

## I. THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS

Pergamos was an important intellectual and religious center of that day. It had a large library of 200,000 books, second only to Alexandria, Egypt. Today, the village of Bergama is on the ancient site. It was the first city in Asia to build a temple to worship the Emperor. In 29 BC, the temple for Caesar was completed making it the religious capital in the east as Rome was in the west.

## II. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIMSELF

*These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword... (Rev. 2:12)*

The sword comes from Jesus' mouth to release judgment on His enemies (Rev. 1:16; 19:15, 21). Jesus uses the sword of His mouth to withstand the threats of evil governments such as ancient Rome and especially the Antichrist government at the end-of-the-age.

## III. AFFIRMATION FOR FAITHFULNESS

*<sup>13</sup> I know your works, and where you  dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. (Rev. 2:13)*

- A. *I know you dwell where Satan's throne is and where Satan dwells* – The throne of Satan refers to a multitude of major altars of worship to the four most prominent Greek gods: Zeus, Athena, Dionysos, and Asclepius (the god of healing, symbolized by a serpent) along with being the center of Emperor worship for Asia. Each had a priesthood with temple prostitution.
- B. You hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith. To hold fast to Jesus' name refers to doctrinal purity and faithfulness even in the face of death.
- C. We hold fast to Jesus' name in the End-Times by refusing the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:13-17). We will do this by using the authority of God's Word by speaking it with our mouths.  
*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Rev. 12:11)*
- D. Antipas. There is no other historical record, but later tradition states that he was placed in a copper vessel which was heated by fire and boiled to death

## IV. CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE

- A. *I have a few things against you* – the two groups (Balaamites (cf. Num 22-25) and Nicolaitans) were similar yet distinct. They both taught a perversion of the doctrine of liberty. They taught that it was okay to participate in the “partying and immorality” of that day under the pretense of Christian liberty (cf. Jude 4)
- B. Antinomianism is the belief that the Gospel frees us from obedience to specific moral standards since we believe that salvation is given as a gift by faith, therefore, we do not need to repent.

- C. ***You have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam*** –involved participating in temple feasts and their orgies. Some of the leaders in the church taught it was okay to participate in these parties or pagan feasts. Balaam advised King Balak to defeat the Israelites by getting them to participate in feasts related to idolatry and immorality (Num. 25). This caused God to judge Israel. The Israelites came under God’s judgment as 24,000 people died.
- D. ***You also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate*** – this possibly refers to followers of Nicolas, the Jerusalem deacon who fell into error (Acts 6:5). This distortion of “liberty in grace” that allows for compromise with a sinful culture is prevalent in the church today.
- E. Twice Jesus mentions His hatred of the Nicolaitans. What were deeds in Ephesus were doctrines in Pergamos. The teaching allowed the spirit of compromise to go unchallenged (cf. Rev. 2:6).
- F. The most common area of false teaching is that which perverts biblical understanding of the grace of God. They pervert God’s grace by reducing its message to receiving forgiveness without repentance and seeking to make people comfortable with God while continuing in their sin ((2 Pet. 2:1-3, 13-18; Jude 4)
- G. The true grace message inspires us to deny lust and gives us power to walk godly (Titus 2:11-13)

## V. EXHORTATION TO RESPOND AND REPENT

- A. ***I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth*** – Jesus will release the sword of His mouth in judgment against this toleration in the church. Jesus will cleanse His Church.
- B. Balaam was eventually killed by the sword (Num. 22:23, 31; 25:5; 31:8). However, the Lord sent an angel to warn Balaam with a drawn sword to obey God’s Word. He would have been killed with the sword earlier if it had not been for his donkey speaking up (Num. 22:22-25).

## VI. PROMISE FOR OVERCOMERS

- A. ***Hidden manna to eat*** – it was hidden only after it was put in the golden pot in the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies (Ex. 16:32-36; Heb. 9:1-5). This speaks of having increased capacity to be fed by the revelation of the Word in this age and in the age-to-come. Hidden manna suggests the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
- B. Jesus is the true bread or manna from heaven that sustains us (Jn 6:48-51).
- C. ***White stone*** – precious stones were given as awards to honor those who offered valiant service to the community or in battle. Also, a white stone with one's name on it gave them admission to special events, including the games and feasts hosted by the Roman Empire.
- D. ***On the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it*** – a special name will be given to indicate one’s faithfulness, character and role in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa.62:2; 65:15; Rev. 19:11-16; Rev. 14:1; Song of Sol.1:3; Acts 15:17).
- E. To overcome in this context means to refuse to participate in idolatry or immorality and to stand up against false teaching on grace that allows others to be confident in their compromise.