**THE 7 CHURCHES OF REVELATION**

**Pergamum, Revelation 2:12-17**

Sunday, July 9, 2023

**WE Slide 1 7/23 Music Guy interviewing. POP QUIZ TIME! What’s the city? Slide 2-9 Follow my lead.** Every city wants to be known for something but **Slide 10** how would you like to live in a city that is known to Jesus as “Satan’s City- where Satan’s throne is”? **Doesn’t sound like the best place to live and the church at Pergamum was feeling the effects of it.** This church had some qualities that Jesus complemented, but it was also a church that was compromising/misrepresenting Jesus due to the pressure from society. **Slide 11 Turn to Rev. 2:12, pg.1226.**

**CITY OF PERGAMUM**

1. **Means “citadel”;** gives us the name for parchment- animal skin for writing, 2nd largest library- 200K vol.
2. **Named the Temple Warden of Emperor worship- protector Caesar/emperor worship.**
3. **QUOTE:** Monty S. Mills, Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation of John, **Slide 12-14**
4. Domitian upped the penalty- made it a death sentence to not worship him/declare him God/Lord.
5. That put huge pressure on believers to go back to their previous life or be a secret Jesus worshiper.
6. **Would believers worship Caesar so they could worship Jesus without any issues, making Caesar more honored than Jesus?** Or only worship Jesus, the One true God, and be arrested/killed?

**This is probably one of the reasons why Jesus says Pergamum is “where Satan dwells”. Slide 15** Combine that with the fact that there was…

1. **Called Satan’s City: where Satan dwells/Satan’s throne was.**
2. A god for every desire, dream, or lifestyle- whatever you wanted there was a god who could get it.
3. Included the temples of Zeus, Asclepius- both called “savior”.
4. Asclepius identified with the image of a snake.
5. Mystery religions from ancient Babylon had also moved to Pergamum after the fall of Babylon.

**Satan is the god of this world, but Jesus makes it sound like he had a special place in Pergamum which put a lot of pressure on the believers who lived there to compromise/misrepresent Jesus.** Let’s see what Jesus has to say to them and what we can learn from this church. **Slide 16-22 As with the other churches Jesus starts with of a description of Himself.**

**GOD**

1. **DESCRIPTION OF Jesus- He’s the One Who Has the Sharp Two-edged Sword, Revelation 2:12**
2. **Used 5x in Revelation-** 1:16; 2:12, 16; and 19:15, 21 the last 3 used in Jesus’ judgment on people.
3. **Used in NT-** Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12- the power/impact of the Bible in our lives.
4. **Used in OT-** Isaiah 49:2 referring to the Messiah’s, who we know is Jesus, words slaying the wicked
5. **Slide 23 In Opposition to “Ius Gladii”**
6. Rome’s “Law of the Sword”- Rome’s authority/justice over the known world.
7. **Jesus is saying** Jesus, not Rome, is the final authority and justice.
8. Jesus’ words create, penetrate, protect, correct, and judge; He has the final say on all matters.

**Jesus then moves on to what He knows about the church. Slide 24** He knows…

1. **DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH, Revelation 2:13-15**
2. **They Dwell Where Satan Dwells**
3. Know- eido; absolute, speaks to His omniscience/knows all things, fully understands; it should comfort them that Jesus knows everything, sees everything, not surprised, it’s all under His control!
4. Dwell- katoikeo; permanently live, unusual use for believers
5. Christians typically called sojourners, visitors, citizens of heaven travel through.
6. This term used in Revelation for unbelieving “earth-dwellers”- people committed to this world’s beliefs/systems/philosophy.
7. Possibly shows Jesus’ concern that they were assimilating into the world’s thinking/lifestyle.

**He also knows they hold fast to His name and didn’t deny His faith. Slide 25** Let’s break that down a little.

1. **Hold Fast Jesus’ Name/Didn’t Deny Jesus’ Faith**
2. Hold fast- krateo; adhere strongly, commit; present tense- day in/day out…
3. My name- all of who Jesus is- His attributes, character, promises.
4. Especially Savior and Lord- the One who saved them/they obey, not the emperor/other gods.
5. **How does one “hold fast Jesus’ name”/committed to who He is- Savior/Lord? EX:** If God/we’re created, if Savior/we needed saving, if Lord/we’re His servant- we do what He says.

**It’s no wonder then that they also “didn’t deny Jesus’ faith”. Slide 26 What does that mean?**

1. Didn’t Deny My faith- arneomai; refuse, reject, decline
2. My faith- didn’t deny/reject their faith in Jesus
3. The pressure to deny Jesus or ride the religious fence- burn incense to Caesar so they’d be free to worship Jesus without breaking the law- must have been intense.
4. Especially after Antipas was killed- **Church Tradition-** a doctor turned in by medical guild/union for failing to worship Caesar, he was put in a copper bull and then put it in the fire.

**Like Ephesus held true to Jesus but had some issues (they forgot why/for whom they were doing all the good things- love for Jesus) some believers at Pergamum were compromising/misrepresenting Jesus. Slide 27** Interesting it was only “some” not all, but Jesus isn’t about to have His reputation or His body- the church damaged. **How were they compromising/misrepresenting Jesus?**

1. **Some Were Compromising/Misrepresenting Jesus**
2. Some were holding to the teaching of Balaam.
3. “hold”- krateo; instead of being committed to Jesus/lifestyle, they were committing to Balaam.
4. Balaam- evil OT prophet, advised Israel’s enemies how to get God to judge Israel- have the people interact with Israel, tempt them with the lifestyle of Moab- a self-focused, sexualized culture like all cultures who reject God/Jesus, natural state of humans without Jesus.
5. Believers were worshiping Jesus on Sunday/worshiped the gods/lifestyle which included sexual immorality during the week. **QUOTE:** Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, The Footsteps of Messiah **Slide 28-30**
6. Like many today- church on Sunday, then during the week the live like the unbelievers in the culture around us- impatient/angry/complaining/lying/cheating/sexually immoral.
7. Being impatient/angry/complaining/lying/cheating- misrepresents Jesus- patient, kind...
8. Being involved sexually outside of marriage misrepresents God’s teaching on sex, the purpose for it- emotional/mental/spiritual unity between a husband/wife, and the dynamic of committed/monogamous marriage as an illustration of Jesus’ commitment to us- His church.
9. 1st century may have had different motivators for their lifestyles, but their culture was like ours because they rejected Jesus and pursued their desires.

