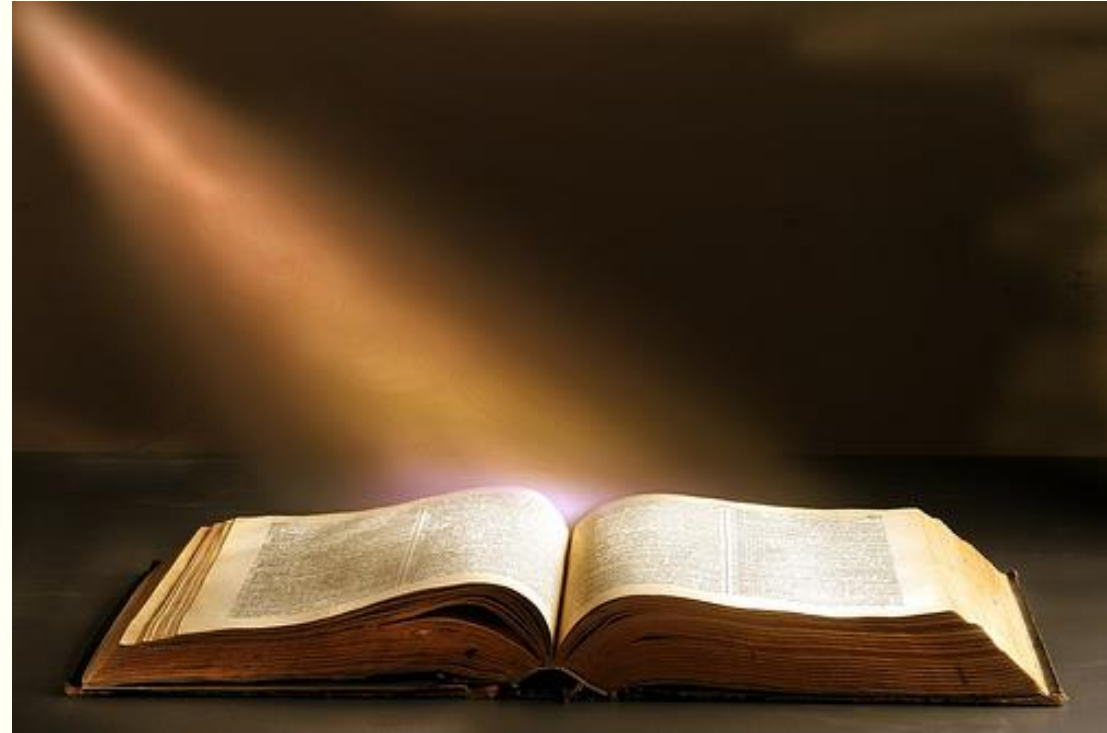


Exploring the Book of Revelation: Verse by Verse

Chapter 2

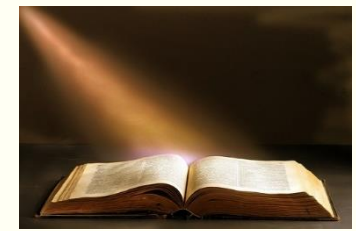




CHAPTER 2

Letters to the Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos and Thyatira churches

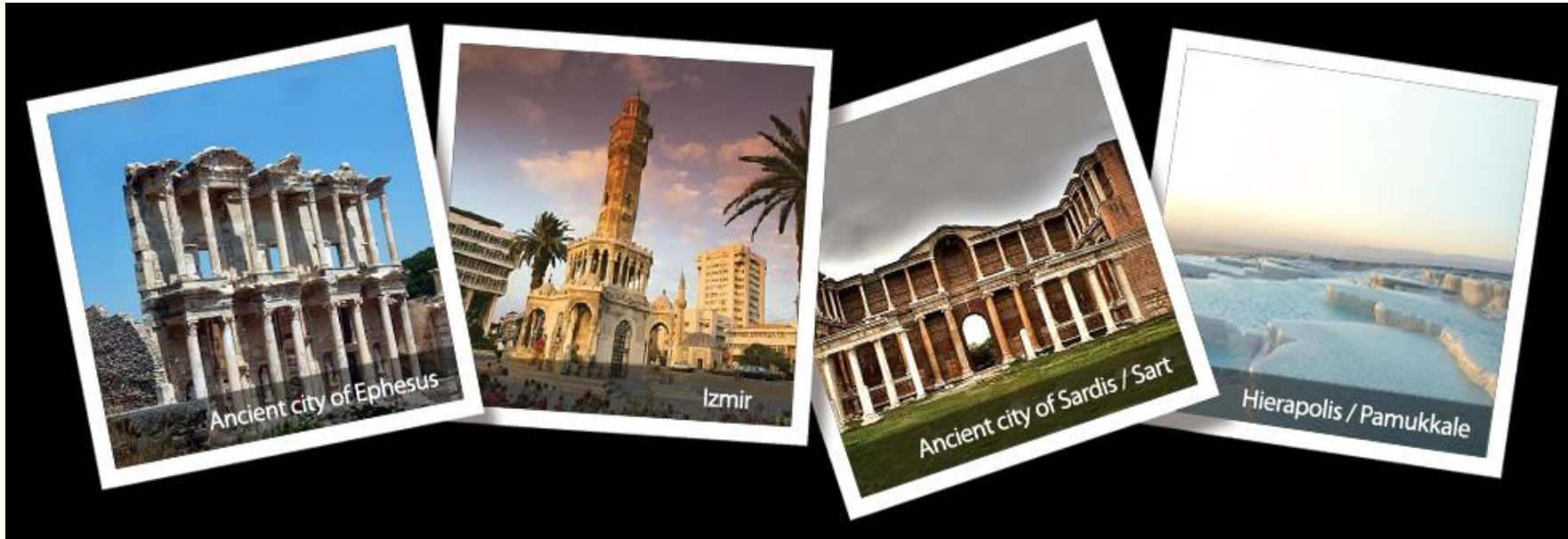
Revelation 2:1-7



1 “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” ’

