

## The Church of Constant Compromise – Revelation 2:18-29

### Introduction

Welcome to My Thoughts and the fourth of seven segments of the Revelation Churches called The Church of Constant Compromise, the Church at Thyatira. So far, we have talked about the Loveless Church at Ephesus, the Persecuted Church at Smyrna, and the Compromising Church at Pergamum.

Are you interested in being a vegetarian, but concerned that you might not be able to adjust? Not to worry. You can become a *flexitarian*. As vegetarianism gains in popularity, a variation has developed. A *flexitarian* is a person who eats primarily vegetables but also indulges occasionally with meat.

I personally couldn't care less whether you're vegetarian or eat meat for every meal, but I think we could make an analogy with modern Christianity. Some of us have practiced being flexible when it comes to our faith in Christ. It is an attempt to compromise on the foundational truths of our belief system. It is nothing new. In fact, one of the seven churches Jesus wrote to in the book of Revelation was doing exactly that.

### The Corrupt Church

Jesus presents Himself to the church of Thyatira as a frightening figure. He appears the same way in the Old Testament in a vision to Daniel.

**His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.– Daniel 10:6.**

Open your Bibles and turn to Revelation 2:18-29:

**<sup>18</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:**

**<sup>19</sup> “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as* for your works, the last *are* more than the first.**

**<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.**

**<sup>21</sup> And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.**

**22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.**

**23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**

**24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.**

**25 But hold fast what you have till I come.**

**26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—**

**27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’— as I also have received from My Father;**

**28 and I will give him the morning star.**

**29 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’**

In verse 18, the flaming eyes of Christ appear to stand for His ability to see through the veneer of our lives and penetrate into the very core of our being. The bronze feet are symbolic of the immovable and uncompromising Christ. The One who knows who He is and what He stands for. He writes to the church at Thyatira, and subsequently to us.

## **Our Choice**

While some are uncomfortable with an either/or choice, that is what we have when it comes to Christianity, we are either for it or against it. The truth is, once that choice is made, life becomes much less complicated. There is an African Proverb, ***“The man who tries to walk two roads will split his pants.”*** Today as we consider our choices, we want to end up going down one road, and we want to make sure it’s the right one. The three choices are:

### **Counterfeit or Real?**

This choice should be a given, but for some reason, some people prefer a counterfeit Christianity over the real thing. Perhaps it is because a counterfeit faith is not as challenging, doesn’t make so many demands, and gives you a smorgasbord of theological choices when it comes to what you will or will not believe.

Thankfully, when it came to the basics of the Christian faith, the church in Thyatira had made the right choice in verse 19. That’s a wonderful commendation and encouragement to the

church. Love, faith, service, and patience are all singled out for applause by Jesus. He even makes it a point to acknowledge they are continually improving in these areas

I'm sure that was a great boost to the church to know they had embraced what was real, what was true, and what was commendable. That is the same thing the church needs to continually embrace in our day. Why accept what is counterfeit when the real thing is staring us in the face?

### **Jezebel or Jesus?**

Jezebel, in the Old Testament, was quite an infamous person who had a real reputation for wickedness. Jesus uses her name to symbolically represent a woman who was influencing the church at Thyatira. Her name might have really been Jezebel, but most likely the name simply stands for a person with the same qualities. She was the wife of King Ahab of Israel. Convinced Ahab to begin worshipping pagan gods, including Baal. Not only did Ahab begin to worship them, but he convinced the people of Israel to do the same.

The interesting thing is, Jezebel never tried to get the Israelites to quit worshipping the true God. She just tried to get them to mix the worship of the true God with her false gods. In other words, she was trying to get them to compromise their faith in a big way.

It is what is known as religious pluralism, which is believing a little bit of this religion, and a little bit of that religion, worshipping this God some, and this other one at other times. That is exactly what was going on in Thyatira. It is exactly the way churches are being asked to compromise today.

In verses 20-23, I think you can see why Jesus calls this woman a "**Jezebel.**" She was doing everything she could to compromise the Christian faith by bringing in pagan worship including bowing down to idols and immoral behavior. She never said she was out to destroy the church, but if the church adopted the practices she was promoting they would be destroyed.

In that day and age, the church faced a very real problem. When a person made an animal sacrifice in a Greek temple most of the meat was left over. The priests would eat some of the meat, and return most of it to the worshipper. The pagan worshipper would often invite friends to their house and offer this meat.

