

“The Tragedy Of Tolerance!”
Revelation 2:14-17

Introduction:

1. Church In Pergamos!
 - The “Royal City” Of Asia! And Rich & Religious!
 - Made It A Very Difficult Place To Worship & Serve The Lord!
 - “Even Where Satan’s Seat Is!” (2:13)
 - And Although Most In The Church Were Faithful:
 - “Thou Holdest Fast My Name, And Hast Not Denied My Faith!” (2:13)
 - Others Were Not Faithful! And The Church Was Tolerant Of Them & Let Them Continue In Their Place In The Church
 - And We Soon Learn The Tragedy Of Tolerance!
 - **IE:** Tolerance In America & The Church Today Is A Virtue – But Listen To The Words Of Jesus!
 - Are These The Words Of Tolerance?
 - Read 2:14-17!
 - These Words Are Also Addressed To The Church In America – And Our Church!
 - The Lord Disapproved Of This Church Because Of Their Tolerance!
 - They Were Tolerant Of Sin / Error / Compromise!
 - And So, The Lord Was Not Tolerant With Them!
 - So, We See:

1. *The Reason For The Lord’s Disapproval!*

- 2:14-15 - “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. / So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate!”
- While Most Were “Holding Fast” Christ’s Name:
 - There Were Two Other Groups In This Church Also!
 - One Group - Held Fast The Doctrine Of Balaam!
 - Second Group - Held Fast The Doctrine Of The Nicolaitans!
 - And The Faithful Ones Were Tolerant Of These Other Two Groups – And The Lord Was Very Displeased!
- The Doctrine Of Balaam Was A Subtle Error!
 - History Of Israel Before Being Led Into The Promised Land!
 - Numbers 22 - Balaam Attempts To Curse Israel, After Being Hired By Balak Of Moab, But Is Prevented By God From Doing So – Instead, Blesses Him!
 - There’s More To This Story!
 - Numbers 25:1-18 - Moab Lured Israel Into Sinning Against God, And Becoming Cursed In This Way!
 - What Happened? What Does This Have To Do With Balaam?
 - Numbers 31:16 - “Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD!”
 - Balaam Advised Moab To Tempt & Lure Israel Into Sin!
- So What Is The “Doctrine Of Balaam?”
 - To Mix The World With God’s People! God’s People Participating In Their Worship & Sins!
 - Biggest Question Of Those Who Hold & Teach The “Doctrine Of Balaam”: “What Harm Is There?”
 - In Being Like The World?
 - In Doing What The World Does?
 - Especially Since It Makes Life Easier For Us & Opens Opportunities With The World!

- In The “Big” Areas Of Immorality & Idolatry!
 - But Starting “Small” & Subtle!
 - It Is The Leading Of Others In The Church To Become More Like The World
 - Especially In Worship!
 - Other Descriptions: “Allowing Pagan Ideas To Be Adopted Into The Church!” (Ken Ham) / “They Would Rather Be United By Error, Than Be Divided Over Truth!” (David Stewart) / “If You Can’t Beat Them, Join Them!” (Warren Wiersbe)
- Many Churches Are In Reality Promoting The “Doctrine Of Balaam” – And Many Of Us Are Tolerant Of It!
 - Instead Of The Church Changing Culture, The Church Is Conforming To The Culture!
 - In Music / Methods / Materialism!
 - **IE:** The Popular Show “American Idol” Is An Appropriate Name! Music Is An Idol In America, And It Has Captivated Christians Who Say: “There’s Nothing Wrong With This!”
 - To Do So Is To “Hold The Doctrine Of Balaam!”
- The Doctrine Of Balaam Was A Shameless Error!
 - When One Sin Or Error Is Left Alone, More Will Soon Follow!
 - Second Group – More Well Known & Organized!
 - Their Deeds & Doctrine Was Well Established!
 - See Ephesus 2:6 - “Thou Hatest The Deeds Of The Nicolaitans!”
 - Not Too Much Known - But An Early Church Historian Said That The Nicolaitans: “Abandoned Themselves To Pleasures Like Goats In A Life Of Shameless Self-Indulgence!” (Clement)
 - They Claimed “Christian Liberty” – But, In Reality, They Were Still In Bondage To Their Own Flesh & Sin!
 - To Tolerate The “Doctrine Of Balaam” May Have Been Understandable!
 - Subtle!
 - To Tolerate The “Doctrine Of The Nicolaitans” Was Inexcusable!
 - Because The Lord’s Feeling Toward Them Was Unmistakable – Hatred!
- We Must Not Be Tolerant Of What The Lord Is Not Tolerant Of!
 - He Is Not Tolerant Of Worldliness In The Church!
 - It Is The “Doctrine Of Balaam!”

2. ***The Response To The Lord’s Disapproval!***

- 2:16 - “Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth!”
- Repent From Compromise & Tolerance!
 - Turn From It! And Then Deal With It!
- Resolve The Compromise & Tolerance!
 - Through The Biblical Process Of Confrontation / Confession / Restoration!
- Because If You Don’t, The Lord Will!
 - Through His Swift Judgment!
 - “Quickly!” – Not Used To This In Pergamos!
 - Through His Severe Judgment!
 - “Wage War!” – Used Of Real War & Battles Throughout Revelation!
 - Through His Sovereign Judgment!
 - This Is His Right! This Is His Church!
 - Our Response To Sin, Error & Compromise Ought To Reflect The Lord’s Intolerance Of Them!
- And When You Do, You Will Receive:

3. ***The Restoration From The Lord’s Disapproval!***

- 2:17 - “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!”
- When You Do Respond In The Right Way:

- You Are One Who “Overcomes!”
- And The Lord Will Reward You In This Way:
- He Will Reward You With His Spiritual Food!
 - “I Will Give To Eat Of The Hidden Manna!”
 - Instead Of Eating “Things Sacrificed Unto Idols” That Leads To Death!
 - You Will Enjoy The “Hidden Manna” That Leads To Life!
 - Manna - Exodus 16:15, 31-35! Hidden From The Eyes Of The People! Until Jesus Came! John 6:35 - “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst!”
- He Will Reward You With His Eternal Fellowship!
 - “I Will Give Him A White Stone!”
 - Probably A Stone Of Approval & Favor!
 - Used In Pergamos By Lawmakers & Juries!
 - Only God’s Approval Matters – Only One Stone!
 - It Is Personal!
 - “A New Name Written Down In Glory!”
 - Is It Your’s?
 - Shows That You Belong To Him & Him Alone! He Gives You A Name, For His Use!
 - Like Naming A Child!
- These Are The Rewards Of The Faithful Christians Who Are Intolerant Of The World’s Ways Infiltrating Into The Church!

Conclusion:

1. We Live In A Very Royal, Rich & Religious Society!
 - But It Is Very Humanistic!
 - And We Need To Be Careful Not To Let The Culture Of This World Change Our Church – But Rather Let The Church Change & Challenge The Culture Of This World!
2. To Do Otherwise, Is The Tragedy Of Tolerance!
 - 2:17a - “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!”

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