

An open Bible with a dramatic, cloudy sky in the background. The Bible is open, showing two pages of text. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, suggesting a storm or a dramatic scene. The text is written in a red, cursive font.

A Time to Heed Bible Warnings

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Forward

Ezekiel 33:7-9

"Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from my mouth and give them warning from me.

"When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand."

But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life.

There are many warnings through the Word of God. When these warnings are not heeded, the Scriptures tell us what the outcome will be.

I challenge you to read and study these warnings. In this way, you can be a delight to the living God.

Chapter 1



Listen to what God says, and warn the people.

Ezekiel 33:7-9

"Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me.

If I announce that some wicked people are sure to die and you fail to warn them about changing their ways, then they will die in their sins, but I will hold you responsible for their deaths.

But if you warn them to repent and they don't repent, they will die in their sins, but you will not be held responsible.

Throughout the Bible there are many scriptures that contain warnings.
No man liveth to himself nor dies to himself.

The exiles were discouraged by their past sins. This is an important turning point in this book—elsewhere in Ezekiel the people had refused to face their sins.

Here, they felt heavy guilt for rebelling against God for so many years. Therefore, God assured them of forgiveness if they repented. God *wants* everyone to turn to him. God looks at what we are and will become, not what we have been. God gives you the opportunity to turn to him, if you will take it. Sincerely follow God, and ask him to forgive you when you fail.

This is all a part of the great Commission. That is, to give the warning that sin will bring forth death, while a life of Christian love, with repentance toward God will bring eternal life.

Do not hesitate to use the word of God to all who will hear. You are God's ambassador.

Make preparation for a famine.

Genesis 41:28-32

This will happen just as I have described it, for God has shown you what he is about to do.

The next seven years will be a period of great prosperity throughout the land of Egypt. But afterward there will be seven years of famine so great that all the prosperity will be forgotten and wiped out. Famine will destroy the land.

This famine will be so terrible that even the memory of the good years will be erased. As for having the dream twice, it means that God has decreed the matter and that he will make these events happen soon.

After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph gave the king a survival plan for the next 14 years. The only way to prevent starvation was through careful planning; without a famine plan Egypt would have turned from prosperity to ruin.

Many find detailed planning boring and unnecessary. But planning is a responsibility, not an option. Joseph was able to save a nation by translating God's plan for Egypt into practical actions (implementation). We must take time to translate God's plan for us into practical actions too.

The city will be destroyed.

Then the two men said to Lot, "Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

Times of war, famine and earthquakes

Matthew 24:6-7

"You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes.

You may not be facing intense persecution now, but Christians in other parts of the world are. As you hear about Christians suffering for their faith, remember that they are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Pray for them. Ask God what you can do to help them in their troubles. When one part suffers, the *whole* body suffers. But when all the parts join together to ease the suffering, the whole body benefits (1 Cor. 12:26).

These are the beginning of sorrow.

Mark 13:7-8

"When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end. "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

What are the signs of the end times? There have been people in every generation since Christ's resurrection claiming to know exactly when Jesus would return. No one has been right yet, however, because Christ will return on God's timetable, not ours. Jesus predicted that before his return, false teachers claiming to have revelations from God would mislead many believers.

According to Scripture, the one clear sign of Christ's return will be his unmistakable appearance in the clouds, which will be seen by all people (Mark 13:26; Rev. 1:7). In other words, you do not have to wonder whether a certain person is the Messiah or whether these are the "end times." When Jesus returns, *you will know* beyond a doubt, because it will be evident to all true believers. Beware of groups who claim special

knowledge of the last days, because no one knows when that time will be (Mark 13:32).

Be cautious about saying, “This is it!” but be bold in your total commitment to have your heart and life ready for Christ’s return.

Chapter 2



Warnings against abuse of authority

Ephesians 6:9

And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Although Christians be at different levels of Christian society, we are all equal before God. He does not play favorites; no one is more important than anyone else. Paul's letter to Philemon stresses the same point: Philemon, the master, and Onesimus, his slave, were brothers in Christ.

You have been admonished with tears

Acts 20:31

"Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

These officials of the province were government officials, responsible for the religious and political order of the region. Paul's message had reached all levels of society, crossing all social barriers and giving Paul friends in high places.

Warnings Regarding pride

Luke 22:26

"But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

The most important event in human history was about to take place, and the disciples were still arguing about their prestige in the kingdom! Looking back, we say, "This was no time to worry about status." But the disciples, wrapped up in their own concerns, did not perceive what Jesus had been trying to tell them about his approaching death and resurrection.

What are your major concerns today? Twenty years from now, as you look back, will these worries look petty and inappropriate? Get your eyes off yourself and get ready for Christ's coming into human history for the second time.

