

## THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

Message 8

Words: 6,000

Scripture: Revelation 2:12-17

INTRO: We have come to the third church, Perrgamos. From Ephesus, which is right on the Mediterranean Sea, you go north between 30 and 40 miles and you come to Smyrna. One is following along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Go north another 35 miles or so inland from the sea, and there is Perrgamos or Pergamum as some call it.

Picture now a large plain, and in the plain a high plateau rising far above the plain, and on that high rising area a city, and you have some idea of Perrgamos. When John wrote it was a capital city and had been for some 400 years. It is a very religious city and one of the things you will find all over Perrgamos is snakes. Straus says it was known, not for commerce, but religion.

Lahaye says, "Two of the most prominent religious systems of the city were the worship of Bacchus (the god of revelry) and the worship of Asclepius (the god of healing)" (57). I remember the god Bacchus from my studies of wine. He was the Roman god of wine and the immorality and loosening of tongues and speaking one's mind are all part of this god of wine. He lived in people in Perrgamos. The prominent sacrifices made to him were goats and swine.

We are all familiar with one aspect of the god of Asclepius. It is the Hippocratic Oath that those who work in the medical world take. The snake on a rod is taken from this god Asclepius, the god of healing. The original Hippocratic Oath began like this: "I swear by Apollo the Physician and by Asclepius and by Hygieia and Panacea and by all the gods." What is interesting to us is that in the original Hippocratic Oath, the doctor swore not to perform abortions. That has been removed from the World Health Organization Hippocratic Oath, which also takes the snake on a rod as their symbol.

Wim Malgo says it was often called the 'Cathedral City' and that it was a city of idolatry. Others, he says, call it a 'City of

Temples'. He says it could be called Pergamena, which means *parchment*. Barclay says, "It is interesting to note that the word parchment is derived from Pergamum. In the ancient world parchment was *hee peramene charta*, which means the Pergamene sheet..." For the sake of time let me just tell you very briefly what happened. Books were written in ancient times on papyrus. This is made from the pith of reeds which grow by the Nile River. Because of an argument about a librarian at Alexandria, which had the largest library in the world at that time, no more papyrus was allowed to be shipped to Perrgamos, which had the second largest library. Well, Perrgamos was a place of invention, and they invented the parchment sheet to write on. This was made from animal skins and much superior as writing material to papyrus.

Wikipedia says, "Parchment is a writing material made from specially prepared untanned skins of animals—primarily sheep, calves, and goats. It has been used as a writing medium for over two millennia. [Vellum](#) is a finer quality parchment made from the skins of young animals such as lambs and young calves."

You will remember Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:13 where he said, "Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments." When papyrus pages were sown together and rolled up they were called a *biblios*. You can tell we get our word "Bible" from this word. It means a book that was rolled up.

Well, it is to this city that the Lord addresses the next message and we begin again by looking at the historical purpose. Why did the Lord write this letter to the church at Perrgamos?

### III. PERGAMOS

#### A. The Historical Purpose

##### 1. The counselee (2:12a)

Like the other two letters, it begins with the words, "To the angel..." We have taken this to mean that it is addressed to the pastor or shepherd of the church at Perrgamos. This brings

us to the counselee, or the church that is being counseled here by the Lord.

So, 2:12a says, "And to the angel of the church in Perrgamos write..." We have looked at a little of the history of Perrgamos, but we want to spend more time on that now. Perrgamos is an inland city situated on a huge rocky crag between two rivers. So dominating is its position that Sir Robert Anderson calls it the royal city or the city of authority.

According to J.B. Smith the first part of the word Perrgamos comes from the same root as the German word *berg*, a mountain. The church name we are familiar with, Berghthaler, comes from that word. The *gamos* part of this name comes from the word to marry. The ideas presented by this name are one of elevation and the other of marriage or union. So it appears that this city had a high view of themselves though they caused intermarriage or union between true and false teaching. John F. Walvoord calls this church, the church in compromise. Compromise is a deadly business for a Christian. Very little shuts the mouth of God's people quicker than compromise.

