PERGAMOS & THYATIRA: CHURCHES OF COMPROMISE

Revelation 2:12-29
2-27-2022



INTRODUCTION:

***Our church must never compromise with those who practice what Jesus hates! (v. 15**

Remember 4 facts about compromise:

I. COMPROMISE IS <u>NEVER JUSTIFIED</u>! (V. 13, 19)
(The <u>Inexcusableness</u> of Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise is not justified,
even though <u>you are doing a work for Christ</u> (v. 13a, 19)

B. Compromise is not justified,
even though <u>wickedness abounds all around you</u> (v. 13b)

C. Compromise is not justified,
even though <u>you may personally remain "unaffected" by it</u> (v. 13c)

II. COMPROMISE <u>MUST BE IDENTIFIED</u>! (V. 14-15, 20-21)
(The <u>Warning</u> About Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise happens when a church is <u>tolerant</u>

B. Compromise happens when a Church is <u>deceived</u>
1. Beware: They are <u>religious</u>
2. Beware: They are <u>seductive</u>

III. COMPROMISE HAS <u>SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES</u>! (V. 16, 22-23)
(The <u>Price Tag</u> for Joining Hands With False Religion)

IV. OVERCOMING COMPROMISE HAS <u>GREAT REWARD</u>! (V. 17, 24-29)
(The <u>Prize</u> for Refusing to Join Hands With False Religion)

PERGAMOS & THYATIRA: CHURCHES OF COMPROMISE

Revelation 2:12-29
2-27-2022



INTRODUCTION:

***Our church must never compromise with those who practice what Jesus hates! (v. 15**

Remember 4 facts about compromise:

I. COMPROMISE IS _____! (V. 13, 19)
(The Inexcusableness of Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise is not justified,
even though you are _____ (v. 13a, 19)

B. Compromise is not justified,
even though wickedness _____ (v. 13b)

C. Compromise is not justified,
even though you may personally _____ (v. 13c)

II. COMPROMISE _____! (V. 14-15, 20-21)
(The Warning About Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise happens when a church is _____

B. Compromise happens when a Church is _____
1. Beware: They are _____
2. Beware: They are _____

III. COMPROMISE HAS _____! (V. 16, 22-23)
(The Price Tag for Joining Hands With False Religion)

IV. OVERCOMING COMPROMISE HAS _____!
(V. 17, 24-29)
(The Prize for Refusing to Join Hands With False Religion)

PERGAMOS & THYATIRA: CHURCHES OF COMPROMISE

Revelation 2:12-29
2-27-2022

INTRODUCTION:

The necessity for God's children to be holy (SEE: I Pet. 1:15, 16; cp. with Lev. 11:44-45).

The words: holy, saint, sanctified all come from the same root and basically mean to be "set apart" or kept pure from defilement.

Anyone who believes the Bible and loves Jesus Christ must also believe in holiness or purity or being set apart.

By conviction, I believe that individual believers and churches must be set-apart from evil.

If you believe that, you also are a "separatist"!

If you believe in "holiness" you must also believe in "separation" because they are synonymous terms.

Three areas of separation:

1) Moral - the believer is to be holy in body and mind (II Cor. 7:1; II Tim. 2:22; I Pet. 4:15)

2) Personal - the believer is not to be "unequally yoked together" with unbelievers in marriage, business, or any other personal relationship (I Cor. 5:11; II Cor. 6:14-18).

3) Ecclesiastical - a church must not associate, cooperate, or fellowship with other churches that are not of like precious faith (II Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 5:6-11; II Th. 3:6; I Tim. 6:3-5; II Jn. 9-11)

ILLUS:--A mother who loves her children will beware of whom they play and associate with.

--A pastor who loves his flock will also beware of whom they fellowship with.

(EX: Paul's warning to the Ephesian pastors - Acts 20:28-32).

We cannot mix with those who will dirty our walk with Christ.

We cannot harmonize with those who are sounding another tune.

We cannot join hands with those who are working for another cause.

We cannot walk with those who are going in another direction.

To the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, Jesus said the same phrase: "I have a few things against thee" (v. 14, 20). When Jesus holds something against a church, it is serious!

Both of these churches had the same problem - they compromised with false religion. In doing so they had a part in that which Jesus hates (v. 15).

***Our church must never compromise with those who practice what Jesus hates! (v. 15)**

Remember 4 facts about compromise:

I. COMPROMISE IS NEVER JUSTIFIED! (V. 13, 19)

(The Inexcusableness of Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise is not justified, even though you are doing a work for Christ (v. 13a, 19)

Jesus knew that Pergamum was a working church (v. 13a).
He knew that Thyatira was also (v. 19).

Thyatira was a working church
" " loving " " ("charity")
" " serving " " ("to minister")
" " believing " " ("faith")
" " enduring " " ("patience" - she remained under)
" " busy " " ("served more than at first - when first established)

(No doubt a growing church with many programs and activities)

"Any church or Christian that compromises with evil must have some good qualities or there would be nothing to compromise" (Neil, p. 42).

