

from front

several occasions (1 Cor. 10:1-11). Christians, today, can become complacent about their fellowship with God. It is not without requirements on the part of the child of God. We must still respect and obey our Father. We must recognize our dependence on Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, and continually be on guard for our adversary (1 Pet. 5:6-9).

Take heed.

- Steven F. Deaton

“These will make war with the Lamb,
and the Lamb will overcome them,
for He is Lord of lords and King of kings,
and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

- Rev. 17:14

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Take Heed (3)

The Word of God repeatedly tells us to take heed. We must beware of certain things in order to live a righteous life, avoiding sin and shame. If we do not take heed, the consequences are devastating.

When speaking to the Ephesian elders, Paul said, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). This is a serious admonition. Shepherds have the responsibility to guide and protect the church over which they are appointed. This means they must be excellent Bible students as well as men with the fortitude to take a stand. They will face attacks from without, as well as within the church (Acts 20:29, 30). Thus, Paul tells them to take heed to themselves and the flock. Elders need to examine their own lives, motives, desires, actions. They must also know the church and act in the best interest of each member.

Paul told Timothy, “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you” (1 Tim. 4:16). Timothy’s duties as a teacher and preacher of the gospel were no small matter. The responsibility to accurately divide the Word of Truth is great (2 Tim. 2:15). Like elders, preachers need to be careful about their personal motives and desires. They must examine themselves to see if they are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). They also need to give careful attention to the teaching they do. Diligent study is necessary—and not just study of anything, but of the right things. Preachers and teachers must be careful about the materials they use to prepare lessons lest their thinking be led away from the truth.

Finally, Paul said, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). The Corinthians thought that since they were baptized and ate the Lord’s Supper, they had a unique relationship to God that could not be broken. Paul pointed out that Israel had the same mistaken belief, strayed from right, and was punished on

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Christ and The Kingdom

Much misinformation and error about Christ and the kingdom circulates in the world and among the denominations. People are misled and, as a result, confused and bewildered. This, however, need not be. God has revealed the plain, simple truth about Christ and the kingdom.

Christ established the kingdom. He declared, “On this rock I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18). He then immediately exchanged “church” for “kingdom” (Matt. 16:19). Thus, the kingdom He promised to establish is also known as the church; body, house, etc. (Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Tim. 3:15). We see this kingdom in existence during the first century. Paul said the Colossians were in the kingdom (Col. 1:13). John wrote the seven churches of Asia and said, “I, John, both you brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom...” (Rev. 1:9). Inasmuch as men were in the kingdom in the first century, we know the kingdom was established.

Christ now reigns over the kingdom. There is a recurring theme in connection to the resurrection of Christ; He is now on His throne. Peter proclaimed a risen, ruling Redeemer on Pentecost. He said David foretold of the resurrection of Jesus, that God “would raise up the Christ to sit on his [David’s] throne, he [David], foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ” (Acts 2:30, 31). He was “exalted to the right hand of God” and is now “both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:33, 36). Jesus’ position of power in the kingdom is at the right hand of God where He now sits. The Hebrew writer made this point abundantly clear to his audience—an audience that desperately needed to be impressed that Jesus is the King of kings, not “will be” King of kings (Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

Christ will give the kingdom to God when He returns. Contrary to popular belief, when Jesus comes back, He will not establish a kingdom. Jesus will not have a 1,000-year reign on earth from a throne in Jerusalem. His kingdom is not of this world (Jn. 18:36). Rather, His kingdom is spiritual. When the Lord returns for the great Day of Judgment, He will cease to rule. Paul said Christ’s reign, rule and power, will end at the end. He will deliver the kingdom to God, not accept it from Him (1 Cor. 15:23-26).

If Christ has established the kingdom, now reigns over that kingdom, and will turn it over to the Father when He returns, then what does that mean for us? Simply put, we must submit to His rule and enter the kingdom on His terms. Jesus told Nicodemus the way

into the kingdom was by the new birth (Jn. 3:3-5). This new birth is spelled out in detail in the preaching of Jesus and His apostles. Jesus said we must believe and be baptized (Mk. 16:16). Peter said we must repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). When we do this, we enter the kingdom (1 Cor. 12:13). As a faithful citizen of the kingdom we can look forward to being delivered to God, that is, going to heaven. Have you submitted to Christ and entered the kingdom?

- Steven F. Deaton

Beware of the Mutilation

“Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation” (Phil. 3:2). In some circles, it would be an outrage for this to be said today. Just the idea of referring to someone as a “dog” is intolerable. Yet, that is exactly what the apostle wrote.

The warning given by Paul was not harmful, but helpful. Notice he said it was “not tedious,” but “safe” for him to write these things to the Philippians (Phil. 3:1). In other words, his warning about false teachers and the damage they do was beneficial for the saints. The same is true today. Warnings about those and that which enslave the soul to sin are good, not bad.

The “dogs” and “evil” workers of which Paul wrote were not alien sinners, pagans, or atheists. Rather, they were the “mutilation.” This group was a sect of Christians who insisted on circumcision. They boasted in the flesh, a standard by which Paul was unmatched (Phil. 3:3-7). In other words, they were brethren. Yes, Paul described some of his brethren, children of God, as “dogs” and “evil workers.” Why? Because the doctrines espoused by them would lead souls to hell.

Are there any “dogs” or “evil workers” today? Is there a “mutilation” sect among brethren? We do not know of any who try to bind circumcision. However, there are those who push unsound doctrines. Those who espouse unproven and illogical scientific theories as the standard by which to interpret the Bible fit what Paul describes in Philippians 3. Likewise, those who advocate social-gospel techniques for drawing and keeping young people are “evil workers.” Warnings need to be sounded whether it is about these or any other loose doctrines. The souls of men are at stake.

- Steven F. Deaton