

## Barbarians in the Pulpit

**1 Cor. 14:11 - Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.**

Throughout the Roman Empire during the first century, there was a small band of uncivilized people known as Barbarians. They were Roman citizens but only by virtue of being born in the empire. However, they were a very isolated, remote tribal sect. They did not speak the common language of Rome, i.e., Greek. Actually, the primitive Barbarians of the first century spoke no known language at all. Their communication was a speech of sounds without syllables. They used guttural grunting and obnoxiously harsh sounds that were unintelligible even to themselves at times. It was a rude and coarse way of expressing themselves using only vile, detestable gestures and sounds to communicate. Indecipherable sounds that only they could possibly interpret. They essentially had no written nor taught language of words but only groaning debased sounds. This was a hallmark trait of Barbarians. Uncouth. Uncultured. Unlearned men. Babblers, as the Romans would say.

By the 4th century, they had grown in number and became quite organized. They were, by Roman laws and governmental mandates, immersed into more of the Greek culture and actually, over time, polished up, all things considered. This was Rome's attempt to rid the empire of this deplorable human blight. The term Barbarian would eventually evolve to include all non-Greek-speaking people, but originally, they were simply the uncivilized minority and outcasts of Roman culture.

The Huns drove them out of their own region deep into Roman provinces, which proved to ultimately lead to the downfall of Roman supremacy in the end. In the year 410, that "eternal city" called Rome was sacked by these newly organized and highly skilled warriors called Barbarians. They marched across Rome, ravishing the empire at will until the last provincial Caesar of Rome finally fell at the hands of the Barbarians 66 years after the fall of the city of Rome in the year 476. The decades of decay within Rome's own infrastructure, along with the bloody sword of the Barbarians, overthrew the mightiest empire in world History.

Any casual and honest survey performed by seasoned apostolics would result in a recognition that the church landscape has radically changed since 2020. Many of the old guard now weeps while the up-and-coming generation rejoices. It's not necessarily an age factor that categorizes the groups but more of a spiritual foundation factor. The root system of a man will oftentimes determine his pedigree and mindset today as to which group he will be aligned with. It does matter who your pastor is.

The Barbarians have influenced the change in our apostolic language. The despicable and indiscernible sounds of yesteryear's outcast have been polished up and repackaged enough that, for many, today is a new and acceptable speech that allegedly enhances the progress of the body of Christ in our era. The backwater's outcast group of yesteryear have now become the mainstream leaders today.

Conversely, those of us from the old-school genre of apostolic heritage discover that their speech is still a foreign language to our ears. It is religious babble-talk. Terms and precepts associated with revival have been grossly brutalized by these Barbarians. The Barbarians have led the shallow and carnal from the back pews of indifference to the leadership roles of church government. The celebration of education rather than anointing is now the impetus of the Barbarians. More emphasis is placed on music and singing, which now has become the centerpiece of liturgical protocols on most Barbarian platforms.

Recent studies by renowned professionals in the field of human behavior are lamenting the change also. Neuroscience, combined with the leaders in the field of psychology, is pleading with both the secular and religious Barbarians to abort their aggression and assaults on American traditions. They, along with God-called ministers, are passionately warning the Barbarians of the lines they are currently crossing. The abyss that lies ahead has no exit ramps no turnaround points. Yet the Barbarians continue to recklessly wreak havoc in the kingdom.

Worship, prayer, and preaching are historical highlights of our gatherings. Whenever these are blended together, they have always been the church's traditional landmarks, forming our spiritual identity. Still, in recent times, they have now been unashamedly redefined and re-imaged by digital church. Casual is currently in vogue. Holy is a term also redefined by the Barbarians.

Choreographed and well-organized are many of the platform rituals the Barbarians now call worship today. The Barbarians rudely insist on debasing and profaning the holy even further by employing the lowest common denominator of social discourse venues such as Facebook to promote the pristine treasure house of spiritual refuge. Our sanctuaries, the last bastion of holy places left, have been overrun and profaned by the digital gods of the Barbarians.

They have become intoxicated with performance. Image-conscious Barbarian's drug of choice is "self-promotion." Audio alone is no longer palatable. They must project an image. They are obsessed with a celebrity brand of Pentecostalism with their face visually and virtually attached to it. The new idolatry of "self" we now witness in Pentecost began with the guttural sounds that yesteryear had no distinction among us but now hold significant pre-eminence among so many today.

Beware of the Barbaric language that attempts to redefine how we have always termed words and themes such as truth, holiness, worship, prayer, revival, and yes, even the word sin. Any change of language is a change of definition. Any definition change will ultimately be a change in lifestyles. Man, and not God will become the focus. The Barbarians are the promoters of humanism - a religious humanism that promotes the image of man. They are of the spirit of antichrist.

The Barbarians were the outliers that became the forerunners of destruction in Roman culture. Today, they are the forerunners of decline and destruction for many in the church.

As the new modern Urban dictionary has perverted the old Webster and Oxford dictionaries with slang and vile definitions that attempt to re-image our vocabulary and realign our understanding of the English language, so have the Barbarian's new speech formed a diabolical mindset towards the holy today.

Give us a clear note and a certain sound. The sheep know His voice and will not follow another.

Bill Pitman