

# The Church of Pergamos (2:12-17)

**Passage:** Revelation 2:12-17

**Title:** The Church of Pergamos (the Church of Compromise)

**Summary:** Pergamos means mixed-marriage, and this church was just that. There was a mixed marriage of godliness and worldliness among some in this church, and Jesus called them to repentance. God does not want us to tolerate compromise in our lives; but how do we correct it? Join us as the Lord makes it clear and simple in our passage before us.

*Revelation 2:12–17 (NKJV)* <sup>12</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: <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. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.'"

## Blessing / John on Patmos

The only book that comes with a promised blessing for those who read it:

*(Revelation 1:3 NKJV)* Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

John on the Island of Patmos receives this revelation of Jesus Christ.

## Book of Revelation Outline

- The Things Which You Have Seen - (Chapter 1).
- The Things Which Are - (Chapters 2-3).
- The Things Which Will Take Place After This - (Chapters 4-22).

*(Revelation 1:19 NKJV)* "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

## John wrote 5 Books / Believe – Eternal Life – Be Ready

The Apostle John wrote 4 other books to the church. The Gospel of John, and 1,2,3 John, and this fifth book, Revelation. In the Gospel of John he wrote that we might believe, he uses the word believe some 60 times:

*(John 20:31 NKJV)* but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

He wrote us in 1,2,3 John so that we might know that we have eternal life:

*(1 John 5:13 NKJV)* These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

So he wrote that we might believe, then that we might know, and now he writes Revelation so that we might be ready:

*(Revelation 2:7 NKJV)* "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

## Before Glorified Christ / Look for in Church – as Individuals / Praise – Problem -Promise

John is now before the glorified Christ, and Jesus says John now write these things to the 7 churches so that they might be ready, for this book is all about man coming before the Holy God:

Chapter 2

The Church of Ephesus (2:1-7)

The Church of Smyrna (2:8-11)

The Church of Pergamos (2:12-17)

The Church of Thyatira (2:18-29)

Chapter 3

The Church of Sardis (3:1-6)  
The Church of Philadelphia (3:7-13)  
The Church of Laodicea (3:14-22)

Now personally and practically for each of us, it is important to read what Jesus says is important for the church, and this is what we should look for in the church we choose to fellowship. And equally as important is what Jesus says is important for us as individuals. Jesus will praise, present, and promise each church. He will praise each church on the good things they are doing, He will then present each Church with a problem He sees in that Church (except Smyrna and Philadelphia), and then give each Church a promise they can hold on to

**So the Outline for each of the 7 Churches will be the same:**

- The Praise of the Church
- The Problem in the Church
- The Promise for the Church

**Actual Churches – Church History – Churches Today – Individuals / Postal Route**

When we study the 7 churches in chapters 2-3 we will see these 7 churches are Actual Churches in the day this was written, they also represent periods of Church History, conditions of Actual Churches today, and they represent each believer individually as each believer can fall somewhere into what is being said about that particular church. The order of these churches was an actual mail route in Asia Minor, it was a postal route, and God today still sends a personal letter, a love letter, to us.

**Known as Church of Compromise**

Pergamos is known as the church of compromise.

**Questions:**

So we're going to ask questions because of the interesting things we'll read.

1. Where is Satan's throne?
2. What is the doctrine of Balaam?
3. What is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans?
4. What is doctrine for that matter?
5. What is hidden mana?
6. What is a white stone and what is a new name?

All fascinating things when you consider. So looking forward to the study today.

**Prayer**

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

*Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

**In Every Study**

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

*Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*

**(Revelation 2:12 NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:**

### **Known For / Name Means**

Pergamos is known as the church of compromise.

1. Pergamos is a compound word, and "per" - means opposite or objection or mixed.
2. And the second part of the word, "gamos", means marriage.

So Pergamos is an opposition to marriage, a pure marriage, it is a mixed-marriage. How interesting. And I believe truly that the opposition is the marriage to the Lamb. Perfect, spotless, pure. And that's what we see here with Pergamos in its compromise. The perfect purity commitment to their marriage. The Vow to the Lord.

### **No mention of Church Start**

Scripture does not record the founding of the church at Pergamos, just like Smyrna, nor is the city mentioned in the book of Acts. All that is revealed about this congregation is contained in this letter. Presumably, a church was planted in Pergamos during Paul's Ephesian ministry (Acts 19:10), either by Paul himself, or by his converts.

### **Not Port City / Not Major Trade Route / Considered Asia's Greatest City**

Pergamum

- was about one hundred miles north of Ephesus,
- with Smyrna located about halfway in between.
- Unlike Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamum was not a port city but was located about fifteen miles inland from the Aegean Sea.
- Nor was it on any of the major trade routes.
- Yet, as its ancient capital, Pergamum was considered Asia's greatest city.
- The Roman writer Pliny called it "by far the most distinguished city in Asia".
- By the time John penned Revelation, Pergamum had been Asia's capital for almost 250 years (since 133 B.C., when its last king bequeathed his kingdom to Rome).

