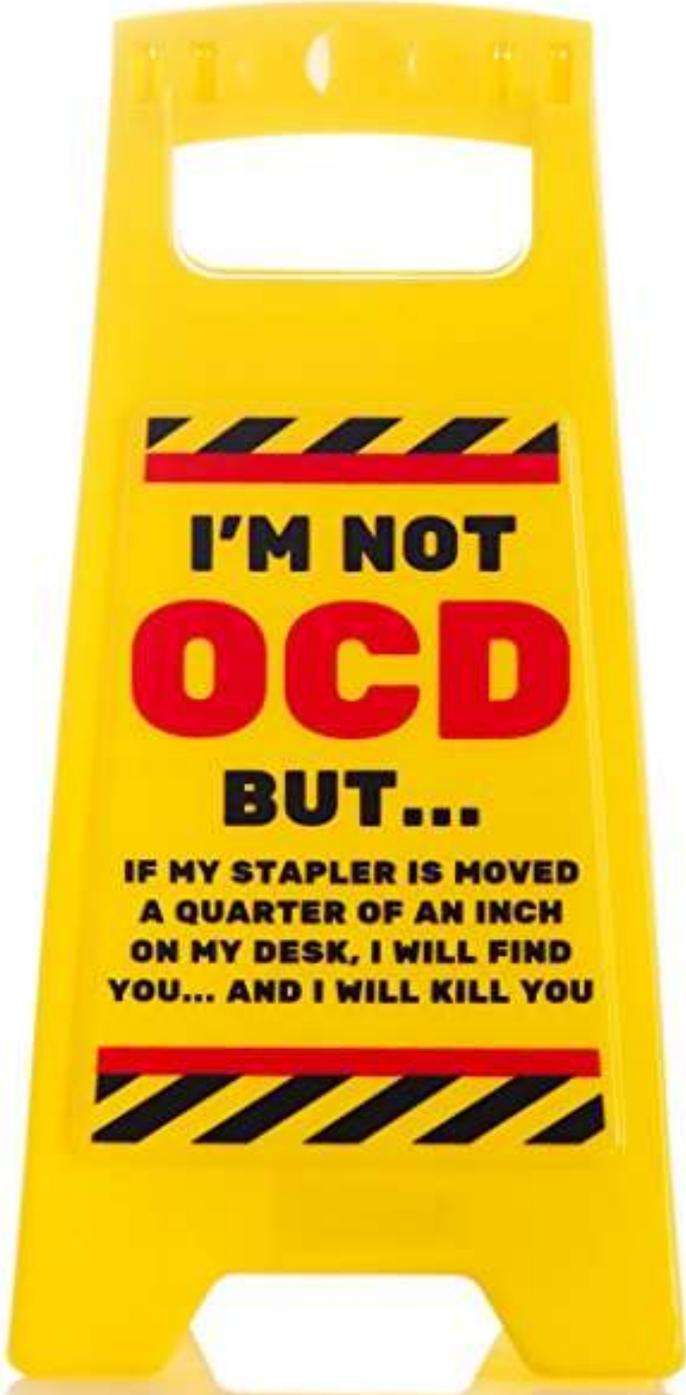


Warning signs can be helpful things...





**I'M NOT
OCD
BUT...**

**IF MY STAPLER IS MOVED
A QUARTER OF AN INCH
ON MY DESK, I WILL FIND
YOU... AND I WILL KILL YOU**

**TOUCHING WIRES CAUSES
INSTANT DEATH**



\$200 FINE



Newcastle Tramway Authority



NO REPARKING
AFTER INITIAL
PARKING WITHIN
THIS LOT ON THE
SAME DAY

WARNING

ARTICLES OF VALUE SHOULD
NOT BE LEFT ON SEATS WHILST
RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

We have warning signs...for what reason?

- To warn us about stuff.

Brainstorm for a minute: Think of some “warning signs” in Scripture.

Why are there so many warnings in the Bible?

- Because there are things that can weaken our faith, distract us from pursuing the Lord, distract us from Scripture and prayer, divert us from the priority of our corporate gathering as a church.

What is the ultimate source for all of those things that can weaken, distract, and divert us?

- “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” ~ 1 Pet. 5:8

Just as a little aside here, what are Satan's strategies against Christ's blood-bought church?

1. To lie and tempt you to doubt God. That was his first—and still his most effective—strategy: Gen. 3:1-5; John 8:44.
2. To thwart evangelism. 2 Cor. 4:4. People can see facts and figures and proofs, but completely miss the glory of Christ. Piper: "He not only speaks what is false, he hides what is true."
3. He masquerades as a teacher of righteousness. 2 Cor. 11:13-15. See also Matt. 7:15, Acts 20:30, 1 Tim. 4:1. He joins a lot of churches and becomes a teacher.

