

Revelation 2:12-17 Pergamum

First three Churches

Ephesus: good on doctrine & works BUT lost their “first love” (relationship not just works)

Smyrna: 'myrrh' (death) – nothing negative - the church closest to Jesus is suffering

Pergamom: mixed with the world/false doctrine

Ephesus: great political center

Smyrna: great commercial center One world thru **Satan's** coercion – **God** uses invitation

Pergamom: great religious center

Vs. 12 – “And to the angel of the church in **Pergamum** write: The One who has the **sharp two-edged sword** says this

Pergamos (meaning as a compound word)

Per: mixed, objectionable

Magos: marriage (spiritual harlotry)

ALSO: 'pergo' (from the word *Pergamus*), means the heights (Satan's throne)

Satan always **loves the high places** – trying to counterfeit the Lord God (Psalm 78:69)

Took Jesus to a **high mountain** to show Him all the kingdoms of the Earth (Matt. 4:8)

Tried to ascend to “**the heights**” of God's throne (Isaiah 14:13)

Corrupted Israel with **the “high places”** (Psalm 78:58)

Church that is mixed with the world (the compromise of truth). Ephesus had lost its first love, Smyrna suffered from internal and external persecution – yet both churches maintained their doctrinal integrity and lived it out. Pergamos is different: corrupted internally by false teaching.

False Doctrines in church today

- **Evolution** (Genesis not literal, you are your own 'god')
- **'Hyper-grace'**: Don't condemn sin – offensive/legalistic (Lk 17:3; 1 Tim. 5:20)
- **Ecumenism**: Unity more important than doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3-4)
- **Social Gospel**: We should work with anyone “pro-family” or “pro-life” (2 Cor. 6:14-17)
- **Headship**: Female Pastors/teachers over men [not enough men] (1 Tim. 2:12; 1 Tim. 3:2)
- **Prosperity Gospel**: (Mt. 6:19-20; 8:20; Lk 18:22)
- **Syncretism**: Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, 7th Day Adventists and Roman Catholics are all members of legitimate Christian churches. (Rev. 22:18)

Upper City – 4 Temples on top

Zeus – the **chief god** (Satan)

Athena – (**Athens**) Zeus daughter; goddess of wisdom, war, heroic adventures

Dionysus: goddess of **wine, fertility, religious ecstasy**

Temple for **Emperor worship**

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Sharp two-edged sword

Eph 6:17 - “the Word of God”

Gen. 1:3 - God created all life and all matter with the spoken word

Gen. 11:7 - The word (language) was used by God as judgment at Babel (confusion)

John 1:1-3 – Jesus Christ is the living Word

Isaiah 49:2 – We exercise that same power when using His Word, the Bible

Hebrews 4:12 – His Word is still working today

Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:25; Isaiah 40:8 – His Word stands forever

The symbol of the Roman procounsel was a sword (peace thru strength)

It's more important God's people fear (respect) His sword rather than man's

Vs. 2:13 – “I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast my name, and didst deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, my faithful

Picture of Great Altar: The altar is 125 ft. by 115 ft. and is 50 feet tall. Altar of Zeus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Located 800 feet above the plain and towered over the 'lower' city of Pergamos.

Altar of Zeus history

The Altar of Zeus was moved from Pergamos, stone by stone, to the Berlin museum in the 1930s by Hitler's regime as well as the reconstruction of the 'Ishtar Gate' – the entrance to Babylon.

How did Germany fare in the twentieth century? World War 1, hyper-inflation, rise of Adolph Hitler, Jewish Holocaust, World War 2. The seat of Satan indeed!

- Discovered by the German archaeologist Carl Humann
- served as inspiration of Albert Speer for *Nuremberg stadium* used by Adolf Hitler (Pic)
- The design for *Vladimir Lenin's tomb*.
- *Obama DNC – Acceptance Speech in 2008 in Denver, Co.* (Biden). (Pic)

Antiochus Epiphanes (168 b.c.) million plus Jews, Zeus in Holy of Holies (Caligula).