### **Impressive / Built on 1000 ft Hill**

Much of Pergamum was built on a large, conical hill towering some one thousand feet above the plain. So impressive is the site even in modern times that the famed nineteenth-century archaeologist Sir William Ramsay commented, "Beyond all other sites in Asia Minor it gives the traveler the impression of a royal city, the home of authority: the rocky hill on which it stands is so huge, and dominates the broad plain of the Caicus [River valley] so proudly and boldly"

### **200K Library / Mfg of Parchment / 10K Amphitheater**

Pergamum was famous for its university with a library of about 200,000 volumes, and for manufacturing parchment resulting in a paper called pergamenta. The city also had a 10,000 seat amphitheater.

### **Center of Worship / Emperor Worship / Sacrifice 1X a year / Dangerous for Christians**

Pergamum was an important center of worship for four of the main deities of the Greco-Roman world, and temples dedicated to

- Athena – god of wisdom, war
- Asklepios, - god of healing
- Dionysos, - god of fertility, wine, and arts (later extreme sexual immorality)
- and Zeus – chief god of all Greek gods.

All were located there. But overshadowing the worship of all those deities was Pergamum's devotion to the cult of emperor worship. Pergamum built the first temple devoted to emperor worship in Asia (29 B.C.), in honor of Emperor Augustus. Later, the city would build two more such temples, honoring the emperors Trajan and Septimus Severus. The city thus became the center of emperor worship in the province, and there, more than in any other city in Asia, Christians were in danger of harm from the emperor worship cult at the time of this writing. Elsewhere, Christians were primarily in danger on the one day per year they were required to offer sacrifices to the emperor; in Pergamum they were in danger

every day. It is likely that the martyr Antipas (2:13) was executed, at least in part, for refusing to worship the emperor.

### **The Two-Edge Sword**

Verse 12 - says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: Chapter one, verse 16 is where we see the sharp two-edged sword. Jesus identifies himself in every one of the seven churches with one of his characteristics that we saw in chapter one.

*Revelation 1:16 (NKJV)* <sup>16</sup> He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

And what's vital to all of us is the answer to compromise. Any compromise is the word of God. He is the way, the truth and the life the way I should go. The truth against the lies of the devil and the life, the more abundant life that he wants us to have. He gives us his word to protect us and to provide for us to protect us from the harm and the diminishing that sin will bring, or even just the way of wisdom of the Lord. And he wants to provide something that only a God can provide, the God can provide.

*John 14:6 (NKJV)* <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

*John 10:10 (NKJV)* <sup>10</sup> The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

In 313 AD, in church history, that's what Pergamos represents in the period of church history. After the 10 waves of persecution (Smyrna). And it was then that Constantine had a vision, the Roman emperor, and that he made Christianity the state religion, but he didn't stamp out the others. He just made it a political move. He didn't have a separation of church and state. He had a merging of church and state. And that's the difference of America. The separation of church and state is that the state can't dictate how the church should be run even though we saw a glimmer of how they tried to make it when we watched Covid. So there's something for us in the big picture of the political prophecy before us, but nowhere do we read in our constitution that anyone was mandated on what religion to follow. And that was the point of separation of church and state in 313. Constantine made Christianity the state religion and it was one of Satan's greatest moves. If you can't beat him, join them, and so he entered in to the church rather than fight against it.

*Matthew 13:24–30 (NKJV)* <sup>24</sup> Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; <sup>25</sup> but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. <sup>26</sup> But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. <sup>27</sup> So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' <sup>28</sup> He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' <sup>29</sup> But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "

*Matthew 13:36–43 (NKJV)* <sup>36</sup> Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." <sup>37</sup> He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. <sup>39</sup> The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. <sup>40</sup> Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, <sup>42</sup> and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Compromise. It's amazing. We see in verse 13 that they were right in the midst of Satan's throne (stronghold), and yet they did not deny the faith of Jesus.

The church could be so great in one area and yet so compromising in another and not even see it. We see they, even the pastor, the elder, and the worship team and all the other leaders in the church did not recognize the compromise or they willfully chose not to address it because they were afraid to face up and go to war over compromise in the church. And now the compromise has compromised the church.

In each of the churches that are lacking and have problems, Jesus describes to them something that they are lacking and what they need to come back for restoration and in this church here in Pergamos it is the word of God. A sword wasn't for show, the sword was for ruthless battle, and that is the picture here for them and us, that we are to be ruthless in the use of the Word of God against anything that comes

against the things of God in our lives, and here specifically..... anything that is compromising our walk and witness with Him.

**Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)** <sup>12</sup> For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

So the sharp two-edge sword is the answer to all compromise. Sharp means “razor sharp” here in this verse. And so there's two verses that we should all memorize. Hebrews four 12, the word of God is living in powerful and sharper than a two-edge sword. That word for divide means surgery. The word will do surgery on you. How you think, what the world thinks and how you can be divided against it. God's word over man's word and it's spiritual. It has a spiritual power behind it, and it reaches into the soul, which is the very person of you. It's your likes, it's your makeup, it's your personality. And yet God still wants to work and bring that into the alignment of the spiritual things. Marrow is where the life blood is created in the bone marrow. If you had no bone marrow, you would die. When cancer treatments are done, many times it's in the bone marrow to put in healthy blood that will go and reef, replenish and heal the body. And this is what the word goes from the soul down deep into our body. So we see body, spirit, and soul.

**Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)** <sup>12</sup> For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The other verse to memorize is Ephesians 6:17, be strong in him. Put on the whole armor. The word is your greatest weapon against principality, powers and rulers. The word gives us the ability to stand and to quit falling for the lies and lust of the world. The Word is Pure Power

- P – Peace - brings us a peace which passes understanding.
- O - is oil. It's Holy Spirit anointed this word of God
- W – Worship - and the word of God will bring us into a place of worshiping and spirit and truth.
- E – Everlasting - And then it gives us an everlasting word by an everlasting God who outlasts all the things of the world. And the word of God has outlast all the hammers that have come against it. It's the anvil that is stand against all the hammers of the challenges.
- R – Repentance - And the R for the power is repentance because it's totally freeing.

And again, it is the answer to all compromise.

**Ephesians 6:13–18 (NKJV)** <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

## **The Praise of the Church**

**(Revelation 2:13 NKJV)** "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.

### **I Know**

He says, I know, I know what you are facing is hard. But He will go to say that compromise is never the answer.

### **Tough Circumstances – Held Fast**

Despite the difficult circumstances in which they found themselves, the believers at Pergamum courageously maintained their faith in Jesus Christ. He commended them for continuing to hold fast His name. Christian it is so easy to quit, I know, but hold fast, hang in there. Think back at how many Christians have quit, and consider, none of their lives improved when they did quit. Hold fast, finish well.

### **Birthplace of Zeus / 150ft Temple**

According to Greek mythology, Pergamos was the birthplace of Zeus. “Satan’s seat” is in reference to the one hundred-fifty-foot-high structure (that’s almost 15 stories) dedicated to Zeus in the middle of the city of Pergamos.

Satan is more than comfortable in America. I am reminded of Jesus story of the casting out of a demon, and if the void isn't filled with God, seven demons come back and are 7 times worse than the first state. Look at progression of America, kick God out of school (remove prayer), then out of government (remove 10 commandments), and backfilled with social media, Hollywood movies and shows, and on and on. Satan has a throne, and I cant say for sure where it is, but if not here in America, he surely has many embassies.

*Matthew 12:43–45 (NKJV)* <sup>43</sup> "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. <sup>44</sup> Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup> Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

### **Asklepios – god of Healing / Healing at Temple – if Touched by Snake**

Others connect Satan's throne with the worship of the god Asklepios that was prevalent in Pergamum. Asklepios was the god of healing, and people came from all over the ancient world to Pergamum, seeking to be healed at his shrine. Asklepios was depicted as a snake (the god of healing, whose insignia was the entwined serpent on the staff - this is still a medical symbol today – Satan's counterfeit from Numbers 21 when Moses lifted the bronze serpent up on the poll.), and nonpoisonous snakes roamed freely in his temple. Suppliants seeking healing either slept or lay down on the temple's floor, hoping to be touched by one of the snakes (symbolically representing the god himself) and thereby be healed. Such symbolism would undoubtedly remind Christians of Satan, Satan, of course, is likewise symbolized as the serpent *Numbers 21:8–9 (NKJV)* <sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

If you are in need of a touch today, God knows, God sees you, and is a call away. I refer you back to our last study, Smyrna, and the God who sees you in you hardship and tribulations.

### **Antipas – Fried to Death / Means Against All / Little Written – Singled Out**

The historian Tertullian tells us that, because Antipas, a physician in the city of Pergamos, wouldn't renounce his faith, he was fried to death. Anti-pas means against all. It also meant, 'like the father'. What a testimony, he was like his Father God. There is little written about this man, but he makes the praise report, singled out by name for his stance against Satan. God praises the believer who stands in hard times.

### **Sound Doctrine**

*Verse 13 - And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith.....* - And the church in Pergamos was known for not denying the Name of the Lord, nor the faith. The core doctrine is "faith"

- Man's need for a Savior
- Jesus only for salvation
- Jesus suffered, died, was buried, and rose again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day,
- and now is seated at the throne of heaven

The did not deny the core doctrine of salvation.

