Chapter 7: THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING
Objectives:

• We will study the Second Great Awakening and how it impacted post-Revolution America culturally.

• We still study how they were a counterpoint to rationalism/enlightenment ideals.
“And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.”

Revelation 10:10-11
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• The origins of the Second Awakening lay in the efforts of conservative theologians of the 1790s to fight the spread of religious rationalism.

• It encouraged church establishments to revitalize their organizations.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- Leaders of several different denominations participated in the evangelizing efforts and drove the revival.
- Presbyterians tried to arouse the faithful on the western fringe on white settlement, and conservatives in the church denounced New Light Dissenters.
- New Light dissenters altered their religious views to make them more compatible with the world of scientific rationalism.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• Methodism which John Wesley had founded in England, spread to America in the 1770s.
• Became a formal denomination in 1784 under the leadership of Francis Ashbury.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• Authoritarian and hierarchal in structure, the Methodist Church sent traveling preachers throughout the nation to win recruits; it soon became the fastest growing denomination in America.

• Almost as successful were Baptists, who were themselves relatively new to America; they found an especially fervent following in the South.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• By 1800 the revivalist energies of all these denominations were combining to create the greatest surge of evangelical fervor since the first Great Awakening sixty years before.

• Beginning among Presbyterians in several eastern colleges (most notably at Yale, under the leadership of President Timothy Dwight) the new awakening soon spread rapidly throughout the country reaching its greatest heights in the western regions.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- In only a few years, many Americans were mobilized by the movement and joined these churches embracing revival.
- Most joined the Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians.
- At Cane Ridge, Kentucky, the summer of 1801, a group of evangelical ministers presided over the nation’s first camp meeting.
  - The Camp meeting was an extraordinary revival that lasted several days and impressed all who saw it with its size (some estimated that 25,000 people attended) and its fervor.
- Such events became common in subsequent years, as the Methodists in particular came to rely on them as a way to “harvest” new members.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• The basic thrust of the Great Awakening messages were clear, Individuals must readmit God and Christ into their daily lives.
• One must embrace a fervent, active piety, and must reject the skeptical rationalism that threatened traditional beliefs.
• Even so, the wave of revivalism did not serve to restore the religious ideas of the past.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• Few of the revivalist denominations any longer accepted the idea of predestination, the belief that a person could affect his or her own destiny added intensity to the individual’s search for salvation.

• The Awakening, in short combined a more active piety with a belief in God as an active force in the world whose grace could be attained through faith and good works.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• The Second Great Awakening also accelerated the growth of different sects and denominations.
• It helped create a broad popular acceptance of the idea that men and women could belong to different Protestant churches and still be committed to essentially the same Christian faith.
THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• Finally, the new evangelism, by spreading religious fervor into virtually every area of the nation, provided a vehicle for establishing a sense of order.

• It also provided social stability in communities still searching for an identity.
• Another movement was the Millerite movement.
• Founded by William Miller, a farmer from upstate New York.
• Miller was originally a deist.
• Miller had a conversion experience after a battle he fought as a Captain of the U.S. Army in the War of 1812 in upper New York.

• They were outnumbered three to one and yet they somehow defeated the British.

• This experience caused Him to realize that God does intervene in people’s lives.
• He committed to the Baptist church and began systematically to study the Bible.
• Miller studies Daniel and Revelation based on Daniel 8:14, that Jesus would most likely return in 1843-1844.
• This is based on the prophecy on Daniel 8:14, where it states that after 2300 days, the sanctuary would be cleansed.
• Miller saw that the 2300 days were 2300 years (Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:6) and this prophecy was connected to a prophecy in Daniel 9 where the beginning of the prophecy was in 457 B.C. with the decree for Jerusalem to be rebuilt given by the Persian King Artaxerxes.

• He believed that the term sanctuary represented the earth, and the sanctuary being cleansed with the earth being cleansed by fire by the second coming of Jesus.
• In mark contrast to Finney, Miller believed that Jesus Christ will return and gather His believers to Heaven, and scorch the earth with fire, destroying the wicked.

• The faithful will reside in Heaven for a thousand years, and return to a newly created Earth.
• Interested in the second Coming of Jesus and the historicist view of Bible prophecy increased with the following Prophecies fulfilled.

• The arrest of Pope Pius VI by Napoleon’s Army in 1798 was seen as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 12:5-6, Revelation 13:5-7).

