

LETTER TO PERGAMOS

Rev. 2:12-17

I Thess. 2:17-18 "But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."

HEB. 10:23 "LET US HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH WITHOUT WAVERING, (FOR HE IS FAITHFUL

Phil. 4:22 "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."

Num. 25: 1-2 "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods."

Num. 31:8 & 16 "Balaam also the son of Besor they slew with the sword" "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord."

Jude 11 "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."

John. 7:12 "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

Heb. 9:3-4 "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;"

I Cor. 5:7 "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:"

Rev. 21:4-5 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

REV. 22:4 AND THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE AND HIS NAME SHALL BE IN THEIR FOREHEADS'

I These. 2:19-21 "But we, brethren, being taken from
you for a short time in presence, not in heart,
endeavored to see you personally to see your face
with great desire. Wherefore we would have come unto
you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered
us."

Phil. 2:25 "All the saints salute you, chiefly they
that are of Caesar's household."

Rom. 25:1-2 "And I have abode in Ephesus, and the
people began to covet knowledge with the daughters
of Hymen, and they called the people and the sac-
rifice of their gods; and the people did eat, and
drank down to their gods."

Num. 25:8-10 "Balaam also the son of Beor they slew
with the sword." "Behold, these caused the children
of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit
excess against the Lord in the matter of Peor,
and there was a plague among the congregation of
the Lord."

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of Cain, and have proceeded after the error of Balaam
son of Beor, and have perished in the gathering of
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stand before their enemies, but turned their backs
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troy the accursed from among you."

Exo. 24:3-4 "And after the second veil, the tabernacle
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round about with gold, wherein was the golden
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the tables of the covenant;"

1 Cor. 5:7 "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that
ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For
even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;"

Rev. 14:8 "And God shall wipe away all tears from
their eyes; and there shall be no more death,
neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be
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away. And he that saith upon the throne said,
Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me,
Write: for these words are true and faithful."

Pergamum: Satan's Throne
Re.2:12:17

Intro. Pergamum, according to Greek legend was built by a son of Hercules. Situated upon a conical hill 1000 ft. high (x, viii, iv, 2). Upon the peak of this hill, one would find the Nicephorum with seven temples (xiv, 2; xvii, 1).

Most provinces had fallen to Rome through military conquest but not Pergamum. Willed to Rome by Athalus III in 133, it then became the "seat of government in Asia. (iii, v). Capitol was later transferred to Ephesus.

Library was second largest in the world with 200,000 volumes, until it was given to Cleopatra by Mark Anthony (c. 25 or 30 B.C.). (viii, 2). Interesting story of rivalry between Eumenes and Ptolemy (x, 2; viii, 3; xvi, 1). The story of "Parchment."

Pergamum was not a commercial but a religious and political center.

The frightening picture of Jesus presented to this church (Re.2:12). Represents (1) Power to punish (2:16, De.32:40-41) (2) Power of His word (Ep.6:17, He.4:12) which cuts with two-edged results (Ac.2:37, 7:54) producing salvation or damnation (Ep.1:13, He.4:2, II Th.1:7-9).

I. Satan's Throne - Evil Environment

A. His throne (seat of his diabolical influence and power) was here at Pergamum)

1. It may come as a surprise to some to learn that he is not in hell but upon earth. (i, 1; viii, 4) (Jb.1:7, II Co.4:4, Ep.2:2, 6:12, Re.12:9)

2. Satan is a real person, having great power, ever at work to crush the good. (I Th.2:18, I Pe.5:8, II Co.2:11, Mt.13:24-25, 39, II Th.2:9). (cf. I Jn.4:4)

B. What, specifically, did Christ refer to as Satan's Throne at Pergamum? There are several possibilities (cf. list in Criswell p. 112-114 and Barclay p. 108-111 and others noted in their respective places).

