

# REVELATION

## Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17



# Pergamum: Historical Background

- **Name Meaning**

- Also called
  - Pergamos (Modern Greek)
  - Pergamon (Greek)
- “Height” or “Elevation”

- **The Principal City**

- The Capital City Asia Minor
- The 1<sup>st</sup> use of parchment
  - Famous for its Library
  - Center for intellectualism (i.e. human wisdom and reason)
- The 1<sup>st</sup> City to Support Emperor Worship



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# Pergamum: Historical Background

- **City of Healing**
  - The “*Lourdes of the Province of Asia*”
    - Lourdes, France
    - Most travelled pilgrimage site in Christianity
    - Bernadette Soubirous
      - Visions of Mary the Mother of Jesus
    - Healing waters at Lourdes

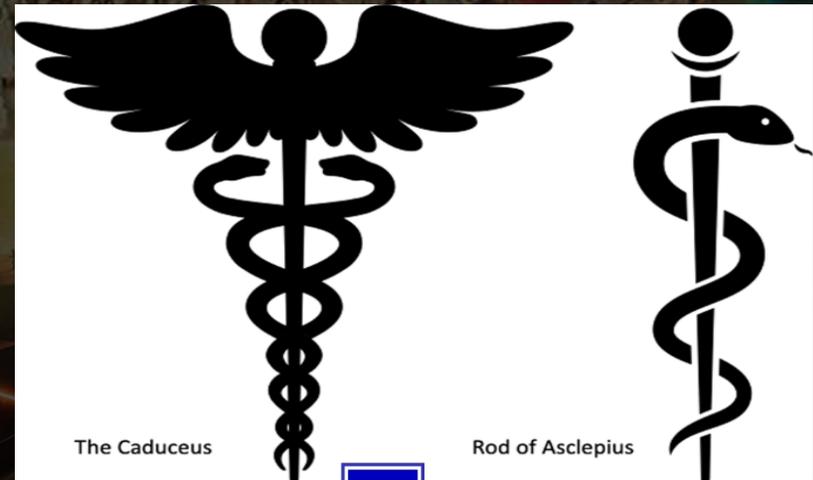


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# Pergamum: Historical Background

- **City of Healing**

- The “Lourdes of the Province of Asia”
- Known for worship of Zeus and Asclepius, the serpent-god of healing.
  - The predominant symbol for medicine and health care.
  - cf. Numbers 21:3-7



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# Pergamum: Greeting/Identification

- “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

**Revelation 2:12**

- **Who has the final say?**

- In Pergamum, the Roman Governor had the final say over life and death. This is known as having he right or sword or the sword of justice.
- Our High Priest introduces himself as greater than the Roman Governor and the one who truly has the final say.

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# Pergamum: Condition

- “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Revelation 2:13

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## • The Throne of Satan

- Source point for emperor worship.
  - This elevated city was the throne of Satan and which made this place hostile territory for Christians.
- Sore spot for Christians.
  - Religious fidelity challenged
  - Moral purity challenged

## • The Faithful of God

- Some remained faithful, by Confessing Christ name
- Some remained faithful, even unto death

# Pergamum: Condition

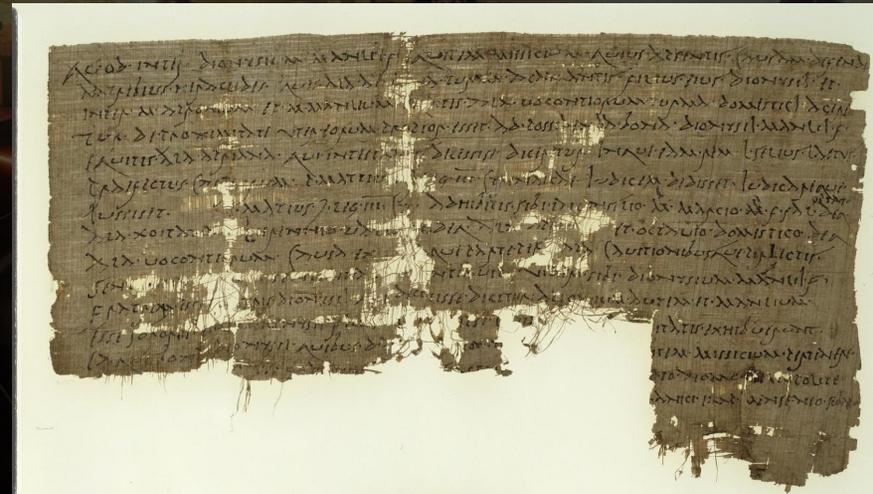
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Revelation 2:13

