

WATCHFULNESS WITH A PROMISE

Romans 16:17-20

as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

(7) For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

(8) Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. (9) Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. (10) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: (11) For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

(12) Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. (13) The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

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INTRODUCTION

Our Lord Jesus and his apostles warned us frequently to be on watch, ever watchful over our souls, watchful lest we fall into temptation, watchful regarding the snares of Satan and the wiles of the devil. Our Savior warns us more often to beware of false prophets than any other danger we face in this world.

- *“Lo, here is Christ.”*
- *“Lo, there is Christ.”*
- *“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees!”*

Do not pay any attention to any man, any doctrine, and idea that would turn you away from the blessed simplicity of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. —

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9).

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(Ephesians 2:8-9) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

We must be watchful, ever guarding against false prophets and the cunning craftiness of those messengers of Satan who would turn us away from Christ and the gospel of the grace of God.

(Matthew 26:41) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

(Mark 13:33) Take ye heed, watch and pray.

(Mark 13:37) And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

(Luke 21:36) Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

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(1 Corinthians 16:13) Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

(Ephesians 6:18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

(Colossians 4:2) Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

(1 Thessalonians 5:6) Let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

(2 Timothy 4:5) Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

(1 Peter 4:7) The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.

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He who is made of God unto us Wisdom says, *“Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors”* (Proverbs 8:34).

(Luke 12:37) Blessed *are* those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.

(Revelation 3:2) Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.

In the Gospel of Romans, after giving his final words of salutation and commendation to the saints at Rome, the apostle Paul does a very unusual thing. His very last word to the saints of God at Rome and his last word to us at the close of this epistle is a call to watchfulness.

Here is a call to **WATCHFULNESS WITH A PROMISE**. That is the title of my message — **WATCHFULNESS WITH A PROMISE**. My text is Romans 16:17-20. — **WATCHFULNESS WITH A PROMISE** (Romans 16:17-20).

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(Romans 16:17-20) Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (18) For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (19) For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. (20) And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Proposition: God's servants, faithful pastors, are door-keepers in the house of God, watchmen upon the walls of Zion, men appointed by God to keep watch over your souls and to guard the house of God, protecting his church from the assaults of Satan; but, as you care for your souls, you must yourselves be watchful. — That is Paul's doctrine in our text.

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- I must watch over your souls as God's appointed doorkeeper in this assembly, as God's appointed watchman on the walls of Zion.
- You must watch over your own soul.
- The primary, central thing over which we must constantly be watchful is gospel doctrine, always guarding against anything that would turn us away from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus.

Divisions: I call your attention to three things in these four verses. This message is a call for watchfulness. This text is a call for watchfulness.

1. We must always be on guard, watching over our souls, lest we be moved away from the hope of the gospel (vv. 17-19).
2. As surely as we trust the Lord Jesus Christ, as surely as we are not moved away from the doctrine of Christ, we shall triumph over our adversary the Devil (v. 20).
3. In all things, as we believe God, we are assured of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CALL TO WATCHFULNESS

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1st — Here is a call to watchfulness. — **We must always be on guard, watching over our souls, lest we be moved away from the hope of the gospel** (vv. 17-19). Let's look at this call closely.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.
(v. 17)

Here we are called to do two things: (1.) Watch for and mark those who would subvert the doctrine of the gospel, and (2.) Avoid them.

WATCH — We are to watch for those who would cause divisions in the church and kingdom of God, promoting scandals among us and making us scandals before others. The world loves to find something scandalous to say against our God and his church. And Satan promotes such scandals by creating strife and division within. — “*Watch and pray!*”

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Those who seek to divide the church of God are never content to simply leave. They are always determined to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30).

(Acts 20:28-32) 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. (29) For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. (30) Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. (31) Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. (32) And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

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The thing from which Satan seeks to turn us is “the doctrine which ye have learned,” the doctrine God taught you by his Spirit (Titus 2:11-14; Galatians 1:3-9; 2 Corinthians 11:3), the gospel, the doctrine by which you were converted.

(Titus 2:11-14) For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (12) Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (13) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (14) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

(Galatians 1:3-6) Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, (4) Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world,

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according to the will of God and our Father: (5)
To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(Galatians 1:6-9) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

(2 Corinthians 11:3) But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Paul was inspired of God the Holy Ghost to put this call to watchfulness at the end of his warm, loving salutations, because nothing could be more

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expressive of his loving and affectionate care than this — that they abide in the truth of the gospel (2 John 1-2). — **Let no one turn you away from that doctrine by which God has saved you. — What is that doctrine?**

- The Character of God
- The Person and Work of Christ
- Salvation by Grace Alone
- Faith in Christ

Mark those who would add something to the gospel and thereby turn you away from Christ.

