

Series: Letters to the Churches
Title: Faithful Where Satan Dwells
Text: Revelation 2: 12-17
Date: April 21, 2013
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Faith in Christ pleases God. But compromise with false doctrine and ungodly living does not. Christ commands some who were doing so to repent or else. Or else Christ will come and fight against them with the sword of his mouth. Believe on Christ.

Revelation 2:12: And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13: I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14: But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15: So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16: Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

I. THE CHARACTER IN WHICH CHRIST PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS—Revelation 2: 12:...These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Christ has manifest himself in different characters to each of the three churches we have studied so far.

Ephesus

The church at Ephesus was losing that sweetheart love they had for Christ when they first believed. So Christ addressed himself to them as one very near to them. Revelation 2: 1: **“He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”** The stars represent Christ's pastors which he holds in his right hand: holding them in place, giving them light to preach, strength to draw nearer to him. The seven golden candlesticks represent his churches, his people gathered together by him, in the midst of whom he walks, always loving and caring for his people.

Smyrna

The church at Smyrna was being greatly persecuted, facing imprisonment, even death They needed strength to persevere in faith. So Christ manifests himself as Rev 2: 8: **“the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.”** He reminds them he is the Author and Finisher of their faith, which was dead as our Substitute but now is alive as our Head: Prophet, Priest and King. “Because I live thou shalt live also.” “We shall be saved by his life.”

Pergamos

Now here in Revelation 2: 12, the church in Pergamos is doing battle with false preachers, who are leading away some who professed Christ. So Christ manifests himself in the character of v12: **“he which hath the sharp sword with two edges.”** The “sharp sword with two-edges” is the gospel of our salvation. It has two edges because with his gospel Christ will both destroy those who are his enemies and heal and protect his saints. Christ is always in the midst of his church with his sword drawn and ready to do battle.

Application: Here is the lesson for us from these things. These various problems that each of the seven churches face represent problems our church may face to one degree or another, at one time or another. So when we see

Christ manifest himself to each church in a particular character, based on their particular need, Christ shows us that whatever our need, at any given time, Christ is our ever-present help, our Savior and Keeper, able to uphold us, able to strengthen us and able to protect us—no matter our problem.

II. OUR SAVIOR KNOWS THE CONDITIONS WHERE WE LIVE AND COMMENDS THE FAITHFULNESS OF HIS SAINTS—Revelation 2: 13: I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan’s seat *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

I Know

Christ said, “I know thy works and where thou dwellest.” He called the city where this church was the “seat of Satan” and “where Satan dwelleth.”—this church was in a rough city where false doctrine abounded everywhere—that is why Christ calls it “the seat of Satan where Satan dwelleth.” That is what Christ calls the place where works religion is preached.

Yet, Christ, by his effectual power, had called out his lost sheep in that city, assembled them together under a faithful pastor which Christ provided. And by the grace of God his saints remained faithful in the midst of so much false doctrine.

Christ says of these brethren “thou hast held fast my name and hast not denied my faith, **EVEN in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you...**” One of their brethren, Antipas, had suffered martyrdom—had been killed—for believing on Christ. Christ calls him “MY faithful martyr”—MY faithful witness. Christ says of his faithful saints, “**thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, EVEN IN THOSE DAYS...**”

Application: Brethren, can you imagine living in a place where our brethren were being killed for believing on Christ. We ought to continually thank God for giving us a place where we can worship him in peace.

Christ’s Name and Christ’s Faith

This verse shows us that the name of Christ and the faith of Christ are one—v13: “**Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.**” The name of Christ includes his Person, his character, his work, and his doctrine. When we hold fast the profession of our faith in Christ we are holding fast his name and vice versa.

Illustration: You hear some say, “We have a Christ-centered ministry.” But the Spirit of God moved Paul to write, “Christ is All and in All.” He said, “I was determined to know NOTHING among you SAVE Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Christ is all our ministry! The doctrine of grace—the gospel—has various branches of truth in it—but it is all one doctrine, one gospel. And Christ is All. The name we hold fast is:

JEHOVHAH Jireh--I AM the Lord will provide (Gen 22: 14)—he provided himself a Lamb.

JEHOVAH Rapha--I AM the Lord that healeth thee (Ex 15: 25-26) In all our bitter waters, he makes the waters sweet.

JEHOVHAH Nissi--I AM the Lord your banner (Exo 27: 15)—the banner we fight under and are more than conquerors through him that loveth us.