Picture now a huge plain, and in that plain a huge section raised high above the plain, large enough for a city, and there is Perrgamos. Barclay says, "Its geographical position made Pergamum even more impressive. It was built on a tall conical hill, which dominated the valley of the River Caicus, and from the top the Mediterranean could be seen, fifteen miles away. Sir William Ramsay, a modern traveler and scholar describes it thus: 'Beyond all other cities in Asia Minor it gives the traveler the impression of a royal city, the home of authority: the rocky hill on which it stands is so huge, and dominates the broad plain of the Caicus so proudly and so boldly'", end quote.

Barclay then says, "History and honour indeed gathered around Pergamum" (106-107).

He further says, "Pergamum has a place all its own in Asia. It was not on any of the great roads, as Ephesus and Smyrna were but historically it was the greatest city in Asia. Strabo called it the illustrious (epiphanes) city, and Pliny called it 'By far the most famous city in Asian'... The reason was that, by the time John was writing, Pergamum had been a capital city for almost 400 years" end quote (106).

It is very difficult to gather the most pertinent data of each of these seven cities of Asia. After studying this city I found an article on the history of this city on the internet and it condensed the information in the best way I was able to find. I will read it for you. It was given by a man named Gordon Robertson. He says:

*Today, all that's left of the city of Pergamum, now in modern-day Turkey, are ruins. But when the Apostle John wrote his letter to the church there, it was one of the most influential cities in the Roman Empire.*

*"Pergamum had a unique status that was different than any other city because it was the political center, says Rick Renner, the author of [A Light in the Darkness](#), a study of the seven churches of Asia Minor. "It was from there that all the rulings were made that affected the whole of Asia Minor."*

*The people of Pergamum were inventors and innovators. They perfected a parchment made out of calfskin and built the world's first psychiatric hospital.*

*Pergamum was also a well-known center for the arts. The city's theater seated ten thousand people a night. The acoustics were so good that a*

whisper on stage could be heard all the way in the top row.

The city's acropolis rivaled Athens, and its library was the second largest in the ancient world. Its collection was so great that the Roman general Marc Antony presented it as a wedding gift to Cleopatra.

At the end of the first century, Pergamum was a thriving city. So why does the book of Revelation call it the dwelling place of Satan? The answer lies in the ruins of the city's temples.

"On one side, it was a very beautiful city," says Renner. "But on the flip side, it was one of the darkest, eeriest cities in the whole Roman Empire."

The people of Pergamum were known as the "Temple-keepers of Asia." The city had three temples dedicated to the worship of the Roman emperor, another for the goddess Athena, and the Great Altar of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods. Many scholars believe this altar is the "Throne of Satan" mentioned in the book of Revelation.

"That word 'throne' was used in a personal private residence, and it was a chair for the lord of the house, the master of the house," says Renner. "The very fact that Jesus would use this word means that Satan felt at home there. He sat on a throne there. It was his territory. He was the master of that house."

The city also had a healing center called the Asklepion, built in honor of Asklepios, the Greek serpent-god. In the first century, this was a cross between a hospital and a health spa, where patients could get everything from a mud bath to a major surgery. Even the emperors came all the way from Rome to be treated here, but this was no ordinary doctor's visit.

"If you were a terminal patient, you were not allowed to go into the Asklepion," says Renner. "These Asklepion priests didn't want anyone hearing that someone had died in the Asklepion. There was a huge sign just above the official entrance to the Asklepion that said, 'Death is not permitted here.' So the only way you were going to get in to begin with is if they knew you were going to live."

Patients entered through an underground tunnel. Then they drank a sedative, and spent the night in the dormitories of the Asklepion, while non-poisonous snakes crawled around them all night. They were told that the serpent-god Asklepios would speak to them in their dreams and give them a diagnosis.

"It was believed that the snakes carried the healing power of Asklepios," and if a snake slithered across you while you were sleeping at night, that was a divine sign that healing power was coming to you."

The next morning, the patients told their "dreams" to the priests, who prescribed their treatments. Finally, the patients made clay sculptures of the body parts that needed healing and offered them to Asklepios.

The people of Pergamum worshipped a myriad of Greek and Roman gods, but when Christianity arrived with the belief in just one god, the city's pagan priests went on the attack and their most famous victim was a man named Antipas.

