

SATAN'S LATEST STAND (01/04/09 SS Class)

By Don McIndoo

Text – **Ephesians 6:11 - 13**

1. In Chapter 16 of Revelation John sees the concluding events in world history. In verse 12 the sixth vial is poured out upon the earth. **Revelation 16:12 - 14** I am sure most of you know that I feel, because of an experience the Lord gave me in 2001, that we are now in this period of time. The seventh and final vial will be forthcoming, ushering in the final chapter of world history.

2. Verse 18 tells of something which will be happening at that time: **Revelation 16:18** In prophetic language such an earthquake most often signifies a great social, political or religious revolution. I believe such a religious revolution is now underway and most of us have been unaware of its beginnings.

3. All of the writers of the New Testament epistles, Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude took great care to warn the early church and its leaders of false teachers and heresies that were already creeping into the church. We will read just a few of these warnings:

2 Timothy 3:1 - 5 ; 2 Peter 2:1, 2 ; and Jude 1:1 - 3; 16 - 18

There is nothing really new here, for Jesus had previously warned His followers:

Matthew 7:15 - 20 and Matthew 24:3 - 5

4. I believe we are being confronted by a latter-day religious revolution. This latter-day revolution we are considering really stems from a philosophic revolution of which we need to become aware. To understand this new philosophy of the 21st century we need first to be aware of the primary philosophic system under which we have grown up.

5. **MODERNISM** (That's our time)

(Quoting from *The Truth War*, by John MacArthur, president of Master's College and Seminary)

"Modernity, In simple terms, was characterized by the belief that truth exists and that the scientific method is the only reliable way to determine that truth. During this time modern thought treated human reason as the final arbiter of what is true. The modern mind discounted the idea of the supernatural and looked for scientific and rationalistic explanations for everything.

Those presuppositions gave rise to Darwinism, which in turn spawned a string of humanistic ideas and worldviews – ... including Marxism, fascism, socialism, communism, and theological liberalism." (p. 9)

These are all things we have grown up with and tried to deal with, ¿right? This philosophic period reigned in the world from the time of the Age of Enlightenment until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Then a new age of reasoning had its beginning. Imagine, just during the last twenty years. Unless we have been studying in a college we probably haven't even been aware of this revolution in philosophy.

6. **POSTMODERNISM** (Again quoting MacArthur)

"If you have been paying attention to the world around us, you have probably heard that expression a lot recently. (?) The term post-modernism has been used increasingly since the 1980's to describe several popular trends in architecture, art, literature, history, culture and religion. It is not an easy term to explain, because it describes a way of thinking that defies (and even rejects) any clear definition.

"Postmodernism in general is marked by a tendency to dismiss the possibility of any sure and settled knowledge of the truth. Post-modernism suggests that if objective truth exists, it cannot be known objectively or with any degree of certainty. That is because (according to post-modernists) the subjectivity of the human mind makes knowledge of objective truth impossible. Nothing is certain, and the thoughtful person will never speak with too much conviction about anything. Strong convictions about any point of truth are judged supremely arrogant and hopelessly naïve. Everyone is entitled to his own truth".

7. So what is the religious revolution growing out of Post-modernism? It is called the **emerging church**.

(A lot of the following information comes from the internet and MacArthur's book.)

a. Question: "What is the emerging church movement?"

Answer: *"The emerging church movement takes its name from the idea that as culture changes, a new church should emerge in response. In this case, it is a response by various church leaders to the current era of post-modernism."* (Internet)

b. *"The emerging church movement falls into line with basic post-modernist thinking—it is about experience in place of reason, spirituality (**identify**) instead of religion, subjectivity over objectivity, Bible stories and images over theology, feelings above truth. These are reactions to modernism and are thought to be necessary in order to actively engage contemporary culture."* (Internet)

c. *"The emerging church began as a self-conscious effort to make Christianity more suitable to a postmodern culture. Emerging Christians are determined to adapt the Christian faith, the structure of the church, the language of faith, and even the gospel message itself to the ideas and rhetoric of postmodernism."* (MacArthur, p. 17)

