

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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Placerita Baptist Church
2011

Mission Statement

This study of the Book of Revelation gives special attention to the testimony it provides concerning our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10; cp. 1:2), leading us to worship and serve Him in everything.

- I. What you have seen (Rev 1).
- II. What is now (Rev 2–3)—the seven churches of Asia Minor.
 - A. Ephesus (2:1–7)
 - B. Smyrna (2:8–11)
 - C. Pergamum (2:12–17)

Pergamum could be characterized as the city of authority. From around 600 B.C., a number of kings chose this site for their royal city—partially due to an ideal position for an acropolis on a hill rising over 1,000 feet above the valley. The city served as the administrative capital of its province as well as being the chief seat of the state religion. The Romans constructed a temple to Augustus there in 29 B.C.—the first city in Asia to possess a temple dedicated to a Roman emperor. Another imperial temple was later built and dedicated to Trajan. A number of shrines co-existed in Pergamum, including a popular one for Asclepius, the god of healing.

Parchment was first manufactured at Pergamum, so the city gave its name to this writing material made from animal skins. They “pergamened” the animal skins. Pergamum housed a large library, second only to that at Alexandria, Egypt. Parchment became the main medium for documents kept in Pergamum.

1. Characterization of Christ (v. 12)
 - He wields the two-edged sword—symbolic of the authoritative Word of God (see 1:16 and 2:16; cp. Hebrews 4:12).
2. Commendation from Christ (v. 13)
 - He commends the church at Pergamum for its works in spite of its idol-filled environment.
 - He commends the church at Pergamum for remaining faithful even when Antipas was martyred in the city.
3. Complaint by Christ (vv. 14–15)
 - He complains that the church at Pergamum tolerates the false teaching of a sect of Balaam, that results in immorality (cp. 2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11).
 - He complains that the church at Pergamum tolerates the Nicolaitans (see 2:6).

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4. Counsel from Christ (v. 16a)

- He counsels the church at Pergamum to repent.

5. Caution by Christ (v. 16b)

- He warns the church at Pergamum that they are in danger of judgment.
 - ▶ See Revelation 19:15, 21.

6. Commitment of Christ (v. 17)

- The overcomers at Pergamum will partake of the hidden manna. This most likely refers to the manna placed in the pot inside the Ark of the Covenant, which may signify heavenly food in a future feast with Christ.
- The overcomers at Pergamum will receive a white stone with a new name written on it. Event organizers distributed such stones as tickets for entry. The new name of the recipient may have identified him or her with Christ and guaranteed entry to that future feast with Him.

7. Practical Implications

- Churches need to beware of incomplete resistance to Satan and his servants.
- Believers need to season steadfast ministry with doctrinal discernment.

Questions for Discussion

- What Satanic elements characterize the environment in which _____ seeks to serve Christ?
- What areas of false teaching might _____ encounter that could infect the church?

Implications Regarding Jesus Christ

- ▶ He judges by His Word.
- ▶ He knows His church's works and faithfulness.
- ▶ He knows His church's inconsistencies.
- ▶ He knows the impact of Satan on His church.
- ▶ He calls for repentance.
- ▶ He rewards faithful believers.