

*AUTHOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLER EPICENTER*

JOEL C. ROSENBERG



IMPLOSION

*CAN AMERICA RECOVER FROM ITS ECONOMIC
& SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES IN TIME?*



JOEL C.
ROSENBERG

IMPLOSION

*CAN AMERICA RECOVER FROM ITS ECONOMIC
& SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES IN TIME?*



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois

Visit Tyndale online at www.tyndale.com.

Visit Joel C. Rosenberg's website at www.joelrosenberg.com.

TYNDALE and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Implosion: Can America Recover from Its Economic and Spiritual Challenges in Time?

Copyright © 2012 by Joel C. Rosenberg. All rights reserved.

Cover photograph of flag copyright © Jacob Termansen and Pia Marie Molbech/Getty Images. All rights reserved.

Author photo copyright © 2005 by Joel C. Rosenberg. All rights reserved.

Designed by Dean H. Renninger

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible,® copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*,® NIV.® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version.® Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. *NKJV* is a trademark of Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rosenberg, Joel C., date.

Implosion : can America recover from its economic and spiritual challenges in time? /

Joel C. Rosenberg.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4143-1967-4 (hc)

1. Forecasting—Religious aspects—Christianity.
2. United States—Forecasting.
3. End of the world.
4. Prophecy—Christianity.
5. United States—Social conditions—21st century.
6. United States—Economic conditions—2009- I. Title.

BT877.R67 2012

277.3'083—dc23

2012003017

Printed in the United States of America

18 17 16 15 14 13 12

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1:	A Coming Implosion?	1
CHAPTER 2:	America's Rising Anxiety	19
CHAPTER 3:	The Case of the Optimists	35
CHAPTER 4:	The Third Lens	55
CHAPTER 5:	Signs of the Times	69
CHAPTER 6:	The Significance of the Rebirth of Israel	83
CHAPTER 7:	Are We Living in the Last Days?	103
CHAPTER 8:	What Happens to America in the Last Days?	115
CHAPTER 9:	The Financial Implosion Scenario	131
CHAPTER 10:	The War and Terrorism Scenarios	151
CHAPTER 11:	The Natural Disaster Scenarios	167
CHAPTER 12:	The Rapture Scenario	187
CHAPTER 13:	The Last Best Hope	209
CHAPTER 14:	A Cause for Optimism: Inside America's First Great Awakening	229
CHAPTER 15:	More Cause for Optimism: Inside America's Second Great Awakening	261
CHAPTER 16:	Will America Experience a Third Great Awakening?	287
CHAPTER 17:	Can America Again Be a Shining City on a Hill?	319

Recommended Reading 351

Acknowledgments 353

About the Author 355

Endnotes 359

Index 385

CHAPTER ONE

A COMING IMPLOSION?

im·plode—*to collapse inward as if from external pressure; to break down or fall apart from within; to self-destruct*

MERRIAM-WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE AMERICAN ECONOMY—and, more broadly, American society in general—is not simply facing serious challenges or a season of decline? Could America actually collapse in the not-too-distant future if serious, fundamental, and sweeping changes are not made soon? Once, such a question would have struck most Americans as ludicrous—even offensive. But times have changed.

The first time I noticed any serious public discussion of the possibility of the American economy imploding was in September 2010. Senator Judd Gregg, the New Hampshire Republican and onetime chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, was being interviewed live from the U.S. Capitol by Fox News host Greta Van Susteren. They were discussing the massive increases in federal spending, astronomically large U.S. deficits, and unprecedented and unsustainable levels of national debt being racked up by an out-of-control political

culture in Washington and the grave dangers these challenges posed to U.S. economic and national security.

“I don’t want to be an alarmist,” Van Susteren said, “but based on what you say, if Congress can’t do a very good job, and if spending is a very effective tool for politicians, and if they add every year, and if the national debt is creating national-security problems as the secretary of state has said, at some point, it seems, we’re going to implode.”

“That’s right,” Senator Gregg replied. “That’s exactly what’s going to happen.”

At that moment in the interview, Van Susteren struck me as being taken aback by the fact that the senator had so quickly agreed with her. Perhaps she was expecting, as I was when I saw the interview, that the senator would dismiss the concept of an “implosion” as going a bit far. Yet that was not the case.

“So do you have any idea when that’s going to happen and what that’s going to mean?” Van Susteren asked.

