

1. ch
Ephesus Metropolis - great ancient city -
one of 7 Wonders of World!
Temple of DIANA
Friendship of Nation - large wooden
Some claim Timothy the Pastor -

THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS

Rev. 2:12-17

"One Thing"
Thou hast left
thy 1st love
Remember
the love of God
in your heart
when 1st converted
Repent & do thy
1st works =

We have considered in the last Sunday evenings the voice speaking to the church by the angel and last Sunday we heard the message to the church at Smyrna. A church that lived in a fox hole of sorrows. The entire account was based upon the matter of suffering. There were troubles, tribulations, poverty, and blasphemy. But the great promise to those that would be faithful unto death, even their pastor Polycarp - there would be no second death for those faithful Christians.

Martyred by Roman
Emperor Marcus
Aurelius
Made a statement
for 26 yrs
He was one of
John's own
converts.

I have divided the verses up for this evenings consideration into five sections.

- 1 - A Sharp Sword - V. 12
- 2 - A Sober Situation - V. 13
- 3 - A Shrewd Scheme - V. 14, 15
- 4 - A Solemn Season - V. 16
- 5 - A Significant Security - V. 17

Now if you have a pencil and paper handy and will jot down this outline as we proceed along with the verses I believe that they will mean a great deal to you in reference later on.

I. A Sharp Sword - V. 12

To the angel of the church these things saith he which have a sharp sword with two edges.

You will note this is to the angel, the pastor - these things he is to write.

And this message is coming from the one with a sharp double-edged sword. The Saviour presents himself, to his church, as the one who has this sharp sword with the edges. And the office of a sword is to cut, to pierce, to sever, and kill.

This is the office of the divine word. The word is intended to save - but it is intended also to kill. Paul says the word of God is quick and powerful. It is a living instrument. Sharper than any two edged sword piercing even to asunder - the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints, and marrow. It cuts into the soul. The word penetrates the conscience. It cuts everything that is contrary to God. It cuts down the conceit, the pride, the self-sufficiency of man. It slews his false hopes.

The church needed moral surgery. And the word would do the work. The Lord identifies himself as the one who has a sharp two-edged sword.

Now this presents him as a symbol with the ability to protect them, even in the midst of persecution.

Second, it presents him as a symbol of power and of judgement. This is one reason why so many hate and avoid the truth of God - it is that it hurts them. It awakens their conscience. It destroys their false hopes. And so this passage is a sword ready for instant work - a symbol of judgement. And Christ is going to use this on his friends and on his foes.

Keep this in mind that the sword is the word of God. And that it is sharp - able to cut into the heart of a man. And that it is a two edged sword - it

cuts everyway - against our transgressions and against the sin we have, and also for healing.

II. A Sober Situation - V. 13

Now Jesus said, I know thy (works)

I know where you (dwell) and he describes this as the seat of Satan - the throne of Satan there.

I know your (faithfulness) - how you have held fast to the name of Jesus. Held fast to the doctrine of faith.

You have had reasons to compromise because Antipas was slain - and perhaps he was the pastor of the church.

All in all, this is a very sobering situation. Here is a congregation of people faithfully carrying on the ministry of Christ in a situation where Satan's seat or throne seems to be established.

Jesus knew all about their work. He knew that their surroundings were unfavorable in the location, in the (neighborhood) where they worked. Jesus took account of this. He said Satan's seat is here. Now it was not a very wholesome atmosphere. This little congregation dwelt upon a stormy sea - they were like a rose bending in the desert's hot sun.

Christians today often find themselves in a very unfavorable association with the surroundings. Sometimes they are thrown into Godless families. Where prayer is ridiculed - the Bible is made fun of. Religion is scorned. They may have to work and live by people that are profane, and godless. And their duties

and engagements may take them away from the place of worship, on the Lord's Day - and from the company of fellow believers. And it makes it hard for them to continue to be devoted unto Jesus.

But that is no excuse for unfaithfulness. Because these people dwelt where Satan's throne was. Now God meant for his people to live a certain way. And they were planted in the neighborhood where Satan exists. The thing that God looks for is evidence that you belong to him. Now you are rich if you belong to him. And you may know that God is going to honor every check when it comes to his bank - if you have been faithful unto him.