The world's system of leadership is very different from leadership in God's kingdom. Worldly leaders are often selfish and arrogant as they claw their way to the top. (Some kings in the ancient world gave themselves the title "Benefactor.") But among Christians, the leader is to be the one who *serves* best.

There are different styles of leadership—some lead through public speaking, some through administering; some through relationships—but every Christian leader needs a servant’s heart. Ask the people you lead how you can serve them better.

Personal Warnings concerning apostasy

2 Corinthians 11:2-3

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

The Corinthians’ sincere and pure devotion to Christ was being threatened by false teaching. Paul did not want the believers to lose their single-minded love for Christ. Keeping Christ first in our lives can be very difficult when we have so many distractions threatening to sidetrack our faith.

Just as Eve lost her focus by listening to the serpent, we too can lose our focus by letting our lives become overcrowded and confused. Is there anything that weakens your commitment to keep Christ first in your life? How can you minimize the distractions that threaten your devotion to him?

The Corinthian believers fell for smooth talk and messages that sounded good and seemed to make sense. Today there are many false teachings that seem to make sense.

Don’t believe someone simply because he or she sounds like an authority or says words you like to hear. Search the Bible and check his or her teachings against God’s Word.

The Bible should be your authoritative guide. Don't listen to any "authoritative preacher" who contradicts God's Word.

Warning against evil

Psalm 34:16

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

Somehow we think that peace should come to us with no effort. But David explained that we are to seek and pursue peace. Paul echoed this thought in Romans 12:18.

A person who wants peace cannot be argumentative and contentious. Because peaceful relationships come from our efforts at peacemaking, work hard at living in peace with others each day.

We often wish we could escape troubles—the pain of grief, loss, sorrow, and failure; or even the small daily frustrations that constantly wear us down. God promises to be “close to the brokenhearted,” to be our source of power, courage, and wisdom, helping us through our problems.

Sometimes he chooses to deliver us from those problems. When trouble strikes, don't get frustrated with God. Instead, admit that you need God's help and thank him for being by your side.

Chapter 3



Warnings against pride

Hosea 7:10

Though the pride of Israel testifies against him, yet they have not returned to the LORD their God, nor have they sought Him, for all this.

Arrogance (pride) keeps a person from returning to God because arrogance acknowledges no need of help from anyone, human or divine. Pride intensifies all our other sins because we cannot repent of any of them without first giving up our pride.

Warnings Against sleep

Mark 13:36

In case he should come suddenly and find you asleep.

The entire thirteenth chapter of Mark tells us how to live while we wait for Christ's return:

- (1) We are not to be misled by confusing claims or speculative interpretations of what will happen (Mark 13:5-6).
- (2) We should not be afraid to tell people about Christ, despite what they might say or do to us (Mark 13:9-11).
- (3) Alert, obedient to the commands for living found in God's Word. This chapter was not given to promote discussions on prophetic timetables, but to stimulate right living for God in a world where he is largely ignored. We must stand firm by faith and not be surprised by persecutions (Mark 13:13).
- (4) We must be morally

Warnings concerning spiritual gifts

1 Corinthians 14:39

Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophecy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues.

Worship is vital to the life of an individual and to the whole church. Our church services should be conducted in an orderly way so that we can worship, be taught, and be prepared to serve God. Those who are responsible for planning worship should make sure it has order and direction rather than chaos and confusion.

Warnings concerning man

Psalm 146:3

Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation.

Warning Individuals

The psalmist portrays man as an inadequate savior, a false hope; even princes cannot deliver (Psalm 146:3). God is the hope and the help of the needy. Jesus affirms his concern for the poor and afflicted in Luke 4:18-21; Luke 7:21-23.

He does not separate the social and spiritual needs of people, but attends to both. While God, not the government, is the hope of the needy, *we* are his instruments to help here on earth.

Genesis 31:24

God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, “Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad.”

Warnings against Apostasy

Hebrews 6:4-8

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.

Certain elementary teachings are essential for all believers to understand. Those basics include the importance of faith, the foolishness of trying to be saved by good deeds, the meaning of baptism and

spiritual gifts, and the facts of resurrection and eternal life. To go on to maturity in our understanding, we need to move beyond (but not away from) the elementary teachings to a more complete understanding of the faith.

And this is what the author intends for them to do (Hebrews 6:3). Mature Christians should be teaching new Christians the basics. Then, acting on what they know, the mature will learn even more from God's Word.