**Jesus as God AND OUR Savior/Lord doesn’t deserve being misrepresented/made to look like He approves of the lifestyles that destroy lives, nor will He put up with it.** Sadly, adding to that, some others, again just some, were holding to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. **Slide 31**

1. Some hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
2. “hold”- krateo; instead of being committed to Jesus/lifestyle, they were committing to Balaam.
3. Debate over who the Nicolaitans were but agree that they believed it was OK for believers to live like the culture around them since Jesus forgives their sin.
4. Many believers live this way- they continue to sin because after all Jesus will forgive them; “It’s just who I am- can’t change.”, “Other people struggle with sin so I’m justified in mine.”, etc.

**All of that is wrong/misrepresents Jesus.** Jesus is holy and He commands those who choose to follow Him to be holy too, not take His death/forgiveness for granted or compare themselves to each other. **Because of their compromise Jesus gives them ONE COMMAND- REPENT! Slide 32**.

1. **COMMAND OF JESUS- Repent, Revelation 2:16**
2. **Repent of Their Sin/Misrepresenting Jesus**
3. Repent- metanoeo; change the mind/turn 180 degrees; change how they think and choose to live.
4. Aorist imperative- urgent response, do so immediately, needs to happen now

**If they didn’t Jesus says He is already on His way to “make war against them with the sword of His mouth”.** **Slide 33** I would not want to be in their shoes!

1. **Failure to Repent Will Bring “War with Jesus”.**
2. “I am coming”- erchomai; present tense, I am already on My way.
3. “sword of My mouth”- truth of His word, teaching from the Bible, will destroy the false teaching.
4. Not told what that would look like, but one way or another it will be a cleansing process that is connected to the truth of the Bible.
5. **QUOTE:** Chuck Swindoll does a great job summarizing this point. **Slide 34-36**

**Whatever the “war” looks like, the result is that Jesus’ word will destroy the false teaching, save His reputation and His body- the church.** It won’t end the persecution but that’s OK because as with each church Jesus reminds them/us of what our eternity will be like. **For BELIEVERS who show they are believers by remaining faithful Jesus promises them that they will be rewarded in the new heaven/new earth. Slide 37** Again He says that “He who has ears, let Him hear what God the Holy Spirit says…”

1. **PROMISES OF JESUS, Revelation 2:17**
2. **For Those Who Have “Ears to Hear” Who are the ones who have “ears to hear”?**
3. Only true believers have ears to hear, understand, and obey 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 **Slide 38-40**
4. “let him hear”- aorist imperative; calls for urgent response, includes obeying what they’ve heard.

**Those who do will overcome and receive rewards over/above eternity with God. Slide 41**

1. **The Overcomer’s Rewards**
2. Overcomes- nikao; believers who obey showing themselves to be true believers, present tense- a lifestyle of obedience, not perfection, but keeps overcoming whatever the world throws at them.
3. Hidden manna- takes us back to the OT/God providing daily manna for Israel in the wilderness.
4. “Hidden” meaning it’s spiritual manna, not physical.
5. Refers to Jesus being our source of spiritual life, John 6:48-51 **Slide 42-44**

**Jesus will also give the overcomer a white stone with a new name on it.** These 2 things are highly debated among scholars. **I’m going to give you what I think based on my study. Slide 45**

1. White stone
2. Pergamum games- winner received a white stone w/name.
3. Stone was the winner’s ticket to the awards banquet
4. Jesus will give each believer their ticket to the banquet in the new heavens/earth.

**As for the new name, again scholars have debated it so here’s a couple of options. Slide 46**

1. With new name- debated; New name- Heavenly personal name? New name for God? Having experienced something new- entering the new heaven/earth.

**Personally, I’m going with the new heavenly name but whatever the meaning the point is no matter the persecution or how severe it is, true believers will show themselves faithful to Christ who promises them eternal safety and peace in God’s presence.** **What are our TAKEAWAYS that we should apply to our lives?**

**YOU TAKEAWAYS Slide 47**

1. **Jesus knows where you live-** Just as Jesus fully knew what was going on in Pergamum and each church He knows what’s going on in your life and in our life together as a church- the good and what needs to be corrected. **He sees and is working out His plan.**
2. **Repent if you’ve been compromising/misrepresenting Jesus- If Jesus were to evaluate your life what would He say you’re “holding fast” to, committed to?** Him? Self? Culture? Jesus didn’t just save you from an eternity in hell, but from this world and it’s destructive thinking/responses.
3. **Hold fast to Jesus- Jesus Expects/Deserves Complete Commitment-** the draw to think/respond like the world around us is very subtle. Though we won’t be arrested/killed for not thinking/responding like the world we’re still very aware of what people think and by that be intimated to play the game of compromise so we aren’t ridiculed. **Trust Him and don’t compromise/misrepresent Jesus in your life choices and He’ll use you/your circumstances to grow you spiritually and draw others to Him for salvation.**

**PODCAST: Feeling the pressure to compromise? You’re not alone. Revelation 2:12-17; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; John 6:48-51**