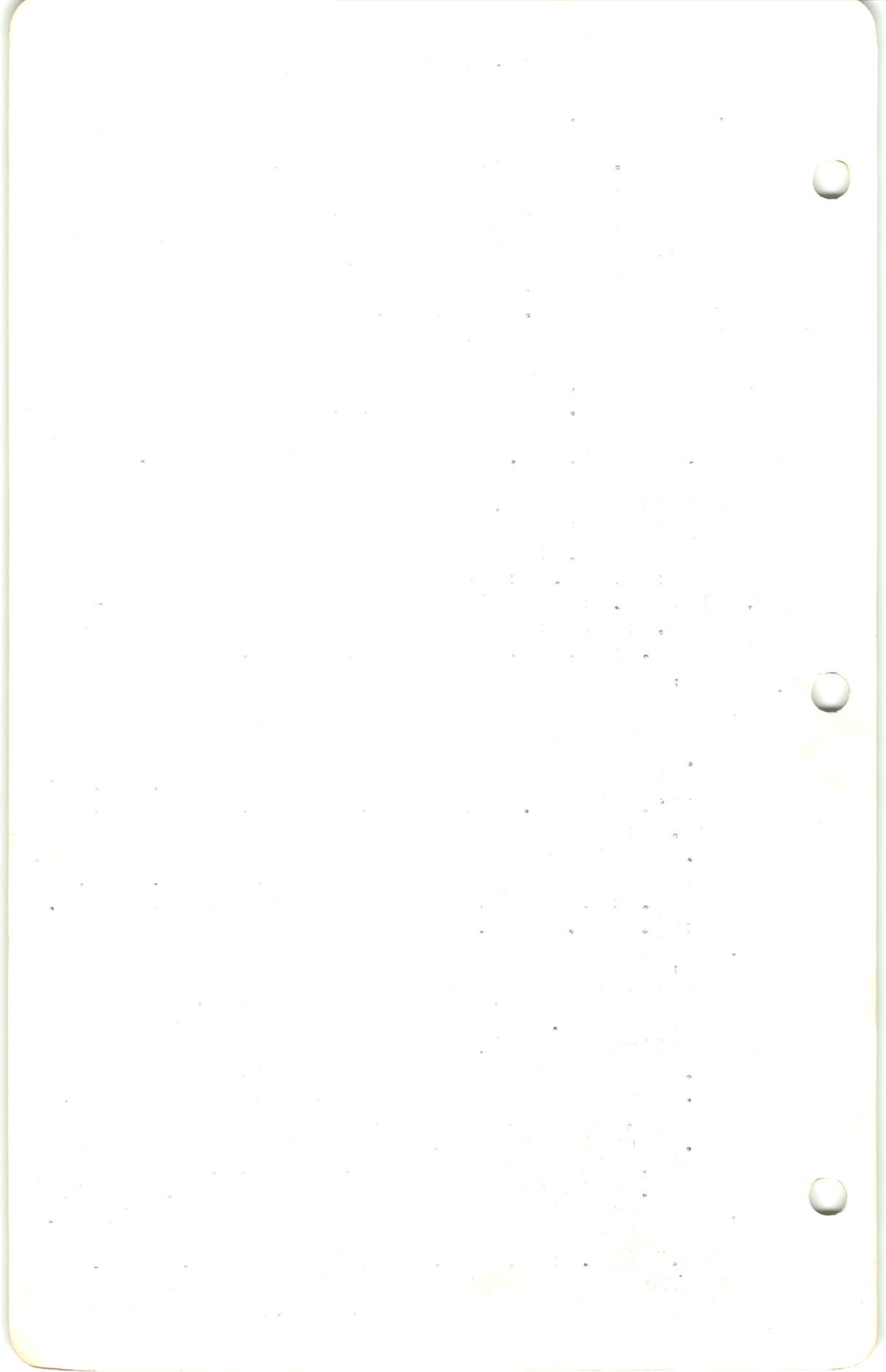
1. The altar and temple of Zeus. (vi, 2)

2. The temple of Asclepeus. Medical college, Galen, snakes, Lourdes. (iii, 2)

3. Augustus temple. Annual ritual, certificate, diocesan structure. (29 B.C.) Caesar is Lord. This is probably what is meant. (xvii, 2)

C. Possibilities of an evil environment (xi, 2).

"The darker the night, the brighter the stars shine." (Ph.2:15, Tit.1:12, Jn.1:5, Mt.5:14). We Can live a true Christian life anywhere; no matter what the environment may be. (ex., Joseph in



Potiphar's house, Daniel in the palace of a heathen ruler, Saint's in Caesars household (Ph.4:22). Let us not lament the darkness, let us spread a little light.