SEVEN LEADING CITIES OF ASIA MINOR

- Each church represents a period in the history of the Christian church from the death and resurrection of Jesus (31 AD) until the Second coming of Jesus
- Begins with the historical background of the city in which the church was located
- Each letter is introduced with a part of the description of Christ in Revelation 1



Seven leading cities of Asia Minor

- Ephesus means **desirable**
- Smyrna means **sweet smelling like myrrh**
- Pergamos means **elevation or exalted**
- Thyatira means **sacrifice of contrition or sweet savor of labor**
- Sardis means **renewal**
- Philadelphia means **brotherly love**
- Laodicea means **judgment or judging the people**



It is incredible that the names of the cities so accurately reflect the history of the Christian church through the centuries



Letters to the Seven Churches



Primary purpose of our Bible study is to understand each message as it applied to the church to which it was given AND its personal application for us today

Greeting

Encouragement

Condition

Problem

Counsel

Admonition

Promise

EPHESUS

- Located 60 miles from Patmos – great seaport
- Prominent and largest city of the Roman province
- Gateway to Asia Minor and main route to the Orient
- Famous political, commercial, financial and religious center
- Home for worship of Diana (Mother of the gods)
- Great temple of Diana (Artemis - fertility) erected in 480 BC was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world
- Four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens
- Possessed the right of asylum for criminals and fugitives
- Temple of Diana was destroyed in 263 AD
- Boasted a major stadium and theater (25,000+ people)
- Famous for superstitious practices and magical arts



The Church of Ephesus



Probably the most influential Christian church with over 50,000 members

Founded by Aquila, Priscilla and the great preacher Apollos (Acts 18:18-26)

Paul worked in Ephesus for 3 years (Acts 20:31)

The church grew rapidly as Christianity spread in Asia. Paul wrote the Epistles to the Ephesians from prison in Rome

Timothy and John himself spent much time in ministry there.

According to tradition, this is where Mary the mother of Jesus lived

Missionary endeavors were unequaled in preaching the gospel. Pioneers of the Christian faith

Aptly represents the Christian church in the 1st century

It may be hard to be a Christian in a modern, multi-cultural, immoral, competitive, hostile society. But remember Ephesus...there were faithful Christians there.



More than 3.5 million people were won to the
Christian faith by AD 100 (within 69 years)

“There is strongest reason to believe that before
the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, the faith
of Christ had been preached in every province,
and in all the great cities of the Roman empire”.

Edward Gibbon (Church Historian)

CLASH OF RELIGIONS

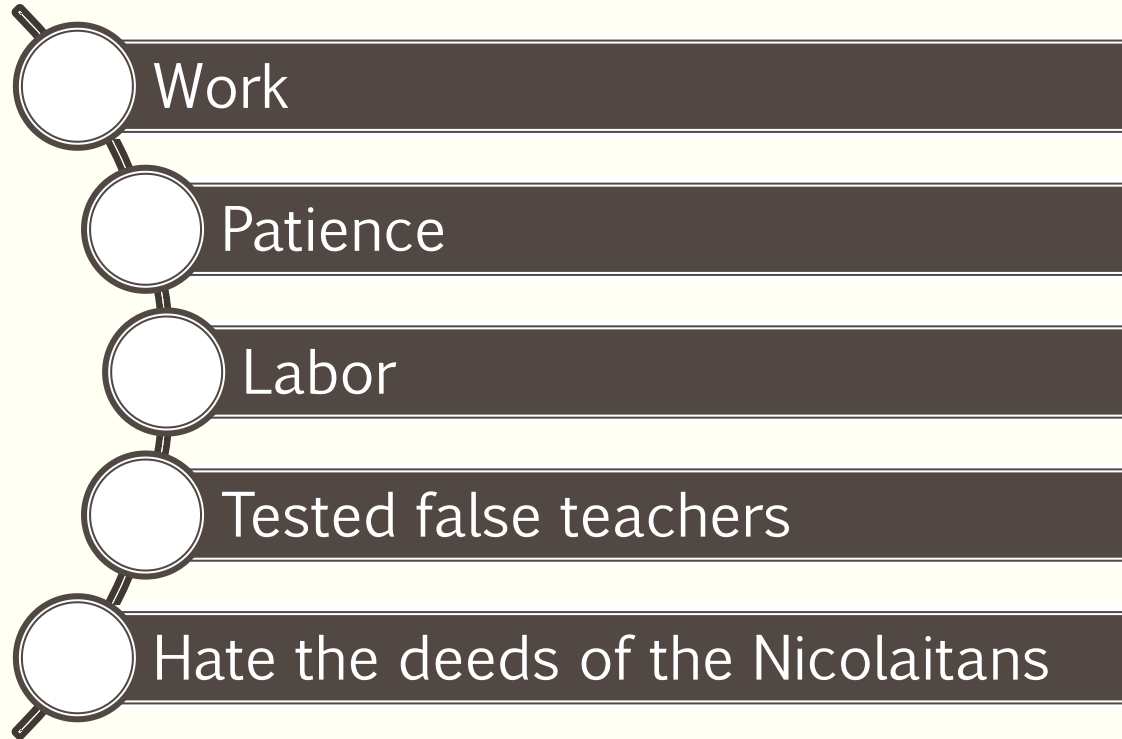
“The rapid spread of Christianity in the 1st century AD served to escalate the conflict between Christianity and paganism, and the inevitable consequence was persecution. In Ephesus, Christianity struck a blow to the worship of Diana, the Mother of the gods. It is noteworthy that the modern-day equivalent, the worship of Mary as mother of God, finds its root in Ephesus. In 451 AD, at the Council of Ephesus, the Roman Catholic Church bequeathed the title “Mother of God” to Mary, thus reviving the ancient cult in a modern garb.