Just as a little aside here, what are Satan's strategies against Christ's blood-bought church?

4. He tempts people to sin. He tempted Jesus to sin, but was unsuccessful—Matt. 4:1-11. Notice the strategy Paul mentions in 2 Cor. 11:1-3.
5. He tempts some to abandon their faith. 1 Thess. 3:5. Tempts them to think that the pressure is too great, and that the only way to make it stop is to abandon Christ.
6. He throws obstacles in the way of missions. 1 Thess. 2:17-18. Anything he can think of to stop the spread of the gospel.

Just as a little aside here, what are Satan's strategies against Christ's blood-bought church?

7. He continually accuses Christians before God. Rev. 12:10. His accusations are true...but that is not the end of the story. With every accusation, we have an Advocate in heaven "who always lives to make intercession" (Heb. 7:25) for us.
8. He distracts with smaller things. 1 John 2:15-16. Glittery trinkets like attention, power, popularity, money, fame, pleasure, comfort, etc.
9. He tempts you to feel pride. James 4:6-10. Pride in self, in accomplishments—anything to take glory from God and ascribe it to self.

Okay—here's where we're traveling in our journey through John's second letter:

- v. 1-3 ~ John's greeting to the church he loves:
Grace, mercy, and peace
- v. 4-6 ~ John's request of the church he loves:
love one another
- v. 7-11 ~ John's concern for the church he loves:
watch yourselves
- v. 12-13 ~ John's desire for the church he loves:
that their joy may be complete

Now—think about this: what was his great concern? What would happen if false teaching spread, and believers were discouraged, etc., etc.?

John's concern for the church he loves ~ v. 7-11

Here is the issue: the purity and proclamation of the gospel would be lost. Spurgeon puts it like this:

“O friends, it is better for us that the sun was quenched than that the gospel were gone!...If the whole church were to die for the defense of the gospel, it is a cheap price to pay for the maintenance of it. I speak solemnly when I say that our main care in life should be to preserve this gospel intact, and hand it down to our descendants. God grant that future ages may not have to curse us for having been undecided or cowardly in the hour of conflict!”

And right there is the danger of false teaching.

John's concern for the church he loves – v. 7-11

Okay—two things are happening in this passage. This is the heart of his short letter—this section contains the only imperatives (the *do this* words) in the letter (v. 7, 10). John has been laying the groundwork for this section in the previous verses (we know that by the little word “*For*” in v. 7).

Here are the two things in this passage:

John's exposure of the deceivers, v. 7

- Their confession and their character

John's exhortation to the believers, v. 8-11

- There are two imperatives and a call for discernment in these verses.

John's exposure of the deceivers – v. 7

Ok—we took a look a couple of weeks ago at the antichrist in Scripture, and we have looked at the confession these deceivers make: they were teaching that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh, likely teaching that because matter is evil and only spirit is good, that the divine Christ could not have been united with sinful human flesh.

- As Paul put it in his letter to the Galatians, who were dealing with a different twisting of the gospel, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel...” See Gal. 1:6-12.

John's exposure of the deceivers – v. 7

If the teaching of Christ is distorted, what happens to the gospel?

- It is no longer a saving gospel.

If that is the case, what are the implications?

- There is no eternal salvation, no forgiveness of sins, no reconciliation with God—only wrath.
- But beyond that—remember the message of the letter to Philemon? If the gospel transforms lives, it must also transform relationships.
- A non-saving gospel will not change or transform a life...and therefore it cannot be a source of hope for the transformation of a marriage.

John's exposure of the deceivers – v. 7

If the teaching of Christ is distorted, what happens to the gospel? It is no longer a saving gospel.

- A non-saving gospel cannot provide you with hope for rescue from depression.
- A non-saving gospel cannot enable you to endure suffering and hardship and sorrow.
- A non-saving gospel cannot help you to stand under temptation.
- A non-saving gospel cannot give you the hope of God's vindication and eradication of sin and evil.
- A non-saving gospel cannot reverse the curse of Gen. 3.

John's exposure of the deceivers – v. 7

That is why John was so concerned when he heard what these deceivers/antichrists were teaching.

- He heard their confession—their doctrine—and immediately knew the implications.

What should our confession be?

John Stott puts it like this: “Jesus did not become the Christ or the Son at His baptism, or cease to be the Christ or the Son before His death; Jesus was ‘the Christ come in the flesh.’ The two natures, manhood and Godhead, were united already at His birth, never to be divided.”

John's exposure of the deceivers ~ v. 7

John writes that these deceivers "have gone out into the world."

- They did not have little horns on their heads, or evil, dark eyes...they didn't look like this:



They probably looked more like this:



John's exposure of the deceivers – v. 7

They were 2 Cor. 11:1-4, 12-15.