II. Faithfulness of the Pergamenes.

A. "Hold fast my name" means to remain closely united to Him. (Ga.3:26-27). This is what the false disciples were not doing (Co.1:23, 2:19). It means to hold fast the inspired teachings (II Th.2:15) and keeping faith with one's initial confession (He.4:14).

B. Denial of the faith. Faith is that total body of doctrine given to us by Jesus Christ (Ga.1:23, 3:23, 25, Ep.4:5). How may we deny? (viii, 4)

1. By keeping quiet about it.

2. By exchanging it for another gospel and another savior.

3. By forsaking it, by quitting it.

C. Antipas, "my witness, my faithful.

1. Of this man, little is known. There is an old tradition that he was roasted alive in a brazen bull.

2. Accepted death rather than deny the faith (Illus. Theodore R. Harris, B 29 pilot Ford p. 52)

3. Martyr: meaning. (Pack p. 38, Creswell p.114, Barclay p. 114). Thayer: "Witness", can mean "(so in N.T.), He knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration." (cf. I Ti.6:1b, Re.6:9, 12:10, 17). We have the "testimony" of Jesus in us (Ro.8:16).

4. Illus: "The Whole World is against you" Ford p. 53)

5. Refused to deny the faith even in the face of persecution (FWCC p. 141-142) (Poem) Faith which will allow us to speak the word of God without fear. (Ph.1:14, Re.21:8). (cf. also II Ti.2:12, He.10:23, Re.2:10, Mt.16:24-25)

III. Infiltration - Balaam and Nicolaitanes.

A. The shocking surprise: "Thus you are having - you" (Re.2:15) (Newell p. 50) "They" the church as a whole remained faithful and true but they had permitted some to speak false theories and grossly false at that (cf. Tit.1:10-11) for this they received divine disapprobation.

