

# **The Face of Compromise**

BY PHILLIP PATTON

Often we are quick to ridicule those who have turned from the faith. Men that have taught truth for decades suddenly changing the ways that they think and teach. This has shown evident from the weak, to the strong. “Giants” of the faith have been known to fall as the great Goliath, from a small stone. One trait that seems evident in all of these, is compromise. Easy it is to stand on the shore of truth having never been tested by the things that so many have, and, criticize them as they fall beneath the waves. It is here that we stand across the moat and begin to throw stones at the glass castle. Why is this? When the Master told His disciples that He was about to be offered, that His time had come, they did not understand. They walked with Him, heard Him speak, were corrected by Him, loved by Him, yet, they did not get a grasp on the spiritual sense of the kingdom. When He realized their discomfort He did something that often is not practiced today. He could easily have begun chastising them, calling them derogatory names, made them feel as though they were ½ inch tall, but, he did not. Can one grasp the sense of amazement on the Master’s face (Heb 4:15) as He uttered “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1–3 KJV)?

As Christians we constantly speak about loving one another, edifying and exhorting within the brotherhood. Until, that is, we stand on the side of the moat opposite the castle. As long as we are standing in the glass castle we want everyone to be loving and understanding. Yet, at times, we are the first to pick up a stone and begin to hurl condemnation. We like to think that sin is always wrapped up as something that is scary, malicious, vicious, and horrifying. We tend to think that Satan as a roaring lion is something that stands out in the crowd and makes everyone run in fear. The problem, this simply is not the case. The evidence of sin is wrapped up in the wanting eyes of a small child of whom his parents have just realized they are living in sin and due to choices made in the past and must now face the consequences of a somewhat broken home. Sin is hidden deceitfully in the heart of the son or daughter, that has just been involved in a crime, guilty, caught red handed, and a parent wanting to defend them to the death, no matter what the law says. No, Satan is not always as obvious as a 500 pound blood thirsty cat, but the consequences are still the same. How many times have once faithful brethren who stood with their feet concreted in truth faltered because of the involvement of a loved one in sin. Then suddenly the face of compromise begins to emerge and the attitude and thoughts begin moving in the direction of "its really not that bad," or, "maybe we have been too quick to jump on everything being evil, maybe this is an example of it not being what we thought" or "I want them to be ok so the Bible must teach this." False doctrines have been formed and taught as truth by these very thoughts.

I have a memory of a Gospel preacher, whom I greatly respect, sharing an account of a moment in his life. A moment that could have torn him asunder. Teaching and baptizing a couple into Christ only to find out later they could not be married in the sight of God. Studying with them and crying with them, and, then, the husband remarks, "I know what this means and I believe it, but I will not divorce her. I made a commit to her and I will keep it." When this preacher returned home he fell into the arms of his wife in tears exclaiming that now he knows what the face of compromise looks like. It is nothing like the little red skinned fella with horns, a pointy tail, and a pitch fork. He has the face of a beloved friend, or a troubled family member. So often we are quick to judge the actions of others and shout from the mountain tops "why have you let this happen," but, if you have ever been in this situation you will then begin to understand why. Why it is that these stalwarts of the faith founder. I personally have pondered why on earth someone with such a strong knowledge and conviction of the Scriptures will change what they have taught for so many years to that contrary to truth and begin to teach false doctrines that is leading souls to perdition. Emotions drive hard the decisions that we make and they are difficult to keep in check. The thing to remember is that no matter how badly we want someone to be right, the truth is still the truth (John 17:17). Even when one falls into the trap of compromise, the truth is still the truth. God said it, that settles it. We must be ever aware of the subtlety of satan and never let our guard down. We know that God is love (1John 4:8) and He wants happiness for us here, but, not at the cost of His truth. Sometimes the cost of His truth is more than we are willing to sacrifice. Matthew recorded "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be

added unto you” (Matt 6:33 KJV). All of the things that this life requires will be provided in putting the kingdom first.

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matt 19:29 KJV). Never once were we told that the life of a Christian would be easy. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matt 7:13–14 KJV). The word translated “strait” is *stenā*, derived from a root word that means narrow or strait. The word translated “narrow” is *tethlemmenē*, meaning to press, or press hard upon, to trouble, afflict, or distress. What does this mean? The life of a Christian will be one of trial (James 1:2–4, 12) waiting for us to come out on the other side victorious. It is of utmost import to always follow the truth, no matter how painful it may be to watch another fall away. May we recall the words of the beloved physician, “They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13 KJV). “Fall away” here means they will leave, depart. The truth is hard. The Hebrews writer described it as sharper than any sword ever known with the ability to cut deeper than any that would come before or after (Heb 4:12). It is up to us as to whether or not we will accept the wound caused by our choices, doctor it, and live with the consequential scars of our choices, and receive that crown of life. After all, how much is Heaven worth to you?