Beware

Intro: Consider Moses’ warning to the Israelites in Deu. 8:6-11, 14 “Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. 7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; 8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; 9 A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. 10 When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. 11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

Beware is used in the Bible 28 times in 26 verses. It means to “be on one’s guard,” “be cautious and alert to the dangers of,” to “take care of.” It is similar to “take heed” which is found 63 times in the Bible. The need to beware or take heed is certainly vital to our spiritual well being.

I. Of What Should We Beware?

A. Unbelief

1. Heb. 3:12 “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”
   a. They had seen the mighty works of God in bringing them out of Egypt, destroying the Egyptian army, feeding them, providing water, et al.
   b. Instead of believing, they believed the evil report of the 10 spies.
   c. Heb. 3:19 “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”
   d. That generation died out in the wilderness; not being able to enter the Promised Land.

2. We must have faith:
   a. Heb. 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
   b. That faith is an obedient faith:
      (1) Heb. 11:8 “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”
      (2) Gal. 5:6 “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

B. The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees

1. Mat. 16:6, 11-12 “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.... 11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”
   a. The doctrine of would be the teaching they gave and the influence through that teaching.
   b. Mat. 15:3, 9 “But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?... 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

2. There is also the Pharisees hypocrisy.
   a. Luke 12:1 “In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”
b. Jesus rebukes their hypocrisy; Mat. 23:23, 25, 27, 29 “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.... 25Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.... 27Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.... 29Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous.”

C. Covetousness
1. Luke 12:15 “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”
2. Mark 7:21-23 “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”
3. Covetousness is the greedy desire to have more, avarice.

D. Pretense
1. *Pretense* is to make an outward show, often to cover one's real intent.
2. Mark 12:38-40 “And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, 39And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.”
3. Paul used this word of those who taught the truth with an improper motive; Phi. 1:15, 18 “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:... 18What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”
4. How often do we put on a pretense for others?

E. False teachers
1. Mat. 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”
2. Phi. 3:2 “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.”
3. 2 Pet. 3:17 “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.”

II. Why Should We Beware?
A. Lest we be led astray:
1. Col. 2:8 “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
   a. *Spoil* means, “to gain control of by carrying off as booty, make captive of, rob.... in imagery of carrying someone away from the truth into the slavery of error” (BDAG).
   b. Satan is ever trying to carry us away into the slavery of error.
2. 2 Pet. 3:17 “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.”
3. Gal. 2:4 “And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:”
4. Many will be led astray by error.
   a. 2 Pet. 2:1-3 “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 3And through covetousness shall they with
feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.“

b. Jude 4 “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

5. Eph. 4:14 “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”

B. Lest we fall; 1 Cor. 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

III. WHO SHOULD BEWARE?
A. Preachers and teachers
1. 1 Tim. 4:16 “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”
2. Rom. 2:21 “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?”

B. Elders
1. Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
2. Tit. 1:9-11 “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 10For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”

C. All Christians
1. 2 John 8 “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”
2. Phi. 1:1; 3:1-2 “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:... 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. 2Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.”

IV. HOW CAN WE BEWARE?
A. Through knowledge
1. We need to hear God’s Word today:
   a. Jer. 22:29 “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.”
   b. Isa. 34:16 “Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.”
2. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
3. 2 Pet. 1:3 “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”
4. Lack of knowledge causes destruction:
   a. Hos. 4:6 “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”
   b. 2 Pet. 3:17-18 “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. 18But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”
B. **Watch and pray**
   1. Mark 13:33 “Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.”
   2. Mat. 26:41 “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Conclusion: We must all beware. Certainly part of being able to beware is that of giving warnings. All Christians should expect them and desire them because they help us get to heaven. Those who are in sin need to beware because God will punish those who do not obey the Gospel; 2 The. 1:7-9 “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”