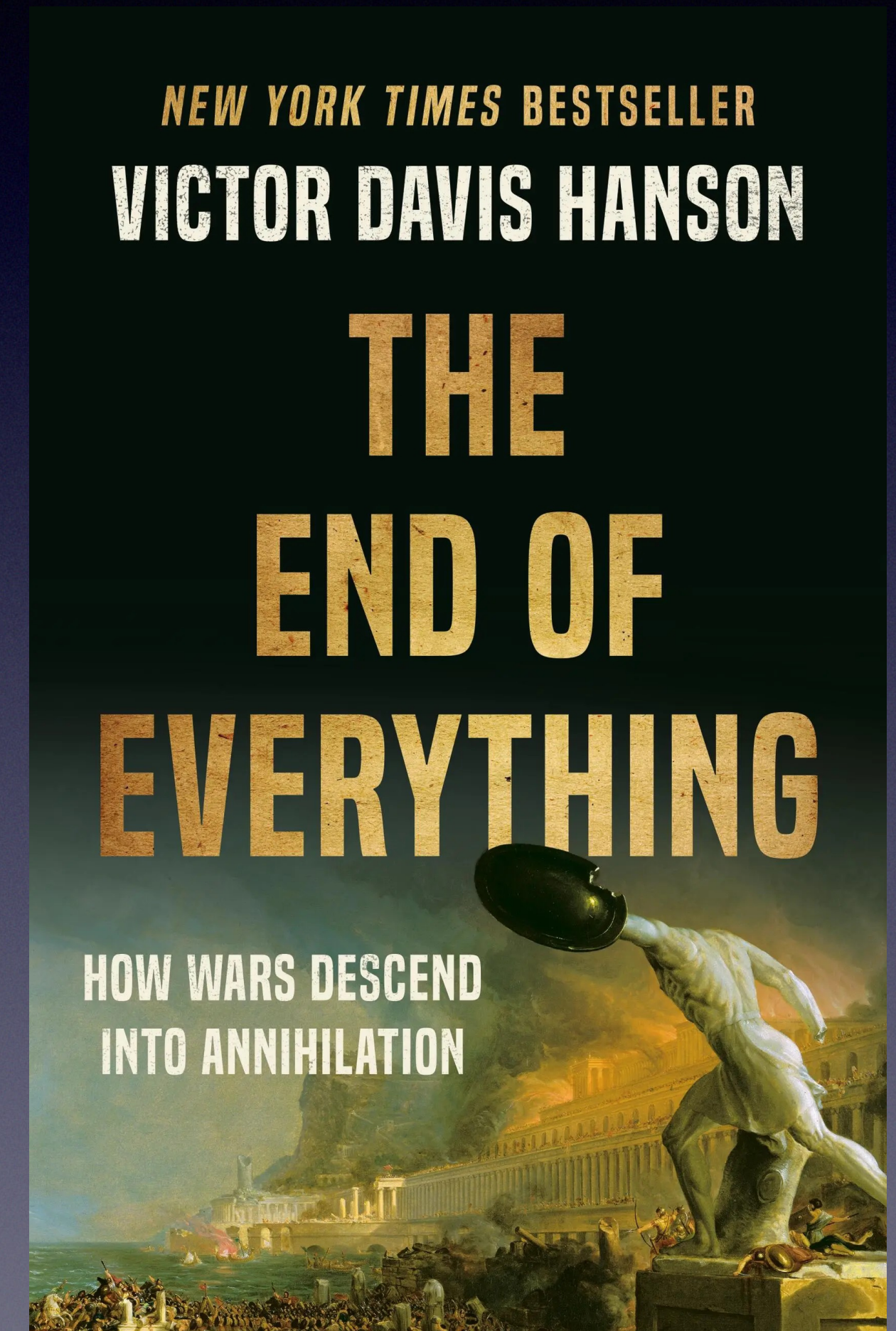
- It means living as kingdom people now, here on earth (Philippians 3:20). Being ambassadors of Christ's kingdom, bringing His light to this dark world (Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 5:8).
- As Christ's body, we represent our Head in the world.
- God is ready to work in us with His incomparably great power to grow us into the people He wants us to be.

Why Empires Fall



The End of Everything

- Victor Davis Hanson writes about these few examples in history.
- In his book, he provides four historical examples: the city-state of Thebes, ancient Carthage, Byzantine Constantinople, and the Aztec Empire.