Why do evangelical Churches compromise with pagan churches? ANSWER: To have larger crowds, to reach more people, to avoid the stigma of being called an "isolationist" or "unloving."

They generally have good motives but bad methods.

"The end never justifies the means."

God's work must always be done God's way!

Examples: --ecumenical evangelism
--charismatic movement
--any work that cooperates with false religions (such as RCC, protestantism, etc.)

May have great initial growth, but it will die at an early age (it will be short-lived).

Why? Because the growth was not produced God's way (ILLUS: growth produced by steroids). Poison has entered the church - it may endure for a while, but will eventually die! (cp. v. 22-23)

B. Compromise is not justified, even though <u>wickedness abounds all around you</u> (v. 13b)

Jesus knew where the church at Pergamos was situated. It was situated in the same city where Satan's throne was.

Pergamos was a capital city for over 300 years, and was called "by far the most famous city of Asia" (Neal, <u>Seven Churches</u>, BJU Press, p. 37).

Three major religions existed in Pergamos -

1) Worship of Asklepios, the god of <u>healing</u> (a temple with an idol of Asklepios existed in Pergamos. Surrounding him were serpents, and he had a serpent-entwined staff (still used as an insignia by physicians today) (SEE Neil, p. 39).

2) Worship of the Greek god <u>Zeus</u>. Zeus was called "savior." (Neil, p. 40)

3) Worship of the <u>emperor</u> (Pergamos boasted of the <u>largest</u> and <u>most important</u> temple dedicated to Caesar.

Jesus knew where they lived and how bad it was, yet He did not counsel them to run away (or move from there).

He had them there for a purpose (the greater the darkness, the greater the need for light).

The church at Pergamos lived among enemies of the gospel.

But no matter how wicked (perverse, loose) our society is, that never justifies bending convictions or loosening standards.

If we are not careful, we may not swing all the way to the left with the world, but whit each move the world makes, we move a notch with it. (we still keep our distance, but we move nonetheless).

Those who held to the doctrine of Balaam and Nicolaitanes maybe <u>didn't seem so bad</u> when compared with the world.

The issue is not, "How bad are they doctrinally?" but "Are they bad at all?"

C. Compromise is not justified, even though <u>you may personally remain "unaffected" by it</u> (v. 13c)

"Holdest fast My name" - Satan knew he could not shake these Christians loose from holding onto the name of Jesus.

The adversary knew he could not coerce them into an outright denial of their faith in Christ, even if it meant martyrdom. So he offers the suggestion to compromise - to give in on their separation.

Like he did with Eve, he encourages them, "You shall not surely die" "You are strong!" "They will not affect you!"

"You can put up with a few ignorant unbelievers in your church membership. After all, you will win them to Christ! I know they are not doctrinally sound, but with time you can straighten them out."

Even if I were strong enough to remain unaffected by the poison they spread, I could not be part of them because others may not be so strong.

Besides, eventually it would take its toll on me anyway!

II. COMPROMISE MUST BE IDENTIFIED! (V. 14-15, 20-21)

(The Warning About Joining Hands With False Religion)

A. Compromise happens when a church is tolerant

What did Jesus hold against these 2 churches?

V. 14 - "Thou hast there them . . ."

V. 15 - "So hast thou also them . . ."

V. 20 - "How sufferest (tolerate, permit) that woman"

*Jesus was not rebuking these churches because they were in doctrinal error, but because they tolerated others to pedal doctrinal error in their midst.

*Jesus did not reprimand them for being guilty of heresy, but for fellowshipping with heretics.

*Jesus was not scolding them because they were teaching lies but because they associated and cooperated with those who were teaching lies.

Any church that loves God's Word will be jealous over it.

We want it taught and obeyed like Jesus does, if we are like Jesus is.

--Church discipline is not easy, but it is essential to purity (Mt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5:3-7)

--Ecclesiastical separation may not be popular, but it is essential to purity.

B. Compromise happens when a Church is deceived

1. Beware: They are religious

Balaam, the Nicolaitanes, and Jezebel all have one thing in common. They all spread doctrine. They all teach. They all, no doubt, had a Gospel to proclaim (Note, however, Gal. 1:8-10).

NOTE: Doctrine is very important to Jesus Christ.

(Many today say "Doctrine" is not essential - "Love" is. Remember, there is no true love where there is false doctrine. Love rejoices only in truth - I Cor. 13:6).

Balaam (v. 14) was a religious man (he did work in the name of the LORD [Yahweh]_.
Cp. Mt. 7:22-23 - "Many will say to me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name?..."

Nicolas (v. 15) had a religion (though immoral)

Jezebel (v. 20) - called herself a "prophetess." She claimed she received revelation from God, and then heralded it out.

The fact that that woman Jezebel was teaching God's servants should have revealed to them that she was "false" and "out of order," because God says that women are not to teach (I Tim. 2:11, 12), but are to learn in silence int he assembly and not prophesy publically (I Cor. 14:34).