In the first century, a pagan who investigated Christianity and then went back to paganism made a clean break with the church. But for Jewish Christians who decided to return to Judaism, the break was less obvious. Their life-style remained relatively unchanged. But by deliberately turning away from Christ, they were cutting themselves off from God's forgiveness. Those who persevere in believing are true saints; those who continue to reject Christ are unbelievers, no matter how well they behave.

This verse points to the danger of the Hebrew Christians returning to Judaism and thus committing apostasy. Some apply this verse today to superficial believers who renounce their Christianity, or to unbelievers who come close to salvation and then turn away. Either way, those who reject Christ will not be saved. Christ died once for all.

He will not be crucified again. Apart from his cross, there is no other possible way of salvation. However, the author does not indicate that his readers were in danger of renouncing Christ (see Hebrews 6:9). He is warning against hardness of heart that would make repentance inconceivable for the sinner.

Chapter 4



Warnings against Deception

Ephesians 5:6

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Paul is not forbidding all contact with unbelievers. Jesus taught his followers to befriend sinners and lead them to him (Luke 5:30-32).

Instead, Paul is speaking against condoning the life-style of people who make excuses for bad behavior and recommend its practice to others—whether they are in the church or outside of it.

Such people can quickly pollute the church and endanger its unity and purpose. We must befriend unbelievers if we are to lead them to Christ, but we must be wary of those who are viciously evil, immoral, or opposed to all that Christianity stands for.

Such people are more likely to influence us for evil than we are likely to influence them for good.

Warnings of evil associations

Proverbs 22:24

Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man.

People tend to become like those with whom they spend a lot of time. Even the negative characteristics sometimes rub off. The Bible exhorts us to be cautious in our choice of companions. Choose people with characteristics you would like to develop in your own life.

Disturbances will grow worse

Luke 21:9-11

"When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately." Then He continued by saying to them,

"Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

Jesus did not leave his disciples unprepared for the difficult years ahead. He warned them about false messiahs, natural disasters, and persecutions; but he assured them that he would be with them to protect them and make his kingdom known through them. In the end, Jesus

promised that he would return in power and glory to save them. Jesus' warnings and promises to his disciples also apply to us as we look forward to his return.

A great time of trouble will come.

Matthew 24:15-22

"The time will come when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about: the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing in the holy place"—reader, pay attention!

"Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. A person outside the house must not go inside to pack. A person in the field must not return even to get a coat.

How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for mothers nursing their babies in those days. And pray that your flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

For that will be a time of greater horror than anything the world has ever seen or will ever see again.

In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, the entire human race will be destroyed. But it will be shortened for the sake of God's chosen ones.

What was this “abomination that causes desolation” mentioned by both Daniel and Jesus? Rather than one specific object, event, or person, it could be seen as any deliberate attempt to mock and deny the reality of God's presence.

Daniel's prediction came true in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the sacred temple altar (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:30-31). Jesus' words were remembered in A.D. 70 when Titus placed an idol on the site of the burned temple after destroying Jerusalem. In the end times the antichrist will set up an image of himself and order everyone to worship it (2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15). These are all "abominations" that mock God.

Jesus, talking about the end times, telescoped near future and far future events, as did the Old Testament prophets. Many of these persecutions have already occurred; more are yet to come. But God is in control of even the length of persecutions. He will not forget his people. This is all we need to know about the future to motivate us to live rightly now.

Sacrilegious objects will cause desecration.

Mark 13:14-20

"The time will come when you will see the sacrilegious object that causes desecration standing where it should not be"—reader, pay attention! "Then those in Judea must flee to the hills.

A person outside the house must not go back into the house to pack. [16]
A person in the field must not return even to get a coat.

How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for mothers nursing their babies in those days. And pray that your flight will not be in winter.

For those will be days of greater horror than at any time since God created the world. And it will never happen again.

In fact, unless the Lord shortens that time of calamity, the entire human race will be destroyed. But for the sake of his chosen ones he has shortened those days.

Jerusalem will see destruction by the gentiles.

Luke 21:20-24

"And when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived.

Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Let those in Jerusalem escape, and those outside the city should not enter it for shelter. For those will be days of God's vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled.

How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for mothers nursing their babies. For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. They will be brutally killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world.

And Jerusalem will be conquered and trampled down by the Gentiles until the age of the Gentiles comes to an end.

Jesus, talking about the end times, telescoped near future and far future events, as did the Old Testament prophets. Many of these persecutions have already occurred; more are yet to come. But God is in control of even the length of persecutions. He will not forget his people. This is all we need to know about the future to motivate us to live rightly now.

Chapter 5



Paul receives a warning.

Acts 21:10-11

As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

Fifteen years earlier, Agabus had predicted the famine in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-29).

Paul's nephew warns of an ambush.

