

Revelation 2:12-17

REVIEW...

- Outline of Revelation...
 - PAST - the things John HAD seen – vision of Jesus – **Revelation 1**
 - PRESENT - the things which ARE – the SEVEN churches – **Revelation 2-3**
 - FUTURE - the things AFTER this – the rapture – wrath – and return of Jesus – **Revelation 4-22**
- SEVEN letters...
 - Given by Jesus – written down by John – with THREE possible interpretations...
 - SEVEN literal churches in Asia Minor [modern day Turkey]
 - Different KINDS of churches – the TOTAL [seven] church...
 - The HISTORY of the church – from PENTECOST to the RAPTURE!
- Ephesus – Loveless church...
- Smyrna – Persecuted church...
 - Smyrna was the HEART of EMPEROR [Tiberias] worship in the eastern Roman Empire...
 - The penalty for refusing to WORSHIP the EMPEROR – was DEATH...
 - Therefore they suffered great TRIBULATION because of their FAITH...
 - But Jesus told them – NOT to FEAR – because His death was not the end...
 - If they were faithful unto DEATH - they would receive a crown of LIFE...
 - To those who OVERCOME – the SECOND death would not hurt them!

THE COMPROMISING CHURCH...

- **1ST – THE INTRODUCTION... vs. 12**
 - FOUR sections
 - Each of the LETTERS to the churches contains FOUR sections...
 - Introduction – Positive – Negative - and Encouragement...
 - Not all of the churches receive all FOUR sections!
 - 1st – The Angel...
 - **To the angel!**
 - The letters to all SEVEN churches open up with this same introduction - to the angel...
 - As you will recall – there are TWO thoughts on WHO this ANGEL was...
 - FIRST – a guardian ANGEL – who watched over Pergamos – **Hebrews 1:14**
 - SECOND – it could be the PASTOR of the church...
 - ANGEL [ἄγγελος] – means messenger – one who gives God's WORD...
 - Therefore Jesus could be talking about the PASTOR – who gave the church His Word!
 - 2nd – The City...
 - **The church of Pergamos write!**
 - Pergamos [Pergamum] – the modern city of Bergama located in Caicus river valley...
 - A beautiful - fertile valley that is around 30 kilometers inland from the Aegean Sea...
 - Pergamos was the CAPITOL of the Roman province of the Asia Minor for over 250 years...
 - It was well known for having one of the LARGEST library in ROME – 200k scrolls!

- The ruins of Pergamos are some of the most impressive in Turkey...
 - Pergamos [Πέργαμος] – the name means the HIGH place...
 - Has TWO sections – the Acropolis [high city] – over 300 meters above the valley floor...
 - The theater on the Acropolis is the steepest theatre in the world...
 - It seats 10-12k people – and has an almost vertical incline overlooking the valley below...
 - There are FOUR major temples: Athena – Trajan [emperor] - Dionysus - Zeus!
- In the valley is a second set of ruins...
 - The Asklepios – was a world class medical facility...
 - They treated not only the physical maladies of the people – but also the emotional...
 - In Greek mythology - Asclepius was the Grecian God of healing [son of Apollo]
 - The symbol of Asclepius was a serpent spiraling up a pole – Medical Association...
 - People would come from all over the world to be healed in the Asklepios!
- The result of all of this PAGANISM had a NEGATIVE influence on the church...
 - Which is why the church in Pergamos is often called the COMPROMISED church...
 - Too often rather than looking to the Lord – the church is influenced by the world...
 - Rather than follow after the example of the world – we are to be an example to them!
 - **Jeremiah 15:19** – “You are to influence them. Do not let them influence you!”
- o 3rd - The Tone...
 - Describing Jesus...
 - In His INTRODUCTION to each of the Churches - Jesus looks back...
 - Highlighting specific CHARACTERISTICS of the Vision from - **Revelation 1:11-18**
 - The choice of CHARACTERISTICS - will set the TONE for the LETTER to that church...
 - With PERGAMOS – Jesus will highlight His WORD – which bring JUDGEMENT!
 - These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword!
 - Sword [ῥομφαία] – 7x NT [6x in Revelation] - speaks of a LARGE two-handed sword...
 - The same sword – that comes out of the mouth of Jesus - **Revelation 19:15**
 - The idea of the sword refers to His Word – which brings judgement...
 - Because of their COMPROMISE – Jesus was going to bring his WORD to JUDGE!
 - Because it is the WORD of God – that reveals the TRUTH...
 - It is the instrument that Jesus will use to EXPOSE who we REALLY are!
 - **Hebrews 4:12** – “The word of God is living and powerful - and sharper than any two-edged sword [μάχαιρα]... a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
- 2ND – THE POSITIVE... vs. 13
 - o 1st – Jesus KNOWS...
 - I know your works!
 - KNOWS [εἶδω] – to SEE and UNDERSTAND...
 - Jesus will make this statement to all SEVEN churches – He sees EVERYTHING!
 - GOOD and BAD – nothing [perfect] is hidden from our Lord!
 - **Hebrews 4:13** – “There is no creature hidden from His sight - but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”
 - o 2nd – Their LOCATION...
 - Where you dwell - where satans throne is!
 - Satan is not omnipresent – he can only be at one place at one time...
 - And the city of Pergamos – was the CITY where satan ruled [throne] in the days of John...
 - It is repeated again at the end of the verse - this is where satan dwells!
 - Temple of Zeus...