Walking Through Revelation
Amazing Discoveries
Water Veith



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The Church of Ephesus: AD 31-100



Everything we accomplish is because of Christ who upholds and empowers us

Jesus walks among the candlesticks and holds the stars in His right hand demonstrating His abiding presence and complete control over His church

Holds in Greek “krateo” means to hold fast, take hold of, grasp, not let go (John 10:27-29)

Jesus has perfect and complete knowledge (**know**)

Works = labor + endurance (patience)

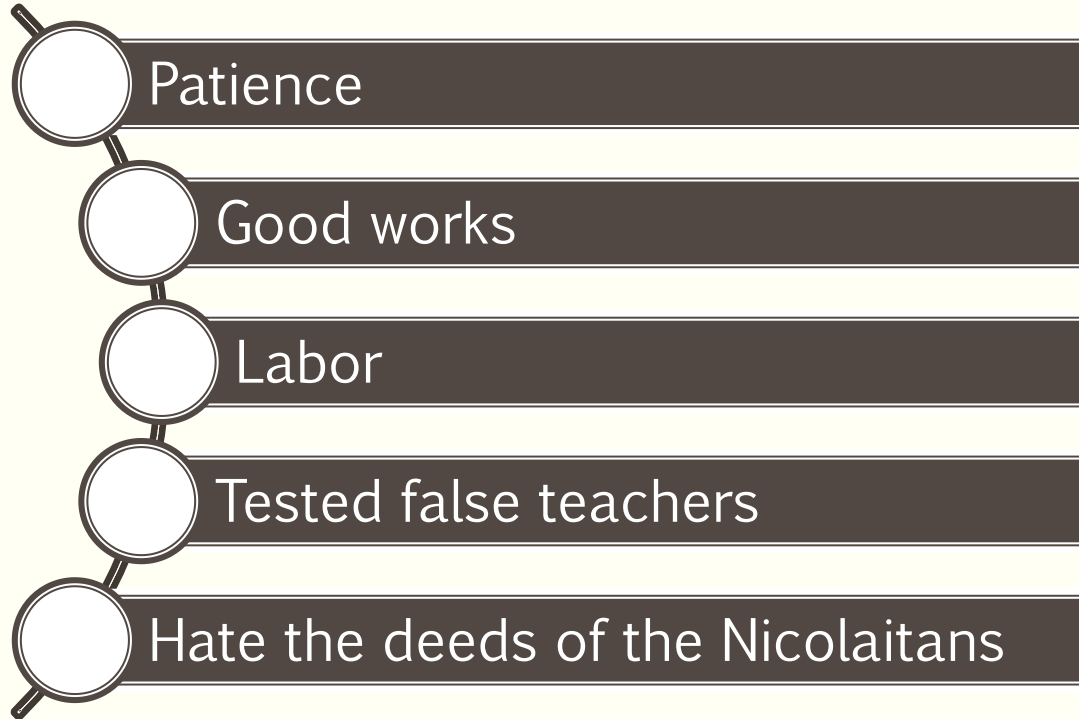
Labor in Greek ‘kopos’ means “laboring to the point of weariness and exhaustion” or “exhausting hard work”

Borne all kinds of pressure for the sake of Christ

Sound doctrinally and did not tolerate heresy

Jesus commends intolerance to evil within church

The Church of Ephesus: AD 31-100



Hatred for evil deeds and not people

Nicolaitans means “one who conquers the people” in Greek. Most dangerous of all heretic groups

Heretical followers of Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons of the early church (Acts 6:5)

Warned by Paul 50 years earlier, the Nicolaitans would threaten to destroy the integrity and purity of the Christian faith and conduct (Acts 20:28-31)

Gained followers in church of Pergamos

Ephesus Christians faced two key issues to compromise their faith and beliefs:

- Participation in pagan religious festivals (eating of food offered to idols, alcohol and immoral activities)
- Cultic prostitution

Balaam means “destruction of people” in Hebrew

Nicolaitans claimed to be Christians but taught obedience to God’s law was unnecessary and sought accommodation with the pagan world

“The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of no effect; that by “believing” we are released from the necessity of being doers of the Word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned ”.