“Sooner rather than later,” Gregg replied matter-of-factly.¹

Implosion? It’s an awfully strong term. Van Susteren knew it. That’s why she prefaced her comment by saying she didn’t want to be an “alarmist.” Still, to her the evidence Senator Gregg was laying out suggested the United States might not simply be headed down an increasingly dangerous path but rather a cataclysmic one.

Yet as startling as the question was, it was the answer, not the question, that was news. A respected U.S. senator was suggesting on national television that he believed America was on the path toward “implosion” unless dramatic, historic steps were taken to change course. It was a sobering moment, made all the more troubling by the fact that Gregg had never been known in Washington for fiery, wild-eyed, hyperbolic rhetoric. What’s more, few in Washington, or in the country, were at that time in a better position than he was to truly understand the magnitude of the fiscal crisis we were—and still are—facing as a nation.

Over time, however, awareness of those troubles began to spread.

A few months later, a headline out of New York City—the financial epicenter of the American economy—caught my attention: “Rubin Warns of Bond Market ‘Implosion’: U.S. in ‘Terribly Dangerous Territory.’” The article began:

Warning of the risk of an “implosion” in the bond market, former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin says the soaring federal budget deficit and the Fed’s quantitative easing [the printing and pumping of more money into the American economy by the Federal Reserve] are putting the U.S. in “terribly dangerous territory.”²

Rubin, a loyal Democrat who served as the country’s chief financial officer in President Clinton’s administration, had never been known for fiery, wild-eyed, hyperbolic rhetoric any more than Senator Gregg had been. He wasn’t running for political office. He wasn’t pontificating before a left-wing special-interest group. He was speaking at an event for business executives, financial professionals, and federal budget experts organized by the Concord Coalition, a “nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to balanced federal budgets and generationally responsible fiscal policy.” Also speaking at the event was former U.S. comptroller general David Walker, who has long argued that America “suffer[s] from a fiscal cancer” that is “growing within us,” which if left untreated “could have catastrophic consequences” for our country.³

Senator Kent Conrad, the North Dakota Democrat and chairman of the Senate Budget Committee at the time, also spoke at the event. He agreed with Secretary Rubin’s assessment, saying the U.S. was facing a “defining moment” in terms of our fiscal crisis and noting, “If we fail [to act], our nation will be condemned to second-class status.”⁴

Not long after this, Congressman Paul Ryan, the Wisconsin Republican and chairman of the House Budget Committee, began

briefing fellow members of Congress and speaking at forums in Washington and around the country on the grave danger facing the American economy in view of the skyrocketing federal debt. While Ryan didn't use the term *implosion*, he might as well have; his message was just as sobering.

"We're on a path where our debt goes from about 68 percent of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] to 800 percent of GDP over the three-generation window," Congressman Ryan said. "I asked CBO [the Congressional Budget Office] to run the model going out, and they told me that their computer simulation crashes in 2037 because CBO can't conceive of any way in which the economy can continue past the year 2037 because of debt burdens."⁵

Ryan has noted that by the time his young children reach forty years of age, "just . . . three programs—Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare—will consume all federal revenues. There will be no room for anything else in the federal budget." He has also warned that "every year we delay fixing the debt problem, we go about \$10 trillion deeper in the hole . . . adding to unfunded promises that we are making to Americans."⁶

The *St. Petersburg Times* ran an article on its website, PolitiFact.com, analyzing Congressman Ryan's case. "Paul Van de Water, a senior fellow at the liberal Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, said it's plausible that the [Congressional Budget Office] model could implode as early as the 2030s, though he added that other models analyzed by the CBO do not predict an implosion that soon," PolitiFact reported.⁷

Slowly but surely, the concept of the "implosion" of the American economy was entering the national conversation.

An Unexpected Question

It was during that period that I happened to be invited to the United States Capitol for a private meeting with a group of congressmen.

The purpose was to discuss the future of Israel in light of the rising Iranian nuclear threat and the future of the U.S.–Israel relationship given recent partisan political tensions in Washington. Because of the subject matter, I decided to accept and a few days later arrived at the meeting just off the floor of the House of Representatives.

During a break, I began chatting with the congressman sitting next to me. Soon the discussion shifted from the challenges facing Israel to the challenges facing the United States. We compared notes for a few minutes on the federal government’s runaway spending, the exploding national deficit, the out-of-control debt, and our stagnant economy. Then the congressman leaned over to me and whispered, “This city doesn’t get it, Joel. If we don’t make major changes—and I mean sweeping reforms—really quickly, I’m not sure how much longer as a nation we can actually survive.”

I certainly agreed the situation was bad, but in two decades of living and working in Washington, I had rarely heard a lawmaker speak in such an apocalyptic tone. “You really believe it’s that serious?” I asked.