(dem – Does such thought not cause us to remember the admonition of Jude to the Christian community? **"...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."** (Jude 1:3)

d. *"We are witnessing a broad based backlash against reason in our culture. This backlash is widely promoted in contemporary higher education. The argument is that every time somebody claims to be in possession of the truth (especially religious truth), it ends up repressing people. So its best to make no claims to truth at all. Rejecting objective truth is the cornerstone of postmodernism. In essence, postmodern ideology declares an end to all ideology and all claims to truth."* (Internet)

(dem - As we consider the *"rejection of objective truth"* it is well for us to always keep in mind the words of Jesus Christ: **"As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** (John 8:30 – 32)

e. *"Understanding these new, broadly held convictions, is essential both for reaching non Christians in our culture and for the ongoing vitality of the Christian church. Rule number one: it's arrogant to suggest that someone's religious beliefs might be wrong. By arrogant, most people mean intolerant-- a term that has come to have a whole new meaning in recent years. Intolerance used to refer to bigotry or prejudice. That is, judging someone or excluding them because of who they are. In this sense, intolerance is offensive. But now, intolerance means that simply disagreeing about beliefs is wrong.*

"The recent movie "At Play in the Fields of the Lord" illustrates this point. In a conversation between an Amazonian Indian and a Christian missionary, the Indian says, "If the Lord made Indians the way they are, who are you people to make them different?" This is one of the defining sentiments of our day. Attempting to convert is unacceptable because it implies standing in judgment over others' beliefs." (Internet)

f. McArthur writes, "Obscenity is one of the main trademarks of the Emerging style. Most authors in the movement make extravagant use of filthy language, sexual innuendo, and uncritical references to most lowbrow elements of postmodern culture, often indicating inappropriate approval for ungodly aspects of secular culture." (p. 139)

g. I have seen a few news items showing an athletic looking minister dressed in tennies, blue jeans and a pull-over sweater, preaching to a big crowd. I thought it was an unusual oddity, but it is the beginning of a cultural, religious revolution. The following news clipping shows its impact.

From the *Arizona Republic* April 22, 2008

Church Holds Bar Service to Find New Parishioners
Another round and Amen!

Beer was on tap and a mechanical bull inspired the sermon as a church held its inaugural service in the Ohio bar. The Country Rock Church drew about 100 people to Sunday's meeting at Pub Lounge.... The barroom church is an offshoot of Sydney United First Methodist Church, whose head pastor says he has been looking for creative ways to reach people. The church's Web site for its new branch advertises "Top regional bands, pizza, wings, rowdy fun & a short sermon."

8. Straight from the horses mouth.

a. Let's give our attention to the thoughts of some leading **emerging "Christian's"**. The first one comes from Donald Miller, author of *Blue Like Jazz* and a number of other popular books. **"For me, the beginning of sharing my faith with people began by throwing out Christianity** (by this he means unchangeable biblical doctrine and theology) **and embracing Christian spirituality**, (this refers to a belief in mysticism) **a nonpolitical mysterious system that can be experienced but not explained** (p. 115)."

b. *"Even our beliefs have become trend statements. We don't even believe things because we believe them anymore. We only believe things because they are cool things to believe. The problem with Christian belief—I mean real Christian belief, the belief that there is a God and a devil and a heaven and a hell—is that it is not a fashionable thing to believe."* - (Miller p. 107)

c. Now a few quotes from Brian McLaren, a well-read author and pastor of a large emerging church:

"I don't believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu or Jewish contexts ... rather than resolving the paradox via pronouncements on the eternal destiny of people more convinced by or loyal to other religions than ours, we simply move on ... To help Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, and everyone else experience life to the full in the way of Jesus (while learning it better myself), I would gladly become one of them (whoever they are), to whatever degree I can, to embrace them, to join them, to enter into their world without judgment but with saving love as mine has been entered by the Lord" (A Generous Orthodoxy, pp. 260, 262, 264).

d. *"At the end of the day, when I am lying in bed and I know the chances of any of our theology being exactly right are a million to one, I need to know that God has things figured out, that if my math (theology) is wrong we are still going to be okay. And wonder at that feeling we get when we let go of our silly answers, our mapped out rules that we want God to follow."*

9. The Apostle Paul told the saints in Ephesus to put on the whole armor of God that they could stand up against the wiles, trickery and deception of Satan. We are now in the closing chapters of world history and Satan is making a final attack on true Christian belief and practice. We need to be informed about his tactics, we need to nurture our children in truth and we need to be ready to express to others a clear position about the true doctrine of Jesus Christ.