--We are to test the spirits (I Jn. 4:1)

--Paul warned us to be on guard against religions, cults, and religious teachers who appear to be godly (II Cor. 11:13-15 - "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."_

2. Beware: They are seductive

Balaam was seductive (Num. 22 - 25). He was hired by the Moabite king Balak to curse Israel (II Pet. 2:15). When Balaam attempted to pronounce a curse, God allowed him to utter only blessings. When he realized he could not curse them, he decided to corrupt them.

"Stumbling block" (v. 14) - that which causes someone to trip and fall.

Balaam knew that God would not destroy Israel when they were pleasing to Him. The only way this Satanically-inspired man could have Israel ruined is if they sinned.

(SEE Num. 31:16, 25:1-9)

What did the doctrine of Balaam, Nicolas, and Jezebel have in common?

ANSWER: Idolatry and immorality under the guise of spirituality.

Balaam introduced Israel to Baalism.

Nicolas introduced Christianity to license and free love (similar to Baalism)

Jezebel, by marrying King Ahab, promoted Baalism in Israel (I Ki. 16:31).

What was the doctrine of Balaam, Nicolas, and Jezebel?

ANSWER: You can have God and the world. You can worship Christ and conform to the standards of the world. You can have religion and immorality. You can have spirituality with sensuality.

As a matter of fact, Baal worship was very sensual and appealing to the base, carnal, nature of man.

It involved two things:

1) Eating meat and drinking wine that was offered to Baal (this would give credence to Baal - Num. 25:2) (Daniel refused to do this - Dan. 1:8)

2) Having sex with a prostitute (Num. 25:3) (Both practices were part of Baal worship)

Long before this problem at Pergamos, the Jerusalem church had taken a stand on these matters: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well." (Acts 15:28-29)

What would Balaamism, Nicolaitanism, and Jezebelism be like today?

ANSWER: It is the teaching that says: "You can be saved and live anyway you want." "You can have Christ and sin." "You can lay up treasures in Heaven and treasures on earth." "You can serve two masters." "You can have your cake and eat it too."

This sounds appealing, but it's a lie of Satan.

Paul warned against such teachers: Phil. 3:18, 19 - "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

Satan knew he could not bring such strong churches into worldliness until he brought the world into the church.

Today, he is again tempting God's people to compromise with the world. How? Christian rock music; worldly standards of dress and hair styles; worldly viewpoints on roles of husband and wife, divorce, child training, materialism, alcohol, etc.

III. COMPROMISE HAS SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES! (V. 16, 22-23)

(The Price Tag for Joining Hands With False Religion)

NOTE: Jesus' description of Himself to the church at Pergamos (v. 12) and Thyatira (v. 18). Speaks of judgment.

(Cp. "sharp sword" - v. 12, with v. 16 - His words are severe)

("Eyes like fire" = piercing, infinite knowledge)

(cp. v. 23 - Jesus' penetrating eyes search the inmost part of man)

("feet ... like bass" - pure judgment)

1. The harlot herself will be judged (v. 16) Those who seek to cause God's people to compromise will be severely punished

   Cp. Rev. 22:7 - "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

   I will come unto thee (believers) and will fight against them (unbelievers).

2. The fornicator will be judged (v. 22) (Those who compromise with Paganism (i.e. join themselves or link up with false religion) will be severely punished (cp. Rev. 18:3-4 - God's call for separation from the harlot of Babylon).

3. The offspring of the relationship will be judged (v. 22) (the fruit produced by compromise will die (v. 22).

The illegitimate offspring (supposed "Christians") will not live.

IV. OVERCOMING COMPROMISE HAS GREAT REWARD! (V. 17, 24-29)

(The Prize for Refusing to Join Hands With False Religion)

Rewards:

1. "hidden manna" (v. 17a) - in contrast to the enticing idol sacrifices, He offers the bread of God (Jesus is the "living bread, come down from Heaven" - Jn. 6:51).

2. "White stone" (v. 17b) - possibly an illusion to a ballot.
"In ancient times votes were taken by the placing of stones in a vessel. A black stone was an unfavorable vote and a white stone was a vote for acceptance. Today we speak of black-listing or black-balling someone for an offense" (Niel, p. 51).

3. Authority to rule with Christ in the kingdom (v. 26-27)
(We are joint-heirs - Rom. 8:17)

(Mt. 19:28 - "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I saw unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

I Cor. 6:3 - "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"
(cp. Dan. 7:18, 27)

4. "The Morning Star" - Christ Himself

Rev. 22:16 - "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testimony unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

CONCLUSION:

The call for every Christian and Bible-preaching church today is to separate from evil.

Balaam, Nicolas, and Jezebel have been tolerated too long by God's people.

The exhortation for those who have committed fornication with the world is "repent!" (v. 16)

The exhortation for those who have not done so is "hold fast" until Jesus returns (v. 25).

And keep defending the "faith that was once delivered unto the saints") (Jude 3).