The End of Everything

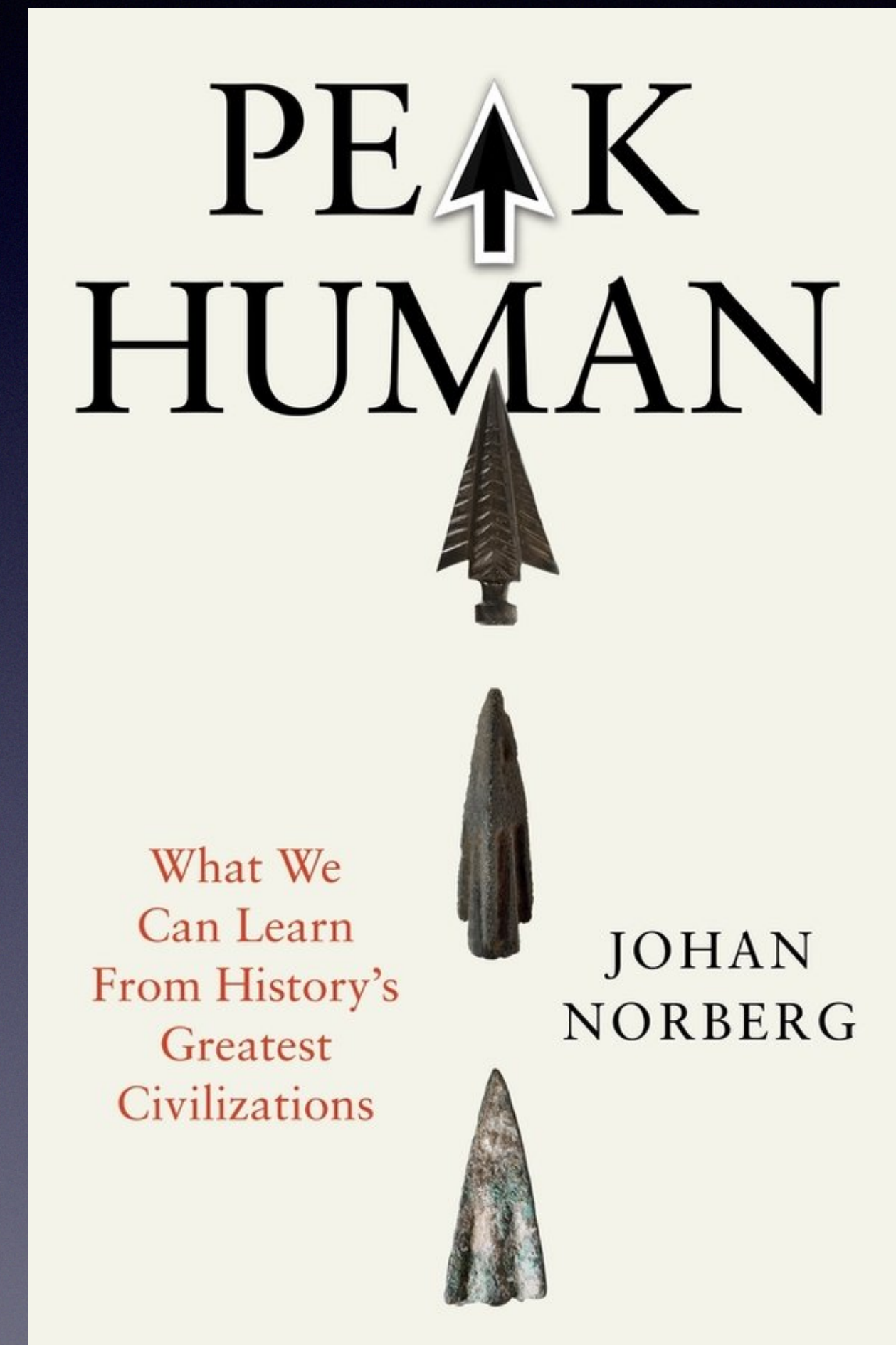
- The leaders believed their illustrious pasts would be enough to prevent their destruction. Alexander the Great, Roman Scipio, Muslim Mehmet, and the Spanish conquistador Cortés proved them wrong.
- He says his book “is about the existential destruction of the losing side in a war. This is very rare in history. It doesn’t happen very often. But when it does, it should enlighten us how it does why it does, and can it happen again?”

The End of Everything

- He reminds us that the same mentalities and delusions that doomed the Thebans, Carthaginians, the Byzantines, and the Aztecs are still with us today.
- Even as they were about to be slaughtered, some may still have been thinking, “It cannot happen here.”
- He wants us to be aware that what happened in the past could happen in the future.

Peak Human

- Historian Johan Norberg explains what we can learn from the rise and fall of “golden ages.”
- He describes 7 of humanity’s greatest civilizations: ancient Athens and the Roman Republic to Renaissance Italy, the Dutch Republic, and today’s Anglosphere.



Peak Human

- Each had their golden age and contributed to our world.
- Ancient Greece gave us democracy and the rule of law.
- From the Muslim world came algebra and modern medicine.
- The Dutch Republic gave us economic ideas and some of the greatest artistic movements.

Peak Human

- He explained that he picked these civilizations because each exemplifies what can be described as a golden age.
- This was a period of innovations that revolutionized many fields and sectors in a short period of time.
- The characteristics are cultural creativity, scientific discoveries, technological achievements, and economic growth.

