

Pergamos Part II

Sunday, 1-12-20

Recap last week...

Rev 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

Rev 2:13 "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.

Throne- seat, implies comfort and security... Seat of power both personal and empirical.

In the early 1900's the Great Altar of Zeus was dismantled and taken to Berlin where it was re-assembled in the Pergamon Museum and went on display as "Throne of Satan" in 1930, just as Hitler was rising to power...

Also implies satanic forces have places they like more than others, perhaps even locations where their power is more concentrated ...

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.

Pergamos had a panthony of gods being worshipped, Christianity disrupts this with Jesus as only deity, granting sole access to Triune God.

Antipas was the Christian Bishop and was targeted by the pagan and financial leaders because their businesses, religions, and "healing centers" were being disrupted by this new religion, Christianity.

They went to the Roman governor telling him that the prayers of Antipas was driving away the spirits rendering them powerless. Antipas had cast out so many demons that the pagans demanded something be done about him.

The governor summoned Antipas and required that he offer sacrifice of wine and incense to the statue of the Roman emperor and declare the emperor was "lord and god". Antipas refused and was condemned to die on the Altar of Zeus in a hollow bull designed for human sacrifice.

**Here's how the sacrifice typically went;
The captive was bound and placed inside the bull positioning the victims head in the bulls head. A fire was lit under the bull and the victim was slowly roasted alive.**

There was a system of pipes in the bulls head where when the victim began to moan and/or scream, the sound was piped through the bulls head giving the impression the bull was coming to life as he absorbed the sacrifice of the life being burned alive within.

Historical tradition says that the elderly Antipas died not moaning or screaming, but praying for the saints!

(See also Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 7:54-60)

Antipas was killed in 92 A.D. just a few short years before the Revelation was given to John on the Isle of Patmos.

Jesus commended them that even in the midst of this horrible atrocity, and living in the darkest spiritual cesspool imaginable, literally Satan's home, the Devils district, City of the Serpent, the church of Pergamos held fast to Jesus' name and did not deny His faith.

Rev 2:14 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.

Balaam was hired by an enemy king to curse God's people in Numbers 22 - 25. (also succinctly summarized by Moses in Deut 23:4-5)

Deu 23:3 *"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever,*

Deu 23:4 *because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.*

Deu 23:5 *Nevertheless the LORD your God **would not listen to Balaam**, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.*

Balaam couldn't curse the Israelites, which meant he lost his great reward, so he devised a plot to get the Israelites to sin so that GOD would destroy them! It seemed to work as seen in

**Numbers 25:2-3 and Numbers 31:16, but only partially because he didn't count on God's grace in judgment!
He received his riches and lived high until he was destroyed with God's enemies in Joshua 13:22**

"Doctrine of Balaam" is spiritual whoring- fornication with the world; Making a market for our gift- greedy for gain; making merchandise of the flock of God.

2Pe 2:14 *having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.*

2Pe 2:15 *They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;*

Jud 1:11 *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.*

**Balaam intentionally cast stumbling blocks before God's people!
Balaam truly heard the voice of the Lord, He was really a prophet, he only uttered what he was told by God, yet he was still rebellious and greedy! His incitement to stumble God's people cost 24,000 lives!**

SEE

Heb 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,*

Heb 6:5 *and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,*

Heb 6:6 *if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

The entire Chapter 15 in the Book of Acts is about stumbling blocks being cast in front of the Gentiles, as is the whole book of Galatians!

**The Doctrine of Balaam incites the righteous to behave wickedly!
Balaam got his greedy reward by inciting the Israelites to partake in sexual immorality and eat food sacrificed to idols.**

The lesson is this:

DO NOT STUMBLE YOUR BROTHER!!!!

DO NOT ENCOURAGE SIN!!!

DO NOT TEACH ANYBODY ELSE TO STUMBLE YOUR BROTHER EITHER!!!

For the Church, 1Corinthians 10:25-29 tells us this is not about what food to eat:

1Co 10:25 *Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;*

1Co 10:26 *for "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL ITS FULLNESS."*

1Co 10:27 *If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake.*

1Co 10:28 *But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL ITS FULLNESS."*

1Co 10:29 *"Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?*

Intentionally eating things sacrificed to idols in a religious manner is sin. Eating meat for the sake of eating meat has absolutely no spiritual connotation either way regardless of where it came from.

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

The letter to the Ephesians in Rev 2:6 references the Ephesians hatred for the "Deeds" of the Nicolaitans.

In the letter to Pergamos there were "those who hold" (to use strength, to seize or retain, - hold, keep, lay hand on, retain) "Doctrine" of the Nicolaitans.

What was vain works, hated by the church of Ephesus, has become a formalized doctrine, taught, instructed, and seized upon with resolve among some of those in the church at Pergamos.

So what was this doctrine of the Nicolaitans that was so detrimental?

Niko- conquest or victory over others
Lai- people
Tes- the

"Someone who is a victor or conqueror over people"

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans sets up a hierarchy of men to rule over the faith and lives of other people. Their rulership is all important, their doctrines are to be held as the oracles of God, their authority is to be without question.

Example:

The Catholic Church's Council of Trent (held between 1545 and 1563) declared

"If anyone shall say there is not in the Catholic Church a hierarchy established by the divine ordination, consisting of bishops, presbyters, and ministers, let him be anathema (a person who is to be detested and excommunicated)"

1Pe 5:2 *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;*

1Pe 5:3 *nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;*

Mat 7:15 *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

Mat 7:16 *You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?"*

Act 20:28 *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

Act 20:29 *For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.*

Act 20:30 *Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

The Church of Pergamos had those that "held" to the doctrines of

Balaam and the doctrines of the Nicolaitans which is a very powerful and detrimental combination!

We have the divine right to rule over you and your possessions. We also have the divine right to declare to you what is right and what is wrong, and the sole authority to declare our actions are above reproach.

Parable of the Mustard Seed:

Mat 13:10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

Mat 13:11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

Mat 13:12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Mat 13:13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Mat 13:31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, *Mat 13:32* which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

See Matthew 13:19 for explanation for who the birds are:

Mat 13:3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.

Mat 13:4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.

Mat 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

Jesus is not telling us the Church will grow massive and glorious, He's telling us the Church will grow massive and unnatural!

Rev 2:16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against **them** (who is "them"?) with the sword of My mouth.

Rev 2:17 "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.*" '

**Pergamos was the Church Married to the world
Constantine...**

Constantine paved the way...

378 emperor makes Christianity the official *and only* Roman religion..

Satan cannot conquer the Church, but he can infiltrate it!

Historical impact

"Changing signage..."

Modern impact

People who say "Did God *really* say?" while standing under a Christian banner will have the power to attract the world, but not the power to change lives for Jesus Christ!

Personal Impact and application

Promise, Blessing, Hope for the overcomer?

Rev 2:16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against **them** (who is "them"?) with the sword of My mouth.

Rev 2:17 "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.*" '