“I’ve never seen it worse than it is right now,” he replied. “And most of Congress is absolutely asleep. They’re arguing over cosmetic changes, but few people around here seem to realize just how much trouble we’re really in.”

Then he asked me the question I wasn’t expecting.

“Joel, what does the Bible say happens to America in the last days?”

I have to admit, I was startled. It’s not that I’d never been asked the question before. I just had never been asked it by a sitting member of Congress, inside the U.S. Capitol.

A few weeks later, I was on the phone with the governor of a large American state. We were discussing the revolutions under way in the Arab world, smoldering turmoil inside Iran, and the growing threats to the nation of Israel from radical Islam. Before long, however, the conversation turned back to the United States. We began talking

about the enormous economic and spiritual threats facing our own country and the daunting prospects of how to turn things around. We also wondered who—if any—of the emerging crop of presidential candidates might have the vision, strength, and wherewithal to get this country back on track.

Then the governor surprised me by asking me a question very similar to one the congressman had asked a few weeks before.

“Joel, I’m curious; does the Bible give us any indication as to what will happen to the United States in the future?”

Soul Searching

Though it doesn’t typically make news because it doesn’t happen in the public eye, many world leaders through the years have asked deeply personal and profoundly important questions of Christian pastors, ministry leaders, and authors, as long as they have been confident that while they were still alive, those sensitive conversations would be kept private and their names would be kept confidential in connection to those discussions. Billy Graham is an example of a prominent Christian in whom many world leaders have confided.

In May 1954, for example, Winston Churchill, the prime minister of the United Kingdom, said to Graham, “I am a man without hope. Do you have any real hope?” In reply, Graham asked, “Are you without hope for your own soul’s salvation?” Churchill answered, “Frankly, I think about that a great deal.” The pastor gently opened the New Testament and took the great British wartime hero through the gospel’s plan of salvation from the teachings of Jesus Christ.⁸

In the summer of 1955, Dwight Eisenhower, the former supreme Allied commander of all Western military forces in the European theater, who had recently been elected president of the United States, asked Billy Graham, “Could you explain to me how a person can be

sure when he dies he's going to heaven?" Grateful for Eisenhower's sincere question, Graham shared with the president some key passages from the words of Jesus Christ explaining how a person can be absolutely certain that his sins are forgiven and that he will spend eternity in heaven with the Lord.⁹

In January 1961, John F. Kennedy, the first Catholic to be elected president of the United States, took the Protestant Christian minister aside for a discreet conversation and asked, "Do you believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ?" Graham was surprised by the question but responded, "I sure do." The president-elect asked, "Why doesn't my church teach it?" Graham told Kennedy that the Second Coming was written about in the creeds of the Catholic church. "They don't tell us much about it," Kennedy replied. "I'd like to know what you think." The minister then shared from the Bible prophecies about the last days, including some of the teachings of Jesus Christ's promise to return to earth in the End Times.¹⁰

We didn't learn that these powerful men had asked these specific questions until after each of those leaders had passed away. Yet these brief conversations give us a fascinating glimpse into their hearts and minds. Churchill, having helped defeat Adolf Hitler and the evil Third Reich, was serving in his second term as British prime minister. Now he faced a new threat. As he stated ominously just after the war at a college in the American Midwest, "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent" of Europe, controlled by the Soviet Empire. Churchill warned that if the Western democracies were not unified and steadfast in their resistance to Communism, "then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all."¹¹ He saw a terrible new war was looming with the Soviet bloc powers, a war he feared could prove far more horrific than the one the West had just survived and won. Eisenhower and Kennedy, too, saw a nuclear-armed Soviet Empire rising, horrible wars engulfing the Korean peninsula and Vietnam,

and the risk of apocalyptic new wars erupting in Europe and Asia. The future of their nations and the world looked very grim from their vantage points. No wonder they were looking to the Bible to see if the Scriptures held any answers, any hope at all.

It is one thing, however, for leaders to discreetly ask soul-searching questions about how to know Jesus Christ personally, how to walk with God more closely, how to better understand the relevance of the second coming of Christ and other personal matters related to the Bible. We would hope and expect that they would ask such questions, and it's heartening to know—even years after the fact—that some do. But it is quite another thing for leaders to privately ask whether the Bible offers clues to the possible decline or even implosion of their own country.