Let me just mention here that Antipas is mentioned by the Lord Jesus Himself in our passage and we will talk more about him later, but here is how the article goes on:

In the book of Revelation, Jesus called Antipas "my faithful martyr." He was the bishop of Pergamum, ordained by the Apostle John, and his

*faith got the attention of the priests of Asklepios.*

*"He had cast out so many devils that the demons had been complaining to pagans, saying, 'You've got to do something about this Antipas'," says Renner.*

*The pagan priests went to the Roman governor and complained that the prayers of Antipas were driving their spirits out of the city and hindering the worship of their gods. As punishment, the governor ordered Antipas to offer a sacrifice of wine and incense to a statue of the Roman emperor and declare that the emperor was "lord and god." Antipas refused.*

*"If you reject the divinity of the emperor, then that is the equivalent of rejecting the city of Rome," says Renner, "and believers were killed for this."*

*Antipas was sentenced to death on the Altar of Zeus. Most of that altar still survives today, and surrounding it are some of the world's most famous marble friezes. They depict the Gigantomachy, or the battle between the Greek gods and the giants. At the top of the altar was a hollow bronze bull, designed for human sacrifice.*

*Renner describes the method of execution suffered by Antipas.*

*"They would take the victim, place him inside the bull, and they would tie him in such a way that his head would go into the head of the bull. Then they would light a huge fire under the bull, and as the fire heated the bronze, the person inside of the bull would slowly begin to roast to death. As the victim would begin to moan and to cry out in pain, his cries would echo through the pipes in the head of the bull so it seemed to make the bull come alive."*

*Even in the midst of the flames, the elderly bishop Antipas died praying for his church. The year was AD 92.*

*A few years later, the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation, mentioning the death of Antipas in Pergamum. Today, all that's left there is the foundation; the Altar of Zeus is more than a thousand miles away.*

*In the 19th century, German engineers dismantled the altar and took it to Berlin. The so-called "Throne of Satan" went on display in the city's Pergamon Museum in 1930, just in time to inspire one of the most brutal dictators the world has ever seen" end quote.*

*(<http://www1.cbn.com/700club/seat-satan-ancient-pergamum>).*

So, the church under counsel here is Pergamos. We go on to the description of the counselor.

## 2) The counselor (2:12b)

Revelation 2:12b, *These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword...* That is a very brief description but very much to the point, pardon the pun. To the church at Ephesus the Lord addressed Himself as, "The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, and walks in the midst of the golden lampstands..." To the church at Smyrna He addressed Himself as, "The First and the Last, who was dead and became alive..." And now He says He is, "He who has the sharp two edged sword..."

You will realize by now that without understanding the history behind these cities it is not possible to get a good understanding of these two very important chapters. And I believe it is important to understand that these two chapters are prophetic of the entire church age. I have given you the ground on which these chapters can be viewed as prophetic.



Now, it is most significant that the Lord addresses Himself as the One who has the two edged sword to this church at Pergamos. Barclay says Roman governors were divided into two classes, those who had *ius gladii*, which is the right of the sword, and those who did not. Those who had the right of the sword had the power of life and death. If they wished, they could execute someone on the spot. He says, "Humanly speaking the proconsul, who had his headquarters at Pergamum, had the *ius gladii*, and at any moment he might use it against the Christian..."

Now look at what our Lord says to this church: "These things says He who has the sharp two edged sword..." You see, the Lord has the *ius gladii*. Life and death are in His hands, not in the hands of any Roman. And may I remind us that He has given to us the right of the use of the sword? Here is what the book of Hebrews says about the sword of the Lord, "For the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword..." If you and I are truly born again, we have the right of the sword. The Lord has given us both the right and the responsibility to use this sword. To those who reject the truth, death; and to those who receive it; life.

When the Lord comes down from heaven with the church in Revelation 19, it says a sharp two-edged sword goes out of his mouth. He slays all of unbelieving mankind at the end of the tribulation with this sword. For those who believe in unconditional love, they need to read that. You see, the phrase, 'unconditional love' is a half-truth and half-truths tend to give wrong impressions and become lies. And let me say this, God's true unconditional love eventually runs out for those who spurn Him long enough.

