

Journey Through the Bible: Revelation

Session 5: The Persecuted Church: Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11)

Remember Acts 17:11

The Apocalypse (Unveiling-*SINGULAR*)

- (1:19) Christ's Instruction and Outline for the Book
- "Have Seen" Risen Christ (Ch. 1)
- **"Is" The Seven Churches** (Ch. 2-3)
- "Hereafter" The Conquest (Ch. 4-22)

Promised Blessing to the Reader (1:3)

Letters to the Churches of Asia (Ch.'s 2-3):

Application:

- Local Churches with Local Church Problems
- Personal Challenges Within the Church
- Open Letters So that Every Church Can Learn
- Prophetic Insight into the Church Age

Areas of Meaning:

- The Name of the Church
- The Title Christ Chooses for Himself
- Commendation
- Concern
- Instruction
- Promise to the Overcomer

Ephesus: "Permitted" or "Desired"

"The Busy Church"

- Christ: Holds the Stars and is Among the Lampstands
- Advocates for the Truth of Scripture
- All Doctrine/Little Personal Devotion
- Return to Your "First Love" (Works Done at First)
- Fruit from the Tree of Life

Smyrna: Myrrh

"The Persecuted Church"

- Christ: The First and the Last, The Resurrected
- "I know your affliction and poverty... You are rich."
- No Concern
- Be Faithful Until Death
- A Crown of Life

- Authority Over Life and Death

Pergamum: Name

Πέργαμος = “High” or “Elevation”
“Tower”

OT: “High Places” Alters of Idol Worship

Pergamum: History

- Evidence of an Early Bronze Age Fortress
 - Little Influence or Population Prior to Alexander (4th Century BC)
- Became part of Lysimachus’ Kingdom (301 BC)
 - Used as the Treasury and Later Capital City
 - Allied with Rome and was Willed to the Republic by King Attalus in 129 BC

Pergamum: Culture

- Hellenistic (Classical Greek) Culture
- Mythology: Birthplace of Zeus
 - Alter Built (125ft x 115ft x 50 ft High)
 - Acropolis Built to Honor Other Greek Gods
 - Athena’s Temple Included a Grand Library
 - Temple of Dionysus Included a Large Theater
 - Heavily Damaged in 600’s AD as Christian Inhabitants Repurposed the Building Materials to Fortify the City.
 - Acropolis was Excavated (Most Notably by Germany)
 - 1870’s AD
 - Musium of Reliefs and a Reconstruction was Built in Berlin. (1901-1930)
- Center of the Cult of Aesculapius
 - Demigod (Son of Apollo)
 - Patron of Physicians
- First Temple to Augustus Caesar (27 BC)
- Under Vespasian Caesar Worship Became a Test of Civic Loyalty (79 AD)

Title of Christ (v. 12):

“The One who has the sharp, double-edged sword...”

- Biblical Symbol: Word of God (Heb. 4:12)
 - Instruction and Judgement

Commendation (v. 13):
- Satan’s Throne (Seat of Power)

- “holding on to my name...”
- “did not deny your faith...”

Ἀντίπαος = “Like the Father”

- Legend: Roasted Alive During the Reign of Domitian

Satan:

- Identified by Scripture as a Being
- Intellect, Will, Strength, Personality
- Is Not Equal in Power or Wisdom to God
- Created Being of God (Rev. 12)
- Power and Influence is Finite (Rev. 20:10)
- Not Omnipresent (Dan. 10; Rev. 9:14; 16:12)
- Betrayer of God (Isaiah 14:12-15)
- Deceiver/Serpent (Rev. 12:9; 2 Cor. 11:3)
- Father of Lies/No Truth in Him (Jn. 8:44)
- Originator of Sin (1 Jn. 3:8)
- Reason for the Existence of Hell (Mt. 25:41)
- Dominion Over a Rebellious Creation (1 John 5:19)
- Adversary (1 Tim. 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:8)
- Accuser (Rev. 12:10)
- “god of this world...” (2 Cor. 4:4)
- “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2)
- “spirit within the children of disobedience”

Concern (v. 14):

- Doctrine of Balaam (Num. 22&23)
 - Spiritual Prostitution (Deny Exclusivity of God)
 - Men of Israel Tempted to Sexual Immorality
 - Gateway to Worshipping the Idols of the Amorites
 - Doctrine of Balaam: Spiritual Unchastity (Rev. 2:14)
 - Way of Balaam: Spirituality for Hire (2 Pet. 2:15)
 - Error of Balaam: Sacrificing Eternity for Now (Jude 11)
- Doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Ephesus)

- Concern (v. 15):
Nicolaitans
 - To Conquer (Have Control Over) the People
 - Spiritual and Political Power
 - Reflection of the Pharisees

Promises to the Overcomer:
Ephesus: Fruit from the Tree of Life
Smyrna: Crown of Life, Not Hurt by the 2nd Death
Pergamos: Hidden Mana, White Stone, New Name

- Prophetic Insight: The Church During the Roman Empire
- Constantine Becomes Emperor (312AD)
 - Edict of Toleration (325AD) Christianity Legal
 - Julian Restores Paganism (361-363AD)
 - Jovian Restores Christianity (363-364AD)
 - Theodosius: Christianity the State Religion (378-395AD)
 - Forced Conversions (Asamilation of Pagan Practices)
 - Pagan Temples Become Churches
 - Pagan Festivals/Worship Models Adapted
 - Pagan Priests Ordained

- For Session 6:
- Read Rev. 2:18-29
 - Read 2X (Normal/Slowly)
 - Surface Meanings
 - Symbols and Figures of Speech
 - Feelings
 - Read 1 Kings 21 (Jezebel)
 - Experiences with “Church Hurt”
 - Experiences with Church Discipline
 - Gossipers, Divisions, Personal Attacks
 - Too Aggressive or Too Lax
 - Journal Thoughts and Questions.
 - Discuss In Groups.