The Church of Ephesus: The Loveless Church

Jesus' rebuke is gentle and specific

Though doctrinally pure, the church of Ephesus was backsliding in love contrary to the gospel of love

Religion became legalistic and loveless

Emphasizing doctrinal soundness, they became severe, censorious, critical and fault-finding

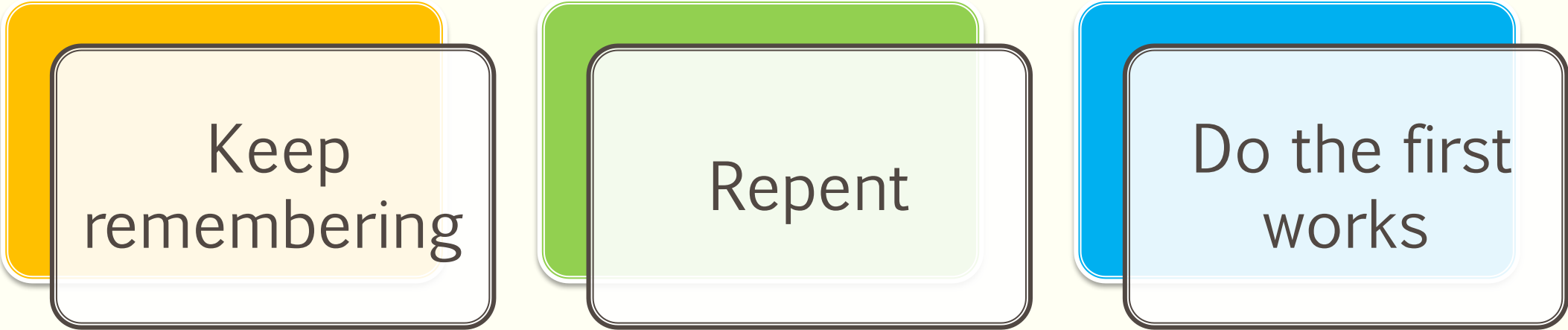
Vertical relationship with God normally defines the horizontal relationship with humanity

Genuine religion is Christ-centered – love for Christ and love for fellow Christians & unbelievers

Jesus counsel had three imperatives



The Church of Ephesus: The Loveless Church



Keep
remembering

Repent

Do the first
works

Keep remembering – bearing in mind the past and apply the lessons to the present

Repent – decisive turning around and radical change of the whole direction of life

First works – selfless zeal and joyful service to Jesus (acts of first love - agape)

First works are the outcome of our First love as the latter springs naturally from the former

The Church of Ephesus: The Loveless Church

If the church does not exercise its call to shine, it loses the very essence of its existence

Call to Christians who are backsliding in their **love for Jesus** and **obedience to the gospel**

“Make Christ your religion”

It is our eternal interest to hear what the Spirit says

The Christian life is a growth process and each day we need to be overcoming

The overcomer is given the promise to eat from the tree of life which is in midst of the paradise of God in the new earth restored (Rev 22:2, 14)

Tree of Life symbolizes immortality, ability to live forever, freedom from death and suffering

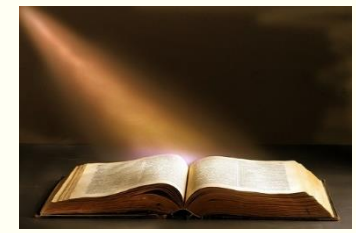


Practical Application - The Loveless Church

- Jesus has constant diligence and eternal vigilance of His church
- Believers need to test those who claim to speak for God
- Love is the first thing to slip away when one turns away from God
- Like the Ephesian believers, we may not sense our spiritual fall and neglect to cherish Christ's compassion and tenderness
- Jesus warns against "Once saved, always saved"
- Faith and love must be continually nurtured
- When the love of Christ is not revealed in its fullness in our lives, we are unable to bring glory to Him



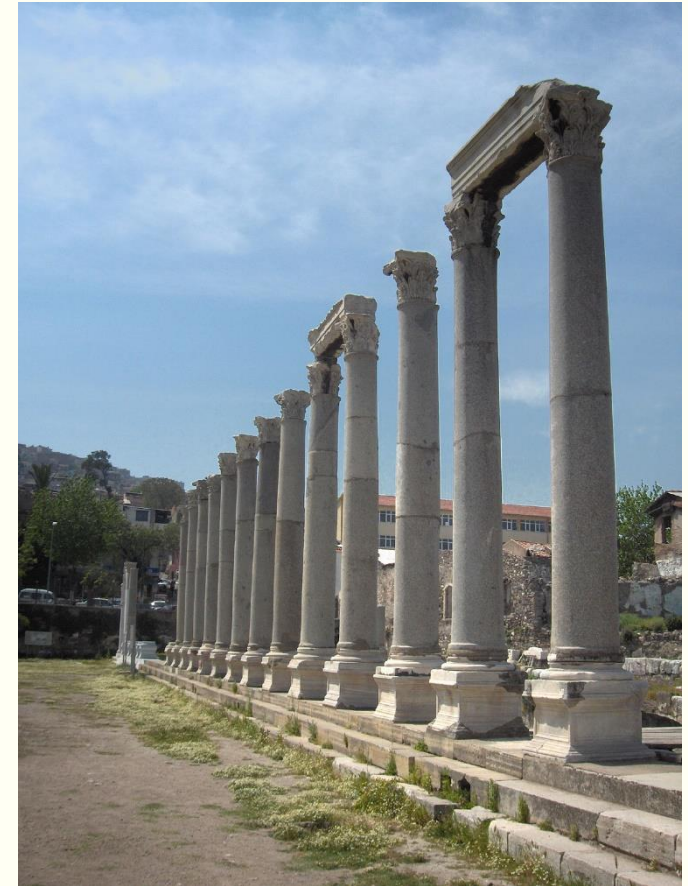
Revelation 2:8-11



8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, ‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: **9** “I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. **10** Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. **11** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.” ’