JEHOVAH Tzidkenu--I AM the Lord your Righteousness (Jer 23: 6; 33: 16) Jeremiah 23: 6: In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; [we will see something else about this name at the end]

JEHOVAH Shalom--I AM the Lord your peace (Judg 6: 24) Judges 6: 23: And the LORD said unto [Gideon], Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

JEHOVAH Shammah--I AM the Lord is there (Eze 48: 35). This was the name which describes the Lord in his church--his guarded city--the Lord is there.

JEHOVAH Ra-ah--I AM the LORD your Shepherd (Ps 23). In this valley of the shadow of death, only Jehovah Ra-ah can make us to lie down in green pastures.

AND ALL THESE NAMES OF COVENANT GRACE MEET IN ONE NAME: JEHOVAH Jesus--I AM the LORD your Savior (Is 43: 3; Mt 1: 21)

Christ is our High Priest. He successfully accomplished atonement for those given unto him and he ever-lives to make intercession for us from his throne of grace, ministering to us continually. Christ is our Prophet. He sends his ambassadors to preach and through the Spirit of God, Christ teaches the gospel in his elect in the heart he created anew. Christ is our King and our Head. He governs his kingdom and his church from his throne of grace. Christ is our All and in all!

When we hold fast the name of Christ we hold fast his faith because Christ is: the Author and Finisher of our faith, the sum and substance of our faith, the Alpha and Omega of our faith. By his grace, believers hold fast the name of Christ and by hold fast his name, we hold fast his faith.

Application: How do we hold fast the name of Christ and the faith of the gospel? We receive the love of the truth in our hearts. We hold fast the truth that Christ has fully, finally, freely, forever accomplished the full atonement and free justification of the believer by his obedience as the Substitute for his people.

We hold fast the message of grace, apart from works: electing grace, redeeming grace, regenerating grace, preserving grace, resurrecting grace, glorifying grace—the grace of God which gets the job done, apart from the sinners help.

Holding fast our faith and holding fast his name is to hold fast to HIM and to the GOSPEL that salvation is of the Lord. (Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Tim. 1:9-12). When we love Christ, we love his gospel, we love his people and we hate every false way--Ps 119:128: Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.

III. WE SEE THAT IN HIS CHURCH, EVEN AMONGST HIS FAITHFUL PEOPLE, THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE NOT FAITHFUL—14: But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Compromisers with False Doctrine

These professed to be Christs, but some of the time, they came to worship with the saints; other times they went to worship with those who preached a false doctrine. They were trying to do what God says is absolutely impossible. (2 Cor 6: 14) **These folks were** trying to yoke together a believer and an unbeliever, thinking they can pull together in an unequal yoke—one person will bear that burden and it will be the person denying the faith. Men who compromise on doctrine are trying to make righteousness and unrighteousness have fellowship, trying to make light and darkness have communion, trying to make Christ and Belial have concord. A believer trying to take part with an infidel and say an infidel has part with him—Peter told Simon Magus--Ac 8:21: Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. They were doing it to avoid persecution. They would rather avoid persecution for the name of Christ than to stand with Christ—they would not bear his cross.

Application: What if Christ had done that? The Lord Jesus Christ would not have been crucified had he just watered down the gospel so as to make sinners think they could justify or sanctify themselves by their law-keeping. The offense of the cross would have ceased and Christ would not have been crucified. But if Christ had not been willing to bear his cross then we would have no salvation. It is because Christ was willing to bear his cross for us that make us willing to bear the enmity of sinners for his sake.

Compromisers with Ungodliness

Others had another problem—v15: **So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**

These heard the truth that “where sin abounded grace did much more abound” so they said, “Let us sin that grace may abound!” Paul said, “Whose damnation is just.”

Application: It is not by committing sin that the grace of God abounds.

The grace of God abounds by Christ putting away the sin of his elect people by shedding his own blood in our place. The grace of God abounds by God the Holy Spirit putting down the reigning sinful dominion and sinful desires of our old man of flesh by creating in his people a new man with new desires to honor and glorify Christ.

Anywhere a man claims to believe the gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace but says that means we are free to willfully live in sin, you can be sure, it is not the grace of God abounding in that man, it is an absence of grace.

We see from this that in every local church there are some who will deny the faith. What are some of the reasons?

Fear of Persecution

Some will deny the faith because they do not want to suffer men’s wrath or because they simply want to get along so they keep their mouth shut.

