

PERGAMUM



The City, the People, the Church...Their God!

Some Historical and Statistical Facts about Pergamum:

- *Pergamum...in the revised and revised standard version; Pergamus in the authorized version (translation)*
- *Historically, greatest city in Asia to the Romans and fellow travelers*
- *Capital city in the Seleucid Kingdom...had been for 400 years before the writing of Revelation...and remained the capital after Rome took possession.*
- *Geographical position made Pergamum more impressive*
 - ✓ *45 miles north of Smyrna; 75 miles north of Ephesus*
 - ✓ *Mediterranean Sea could be seen 15 miles away...city built on a hill.*
 - ✓ *The traveler was impressed with this city because it was thought to be a royal city; the home of authority.*
- *City of Culture....*
 - ✓ *Famous for its library...with 200,000 parchment rolls...pergamane...which meant parchment*
 - ✓ *Great religious center ...2 famous shrines*
 - *Zeus statue in front of the Temple of Athene (800 ft. high on the hill)*
 - *Temple of Asclepios—God of Healing Temple...like a hospital. People came from all over the world to be healed.*
 - *Possible Satan Seat title---*
 1. *Asclepios Soter...named...meant (Asclepios, the savior)*
 2. *Emblem of Asclepios was the serpent.....still used today for medical or healing places. (Royal Army Corp. has it on their caps)*
 - ✓ *Administrative Center of Asia*

“Center for Caesar Worship for the Province...therefore, many theologians believe that this is why John called it “the place of Satan’s seat”...because people were required to take an oath to the Caesar....declaring “Caesar is Lord”...and the Christian knows that only Jesus is Lord. Nobody can take His place.

Revelation 2:12-17, *“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where you live – where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city – where Satan lives. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: there are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.”*

Identification of Christ...the Revealer of all Things! Revelation 2:12

He has the Double-Edged Sword (two edged sword):

- ✓ Symbol of the word of Christ
- ✓ Assurance of Judgment on the basis of absolute truth

2 Edged Sword

Roman governors divided into 2 classes

1. *Those who had the “ius gladii” (Right of the Sword)*
2. *Those who didn’t*

Those who had the “right of the sword” had the power of life or death....on his word. A Christian would/could be executed. The sword would come down and the head of the Christian would come off.....But, Christ Jesus has the last word, “I have the double-edged sword.”

Many Christians had to die because of refusing the oath.

Power of Rome might be satanically powerful, but...The Power of Christ is more powerful!

Does Jesus know where you live?

“I know where you live”, Rev. 2:13

The Greek word used here is “Katoikein”= to have one’s permanent residence in a place.

Usually Christians were called “sojourners”...Greek, “Paroikein

These Christians had their permanent residence where Satan’s rule is strongest.

The principle of the Christian life is not escape, but conquest.

Be a witness for Christ where life has set you

“Don’t run from the sinners, but conquer them in Christ”.

If, in the early days of Christians had run away every time they were confronted with a difficult engagement, there would have been no chance of a world for Christ.

Identification of a Martyr...from Pergamum

Antipas—Nothing known except he was a faithful martyr (witness)

Christ gives him His own title (“faithful witness”), Rev. 1:5; 3:14

Remember...to those who are true to Him, He gives nothing less than His name.

Isn't it good that we are going to get to talk to Antipas....let him tell us his testimony.

What a glorious time we will have....hearing testimony of the blind man that was healed, the lame man as he was healed by Jesus, the Samaritan woman, the widow...story after story.

And John tells us, “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

Commendations:

✓ ***Held fast to my name...”stayed true to my name”***

Steadfastness in center of Satan's domain

✓ ***Loyalty to the cause of Christ.... “Did not renounce your faith in me.”***

Condemnations

✓ ***You tolerate immoral, perverted teachers (teaching of Baal)***

✓ ***You tolerate (Compromise)....***

Nicolaitans (People who want to keep one foot in the world...but, want to do it “religiously”)

Balaam—Hebrew...Bela = to conquer; ha'am = the people

Numbers 25:15.... (Seduction of the Israelite men to go into the Moabite women and commit fornication)

Numbers 31:16...Seduction caused evil influences to engulf the camp

Balaam = evil man who seduced the people to sin.”

Nicolaus...Greek, Nikan = to conquer; laos = the people

They sought to persuade Christians that there was nothing wrong with a prudent conformity to the world's standards.

The two names meant and were one and the same....

Meaning that this was a person...any person who is an evil teacher, who has won victory over the people and subjugated them to poisonous heresy.

Do you know any churches like this??

Without naming them, what do they teach and preach?

We Christians must be different!!! Most common word in the N.T. for Christians...hagios...which means “different.”

Hagios.....

✓ ***Temple is hagios because it is different than other buildings***

✓ ***Sabbath Day is hagios because it is different than other days***

- ✓ God is supremely different because He is faultless, He is totally different from man in that there is no sin.
- ✓ The Christian is hagios...because he is different than other men.