B. "The doctrine of Balaam." (Nu.22+24, 25:1-2, 31:8, 16)

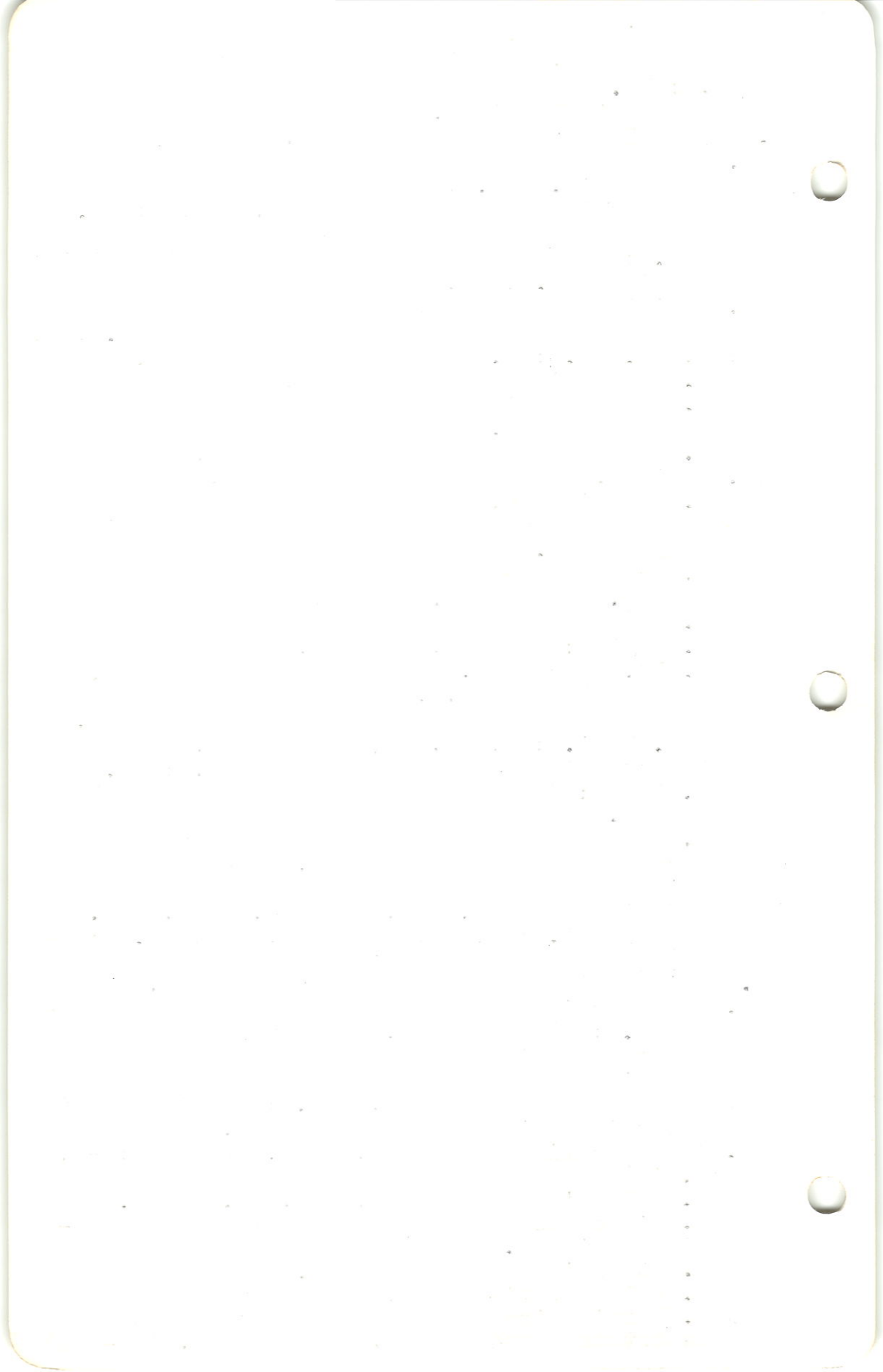
1. Balaam's advice (Jos. Ant. Bk. 4, Ch. 6)

2. Viewed as the father of religious syncretism (Caird p. 38)

3. Stumbling block (McCan p. 34-35)

4. Balaam (Criswell p. 115)

5. Fornication as a way of life: Quotes from Demosthenes and Cicero. (Criswell p. 115-116)



6. Things offered to idols (I Co.10:20-33, Ac.15:29) Signifies a formal act of worship before the emperor's shrine for the sake of one's skin. (Mc Dowell p. 43-45)

C. The Nicolaitanes.

1. Followers of Nicolaus of Antioch? (Ac.6:5) Cf. Irenaeus "Against Her." 26:3, p. 352 and Eusebius "Hist. Ecc." 29:1-4 p. 161.

2. Beginning of clerisy? (Newell p. 50-51, Criswell p. 131-139)

a. Nike = a winged victory. Laos = people hence oppressors and conquerors of the people.

b. Per = something objectionable. Gamos means marriage. (Ja.4:4)

c. Priesthood of all believers (Ex.19:5-6, I Pe.2:5, He.10:19-22). The veil is rent from top to bottom and any man can go to God anywhere. (He.4:16) (Mt.20:25-26, I Pe.5:3, II Co.1:24)

3. Probably a group led by a prophet called Balaam, who advocated a watered-down Christianity (Pack p. 38)

a. Encouraged a cautious policy of compromise. The man who is not prepared to be different should not start the Christian way at all. (Barclay p. 114)

b. Long argument for the Nicolaitane side (Caird, p. 39-41) representing a laxity toward paganism.