- On the Acropolis in Pergamos was a temple to Zeus – and the altar to Zeus...
- The foundation and steps of the remains of the altar can still be seen today – 80x80m
- The actual altar was moved to the Pergamon museum in Berlin – Germany [Nazis]
- Zeus was the greatest of the Greek gods – so perhaps this altar was the throne of satan!
- I am not sure about you – but if Jesus told me satan lived in my city – I would move...
- Needless to say - the church in Pergamos certainly did not have it easy...
- They were striving to be a light in arguably the darkest place on earth!

o 3rd – Hold fast...

- You hold fast to My name!
- HOLD fast [κρατέω] - to hold onto something carefully – refuse to let go...
- MANY in the church - put their TRUST in the NAME of Jesus...
- There were a lot of other NAMES that they could have put their faith in – Zeus - Caesar...
- But they believed there was ONE name that was above all others!
- **Acts 4:12** – “Nor is there salvation in any other- for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

o 4th – Not DENY...

- Did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr...
- Who was killed among you - where Satan dwells!
- Those in Pergamos who HELD onto the NAME of Jesus we VERY faithful...
- Even the point of giving their lives for sake of their FAITH!
- There is a TEMPLE in the lower part of the city of Pergamos called the RED Basilica..
- It was used in the worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis – Serapis...
- Antipas - the Pastor of Pergamos - was killed there by worshipers of Isis!
- Because holding fast to the Lord – our FAITH - is also not about a better life now...
- If we are looking for earthly rewards in return for our obedience to Christ...
- We might very well be disappointed – God promises us tribulation here – **John 16:33**
- The rewards for serving Jesus are far greater - they are eternal – it is about heaven!

● 3RD – THE NEGATIVE... vs. 14-16

o 1st – Doctrine of Balaam... vs. 14

- I have a few things against you!
 - Not EVERYONE in the church was holding onto the BIBLE...
 - There were TWO other TEACHINGS [doctrines] that were POPULAR in PERGAMOS...
 - They HELD [κρατέω] to the TEACHING of Balaam – and the TEACHING of NICOLAITANS!
- You have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam!
 - Balaam was one of only a handful of non-Jewish prophets in the Old Testament...
 - There is no doubt Balaam KNEW the LORD - and that the LORD SPOKE to him...
 - Balaam referred to God by his true name [יהוה] - **Numbers 22:8**
 - King Balak of Moab sent to Balaam and asked him to CURSE the people of Israel...
 - When Balaam asked the LORD if he could go – the LORD told him NO – TWO times...
 - But he pleaded with the LORD [he was offered a LOT of money] and God let him go...
 - God sent an angel to KILL Balaam – but his DONKEY kept avoiding the angel...
 - The THIRD time it happened – Balaam beat his DONKEY – and the DONKEY spoke...
 - What is AMAZING is not that a DONKEY talked – it is that Balaam ARGUED back...
 - Then Balaam saw the angel – and the LORD told Balaam to ONLY speak what God said!
 - What was OBVIOUS to a dumb DONKEY – was HIDDEN from Balaam...
 - Because GREED will BLIND us to the DANGER right in front of us!
- Who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel...

