



DISCIPLESHIP UNIVERSITY AT
FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH
PROP 4500: REVELATION

Part V: Message to Pergamum – Truth

THE CHURCHES OF ASIA



BACKGROUND: CITY OF PERGAMUM

- Pergamum was due north of Ephesus and Smyrna, but was about 15 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea. The city sat on a plain at the foot of a conical mountain that rose about a thousand feet above it. Pliny, the Roman philosopher and author, said Pergamum was the most distinguished city in Asia.
- Pergamum was a major religious center, being the first city in any province to build a temple to a living emperor – Caesar Augustus – in 29 BC (three years before Smyrna).
- The city also played home to many other temples and cults, not the least of which was the massive temple and altar to Zeus. This massive structure was at the top

of the mountain (acropolis) and was built in the first half of the second century BC. It was excavated in the late 1800s, and its friezes were sent to Berlin. Later, this structure was used as the model for the building of the Tribune at Zeppelin Field in Nuremberg. Hitler often visited this structure.



The reconstruction of the altar of Zeus in the Pergamum Museum, Berlin, Germany. The friezes are from the actual archaeological site.

- Another prominent cult was that of Asklepios, the god of healing and medicine. His symbol was the serpent, entwined around a staff (the symbol used by doctors today). Many would travel to his temples in order to receive cures for their illnesses and diseases.
- There were many other temples in the city (including a very elegant temple to Athena), as well as many public buildings, a fountain, and a major library (200,000 pieces).

CHARACTERISTIC OF CHRIST

*Jesus is the one who has the _____ - _____
_____ (v. 12).*

- *What imagery does this bring to mind (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Isa. 49:2)?*

- *How does the Bible act like a sword?*

COMMENDATION

Jesus offers two commendations to the church at Pergamum:

- *They hold fast to Jesus' name (v. 13)*
 - *What is the absolute minimum that someone must believe in order to be saved (Acts 16:31-32; Rom. 10:9-10)*

 - *Mere intellectual assent is not enough to produce saving faith; there must be a relationship where Jesus is both _____ AND _____.*

- *They do not deny the faith (v. 13)*
 - *What does Jesus mean by "the faith"?*

- *What does this holy life look like (Gal. 5:22-23)?*

- *How does a believer develop this holiness (Gal. 5:25)?*

- *Jesus reassures the believers in Pergamum by telling them that He knows “where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is” and “where Satan dwells.” How is this a blessing to us today?*

CONDEMNATION

While the majority of the church in Pergamum held to the truth, there were some who did not and this brings forth a rebuke from the Lord Jesus.

- *Jesus speaks specifically about Balaam. Who was he (Num. 22-24, 31:8, 16)?*

- *What did Balaam suggest to Balak as a means for causing Israel to stumble?*

- *Antinomianism:*
 - *Where is the balance between living an obedient life to God's moral law and where we have freedom in the grace of Christ (Rom. 14; Rom. 6)?*

 - *How does this compare to what we see in the church today?*

- *Ultimately, to deny that holy living is a central truth of Christianity is to embrace false teaching (I John 2:4-6). What, then, should we do with those who make these antinomian claims (I Corinthians 5:9-13)?*

CORRECTION

What is Jesus' correction for those who have fallen into this false teaching and false doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans?

- *Illustration: Bob Newhart*

- *What is repentance?*

- *How does repentance occur?*

CONSEQUENCE

- *If repentance does not occur, what does Jesus say will happen?*

- *Is this visit a good thing?*

- *How has the church fought false doctrine and false teaching through the centuries?*
 - *How successful have those strategies and tactics been?*

- *What is the one proven method by which false doctrine might be countered?*

A WORD TO THOSE WHO CONQUER

- *The one who conquers receives some of the _____ (v. 17).*

- *The one who conquers also receives a _____ (v. 17).*

- *The one who conquers also receives a _____ (v. 17).*

While we remain on earth, we must be fighting the good fight of faith. We must be rightly dividing the Word of Truth, so that we might not be ashamed. In so doing, however, we must remember to maintain the balance between truth and love. Love becomes sentimental when not strengthened by the truth, and truth becomes hard when not softened by love. Finally, we must remember to exercise theological triage so that we might discern which of our doctrinal differences are of the first order (diversions from which must be viewed as being false doctrine) and which are not.

Unity in the essentials, liberty in the non-essentials, and love in all things.