

Study 4: The Compromising Church Revelation 2:12-17

RECAP SESSION 2: Revelation 2:9-11

Identification of the Church (Revelation 2:9a): The passage begins with Jesus identifying the church in Smyrna. He acknowledges their works, tribulation, and poverty.

Affirmation of Spiritual Wealth (Revelation 2:9b): Despite their material poverty, Jesus affirms that the church in Smyrna is spiritually rich. Their true wealth lies in their faith and commitment to God, even in the face of persecution.

Sympathy for Tribulation and Poverty (Revelation 2:9c): Jesus acknowledges the challenges faced by the church in Smyrna, particularly their tribulation and poverty. Despite their difficult circumstances, they remain faithful.

Warning of Coming Persecution (Revelation 2:10a): Jesus forewarns the church in Smyrna about the persecution they are about to endure. He mentions that the devil will throw some of them into prison to test them, and they will face tribulation for ten days.

Encouragement to Remain Faithful unto Death (Revelation 2:10b): Despite the upcoming trials, Jesus encourages the believers in Smyrna to remain faithful unto death. The promise is that those who endure persecution and remain faithful will receive the crown of life.

Assurance of Victory Over Second Death (Revelation 2:11): The passage concludes with the promise that the one who overcomes (remains faithful) will not be harmed by the second death. This refers to spiritual victory and eternal life.

Jesus calls the city of Pergamum the place “where Satan has his throne” (Revelation 2:13). It may have been, at least at this point in history, that Pergamum was the headquarters of Satan on earth. It was the place where the evil forces of the universe were most powerful.

The amazing thing is that in the place of Satan’s throne there was a church, a body of believers in Jesus Christ. You might think that such a church in such a place would be a persecuted church, but that was not the case in Pergamum. Satan’s tactic against the church was much more effective than persecution. He was seeking to corrupt the church from the inside.

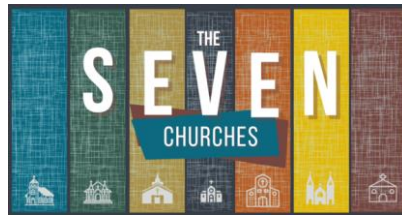
Read: Revelation 2:12-17

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Jesus finds several things to commend in this church (v.13). What are they, and why does Jesus admire these things?

- 2.) Antipas was probably a past leader in the church who had been killed right before their eyes. Do you think you would stand true to Christ if you saw someone die for their faith? Explain.

- 3.) Jesus also finds things in the church he is concerned about. The programme Christians were tolerating some in the church who were leading people away from biblical truth and into false teaching. Hopefully, some



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person or group in your church is responsible to guard the purity and accuracy of the church's teaching. How do they do this?

What part do you play in guarding the truth?

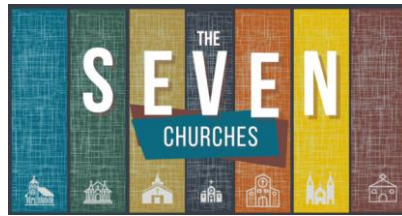
4.) The teaching of Balaam let the Old Testament people of Israel into immorality and idolatry (v.14) – sins for which God judged his people severely. In essence, Balaam taught that as long as you believe in God and go through religious motions, you can live however you want. How would you respond to someone who tried to convince you that teaching was correct?

5.) The teaching of the Nicolaitans (v.15) was probably the New Testament version of the Old Testament teaching of Balaam. They called themselves Christians but lived like the unsaved world around them and said it didn't matter to God. How does the Lord of the church respond to that twisted teaching (v.16)?

What does repentance involve for a church that tolerates false teachers and false teaching?

6.) What consequences will come if the church does not repent, and how might those consequences be revealed in a modern church?

7.) Jesus promises two things to the fearful believer: hidden manna (daily spiritual nourishment) and a white stone with a new name written on it (an entrance pass into the temple of the living God). How have you experienced those blessings in your own life recently?



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What can you learn from this letter that might be hindering you from receiving or enjoying those blessings?

8.) what would you say to a friend who believes in Jesus but is flirting with the world or tolerating things in their life that shouldn't be there?

What do you find in your own life reflected in the Church at Pergamum?

RESPOND: Sit in silence and allow the Holy Spirit to search your mind and heart. Ask him to reveal any areas where you maybe following popular opinion rather than biblical truth. Determine what changes in your thinking and action you will make with God's help.

NOW OR LATER: Pergamum was famous for two religious' shrines. The first was a massive altar to the Greek god Zeus. It stood on a hillside 800 feet above the city. From blue it looked like a giant throne. In Jesus eyes it was the throne of Satan.

The other shrine in Pergamum was the temple of Asclepius, the God of healing. Sick people travelled from all over the ancient world to be healed. The emblem of Asclepius was the serpent, and his temple was inhabited by thousands of snakes. The followers of Asclepius taught that in order to be healed, the sick person had to spend a night lying on the floor in the darkness of the temple. The touch of a snake on a person's body was believed to be a touch of the god that would bring healing.

The images of the serpent would remind Christians of Satan. It may have been that temple and its false worship that prompted Jesus to call Pergamum "the place where Satan lives" (Revelation 2:13).

here do you think the place of Satan's throne is today? And why?