- Take aim at them as approaching enemies.
- Mark them as dangers to avoid.
- Beware of them. Beware of their designs, no matter how they approach you.

AVOID — Having marked the enemies, Paul tells us to “*avoid them.*”

- Stay away from them.
- When they attempt to contact you, ignore them.
- Do not allow them into your house.

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- Do not bid them God speed.
- When they approach you, push them aside and walk away.
- Do not investigate their doctrine (Deuteronomy 12:30).

(Deuteronomy 12:30) Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

Someone rightly said, “Heresy does not bludgeon us into belief. We are seduced.”

Verse 18 — That brings us to verse 18. Here the apostle tells us why we must mark and avoid these heretics.

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words

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and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” (v. 18)

They do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies.

- They do not preach Christ.
- They do not serve our God.
- They do not seek your good.
- They are self-serving men, gratifying their own evil lusts by seeking to destroy your soul, turning you away from Christ.

They deceive unsuspecting, unsuspecting, trusting souls by their “good words and fair speeches.”

- They use the words of Scripture, making arguments from the Bible, quoting Scripture, as Satan did tempting our Lord.
- It has been the practice of heretics in all ages to use the words and phrases that faithful servants of God use (The Grace of God, The Righteousness of Christ, The Spirit of Christ, Substitution, Blood Atonement), but use them to cover their determination to turn you away from

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Christ.

This call to watchfulness is pressed upon us by the fact that God has been so gracious to us (v. 18).

“For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.” (v. 19)

What Paul says here to the Roman believers, I say to you. We must constantly be watchful because our faith is known and spoken of throughout the world.

- Our Faith in Christ
- Our Doctrine
- Our Dogmatism

If any of our own are snared and taken by Satan, the scandal will spread everywhere overnight.

- B. P.
- F. W.
- E. R.
- A. K.

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• D. R.

I am thankful, beyond what words can express, for God's great grace in granting to us the obedience of faith in Christ. I am so very thankful to our God for his great grace in giving us a voice that is heard around the world in this generation. But the grace we enjoy and the place of usefulness God has given us marks us as targets for Satanic assault.

- Stephen (Acts 6 and 7)
- Paul and Silas at Philippi (Acts 16)
- Paul at Thessalonica (Acts 17)
- Paul at Corinth (Acts 18)
- The Uproar at Ephesus (Acts 19-20)
- “*All Jerusalem was in an uproar*” and tried to kill Paul (Acts 21:31).

Because “ye are sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” Because God has given you faith in Christ, because he uses you to proclaim the gospel to so many, because you

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are the examples to whom so many look for guidance and strength...

- Be wise concerning good gospel doctrine, too wise to be deceived.
- Be simple concerning false, evil doctrine, too simple to be deceiving.

Illustration: *Happy Jack*

I love the story C. H. Spurgeon frequently told about a man called “**Happy Jack**.” — “There was once a poor man, a huckster, who used to go round the country villages selling little goods. This poor creature, in going round on his journeys heard some old woman singing the little ditty:

‘I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.’

Jack recalled that. ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘that just suits me.’ So he began to hum it himself as he went round on his huckstering expeditions and, by

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God's good grace, that little ditty burnt its way into poor Jack's heart.

After some time he became a converted man, gave up his swearing and drinking, and began regularly to attend the church services. At last he determined that he would join the church; so he went to the minister.

The minister said. '**Well, friend, what can you say for yourself?**' 'Not much,' he said, 'Only this: I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all, But Jesus Christ is my all in all.' 'Well,' said the minister, '**you must tell me more than that.**' 'No,' said Jack, 'I can't, for that is my confession of faith, and that is all I know.' 'Well, friend,' said the minister, 'I can't refuse you church fellowship, but **you will have to come before the church meeting,** and the members will have to see you and judge you.'

Jack accordingly went to the church meeting, and there sat some good old-fashioned deacons,

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some of whom began to see whether they could find fault with him. He stood up, and **on being requested to state his experience**, simply said:

‘I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.’

One old deacon said, ‘Is that all you have to say?’ ‘Yes,’ says Jack, ‘that’s all.’

The minister said, ‘You may ask my friend here some questions if you like.’ So one says, ‘Brother Jack, **have you not many doubts and fears?**’ ‘No,’ said Jack, ‘I never can doubt but that ‘I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,’ for I know I am; and I cannot doubt that ‘Jesus Christ is my all in all’ for He says He is, and how can I doubt that?’

‘Well,’ said another, ‘but **sometimes I lose my evidences and my graces**, and then I get very sad.’ ‘Oh,’ said Jack, ‘I never lose anything, for in the first place ‘I’m a poor sinner, and nothing

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at all’ — no one can rob me if I am nothing at all — and in the second place, ‘Jesus Christ is my all in all,’ — and who can rob Him? He is in Heaven; I never get richer or poorer, for I am always nothing, but I always have everything.’

