

## Palisades Community Bible Church

### Online Sunday School

# Imagine There's No Heaven. It's Easy If You Try.

September 27, 2020

If you were born in the late 1900s, you probably grew up hearing (enduring?) the Beatles' hits on the radio. I remember watching their first appearance on the Ed Sullivan show on our round black and white TV with aluminum foil on the 'rabbit ears.' (and, someone had to be touching those rabbit ears all the time, or the screen went to 'snow') It was called the "British Invasion." Besides wiping out all but a few of the immensely popular "Girl Bands" and edging out Elvis in the charts, the Beatles became center stage in the cultural revolution (de-volution) that we Christian boomers have been praying about for decades.

One of my grandfather's last statements to me was "Brent, this world has just got too rotten!"

In this study, we're going to take a very scary look into the phases of the 'last days' and some of the pivotal players. We recently finished a six-part study on the 'Prophecies of Jesus' First and Second Coming.' (if you did not get these studies, please contact the church office and request them). I refer to it as a 'scary' look because we'll look at the roadmap for the destruction of the United States, and how far we are along it. And, the really scary part is that it's happening NOW. What we don't know is the exact timeline. We are, however, on it. **Matthew 24: 36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."**

We are in what the New Testament calls the last days. Human history is reaching its final phase, according to prophesy. Yes, we are observing the train wreck in slow motion. What will it look like for our children and grandchildren? How will America change in the next decades? How do these changes reflect the oft-repeated cycles of the Old Testament Hebrews as they were blessed by God, drifted away from God, fell in love with foreign idols, then fell into slavery? Let's start with a song, the tune of which, is very familiar:

## **"Imagine"**

(from "Imagine: John Lennon" soundtrack)

**Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. No hell below us. Above us only sky.**

**Imagine all the people - living for today.**

**Imagine there's no countries. It isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for. And no religion, too.**

**Imagine all the people - living life in peace.**

**Imagine no possessions. I wonder if you can. No need for greed or hunger. A brotherhood of man.**

**Imagine all the people - sharing all the world... You...**

**You may say I'm a dreamer, But I'm not the only one.**

**I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will be as one**

If you are a mature Christian, these words should make you wretch! If not, please make an appointment with Pastor and discuss it. This satanic anthem demonstrates just how important it is to remove Christ from society in order to achieve perfection....Nirvana. The antichrist will go into the Temple, masquerade as god and deny Jesus' divinity.

**“When Satan tempted Eve, he offered her another way to bliss. When Satan tempted Jesus, he offered Him another way as well. Judas, no doubt, thought the way offered to him would lead to something better than what Jesus was offering.**

**Today, we have another proposition laid before us. It is just as tempting, because, on the surface, it sounds so good. And, again, all we have to do is turn from God and His ways and follow another path.**

**Jesus spoke of this as well when He said there were two ways before us, one was small and narrow and the other wide and broad (Matthew 7:13-14). By this, He was telling us that the wide gate and the broad road are certainly tempting... so tempting, in fact, that “many” go that way. Yes, it looks easier and it appears much more pleasant. There is even a hint of paradise at the end. But it is a false**

path, a deceptive way. It may appear pleasurable, but it leads, as Jesus told us, to destruction.

So, too, the belief that there is a utopia at the end of the socialism path. It is so appealing, so alluring, so “right”, that many in our culture are again falling prey to its promises.” Dr. Del Tackett

Yes, the promise of the “broad way” is a paradise of peace. Let’s check Webster’s:

**PEACE 1: a state of tranquility or quiet: a: freedom from civil disturbance b: a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom**

Some people say “peace” is the absence of conflict or struggle – living in a stress free environment. Others say it is the ability to prevail in every conflict or struggle (knowing the outcome). Lennon’s song asserts that, if we just stop trying, and get rid of religion, and share equally, we’ll all live stress free in peace. If we just stop pursuing things that are worth living for, or dying for, we’ll have nirvana.

Adolf Hitler preached it: **“This year will go down in history! For the first time, a civilized nation has full gun registration! Our streets will be safer, our police more efficient, and the world will follow our lead into the future!”** The message to the people is obedience, conformity, and peace will follow. A few more:

**“The great masses of the people will more easily fall victims to a big lie than to a small one”.** Adolf Hitler

**“How fortunate for governments that the people they administer don't think.”**  
Adolf Hitler

**“By the skillful and sustained use of propaganda, one can make a people see even heaven as hell or an extremely wretched life as paradise.”** Adolf Hitler

**“He alone, who owns the youth, gains the future.”** Adolf Hitler

Stop trying? Give up religion? Let them have our children? Share equally? Let’s go back to first century Rome. The Roman rulers were harsh, unforgiving and brutal....IF YOU RESISTED THEM. If you obeyed their laws, did not organize against their causes in the name of your ‘god’, and paid their exorbitant taxes,

you could live in peace. All you had to do was give up your freedom, your soul and your possessions and you'd have PEACE. Simple.