In addition, much of the meat offered to idols was sold in local butcher shops, but the Gentile Christians had been told not to partake of this meat. To add to the problem, the trade guilds of Thyatira, to which most of the church members would have belonged, had a common meal at the pagan temples where the main course was this meat sacrificed to idols.

The Christians were faced with the dilemma of cutting themselves off from almost every social function with non-Christians, or compromising their beliefs and giving into the pagan culture. Jezebel was influencing them to compromise with the culture, even though God had given

them different instructions. In addition, there were those among the pagans that taught that the height of spiritual experience was to indulge in every type of sinful experience, yet leave the soul unaffected.

When Jesus says they had committed sexual sin, it could mean they had literally engaged in sexual practices, or it could mean they were living adulterous spiritual lives by claiming to follow Him, yet worshipping other gods at the same time. Whatever the case, it was obvious that many in the church had begun to compromise their promise to follow Jesus, and Jesus alone, as Lord. So what does this have to do with us? It has everything to do with us.

We are asked on a continual basis to water down our belief system, to become religious pluralists, and to drop our claim to Jesus as the exclusive means to salvation.

- While we might not be asked to eat meat sacrificed to idols, we are asked to compromise our belief system by adopting whatever the culture decides to dictate to us at any given moment.
- We are told that we must reject any claim to absolute truth, that we must alter our convictions to fit the morality of the day, and to walk away from what has been passed down to us as the historic faith of Christianity.
- At the very least we are told we must be tolerant to the point that our faith is so watered down that it doesn't have any meaning anymore.

Let me ask you some questions:

- We must decide – is it going to be Jesus or Jezebel?
- Who is it that we follow?
- Whose instruction is it that we will accept as authoritative?
- Who is it that sets the standard?
- Who is it that we will bow down and worship?

Thankfully, many in Thyatira, as well as many in our day and age, have chosen Jesus, and that choice results in an eternal peace that can only be granted by Him.

### **Judgment or Reward?**

Mark Cuban, the owner of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks, recently offered WGN Chicago Radio sports-talk host David Kaplan \$50,000 to change his name legally to "Dallas Maverick." When Kaplan politely declined, Cuban sweetened the offer. Cuban would pay Kaplan \$100,000 and donate \$100,000 to Kaplan's favorite charity if he took the name for one year. After some soul searching, and being bombarded by e-mails from listeners who said he was crazy to turn down the money, Kaplan held firm and told Cuban no. Kaplan explained: "I'd be saying I'd do anything for money, and that bothers me. My name is my birthright. I'd like to preserve my integrity and credibility."

I agree with Kaplan and see a parallel choice for those of us in Christ. The name "Christian" is the birthright of every follower of Jesus Christ. We have a responsibility to live every day in a way that brings honor to that name – and honor can only be given if we choose to follow the Christ of the Bible. What we do with Jesus is a choice of whether we will be judged or rewarded.

In verses 24-29, Jesus asks the church at Thyatira to do one thing, and one thing only – “hold tightly to what you have until I come.” It’s the same instruction for us, and the same instruction for every church and every believer – hold to the faith, don’t compromise, stick with what you’ve been taught, and when you do that, Jesus says, you will receive your reward.

There is a promise to join Jesus in ruling the nations, and a promise that we will receive the morning star.

The first promise is a quote from Psalms 2:8-9: **“Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”** We are promised that in the end, we will rule with Jesus over all the nations, that everything said of the Messiah will be fulfilled, and that we will be a part of it all. Rather than being the end of being judged, we will be on the side that is victorious over all who have gone against the name of Christ.

Then is the promise of the morning star. In Revelation 22:16, Jesus reveals that He is the morning star: **“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”** When Jesus promises the morning star, He is promising Himself. In the end, when all is said and done, and the new heavens and earth are our dwelling place, the morning star Himself will be with us for all of eternity.

### **Conclusion:**

Let me give you a few **Warning Signs** to watch out for when it comes to compromise:

- Stating that Jesus is anything less than God in the flesh.
- Denying that God is a Trinity.
- Trying to blend other religions, such as Buddhism, New Age Teachings, or others with Christianity.
- Attempting to downplay the importance of following only Jesus as Lord.

When any of these things happen, turn to Christ, and lean on Him for strength, guidance, and as a means for survival, Amen!

**I am Dale Van De Bogart and I fully agree on God’s Word!**

If you are reading this and never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, what are you waiting for? Click on [FREE GIFT](#) and make Jesus the Lord of your life **TODAY!** Remember, read your Bible daily, it's good food! Like and follow us on [Facebook](#) and subscribe to our [YouTube](#) channel and watch this and other My Thoughts videos.

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