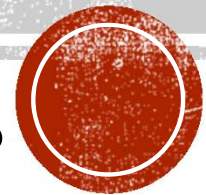


REVELATION 2

Letter to the churches - Pergamos



By Richard Osei

REVELATION “THE UNVEILING”

- The consummation of all things
- The only book promising a special blessing to the reader
- 404 verses containing over 800 allusions from the Old Testament
- It present the climax of God’s Plan for you and me



THE SEVEN CHURCHES

- Why these seven?
- One phrase that echo's through out the letters (He that heath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches)
- Levels of Application
 1. Local – Sir William Ramsay conducted an intensive archeological investigation (Had local problems that the letter address)
 2. Admonitory to all churches (all the seven letters were sent to all the seven churches, with one specifically to that church)
 3. Homiletic (Personal)
 4. Prophetic



SEVEN DESIGN ELEMENTS

- In each of the Letters to Seven Churches
 1. Name of the Church
 2. Title of Christ Chosen
 3. Commendation (2 letter - nothing good to say about them)
 4. Concerns (2 letter - nothing bad to say about them)
 5. Exhortation
 6. Promise to the Overcomer
 7. Close: "He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches."



EPHESUS

- Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.
- They are too busy on the business of the King, to have any time for the King (Example: Luke 10:38-40)

1. Name of the Church → Ephesus
2. Title of Christ Chosen → Rev. 2:1
3. Commendation → Rev. 2:2-3
4. Concerns → Rev. 2:4
5. Exhortation → Rev. 2:5-6
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”
→ Rev. 2:7
7. Promise to the Overcomer → Rev. 2:7



SMYRNA

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

1. Name of the Church - Smyrna
2. Title of Christ Chosen – Rev. 2:8
3. Commendation - Rev. 2:9
4. Concerns – no concerns
5. Exhortation - Rev. 2:10
6. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.” - Rev. 2:11
7. Promise to the Overcomer - Rev. 2:11



LETTER TO PERGAMOS

- The City of the Serpent
- Pergamos is the feminine form; Pergamum is the neuter form of the name; both were used
- Pergamos was located 48 miles north of Smyrna
 - - Ephesus, the great political center
 - - Smyrna was the great commercial center
 - - Pergamos, the great religious center



EARLY HISTORY

- Prior to Alexander the Great, Pergamos was little more than a castle on top of a hill
- Its foundation is ascribed to Arcadian colonists under the Heracleid Telephus (who routed the Achaeans on their landing in Mysia to attack Troy)
- Its name is said to have been derived from the son of Pyrrhus and Andromache who made himself king of Teuthrania by killing the king in single combat
- 301 BC Antigonus defeated a Ipssus
- North West Asia minor was united to the Thracian kingdom of Lysimachus
- Impregnable position lent itself to its use as a treasury
 - However Philetaerus betrayed Lysimachus' trust by allying himself with Seleucus, Lysimachus rival
- Subsequent rulers established themselves as a dominant power in Asia Minor and a principal center of Hellenistic culture.



EARLY HISTORY

- Early ally with Rome
- Became an extremely wealthy and prosperous city
- Official capital of the Roman province of Asia for two centuries
- Lacking proximity to the key trade routes, it eventually yielded to a better located rival: Ephesus



GEOGRAPHY

- Pergamos is about 18 miles from the sea, about 48 miles north of Smyrna
 - The present city of Bergama has a population of only 101,004 (2012) ver. Almost 200,000 of old
- Zeus is said to have been born there
 - The great alter stood on a foundation 125 ft by 115 ft high, set in colonnaded enclose
 - Satan's throne? Rev. 2:13





IDOLS - AESCULAPIUS

- The Caduceus was the official emblem of the city
- Aesculapius regarded as god of healing among other things
- The originally emerged from the brazen serpent of Moses
 - Numbers 21:8-9
 - Explained by Christ John 3:14-16
 - Destroyed by Hezekiah 2 Kings 18:4
- Snake – symbol of sin
- Brass – symbol of judgment



