

“The Seven Churches of Revelation”

Part 3 – The Church of Pergamos

Pergamos – The Compromising Church (Revelation 2:12-17).

*Prophetically – the era from 315 AD – 606 AD.

The word Pergamos (Pergamum) means “elevation”. This word accurately describes how the church became elevated through its marriage to the government. Satan discovered that persecution only purified the church and spread the gospel, so he took the opposite tactic to indulge the church into complacency.

Emperor Constantine had a major impact on this church age. He believed that if he embraced the Christian religion he would be able to conquer his enemies. He supposedly accepted the Christian faith and declared himself to be its defender and protector. Beginning in 312 AD, he united the church and state by declaring an edict of toleration for Christians and showering the church with many gifts. The church went from being persecuted by the government to receiving money from the government including pagan temples that became churches. When the Roman Catholic church grew out of the pagan Roman Empire, it adopted the same policy for governing the church as the emperors had used for governing the Empire.

I. The City of Pergamos

- About 60 miles northeast of Smyrna
- Center of Roman emperor worship (primary)
- Throne-like altar on a cliff overlooking the city built for the Greek god Zeus.
- Known for its civilization and learning (library containing over 200,000 volumes).
- Noted for its pottery, tapestries, and parchments.

II. The Church of Pergamos – Revelation 2:12-17

A. Christ's Introduction

- i. (2:12) "he that hath the sharp sword"
(warning, not encouragement)

B. Their Location

- i. (2:13) "where Satan's seat is"
- ii. Persecution; example of Antipas

C. Their Praise

- i. (2:13) "thou holdest fast my name"
- ii. "and hast not denied my faith"

D. Their Warning

- i. (2:14) the doctrine of Baalim
- ii. (2:15) the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes
Tolerating these sins meant that the church was taking a passive approach to impure doctrine and practices.

E. Their Need

- i. (2:16) Repent, or judgment will come
- ii. "with the sword of my mouth" (1:16)

F. Their Promise

- i. (2:17) "Overcomers" (the saved)
 - 1. "the hidden manna"
 - a. Bread of Life
 - 2. "a white stone"
 - a. Court = acquittal
 - b. Relationships = friendship
 - c. Voting = approval
 - d. Sports = victor
 - 3. "a new name"