- They were impostors—just as Christ had come into the world, and had sent His disciples out into the world (John 17:18, 20:21), so the father of lies sent his emissaries out into the world.
- The Christ was being aped, or mimicked, by the antichrist. Stott: “We are to think of them as itinerant false prophets, travelling along the great Roman roads of Asia Minor, seeking to insinuate their error into the churches they visited.”

So John tells his readers to test them, test their confession: Jesus Christ is fully man and fully God.

John's exhortation to the believers – v. 8-11

And that leads John to his first major imperative:

- “Watch yourselves...”

And with that imperative he gives them a reason:

- “...*so that* you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.”

What is he saying here?

- If they are taken in, deceived, by this false teaching, they stand to lose something.

John's warning here uses the same Gk verb as Jesus uses in Mark 13:23 (see 13:5, 9, 23, 33, 35, 36).

John's exhortation to the believers ~ v. 8-11

“Watch yourselves...”

Apparently, for a genuine believer to dabble in false teaching, to the degree that one might start to be taken in by it and think it is true, has an eternal impact.

- Let's start with the parable in Luke 19:11-27.
- That there will be rewards in heaven for believers, and degrees of those rewards, is clear both from the parable in Luke as well as 1 Cor. 3:8, 10-16; Matt. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 6:5-8; and others.
- “The Christian life leads in the end to a reward, and failure to persevere in the truth (and in right conduct) can lead to loss of what God has promised to His people.” ~ J. Howard Marshall

John's exhortation to the believers – v. 8-11

“Watch yourselves...”

This is not a question of losing eternal salvation—according to God's word that cannot be lost: John 6:37-40; Rom. 5:1, 8:1, 8:28-39; Heb. 7:25; 1 Pet. 1:4.

But here's the thing: John dearly loved these redeemed ones, and he had worked and labored among them for years. They were his “little children” (1 John 5:21), and he didn't want them to lose out on any capacity for joy and delight in eternity.

- It is clear that Jesus desires His people to be full of His joy—and if that joy can be known here on earth, how much more in heaven? – John 15:11, 16:22, 17:13.

John's exhortation to the believers ~ v. 8-11

“Watch yourselves...”

If we will be full of Christ's joy in heaven, then a loss of reward will not mean a loss of joy: all believers will be full of joy, but will perhaps have a greater or lesser capacity for that based on reward.

Jonathan Edwards: “Though all (in heaven) are perfectly free from pride, yet as some will have greater degrees of divine knowledge than others and will have larger capacities to see more of the divine perfections, so they will see more of their own comparative littleness and nothingness and, therefore, will be the lowest abased in humility.”

John's exhortation to the believers – v. 8-11

“Everyone who goes on ahead...” (v. 9)

What is John's point in v. 9?

It's simple and straightforward, like John always is in his letters:

- One who *teaches* a distorted view of Christ, one who *adheres* to a distorted view of Christ—neither is a believer.
- This is very sobering language—the warning that John gives cannot be overemphasized.
- Any teaching that does not agree with, or is not consistent with, Scripture should be rejected.

John's exhortation to the believers – v. 8-11

“...do not receive him into your house...” (v. 10)

Here is John's 2nd major imperative: don't receive him into your house, don't give him any greeting.

- Sound a little extreme? A little too much?

See John 10:1, 10; Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29.

- Give them no practical encouragement—remember, these are *teachers of false doctrine about the incarnation*, not believers caught up in it. Big difference.
- And these are not Mormons or JW's we might try to evangelize. V. 10-11 concern those in the church seeking to draw disciples away from Christ.

Irenaeus (130-202) relates these two accounts in his book *Against Heresies* –

- The early church father Polycarp (69-155), when asked by the notorious heretic Marcion, “Do you know me?” replied, “I do know you—the firstborn of Satan!”
- The apostle John once encountered another clear and notorious heretic, Cerinthus, in a public bathhouse in Ephesus. Instead of greeting him, John turned and fled, crying out to those with him, “Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within!”

“If John’s instruction still seems harsh, it is perhaps because his concern for the glory of the Son and the good of men’s souls is greater than ours, and because ‘the tolerance on which we pride ourselves’ is in reality an ‘indifference to truth’ (Alexander). The false teacher whom John will not have entertained by the church is ‘the deceiver’ and ‘the antichrist.’ His teaching is derogatory to Christ and dangerous to men. How then can we make him welcome in our home or church or wish him well on his journey? If we do so in the name of love, are we sure we are acting in the best interests of the false teachers, and of those they would pervert? ‘Charity has its limits: it must not be shewn to one man in such a way as to do grievous harm to others (Plummer).’” ~ John Stott