

Lesson: PERGAMUM

Pergamum is the third church listed among the 7 churches of the Book of Revelation.

“The sumptuousness of the Attalic princes had raised Pergamum to the rank of the first city in Asia as regards splendor. It was a sort of union of a pagan cathedral city, a university town, and a royal residence, embellished during a succession of years by kings who had a passion for expenditure and ample means of gratifying it.” (Unger Bible Dict., pg.844)

We will study 10 points on this Pergamum.

1. **“The most important city of Mysia, situated 3 miles north of the river Caicus, about 15 miles from the sea.” (Westminster Dict., pg.471)**
 - “It was built on a cone-shaped hill rising 1000 feet above the surrounding valley. Its name in Greek means ‘citadel’ and is the origin of our word ‘parchment.’ (NIV, Rev.2:12)
2. **“It was once the capital of a wealthy kingdom ruled over by a dynasty of kings, several of them called Attalus.” (Westminster Dict., pg.471)**
3. **The Attalus king, Eumenes, built a famous library second only to Alexandria.**
 - “It had a vast library of 200,000 volumes, which was removed by Anthony to Egypt and presented to Cleopatria.” (Unger, pg.844)
4. **“The books were of parchment which was here first used; hence the word ‘parchment’ which is derived from the name of the town.” (ISB, pg.2322)**
 - They manufactured parchment (pargamene) at Pergamum. All the NT manuscripts were written on it.
5. **“Attalus III bequeathed his property to the Romans, but granted independence to Pergamum and the some of the surrounding country. The Romans erected the kingdom into the province of Asia (129-126BC) and made Pergamum the capital.” (Westminster, pg.471)**
6. **“There were beautiful temples to the four great gods Zeus, Dionysus, Athena and Asklepios.” (ISBE, pg.2322)**
 - “The acropolis of Pergamum crowned a steep hill that rose 1000 feet above the plain. Near the summit stood an immense altar to Zeus, erected by Eumenes II to commemorate the victory won by his father over the Gauls; and at a short distance from this altar there was on elegant temple of Athena. Outside the city was a famous shrine of Asklepios, god of medicine, to which people from all quarters flocked for healing.” (Westminster, pg.471)
 - “There was a school of medicine in connection with the temple (Asklepios).” (ISBE, pg.2322)

- “Invalids from all parts of Asia flocked, and there the god revealed to the priests and physicians by means of dreams, the remedies which were necessary to heal their maladies.” (ISBE, pg.2322)
- “A title which it bore was ‘Thrice Neokoros,’ meaning that in the city three temples had been built to the Roman emperors, in which the emperors were worshipped as gods.” (ISBE, pg.2322)
- Therefore, John refers to Pergamum as the ‘seat of Satan.’ (Rev.2:13)
- There were many Jews in the towns of Asia Minor because of their religious tolerance.

7. Although Pergamum prided itself of religious tolerance, they were hostile to Christianity.

- Antipas, the pastor of the church, was roasted to death in a pagan brazen bull during the reign of Domitian as the first martyr of Asia (NIV, Rev.2: 13).

8. The Christian church of Pergamum went into apostate reversionism because of the false teachings of Balaam and Nicolaitan (Rev.2: 14-15; Jude 11; 1 Pet.2: 15-16; 1 Tim.4: 1; Num25; 31:16).

- “*Nicolaitans* – a heretical sect within the church that had worked out a compromise with the pagan society. They apparently taught that spiritual liberty gave them sufficient leeway to practice idolatry and immorality. Tradition identified them with Nicolas, the proselyte of Antioch who was one of the first seven deacons in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 6:5), though the evidence is merely circumstantial. A similar group at Pergamum held the teaching of Balaam (vv.14-15), and some at Thyatira were followers of the woman Jezebel (v.20). From their heretical tendencies it would appear that all three groups were Nicolaitans.” (NIV, Rev.2:6)

9. “Smyrna, a rival city, was a commercial center, and as it increased in wealth, it gradually became the political center. Later, when it became the capital, Pergamum remained the religious center.” (ISBE, pg.2322)

10. Today this Turkish City is called *Bergama* and has 15 mosques. It is still the religious center of Asia.

We will study the church of Pergamum by the 5-point study outline of the 7 churches.

1. ***Saluation of Pergamum*** (Rev.2:12a) – write (grapho/ a.a.impv)
2. ***Celebrityship of Jesus*** (2:12b) – sharp two edged sword (rhomphaia/ death sword) (1:16; 2:12, 16; 6:8; 19:15,21)
3. ***Appraisal of the church*** (2:13-16)
 - Praise (2:13) – held fast the name of Jesus Christ amidst persecution
 - Problem (2:14-16) – false teachings
4. ***Phase II Victory*** (2:17a) – Faith cycle (hear/ akouo/ a.a.impv)
5. ***Phase III Reward*** (2:17b) – Two gifts (didomi/ f.a.ind): hidden manna and white stone with new name. (1 Cor.10:3-4; Psa.78:23-29; 105:40-41)

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM HAVE TO OVERCOME (nikao) IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THESE TWO REWARDS?