D. Water in the Boat. When Satan failed in his frontal assault, he tried the old ruse of boring from within. (Mc Dowell p. 48). A negative response to Satan is also necessary (Ford p. 53-55) (Ro.12:2, Ga.6:14, Ja.4:4)

IV. Repent - A call to correct the deficiencies.

A. Contrast the attitude of these people at Pergamos with those at Ephesus. (Re.2:2, 6)

1. Narrow passage between the legalism of Ephesus and the laxity of Pergamum (McCan p.34.

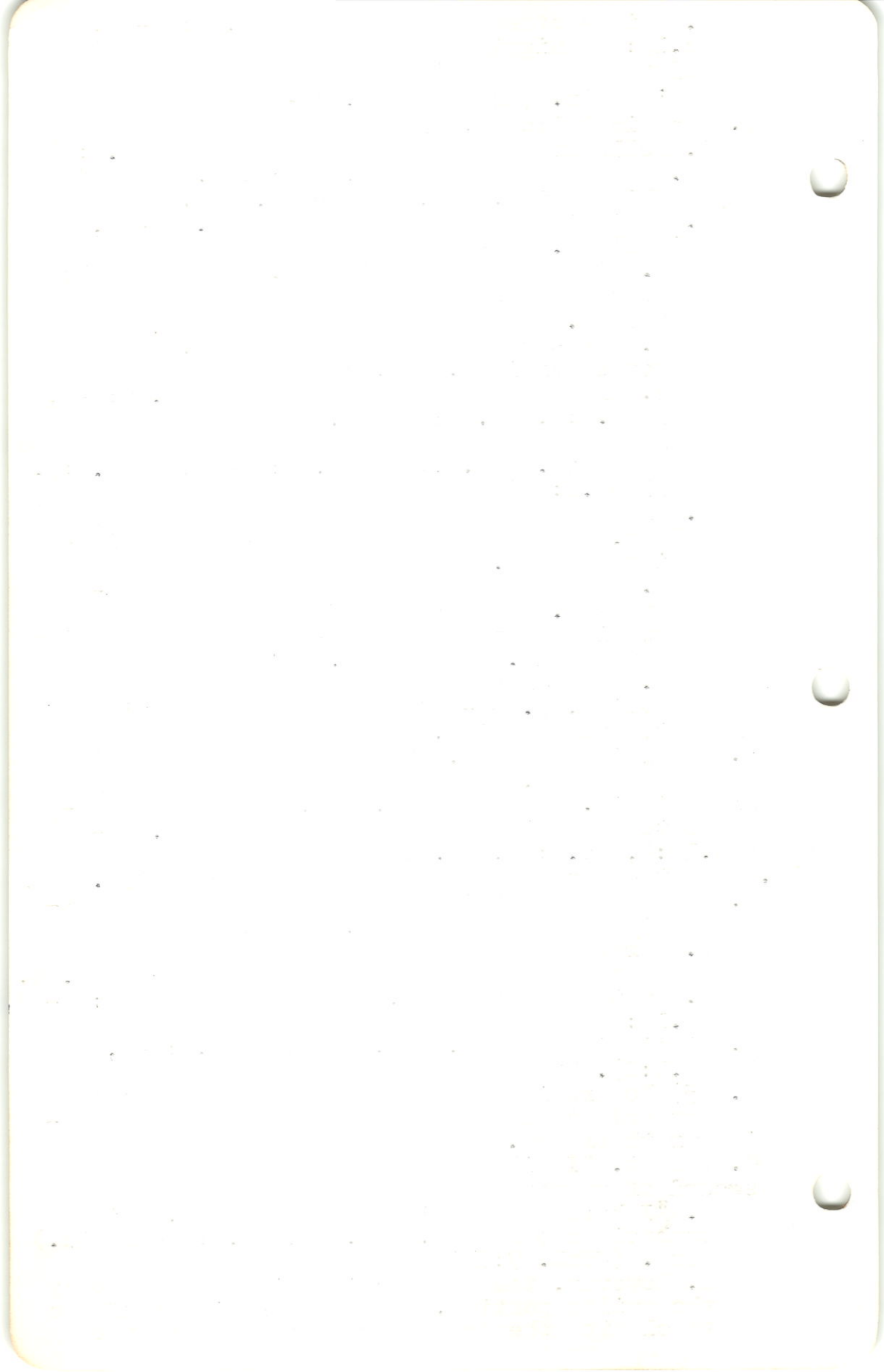
2. Must hate evil (Ps.97:10, 119:104, 139:21-22, Ro.12:9)

B. Discipline needed. (Ro.16:17, I Co.5:5-6, II Th.3:6). The purpose is always to save (McCan p. 35) Toleration of sin is false kindness; it serves only to expose the errorist to the avenging wrath of God.