Acts 23:16-21

But Paul's nephew heard of their plan and went to the fortress and told Paul. Paul called one of the officers and said, "Take this young man to the commander. He has something important to tell him."

So the officer did, explaining, "Paul, the prisoner, called me over and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

The commander took him by the arm, led him aside, and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

Paul's nephew told him, "Some Jews are going to ask you to bring Paul before the Jewish high council tomorrow, pretending they want to get some more information.

But don't do it! There are more than forty men hiding along the way ready to jump him and kill him. They have vowed not to eat or drink until they kill him. They are ready, expecting you to agree to their request."

This is the only Biblical reference to Paul's family. Some scholars believe that Paul's family had disowned Paul when he became a Christian.

Paul wrote of having suffered the loss of everything for Christ (Phil. 3:8). Paul's nephew was able to see Paul, even though Paul was in protective custody, because Roman prisoners were accessible to their relatives and friends who could bring them food and other amenities.

It is easy to overlook children, assuming that they aren't old enough to do much for the Lord. But a young boy played an important part in protecting Paul's life. God can use anyone, of any age, who is willing to yield to him.

Jesus made it clear that children are important (Matthew 18:2-6). Give children the importance God gives them.

God is a jealous God.

Deuteronomy 6:14-15

"You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

Moses warned the people not to forget God when they entered the Promised Land and became prosperous. Prosperity, more than poverty, can dull our spiritual vision because it tends to make us self-sufficient and eager to acquire still more of everything—except God. The same thing can happen in our church.

Once we become successful in terms of numbers, programs, and buildings, we can easily become self-sufficient and less sensitive to our need for God. This leads us to concentrate on self-preservation rather than thankfulness and service to God.

Those who go after other gods shall perish.

Deuteronomy 8:19

"It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish.

In times of plenty, we often take credit for our prosperity and become proud that our own hard work and cleverness have made us rich. It is easy to get so busy collecting and managing wealth that we push God right out of our lives. But it is God who gives us everything we have, and it is God who asks us to manage it for him.

Do not covet the silver or gold on graven images.

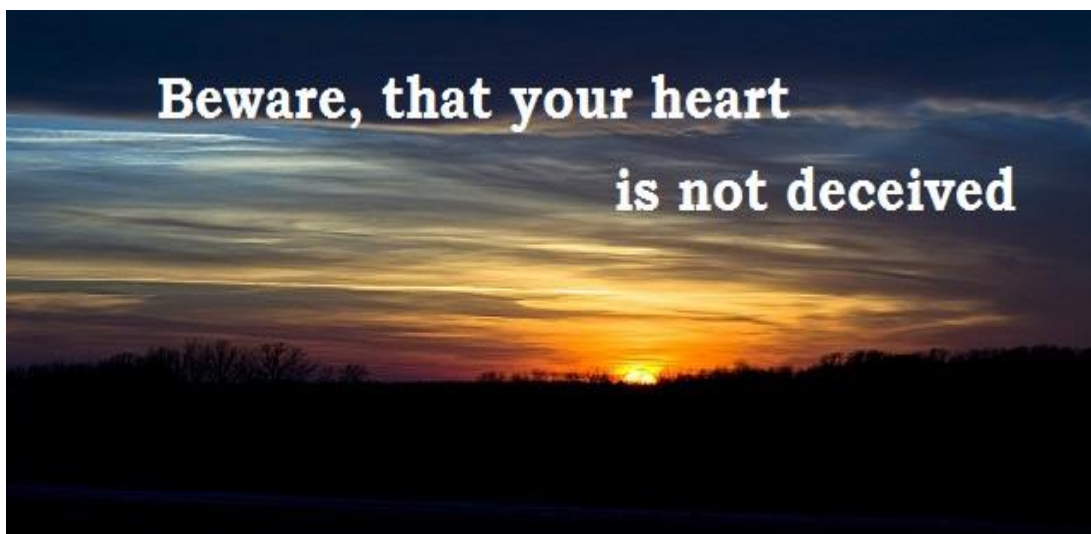
Deuteronomy 7:25

"The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

Moses warned Israel against becoming ensnared by the idols of the defeated nations by coveting the silver or gold on them.

We may think it's all right to be close to sin as long as we don't participate. "After all," we say, "I won't do anything wrong!" But being close can hurt us as we become attracted and finally give in. The only sure way to stay away from sin is to *stay away!*

Chapter 6



Beware that your hearts are not deceived

Deuteronomy 11:16

“Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them.

Let none who hear these warning consider themselves immune.

