

Pergamum (2:12-17)

The Spirit is saying “*Do not back off! Stand up for freedom! Resist the encroaching pressure of power politics and pagan ideologies.*”

A. Is this ancient history?

B. The Compromising Church!

1. Persecution only caused the church to flourish, so Constantine made Christianity the state religion.
2. What seemed a blessing turned out to be a great curse.
3. **Pagan practices** introduced into the church.
 - AD 300 – Prayer for the dead.
 - AD 300 – Making the sign of the cross.
 - AD 375 – Worship of saints and angels.
 - AD 394 – Mass instituted.
 - AD 432 – Worship of Mary.
 - AD 500 – Priests dressing different from laity.
 - AD 526 – Extreme Unction.
 - AD 593 – Doctrine of purgatory.
 - AD 600 – Worship services in Latin.
 - AD 600 – Prayers to Mary.
4. **Postmillennialism** was introduced when the church was made the state religion.
5. **Compromise** was a big problem, caused by the merging of church with state.

C. Description of Christ!

1. ***“These things saith He who has the sharp sword with two edges.”***
2. This is an appropriate description to place against the authority of the Roman government.
3. Christ’s sword is a reference to the Word of God.
4. It is given as a **cure** for compromise.
5. Had the Church heeded the Word of God, the dark ages would not have been needed.

D. Recommendation of Christ!

1. ***“I know your works, and where you stay, even where Satan’s throne is.”***
2. **“To stay”** means to have one’s permanent residence.
3. Christians are normally called “sojourners.”
4. The reference here is that they live in the place where Satan’ rule is strongest.
5. The temptation to move where living for Christ is easier.
6. These Christians were doctrinally pure. Their sin was in taking in ceremonies of paganism which polluted them.

E. Condemnation of Christ!

1. Though their theological doctrine was correct, their practical doctrines were radically evil.
2. There were **two major problems**.
 - The ***doctrine of Balaam*** (Numbers 24-25). Balaam’s purpose was to compromise Israel and bring her under God’s wrath.

- The ***doctrine of Nicolaitans***. They sought to persuade Christians that there was nothing wrong with prudent conformity.
3. Is the Nicolaitan belief still in the church?
 4. The Word of the risen Lord is that He will deal with this through His Word.

F. Christ's Admonition!

1. Repent or be judged by the Word of God.
2. Be sure of this – if there is a principle in the Word of God to which we have refused to submit, we will face that principle when we stand before the Lord at His appearing.

G. Christ's Promise!

1. *First promise*: ***"To the one who conquers I will give him the hidden manna."***
 - Manna is a symbol of nurture. It was heavenly food provided for Israel and typifies the spiritual food provided by God in His Word.
 - The hiddenness of the manna is an allusion to the hiding of the wilderness manna in the Ark of the Covenant.
2. *Second promise*: ***"I will give him a white stone and upon the stone a new name written which no one knows except he that receives it."***
 - In ancient times the white stone meant acquittal.
 - It is the reward of final victory.

Conclusion.