What does this tell us...that we are so different that we can't relate to those that are of the world....that we can't be a force that can reason with the world? No...we can relate because we know sin's hold and what it takes to be different....that we can't do it within ourselves. It is Christ living in us.

We are constantly leaning on the Rock that is secure....because we know that our footing is on shifting sand when we depend on only that which comes from our experiences...or our wisdom.

Exhortation and Warning...CORRECTION.

- ✓ Repent....or else

"I will go to war with them..."

Not the faithful Christians...those who teach and those who don't repent!

WITH THE SWORD OF MY MOUTH (The Word of God)

On the basis of the Word of God, I will bring judgment!

Matt. 25:31, 32

2 Peter 3:7

Heb. 9:27

Rev. 20:12

2 Peter 2:9

Romans 2:16

Overcome (Definition)

- ✓ To get the better of
- ✓ To struggle in competition...and to conquer.
- ✓ To be victorious; win

Overcomer....

1. Steadfast to the End
2. Faithful to the End
3. Does not yield
4. Realizes that this World is very Evil....He/She overcomes evil!

Who is it that overcomes the world?

1 John 5:4, 5, "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

The Risen Christ Promises Two (2) Things to The Overcomer:

1. Share the hidden Manna
2. White Stone with a New Name on It.

Hidden Manna—

Three (3) things...to remember:

1. Children of Israel, when they had no food in the desert, God gave them manna to eat. (Exodus 16:11-15)
When need of manna passed, the memory didn't.
....Pot of manna was placed in Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies...for the Lord God Jehovah. (Exodus 16:33-34; Hebrews 9:4)

6th Century, the temple which Solomon built was destroyed....There is a legend (not biblical) that states that Jeremiah hid the pot of manna somewhere on Mount Sinai. When the Messiah comes, the manna would be discovered again.

As an overcomer....you will share with God the manna that was rightfully His.

2. "Heavenly Food"...Manna

Bible called the manna:

- ✓ Grain of heaven (Psalm 78:24)
- ✓ Bread of the Angels (Psalm 78:25)

As an overcomer...you will share heavenly manna with the King.

3. Hidden Manna is the Bread of God

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." (John 6:31-35)

To the overcomer...Christ, the Bread of Life, will give Himself.

WHITE...IS HEAVEN'S COLOR

1. White Garments (3:5)
2. White Robes (7:9)
3. White Linen (19:8,14)
4. White Throne of God ((20:11)

NEW....Two Words for New

1. Neos...new at a point of time
 2. Kainos...new not only in point of time, but also in point of quality.
- Nothing like it has ever been made before.*

- ✓ New Jerusalem (3:12)
- ✓ New Song (5:9)
- ✓ New Heavens and New Earth (21:1)
- ✓ God makes all things new (21:5)

White Stone is the man himself....Promising a new self, clean, pure and glistening.

NEW NAME...NEW STATUS.....CHRIST PROMISES A NEW STATUS!

White Stone...Meaning

- ✓ *Ancient law courts...white and black stones were used for registering the verdict of juries. Black for condemnation; white for acquittal.....*
Meaning ... The Overcomer is acquitted in the sight of God because of the work of Jesus Christ.
- ✓ *In Ancient world, objects called "tessarae" were used.*
Tessarae was a little tablet made of wood, metal or stone (Stone most precious of the 3) and it had writing on it.
The possession of a tessarae conferred some kind of privilege upon a man.

Three (3) Types of Tessarae.

1. *Special clients of Roman culture who were given a tessarae whereby they receive free food, money, and other gifts.*
Meaning: The Overcomer has the right to the free gift Christ can give.

2. ***Victorious Athletes would receive a tessarae who would be able to get into all the public spectacles...free.***

Meaning: The Overcomer will receive a victorious crown in which Christ shares.

3. ***In Rome, a gladiator was the admired hero of all.***

Often a gladiator had to fight on until he was killed in combat.

If he retired at the game, being the best, special honor and privileges were given to him. A “tessarae” was given to him with the letters “SP” stamped on it.

SP...stands for “Spectatus”...meaning a man whose valor has been proved beyond a doubt.

Meaning: An Overcoming Christian is a gladiator of Christ and that, when he has proved his valor in the battle of life, he is allowed to enter into the rest which Christ gives with honor.

4. ***Common Custom of Ancient Days...was to Carry an Amulet or Charm.***

These amulets/charms were made of metal or stone. On it was a sacred name... (Sacred name to the ancient man)...because that name was some god that they knew. To know a god’s name was to have a certain power over him. Like...he would be able to summon that god when there was a need...mastery over the god and demons.

What John might be saying is: “Heathens carry amulets or charms with superstitious inscriptions on them and they think they will keep them safe.

You (as an overcomer) need nothing like that, you are safe in life or death because you know the name of the only true God....