The city being the center of state religion is spoken of as being the throne and seat of power of Satan's rule. And we must remember how in a pagan society the church may be tempted to take on the fashions of the world. But the church ought to show in Christ rejecting age, that there is a true union with the Saviour. The presence of the throne of Satan and his dwelling in the earth - leave no question to us today - for this is much in evidence.

Who can doubt that Satan has a throne established in this world. { Samuel Hughes Moffitt, the dean of the graduate school in the Seminary in Seoul, Korea recently wrote an article entitled "A Lesson In World Winning". The most amazing thing in that article is what he had to say about communism evangelizing the world. He said I watched the red tide sweep across China. The Protestants had been trying to win that country but the communists took it in 30 years. Their armies, their propaganda - they practiced evangelism - he said. They would stage meetings which lasted all day. Put on plays, concerts, operas, and movies. They swept students and village people off their feet. Dr. Moffitt said even one of his students tried to convert him to communism. And then he told a story about a young freshman at a Christian college, who was in great distress. The

father and mother were earnest Christians in China. And she said this, I wonder if my family knows how hard it is for me to remain a Christian. Three of her (roommates) were members of the communist youth group. Their object was to convert every young person on that campus. 24 hours a day they argued, fought, pleaded - and put terrifying pressure on this young girl. Until at last one day on the library wall which carried the slogans this little freshman wrote "I wish to announce to my fellow students that I am no longer a Christian, I have discovered my mistake." And how I have been deceived. This brought grief to her parents - but this was something of the pressure that we read about in this church - Satan's throne being here.

A woman in Colombia once told a missionary that she had won 250 students to communism in one year. As we think about this, and we think about the sin in our own country - the looseness, the rapid increase in divorces and re-divorces. The increasing rate of desertions and pre-marital and extra-marital sex relations. The millions of pieces of obscene advertisements which are mailed to teen-agers. The growth of the clubs of non-virgins among school youth. The increasing trend of rape or kidnappings for sex purposes. The modern popular music, painting, and drama, and movies - and the press. This sort of love is glamorized and approved by modern man and modern women. The old fashioned view is just a source of frustration. And classified as physical illness. Today men are worse than beasts. Crimes of violence, and disorder on every hand. Could we but doubt what Jesus says here to the church. This place is here where Satan's seat is.

However, he goes on to say there is (much to your credit,) Thou holdest fast my name." The name of the Lord is a strong power. The righteous running into it and is set on high. Christ must increase and I must decrease. Now there are many expressions in words which Christ is presented to us - but they

being the pastor of the church. But Satan had his throne there - he was putting people to death. And some were growing tired of the struggle. And they were ready to give up.

The Devil will say to you - your duties are so tiresome. Your leisure is so important. Your rest is so needed. You have to struggle for a livelihood - you are so exhausted. And besides all of your friends will think you are strange if you give attention to the church and to religion.

Now God will not excuse you because of circumstances or some peculiar or unfavorable thing. We may have our trials and we think that we can justify our unfaithfulness. But it is a great thing to hold fast unto his name. Some people that the cluster of Greek God's in their temples made up Satan's throne here. Even they had a serpent that played a prominent part of one of the cults of the God Aesculapius. In honor of this God a live serpent was kept and fed in the temple, while the serpent worship was so marked, the characteristic of the place - we find reptile engraved on many of it's coins. Crowds would come to this temple and doubtless used by Satan - trying to counterfeit the work of the Apostles and the Gospel. And those who refuse to take part were renounced. Those who obstained in their public and private life - were slain and put to death. But the Lord commended the Christians for their loyalty and their faith.

JUST FOR FUN

The pastor suggested the church purchase a much needed chandelier, but there was opposition from the congregation. Finally, he asked one of the most vocal opponents of the idea why he opposed it.

III. A Shrewd Scheme - V. 14.

"Well," said the man, "first, no one can spell it, so how can we order it. Second, no one can play it if we get it. And, third, what we really need is more light."