Antipas died for his witness (Greek Word martyr – means "witness"). He would not bow to whatever it was, and was killed for it. Let it be known, that they had to know, that he had a witness to start with in order to die for it.

If Christianity was a crime, is there enough evidence in your life to be convicted?

### **The Problem in the Church**

**(Revelation 2:14 NKJV)** "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality."

### **Story of Balaam / Donkey – 3X / Moabites / Hook'em Physically**

You remember the story of Balaam. Asked by Moabite King Balak to pronounce a curse on the people of Israel, God forbade the prophet Balaam to go. But Balaam went anyway, and after a short discussion with

a donkey, he wound up on a mountain overlooking the encamped Israelites upon whom he was to issue a curse. After three failed attempts, realizing he couldn't curse them, Balaam resorted to an alternate plan. Get your woman, the Moabites, all gussied-up, strut past the men of Israel, bat their eyelashes, invite them back to the tents, and then after they hook with the physical, then they can introduce idol worship to them through which Israel will thereby bring a curse upon herself" (see Numbers 22-24).

God must discipline His children, for their sake, and His name sake:

*1 Peter 4:17-18 (NKJV)* <sup>17</sup> For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

In the end, 24,000 men of Israel would die because of this sin.

*Numbers 25:9 (NKJV)* <sup>9</sup> And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

So that is what happened historically, the Children of Israel were introduced and seduced into idolatry and sexual immorality.

But here we read in verse 14, that we are talking about the "doctrine" of Balaam.

Again, Pergamos is not denying the "doctrine of Christ", but they are embracing the "doctrine of Balaam".

### **Doctrine of Balaam – Objectionable Marriages – Mixed Marriages**

What, then, is the doctrine of Balaam? It is Pergamos: objectionable marriage with the world. It is getting God's people involved with/mixed with the things of the world. God does not want mixture in His church.

Doctrine is – what you believe and why. Doctrine shapes how you live.

### **Greek Word Pergamos / Unequally Yoked – Sexual Sin / Not Open-Minded**

The Greek prefix per, means opposition. The suffix gamos, " means "marriage." Pergamos, then, means "objectionable marriage"—a fitting description of the next phase of church history. So the church at Pergamos allowed people to be unequally yoked, they turned a blind eye to sexual immorality, indulgence in the things of the world. God says I have a problem with this, and if God has a problem with it, then you and I should too. We can't allow compromise in our lives and in this church, no matter how acceptable it is in this world around us. It is not being open-minded, it is being deceived by Satan.

People today, even pastors, will say all that matters is that you Jesus died for your sins; how you live doesn't matter. Personal holiness doesn't matter. So there is no challenge against sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, and the like.

### **Period of Church History / 10 Emperors / 5 million**

The resultant of this compromise can be seen in the period of Church History that this church represents, and is still prevalent today. The year was A.D. 312. The last of the ten Roman emperors who had persecuted the church was dead, ushering in a power play for the reins of the empire. During these 10 periods of persecution some 5-7 million Christians were killed.

### **10 Waves / Church of Smyrna**

There were ten intense periods of persecution by ten Roman emperors (these dates are approximate). The church at Smyrna represents this church period from approximately 64-313AD:

- Nero—64–68 (Paul was beheaded under his reign)
- Domitian—95–96 (John was exiled during that period)
- Trajan—104–117 (Ignatius was burned at the stake)
- Marcus Aurelius—161–180 (Polycarp was martyred)
- Severus—200–211
- Maximinius—235–237
- Decius—250–253
- Valerian—257–260

- Aurelian—270–275
- Diocletian—303–313 (the worst emperor of all).

### **Civil War / Cross in Sky / Born-again / Christians Sided with Him**

After Diocletian, there was a civil war in Rome, a fight for power, a fight for total power and control of the Roman Empire. One of the rulers was a young man named Constantine, and according to legend, he said he saw a cross in the heavens and heard a voice saying, "In this sign conquer." And as a result, young Constantine fell to his knees and became a born-again believer. According to history, however, what really happened was that, substantially outnumbered, Constantine noticed that Christians were not enlisting in anyone's army. Realizing that if he converted to Christianity, he would have access to a potential infusion of new troops, he became a Christian. And the Christians responded by siding with him.

### **Disaster for Church / Edict of Toleration / Official Religion / Babies – Armies Baptised**

But it would turn out to be an unmitigated disaster. As a result of Constantine's Edict of Toleration, which forbade persecution of Christians, Christianity became the official religion of Rome. In fact, soon all Roman babies would be legally required to be baptized into the Christian faith, whole armies marched through the river and were considered baptized.