Let me remind you of something else. The sword stands for division. The romans divided many a head from the body with one stroke of the sword.

Let me remind you of what Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-37:

34 *"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.*

35 *"For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';*

36 *"and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'*

37 *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*

I have told you that one of the accusations against the Christians in this early period of the church was that they were accused of dividing families. The truth does that. Many are not worthy of the kingdom of God because they back out when it comes to some truth that affects their own personal interests or sin.

3) The commendation (2:13)

We come now to the commendation of this church in Revelation 2:13:

*2:13 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.*

The commendation in each church so far has started like this: "I know your works..." In the high teaching on grace in our day, some messages on works are long overdue. The Christian's works, and the works of the Church are very important as we learn from the Lord's words to these churches. Every judgment of every person, both saved and lost will be according to their own works. Works

do not determine if I go to heaven or not. They determine what the believer will receive in heaven; and for the lost, they determine how horrible hell will be (Luke 12).

But notice that the Lord does not give any works worth commending. To Ephesus He said, "I know your works, your labor and your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil and you have tested false prophets." To Smyrna He says, "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty..." To Pergamos He says, "I know your works." They had managed to hang on, but they had not managed to go forward. By all appearance, this is not a healthy church.

Furthermore, the Lord says, "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is." Let me say this, He knows where we dwell. Would He say something like this to us: I know where you dwell, where money is god"?

Our verse goes on, "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is..." Well, we have learned some of the religiosity and idolatry and immorality that went on in Pergamos. This was a very evil place. It was so evil that Satan had placed his throne here. We learned earlier that the Hippocratic Oath carries over to our day from that time. Let me now read part of an earlier quote:

*The people of Pergamum were known as the "Temple-keepers of Asia." The city had three temples dedicated to the worship of the Roman emperor, another for the goddess Athena, and the Great Altar of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods. Many scholars believe this altar is the "Throne of Satan" mentioned in the book of Revelation.*

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A while ago my wife mentioned that Amir Sarfati, a Jewish prophecy teacher who sometimes is on Jan Markel's radio show had mentioned Pergamos in connection to Hitler. In a message called, Europe: Ready for Antichrist, he said that Adolf Hitler designed a certain airfield which he called, and I couldn't quite make it out, but I think it was the Sepaline Feld. He said Adolf Hitler designed this Feld after the altar of Zeus in Pergamum, in Turkey. And now I'll quote him. He said:

*"Now wait a minute, Hitler, Pergamum, Turkey? The Pergamum Museum in Berlin one of the most beautiful Museums in a place called the Island of Museums, is housing two of the most unbelievable artifacts. Now you guys are all about, 'Oh they are reproducing the art of Baal in New York city!' That's a reproduction. I'm talking about the real deal that is in that museum. You see, you have to understand that the city of Pergamum, if you could see only the theatre of that place, it's a huge place.*

*You see the people in that place were inventors and innovators and known as the biggest competition to Athens in those days. They say that the cities acropolis rivals the city of Athens. The library that was there in those days was the second largest in the world. That same library Anthony gave to Cleopatra. The people at Pergamum were known as the temple keepers of Asia. The city had three temples dedicated to the worship of the Roman emperor. One of them was the goddess Athena, and then was the great altar of Zeus, which was known by them then as the seat of Satan himself. You know, there was a very famous Christian guy who lived there, and Revelation 2:13 will tell you about Antipas who was one of the Christian leaders in that particular place. He would not denounce Christ, they took him, they took a bull and took everything out of that bull and put that person inside and roasted the bull, and the steam came out of the eyes so he would denounce Christ. That was a satanic thing that was done right on the*

*throne that is known as the seat of Satan. That is why Revelation 2 says he was killed among you where Satan dwells. It's interesting because since 1930 the altar of Zeus, known as the seat of Satan is in Berlin inside that museum. And that particular thing you see is the way Adolf Hitler asked Albert Speer to design the Sepalin Feld and all the markings and all the ceremonies of the Nazi troops and the Nazi party.*

*He knew what he was doing. Not only does he want to restore Babylon, he wants the seat of Satan to be right there. And if that's not enough, and you think I'm sailing with my imagination about Europe inviting Babylon, one of the other things that is in that museum is the Ishtar gate to Babylon. In fact this is one of the gates taken from Babylon and brought to Germany by the archeologists. So in that museum you see the seat of Satan and the gate of Babylon. You see, you don't have to think it all started in the 1920's or 30's. No, it started way before.*

<http://www.olivetreeviews.org/radio/complete-archives/1188-europe-ready-for-the-antichrist>

So there are more historical things from the past that affect us to this day. But listen further now to the commendation given by Jesus Himself to this church:

*2:13 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...*

The Lord said, "You live where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name..."