Now Jesus said he had a

Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

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III. A Shrewd Scheme - V. 14, 15

Now Jesus said he had a few things against them. First, the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

This was the wealthiest city of its time - famous with its magnificent library of many thousands of volumes. In a midst of a fertile land - these people lived in wealth and luxury. And it was a sensual society filled with vice. And was most intolèrant toward the Christian teachings and the Christian testimony. We see the martyr of Antipas who lost his life - and it is indicated here that he lost it because of his faith.

The condition of society must have been corrupt. Christianity was having a hard time getting a foot hold. It was in great danger. The general order of things in society. Men were being influenced by what they saw and what was taught. They wanted polish and refinement and celebrate at the festivals - as people are always weak and ambitious - and wanted to be a part of society. And men today even copy the way and the thinking of the world. And this was the danger in this church. The members were being challenged to compromise and to live the life after the fashion of that day.

Now Jesus has mentioned what was a credit to them. And now our Saviour proceeds to note some things of a different character. And he expresses it a few things. The object here is to try to win the offenders back to a proper way of life. To a spiritual faithfulness. He seeks to reclaim.

First, the doctrine of Balaam. Now this is the man who taught Balak to cause a stumbling block to the children of Israel. He taught them to sacrifice to idols. And to eat that food - that meat - and he taught them to commit fornication.

Now the minister here in charge of this church is being held responsible, for these people who were tolerated in the church because they were his oversight. This is part of the grave responsibility which a minister has. Somehow to permit that which is against God. There must be action - there must be admonition - and of course the angel had been too easy with dealing with certain members in the flock.

Now these people referred to called themselves Christians and they claimed to be very enlightened, liberal, and proper Christians. But they were really followers of Balaam's doctrine. Balaam was a prophet of God - he really spoke the truth of God. But he turned out to be a very bad man. And he came to a very sorry end.

possess honor and reward. He loved the wages of unrighteousness. With God's word in his mouth, the Devil's covetousness was in his heart. And so the king offered him riches and honor and royal favor. And this is something hard to turn down. A splendid chance of wealth and the world. And so, if Balaam said - if the king were to give me a house full of Gold - I must stick to the word of God. But at last we find him advising that the lude women would seduce the men of Israel and get them to participate in the feast of the pagan worship - that was the thing that he needed to do.

Now some of the members in the church here were holding to this idea. Now they did not really intend to renounce their profession - they wanted to stay as good members in good standing in the church. Why not be friends with the best people in the community. But we can yield a little bit here and a little bit there - and we can profit by that. There was no harm in accepting invitations to entertainments in the heathen neighborhoods or partaking in banquets or things that were dedicated to heathen gods. Or going to their temples and indulging with them in their customs in the community. Why this would please the heathen and secure their favor.

Satan had tried them with violence and had tried persecution on them and now he comes to try them with social seductions - flattering them with the friendship of the world. Graffifying pleasures.

And telling them that they could be Christians even though they were a part of the heathen worship. So they walked after the flesh and the lust of uncleanness. Their eyes were full of adultery, unstable souls. Peter calls them wells without water. Clouds carried by the wind. And Jude speaks of these same people as giving themselves over to the uncleanness of the heathen - filthy dreamers. And all spiritual authority - and learning greedily after the eyes of Balaam. They are trees twice dead - raising waves of the seas.

Wandering stars.

Now the word of God pronounces awful judgement against these people. And they are destroying more than their souls. These members have brought blame and a curse upon the church. And with all its faithfulness - all those who held fast to Christ - they tried to remain in it. And this is the modern trend today.

Second, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans - V. 15. I hate. They had grown up with this doctrine. And they were tolerating this. We do not really have complete information on this group of people but we understand that they were corrupt and they taught that it did not matter much what was done with the body because you lived in it such a short time. They gave a free license to all sorts of impurities. Adultery, fornication, and every sort of fleshly indulgence. They were free from condemnation - they said that a man ought to have several wives as part of his system of living. And he could eat things offered to idols. And there was nothing wrong in this.

The doctrine here referred to says - it doesn't make any difference what you do. If you are a Christian - it is alright - you can do anything.