**World Health
Organization**



IDOLS - AESCULAPIUS

- Aesculapius had been recognized as a god (the son of Apollo and the virgin Cornois).
 - It was claimed that he had the power to avert death. He was originally represented by the Anatolians as a serpent.
- The Greeks later depicted him holding Hermes' staff (the Caduceus) with the two headed snake
 - Hermes is god of commerce
 - The Caduceus was the official emblem of the city
- Health institution before the scientific medical practice begun by Hippocrates-prospered for eight centuries
- Functioning mostly by psychiatry and suggestion
 - Sleep was induced and priests suing drugs and other methods to cause patients to dream, and then interpret, etc.
 - Bathing, whispered consultation, music, plays and other techniques were employed as therapeutic aids.



PERGAMOS - CHRIST TITLE AND COMMENDATION

- ¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,
- “These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 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.
- Pergamos - combination of two words in Greek
 - Per- mixed, objectionable
 - Gamos – marriage
- the sharp two-edged sword – the word of God
- Who is Antipas?
 - Stories about him being shut up in a blazing bowl, and even at that point he was singing and praying. Antipas in the Greek means - against all



WHERE SATAN DWELLS

- Satan is real
- Character
 - Murderer John 8:44
 - Deceiver Rev. 12:9; 2 Cor. 11:13
 - Liar John 8:44
 - Sinner 1 John 3:8
- Domain
 - - Vast demonic kingdom Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:7
 - - World System 1 John 5:19
 - Locality: not omnipresent
- Satan's Titles
 - "Adversary" (Satan) 1 Tim 5:14; 1 Peter 5:8
 - "Accuser of the Brethren" Rev. 12:10
 - "god of this world"
 - "prince of the power of the air" Eph. 2:2
 - "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" Eph. 2:2
 - "the enemy that sowed tares" Matt. 13:39
 - "the wicked one" 6 times



SPIRITUAL GEOGRAPHY

- The Locality of Satan & his demons
 - Not omnipresent
 - Territorial Dan. 10, Rev. 9:14, Rev. 16:12
- The Migration
 - - from Babylon to Pergamos to Rome



HOLD FAST TO MY NAME

- “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.
- Hold fast to my name
 - Always singular
 - 3rd Commandment: Ambassadorship



CONCERN:

- 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.¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. [a]
- ¹⁶ Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

- Who is Balaam
- Who is Balak
- What is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans



THE PROPHET BALAAM

- **Gentile**
 - -"Soothsayer" (Joshua 13:22)
 - - From Mesopotamia (Deut. 23:4-5)
 - - By Euphrates, Aram (Num. 22:5, 23:7)
- **Hired by Balak King of Moab**
 - - Rebuked by his donkey (Num. 22)
 - - Refused to curse Israel (Num. 23, 24)
 - - Taught how to defeat Israel (Num. 31:16)
- **Reference to Balaam (New Testament)**
 - "Doctrine of Balaam" (Rev. 2:14)
 - - Spiritual unchastity; marriage with the world
 - "Way of Balaam" (2 Peter 2:15)
 - - Hireling = making a "market" for his gift
 - "Error of Balaam" (Jude 11)
 - - Sacrificing eternal riches for temporal gain



CLOSING PHRASE AND POST SCRIPT

- 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*.””



WHAT IS MANNA

- What is it? (Exodus 16)
- Collected daily for 6 day only
- Described poetically
 - - “food from heaven” & “bread of the mighty” (Ps. 78:24)
 - - “bread of heaven” (Ps. 105:40)
- “I Am the Bread of Life” (John 6:26-58)

- Hidden manna (John 6:33-35)
 - John 6:26-58



WHITE STONE

- And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written
- Romans give a stone with names (like a ticket)
 - For food
 - Tickets



PROPHETIC PROFILE?