C. Threat. "I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth"

1. "I have a few things against thee" This emphasizes our duty. (Ga.6:1, Ja.5:20-21 etc.) Comp. (Josh. 7:12)

2. However, the destruction will be upon only the guilty parties. Here is a reminder of the angel with the drawn sword standing in the



way before Balaam. (Pr.27:6)

3. What would happen today if Christ came upon this church with drawn sword? How many would he cut off? Would you be among those to suffer?

V. Promise To The Conquerors

A. Hidden manna. (Ex.16:32, 34, He.9:4). (cf.

I Pe.1:8, Jn.6:32-35)

1. Rabbinic legend (Caird p. 42, Barclay p. 117, Hastings p. 100). Suggests therefore, participation in the banquet of the Messianic kingdom.

2. For tables and social glee missed here, there is a better one in heaven. "You may not have idol meats but I will give bread of heaven." (Pack p. 39, Criswell p. 118).

B. White Stone (Pack p. 39, 6 explanations)

1. Tessera hospitalis (Hastings p. 105-6)

2. Happy day (Barclay p. 120, Criswell p. 119)

3. Acquittal (Barclay p. 118, Ford p. 57).

Illus: Little boy who said "Preacher, don't you remember me? You wiped the mud off me one day."

C. New Name

1. A custom both among Hebrews and heathen (Barclay p. 122). Abram, Jacob, Octavian, Christian. It signifies a new relationship; a new life.

2. Intimacy...no one else knows (Newell p. 53) (Pr.14:10)

Conclusion. Even in an evil environment, (in the world but not of the world) we can be faithful. Things we miss - wild joys of pagan feasts and sensual indulgence are nothing to the pleasures waiting. Let us not be overcome by worldliness but rather overcome the world. Then some day we shall taste the food of angels and be introduced to the still secret world where our new name waits.

Bib. W.A. Criswell "Ex. Ser. on Rev." Vol.II p.111-139

Wm. Barclay "The Rev. of Jn." Vol. I p. 105-123

Ed. A. McDowell "The Mean. & Mes. of Rev." p.43-48

W. Hershel Ford "The 7 Ch. of Rev." p. 49-58

Frank Pack "Liv. Wd. Rev." Vol. I p.37-39

R.L. McCan "A Vis. of Vic." p. 33-36

E. Clevenger "FWCC Lec. 1963" pp. 134-135

Wm. R. Newell "Revelation" pp. 47-53

G.B. Caird "Rev. of St. Jn. The D." pp. 36-42

Irenaeus "Against Her." p. 352

Eusebius "Hist. Ecc." p. 161

Josephus "Antiquities" p. 122-128

Finegan "LFAP" pp. 265-266, 313-316

Ency. Britt. Art."Pergamos" Vol. 17 p. 507

Pul. Comm Revelation p. 61-62

Others: Bible dictionaries on Pergamum, Balaam, Nicolaitanes; Commentaries en loco; Thayer; Old

Sermon taken from F.L. Cox "Acc. To Jn.", L.G.
Thomas "Letters to 7 Ch.," F.L. Cox "Rev. in 26
Lessons"

Pergamum

Demosthenes: "We have prostitutes for the sake of pleasure. We have concubines for the sake of daily cohabitation. We have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately and of having a faithful guardian of our household affairs."