The Roman eagle, symbol of the empire and the god Jupiter (who is synonymous with Zeus), was raised in Jerusalem from the time of Pompey.

The fires of this altar were never allowed to go out – continual sacrifices to Zeus. Towered over the city and the eye of anyone living in Pergamos was drawn to it. On the hillside it would look like a great seat or throne.

President Erdogan in Turkey wants it back – Christians in Berlin continually pray he gets it

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“didn't deny”

Antipas. Declare Caesar as Lord. From the group they first chose Antipas – who refused.

“my name” always used by God in the singular (God's name in vain (**Exodus 20:7**) not vocabulary)

'Antipas': name means: “against all” (he stood alone/suffered martyrdom over all the other Christians in Pergamum). Burned alive inside a brazen bull (the bull was a symbol of Zeus)

Greek word **'martyr'** is the English word 'witness'

Vs. 2:14 – ‘But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*.

“**Nicolaitans**”: conquerors over the people “**Balaam**”: Lord of the people

Who is Balaam?

- 1) soothsayer – Joshua 13:22
- 2) from Mesopotamia (Shinar) – Deut. 23:4-5
- 3) from Euphrates (modern Iraq – Babylon?) – Num. 22:5; 23:7

Who is Balak – King of Moab, hires Balaam to come and curse Israel.

- 1) the “doctrine” of Balaam”: mixed marriage, sexual immorality (Rev. 2:14)
- 2) the “way” of Balaam: sold his gift for money (used God's gift for self) (2 Peter 2:15)
- 3) the “error” of Balaam: give up eternal treasure for temporary gain (Jude 11)

Numbers 22-25: Balaam was a true prophet but he prostituted his gifts in order to get money from King Balak. Balak had hired Balaam to curse God's people Israel but every time Balaam spoke God turned his tongue and he always ended up blessing Israel.

King Balak ended up corrupting Israel by inviting them to take part feasts/sexual immorality

Why include that account in letter to Pergamos? Group in church had compromised/given in to idolatry and immorality. Compromised with Rome and Emperor worship.

2 Corinthians 11:1-4 – “The Great Harlot” vs. chaste bride”.

Satan can either attack the church from the outside or the inside. Outside usually strengthen the church and cause further spiritual growth. Inside are much more effective. Confuse the creed you can corrupt belief (creed leads to conduct). Bad teaching, then, always leads to bad living.

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The personal application here is . . . holiness, reflecting the character and nature of God

- 1) What we teach affects how we live
Beliefs affect behavior
Creed influences conduct
- 2) Their teaching was justifying sin
Using current cultural norms to justify sin
statements like “we must be culturally relevant”
“we must be inclusive”
“you don't need to abstain – just use moderation”
If Jesus were alive today He would have chosen six men and six women as disciples
We must be credible to contemporary society (compromise) –

NO! We must remain true to the Word of God! (We must be different: salt/light)

15 So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

When the first century churches were planted by the Holy Spirit, the Apostles appointed Elders in each city. There are various forms of church governance practiced in different churches today but the model has been corrupted and abused over the successive centuries.

The Bible states that if we are in Christ we are all members of a new priesthood and are all ambassadors for Christ.

Professional Priesthood: This issue is a demonic structure within the church which actually creates **barriers** to God's people drawing closer to Him and growing in intimacy. It is a method of keeping people who desire a deeper spiritual relationship with God merely dependent on other human beings. It's an Old Testament form of priesthood where you needed a human mediator – a go-between concerning yourself and God.

As 1 Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God, and **one mediator** also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”. You can now go directly to God the Father through Jesus Christ yourself. You don't have to pray to Mother Mary, or some other “saint. You don't have to confess to a human priest because you now have a faithful High Priest, Jesus Christ the Righteous One who died for your sins. Mary didn't die for your sins nor did any priest. Jesus Christ wants to be in this personal relationship with you and He reveals Himself by His Holy Word – The Bible.