Then another began to question him thus: ‘But my dear friend Jack, **don’t you sometimes doubt whether you are a child of God?**’ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘I don’t quite understand you; but I can tell you I never doubt but that ‘I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,’ and that ‘Jesus Christ is my all in all.’”

Always after that in the villages they used to call him ‘Happy Jack,’ for he was always happy; and the reason was that you could not drive him from that simple standing point, ‘There is nothing in me: I believe in Christ; I deserve punishment; I am lost in myself, but I trust in Him who came into the world to save sinners, and I know He will not let me perish.’”

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Now, look at Romans 16:20.

PROMISED TRIUMPH

2nd — Here is a promise of triumph. — **As surely as we trust the Lord Jesus Christ, as surely as we are not moved away from the doctrine of Christ, we shall triumph over our adversary the Devil.** — *“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly”* (v. 20).

Those words “*shall bruise*” do not indicate a desire or even a prayer. Rather “*shall bruise*” is a declaration of fact. This is a matter of certainty. — As surely as Satan’s servants stir up divisions and raise scandals against us, “*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*”

(1 Corinthians 11:19) For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

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(1 John 2:18-24) Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. (19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. (20) But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. (21) I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. (22) Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. (23) Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.* (24) Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

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“The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” — What a delightful, comforting, invigorating promise! The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Satan is a subtle foe, a powerful foe, and a relentless foe. But the promise is absolute. My brother, my sister, Satan shall be bruised under your feet shortly. He has come down in a rage and with great to the earth, because he knows that he has but a short time (Revelation 12:12).

But how is he to be conquered and brought under our feet? We cannot subdue him! You and I are nothing before Satan’s assaults and temptations. But he who is our God, the God of peace, shall bruise him and bruise him under our feet! Though you and I have nothing to do in the work, we have all the blessedness in the victory. Our God will bruise him and bring him down; but it shall be under our feet!

As Joshua called for the children of Israel to come and put their feet upon the necks of their enemies, so our almighty Joshua will do for all who go to war with him, when he brings Satan under their feet,

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(Joshua 10:24-25).

(Joshua 10:24-25) And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near and put their feet upon the necks of them. (25) And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

My brothers, my sisters, children of God, when you are harassed with temptations and groan, thinking, “How long shall my enemy afflict me?” the Lord promises that he will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. As with his people of old, our God in great wisdom and grace, does not drive the Canaanites out before us all at once. He does it little by little, lest the beasts of the field increase upon us. But he will destroy them with a mighty destruction

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until they are utterly destroyed (Deuteronomy 7:22-23).

(Deuteronomy 7:22-23) And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. (23) But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

If the Lord were to destroy Satan at once, if we had no foes from within and no temptations from without, if no seducers and deceivers assailed us, the evil beasts of the field in our own hearts (spiritual pride and Pharisaical righteousness) would increase upon us and be more deadly in evil than all the other devices of Satan. **The Lord God keeps his people humbly looking to him for grace, looking to Christ for strength, looking his Spirit for sustenance by continually making us see, and know, and feel, the plague of our hearts.** Still, the promise is “*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly!*”

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This promise applies to...

- Your Sickness — Shortly, Suddenly, Unexpectedly, and Soon!
- Your Family Trouble — Shortly, Suddenly, Unexpectedly, and Soon!
- Your Own Falls and Failures — Shortly, Suddenly, Unexpectedly, and Soon!
- Your Implacable Foes — Shortly, Suddenly, Unexpectedly, and Soon!

And there is a day that will soon come, when our dear Savior, he Lord Jesus Christ will utterly destroy our adversary the Devil. When our Lord Jesus Christ has shut up the fiend of hell in the bottomless pit forever, never to be loosed again, do not, no, not for a moment, lose sight of this sweet promise. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly, suddenly, unexpectedly, and soon!

(Revelation 21:1-5) And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (2) And I John saw the holy city, new

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Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (5) And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

(Revelation 22:1-6) And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. (2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. (3) And there shall be

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no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: (4) And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. (5) And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (6) And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Now, let's go back to our text, Romans 16. Read the last sentence of verse 20 with me.

ASSURED GRACE

3rd — Here is a blessed assurance of grace. — **In all things, as we believe God, we are assured of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.** — “*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. — AMEN!*” This is our Lord's own promise of assured grace. Even as we wait for the God of peace to bruise Satan

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under our feet, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (all grace) shall be with us! A his promise to our souls is — “*My grace is sufficient for thee.*” — (2 Corinthians 12:1-10).

Amen.