Application: Brethren, the fact of the matter is the gospel is offensive but if we are not willing to speak up when we have opportunity—we deny Christ. When you tell sinners that God declares “**there is none good, no not one**” they will be offended. But God might just reveal it in their hearts and save them. When you tell sinners they can’t keep the law. **Galatians 3: 21...if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.**” They will be offended—but God might save them.

When you tell sinners that the only reason their preacher is preaching morality instead of preaching Christ is because **Galatians 6:12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.** They will be offended. But God might save them.

Remember these things Christ said: Christ said, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matt. 10:34). 'He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad' (Matt. 12:30). 'And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple' (Lk. 14:27).

Embracing False Doctrine

Others turn from Christ and deny his faith by embracing false doctrine. That was the case with those who embraced the doctrine of Balaam. Men may tell you the truth of the gospel and claim to believe the truth—but by joining with those who believe false doctrine, they totally deny the gospel.

Ungodly Living

Others deny the faith by living as if godliness and obedience toward Christ do not matter. That is what those did who joined with the Nicolaitians.

Now, those who receive false doctrine as well as those who live in sin are both who Paul is speaking about when he said, **Titus 1: 16: They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.** Holding true doctrine requires we renounce all false doctrine

as well as all licentious practice. If we embrace error and if fail to live to the glory of Christ then we have denied his name and his faith.

Application: What I am telling you is true practical preaching. What passes for practical teaching in our day is nothing but moralizing, legal, free-will, works religion. Christ must be taught beginning to end and everything practiced must be for the glory of Christ beginning to end. The focus of our hearts and minds must be Christ our Lord, and shun everything that would turn our thoughts away from him. Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life—follow him alone—and that we can only do by his mercy/grace.

Leave for Good

Others, out-and-out forsake Christ and the gospel (John 6:66; I John 2:19). All who forsake Christ, for whatever reason, prove their faith was false from the beginning.

Application: Remember we are not speaking of isolated acts but the overall way in which folks go and remain. Believers are sinners still. We stumble greatly at times. But all true believers hold fast the name of Christ and will not deny the faith of the gospel.

John 10: 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers...²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: ²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

IV. CHRIST GIVES A COMMAND TO REPENT--Revelation 2: 16: Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Repent

Christ is saying...

2 Corinthians 6: 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Or Else

Notice he says, '**I will fight against THEM.**' Christ never fights against those who trust him and rest in him alone. Only against those who deny him. He says, "**I will fight against them with the SWORD OF MY MOUTH.**" The Lord disciplines his church by the preaching of the gospel.

Application: It is not that the message changes. No one is usually aware of it, not even the preacher. But the Lord makes the man who is denying him to feel like the message is directed at him and him alone. Believers will all be rejoicing, saying what a comforting message it was, while the person denying him will think the preacher has been reading his mail. The preacher will not even be aware of it. It is God fanning his threshing floor, separating the wheat from the chaff (Matt. 13:30). As the Lord puts it, "**I will fight against them with the SWORD OF MY MOUTH.**"

2 Corinthians 2: 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: ¹⁶ To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

**V. A WORD OF COMFORT TO THOSE WHO OVERCOME THROUGH FAITH UNTO THE END—
V17: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will**

I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

These are things Christ will give us in glory. They are the anti-types of those things that were in the tabernacle of old.

Hidden Manna

None but the high priest had access to the "manna hidden" in the sanctuary. Christ is the High Priest—but he has made his chosen, redeemed, regenerated believing children priests, fit to enter the holiest of all. The hidden manna Christ will give us in that day is Christ himself—John 6: 35:...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

A White Stone

The white stone. The high priest wore the Urim, which was a white rock or crystal. Urim means "light." It was used to give divine revelation. Those who endure in faith till the end will be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ our High Priest and be "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:" with a full revelation of Christ—1 Co 13:12: For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Also, white stones were used in ancient days for absolution and the person's name was written on it. In that day that in Christ, he will declare we have been completely absolved—pardoned of all sin—by his blood. Jeremiah 50: 20 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

A New Name

As for the new name written on the stone. The Urim had the name "Jehovah" written on it, which no man knew. And that will be our new name: Jeremiah 33: 16: In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness"—Jehovah our Righteousness. The same as his name--"My new name." (Rev 3: 12; Jer 23: 6)

May he be pleased to grant us repentance and faith to hold fast to his name and his faith firm unto the end.

Amen!