

The Message of Jesus to the Church of Pergamum Revelation 2:12-17

Dr. Michael D. Wedman



Background and History

Crossing the hermeneutical bridges

Reputation:

- ▶ Capital city of Asia-almost 400yrs.
- ▶ An illustrious city - Strabo
- ▶ By far the most famous city- Pliny
- ▶ Legend says it was built by a son of Hercules

Setting:

- ▶ 15 miles inland of the Aegean Sea
- ▶ Not on any major trade routes
- ▶ Built on a conical hill
- ▶ Mediterranean could be seen from the top of the hill

Setting:

- ▶ In the valley of the river Caicus.
- ▶ Beyond all other cities in Asia minor, it gives the traveler the impression of a royal city.



Economics:

- ▶ A center of culture
- ▶ An impressive library rivaled only by the library in Alexandria which Alexander the Great built
- ▶ Over 200,000 parchments

Economics:

- ▶ Parchment was invented at Pergamum.
- ▶ Government/judicial buildings



Politics:

- ▶ Administrative center of Asia
 - ▶ Proconsul met to make decisions
- ▶ Legal center of Asia
- ▶ Rulers held the “ius gladii”

Politics:

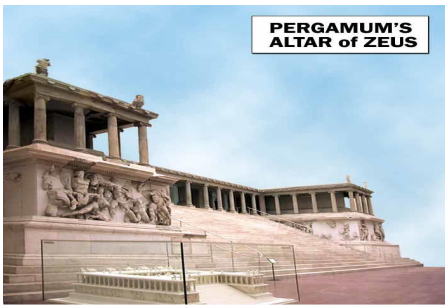
- ▶ “ius gladii” - power of the sword
- ▶ “ius”- law, right, justice
- ▶ “gladii” or “gladus”- sword

Religion:

- ▶ Religious capital of Asia
- ▶ 4 main gods worshipped
 - ▶ Zeus- greatest of gods
 - ▶ Temple was 400 feet up on the hill
 - ▶ 40 feet high on the side of the hill

Religion:

- ▶ Temple of Zeus:
 - ▶ Temple looked like a throne
 - ▶ It smoked all day with sacrifices
 - ▶ Carving of the battle of giants



Original position: Pergamum acropolis. Location: Pergamon Museum in Berlin

Religion:

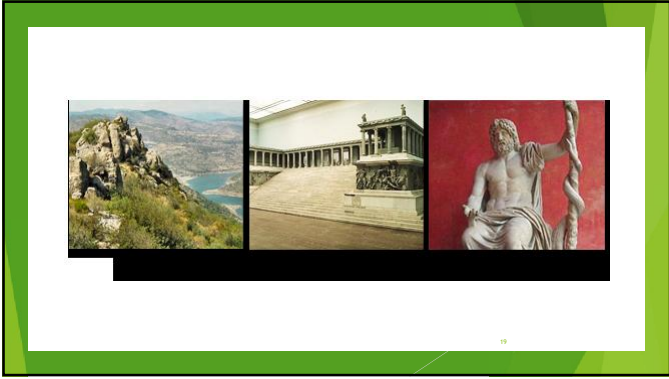
- ▶ Temple of Athena:
 - ▶ god of wisdom in art and war
- ▶ Temple of Dionysius
 - ▶ god of wine and drama

Religion:

- ▶ Temple of Asclepius
 - ▶ The “pergamene god”
 - ▶ god of healing
 - ▶ The temple was like a hospital

Religion:

- ▶ Temple of Asclepius:
 - ▶ People from all over came to be healed
 - ▶ Referred to as Asclepius the Savior
 - ▶ Symbol was the snake









Religion:

- ▶ Caesar worship
- ▶ Built a temple to Augustus in 29 B.C. while he was still alive to worship him.
- ▶ Called the “neokoros”-temple sweeper

Christianity:

- ▶ Under great persecution and pressure
- ▶ A definite clash of Christ and the world

Today:

- ▶ A little village called Bergama exists there today.
- ▶ Temple of Zeus discovered in 1878

The Message of Jesus

Sharp double edged sword

- ▶ Why this description of Jesus?
- ▶ Because of their judicial privileges

Verse 13 notes:

- ▶ The word “dwell” - not the usual word to dwell as used most in the N.T.-stranger, sojourner, temporary
- ▶ Word here is permanent resident. One who cannot escape or leave the situation they are in

Verse 13 notes:

- ▶ Throne of satan - special authority
- ▶ Why the throne of Satan?

Throne of satan

- ▶ Perhaps the temple of Zeus
- ▶ Perhaps because of all the other temples that were there
- ▶ Perhaps because of Asclepius the serpent

Praise from Jesus:

- ▶ For steadfastness and faithfulness to Him in the midst of persecution and death.
- ▶ Did not renounce their faith
- ▶ Particularly Antipas

Rebuke from Jesus:

- ▶ 2 things against them:
- ▶ Teaching of Balaam - see Numbers 22-24; 31:16
 - ▶ Idolatry and sexual immorality
- ▶ This was begin taught in the church

Rebuke from Jesus

- ▶ Teaching of the Nicolaitans
 - ▶ Similar to balaamism
 - ▶ Also included Gnosticism - the belief in special knowledge that saves.

The Call of Jesus:

- ▶ Repent!
- ▶ Jesus is coming to fight against those who do not follow Him in truth

The Reward of Jesus:

- ▶ Hidden Manna - spiritual food, nourishment, sustenance.
- ▶ Jesus is the bread of life - see Jn.6:32-40

The Reward of Jesus:

- ▶ White stone with a new name written on it
- ▶ Question: Why a white stone?

The Reward of Jesus:

- ▶ Answer:
 - ▶ Judicial
 - ▶ Victorious life
 - ▶ Admission ticket
 - ▶ Amulets or charm bracelets

Summary/Conclusion:

- ▶ The church that has decided to fit into the morals and social values of the world.
- ▶ The church that allows the truth of God's word to be watered down so as to not offend.

Summary/Conclusion:

- ▶ A church that has some who are remaining faithful while others are not - a tolerant and divided church
- ▶ A compromising church

Summary/Conclusion:

- ▶ Ephesus was a church that loved proper doctrine above people.
- ▶ Pergamum was a church that loved people above proper doctrine