### **Constantine the Politician / Everyone Happy – Merged the Pagan / The Coin**

Yes, the Christians were in power, but, understanding the political expediency of concession, Constantine compromised with the pagan priests and traditions that permeated Rome. Constantine ever the politician said, "Let's find common ground. Let's meet halfway." So a marriage took place that was perhaps most clearly illustrated by the coin issued shortly thereafter. Christian symbols were stamped on one hand of the coin and pagan symbols on the other hand. From A.D. 313 to A.D. 600, church and state worked together as a political power—and as a result the church began a downward spiral from which she has yet to recover, as we shall see.

### **Christians out of Catacombs / Hooray / Nothing bad About Smyrna**

Now Christians are out of the catacombs, they are no longer meeting underground in the sewer system. They go from poverty and wearing rags, to real jobs and nice clothing. They began opening businesses, they started moving on up. Persecution is over, hooray, so you say, and yes no one enjoys suffering and persecution, but important to remember the Church of Smyrna, the persecuted church, the period of church history when over 5 million Christians were martyred, and yet God had nothing bad to say about that church, only praise and the promise of eternal life. God says to Pergamos, I have a few things against you, you best repent.

### **Merged / Priests – Temples – Holidays / Satan Changed Strategy**

This began the process by which Christianity merged with the Roman state. Heathen priests became Christian priests; heathen temples became Christian churches; heathen feasts became Christian festivals. Christianity was no longer a personal matter, but a national identity. The church married the political system, so that worldliness was synonymous with the church. Satan changes his strategy rather than attacking the church and watching it purify and grow, he infiltrates it from the inside to weaken it. Persecution will have you living a life of purity because you will be looking for His soon return, ease of life many times has a person looking around instead of up. The comfortable life can affect your theology.

### **Pontiff Maximus / Constantine Passed it to Priest / 200 Years after Peter**

Did you know each Roman Emperor called himself and considered himself the supreme being, "pontiff maximus", thus they demanded worship. But Constantine, he passed that on to one of the priests, and told all of Rome that this priest was now "pontiff maximus". So if you are ever wondering where the establishment of the Pope in Rome began, it began here with Constantine. By the way this is some 200 years since Peter, so he could not have been the first "pontiff maximus".

### **1 Religion / Catholic - Universal**

Also to note, Constantine said there is only 1 religion, Christianity, it will be the universal religion. Catholic means universal, and to establish the headquarters of this universal Catholic religion, he put the word Roman in front of it so no one would even consider establishing the headquarters anywhere else,



and it worked for 1700 years later the Roman Catholic Religion is headquartered in Rome, and the "pontiff maximus" still sits over it.

### **Our Holidays - Christmas & Easter / Nimrod – Semiramis “Queen of Heaven” - Tammuz**

Here is an interesting story, do you really want to know where Easter and Christmas came from, Genesis 10 was the beginning of the Babylonian religious system:

*(Genesis 10:8 NKJV) Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth.*

*(Genesis 10:9 NKJV) He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD."*

Nimrod had a wife whose name was Semiramis and she became known as "The Queen of Heaven." She had a son, which she claimed to be virgin born (which can't figure out if she was already married – by the way her husband was off to war at the time of her virgin birth) and she named him Tammuz. He was being groomed to be the center of worship by the people. One day while hunting, a wild boar gored him; he lay dead for three days and when he was found he revived. They celebrated his birth on the 25th of December. They would burn a Yule log on the fire until it was completely consumed, but in the morning a tree would appear, brightly decorated in the home (the parents would bring it in after the children fall asleep). It was an evergreen tree, which was a symbol of perpetuated life.

Constantine took the practice of "Saturnalia" and incorporated it with the Christian calendar, calling it Christmas and celebrating the birth of Christ. To celebrate his resurrection from being gored by the boar, they began to decorate eggs and to have a celebration in the springtime, which later became known as Ashtar (we call it Easter), the Greek for Semiramis. The egg, again, is a symbol of continued life. Does all this sound familiar? These are the true roots of these holidays, and they were thousands of years before Christ.

### **Easy for Constantine to Do / Early Christians Hiding / Jesus not Born Dec 25**

One of the reasons it was easy for Constantine to do is that in the early days of the Christian Church they wanted to celebrate the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Of course there was great persecution going on in those days, and many underground churches. So they said let us celebrate at the same time as the pagans do, and nobody will know that we are celebrating Christ rather than Tammuz. By the way, it is highly unlikely that Jesus was not born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December, for the shepherds do not have the flocks in the fields at that time of year. Our Christmas truly is celebrated at the same time as Pagan celebration.

