

THE REVELATION

Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis

Revelation 2: 12-3:8

Introduction: In previous studies we have learned that these congregations share some characteristics. There is an interesting symmetry in the list of seven: the first and the last appear to have unique problems and represent extremes; the second and sixth have no problems worth mentioning and receive only praise; the middle three share much in common both praiseworthy and problem oriented. The churches of Asia were located in a region which was beset with certain spiritual dangers, and they each responded to them in a variety of ways. The dangers are not unlike those we face today, and we, too, will respond in certain predictable ways.

I. UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

- A. Pergamum: center of worship and culture for the entire Asian region
 - 1. Art
 - 2. Education
 - 3. Temples and cult
- B. Thyatira: first on the route to Asian conquest and therefore a strategic outpost garrison
 - 1. Strong guerilla warriors
 - 2. Greatest number of trade guilds—essential for doing business
- C. Sardis: no particular distinguishing characteristics; no notable contribution to Asia

II. COMMON WORTHY ATTRIBUTES

- A. Faithfulness even in the face of martyrdom (except perhaps Sardis)
- B. Good works (even Sardis appears to have good works)

III. COMMON SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS

- A. Balaam, Nicolaitans, Jezebel
- B. All of these orient around worldliness and lack of self-control
 - 1. Deeds of the flesh quench the Spirit
 - 2. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit
 - 3. Freedom from the Law is not lawless freedom

IV. JUDGMENT AND BLESSING

- A. Judgment
 - 1. Failure to repent will result in war with Christ
 - 2. Those who do not repent will reap what they sow
 - 3. Remember what you have heard and WAKE UP!
- B. Blessing
 - 1. Hidden manna and a special name
 - 2. Those overrun will become the rulers and occupy the throne satan has claimed
 - 3. They will walk with Jesus in righteousness and be upheld by Him before the Father

Conclusion: It is never easy to live for Christ in a culture of godless immorality and materialism, but faithfulness has great reward. However long this life, and however costly faithfulness, it is really but a short while and a cheap price compared to the glory to follow and the intimacy now.

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.’

Revelation 2: 12-17 NASB

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this: ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them—I place no other burden on you. Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come. He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Revelation 2: 18-29 NASB

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Revelation 3: 1-6 NASB

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