- Ephesus - Apostolic Church? (**The Loveless Church**)
 - Knew the word, and on a mission but left their first love
 - Being too busy on the business of the King rather than for the King Himself
- Smyrna - Persecuted Church? (**The Persecuted Church**)
 - that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation
 - Their ambassadorship was tested



ADMONITORY (TO ALL CHURCHES)

- Application to All Churches
 - Ephesus → Devotion, not just doctrine
 - Smyrna → Endure Persecution
 - Pergamos → Purify Ambassadorship
 - Thyatra
 - Sardis
 - Philadelphia
 - Laodicia



PERSONAL (HOMILETICS)

- Personal Application
 - Ephesus → Neglected Priorities
 - Smyrna → Satanic Opposition
 - Pergamos → Spiritual Compromise
 - Thyatra
 - Sardis
 - Philadelphia
 - Laodicia



PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMER

- Application to All Churches/Person
 - Ephesus → Eat of Tree of Life
 - Smyrna → Not hurt of 2nd death
 - Pergamos → Manna, Stone, Name
 - Thyatra
 - Sardis
 - Philadelphia
 - Laodicia



WHO IS THE “OVERCOMER”

- ⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our^[a] faith. ⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4-5)
- Overcomer promises are to the people of faith



PROPHETIC

- Babylonian Legend
- Tammuz born to Nimrod and Semiramis
 - - Associated with the sun god;
 - He “dies” at the winter solstice (~ Dec. 22)
 - Is “resurrected” as the days get longer
- - Thus, celebrated by burning a “yule” log (Chaldean: infant), replaced by a trimmed tree in the next morning (Jer. 10:1-5)
- - Also mistletoe (fertility) wassail, etc. (Hislop, The Two Babylons)



BABYLONIA ROOTS

- Nimrod who founded the original Babylonian religion
- - Virtually identical to Phaethon – or Aesculapius, eventually developing into the worship of his widow Semiramis and his posthumous son
- - Semiramis & Tammuz of Babylon
- - Ashtoreth & Tammus of Phoenicia
- - Isis & Horus of Egypt
- - Aphordite & Eros of Greek
- - Venus & Cupid of Rome

- (Alexander Hislop)



THE MIGRATING PRIESTHOOD

- When Cyrus conquered Babylon, the Babylonian priesthood and their initiates fled and set up shop in Pergamos
- As the centroid of power ultimately shifted to Rome, this same religious system adopted Latin labels and formed the foundation for pagan Rome



PONTIFEX MAXIMUS

- When Cyrus conquered Babylon, they founded a new center at Pergamos and that king became Pontifex Maximus, the high priest of that pagan system (G. H. Pember)
- Subsequent transfer of the cult from Pergamos to Rome, with the appointment of successive Caesars as high priest
 - 378 AD: Damasus, the Bishop of Rome, Completed the absorption of the Babylonianism into the Roman (Histop & Pember)



HISTORY OF ROME

- 753 BC Rome founded
- 342-272 BC Subdued Italy
- 264-146 BC Conquered Carthage
- 215-146 BC Greece, Asia Minor
- 133-31 BC Spain, Gaul, Briton, Teutons
- 63 BC Conquered Judea
- It its zenith, it spanned from the Atlantic to Euphrates and from the North Sea to the African Desert: Population: 120 million.



CAESAR WORSHIP

- Augustus inaugurated emperor worship in order to give the empire a bond of common sentiment
- Although not the seat of imperial and judicial authority, Pergamos became the center of the official religion of emperor worship
 - The first temple of the cult was erected at Pergamos in 27 BC
- Under Vespasian and his successors, it became a test of one's loyalty if one would or would not offer incense to the statue of the emperor



THE RISE TO THE ZENITH

- 46-44 BC Julius Caesar
- 31BC-14 Augustus (Luke 2:1)
 - - Christ was born in his reign
- 12-37 AD Tiberius (Luke 3:1)
 - Christ was crucified in his reign
- 37-41 Caligula
 - Unsuccessful attempt at desecration of the Temple.
 - He instructed his generals to put an idol of himself in the Holy of Holy
 - He order Petronius kill for failing to obey his order (he dies two week before the order of his execution)
- 41-54 AD Claudius
- 54-68 AD Nero
 - - Blamed his burning of Rome on Christians, Executed Paul
- 68-69 AD Galba, Otho, Vitelius
- 69-79 AD Vespasian
 - - 70 AD; (Titus his son) Destroyed Jerusalem