**“Men freely believe that which they desire.” Julius Caesar**

**“As a rule, men worry more about what they can't see than about what they can.” Julius Caesar**

In fact, take a look at all of Jewish history and the tyrants that oppressed them; Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, The Ammonites, the Philistines, just to name a few. Each demanded the same thing from the Jews; obedience, loyalty, wealth, their young. It was peaceful, initially, but it soon became slavery!

Jesus preached a different message: **Matthew 16: 24 Then Jesus told His disciples, “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in His Father’s glory with His angels, and then He will repay each one according to what he has done.”**

The charlatans of the easy path tell us that we can absolve our own sins, that we can be good enough. Yet, they define what is good. They set the rules. All along that path we encounter evil. The evil we find most often is justification for our own sins...our own lusts...our own selfish desires. We can cover those up on the easy path. As the world becomes more ‘civilized’ the more we pursue this path of promised peace. Webster’s defines **Evil: morally reprehensible: SINFUL, WICKED**. And, just what is it that we are to do with evil? Conform? Comply? Pay its demands?

My greatest take-away from the book; “All Quiet on the Western Front” was the author’s observations about how compliant the Jews were. He was amazed that one soldier with one gun could herd hundreds of people out of train cars, line them up along the pit that had been dug and shoot them all dead. He wrote that, had ten men stormed the soldier, two might have been shot, but the others would have been able to overcome him. None had the courage and died looking into a hole in the ground.

Idolatry has its foundation in the earth and man's efforts apart from God. Lennon sings; **"...above us only sky..."** The gist of the philosophy is that, if we abandon religion, then the earth and man can finally embrace and live in peace. Maybe, if we adore the earth enough, we'll live peacefully in it. The Old Testament Jews repeatedly gravitated to gods made by human hands, in hopes of peace and prosperity. It's no different, today. Yet, Jesus came to break that cycle, because the end of it is eternal hell.

**"Lennon gave us simply an excerpt from the list of necessities that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels laid out as the means to achieve utopia. (the Communist Manifesto) Lennon didn't list them all in his short song, but Marx included the destruction of marriage, the family and the church as well. The real cost of Socialism/Marxism/Communism has to be kept somewhat hidden. Lennon knew this for he said as much in his self-description of "Imagine":**

**[it is] anti-religious, anti-nationalistic, anti-conventional, anti-capitalistic... but because it's sugar-coated, it's accepted.**

**And the truth under the covers of Socialism must be sugar-coated, for no one would want what really comes to those who take this broad road and the means to get there. It may sound so idealistic to croon about no one having possessions, but living that way, as we have seen it played out in places like East Berlin, is more of a hell on earth than even a hint of paradise. Policing out the belief in God is gruesome. "Stomping out" might be a better phrase. Vladimir Lenin said that the price to get to the socialistic utopia was worth it, even if it cost the lives of millions of people. Which it did. Some estimate 90 million at the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic's bloody hands.**

**In the end, it is nothing but a scam. The promise is whispered that if you join the revolution and take down the owners and then give up your possessions, you will enter into a utopia. What a scam. The East Berliners lived in poverty while the leaders lived in palaces. The same is true in Cuba and Venezuela and throughout socialism's history." Dr. Del Tackett**

So, here are some questions for today's Christian to consider:

- How is it that the ones who preach godlessness, conformity and obedience, with the reward of paradise, are willing to punish/kill you if you refuse?
- By what mechanism is it possible to alter the thinking of a nation that was founded in freedom and religious liberty? What has conditioned Americans to despise both, and even consider them dangerous?
- Tyrants through history have used public forms of punishment in order to control any elements of resistance. What forms of public punishment do we witness in our country today?

**Psalm 85: 8 Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.**

**Isaiah 32: 17 And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.**

**John 14: 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.**

Jesus DOES NOT offer peace as the world promises peace! The world's tyrants offer you a life without want, without storms, without struggle....yet, that is just the BAIT. What lies at the end of this broad and easy path is slavery, oppression and misery. And, those who swallow this bait are doomed to endure the harshness of the end times.

The peace that Jesus offers is communion with God – peace between God and sinful Man. This can only happen if our sins are absolved; paid for. They are paid for with a currency we do not possess! Only Jesus is able to, and willing to, pay the price. And, this peace is poured out IN THE MIDST of trials, pain, division and struggle. Those things are a part of this sinful world, and Jesus gives us peace in it and through it. We have peace because we know the outcome.

But know; what we see in our world today has been foretold:

**Luke 12: Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to divide people against each other!**

**Matthew 25: 31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered**

**before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'**

Next time, we'll look more closely at the specific ways American Christianity is being threatened...as Christianity is even MORE threatened in so many other countries. We are in pivotal times...and I'm not just referring to this panic-demic.

**Jesus, you bring us truth. Teach us to think.**

**Teach us to trust in you. Teach us to pray.**

**Amen**