Cicero: "If there is anyone who thinks that young men should be absolutely forbidden to love a prostitute, he is extremely severe. He is at variance not only with the license of what our age allows, but also with the customs and concessions of our ancestors. When, indeed, was this not done? When did anyone ever find fault with it? When was such promiscuousness ever denied? When was it that this which is now lawful was not lawful?"

NED 4-9-67 Reel #31

Near ancient troy, 60 mi. north of Smyrna, 15 mi. from the sea. The first capitol of Asia (later Augustus transferred it to Ephesus.) Library of 200,000 rolls was 2nd largest in world until Antony gave it to Cleopatra. (cir. 25 or 30 B.C.) Parchment gets its name from Pergamos - invented there. A stronghold of anti-Christian idolatry-bearing on our lesson. The origin of this church probably same as Smyrna (Acts 19:10).

I Salvation:

A. To the "Angel." Dictated by Christ, who is described as:

B. "He which hath the sharp sword ^{RENDER} with two edges."

(1) Rev. 1:16, 2:16, Deut. 32:40-41 - absolute authority, power to punish. It will be the word of his mouth "depart". (2) Powerful word, authority etc: Eph. 6:17, Heb. 4:12 (3) It cuts with various results: Acts 2:37, 7:54 (4) Salvation or damnation Eph. 1:13, Heb. 4:2, II Thess. 1:7-9.

II Approval: "I know" (Jno. 2:25, Acts 1:24b) ^{THOU LORD WHICH KNOWEST THE HEARTS OF ALL MEN}
Perfect knowledge of church and wicked surroundings as well: knew strengths and weaknesses, difficulties and temptations which surround.

A. Evil environment: Face to face with Satan.

A real personality fighting mans spiritual welfare. Thus power or influence hindering church (cf I Thess. 2:17-18) Sows tares (Matt. 13:24-30), Steals away word (Lk. 8:12); Transforms into an angel of light (II Cor. 11:13-15).

B. Throne: Probably hearts of men. The "throne" or center of idolatry, esp. emperor worship.

1. Temple to Augustus - 29 B.C. Diefied.

2. Temple of Aesculapius the god of healing priests - serpent.

3. Magnificent altar of Zeus & Temple.

C. Although environment was evil, were loyal to the name of Christ. (I Tim. 6:12) He cannot please the Lord who does not remain stead-fast.

(I Cor. 15:58, 16:13) ^{WATCH YE, STAND FAST IN THE FAITH, QUIT YE LIKE MEN, BE STRONG.}

D. Persecution had not caused them to deny: (Eph. 4:5, Jude 3, II Tim. 2:12, Tit. 1:16, Heb. 10:23 cf. I Pet. 4:12-19) Antipas - an example of their loyalty who gave up life rather than submit to worship of Satan. (cf Rev. 2:10, Matt. 16:24-26) (cf Acts 7:57-58) We can live the true life in any locality even where "Satans' throne is." In the house of Potiphar Joshep kept himself pure. While in the power of a heathren ruler, Daniel did not defile himself. There were saints in Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22)

near ancient city, 50 mi. north of Bayona, 15
mi. from sea. The first capital of Asia (1500
A.D.) transferred to Bayona. Library of 500
000 rolls was 2nd largest in world until 1800
gave it to Constantinople. (1500-1800) Trans-
ferred to Constantinople - transferred there.
Household of early-Christianity-bearing or
our house. The origin of this church probably same
as Bayona (1500-1800).