THE RISE TO THE ZENITH

- 79-81 AD Titus
- 81-96 AD Domitian
 - - Most violent: thousands slain
 - - John banished to Patmos
- 98-117 AD Trajan
 - - Sought to uphold the laws
 - - Christianity regarded illegal
- 117-138 AD Hadrian
- 138-161 AD Antoninus Pius
 - - Bar Kochba revolt
 - - Aelia Capitolina replaces Jerusalem
- 161-180 AD Marcus Aurelius
 - - Severest since Nero Peak of Roman power



DECLINE AND FALL

- 180-192 AD Commodus (Dies in the arena)
- 192-284 AD Barrack Emperors
 - - Appointed by army, Civil War
- 193-211 AD Septimius Severus
- 218-222 AD Caracalla
 - - Tolerated Christianity
- 218-222 Elagabalus
 - - Tolerated Christianity
- 222-235 AD Alexander Severus
 - Favorable to Christianity
- 235-238 Maximius



DECLINE AND FALL

- 244-249 AD Philips
 - - Very favorable to Christianity
- 249-251 AD Decaus
 - - Persecuted Christians furiously
- 253-260 AD Valerian
 - Killed Origen
- 260-268 AD Galienus
 - Favored Christians
- 270-275 AD Aurelian
- 284-305 AD Diocletian
 - - Persecuted Christians most furiously
 - - Systematically attempted to abolish all by tortuous death



CONSTANTINE

- 312 AD Constantine set out to defeat the forces of Maxentius, his rival, for supreme power in the empire.
 - His father had prospered when he had prayed to God to the Christians, and Constantine, in his extremity, resorted to the same action
 - It is said that on the next day he saw a shining cross in the sky with an inscription above “ in hoc signo vinces: “In this sign thou shalt conquer.”
 - He defeated Maxentius at the Malvan bridge, and immediately declared his conversion to Christianity
 - Other records say it was baptize on his death bed
- 325 AD: Edict of Toleration established freedom of religion;
 - Favored Christians at court
 - Exempted Christian ministers from taxes
 - Issued a general exhortation to all his subjects to become Christians
- 330 AD: Moved the capital of the empire to Byzantium, calling it Constantinople



CONSTANTINE

- Ceased the gladiatorial fights
- Reduced the killing of unwelcome children
- Abolished crucifixion as form of execution
- Repealed the persecution edicts of Diocletian
- Assumed headship of the church (he empowered the Council of Nicaea)
- Advanced Christians to high offices
- Declared Sunday a day of worship
 - Forbid work on Sunday
 - There were groups of 3 sun worshipers at that time
 - By making Sunday (not Sabbath) the day of worship was peaceful political move
 - It was a way to unify is empire
 - Slaves had a day off (they did not have a day off)
 - Reduced slavery



MARRIAGE CONSUMMATED

- 361-363 AD Julian, “The Apostate”
 - - sought to restore paganism
- 363-364 Jovian
 - - Re-established the Christian religion
- 378-395 Theodosius
 - Made Christianity the state religion
 - Forced conversions filled the churches with unregenerate
 - Ambition to rule, heathenism, & ceremony emerge in the world church



PERVERTED MARRIAGE

- Heathenisms was Christianized
 - Pagan temples became Christian churches
 - Heathen festivals were converted into Christian ones (Christmas Day, Easter, etc)
- Pagan priest slipped into office as Christian priests
- Change was mostly classification
- What persecution didn't accomplish, marriage to world did



PROPHETIC PROFILE?

- Ephesus - Apostolic Church? (**The Loveless Church**)
 - Knew the word, and on a mission but left their first love
 - Being too busy on the business of the King rather than for the King Himself
- Smyrna - Persecuted Church? (**The Persecuted Church**)
 - that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation
 - Their ambassadorship was tested

Pergamos – The Marriage Church (**The Compromising Church**)

you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith

Compromising with the world



NEXT READ CHAPTER 2 & 3

- Outline the Letter to Thyatira
 1. Name of the Church
 2. Title of Christ Chosen
 3. Commendation
 4. Concerns
 5. Exhortation
 6. Promise to the Overcomer
 7. Close: “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”