Deuteronomy 29:18-21

The Lord made this covenant with you so that no man, woman, family, or tribe among you would turn away from the Lord our God to worship these gods of other nations, and so that no root among you would bear bitter and poisonous fruit.

Let none of those who hear the warnings of this curse consider themselves immune, thinking, ‘I am safe, even though I am walking in my own stubborn way.’ This would lead to utter ruin!

The Lord will not pardon such people. His anger and jealousy will burn against them. All the curses written in this book will come down on them, and the Lord will erase their names from under heaven.

The Lord will separate them from all the tribes of Israel, to pour out on them all the covenant curses recorded in this Book of the Law.

Moses cautioned that the day the Hebrews chose to turn from God, a root would be planted that would produce bitter poison (see Hebrews 12:15).

When we decide to do what we know is wrong, we plant an evil seed that begins to grow out of control, eventually yielding a crop of sorrow and pain. But we can prevent those seeds of sin from taking root. If you have done something wrong, confess it to God and others immediately. If the seed never finds fertile soil, its bitter fruit will never ripen.

God sees everything you are doing.

Jeremiah 7:9-15

Do you really think you can steal, murder, commit adultery, lie, and worship Baal and all those other new gods of yours, and then come here and stand before me in my Temple and chant, “We are safe!”—only to go right back to all those evils again?

Do you think this Temple, which honors my name, is a den of thieves? I see all the evil going on there, says the Lord.

“Go to the place at Shiloh where I once put the Tabernacle to honor my name. See what I did there because of all the wickedness of my people, the Israelites.

While you were doing these wicked things, says the Lord, I spoke to you about it repeatedly, but you would not listen. I called out to you, but you refused to answer.

So just as I destroyed Shiloh, I will now destroy this Temple that was built to honor my name, this Temple that you trust for help, this place that I gave to you and your ancestors. And I will send you into exile, just as I did your relatives, the people of Israel.’

As this section opens, God sends Jeremiah to the temple gates to confront the false belief that God will not let harm come to the temple and those who live near it. Jeremiah rebukes the people for their false and worthless religion, their idolatry, and the shameless behavior of the people and their leaders.

Judah, he says, is ripe for judgment and exile. This happened during the reign of Jehoiakim, a puppet of Egypt. The nation, in shock over the death of Josiah, was going through a spiritual reversal that removed much of the good Josiah had done.

Themes of this section are false religion, idolatry, and hypocrisy. Jeremiah was almost put to death for this sermon, but he was saved by the officials of Judah (see Jeremiah 26).

Do not go after false gods.

Jeremiah 25:4-11

“And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear, saying,

‘Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and dwell on the land which the LORD has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever; and do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands, and I will do you no harm.’ read more.

The good figs represented the exiles to Babylon—not because they themselves were good, but because their hearts would respond to God. He would preserve them and bring them back to the land.

The poor figs represented those who remained in Judah or ran away to Egypt. Those people may have arrogantly believed they would be blessed if they remained in the land or escaped to Egypt, but the opposite was true because God would use the captivity to refine the exiles.

We may assume we are blessed when life goes well and cursed when it does not. But trouble is a blessing when it makes us stronger, and prosperity is a curse if it entices us away from God. If you are facing trouble, ask God to help you grow stronger for him. If things are going your way, ask God to help you use your prosperity for him.

were moved to a foreign land, their captivity was not enslavement. The people could function in business and own homes. Some, like Daniel, even held high positions in the government (see Daniel 2:48).

Do not engage in sexual immorality.

1 Corinthians 10:7-11

For the Scriptures say, “The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged themselves in pagan revelry.”

And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day.

Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. And don't grumble as some of them did, for that is why God sent his angel of death to destroy them.

All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close.

The incident referred to in 1 Cor. 10:7 is when the Israelites made a golden calf and worshiped it in the desert (Exodus 32). The incident in 1 Cor. 10:8 is recorded in Numbers 25:1-9 when the Israelites worshiped Baal of Peor and engaged in sexual immorality with Moabite women.

The reference in 1 Cor. 10:9 is to the Israelites' complaint about their food (Numbers 21:5-6).

They put the Lord to the test by seeing how far they could go. In 1 Cor. 10:10, Paul refers to when the people complained against Moses and Aaron, and the plague that resulted (Numbers 14:2, 36; Numbers 16:41-50). The destroying angel is referred to in Exodus 12:23.

Chapter 7



Guard yourself against idols.

1 John 5:21

Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

An idol is anything that substitutes for the true faith, anything that robs Christ of his full deity and humanity, any human idea that claims to be more authoritative than the Bible, any loyalty that replaces God at the center of our lives.

John presents a clear picture of Christ. What we think about Jesus Christ is central to our teaching, preaching, and living. Jesus is the God-man, fully God and fully human at the same time.

