

SOUND WORDS

“Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ.” (2Tim. 1:13)



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Lessons From History

Brother Matt Adams recently visited Egypt and Israel for about two weeks. In talking with him about this very memorable trip, he had many interesting observations. One that stuck with me was when he related how awesome the trip was from the standpoint of what he saw firsthand. He sailed on the Sea of Galilee, visited Gethsemane, Golgotha, and Jerusalem, and climbed Mt. Sinai. He was also able to visit the Sphinx and the pyramids and get an insight as to why the Israelites admired the Egyptian foods so much. He told me that in spite of the magnificence of the places he visited, it was sad that he did not see local brethren. To our knowledge there is no true church in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. The place where the first gospel sermon was recorded no longer has a faithful local congregation. How sad!

How did this happen? Perhaps it is because local brethren stopped being watchful for the dangers of heathen religions. Certainly Judaizing teachers have had their sway in Jerusalem, and the heresies of Islam have stifled and smothered the truth in the rest of the area. Brethren, if it happened there, are we so naïve as to think it cannot happen in this country?

In many congregations today, there are brethren who are tolerant of error and who have a “politically correct” attitude about the pulpit. They desire to have their ears scratched rather than listen to scriptural lessons that expose errors and warn brethren. Today local congregations are faced with a “new denominationalism” in the form of “community fellowships,” accepting and “fellowshipping” every belief. These groups have the “I’m O.K. - You’re O.K.” concept. This “come-as-you-are” mindset has become so popular that many brethren are welcoming it.

“Dynamic speakers” and “worship leaders” have taken the place of sound gospel preaching. Conviction has been replaced with tolerance for any and every error. Sadly the day may be approaching when “a generation that knows not God” will find themselves absorbed into the mainstream of denominationalism. When conviction is sacrificed, false religion has a field day. Make no mistake; what we think impossible can very well become reality! Look at how far we have fallen to this point! Let’s all return to the “old paths wherein is the right way” (Jer. 6:16) and learn from history so we do not repeat the tragedy of the Mideast.

An Islamic America? No way! I’m sure this was said of other countries in the past too. --- SWA ---

News & Notes

Sickness: Bea Baston, Martha Beck, Leonard Beck, Ronnie Gandy, Eunice Oglesby, and Ed Stacey are all struggling with chronic illnesses. They are all examples to us. Also remember their spouses and family members who care for them. Keep them all in your prayers; send cards, and call or visit.

Sympathy: Our hearts go out to Jane Ann Fox in the recent loss of her younger sister.

Next Gospel Meeting: Our next gospel meeting will be July 13-18 with Connie Adams. Include those dates on your calendar and schedule your summer plans to allow maximum attendance. Invite your neighbors and friends now; don’t wait! Connie and his wife will stay with Stan and Carla.

Men’s Training Class: Enthusiasm is high and attendance is up in our men’s training class. We are encouraged by so many men who are willing to grow and improve themselves in public worship duties. We have gained six new Wednesday night song leaders so far and also five new men who are willing to offer the invitation.

Elders Admonitions: Our elders recently admonished and encouraged us to more diligent service. Let’s examine ourselves and see where we need to improve in our service to the Lord.

Potential Monetary Crisis: Due to increases in property insurance coverage on the building (as is happening throughout Florida) and increasing costs overall, we find ourselves in a financial crisis. Our premium has increased over 60%. Pray about this, and members, do what you can to help.

Electronic Mailing of Sound Words: Due to the monetary problems, we want to utilize electronic mailing of this bulletin to the maximum extent possible. If you are able to receive it via e-mail, please send an e-mail to soundwords@live.com. You will be added to the mailing list and receive Sound Words in Adobe format.

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SOUND THE WARNING IN TIME

We who live on the Gulf Coast know well the value of early storm warnings. We are fast approaching another hurricane season, and those who realize the devastating potential of a hurricane are aware of the value of early warnings. When these warnings are given, there is only a small window of opportunity to decide whether you will heed the warning, minimizing potential harm to life and property or ignore the warnings and chance that you will survive unscathed. Those who are wise always heed the warnings and make the proper preparations to avoid or minimize harm that may occur.