SMYRNA

- Modern day Izmir: Pearl of Aegean
- Wealthy and beautiful city claimed to be the “glory of Asia”
- Third largest city in Turkey
- Harbor trade city, ~40 miles north of Ephesus
- Working harbor today where over 70,000 ships dock each year
- Status of a free city - political, religious and cultural center
- Flourished in science and medicine
- Special relationship with Rome (first temple of goddess Roma)
- Citizens unquestionable loyal to Rome
- Center of mandatory Emperor worship – Imperial cult
- Worship of goddess Rome Dia a sign of allegiance to empire
- Largest public theater in the province – seats 20,000 people
- Olympic games were held in Smyrna



“Once a year, every Roman citizen was obliged to perform the religious duty of burning incense on the altar to the godhead of Caesar, and then was issued a certificate. To refuse brought about the threat of death. Smyrnaeans were openly very hostile toward the Christians in the city because of their refusal to participate in emperor worship”.

EMPEROR WORSHIP

“The second thing that made life miserable for Christians in Smyrna was the presence of a large and strong Jewish population also very hostile toward Christians. In their bitterness, the Jews joined the pagans in hating and persecuting Christians. They slandered the Christians before the local government, making malicious accusations, thus stirring up the pagans against the Christians and inciting the authorities to persecute them”.

JEWISH HOSTILITY

SEVERE PERSECUTION

Smyrna means “sweet smelling”. This scent is derived from myrrh, an Arabian herb when crushed, gives off a beautiful fragrance. Myrrh was also used to embalm the dead

Experience of the church of Smyrna coincides with the severe persecution of faithful Christian believers during the 2nd and 3rd centuries

During these centuries, pagan Caesars of the Roman Empire tried to destroy the Christian church

As the saints were crushed by their martyrdom, their dying was a fragrant testimony to their faith in Christ and millions were convinced of the truth

Polycarp, student of Apostle John was a prominent leader in the church of Smyrna in the 2nd century. Polycarp, like many, suffered martyrdom in Smyrna in AD 156



Millions sacrificed their lives for Christ in the Circus Maximus, Coliseum, St Peter's square, etc.

The Church of Smyrna: AD 100 - 313



“...though He was a Son, yet
He learned obedience by the
things which He suffered.”
(Hebrews 5:8)

Shortest message of the seven letters

“First and Last” and “One who was dead and came to life”
indicates Jesus complete victory

Jesus could relate to their trials. He reminds His suffering church facing persecution of His own suffering and death

Christian community experienced “affliction and poverty” yet rich in grace, faith and eternal possessions

affliction (serious tribulation, oppression, pressure of a burden that crushes, distress)

extreme poverty (beggarly, destitute of riches/abundance)

Earthly possessions of believers were frequently confiscated by the State. Many were forced into hiding in the catacombs

The Church of Smyrna were spiritually wealthy though they did not possess material riches

Striking contrast to the wealthy Church of Laodicea which boasts of its material riches, yet spiritually poor

The Church of Smyrna: persecuted church



Synagogue of Satan – Jewish opponents of Christian church

Tertullian described the Jewish synagogues as “fountains of persecution”

The church is under serious pressure and will suffer even more in the days to come. It will get worse!

Receive a gentle rebuke from Jesus to stop being afraid

Ten days of testing ~ short period of testing

Faithfulness of Daniel and his friends in Babylon (Dan 1:12-15)

Imperial persecution (AD 303-313) by Emperor Diocletian and successor Galerius

Constantine the Great issued the famous Edict of Milan (AD 313) granting Christians religious freedom ending the persecution

Received no correction from Jesus (like Philadelphia)

God allows the devil to bring trials and pressure in our lives to test us.
But He reminds us not to be afraid for He is in perfect control.



Tertullian, The Apology, page 70
Church Father (AD 155-240)

“Kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to dust...The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow. The blood of Christians is seed”.

IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION



Great Controversy, page 42

“In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives did not cease when these faithful standard-bearers fell at their post. By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but His work went steadily forward. The gospel continued to spread and the number of its adherents to increase. It penetrated into regions that were inaccessible even to the eagles of Rome. Thousands were imprisoned and slain, but others sprang up to fill their places. And those who were martyred for their faith were secured to Christ and accounted of Him as conquerors. They had fought the good fight, and they were to receive the crown of glory when Christ should come. The sufferings which they endured brought Christians nearer to one another and to their Redeemer. Their living example and dying testimony were a constant witness for the truth; and where least expected, the subjects of Satan were leaving his service and enlisting under the banner of Christ.

IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION

The Church of Smyrna: persecuted church

The faithful church is encouraged to remain faithful

Reward for faithfulness is a crown of life “stephanos”

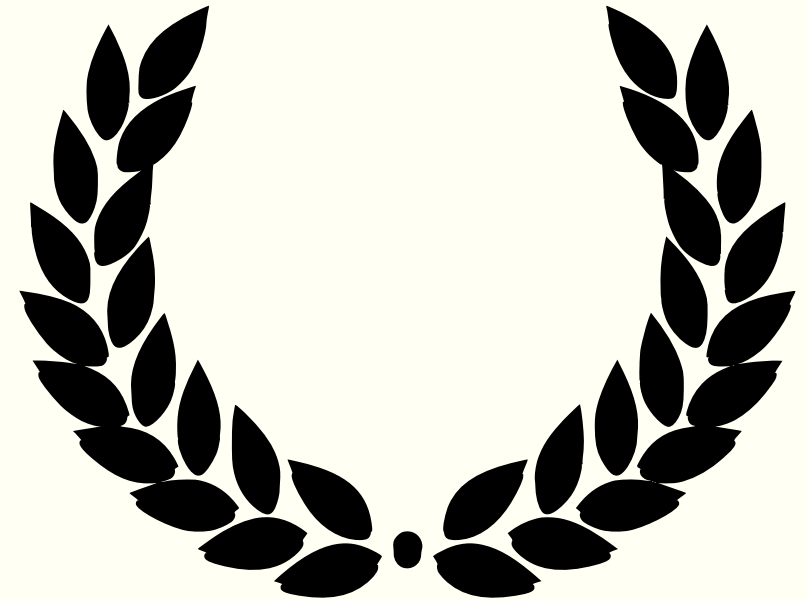
Crown of victory, glory, righteousness (wreath)

The victorious church of Rev 12 wears stephanos of
12 stars upon her head – Rev 12:1

Not a royal crown “diadema”

The overcomer is promised not to experience the
second death (total extinction of the lost)

Keep your eyes fixed on the prize. The pressure and
trials will not last forever



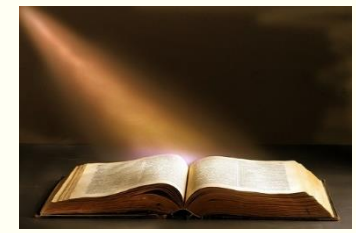
“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” – James 1:12

Practical Application - The Persecuted Church

- Jesus has experienced pain and suffering. He can empathize with us in our tribulations
- One of the great lessons of history:
 - When the church is in adversity, it is spiritually rich
 - When the church is affluent, it is spiritually poor.
- Persecution purged out corruption and compromise from within the Christian church
- To be fit for translation, the end-time church must first pass through a time of trouble to enhance its spiritual focus
- In the future, when God allows His people to become martyrs, He will give them supernatural courage and boldness to stand for their faith in the face of death. He will use such faith to save many who are still in spiritual Babylon



Revelation 2:12-17



12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: **13** “I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. **14** But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. **15** Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. **16** Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. **17** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” ’

PERGAMOS

- Pergamum (Pergamos) was capital city of Roman province of Asia
- Located at elevation 1000 ft ~ 40 miles northeast of Smyrna
- Center of intellectual life in Hellenistic world
- Famous library held ~ 200,000 manuscripts (second only to the library of Alexandria)
- Magnificent temples (Zeus, Athena, Dionysus, Asclepius, Venus)
- On a hill above the city stood the Great altar of Zeus like a great seat or throne. Portion is exhibited in Pergamum Museum in Berlin
- Famous shrine of Asclepius (serpent god of healing - savior)
- Serpent around pole: emblem used by modern medical profession
- Center of worship for Dionysus, god of wine
- Imperial cult: worship of Roman emperor, sacred duty of citizens
- Seat of Babylonian sun worship: idolatry, astrology and occultism
- Chaldean sun worshippers fled from Babylon to Pergamos (487 BC)



“Every citizen of the province had to appear before the local magistrates in Pergamos once a year and offer a pinch of incense to a representation of the emperor, saying, “Caesar is Lord”, and then be issued a certificate. The worship of the emperor was a test of loyalty to Rome, and a refusal to take part in the worship and receive the certificate meant persecution and death.”

EMPEROR WORSHIP

The Church of Pergamos: AD 313 - 538



Pergos = “castle or tower”, “gamos” = marriage

Pergamos means “**elevation or exalted through marriage**”

Christianity became popular as Satan changed his form of attack upon the church, bringing great peril than even persecution

Period of amalgamation of apostate church and state

Jesus identifies Himself to the church of Pergamos using the sharp two-edged sword like an expression used in Pergamos by the Roman governor “has the right of the sword”

Persecutors of God’s people might be satanically powerful, but the power of the “Word” is greater (Rev 19:15)

where you dwell “katoikeo” means reside permanently, settle down
throne of Satan (seat of authority) – ancient serpent

Christians in Pergamos lived in a dangerous and religious climate hostile to their faith. Constantly exposed to the pagan religious lifestyle and practices



Great Controversy, page 49

“Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions. The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.”

THE APOSTATE CHURCH

The Church of Pergamos: AD 313 - 538



The church remained faithful and loyal
Antipas, bishop of Pergamos experienced martyrdom
Tradition says he was burned to death in a brazen bull
Greek word “Martus” means martyr, witness unto death
Jesus uses His title in Rev 1:5 - **“my faithful witness”**
Witness for the truth means to suffer for Christ’s sake
“anti” - in opposition to or against. “pas” – father or papa

“The Pergamos church aptly fit into the period after the conversion of Constantine to Christianity in AD 313. The church finally won its struggle with paganism and Christianity became a State religion. The Christians did not have to fear persecution...tradition was gradually replacing the Bible as the source of teaching and belief. Although many Christians remained unwavering and faithful to the gospel during this period, the 4th and 5th centuries were characterized by spiritual decline and apostasy, during which the church wrestled with the temptation of compromise.”

Revelation of Jesus Christ, page 131

The Church of Pergamos: compromising church



Divided church that was corrupted by compromise

Last major obstacle hindering the power of the Bishop of the Roman Church in Rome was removed and he became the head of the church.