There is nothing wrong with doing so. To the contrary, all leaders should feel comfortable asking honest, genuine questions about what the Bible says on any subject, including their nation's future. Most of us, however, simply would not expect such questions from our national leaders. In many ways, this is new, uncharted territory. Yet given the state of our economic and cultural troubles, these are the questions people are asking these days.

And it's not just politicians. In my experience, people at all levels of business, media, the arts, sports, ministry, education, and elsewhere are asking as well.

The Most Frequently Asked Question

Until recently, the question I was asked most frequently when I spoke and did interviews in the U.S. and around the world was, "Joel, how can you be Jewish and believe that Jesus is the Messiah?" Within the last few years, however, that important question has been significantly eclipsed by another one. These days, the question I am most frequently asked is this: "What happens to America in the last days?"

I also get plenty of variations on the theme:

- Is America simply in decline, or are we like the Roman Empire, stumbling toward collapse?
- Do you believe America's days are numbered?
- Are we approaching the end of America as we have known it?
- Are we living in the last days?
- What does the Bible say about the future of the United States?
- Is America even mentioned in End Times Bible prophecy?
- Is America mentioned, described, or hinted at in the Bible at all?

Christians are certainly wrestling with such questions. But I find that Americans from a variety of religious backgrounds—including Jews, Muslims, and others—are asking these and similar questions as well. Indeed, often when I am on a secular talk radio show, I'm invited to talk about geopolitical issues related to Israel, the broader Middle East, and radical Islam. The conversation tends to come around to my views of how Israel and the nations of the epicenter fit into Bible prophecy, and then it's not uncommon for the radio host to ask me, "So what about America? What does the Bible say about our future?"

Some people ask because they are certain America *is*, in fact, described in the Scriptures as a significant or even major player in the End Times, and they want to know more. They are looking for hope that we are going to weather the economic, political, moral, spiritual, and other storms now battering us so intensely. Others, however, ask because they are fearful the U.S. is *not* described in the Bible, and they are wondering, "Why not? And if not, what will happen to us, and how much time do we have left?"

My wife, Lynn, and I have lived in and around Washington, DC, since 1990, and neither of us recalls hearing such questions—much less being asked them ourselves—during our first decade in Washington.

During those years, my professional life was immersed in researching and advocating various economic/social/cultural/educational reforms and working on political campaigns for a variety of U.S. and Israeli leaders, not teaching Bible prophecy. I'm not saying such questions weren't being asked and answered by others during this time. I'm just saying that I, apparently, wasn't tuned in to such conversations.

Over the course of the last decade, however—and even more so in the last few years—as such questions have come up more and more, I'm increasingly aware of and focused on this conversation, more so than at any other time in my life, ever since I left the campaign trail, went through what I call “political detox,” and began writing books about the growing geopolitical, religious, and economic threats facing America, Israel, and the church in light of Bible prophecy. My sense is that more people are asking these questions more often—and more openly—than ever before. A growing number of Americans fear that this period of our history is different and the crises we face today—and those coming up over the horizon—may be far worse than anything we have experienced in the past.

Why Are People Asking?

Indeed, Americans are asking such questions, in my experience, with growing frequency and urgency because of a gnawing and steadily intensifying anxiety they and their families and their neighbors have that, as challenging as things are in our country today, they very well could get catastrophically worse. Many Americans genuinely fear that God is preparing to remove his hand of protection and blessing from our country—or perhaps already has. They fear that unlike previous dark times in our national history, God may not intend to help us turn things around and get us back on the right track.

Understandably, such thoughts can be both unnerving and perplexing. The more optimistic among us ask questions like “Surely,

God *must* have a plan and purpose for America going forward, and it must be a good and wonderful plan, right?” Yet even these are signaling their doubts by asking the question.

When people in other countries ask what the future of America holds and whether America will continue to lead the world in the twenty-first century—and they do ask, with ever more frequency—they tend to do so, I believe, for one of two reasons: Either they honestly fear what the world will look like without an economically, militarily, and socially vibrant United States of America playing a central and starring role in shaping the future of the globe. Or they secretly long for a day when the U.S. is humbled, weakened, and even neutralized so that other nations can take the lead and reshape the future of the globe.

Such are the times in which we live.

Some Context

Before we go any further, let me just say it has been difficult for me to write this book. To be perfectly honest, there were many times when I simply didn't want to finish it. I didn't want to study the data or examine the trends, much less draw any conclusions about the future of our country. The process was, at times, depressing, and if I'm not careful, I can still find myself becoming anxious or gloomy.

