

## Revelation 2:12-17

5-16-18

### Pergamos, The Compromising Church

#### I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Harold Bither - Celebration of Life Sat.10am.
- B. Prayer: Carrie Zinn (stroke) (Heidi). Chuck Herrera (Becky).

#### II. Intro:

- A. Slide2 Pergamos (*Pergamum*) – Height or elevation. Modern city of *Bergama*.
  1. Famous for its **civilization** and **learning**. Pergamene rulers were generous patrons of **art, philosophy, athletics, rhetoric, and science**.
  2. The **main products** were *agriculture, produce, livestock, silver, ceramics, woolen textiles*, and most famously...**parchment**.
    - a) Slide3 Pergamos was the **1st place** where *skins/parchments* were used for writing on, *which replaced papyrus*. see 2 Tim.4:13
  3. Slide4 The city was built on a cone-shaped hill (1000' high). **Political capitol of Asia**
  4. Slide5 On the hillside of the **acropolis** (summit/city) is a steep **Greek theatre** with 80 rows of seats that would have accommodated up to 10,000 spectators.
  5. Slide6 Remains of the only **Roman amphitheatre** (amphi = both, *sides*)
    - a) **It was the site of** gladiatorial games **and** nautical reenactments.  
*It was also a site of* some 2nd-century Christian martyrdoms.
  6. They had one of the largest **Libraries** of antiquity w/200,000 books.
    - a) Ptolemy V cut off papyrus to Asia in rivalry of Alexandria vs. Pergamum library.
  7. The Library was later sent **to Egypt**, a gift from Mark Anthony **to Cleopatra VII** After the destruction of Alexandrian library in about 40 bc. [**Guess she liked to read? Here honey the library of congress**]

#### III. Slide7 COMMENDATION (13)

- A. **Satan's throne is & Satan dwells** – Probably a reference to *the altar to Zeus*, located at the top of Pergamum's acropolis, and which hailed him as *savior*.
  1. It was home to **the Greek pagan cults** of *Zeus, Athena, Dionysus, Asclepius*.  
**As well as Egyptian deities Serapis, Isis, and Harpocrates**.

2. The official Center for Emperor Worship (started here).

a) They had their 1st temple dedicated to *Augustus Caesar* (reigned when Jesus was born)

3. Slide8 The Asklepios center – had a temple dedicated to Asklepios (the god of healing) whose *insignia* was the **entwined serpent on the staff**. Still a medical symbol today. It was the *Mayo Clinic* of the ancient world.

a) **The Asclepion** functioned as a combined *sanctuary, spa, and hospital*. It offered *healing pools, sacred spring, and mud treatments* & attracted *pilgrims, visitors, and patients* from a great distance - including **the emperor**.

B. The Lord commends the church for its *steadfastness* in the *epi-center* of Satan's domain.

1. They remain faithful even in Satan's City, on Satan's Turf.

2. Note: The church **isn't** told to *get out of a place* like this.

C. Didn't deny the faith, even during persecution - They held to their faith *even when* it might have cost them their lives.

1. Slide9 Faith - Heb.11:32-40 *who through Faith subdued kingdoms* (33) *escaped the edge of the sword* (34). *Others, Through Faith were tortured... were slain with the sword* (35,37). *All these having obtained a good testimony through Faith* (39)

D. Slide10 Antipas *My faithful martyr* – do to the persecutions during the time of *Domitian*.

1. He would have been killed in *John's* lifetime. [patron saint of toothaches]

2. Some ancient writers tell us he was enclosed in **a red-hot brazen ox** & thus burned alive w/great pain, yet in steadfastness.

3. **God knew all about** this humble believer who **lived & died** for Christ.

a) He calls his sheep by name...*Antipas*.

b) 2 Tim.2:19, *Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His.*

#### IV. Slide11a **CONDEMNATION** (14,15)

A. Some held bad doctrine – it wasn't even *the churches* stance, yet still effected the body, they were *too tolerant* of false doctrines.

B. Slide11b Doctrine of Balaam – His story is in Numb.22-25

1. Moabite King *Balak* was scared regarding Israel coming up from Egypt, as he saw what they did to the Ammorites.
2. Invited **Balaam** (a hireling prophet) to come curse them for him. Tried to no avail. *So, If you can't curse em, corrupt em.*
3. **Balaam** gave King *Balak* advice to *make friends w/Israel.*
  - a) Israel, instead of instituting *neighborhood watch*, became *good neighbors* :(
  - b) *They wedded the world, to get worldly advantages.*
4. Satan decides, *If you can't beat em, join em...so he does.*
5. The **meat sacrificed** to these idols was served at their banquets.
6. Often **sexual immorality** was a part of these banquets.
  - a) The issue wasn't eating the meat, *but* actually participating in idolatrous feasts & sexual sin.

C. *Slide11c* Doctrine of Nicolaitans –

1. What begins with **deeds** in one church (2:6), *is now a settled doctrine* in another.
2. This church is now divided into *priests & people.* [*priesthood & laity*]
  - a) *As Protestants we still deal with this, just without the titles.* Many in church still see, the **pastor** as the *minister* of the church, *when we all* are supposed to be.

