

Woke? No, Really Wake Up!

And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Romans 13:1-12

“Be Woke!” “Get Woke!” “Act Woke!” These phrases dominate pop-culture today. But what do they really mean? And, more importantly, why does it really matter? Dictionary.com describes “woke” as “being conscious of racial discrimination in society and other forms of oppression and injustice. In mainstream use, woke can also more generally describe someone or something as being ‘with it.’”^[1] So, to be “woke” is to be aware. Awareness? What could be wrong with that? Of course, to some degree being aware of discrimination, oppression, or injustice can be a good thing. If you see things that are wrong and don’t acknowledge it, if you just sweep such things under the rug, it only encourages more destructive behavior. But awareness is one thing; perceived solutions are another. And that’s where the “woke” culture of today is anything but “awake”.

The woke movement is more of a pietistic scrubbing of society which defines good and evil in very specific, even biased terms, and then seeks to annihilate anything and everything which the movement defines as “evil”. Movements such as these tend only to deconstruct and destroy, leaving things in more chaos than ever. That’s not just my opinion. Former President Barak Obama even raised such a concern when he said, “This idea of purity and you’re never compromised and you’re politically woke, and all that stuff — you should get over that quickly. The world is messy. There are ambiguities. People who do really good stuff have flaws.”^[2] Good point. Here is another way to say that: Our best deeds are still full of selfishness and sin. And merely casting stones isn’t going to ultimately solve the big issues that matter.

Being “woke” on our terms isn’t going to solve things. That’s why Romans 13 tells us to do something else. We are called to “wake up” to what God says about things and to what God has done to remedy the brokenness and sin of our world. Yes, wake up to your sin and your brokenness. Take it seriously. But realize that everyone else is a 100% sinner also. Just calling it out doesn’t save us from it. So also wake up from the slumber of thinking that this world’s solutions will solve the problems of violence, immorality, profanity, coveting, lying, deceiving, et al. Yes, wake up to your sinfulness, but then also wake up to God’s antidote to the human condition, the Savior, Jesus the Messiah. He took all the barbs and accusations of the “woke” pietists on himself (as well as their sins, too). He took our sins and transgressions upon himself. In fact, He not only suffered the just temporal punishments that we might desire for such deeds, He also took upon Himself the eternal punishments for such things so that He can offer us His perfect life as a gift.

Wake up to that! It will change your heart. It will change your mind. It will allow you to be merciful in a merciless world. It will allow you to humbly serve others with no thought of personal gain. It will allow you to face whatever this world throws at you because really “waking up” means putting your trust in Christ in all things with your eyes wide open to who you are, and more importantly, to who He is and what He has done for you.

[1] <https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/woke/>

[2] <https://nypost.com/2019/10/30/obama-rips-woke-culture-at-foundation-event/>