I. Bayona:
a. To the "Angel." Directed by Christ, who is
described as:
b. "The which hath the sharp sword with two edges."
(1) Rev. 1:16, 2:16, Deut. 32:41 - absolute
authority, power to punish. It will be the sword
of his mouth "angel." (2) "angel" word. Author-
ity etc: Rev. 1:16, Heb. 1:12 (3) It cuts with
various results: Acts 2:27, 7:34 (4) Salvation
or damnation Rev. 1:16, Heb. 1:12, 1:13, 1:14
II. Bayona: "Angel." (1) "Angel" (2) "Angel"
perfect knowledge of church and listed surroundings
as well: knew sciences and sciences, disciplines
and relations with nature.
A. First environment: Place to live with nature.
A. 2nd environment: Light and spiritual well-
fare. Thus power of influence in church
(1) I Thess. 2:13-15 (2) 1 Cor. 13:24-30
angel's way word (1) 1 Cor. 13:12-15
angel of light (1) 1 Cor. 13:12-15
A. 3rd: "angel" means of man. The "angel"
or center of identity, etc. spiritual world.
1. Temple to Bayona - 2nd A.C. 1500-1800.
2. Temple of knowledge the lot of living
priests - angel.
3. Mechanism of 1500-1800 temple.
B. Although environment was evil, yet loyal to
the name of Christ. (1) 1 Cor. 13:12-15
please the Lord who does not remain after death.
(1) 1 Cor. 13:12-15
C. Association has not caused them to deny (1) 1
1 Cor. 13:12-15 (2) 1 Cor. 13:12-15
of 1 Cor. 13:12-15 "angel" - an example of their
loyalty who have up this temple. (1) 1 Cor. 13:12-15
relationship of Bayona. (1) Rev. 2:10, 13:12-15
(1) Acts 7:57-59 We can live the true life in
any locality even where "angel" "angel" is in
the house of Lucifer John 8:12-13. Bayona
while in the power of a Lucifer John 8:12-13. Bayona
did not believe himself. There were saints in
Caesar's household (1) 1 Cor. 13:12-15

III Reproof: (vs. 14-15)

A. Evil doctrine taught: (1) Balaam (Num. 25:1-2, 31:8, 16) (II Pet. 2:15, Jude 11) (2) Nicolaitans: both about same, namely, that gospel of grace lifts men above moral law, conferring license to bow before idols and commit sensuous sins.

AS FREE, AND
NOT USING YOUR
LIBERTY AS

(I Pet. 2:16). Contrast Ephesus (Rev. 2:6)

CLONE FOR
MAI. BUT AS
THE SEARINGS
OF GOD

B. A Minority guilty but the church was held responsible. "Against thee" - "Them". (Josh. 7:12). Fellowship makes guilty (II Jno. 9-10, I Cor. 5:6). Laxity and false kindness toward the erring. Compare Ephesus (Rev. 2:2)

IV Admonition (vs. 16) Religious error and attitude of compromise calls forth stern admonition to drastic action. They were given choice of two courses.

A. "Repent". R. is a change of mind with reference to sin produced by godly sorrow and resulting in amended life. (II Cor. 7:10, Matt. 3:8) Specif. persuade those in error, or drive them out of fellowship. Instead of being lax with the errorists, they must exercise discipline. (I Cor. 5:4-7, 11; II Thess. 3:6)

B. Allow the errorists to be exposed to the wrath of God. (Heb. 10:31). Laxity or the compromising attitude exposes sinners to an alternative more serious than discipline. The toleration of sin is false kindness. To condone error is to encourage the sinner and speed him to perdition. An angel of divine wrath with drawn sword - Num. 31:8)

V Promise: (v. 17) To the one who hears and overcomes a threefold promise is made. Not to ones overcome, but who do overcome - by fervent prayer, diligent service, daily Bible study, constant attendance - always looking to Jesus, imitating his example.

A. "Hidden manna" (Ex. 16:32-34, Heb. 9:4). Bread of life from heaven able to sustain the soul - hidden in the sense that it is now in heaven (I Pet. 1:8) (cf. Jno. 6:32-35)

B. "A white stone" Not black stone of condemnation but white stone of acquittal (justification, innocence, victory) admitting them to the secret places of the Most High.

C. "A new name" A new name indicates advancement in life: v 12. Abram, Abraham; Jacob, Israel. A new and more intimate relationship (II Cor. 5:17, Rev. 3:12, 22:4, 21:4-5). Former things are gone all is new.

D. To walk the lovely and happy streets of the holy city - the new Jerusalem we must become fit in these few moments of earth-life. We must come into the new life that is ever new (II Cor. 5:17, Rom. 6:3-4, - Do not soil the new white garments.

Wed. 4-9-67 Reel # 31