D. *Don't compromise...resist.*

1. Antipas said, *no compromise...many in the church said, let's take the easy way out.*
2. Many Christians are trying to live with one foot on the **dock** & one on the **boat**.
3. **Compromise** is simply changing the question to fit the answer.

E. *Slide12a* 4 things about **Compromise**: (from *Chuck Swindoll*, Letters to Churches)

1. **Compromise never occurs quickly.** Just as water erodes, compromise erodes 1 innocuous **drop** at a time *until* there is a comfortable **trickle**, *then* an acceptable **stream**, *and then* an uncontrolled **flood**.
2. *Slide12b* **Compromise always lowers the standards.** We normally aren't able to pull them **up**, they usually pull us **down**.

3. Slide12c Compromise is seldom offensive. We tend to judge sin by its outward appearance. But its real ugliness is usually *beneath the surface* in its intrinsic character.
4. Slide12d Compromise is often the first step towards total obedience. Compromise is never satisfied.
  - a) While the Christian must live in the world, he should not let the world live in him. [be like the fish that live in salt water...yet don't taste salty]

## V. Slide13 REPENT (16)

- A. Repent – His constant *charge and command* to His own is Repent.
  1. Change or else...*I will come to you quickly & will fight against them* (those w/ the bad doctrine) *with the sword of my mouth.*
- B. Antipas felt the sword of **Rome**, but the church at Pergamos would feel the sword of **Christ** if they did not repent.
- C. A little girl said to her mother, *I know why flowers grow...they want to get out of the dirt.*
  1. Do you want to get out of the dirt? Repent, is the wake up call to the church.
- D. *The influence of a Holy Life is often the greatest contribution we can make to the salvation of men.*

## VI. Slide14 PROMISE (17)

- A. Hidden Manna – Heavenly nourishment in contrast to food sacrificed to idols in v.14.
  1. Jesus is the real manna for Christians to live on.
- B. Slide15 A White Stone is ambiguous. A white stone had many meanings in ancient society
  1. Rabbinic legend – that precious stones fell from heaven along w/the manna.
    - a) Followers of Christ – This would represent the precious gifts of God to His people.
  2. Ancient Law courts – white & black stones were used for registering the verdict of Juries. [black for condemnation; white for acquittal]
    - a) Followers of Christ are acquitted in the sight of God because of the work of Christ.
  3. Happy Day? - The Thracians & Scythians kept an urn in their house & each day they threw either a white stone in for a Happy day, or a black stone for

every **Unhappy day**. At the end of their lives the stones were counted to distinguish whether they had a **wretched** or a **Happy life**.

a) **Followers of Christ** we can have the joy that no man can take from us. Jn.16:22

4. **Wear an amulet or charm** (**lucky jewelry**: a piece of jewelry worn to provide protection against *evil, injury, disease, or bad luck*)

a) A very common custom in the ancient world.

b) On the pebble was *a sacred name*. To know a god's name was to have certain power over him, to be able to summon him to one's aid in time of difficulty & to have mastery over demons.

c) It was known to be doubly effective if *no one else knew the name* inscribed on it.

d) **Followers of Christ** maybe He will place around your neck, **not** a good luck charm, **but** maybe a small stone that would represent more of what *a promise ring* on a chain represents in our culture. With a special name of *Himself* on it...just for you. (His Names/titles thru Scripture are to *reveal more of Himself to us*)

5. **Friendship** – when 2 people, seeking to seal a friendship, broke a stone into 2 & each retained a half, which gave access to each others home. []

a) **Followers of Christ** here is guaranteed access to His home & promise of His friendship

6. **Admission to a feast** – if there was *an expensive & restricted feast* often they would use *a white stone* for admission...**much like an exclusive club today**.

a) **Followers of Christ** here is *your ticket to His feast*.

b) This would *contrast* the pagan ceremonies of v.14; believers had *greater festivities awaiting them* **and** did not need to compromise.

7. **Victory** - In Rome a great Gladiator was the admired hero of all.

a) Often a gladiator had to fight on until he was killed in combat. **But** if he had a specially illustrious career, when he grew old, he was **allowed to retire in honor**.

(1) Such men were given *a white stone* w/the letters SP on it.

(2) SP stands for the Latin *Spectatus* which means a man whose valor has been proved beyond a doubt. *“Tried, tested, proved; esteemed.”*

b) Followers of Christ one day saint we WILL receive a stone. Maybe it will say, *“tried, tested, proved, & esteemed”*. Maybe just SP/Spectatus.

- C. Slide 16 A New name – new (keenos) *Of a kind not seen before, new in form or quality; different nature, contrasted to old.* [neos = new in time, recent]
1. Also used in: New Jerusalem (3:12). New song (5:9). New heavens/new earth (21:1). God makes all things new (21:5).
  2. A new name for us (a nickname/petname shows intimate knowledge in).
  3. Or is it a new name for Himself?
- D. Are there some seen or unseen *weeds of compromise* popping up in your life, your business ethics, your marriage relationship, your finances, your personal purity, or your love for Christ? *How deep are the roots? What will be necessary to pull them out by the roots? Who can help you? In what way?*