

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

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Stand or Compromise: What Will You Do? (Part 1)

Daniel 3:16-18

Turn in your Bibles to Daniel 3. We will refer to several verses in this chapter throughout the message, but we will begin by reading verses 16-18. Pay attention to these wonderful, thrilling verses. They are the response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when Nebuchadnezzar gives them a second chance to bow before the image that he has set up for worship. The verses say, *“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”* With these verses in mind, and others that we will look at throughout the course of the message, I want to preach on this thought, “Stand or Compromise: What Will You Do?”

The subject which is expressed in the title for this message is a serious one. Preachers, individuals, churches and schools that once took a strong stand against compromise and for doing right have fast fallen into the path of fleshly living and religious compromise. At times it seems hard when people and churches that we have known for years have chosen the path of compromise, but while our hearts should grieve over their wrongdoing, we must face the reality that what they are doing is nothing new. The Bible and history record those who have compromised down through the centuries. Paul wrote of Demas in II Timothy 4:10 because he had forsaken Paul and *“loved this present world.”* Demas was a real man who was mentioned by Paul in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24. In Colossians Paul includes him in the greeting to the church and in

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Philemon he is called a fellowlaborer. While no details about him appear anywhere else in Scripture, these two passages alone show that he expressed a desire to serve the Lord and traveled with Paul at least for a while. However, as II Timothy 4:10 says, something about the world attracted him, and he left the service of the Lord and began to follow his fleshly desires. There are many people just like Demas in every generation. They will serve the Lord for a period of time, sometimes many years, but something either in the religious or secular world attracts them, and they leave the Scriptural path of truth for the wrong path of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Make no mistake about it. Our flesh is strongly attracted to the world. Any of us could make the wrong decision and end up just like Demas and others in past generations. We must determine to be like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and stand up for what is right and not compromise. The choice and path will not be easy to the flesh, but it will be the right thing to do, and the right thing is **ALWAYS** the best thing to do.

I mentioned in the previous paragraph about every generation having in it those that have compromised. I repeat that it is not easy nor enjoyable to see friends, family, and churches change and follow the world. But we must understand that it will happen, and we must determine that we will stand up for truth and right even if we are the only ones who will do it. Now we will not be the only ones in the whole world who remain faithful. There will be true believers in different parts of the world, but there may come a point where we might be the only ones in our extended family doing right, or we may be the only church in a town or city taking the right stand. If that be the case, then so be it. May we not worry if we have a big following. May we be concerned that we are doing right!

There are a couple of other things to mention about this issue of standing or compromising before I give a formal introduction to the message. I am discussing this general issue because sometimes we think that we have it worse in our generation than ever before. That is normal, human thinking and, I suppose, that every generation has

felt that way. I just recently picked up a booklet written in the 1970's, and the author was talking about how bad the times were. He was right about what he wrote and now we have come another forty years along. I remember hearing a preacher years ago quoting from a book where the author described the society in which he lived and said that he believed it was the worst ever. If I remember correctly, the man was writing either in the late 1700's or early 1800's. I make these statements to cause us to realize that people have always had a choice between following God or rejecting God. Every generation has had those who followed God and Scripture their entire life and ministry, and those who followed God and Scripture for a little while, and then departed from the true faith.

I mentioned Demas, but Scripture also records commands that tell us to be aware of those that try to lead us astray. Obviously much could be said about each of these passages, but I will not spend much time in discussing them. They are just an introduction to our subject, so I will make brief comments on them. II Peter 2:1-2 says, *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”* What an awful reality these verses portray. They have been fulfilled in every generation beginning in the time that Peter wrote. There have always been those who speak of Jesus, but deny important details about Him. They say they believe in Jesus, but deny that He was, and is, God in human flesh. He died on the cross for them, but they deny that His death meant anything more than any other death. What makes it even worse is that others follow them as verse 2 says. It would be bad enough if they came up with their wrong ideas and kept it to themselves, but at least no one would be damned but themselves. However, they spread their *“damnable heresies”* and ensnare others. Why are they damnable? Because they reject the only true way of salvation in Jesus Christ. To reject Him brings the everlasting damnation of the Lake of Fire.

The Holy Ghost also led the Apostle John to write about the propensity to compromise. In I John 4:1 we read, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”* The command in this passage is not to believe every thing that you hear, but compare what someone is saying to Scripture. Why do we have to be on guard? Because the Devil has his own host of prophets (preachers) who are spilling out their falsehoods. Many people are impressed with a preacher because he has a television program, or a nationwide radio broadcast, or a big, elaborate church building. While none of these things are wrong in themselves, the very existence of them does not mean that they have the hand of God on their ministry. Some people are so deceived as to think that bigness equates with God's touch. That is absolutely not the case! In fact, many times (not every time, but I dare say most) the bigness is a sign of Satan's approval, not God's. Do not be taken in by the so-called results of anyone! Compare what they are saying to Scripture. If their teaching is Scriptural, then they are God's servant. If it is contrary to Scripture, then they are Satan's servant.

One final passage I will mention is Jude 3. The Holy Ghost had Jude write, *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”* For the remainder of his epistle, Jude will write about and against false teachers. He begins by saying *“earnestly contend for the faith.”* What does that mean? I can hear Bob Jones Sr. asking that same question in a message from the 1950's that I heard him preach on tape. He answered that question in the manner that only Bob Jones Sr. could. He shouted, **“Stand up and fight for the faith!”** I say, “Amen!” May God embolden us to stand and not compromise. May we not be spineless, wimpy, giving-in-to-everything believers. May we stand up and not compromise!

I mentioned Bob Jones Sr. He lived from 1883-1968. He saw many friends compromise, but by the grace of God, he stayed faithful

until the end. He took the right stand against Billy Graham's compromise in the 1950's. It cost him some friends, but he was more concerned about being right in God's sight than keeping friends. I could write about men such as Harold Sighthler, Oliver Greene, and others that I know, who took the right stand against the compromise of the Southern Baptist Convention and became independent. Others are known only to God. But they were faithful as well. It was not easy on the flesh, but they and others were more determined about being right with God. That is the attitude we must have. Do not worry about what men say. Worry about what God thinks of you. He has no use for a compromiser. Stand up for what is right!

There is much more that could be said about the general issue of standing for right or compromising with wrong, but I must get into the message. Before I close out this issue, let me say again that we must determine if we will stand or compromise. Every individual, family, church, and school in every generation has had to determine whether they will follow the right road or the easy road. That is what it comes down to—will we do right or wrong? It is similar to what Robert Sheffey said in the film as he was talking to a young preacher about compromise in their Methodist association—compromise is wrong; standing up for God is right. The young preacher said the choice was easy. He wanted to do right. So do I. Stand or Compromise: What Will You Do?