Peak Human

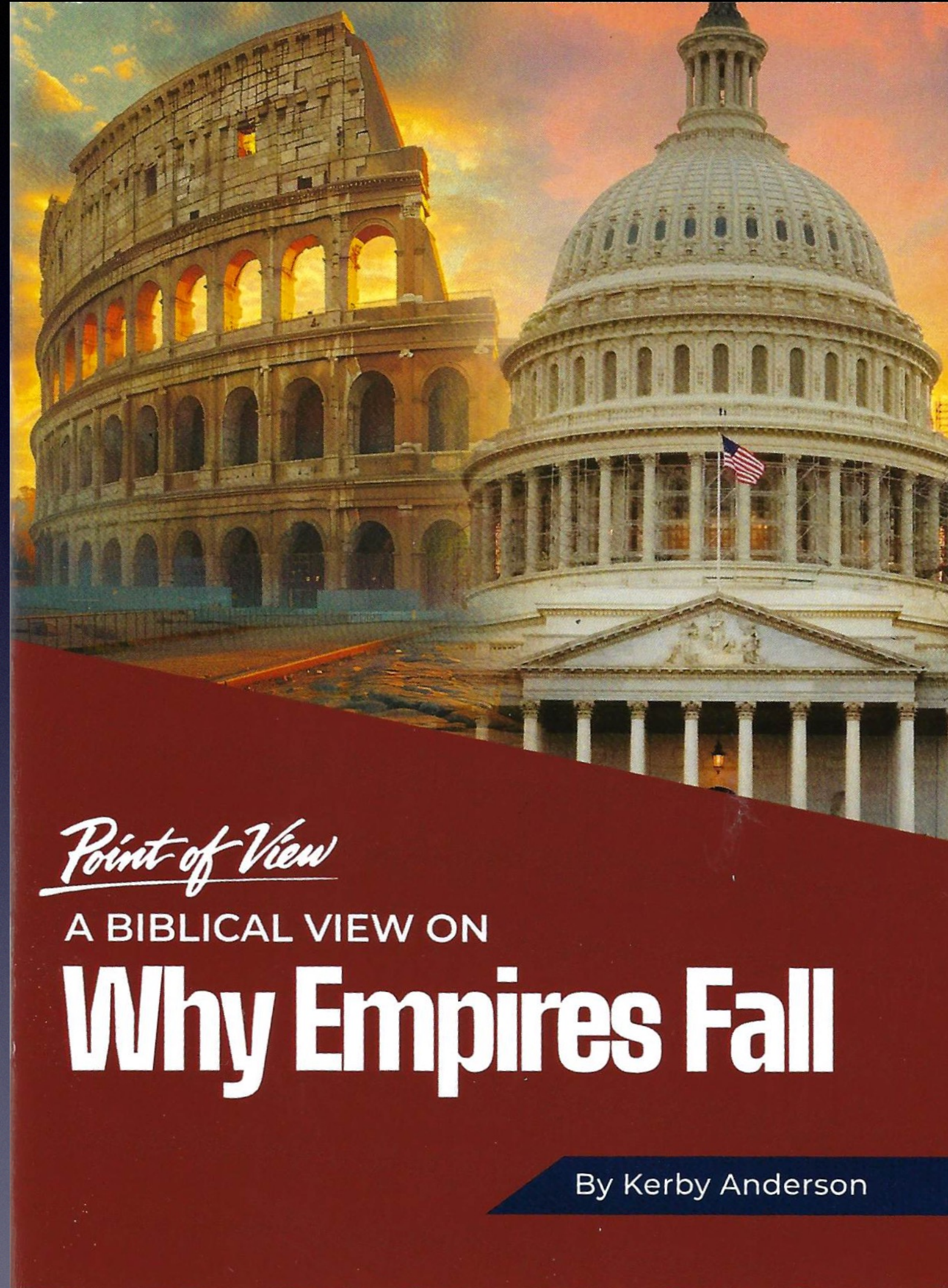
- Of course, these empires fell. “The emperors wanted to become popular by handing out free stuff to people. Originally, this started small. You just handed the very poor means of subsistence. But it was popular, so the group that lived on the public’s expense grew larger all the time.”
- Eventually the ever-expanding system of entitlements became too much.

Peak Human

- Norberg observed, “Romans could conquer the world, but they couldn’t do entitlement reform.”
- To pay for this, the Roman emperors devalued their currency by putting less gold and silver in each coin.
- He concluded that, “Inflation was much worse than barbarian invaders.”

Peak Human

- This sounds like our world today.
- Modern governments, including our own, make more financial promises than they can keep. To pay for it, they print more money.
- We have been living in a golden age, but the question before us today is whether it will continue.



Point of View

A BIBLICAL VIEW ON

Why Empires Fall

By Kerby Anderson