- To eat things sacrificed to idols - and to commit sexual immorality!
- Balaam wanted to earn the REWARD King Balak had for him...
- He did not care what effect his actions would have - he ONLY thought of the MONEY...
- He was more concerned with RICHES in this life - than ETERNAL life...
- If he could not CURSE Israel - he knew how to get them to CURSE themselves...
- Balaam gave king Balak the idea to TEMPT the men of Israel - with the women of Moab!
- **Numbers 31:16** - "These women caused the children of Israel - through the counsel of Balaam - to [sin] against the LORD..."
- Balaam DIED for his MONEY...
 - Because MOAB caused a SCANDAL [σκάνδαλον] in Israel..
 - And got them to curse themselves by committing sexual immorality [πορνείω]
 - God commanded Israel to attack the Moab - **Numbers 25:16-18**
 - When Israel defeated them - Balaam also died in the battle - **Numbers 31:8**
 - SADLY - many people are DETERMINED to miss out on HEAVEN...
 - They are confident MONEY will make them happy - they will SACRIFICE anything to get it!
 - The problem is people make MONEY their god - instead of Jesus...
 - We cannot dedicate our lives to MONEY and possessions - and to the LORD...
 - We waste our life on possessions that do not last - rather than on eternal rewards...
 - If we desire more MONEY - we are missing the greatest riches of all - Jesus!
 - **I Timothy 6:10** - "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil - for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness - pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
- o 2nd - Doctrine of the Nicolaitans... vs. 15
 - Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans - which thing I hate!
 - The church in Ephesus - hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans **Revelation 2:6**
 - But the church in Pergamos HELD [κρατέω] to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans...
 - As you may recall - there are TWO views as to what this doctrine might have been!
 - The teachings of NICHOLAS...
 - NICHOLAS was one of the SEVEN deacons raised up at the church in Jerusalem - **Acts 6:5**
 - Some of the early church fathers [Irenaeus] taught that he became a HERETIC...
 - Teaching that it was OK to practice adultery - promiscuity...
 - Which would have been well received in the sinful culture of Artimus worship!
 - Hierarchy...
 - Nicolaitans [Νικολαίτης] is a compound word - Victory [νίκος] and People [λαός]
 - Meaning those who RULED over the PEOPLE - speaking of HIERARCHY in the church...
 - The idea being - leaders who taught people could not come directly to the Lord!
 - Doctrines of compromise...
 - Both the doctrines of BALAAM and the NICOLAITANS speak of COMPROMISE...
 - Being influenced of the WORLD around them - rather than the WORD!
 - The only reason someone HOLDS to the WORLD rather than the WORD...
 - Is because there is something else that they WANT more than God...
 - We WANT to be accepted by people - making us unwilling to STAND for Jesus...
 - We WANT drugs - alcohol - pleasure - ONLY living for the moment...
 - We WANT money - desiring the things of THIS world!
 - **Matthew 6:24** - "No one can serve two masters..."
 - We all have to make a choice - we cannot serve TWO masters...
 - Beware a divided heart - desiring to follow Jesus - but flirting with the world...
 - Trying to LOVE this world and the Lord - is in essence cheating on Jesus...
 - We have a simple CHOICE - who do we CHOOSE to live for - who do we SERVE...

- If we live for this world – then we are not going to be a friend of Jesus!
- **James 4:4** – “To be a friend of the world makes [us] an enemy of God.”

o 3rd – Repent... vs. 16

- Repent!
 - The command [imperative] – was to STOP the compromise...
 - The church needed to TURN around – come back to the WORD – come back to Jesus!
- Or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth!
 - If they did NOT repent – Jesus would come QUICKLY with His SWORD [ρόμφαία]
 - And He would make WAR [πολεμέω] with them...
 - NOTE: there are TWO groups that are in danger of being JUDGED by the sword...
 - Jesus will come to YOU - and fight against THEM...
 - The THEM - refers to those who HOLD the doctrines of Balaam and Nicolaitans...
 - But the YOU - refers to those who HOLD fast to Jesus...
 - Why would they be JUDGED – because they did not stand up to the false teachings!
 - The Holy Spirit killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying - **Acts 5** -
 - Achan and his family we killed when they compromised at Jericho – **Joshua 7:25**
 - Because just as a LITTLE mud can quickly contaminate - make all the water unclean...
 - And it only takes a LITTLE cancer before a life is in peril!
 - When COMPROMISE goes unchecked it encourages others to SIN...
 - That sin can quickly spread out and infect a whole family or church...
 - The longer it goes untreated - the more dangerous it becomes...
 - The only solution - cut out the cancer - remove the problem!

