

The Unfaithful Bride (Message #7)

Revelation 2: 12-17

Tonight we come to the 3rd church in Revelation, the church in Pergamos. On the prophetic timeline, it represents the church age from [AD 312-590](#), concluding near the beginning of the dark ages.

Pergamos was the capital of Asia Minor. It shared some similarity with Ephesus. Pergamos was known for its wealth, political status, intellect, and pagan worship. Parchment was invented there, writing material made from animal skins. There was a library with over 200,000 volumes. Pergamos had many pagan temples; one to Aesculapeus, god of medicine, (illus. snake temple), three to Caesar where people were required to declare Caesar is god, and a massive altar built to Zeus, thought to be ruler of the gods, clearly a difficult place for Christians.

Jesus reminds them of the truth and power of His Word, [v.12 – And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges.](#) Jesus has a word for them, as well as us. Pergamos means “[married.](#)” Tonight let’s look at: [The Unfaithful Bride.](#)

I. The Position of the Church ([13](#)) – [I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.](#)

▪ Jesus repeats the statement, “[I know thy works.](#)” In fact He makes this statement to all 7 churches. He was well aware of the works of the churches. He is aware of everything about His church, including you and me. Theirs was an interesting position. Notice:

A. Their Dwelling – [I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is:](#) Pergamos existed in a hostile environment. They worshipped in a city where [Satan’s seat was, where he dwelt.](#) Pergamos was a stronghold for Satan.

▪ Many today think he is just a figment of men’s imagination, a cartoon character in a fairy tale. Listen, Satan is very real. He is working in our world today! Remember what he said to God in [Job 1:7 – From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.](#) He is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The Bible refers to him as the “[god of this world](#)” and the “[prince of the power of the air.](#)” Never be deceived, Satan is at work! He wants nothing more than to destroy the lives and testimony of every Christian he can. Jesus also spoke of:

B. Their Doctrine – **And thou holdest fast my name.** In the midst of evil, they held fast to the name of Jesus and their faith in Him. To most in Pergamos, Jesus was just one of many gods, but they recognized the preeminence of Jesus. They knew He had a name above every name; the name whereby men must be saved.

- (Illus. the picture of Jesus in the pulpit). Jesus is the reason we are here. It is His precious name that we've met to exalt and praise. The world needs to hear the blessed name of Jesus sang and preached about, and testified of.
- **And hast not denied my faith.** Not only His name, they held fast to their faith, the fundamental truths of doctrine. There are some truths that we cannot abandon, **1) The Virgin Birth 2) His Substitutionary Atonement 3) His Bodily Resurrection 4) His Literal Second Coming 5) The Inerrancy of Scripture.** No matter how much the liberals deny these precious truths, we must hold fast to them. Without these our faith is in vain! Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the way to salvation!

C. Their Devotion – **Even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.** We say that we are committed to Jesus, but are we really? Would we stand in the face of death? Does Jesus mean more to us than life itself?

- These are tough questions, but the church at Pergamos had to answer them. Many were killed because they wouldn't deny the faith. Jesus speaks of **Antipas**, His faithful martyr. History tells us that Antipas was the pastor at Pergamos. His name means "**against all.**" He stood against all that Satan brought and paid a heavy price. He refused to proclaim Caesar was god and was placed in a brass bull. A fire was built under it and Antipas was roasted alive. Church that is devotion to Christ! He had not died in vain; Jesus knew his name.
- I don't like to preach "doom and gloom", but persecution is coming to America. It is already happening in Canada against preachers who preach against sin. Where is your faith tonight?

I. The Position of the Church (13)

II. The Problems of the Church (14-16) – Pergamos heard the dreadful words, "**I have a few things against thee.**" Some were true to Christ, but not all. Notice the problems of the church.

A. Their Compromise (14a) – **But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them there that hold the doctrine of Balaam.** The faithful were doing the works of Christ, but they had allowed some among them who were not. The true church was mixing with those who taught false doctrine.

- We **cannot compromise** our stand on the Word of God and His doctrine to gain the favor and attendance of this world! Many have a “whatever it takes” mindset. We cannot lower our standards for the sake of numbers.

- This world, the lost man, isn't going to like true doctrine; it is against his nature, but it is what he needs. He must be born again before he will accept the things of God. A true Christian doesn't mind God's truth; they will embrace it, love it, and live by it. A compromising church will soon be filled with lost people who have a false sense of security, but are still bound for hell!
We cannot compromise!

B. Their Corruption (14-15) – V.14 – **But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.** Corruption will soon follow compromise. It won't be long until the ways of God are abandoned for the ways of men. Jesus warns of the “**doctrine of Balaam.**”

- **Numbers 22-25** teaches that Balak, king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam's curse was turned into blessing. When his plan failed, Balaam suggested that Balak corrupt Israel by enticing them to engage in idolatry and immorality. Israel believed they could live as they pleased and still have favor with God.

- This doctrine is alive and well in churches today! Many want the pleasure of sin through the week and God on Sunday. We can't have it both ways. Man cannot serve 2 masters. You can't live like hell, among the world, and be right with God!

- Jesus spoke again of the Nicolaitanes. **V.15 – So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.** They were only deeds in Ephesus, but Pergamos had embraced their doctrine. I found the word means “**to conquer the people.**” Evidently there was a hierarchy being set up to dictate the church's operation. These are the beginnings of the Roman Catholic Church. This elevated men and positions to a level reserved for God, (illus. Pope, saint and Mary worship).

- I have been called to pastor here, but I am not Lord here, and neither are you. Sadly many churches are run by individuals and God is left out. It is His church and we are to exalt Him, not man!

C. Their Confrontation (16) – **Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.** Jesus gives a solemn warning to Pergamos, REPENT! If they failed, He would bring swift consequences. He wasn't going to fight against the whole church, just the troublemakers. Notice “**thee**” and “**them**” in **v.16.**

- God knows those who belong to Him. He also knows those who operate as wolves devouring the sheep. I wouldn't want Jesus to find me a troublemaker in the church! I believe all churches have these among them, but they are not unnoticed. Jesus will care for His bride!

I. The Position of the Church (13)

II. The Problems of the Church (14-16)

III. The Provision of the Church (17) – He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. The faithful are never forgotten. Jesus promises to provide for those who overcome. Notice 3 promises:

A. Hidden Manna – We all know about the manna in the wilderness. Most in Pergamos filled themselves with worldly pleasure. The pure were not left out; Jesus would feed them with His abundance.

- What He offers is always superior to this world's offer. We can come to the Lord's Table and find nourishment for our souls!

B. A White Stone – This seems of little value to us, but it was a precious gift in that day. White stones were given of judges to those who were found innocent. Soldiers received them after victory in battle. They were broken and shared by friends, to be redeemed at a time of need. They were given as tickets to special occasions. A groom would offer a white stone as a promise to take his bride. I'm glad for the "white stones" I've received!

C. A New Name – The white stone given to over-comers would have a new name written on it, that no one knew except the recipient. This speaks of our individual relationship with Jesus.

- Aren't you glad for a new name? I'm no longer the man I used to be. Jesus has given me a new name; I belong to Him! My name is recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life, never to be removed. Every child of God shares an intimate relationship with Christ. Our names are different, but He knows us all.

Conclusion

Once again I have been challenged by the text. There is a strong push in our day to abandon the old way, to join the modern movement. I want to remain true to the ways of God!
Jer.6:16 – Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

It may get tough, but I plan to stand for Jesus! If we compromise our stand and allow corruption in God's church, He will come quickly in judgment. He has done so much for me; the least I can do is live for Him. Has God spoken to you? Is there a need in your life?