### **Satan's Counterfeit Plan / But how?**

How can this be you might be wondering, their story was first, before the birth of Jesus, how can that be? It is quite fascinating to realize that Satan developed his own counterfeit to God's Plan, which he knew. Of course some people use this story to say that Christianity is a copy of this story. Truly if you don't think it all the way through, it could cause you to question. But as always, let the Scriptures be the anvil that breaks all the hammers that come against it.

### **Signs in the Stars / Genesis - Matthew**

Here are two solid reasons for how the counterfeit superseded the original. It would seem that God had set His plan in the stars, which were set for signs and for seasons:

*(Genesis 1:14 NKJV) Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;*

The Scriptures can lead us to believe that the Gospel is really there in the signs of the Zodiac; but, Astrology has become a perversion of that. This all came about at the time of Nimrod, who was one of the instigators of building the Tower of Babel to reach into Heaven. You may say I am stretching the Scriptures there in Genesis, but the Book of Matthew concurs:

*(Matthew 2:1 KJV) Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,*

*(Matthew 2:2 KJV) Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

When the birth of Christ took place there were still men in the East, who could read the stars and they were brought from afar, to worship the child that was born, by these signs. There are many interesting books on the Zodiac and the message of the gospel in the Zodiac. If you are interested in a more detailed study of the origins, that we find in the 10th chapter of Genesis, there is a book "The Genesis Record" by Dr. Henry Morrison. It traces each one of Noah's sons' national roots.

### **Gospel before Foundation of World / Satan comes before the Throne**

Secondly, Folks, Satan inspires people. He is the prince and power of the air, he fills and energizes people who are tuned into his station. Now Satan knows the story, he goes before the throne, he has been able to come and go. He knows enough of the details to create a counterfeit.

He knew back in the garden what it meant, he knew that he would hurt Jesus (gore Him):

*(Genesis 3:15 NKJV) And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

How did he know the resurrection after 3 days, because the story of the resurrection was laid out before the foundations of the world:

*(1 Peter 1:18 NKJV) knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers*

*(1 Peter 1:19 NKJV) but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*

*(1 Peter 1:20 NKJV) He indeed was **foreordained before the foundations of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you*

*(1 Peter 1:21 NKJV) who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

*(Revelation 13:8 NIV) All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to **the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.***

And we know that Satan has access to come and go before the throne as he desires (but that will come to an end in the Last Days). We read this in the story of Job. Satan comes and makes accusations against you and me, and he comes and hears all that the Lord is doing:

*(Job 2:1 NKJV) Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.*

*(Job 2:2 NKJV) And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."*

*(Job 2:3 NKJV) Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."*

### **Satan Energizes People / Nimrod Willing Participant**

The death and resurrection of Christ was told before the foundations of the world, and Satan knew enough of the story to build his counterfeit. It wasn't hard to find a willing participant in the Nimrod family, for they were rebellious against God, and was looking for the souls of men. Nimrod is still stealing the souls of men today in a sense, for those that will use this story as justification not to follow the real-thing, Jesus Christ.

He energizes people, and people will follow his lie. Joseph Smith is a modern day example:

*(Ephesians 2:1 NKJV) And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*

*(Ephesians 2:2 NKJV) in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

### **God warns in the OT**

God warns of following the Queen of heaven (Jer 7:18, Jer 44:18-25). God warns not weep for Tammuz (who is also know in false religions as Astoreh, Venus, and Jupiter):

*(Ezekiel 8:13 NKJV) And He said to me, "Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing."*

*(Ezekiel 8:14 NKJV) So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house; and to my dismay, **women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.***

*(Ezekiel 8:15 NKJV) Then He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these."*

In Jeremiah 10, we see God's warning against this pagan practice. They are told not study the stars (astrology), we see a picture of the Christmas Tree:

*(Jeremiah 10:1 NKJV) Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.*

*(Jeremiah 10:2 NKJV) Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.*

*(Jeremiah 10:3 NKJV) For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.*

*(Jeremiah 10:4 NKJV) They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple.*

### **God hates this Mixture / Will Destroy Babylonian Religion Rev 17**

There you have a brief history of things you celebrate and are influenced by. The Lord comes down heavy, in Chapter (17) of Revelation, on the Babylonian System that has invaded the church and he speaks of God's coming judgment against this system. God says I hate the mixture of the Babylonian system with my pure church.

**(Revelation 2:15 NKJV) "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**

#### **Nicolaitan**

Compound word

- Nico – to conquer
- Laity – the people

So "to conquer the people"

#### **Establishment of Priesthood**

Just what are the deeds of the Nicolaitans? Often a group gets its name and the name describes the actions of that group. The word Nicolaitan is made up of two Greek words. "Nicos" meaning "conquest" (where the sports company Nike gets its name) and "laity" meaning "people of the church. It is the establishing of a priesthood, of men saying you need to come to me if you are to see God.