I dearly love my country. I was born here and grew up here, and I don't want anything bad to happen to America. I don't want to imagine worst-case scenarios, much less write about them. I don't want to suffer through such times if they come. Nor do I want Lynn or our four sons—Caleb, Jacob, Jonah, and Noah—to suffer through such times. I don't want our extended family and friends, spread out all over this beautiful land, to go through such times, either. Maybe none of us will. Maybe the worst-case scenarios will be avoided. I certainly hope so.

Yet I live and work in the nation's capital. I regularly and extensively

travel this country. I see what's happening all around me, and it is deeply disturbing. Marriages and families are imploding. Our federal debt is exploding. The tide of cultural pollution is rising. Our educational system is collapsing. Friends and neighbors are abandoning God and the church. The list of horrifying trends seems to grow longer each and every year. At this point, even a blind man can see the handwriting on the wall. The question is, what does the handwriting say, and what does it portend for the future of America?

The apostle Paul once said that God “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation” (Acts 17:26). In other words, God decides precisely where on the planet and precisely in which period of history each man and woman is going to be born.

Centuries before Paul, David—the Jewish shepherd boy from Bethlehem who unexpectedly rose to become the beloved king of Israel from whom the Messiah would humanly descend—wrote that God “formed my inward parts” and “wove me in my mother’s womb.” In a remarkable prayer of gratitude to the Lord, David wrote, “I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made . . . Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them” (Psalm 139:13-16). David, too, understood the sovereign will and power of God. He understood that God is the creator who fashions each one of us with a plan and a purpose. He understood that God both knows and decides exactly where and when each one of us will be born, and he makes these decisions for a reason.

Such truths point us to another truth. God could have chosen you to live in another time and another place. You could have lived in the times of Moses or the times of David or the times of Jesus and Paul. But in his sovereign will, God decided you and I would live in these times. What’s more, he chose the very family and language and

country into which you and I would be born. It wasn't an accident. It was part of a plan. Most of those reading this book are likely to be American citizens. Have you ever taken time to consider why God chose you to be an American? What purpose are you to serve in this country? What role in the future of this country has God planned for you to play? Given the high stakes of this moment, I would encourage you to take some time to give these questions serious thought. Discuss them with your family and friends.

For those who are living in the United States but are not American citizens, I would encourage you to take some time as well to consider why the Lord has brought you to this country. What action does he want you to take at this critical hour? For those of you who are reading this someplace else, as citizens of another country, it is probably fair to say you would not have picked up this book unless you had an interest in the future of America. Take some time to consider why you care, what you're hoping to learn, and what role God has for you to play in the future of America as well as in your own country's future.

Jews, Gentiles, and the American Dream

Every American citizen has his or her own "American story," a heritage to be treasured and celebrated. My family is no different.

My family on my father's side was made up of Orthodox Jews who escaped from the "old country"—anti-Semitic, totalitarian, czarist Russia—during the pogroms against the Jews in the early 1900s. They made their way to America searching for religious freedom, freedom from persecution, and the opportunity for a better way of life.

Given that both of my paternal grandparents died before I was three years old, I never had the chance to talk to them and ask them their stories. Sadly, neither of my grandparents told my father or his brother many stories from the old country. They passed down

few documents to us. So it's been challenging to piece together their journey. About the only story that has been passed down through our family is that when our Orthodox Jewish relatives wanted to leave Russia, some of them had to escape in a hay wagon that was crossing out of Russia into a neighboring country. (The best we can surmise is that they went into Poland.) Czarist soldiers plunged their swords into the hay to see if there was anyone hiding in there. By God's grace, no one was injured. By God's grace, my relatives weren't discovered. And by God's grace, having gotten out of Russia, they didn't decide to settle in Poland or Germany or anywhere else in central Europe. Many Russian Jews did settle there, of course, escaping the horrors of the Russian pogroms only to experience the horrors of the Third Reich and the Holocaust.

Called by freedom and the promise of a new world, my family kept moving across the continent of Europe until they got to a port, scrounged up enough money to pay for passage on a steamship, made their way to America, and settled in Brooklyn.

A few years ago, my wife and I found an actual copy of a 1930 U.S. census record showing that my great-grandfather Maximilian "Max" Jaffe lived in Brooklyn and that he was a tailor, from Russia, Jewish, with no formal education but could read and write. The records also indicated that Max arrived in the United States in 1903 and that his wife and his daughter, Selma—my father's mother—arrived in the U.S. five years after him in 1908.