There was no problem in fixing the names of the leaders in those who were following heresay. Because they followed them and become partakers of other men's sins. Let us keep in mind that Balaam doctrine is that which is a stumbling block and leads to unholy alliances and Numbers 25:1-9. And it is that of greed. Let us also remember also the doctrine of Nicolas is that which would have you conform to the community customs. Thereby compromise the doctrines of the church. But God wants today is just such men of God, who for the truth sakes, are willing to stand if need be all in this world. That's why I have

said this is a shrewd scheme. That the Saviour speaks about in V. 14 and 15.

IV. A Solemn Season - V. 16

Here the spirit gives a signal that there will be a solemn season granted to this church and to these Christians. For he says, repent or else I will come unto you quickly. And the word quickly here denotes that there is going to be allimit - a season that is here set apart for repentance. And they had better seriously seek these solutions that have been suggested - and this is repentance. Because the time is going to be limited.

Now if they fail to accept this call - judgement is going to follow with a sword. It is impossible for a man to serve two masters. He can not hold fast to the faith in Christ - he must let go of the world. He must let go of the unclean things in his life. What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness. Communion hath light with darkness. One thing or the other must go. Come out from among them and be accepted - saith the Lord. Here is a call to repentance. Our Lord will make war against them with the sword. Now just what action he will take is not indicated but he leaves no doubt as to the fact that he will be able to handle the situation that has developed. They are to practice self judgement and if they do not, then he is going to immediately going to deal with this assembly of people and visit it with judgement. I will make war against them.

V. A Significant Security - V. 17

They are invited to hear what the spirit has to say to them and he proceeds to tell them about a promise. And the securities that will be there and are strong. The first is the hidden manna and the second is the white stone.

Now he says those that are faithful and the ones that will overcome - I will give to eat of the hidden manna. This is the thing that furnished the need for Israel all during their wildering wanderings.

Now the Gospel needs a man's ear. And this, our Saviour, says there is going to be victory to those who overcome and they will have a banquet, and will eat of this hidden manna. Now this is in contrast to those who partake of idol meats. And eat with the heathen in their temples. Christ will supply a far more precious bread. If they will reject the world's supplies.

This is food that sustained Israel for about 40 years in the barren wilderness and people called it manna. What is it. It was heavenly bread - especially provided of God. It fell in little white flakes every morning - for the day's supply. Accept on the Sabbath - a double portion fell on the morning preceeding. And the people fed upon this during the long pilgrimage until they reached the land of Canaan where they had fruits and vegetables to eat. John 6 - our Saviour speaks of himself as the true manna - the bread of God is he which came down from Heaven and gave light to the world. I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. Eat of this bread - and you shall live forever. And the bread that I shall give is my bread which I will give for the life of the world. He that eateth of this bread shall live forever.

When the tabernacle was built - the command was given to take of the daily manna and put some of it in a (golden pot) and lay it up before the Lord in the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies. A veil hung between this and the outer part of the sanctuary and it was a hidden chamber - concealed. And a sample of the manna was there hidden in the golden pot. And in the enclosed ark and in the enclosed holy of holies. It was the hidden manna.

This helps us to see that here is the type of Christ - those who ate the manna in the wilderness did not escape death. But the believer in Jesus Christ who eats the hidden manna shall never die.

2 Another thing about this significant security is the white stone mentioned here. No one knows but he that receives it. The same person is given both - the hidden manna and the stone. Whose inscription is hidden to all but the recipient. These two promises. Now Satan's throne was there and dominated the city government, in that city, and it was a test of loyalty to the government. The same thing was true when Paul wrote his letter to the Greek city of Corinth. That a Christian might not eat at both the Lord's table and the Devil's table. Nor drink of both the Lord's cup and the cup of the Devil. Here is the demand that there be no compromise and the word here is going to give a new meaning. This seems to say that there is going to be a happy election. To the society in Heaven, and you at last will have won the conflict. You will not be black-balled. But you are going to receive the mark of honorable distinction. The white stone here was a precious sign and significant factor because it had a great meaning to these people. It was used for three or four purposes in that day and time.

First, to pronounce acquitted - one accused and tried. That is a man who had been accused was now set free and the thing that had been placed against him had now been removed. And he was given a white stone - and this would show as evidence.

Second, the evidence of the holder was made a free man in a free city state. The white stone would indicate that this man had been freed from slavery. And he carried this as a mark and indication of his citizenship.