Satan had his throne there in the religion of the people and among their false gods. This was the place of the snake. They were everywhere. Wim Malgo writes this, "According to historic books, Perrgamos erected an altar nearly a thousand feet high in honor of Zeus. It is also recorded that during that time a snake-cult was

practicing its evil art in the temples of Perrgamos. People who were ill afflicted went to these temples to seek healing by the snakes that were kept there. The most important snake was even called the 'Saviour.' Many people had faith in those snakes and worshipped them. That is a fitting picture of the 'throne of Satan'" (82).

Well, they had snakes on their coins and markings, but in spite of this the Lord says, "You hold fast My name..." John F. Walvoord says, "The faithfulness of the church at Perrgamos is a challenge to Christians today to stand true when engulfed by the evil of this present world, the apostasy within the ranks of religion, and the temptation to compromise their stand for the truth" 67).

No wonder Satan had his throne there. Now the KJV calls this Satan's seat. The original word is *thronos*, from which we get our word throne. Out of 40 or so uses of this word in Revelation the KJV has translated throne some 35 times and 6 times as a seat. I am not sure on what ground they have done that. Satan is an imposter and I can't see him happy to sit on a seat when Jesus Christ sits on a throne.

Well, the Christians at Perrgamos lived at a place where Satan had his throne. Now you see, what place we live, what our circumstances are, are never an excuse for not living right. We might say, "We have the internet with every sin imaginable right at our fingertips." That is no excuse to live wrong. If death is not to be feared, one can live right in any place on earth. Let me show you the great difference: in some places you can profess to be a Christian without really being one and paying no price for it; in others there is a price to pay. We ought to be the most fearless people on earth. When you do not fear death, there is nothing to fear but God Himself. And if you are with Him, there is nothing to fear from man or devil.

So the Lord said they held fast His name.

*2:13 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.*

Now notice that they held fast to the Lord's name. They would not deny His name. That is not a work that moves them forward. They are just holding on to His name. If they had been aggressive with the Lord's name, they might have suffered persecution, but there is no persecution mentioned at present nor does it say there is any coming. Antipas? He was in the past!

But what is the meaning of, "You hold fast to My name..." I think what is meant that they held His name fast is that in the Roman world you were expected to say, "Caesar is lord", and so far they were refusing to do that. To them, Jesus was Lord. They held His name.

The Lord further commends them that they did not deny "My" faith. Wim Malgo says, "In our time, especially in the Western free world, these attacks of Satan are not so obvious any longer. He is now much more civilized and has put on the cloak of religion. His methods have grown much more subtle, but his goal is the same. He desires that we deny the precious name of Jesus in our everyday life, in actions and behavior" (85-86).

I think that today we can deny the true faith by allowing divorce and remarriage. We can deny the Lord's name by teaching unconditional love. You see, some of these teachings are very subtle. Did the Lord love us unconditionally when He died for us? Yes! While we were yet sinners He died for us! Does that mean we can now live the way we want and He will still love us? No!

Then we have such teachings as unconditional grace. But there is no truth in the teaching of unconditional grace. And in these teachings we can be comforted in our sin. Then there is unconditional forgiveness. This is never true. It is sin that requires forgiveness, and sin has to be dealt with. But these teachings subtly undermine the true teachings of the Scriptures.

Now notice that they did not deny His faith in the past, in the days when Antipas was His faithful martyr. Now Antipas was the pastor or shepherd of the flock in Pergamos. We saw earlier how horribly his life came to an end. And even then, I suppose when the pressure was at its greatest, they did not deny the faith. We notice that this is now being written to the man who is shepherd here now. He has replaced Antipas.