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## • The Faithful of God

- Antipas, Christ’s faithful witness (cf. Rev 1:5)
- Imperial Cult Certificates
  - A cause for compromise



# Pergamum: Problem

- But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Revelation 2:14-15

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## • A Policy of Compromise

- Ephesians vs Pergamum
  - *Intolerant vs Toleration*
  - *Conservatism vs Liberalism*
- The Doctrine of the Nicolaitans
  - From the Greek word *Nikolaos*
  - *Nikos – conquer or subdue*
  - *Laos – people*
  - Possible origins in Acts 6:5
- The Doctrine of Balaam
  - Jude 11
  - 2 Peter 2:15
  - Compromise for personal profit
  - Compromise for personal pleasure

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**Revelation 2:14-15**

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## • A Policy of Compromise

- What is compromise?
  - Failing to put God and His Law first.
- Why do we compromise?
  - Our natural desire is to take the path of least resistance.
  - We place ahead of God
    - People
      - Family
      - Friends
    - Preferences
      - Need for approval & normalcy (1 Peter 2:9)
      - Avoidance of pain & discomfort (Rom 8:18)

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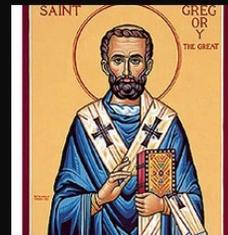
Revelation 2:14-15

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## • A Divine Mirror

- How to actively guard against compromise.
  - Revelation 1:3
  - James 1:23-24
  - A Call to Self-Reflection

Pope Gregory I



The Holy Bible is like a mirror before our mind's eye. In it we see our inner face. From the Scriptures we can learn our spiritual deformities and beauties. And there too we discover the progress we are making and how far we are from perfection.

AZ QUOTES

# Pergamum: Problem

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Revelation 2:14-15

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## • A Divine Mirror

- My dear brother, what have you been beholding? By beholding the imperfections of men and women, you are gradually becoming changed into the same likeness. Make a decided change, and look to Jesus, that by beholding His perfection, you may become changed into His image. Then His spirit will take possession of your mind and character. By your piety and godliness, by your words and actions, by your spiritual activity for truth and righteousness, you will represent Christ. When a man turns away from human imperfections, and beholds Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in his character. He fixes his eye upon Christ as on a mirror which reflects the glory of God, and by beholding, he becomes changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

12LTMS, LT 74, 1897, par 2.

# Pergamum: Counsel

- Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

**Revelation 2:16**

## • The Word of God

- Can be for us
  - Jeremiah 1:19
  - Deuteronomy 28:7
- Can be against us
  - Deuteronomy 28:15-69
  - The Fate of Balaam
    - Numbers 31:8,1; 25:5
  - The Fate of the World
    - Revelation 19:13-15

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# Pergamum: Closing Promise

- “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.” ’

Revelation. 2:17

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- **The Priestly Feast over the pagan feast**
  - Manna –Spiritual Food (Psalm 78:25  
Corinthians 10:35)
- **A White Stone**
  - Symbol of Victory
  - Symbol of being justified
- **A New Name**
  - New Relationship
  - Dignity Restored

# Pergamum: Historical Application

AD 323-538

- Each church has a literal and prophetic meaning.
- Prophetic
  - A period characterized by the marriage of church and state.
  - Pagan doctrines and the traditions of men replacing the doctrines of God.
    - The Sabbath (Edict of Milan AD 313 and Civil Sunday Worship AD 321)
    - Prayer (Priest as Mediator, Intercession of the Saints)
    - Holidays (Easter, All Hallows Day, Christmas)

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Stefanovic, Ranko. Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation . Andrews University Press. Kindle Edition.