What my Jewish grandparents and great-grandparents found here was more than they could have hoped for, dreamed of, or imagined. They were finally free to go to a synagogue and celebrate the Jewish holidays in peace, establish and raise a family in safety, and seek to give their children and grandchildren better lives than they had. Selma Jaffe would later marry Herman Rosenberg, also of Russian Jewish heritage. Together they had two sons, Jerome (my uncle Jerry), and Leonard, my father. Both brothers are first-generation American

citizens. My father was born in Brooklyn in 1939 at a time when Adolf Hitler was on the move in Europe, seeking to take over the world and preparing to exterminate 6 million Jews, including more than a million Jewish children. My father was the first on his side of the family to ever graduate from college, and he was the first to become a licensed professional—in his case, an architect.

My family on my mother's side were Gentiles—white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Christians who came to the New World fleeing religious persecution from the state-controlled churches of Europe and seeking more economic opportunity. My maternal grandmother, Esther Cagwin, was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, her family having come to the colonies from England before the Revolution began. The ancestors of my maternal grandfather, Walter Copia, were Germans. His grandparents, Joseph and Elizabeth Copia, were from Baden and Berlin, Germany, respectively. Unfortunately, I know very little about them, their history, or their dreams and aspirations. My maternal grandfather abandoned the family and filed for divorce, leaving my grandmother, Esther, all alone to raise my mother, Mary, an only child, in a small city called Rome, New York—not far from Utica and Syracuse. My grandmother (Grammie), a public school teacher, was a heroic woman and one of the kindest and most generous people I have ever met. Since her husband had left her long before I came along, and since my Jewish grandparents passed away when I was just a toddler, Grammie Copia was the only grandparent I ever knew, and I loved her dearly and missed her terribly after she passed away in 1982.

Even with painful and at times tragic chapters, my family's story is an *American* story. We have truly had the opportunity to live the American dream. My forebears chose to leave the countries of their birth and travel to the New World despite many hardships. They wanted to be Americans, pure and simple. In God's sovereignty and by his grace, that's exactly what they became. For our family, America

has truly proven to be a home for both Jews and Gentiles. For us, the verse at the base of the Statue of Liberty is not trite. It has real and personal meaning. *“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”* Members of my family were once part of the “huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” America opened her “golden door” to us, and we will forever be grateful. But now, I am deeply concerned about the future of this country that has been so good to us.

Why I Wrote This Book

These are not normal times.

Americans have been gripped by a widespread and deeply rooted pessimism in recent years. They are openly asking whether our nation can survive. In the pages ahead, we’ll consider whether such pessimism is reasonable or an unwarranted overreaction to current economic and spiritual trends. Americans have, after all, faced dark times before and overcome them. Then we’ll look at recent events and trends in the light of Bible prophecy. We’ll consider whether we are in the period of history the Bible calls the “last days” and look at which nations and regions of the world are specifically mentioned as key players in End Times prophecies. We’ll then look directly at a central question people are asking—“What happens to America in the last days?”—and examine a range of scenarios Americans could face in the months and years ahead.

Then we’ll take a look back at two remarkable periods in American history. We’ll see how God has blessed this nation in the past with two tremendous spiritual revivals, and we’ll quickly study some of the key human players God used to bring about these periods, known as the First Great Awakening and the Second Great Awakening. And then we will ask two other crucial questions: Given that God has

blessed America with such amazing revivals in the past, might he choose to do so once again? Instead of allowing America to implode, might the Lord in his grace and mercy allow us to experience a Third Great Awakening in the years to come?

After some observations and interpretations, we'll begin to consider some applications. In light of where we are and where we are heading as a country, how should we then live? How should our relationship with God be different from what it is now, if at all? How should our relationships with our parents, our spouses, our children, and our neighbors change? How should our involvement in our churches change? Are we content with the church's involvement in our society? If so, why? If not, why not? To what extent, if at all, should we be involved in the political process? And how can we keep from losing hope if our nation continues to be shaken and loses her way?

My hope is that you will not only find this book helpful for yourself but that perhaps you'll share it with a friend and discuss it over a cup of coffee or a pot of tea. Perhaps you'll decide to study it with your book club or with your small-group Bible study or home fellowship group. Whatever you do, please don't keep your thoughts to yourself. Engage someone else in this conversation. Listen to what they think. Compare notes. Discuss practical steps you intend to take going forward and how you might encourage one another on the journey.

The stakes are very high. Our nation has come to a critical crossroads. We face the potential implosion of our economy and society. Let us, therefore, engage each other in discussing how we got here, where we are going, and most importantly what the Lord is telling us in his Word to do next.

Time is of the essence.