16 Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

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God brought immediate judgment

Ananias/Saphira: **Acts 5:11** - “great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard”
Korah, Dathan, Abiram: **Numbers 16:32**

Church discipline leads to purity and holy fear of God but notice the issues Jesus had was not with the whole church. He said He will come and make against “**them**” - “not “you”. There were infiltrators in the church at Pergamos who had allowed these heresies to come in and they needed to repent – to expose and renounce those errors or they would be under judgment. If they wouldn't insist on doctrinal and moral purity Jesus would use that same verbal sword against them that He will later use one day to smite the nations as in Revelation 19:15.

17He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give *some* of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.’

who is the one who Overcomes

1 John 5:4-5 – “For whoever has been born of God **overcomes the world**; and this is the victory that has **overcome the world**: our faith. Who is the one who **overcomes the world**, but the one who believes that Jesus is *the Son of God*?”

hidden manna

Exodus 16; Psalm 78:24 – the 'bread from heaven'

John 6:51 – “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats from this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I will give for the life of the world also is My flesh.”

Stored inside Ark of the Covenant (God's throne is the Mercy Seat on the Ark). Hidden inside the Holy of Holies. You will dwell in my very presence. I will give you myself (Jesus). If you forsake the pagan feasts – I will feed you.

White stone

In John's day a white and black stone were used by a judge to pronounce either guilt or innocence upon a defendant. In the case of those who entrust themselves to Christ, we receive the white stone. When we stand before the Father one day Jesus, our advocate, will confess us before the Father as being His own – bought by His blood. We are declared guiltless. Jesus became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

As **Romans 5:1-5** states, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with As Paul also says in **Romans 8:1**, “There is, therefore now no condemnation

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'victory stones'. Those who participated in the Olympic and Ionian games and were victorious would receive such a stone with their name engraved upon it. That stone granted you access to a particular feast and winner's celebration but also release from taxes for life.

For believer's it is our victor's pass into eternal glory with God.

new name written

Names in biblical times had meaning. God actually changed the name of a person in order to reflect a new relationship, new standing, new character and nature. Abram became Abraham, Sarai became Sarah, Jacob was renamed Israel, Simon became Peter, and Saul became Paul.

Just as a parent names his or her child, God signifies His authority over us but also the personal relationship we enjoy by giving us a new name which no one else knows.

Marks of a True Church

Ephesus: Love for God, the brethren and the lost

Smyrna: bearing up under persecution/suffering for His name

Pergamum: separation from sin/the world

How does your church – and your Christian life personally – measure up to this standard?

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We often talk about spiritual warfare in the context of our individual walk – how Satan tries to disrupt our personal relationship with Christ. That is certainly one element of the spiritual warfare but it extends far beyond us personally.

The spiritual warfare in which we are engaged is (at least) a two-front war. The work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not just an effort to redeem the souls of mankind. God is also about the work of restoring the physical creation to its rightful place.

The spiritual side: Jesus + the cross = redemption (buy back death) (Col. 1:13-14; 2:6-15)

The natural side: the physical creation + the true King = restoration of all things (Acts 3:20)

Col. 1:13-18 – for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Eph. 1:21-23; Eph. 3:10; Eph. 6:12 –

2 Cor. 4:4 – in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Demons are not omnipresent. They have locality, areas of responsibility, rank in power.
Satan: the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, loves 'high places'
Demons confined to river Euphrates
Daniel 10 – they are territorial
Job – under restriction - accountability
Demoniac at Gadara

Physical Kingdoms

Babylon	vs.	Jerusalem
Babel (Gen. 11:8) 2200 B.C.		Psalm 2
'wickedness' (Zech. 5:11) 410 B.C		2 Sam. 7:16
Judgment (Rev. 17-18)		Isaiah 43:7

Literal Thrones

Babylon (Plain Shinar):
Tyre (Ezekiel 28:12)