#### **Veil Menders**

They are veil menders, they get out the needle and thread and try to put the veil back up between man and God. They try to come and say, Hey, if you want to approach God, you got to come through me. If you want to be spiritual, come and meet with me. And Jesus says He hates it because Jesus says he hates anything that puts a veil between him and his bride.

#### **Priesthood Abolished by Jesus / No Intercessor between God and Man**

Now, the Lord said that they hated that. He said He hated it too. The priesthood was a part of the old testament arrangement when God was not approachable by man, by sinful man. And the priest would approach God for the people with the sacrifices, then he would come out from the Holy of Holies to pronounce God's blessings upon the people. He was God's representative to the people. He was the people's representative to God. He was a mediator. He was a go between. And that was necessary in the Old Testament period. But Jesus by His death abolished the priesthood. And now there's only one God and one mediator between God and man and that is the man Christ Jesus. He died in order to give you direct access to the Father. Now, He hates anyone who would come in between you and the Father, that your approach to God would have to be through some person. Not necessary, not possible unless that is the person of Jesus Christ. One God. One mediator between God and man. Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me. And so the priesthood had already begun to be established. We'll find it when we get to the church of Pergamos. That early in the church this idea of special holy men who can intercede to God for you and would be intermediaries between you and God. Not so. The Ephesians did accept that. In fact, they hated that and Jesus said He also hated it.

*1 Timothy 2:5 (NKJV) <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*

#### **No other Man in Brides Life**

Jesus is saying I don't want anyone or anything coming between me and my bride. Stay away from my wife, or you will find out about a jealous husband, and it won't be pretty.

### **Why Spiritual Hierarchy?**

Why do people want that spiritual hierarchy? They want it because they do not want to enter into the spiritual work themselves. They would rather pay a professional, and then it will be his responsibility to pray for me, to tell me what the bible says, to do all the works of the ministry. It is a justification to them for not seeking the things of the Spirit, but the things of the world. God hates it, so should we.

**(Revelation 2:16 NKJV) 'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.**

### **Repentance**

Verse 16 – repent: Repent means to change your mind. Change the way you think about this or that. To turn away from it. To walk away from it.

Repentance is an invitation to come home. It's an invitation back to intimacy and unity. It's a beautiful word.

### **Only Remedy / Change Mind / Holiday Seasons**

The only remedy for any sinful behavior is to repent. Repent is from “metanoeo”, a word used in Scripture to describe a change of mind that results in a change of behavior. While tolerance is lauded in our modern culture, tolerating heretical teaching or sinful behavior in the church is not a virtue but a sin. What about celebrating holidays, well if you aren't worshipping Tammuz, then I say don't get caught-up in the distraction, but use the holidays to point people back to the reason for the season. Unfortunately, I see so many Christians get caught-up in the rush, they totally blow God off during the season, so change your mind about that.

### **Unequally Yoked / Sexual Immorality / Church Tolerance / Teenagers**

God gives a strong word here about being unequally yoked, married/mixing with the world. He gives a strong word against sexual immorality. You are not married in God's eyes, you are married when you say I Do before the throne of heaven and in the witness of man. Many churches have accepted this compromise now, the world has worn them down. Tolerance of the church has produced acceptance, and now that acceptance has led to promotion. I feel for you teenagers, for all the bombardment that is before you with these sexual images, time after time those images are being written to the hard drive of your brain, and you become programmed to “double click”, all it takes is a little hormone raging, and there is plenty of that, but hold-fast, stay strong, you'll be glad you did.

### **Pergamos Failed to Heed Biblical Warning / Married the World / Church of Ephesus**

The church at Pergamum, like much of today's church, had failed to heed the biblical warnings against worldliness. Consequently, it had drifted into compromise and was in danger of becoming intertwined with the world. That would be the next step in the downward spiral from the Ephesian church's loss of its first love for Jesus Christ. If you are compromising in your life, your love for the Lord will quickly wean, and eventually you will be like Ephesus, you will have left the romance place with the Lord, and just be going through the motions of love.

### **Churches Today / Consumer Oriented**

Today's user-friendly, seeker-oriented, market-driven, consumer oriented churches doesn't preach much against worldliness. To do so might make unbelievers (not to mention many believers) uncomfortable, and is therefore avoided as poor marketing strategy.