He came to earth to die in our place for our sins. Through faith in him, we are given eternal life and the power to do his will. What is your answer to the most important question you could ever ask—who is Jesus Christ?

Warn those who deal in disputations

2 Chronicles 19:10

“Whenever any dispute comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, you shall warn them so that they may not be guilty before the LORD, and wrath may not come on you and your brethren. Thus you shall do and you will not be guilty.

Jehoshaphat delegated some of the responsibilities for ruling and judging the people, but he warned his appointees that they were accountable to God for the standards they used to judge others.

Advice is helpful for all leaders:

- (1) Realize you are judging for God
(2 Chron. 19:6); (2) be impartial and honest (2 Chron. 19:7);
- (2) Be faithful (2 Chron. 19:9);
- (3) Act only out of fear of God, not men (2 Chron. 19:9).

God holds us accountable for the authority we exercise.

Jehoshaphat appointed priests and Levites to help in administering civil laws. Many years earlier, Moses had chosen men who were capable, faithful, and honest to help him judge disputes among the people (Exodus 18:21-22).

Obviously the best kind of leader is one who always acts with reverence for God.

Effective leaders get the job done; faithful leaders make sure the job is done in God's way with God's timing. They are careful to instill God's wisdom in future leaders and build God's values into the entire community.

Deal with the part of the body that causes you to sin.

Matthew 5:29-30

“If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. “If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

When Jesus said to get rid of your hand or your eye, he was speaking figuratively. He didn't mean literally to gouge out your eye, because even a blind person can lust. But if that were the only choice, it would be better to go into heaven with one eye or hand than to go to hell with two.

We sometimes tolerate sins in our lives that, left unchecked, could eventually destroy us. It is better to experience the pain of removal (getting rid of a bad habit or something we treasure, for instance) than to allow the sin to bring judgment and condemnation.

Examine your life for anything that causes you to sin, and take every necessary action to remove it.

Eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil will bring death.

Genesis 2:16-17

The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

God gave Adam responsibility for the garden and told him not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Rather than physically preventing him from eating, God gave Adam a choice, and thus the possibility of choosing wrongly. God still gives us choices, and we, too, often choose wrongly.

These wrong choices may cause us pain, but they can help us learn and grow and make better choices in the future. Living with the consequences of our choices teaches us to think and choose more carefully.

Why would God place a tree in the garden and then forbid Adam to eat from it? God wanted Adam to obey, but God gave Adam the freedom to choose. Without choice, Adam would have been like a prisoner, and his obedience would have been hollow.

The two trees provided an exercise in choice, with rewards for choosing to obey and sad consequences for choosing to disobey. When you are faced with the choice, always choose to obey God.

God will put an end to arrogance, pride and haughtiness.

Isaiah 13:11

Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless.

You will be punished according to the results of your deeds.

Jeremiah 21:14

“But I will punish you according to the results of your deeds,” declares the LORD, “And I will kindle a fire in its forest that it may devour all its environs.””

Jeremiah had foretold Jerusalem’s destruction. The city’s leaders had denied his word and mocked his announcements. In desperation, King Zedekiah turned to God for help, but without acknowledging God’s warnings or admitting his sin.

Too often we expect God to help us in our time of trouble even though we have ignored him in our time of prosperity. But God wants a lasting relationship. Are you trying to build a lasting friendship with God, or are you merely using him occasionally to escape trouble?

What would you think of your family or friends if they thought of you only as a temporary resource?

Chapter 8



You have been appointed as a watchman.

Ezekiel 3:17-19

"Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, warn them from me.

"When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

"Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself.

A watchman's job was to stand on the city wall and warn the people of approaching danger. Ezekiel's role was to be a spiritual watchman, warning the people of the judgment to come.

Some think that "accountable for his blood" means that just as a watchman on the wall would pay with his life if he failed to warn the city of approaching enemies, Ezekiel would have been held accountable if he had refused to warn the people of coming judgment.

Others believe this phrase simply means that God would hold Ezekiel responsible.

In these verses, God is not talking about loss of salvation but rather about physical death.

If the people back in Judah continued in their sins, Nebuchadnezzar's armies would destroy them and their land and cities. If, on the other hand, the people would turn to God, God would spare them. God would hold Ezekiel responsible for his fellow Jews if he failed to warn them of the consequences of their sins.

All people are individually responsible to God, but believers have a special responsibility to warn unbelievers of the consequences of rejecting God. If we fail to do this, God will hold us responsible for what happens to them.

This should motivate us to begin sharing our faith with others—by both word and deed—and to avoid becoming callous or unconcerned in our attitude.