Unlike the church of Ephesus, the church of Pergamos tolerated the false teachers and made compromises

Balaam (false corrupt prophet) and Balak (king)

Nicolaitan = Balaam's doctrine of heretical compromise

Spiritual fornication – mingling paganism with Christianity
(Balaam strategy: fornication and idol worship)

Call to repent and escape the impending judgment or else they will experience Balaam's punishment. He was slain with the sword in the war waged against Midianites (Num 31:8)

It is easy to conform to the world's standards, laws or pressure to escape discomfort, displeasure or persecution

The Church of Pergamos: compromising church

Three-fold promise to those who do not compromise

Manna was preserved in the ark of covenant for 40 years in the wilderness and 800 years in the Promised land

According to Jewish tradition, the ark of covenant taken by Prophet Jeremiah in 586 BC and hidden in secret cave east of Jordan

Ancient custom of giving a white stone to those acquitted on trial and a black stone to those condemned

Bread of angels – rather than food sacrificed to pagan gods

White stone (like Urim diamond) - rather than Roman certificate

New name – entitled to admission, special honor and privileges in the feast of the heavenly banquet (Rev 19:7-9)

New name stands for a person's new relationship with God (Jacob – Israel, Abram – Abraham)

“...you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.” – Isa 62:2

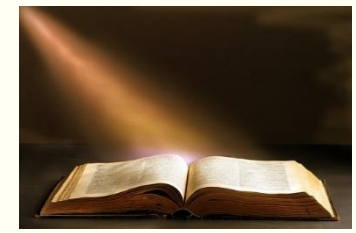


Practical Application - The Compromising Church

- Popularity breeds compromise of principles
- Under the pretext of Christian love, the church may tolerate false doctrines, worldliness and transgression of God's commandments
- The two-edge sword of God's word (Heb 4:12) cuts both ways. It penetrates to the depths of our soul, awakens us spiritually and convicts us of our sins and judges us if we reject the truth (John 12:48)
- The promise to the overcome is that they will be elevated to a distinguished position in the kingdom of heaven and will enjoy an especially close, intimate and special relationship with the Godhead

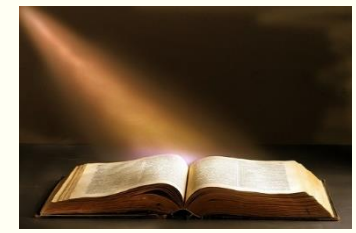


Revelation 2:18-23



18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:
19 “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first. **20** Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. **21** And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. **22** Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. **23** I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

Revelation 2:24-29



24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. **25** But hold fast what you have till I come. **26** And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—**27** ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father; **28** and I will give him the morning star. **29** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

THYATIRA

- Located 40 miles southeast of Pergamos
- Began as a Macedonian colony founded by Alexander the Great
- City was inland on the river Lycus at a fork where two branches of the river came together – current day Turkish city (Akhisar)
- Smallest and least important of the 7 cities
- Apollo, the sun god, was the chief deity of the city
- Commercial and trade city famous for its dyeing industry
- Manufacturer of royal purple, scarlet and woolen goods
- Citizens were mainly poor laborers
- Known for its industries and many trade guilds (trade unions)
- Membership in the trade guilds was compulsory
- Required attendance at the guild festivals in pagan temples and sharing a common meal offered to the guild's patron god, often accompanied with drunkenness/immoral acts



The Church of Thyatira: AD 538 - 1500



Lydia, seller of purple in Philippi was from Thyatira (Acts 16:4)
Christians suffered ridicule and hardships of social isolation and economic sanctions by not join a trade guild

The longest of the seven messages

Thyatira is made up of two Greek words “Thy” meaning **sacrifice** and “Tereo” meaning **to keep**

Thyatira also mean “sweet savor of labor” as used in sacrificial offering or “odor of affliction”

Dark and difficult period in the history of the Christian church when church tradition replace the Bible in teaching and practices

Ancient Babylonian mysteries were introduced – sun worship

Forms, rituals, objects and works replaced the truths of the Bible

Pagan vestments of purple and scarlet colors and Mitre hat of Dragon the fish god introduced in vestments of the priesthood

Bible was banned and all who refused to acknowledge the supremacy of the Papal Church were persecuted



The Church of Thyatira: AD 538 - 1500

Gnosticism developed from sun worship – belief of an inner or hidden meaning that only their religion could disclose “deep things”

Central era of the period of the 7 churches

Spans the period of the Middle and Dark Ages when Papacy dominated Europe to the beginning of the Reformation

Longest and most trying period of the Christian era

Bible was the Latin version, which most people could not read

Sadly, the professed recognized Church of Rome arrayed in purple and scarlet was NOT the Church of Thyatira

The true church (woman) fled to the wilderness - Rev 12:6,14

Many faithful Christians were put to death as “heretics,” causing great numbers of God’s people to flee into the wilderness

The Church of Thyatira existed only as scattered group of believers



Celtic Christians of the British Isles

Paulicians of Armenia

Ethiopians of Africa

Waldenses of Eastern Spain and Northern Italy

Albigenses of Southern and Western France

Lollards of England

Hussites of Bohemia

The Church of Thyatira: AD 538 - 1500

“Son of God” emphasizes His deity - only used once in the Book of Revelation

In contrast to the introductory vision in Rev 1 where He appears as the “Son of Man”