• End of the 1,260 years of Papal political domination.
• The ominous dark day of 19 May 1780, where the day inexplicably went dark as night in the northeast.

• This was a historicist view of Bible Prophecy is where Bible prophecy being fulfilled throughout both in the past, present, and is fulfilling in the future.

• It was different from the common view that Bible prophecy was thought of all been fulfilled in the past or all will be fulfilled in the future.
• Miller’s interpretations began to be published in Baptist publications.
• Miller’s views attracted those who opposed slavery (abolitionists), and those who opposed alcohol (temperance movements).
• Anti-slavery activist William Lloyd Garrison worked with Millerite Josiah V. Himes in anti-slavery causes.
• Millerite Joseph Bates was active in anti-slavery and temperance (anti-alcohol and anti-smoking causes).
Large camp meetings with huge tents traveled from city to city, town to town. Attracting hundreds.

Many were also attracted by the prophecy charts and diagrams of the various symbols found in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians and other Christians joined the movement.

The Millerites were called “Adventists” those who believe in the coming or return of Jesus.
• But in October 22, 1844, Jesus did not return, this was called the Great Disappointment.

• The Millerite followers had up to 50,000 followers at that time.

• Many left the movement but a few began to restudy Daniel 8:14 and began to understand Miller misunderstood prophecy and that the term “sanctuary” was not the earth being cleansed by fire but it was a sanctuary in Heaven where the records of sins of the saints were being blotted out or deleted (Hebrews 8:1-2, Daniel 7:9-11).

• Ellen and James White, Uriah Smith, and Joseph Bates were part of this Millerite movement.

• They would become founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
WOMEN IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• One of the most striking features of the Second Great Awakening was the preponderance of women, particularly young women within it.
• One reason for this was that women were more numerous in certain regions than men.
• Adventurous young men often struck out on their own and moved west; women, for the most part, had no such options.
• Their marriage prospects thus diminished, and their futures plagued with uncertainty, some women discovered in religion a foundation on which to build their lives.
WOMEN IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• Women moved out of the homes as homemakers to work in factories.
• Religious enthusiasm helped compensate for the losses and adjustments these transitions produced.
• It also provided access to a new range of activities associated with the churches, charitable societies ministering to orphans, and the poor, missionary organizations, and others, in which women came to play important roles.
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• A substantial group of African American preachers became important figures within the slave community.

• Some of them translated the apparently egalitarian religious message of the Second Awakening that salvation was available to all brought a spirit of the desire of equality.
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• Out of the African American revival meetings in Virginia arose an elaborate plan in 1800 (devised by Gabriel Prosser, the brother of an African American preacher) for a slave rebellion and attack on Richmond.

• The plan was discovered and the rebellion forestalled by Whites but revivalism continued to stir racial unrest in the South.
NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

• The spirit of revivalism was also particularly strong in these years among Native Americans.

• Although very different from revivalism in white or black society.
NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- It drew heavily from earlier tribal experiences.
- In the 1760s the Delaware prophet Neolin had sparked a widespread revival in the old Northwest with a message combining Christian and Indian imagery that brought forth a vision of a personal God intimately involved in the affairs of man.
NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- Neolin called for Indians to rise up in defense of their lands and had denounced the growth of trade and other relationships with white civilization.

- His vehement statements had helped stimulate the Indian military efforts.
NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- Dislocations and military defeats Indians suffered in the aftermath of the American Revolution created a sense of crisis among many of the eastern tribes in particular.
- Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries were active among the southern tribes and sparked a great wave of conversions.
NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- Another was Handsome Lake who overcame alcoholism that gave him a special stature within his tribe.
- Handsome Lake’s message spread through the scattered Iroquois communities and inspired many Indians to give up whiskey, gambling and other destructive customs derived from white society.
NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- But the revival led to Christian missionaries becoming active in the tribes and urged Iroquois men to give up hunting for farming and for women who did farming to do domesticated work in the home.

- Some women resisted and Handsome Lake denounced them as witches and some were killed.
FREE THINKERS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- The Second Great Awakening also had important effects on those Americans who did not accept its teachings.
- The rational “freethinkers” whose skeptical philosophies had helped produce the revivals were in many ways the victim of the new religious fervor.
FREE THINKERS IN THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING:

- They did not disappear after 1800, but their influence rapidly declined, and for many years they remained a small and defensive minority within American Christianity.

- Instead, the dominant religious characteristics of the new nation became a fervent evangelicalism which would survive into mid-nineteenth century and beyond.