Warn the wicked of his iniquities.

Ezekiel 33:7-9

"Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from my mouth and give them warning from me.

"When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand."

But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life.

The exiles were discouraged by their past sins. This is an important turning point in this book—elsewhere in Ezekiel the people had refused to face their sins. Here, they felt heavy guilt for rebelling against God for so many years.

Therefore, God assured them of forgiveness if they repented. God *wants* everyone to turn to him. He looks at what we are and will become, not what we have been. God gives you the opportunity to turn to him, if you will take it. Sincerely follow God, and ask him to forgive you when you fail.

Continued sin will cause worse happenings.

John 5:14

Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

This man had been lame, or paralyzed, and suddenly he could walk. This was a great miracle. But he needed an even greater miracle—to have his sins forgiven.

The man was delighted to be physically healed, but he had to turn from his sins and seek God's forgiveness to be spiritually healed. God's forgiveness is the greatest gift you will ever receive. Don't neglect his gracious offer.

Be saved from this perverse generation

Acts 2:40

And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, and "Be saved from this perverse generation

About 3,000 people became new believers when Peter preached the Good News about Christ. These new Christians were united with the other believers, taught by the apostles, and included in the prayer meetings and fellowship. New believers in Christ need to be in groups where they can learn God's Word, pray, and mature in the faith. If you have just begun a relationship with Christ, seek out other believers for fellowship, prayer, and teaching. This is the way to grow.

There will be distress for every soul that does evil.

Romans 2:8-9

But to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.

Although God does not usually punish us immediately for sin, his eventual judgment is certain. We don't know exactly when it will happen, but we know that no one will escape that final encounter with the Creator. For more on judgment, see John 12:48 and Rev. 20:11-15.

Chapter 9



The wages of sin is death

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You are free to choose between two masters, but you are not free to manipulate the consequences of your choice.

Each of the two masters pays with his own kind of currency. The currency of sin is death. That is all you can expect or to use hope for in life without God. Christ's currency is eternal life—new life with God that begins on earth and continues forever with God. What choice have you made?

Life is a free gift from God. If it is a gift, then it is not something that we earn, nor something that must be paid back. Consider the foolishness of someone who receives a gift given out of love and then offers to pay for it.

A gift cannot be purchased by the recipient. A more appropriate response to a loved one who offers a gift is graceful acceptance with gratitude. Our salvation is a gift of God, not something of our own doing (Ephes. 2:8-9). He saved us because of his mercy, not because of any righteous things that we have done (Titus 3:5). How much more we should accept with thanksgiving the gift that God has freely given

The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul is describing characteristics of unbelievers. He doesn't mean that idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, slanderers or swindlers are automatically and irrevocably excluded from heaven.

Christians come out of all kinds of different backgrounds, including these. They may still struggle with evil desires, but they should not continue in these practices. In 1 Cor. 6:11, Paul clearly states that even those who sin in these ways can have their lives changed by Christ.

However, those who say that they are Christians but persist in these practices with no sign of remorse will not inherit the kingdom of God. Such people need to reevaluate their lives to see if they truly believe in Christ.

Retribution against believers will pay with eternal destruction.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

Dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

The “everlasting destruction” that Paul for salvation. Describes, is the lake of fire (see Rev. 20:14)—the place of eternal separation from God. Those people who are separated from God in eternity no longer have any hope

Some want to distort the gospel of Christ

Galatians 1:7-8

Which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Paul strongly denounced the Judaizers’ perversion of the gospel of Christ. He said that even if an angel from heaven comes preaching another message, that angel should be “eternally condemned.” If an angel came preaching another message, he would not be from heaven, no matter how he looked.

In 2 Cor. 11:14-15, Paul warned that Satan masquerades as an angel of light. Here he invoked a curse on any angel who spreads a false gospel—a fitting response to an emissary of hell. Paul extended that curse to include himself if he should pervert the gospel. His message must never change, for the truth of the gospel never changes. Paul used strong language because he was dealing with a life-and-death issue.

Be on guard against unprincipled men.

2 Peter 3:17

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

Always will challenge our faith. We still have much room for growth. If every day we find some way to draw closer to Christ, we will be prepared to stand for truth in any and all circumstances. Peter concludes this brief letter as he began, by urging his readers to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—to get to know him better and better.