Turn to Matthew 25. We notice in our passage that they held fast to His name, and they did not deny His faith; but it does not say they did anything positive with it. We can say we believe the Bible and we hold to the truth, but what do we do with it? The Lord tells a parable where a certain man went to a far country and he gave five pieces of money to one servant, two to another and one to another. No doubt he knew their abilities.

The one who received five gained five more, the one who gained two gained two more. So look now at verse 19:

*19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.*

*20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'*

*21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few*



*things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

22 *"He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'*

23 *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*

24 *"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.*

25 *'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'*

26 *"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.*

27 *'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.*

28 *'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.*

29 *'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.*

We must not only be faith keepers, but faith promoters.

Now notice that it says that Antipas was killed where Satan dwells. So, let me ask, why does Satan persecute? My wife and I listened to a

certain converted Muslim some time ago. And he said this: "You do not have to persecute someone unless you are afraid of the truth they carry." Satan tries to shut the mouth of anyone who dares to share the truth with others. And anyone living in sin does not want truth to expose them.

We have mentioned that the word 'martyr' comes from the Greek word for witness. Just before Jesus ascended He said in Acts 1:8, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Now let me read it in the original: "...and you shall be martyrs to Me..." Where do martyrs come from? From those who open their mouth with the truth.

I will never forget the missionary to China I heard years ago. He made over 40 trips to China. And he said Americans would say when they traveled there, "It's not so bad here. What are you complaining about?" And the Chinese Christian would say, "Oh no, its not bad if you keep your mouth shut." We bought a Tee shirt for one of our fisherman friends, I won't tell you which one. And it said, "Even a fish wouldn't get in trouble if it kept its mouth shut." You see, no witness, no martyrs.

Guy Dowd, who was a Christian school teacher in the States became teacher of the year one year in his country. It is a very high honor. And he talked about how puzzling it had been for him as a teacher to learn how intimidated and silent Christians were about their faith, until he learned a very important thing. These Christians were undercover agents. And I ask you, can a true Christian be an undercover agent? A witness has to open his mouth.

4) The criticism (2:14-15)

We come now to the criticism the Lord lays against this church. It takes two verses and 59 words to express this criticism. The Lord says in verses 14-15:

*2:14-15 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 fornication. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.*

In addressing the church at Smyrna there was no, "You have done this and this, but..." There was no 'but'. Now there is a "Nevertheless..." Oh, oh. But it gets worse. He says, "Nevertheless I have a *few things* against you!" Now note first, their danger was not Satan outside the church. Oh, they lived where Satan had his throne, but Satan on his throne is not a danger like Satan in the church. We have seen that first hand. Pergamos had Satan inside the church. But worse, they tolerated it. He said, "... you have there those..." You have them. They are inside the church with you. And what were they doing about it? They tolerated it. Notice second that it was a matter of doctrine; a matter of teaching. You have there those with wrong teaching. You have them. You tolerate them.

Maybe, like in our culture, because we are now tolerating homosexuality, even inside the church, divorce and remarriage does not seem nearly as bad. So we are more ready to tolerate that because look at how much worse this is. But the Lord it is OK to allow this because there is much worse around you. He says, "I have this against you." You are not pure. You are mixed. You tolerate bad teaching.

Now notice what they tolerated. They tolerated the doctrine of Balaam. And what is the doctrine of Balaam? Well, why don't you study that and

get ready for next time. What is before us now is a huge and very important subject.

CONCL: And in conclusion, we have been looking at the third church addressed by the Lord; Perrgamos. The name Perrgamos comes from two words, one meaning a high place, and the other from the word to marry. This is a very significant name. The One who is addressing this church is the One who has the sharp two edged sword. He has the power of death and life in His hands.

And what did the Lord find worthy of commendation? Let me put it in my own words. "You do a good job of hanging on, but you aren't going anywhere." I wonder, does that describe me or you? We're hanging on, but we don't dare open our mouth?

And last, let me give you an assignment. You will get much more out of the next message if you do it. Read Numbers 22-24, and then seek to answer this question: What is wrong with Balaam?