● 4TH – THE ENCOURAGEMENT... vs. 17

o 1st – LISTEN...

- He who has an ear - let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!
- This was NOT written just for the church in PERGAMOS...
- It is for ANYONE who has an EAR – they MUST [imperative] LISTEN...
- Because the SPIRIT of God is SPEAKING [present] to ALL churches [plural]
- This LETTER is for us – Jesus is writing to us TODAY...
- If we are willing to LISTEN to what His SPIRIT has to SAY...
- He is telling us NOT to listen to the WORLD – but LISTEN to the LORD...
- I have met believers who are MISERABLE – COMPROMISED – UNSTABLE...
- The problem is they have ONE foot in CHURCH – and ONE foot in the WORLD...
- Therefore - they are miserable in CHURCH – because they WANT the WORLD...
- But they are also not happy with the WORLD – because they know too much about the WORD...
- They are just MISERABLE – because they COMPROMISED – and need to REPENT!
- **James 1:6/8** – “He who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind... he is a double-minded man - unstable in all his ways.”

o 2nd – The PROMISE... vs. 17

- He who overcomes!
 - This same CONCLUSION - is given to all SEVEN churches...
 - There are a variety of REWARDS described – but all with the same CONDITION...
 - OVERCOME [νικάω] – to those who have VICTORY [present]
 - For PERGAMOS – VICTORY – meant no long COMPROMISING...
 - And the REWARD for doing that – was TWO things!
- I will give some of the hidden manna to eat!

- When Moses brought Israel out of Egypt - and they wandered in the wilderness...
- There was NO food to eat - so God sent them MANNA [מַן] - **Exodus 16**
- When the people saw it they asked - what is it - the word in Hebrew is [מַן]
- But those who ate the MANNA in the wilderness - all died – **John 6:49**
- Jesus is the true MANNA that comes from heaven - anyone who eats NEVER die...
- He is the HIDDEN manna that comes down from heaven!

- I often get busy in the morning – and do not take the time to eat...
- The result is by about NOON – my tummy is telling me it NEEDS food!
- In the same way – if we get busy and MISS our time with Jesus – the hidden MANNA...
- When we do NOT take time to get into His word - our SPIRIT is STARVING...
- If we do not want to become spiritually WEAK - we need HEAVENLY food...
- When we are DAILY in His WORD - we will be STRONG - and never COMPROMISE!
- I will give him a white stone!
 - In Greek courts the jurors would have TWO stones – one WHITE and one BLACK...
 - When they were asked to give their verdict in a case – they would cast their STONE...
 - The WHITE stone for INNOCENT - the BLACK one for JUDGEMENT!
 - **Acts 26:10** – “...when they were put to death - I cast my vote [stone] against them...”
 - We are sinners and deserve the BLACK stone - **Romans 6:23**
 - But if we HOLD to the name of Jesus – listen to His word – we get the WHITE stone!
- On the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it!
 - In Pergamos – at the Asklepion – there is a tunnel...
 - The 90m tunnel – crypto porticus – would be filled with steam and music...
 - At the top are several openings – a physician would speak ENCOURAGING words...
 - When you came out – you would be given a WHITE stone with a NAME etched on it...
 - The idea was you were HEALED from your infirmity and given a NEW life!
 - Jesus is the ONLY one who can HEAL us [not just give us encouraging words]
 - He gives us a NEW character with – a NEW name – because we are NEW creations!
 - Like Saul who had his name changed – from Saul [great] to Paul [little]
 - A man with a tainted history - murderer - never really used by God...
 - Who became one of the greatest men used by God in history!
 - God does not want to leave us as we were before Christ – He wants to make us great...
 - God wants to give us a new name – change our character – **II Corinthians 5:17**