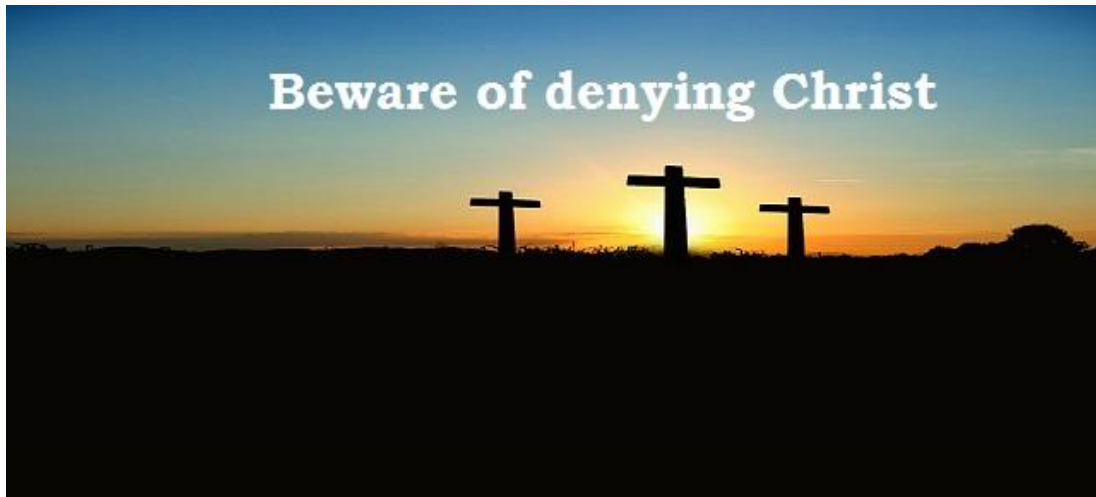
This is the most important step in refuting false teachers. No matter where we are in our spiritual journey, no matter how mature we are in our faith, the sinful world

Whoever denies me I will deny before my father.

Matthew 10:32-33

“Therefore everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. “But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Chapter 10



Beware of denying Christ.

Luke 12:8-10

"And I say to you, everyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; but he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God." And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him.

We disown Jesus when we

- (1) Hope no one will think we are Christians,
- (2) Decide *not* to speak up for what is right,
- (3) Are silent about our relationship with God,
- (4) Blend into society,
- (5) Accept our culture's non-Christian values.

By contrast, we acknowledge him when we

- (1) Live moral, upright, Christ-honoring lives,

- (2) Look for opportunities to share our faith with others,
- (3) Help others in need,
- (4) Take a stand for justice,
- (5) Love others,
- (6) Acknowledge our loyalty to Christ,
- (7) Use our lives and resources to carry out his desires rather than our own.

Beware of the leaven of Pharisees

Matthew 16:6

And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

The disciples answered Jesus' question with the common view—that Jesus was one of the great prophets come back to life. This belief may have stemmed from Deut. 18:18, where God said he would raise up a prophet from among the people.

Beware of evil workers

Philippians 3:2

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, and beware of the false circumcision;

Citizens of Philippi had the same rights and privileges as the citizens of Rome, because Philippi was a Roman colony. Likewise, we Christians

will one day experience all the special privileges of our heavenly citizenship, because we belong to Christ. Let us not be so tied to this life that we would be sorry to see Christ return.

Talk and philosophy will deceive some.

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

Paul writes against any philosophy of life based only on human ideas and experiences. Paul himself was a gifted philosopher, so he is not condemning philosophy.

He is condemning teaching that credits humanity, not Christ, with being the answer to life's problems. That approach becomes a false religion. There are many man-made approaches to life's problems that totally disregard God.

To resist heresy you must use your mind, keep your eyes on Christ, and study God's Word.

They will talk and deceive

Titus 1:10-11

For there are many who rebel against right teaching; they engage in useless talk and deceive people. This is especially true of those who insist on circumcision for salvation.

They must be silenced. By their wrong teaching, they have already turned whole families away from the truth. Such teachers only want your money.

Paul warned Titus to be on the lookout for people who teach wrong doctrines and lead others into error. Some false teachers are simply confused—they speak their misguided opinions without checking them against the Bible.

Others have evil motives—they pretend to be Christians only because they can get more money (“dishonest gain”), additional business, or a feeling of power from being a leader in the church.

Jesus and the apostles repeatedly warned against false teachers (see Mark 13:22; Acts 20:29; 2 Thes. 2:3-12; 2 Peter 3:3-7) because their teachings attack the foundations of truth and integrity upon which the Christian faith is built.

You can recognize false teachers because they will

- (1) Focus more attention on themselves than on Christ;
- (2) Ask you to do something that will compromise or dilute your faith;

- (3) De-emphasize the divine nature of Christ or the inspiration of the Bible; or
- (4) Urge believers to make decisions based more on human judgment than on prayer and Biblical guidelines.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I
accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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Additional comments and charts are taken from:

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