### **Bible Has much to Say About Worldliness**

But unlike much of the contemporary church, the Bible does not hesitate to condemn worldliness for the serious sin that it is. Worldliness is any preoccupation with or interest in the temporal system of life that places anything perishable before that which is eternal. Since believers are not part of the world system (John 15:19), they must not act as though they were. “Do not be conformed to this world,” wrote the apostle Paul, “but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2). Because they have been redeemed by God's grace, believers are called to “deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly,

righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12). “Pure and undefiled religion,” notes James, consists in keeping “oneself unstained by the world” (James 1:27), because “friendship with the world is hostility toward God[.] Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4). First John 2:15–17 makes the believer’s duty to avoid worldliness unmistakably clear: Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

*(John 15:19 NKJV) "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but **I chose you out of the world**, therefore the world hates you.*

*(Romans 12:1 NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

*(Romans 12:2 NKJV) And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

*(Titus 2:11 NKJV) For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,*

*(Titus 2:12 NKJV) teaching us that, **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts**, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*

*(Titus 2:13 NKJV) looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

*(James 1:27 NKJV) Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, **and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.***

*(James 4:4 NKJV) Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? **Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.***

*(1 John 2:15 NKJV) **Do not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*(1 John 2:16 NKJV) **For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;** is not of the Father but is of the world.*

*(1 John 2:17 NKJV) And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

*(2 Corinthians 6:14 NKJV) **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

*(2 Corinthians 6:15 NKJV) And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

*(2 Corinthians 6:16 NKJV) And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."*

*(2 Corinthians 6:17 NKJV) Therefore "**Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord.** Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."*

## **How do You Know – the Word**

How do you know who’s who or what’s what in a world so prone to the Pergamos tendency? Stick with the Word—with that which divides sin’s mind-set from that which is right eternally (Hebrews 4:12). For every church Jesus gives a description of Himself that relates to the issue and needs of that Church. In verse 12 he says He who has the sharp two-edged sword. Stick with the Word and you will not be drawn into the world of Pergamos:

*(Revelation 2:12 NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:*

## **Healthy Church**

Verse 16 - and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. – Jesus is saying to the messenger (pastor) of this church that if you won’t deal with it, I will, and it will not be good for you or them. Most pastors will say yes Jesus you deal with them, I don’t want to deal with it; but the Lord gives the charge to the pastor to deal with it, because that is what a shepherd is to do. To protect and provide. If the shepherd doesn’t deal with it, then his whole ministry becomes subject of what he really believes, and does he live what he preaches.

## **The Promise for the Church**

**(Revelation 2:17 NKJV) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."**

### **Overcome by Faith**

Verse 17 - To him who overcomes – We overcome by faith in the blood of the Lamb.

*(1 John 5:4 NKJV) For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith.  
(1 John 5:5 NKJV) Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

### **Hidden Manna / Exodus 16 / John 6**

Verse 17 - I will give some of the hidden manna to eat – According to Exodus 16:33, the Israelites were to memorialize that divine provision by keeping a jar of manna inside the Ark of the Covenant during their travels. The hidden manna represents Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life who came down from heaven:

*(John 6:35 NKJV) And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

### **White Stone / Not Guilty**

Verse 17 - And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone - The secret ballot of John's day was a stone. A black stone was "no"; a white stone "yes." We still refer to this practice when we say someone was "blackballed." Thus, Jesus was saying, "If you turn away from paganism, compromise, and the Pergamos mentality, I'll give you a white stone, which means you're not guilty; you're righteous; you're free."

### **New Name / Equal in Heaven / Yet Special for You**

Verse 17 - on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it – Jesus will be something to you, which He is to no one else. Although we will all be equal in heaven, all together in heaven, yet we will each have something intimate and personal with Him.

The white throne meant you were acquitted of a crime, a new name. I believe the word is a unique and one and only name that nobody knows. And I look forward to the new name in heaven. I don't fully understand and know if that name is just between me and the Lord or all of us. But we will know each other and recognize each other. But I love the old name. We'll be gone. No tagging in association with my old man that had my past tagged to it and I love it. Even now, I believe there's a new name. When the accuser comes, not only is there no record of my sin, it would read. There's nobody named Ray Bullis here in this place and the Satan would not know what the new name is. Therefore, he cannot accuse us as the accuser of the brethren did. When Jesus comes to discipline, the church, repercussions will flow back to the church because they didn't discipline. So the calling to address discipline when it needs to.

### **Be an Antipas – Be Against Things Lord is Against / Receive the Hidden Manna**

Beloved, be and Antipas, be against all these things that the Lord is against. Jesus says nothing this world has to offer you can compare to the hidden manna that I will give you,

### **Gospel / If You Were to Die Tonight**

#### **Personal**

*Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV) <sup>11</sup> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

#### **Problem**

*Romans 3:23 (NKJV) <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

#### **Penalty**

*Romans 6:23 (NKJV) <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

#### **Provision**

*John 3:16 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

## Profession

**Romans 10:13 (NKJV)** <sup>13</sup> For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

## Recognize

**John 14:6 (NKJV)** <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

## Repent

**Acts 3:19 (NKJV)** <sup>19</sup> Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

## Receive

**Romans 10:9 (NKJV)** <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

## Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

**Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)** <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

## In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV)** <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need