The children of Israel were told to heed the watchmen of Israel. These were men who had the task of early warning of impending danger (Jer. 6:17). They were to be diligent and alert to the approach of any threat to the walls of the city they watched over. They were to be ever alert and ready to sound the trumpet long before the enemy began battering the gates or laying siege to the city. If they did not do their jobs properly, lives were lost and cities fell (Isa. 62:6; 56:10).

Warnings are of no value if they are issued only after the disaster has struck. Anyone can tell you something is dangerous when it is facing them in the eye. The task of early warners is to see the dangers coming ahead of time and alert the population so they can make proper preparations.

We live in a time when many resent those who spiritually warn their brethren of impending dangers. These spiritual watchmen are called names like “brotherhood watchdogs,” “alarmists,” “fatalists,” and numerous other derogatory titles. Why would anyone resent or make fun of being warned of impending danger?

Some do not want their selfish world altered. They have become comfortable like they are and deem themselves immune from any dangers that may come on others. They are smug and self-sufficient and do not see themselves in need of anyone else to help them see the enemy. These will certainly perish spiritually because they will only see dangers when the sword is at their throat.

Some are deluded. They believe that there is no such thing as danger; therefore, there is no need for anyone to sound alarms. These know little about the history of digression thereby ignoring any warning and insisting there is no danger even in the face of certain departure from the faith. They simply deny there is a problem even though it is beyond question. Read Isaiah 56:10 and note how God describes those who were supposed to be the Watchmen of Israel.

Some are ignorant. They hear the warnings and see the dangers but react with a compromising spirit seeking to make alliances with the enemy and embrace error as some kind of “buddy.” These believe they can serve the Lord and the heresies of the world at the same time. They are ignorant of the history of God’s people and can be told nothing because they think they know it all.

Brethren, we need to be thankful for watchmen who sound the alarms of early warning. We need to heed their warnings. Many faithful brethren who sound alarms of impending errors are made out by some brethren to be some kind of child who is always “crying wolf.” Certainly wisdom demands that we make sure that impending dangers are real and that we do not see a “bear behind every bush.” Upon finding a warning to be legitimate, we are bound by honesty to admit the danger and then go about to warn all we can.

It is beyond belief how anyone could legitimately and seriously hate and resent those who sound warnings of impending dangers in the church. Several years ago, brethren warned of the dangers of the missionary society, the dangers of institutionalism, and the grace-unity heresy. The church was decimated with all of these errors and after the enemy was released, only then did some come around to a proper defense of truth, only to find themselves cast out from among the people they had “cushioned” from hearing all the “endless warnings of over-zealous brethren.” Although many preachers finally saw the light, the churches where they preached followed the crowd into digression and damnation.

More recently some in the church have refused to see the dangers of the 70 A.D. doctrine, the Day-Age controversy, the marriage-divorce-remarriage issue, and Romans 14 errors. In most cases it is impossible to even talk about these issues with those who hold to a compromised position. Evidently some resent those who sounded alarms on these issues years ago. Instead of respecting the truth about the dangers of these doctrines, many have buried their heads in the sand and ignored the dangerous ends of these errors.

The more we embrace the enemy and his notions, the less likely we are to see the dangers of error and the proclaimers of it. It is time we finally get the lesson of Peter that we cannot “warm our hands over the enemies’ fire” (John 18:18-25).

Israel made alliances with the inhabitants of the land rather than utterly destroy them. As a result they were constantly faced with oppression from the enemies of God. The same result will come today when we consider the errors of Satan as harmless. The question is asked by the wise man, “can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned” (Prov. 6:27)?

Brethren, we need to awake to the dangers of moral sins also. Social drinking, immodesty, gambling, substance abuse, bad language, lascivious dancing, and pornography are real dangers to our souls. Ask for lessons on these and other vital subjects and heed the warnings from the Scriptures. The dangers of modernism and apostasy are real. May the ranks of those who sound the warning before the enemy is upon us increase, and may God help us to take heed to those warnings! ---SWA---