Position and prerogatives of Christ were being usurped by the great antichrist who had seated himself in the temple of God, showing himself that is God (2 Thess 2:4)

Eyes as flame of fire - Jesus penetrating gaze, discernment, piercing human hearts and minds

“Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men” (Acts 1:24) – Greek word “**heartknower**”

Feet like burnished bronze

- uncompromising judgment on the wicked,
- presence in trials of His faithful people (Hebrew boys)
- bronze altar of sacrifice,
- bronze serpent lifted up in the wilderness

Chalkolibano – fine brass, more precious than gold (alloy of gold, silver, brass) mixed metal of great brilliance



The Church of Thyatira: AD 538 - 1500

Jesus commends their works of **love, faith, service** and **perseverance** in the dreadful long period of papal persecution

Greek word for patience – hupomone means “like a pillar of a bridge” or “to stand firm under pressure”

Their works in the latter part of the Thyatiran period were of greater magnitude (papacy was more dominant and relentless in her opposition to the truth) than those of the earlier period

Growth in grace – only church commended for spiritual growth

However, a rebuke is given for accommodating false doctrines, immorality, practices (idolatry, occult, astrology, witchcraft)

The decree of the Council at Jerusalem – abstain from sexual immorality and eating food sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:29)

Sexual immorality (spiritual adultery) – mixing a pure relationship with God and other allegiances

Jezebel is used figuratively to denote papal abominations – to **teach** and **seduce** (doctrines that deceive)

Permissive teaching of compromise similar to the Nicolaitans (Ephesus) and Balaamites (Pergamos)



The gift of prophecy was highly respected as prophets were regarded as receiving direct revelation from God



An Enduring Vision – Revelation Revealed

Jezebel represents the harlot church of Revelation 17. She was a Phoenician Baal worshipper and prophetess. Married to King Ahab, she was the daughter of the King of Sidon, a priest of the pagan sun god Baal. She exalted paganism and murdered those who opposed her authority. Her dominating influence led Ahab to establish the apostate worship of Baal, leading a majority of Israel into apostasy. During the showdown on Mount Carmel, Elijah, the true prophet of God exposed the corrupt and idolatrous practices of Baal worship, calling for repentance and reformation. Israel began to turn back to the true God. This dramatic episode in Israel's history was a picture of the experience to befall spiritual Israel in the Christian era.

JEZEBEL, THE FALSE PROPHETESS



20th Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism

The missionary history of the Church clearly shows her adaptability to all races, all continents, all nations. In her liturgy and her art, in her tradition and the forming of her doctrine, naturally enough she includes Jewish elements, but also elements that are of pagan origin. In certain respects, she has copied her organization from that of the Roman Empire, has preserved and made fruitful the philosophical intuitions of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, borrowed from both Barbarians and the Byzantine Roman Empire—but always remains herself, thoroughly digesting all elements drawn from external sources...In her laws, her ceremonies, her festivals and her devotions, she makes use of local customs after purifying them and "baptizing" them.

PAGAN FESTIVALS TRANSFERRED INTO THE CHURCH

The Church of Thyatira: AD 538 - 1500

Corrupt church and mother of harlots is threatened with judgment because she refuses to repent (Rev 17-19)

“Will cast her” and “Will give everyone” denotes future reward or punishment (for two kinds of works)

Kill her children – Jezebel’s 70 children were slaughtered by Jehu (2 Kings 9:7-8, 10:6-8)

Spiritual death for her children (followers of false church)

In ancient world, kidneys were regarded as the “**seat of emotions**” and the heart as the “**seat of intelligence or will**”

Synagogue of Satan -> throne of Satan -> deep things of Satan

The corruption that began in the 4th century grew until the depths of Satan were reached – Dark Ages

“to know” means more than intellectual knowledge. It is knowledge from experience, entrenched in the teachings and practices

Relief promised from the weight of papal oppression

“For then there will be great tribulation...and unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matt 24: 21-22)



The Church of Thyatira: The Wilderness Church

The Son of God promises His unconditional coming to the church of Thyatira with no threat of punishment

Hold fast till I come - call for endurance to overcome

Power over the nations - the saints will judge the world (1 Cor 6:2,3)

“Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be give to the people, the saints of the Most High...” Dan 7:27

“Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He himself will rule them with a rod of iron...”
Rev 19:15 and Ps 2:8,9

The Dark Ages were to come to an end with the dawning of the Morning Star. **Jesus is the Bright and Morning star** – Rev 22:16

Day star breaks through to usher the dawn of the day - 2 Pet 1:19

Superstition, fear and ignorance of the Word of God was being replaced as the Reformation ushered the light of a new era
(Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Knox, Calvin, Zwingli)



John reverses the order of the closing and the promise. “He who has an ear” is emphasized before the promise is given

Practical Application - The Wilderness Church

- Jesus knows your works (repeated to each church)
- Service is the outcome of love, faith produces patience (perseverance)
- Faith, obedience and endurance are the main characteristics of God's faithful people (Rev 13:10, 14:12)
- Unfavorable circumstances is no excuse for compromise and disobedience to Jesus
- While the previous churches were besotted by false teachings, the church in Thyatira allowed or tolerated its presence
- Don't give up your faith no matter how long your trials
- Jesus presence and protection as our Shepherd - the opposite end of the shepherd's crook on the rod is the bar of iron used as weapon against enemies
- To those who follow and trust God, He will give the right to rule with Him
- Be steadfast and patient to be victorious in whatever situation you face with the strength of the Lord



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