

PERGAMUM: COURAGEOUS BUT COMPROMISED - Rev 2:12-17

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INTRODUCTION

1. Opposition in Smyrna from *synagogue of Satan* [Rv 2:9]. Opposition in Pergamum is pagan - *where Satan's throne is* - 2:12-17.
2. Famous library; pagan temples & Emperor cult - each deity called "savior" - "kurios kairos" - Lord Caesar. How hard cld it be to say 2 simple words?
3. Roman gov't cld execute death sentence in thoroughly paganized courts.

1st: The Address and the Author - v12

1. *Angel* church seen in spiritual war [human/angelic] exercise authority. *You* [v13ff] is single [tho plural in v13]: individual martyr united to church.
 - i. Jesus writes to churches. Satan opposes churches.
 - ii. When we encounter lax churchmanship by professing Christians, we have reason to perceive a Satanic strategy at work.
2. 1:16 - 2:12. Roman court had power of sword - Jesus has sword [Hb 4:12].
 - i. Rv 19:15 assoc'd w/ judgment _
 - ii. Rv 2:16 threatens false teachers - *sword of His mouth* = Word of God

2nd: The Evaluation of the Spiritual Condition of Smyrna - v13

1. Commends - present & past: *holding fast & did not deny* - *My name/faith*
2. *I know where you dwell* - among whom you live - different locations & historical settings pose different challenges to the church - Tit 1:10-14. *I know*= knowledge gained by experience: Jesus lived in Satan's realm.
3. *where Satan's throne is*: Satan rules Pergamum; murderous lies; immoral behavior; idolatrous - enforced by the civil/court authorities
4. *holding fast* & proved faithful when *Antipas* was martyred = *My witness, My faithful one* - 2:10b faithful til death -> crown of life.
 - i. Antipas ["against-all"]. We do not know how he died - Jesus knows.
 - ii. *faithful witness* to Jesus: *My* [2x]: name - witness
 - Oiii. *who was killed among you* [plural]
5. *Where Satan dwells* = *where you dwell*: Satan & church live in same place

3rd: Words of Praise or Reproof - v14-15

1. *I have a few thgs against you*: church is fighting [Antipas: faithful witness] *But - against* - compromise
 - i. Cf Waldensians - persecuted in Reformation, now liberal
 - ii. Perg saw Antipas martyred but is now doctrinally compromised.
2. Orthodox [*you hold fast My name*] but tolerating *teaching* [2x] that is identified w/ *Balaam* & associated w/ *Nicolaitans*.
 - i. *v15 Nicolaitans* - *in the same way* as *Balaam* [v14] doctrine & practice
 - ii. Balak & Balaam - Num 22-25. Balaam enticed Israel to idolatry & immorality = covenant infidelity. Religion as a business selling sensual & material gratification - socially celebrated.
 - iii. Nicolaitans - *stumbling block* -> apostasy. *You have* [v14,15] TF Jesus says *I have*.
 - a. Perhaps involvement in pagan celebrations were said to be a "liberty" - a legitimate engagement w/ society: no harm done.
 - b. Temptations to Xns converted from paganism [A 15:29; cf. Cor - 1C 8:1-10; 10:14-33].
 - iv. Jesus is *against* Nicolaitans [KJV adds *wh/ I hate*] 2:6 Ephesus is commended where Pergamum is rebuked.

4th: Words of Exhortation - v16

1. The Nics must be removed - either by church or by Jesus. *Repent* - this teaching [those teaching] must go.
2. Jesus' *coming* - *to make war against them w/ sword from mouth*

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- i. Providential judgment? cf. 1C 11:30-32; 1C 3:17a; Hab 3
- ii. Jesus' 2-edged sword obeyed by church to discipline & remove.
- iii. Ananias & Sapphira [A5]: compromise/apostasy is very dangerous.

5th: Command to Hear What the Spirit Says - v17a

1. *Repent or else I will come - hear what Spirit says*: circum'd ears - Jer 6:10
2. We need intentional listening - Prv 2:1-2 listen, pray, study, implement; avoid *perverse man* [v12], *adulteress* [v16]. 2 Women: Wisdom or Folly.

6th: Promises to the Overcomer - v17b

1. *hidden manna* - food for wilderness [Jn 6:48-51]
2. *white stone* - juror's vote to acquit; to admit into feast of Asclepios - Jesus overturns black-stone of condemnation & admits to Lamb's banquet - Rv 19
3. *new name* - Rv 3:12 => identified w/ Jesus & His glory
4. Known only to recipient? [Rv 19:12-13] Private, intimate, personal. Lk 10:22; Rv 22:4
5. v13 - *hold fast My name* - inclusio [v17] - given *new name*: *My new name*.