

Revelation 2:12-17

Sunday, July 26, 2020

Outline:

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III. The Commendation (2:13)

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I. The Christians (2:12a)

"These things says He..." (NET) "This is the solemn pronouncement.

A. Leadership (Pastor/teachers)

(Angel = Messenger)

Jesus speaks to the pastor and teachers, the leadership, that they may spread the Word, relay the message to the fellowship.

(Heavy responsibility)

B. Fellowship in Pergamos

Pergamos was the Roman capital of the Province of Asia, when the book of Revelation was written, it had actually been a capital for almost 400 years, first Greek, then Roman. Just to give you an idea of the significance of the city, it boasted a population of close to 250,000 people. It was located approximately 20 miles inland from Smyrna, North of all the other cities addressed in Revelation 2-3.

Pergamos was a very prominent pagan center of idol worship, and as we've already seen with previous cities - things like emperor worship (big in Pergamos), and the worship of Rome took place there. They also worshiped Athena, Asclepius (who was known in Greek mythology as the demi-god of healing and medicine, the son of Apollo and the human princess Coronis, whose insignia was the entwined serpent on the staff - this is still a medical symbol today) as well as the worship of Dionysus, and Zeus.

No traveler could visit Pergamos without being inundated by the totality of temples and altars everywhere. This city has often been described by historians as "*a strong center of paganism.*" This was so prevalent, that Jesus describes it as the city where Satan's throne is.

Pergamos was also famous for its university with a library of about 200,000 volumes, and for manufacturing parchment resulting in a paper called pergamena. The

atmosphere of this city was adverse to any effective Christian life and testimony.” - Bible Knowledge Commentary

II. The Christ (2:12b)

The Greek word translated sword (strong #4501 *rhomphaia hrom-fah'-yah*) actually refers to a long sword, usually worn over the shoulder, because it's too long to wield in a sheath on the side.

According to Revelation 1:16; 19:15, 21 the sword actually proceeds forth out of His mouth.

Revelation 19:15, "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Revelation 19:21, "And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh."

A good cross reference would be **Isaiah 49:2**, "And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me."

Now, there are some, in looking at this, who see it only as the double-edged sword of the Bible, however those references in Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17 - use a different Greek word than what we find here.

This is not primarily the Sword of the Spirit; **this is the Sword of the Son**. Jesus is not presenting Himself as a teacher here, He's presenting Himself as a warrior; here we see Jesus as Judge, and He does not bear the sword in vain.

III. The Commendation (2:13)

A. I know your works

Jesus says, I see you, how you're not unemployed when it comes to working for Me, in the church. I see your inspiration, your occupation, your good deeds done for Me.

B. I know where you dwell - in that Satanic city where Satan's throne is

And of course God knows where we live, He knows our lives, He knows our neighbors and all the numbers of Demons that might be in our proximity. He doesn't need to take a census of Satans servants...He know where we dwell, and where they dwell. Jesus says to this church, I see, how Satan not only *inhabits* Pergamos, He *rules* from Pergamos.

A few views on Satan's throne:

In Pergamos was the first temple dedicated to Caesar. *"It was a was a rabid promoter of the imperial cult. This is probably what is meant by "Satan's seat" in Revelation 2:13. - Wiersbe*

Others point to the altar to the Greek God Zeus, an altar that was actually shaped as a throne - a throne that was over 40 feet high. *"The word altar is somewhat misleading. The structure is a monumental colonnaded court in the form of a horseshoe, 120 by 112 feet. The podium of the altar was nearly 18 feet high. The great frieze, which ran at the base of the structure for 446 feet, depicted a gigantomachy, that is, a battle of the gods and the giants. It was one of the greatest works of Hellenistic art."* And then there was the throne - over 40 feet high. (*New Testament Cities in Western Asia Minor* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980], 35-36)

Others point to the Library.

Romans 1:22, "Professing to be wise, they became fools,"

We don't know for certain the physical manifestation of Satan's throne, all we know is Jesus' declaration, that they lived in Satan's headquarters, in a very dark, dark place.

The Lord knows the spiritual warfare we're going through.

C. I know your faith, it's been firm, even in dangerous days

"Like their brothers and sisters in Smyrna, the believers in Pergamos had suffered persecution, and one of their men had died for the faith. In spite of intense suffering, this church had remained true to God. They refused to drop incense on the altar and say, "Caesar is Lord." - Wiersbe

NET, "...yet you remain true...you did not renounce my Name"

It is likely that Antipas was executed, for refusing to worship the emperor.

IV. The Conviction (2:14-15)

A. They tolerated those who held to the doctrine of Balaam

(NLT) "I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam..."

(Balaam story is centered in Numbers 22-24; his death is recorded in Numbers 31:8)

Wiersbe, *"The congregation or the individual Christian that compromises with the world just to avoid suffering or achieve success is committing "spiritual adultery" and being unfaithful to the Lord."*

They tolerated:

1. Idolatry

2. Sexual Immorality

3. Balaam was a Prophet for Profit

2 Peter 2:15, "They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;"

B. They tolerated those who held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans

Jesus said, "...which thing I hate."

V. The Counsel (2:16a)

16a Repent; 17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

A. Repent

Not toleration - but excommunication. We must not allow sin and false teaching to be planted in our churches.

Expose them and expel them.

B. Listen to the Holy Spirit

VI. The Consequences (16b-17)

A. Negative Consequences

Jesus would fight against them with the sword in His mouth (let there be a healthy fear of God)

(NET) make war

Wiersbe, "Antipas had felt the sword of Rome, but the church at Pergamos would feel the sword of Christ—the Word (Heb. 4:12)—if they did not repent. This is not a reference to our Lord's return but to a present judgment that comes to a church when it is disobedient to the Word of God."

B. Positive Consequences

To the one who is victorious, who overcomes, who conquers:

1. Hidden Manna to eat

NLT, "...the manna that has been hidden away in heaven."

Some see this as a picture of Jesus, and what a beautiful picture that is, He is the manna from heaven (John 6:57-58), but I believe it to be taken literally. When we're in heaven we will have Jesus, but I believe we will literally have some of the manna was placed in the jar and in the Ark of the Covenant. Jesus will multiply it for us all.

2. A White Stone with a new and secret name

Wiersbe, "In those days, a white stone was put into a vessel by a judge to vote acquittal for a person on trial. It was also used like a "ticket" to gain admission to a feast. Both would certainly apply to the believer in a spiritual sense: he has been declared righteous through faith in Christ, and he feasts with Christ today (Rev. 3:20) and will feast with Him in glory (Rev. 19:6-9)."

*John MacArthur, "It seems best, however, to understand the **white stone** in light of the Roman custom of awarding white stones to the victors in athletic contests. A white stone, inscribed with the athlete's name, served as his ticket to a special awards banquet. In this view, Christ promises the overcomers entrance to the eternal victory celebration in heaven."*

NET, "...a new name that no one can understand except the one who receives it."

AMP, "...which no one knows or understands except he who receives it."

The new name points to intimacy and ultimate victory.

God help us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to never, ever compromise!