

Revelation 2:12-29

In the Last Days series

1:19– Seen, are, after....Ch 2,3 church age..local..historical..contemporary

*Rev 2:12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp **two-edged sword** says this: 13 ‘I know where you dwell, where **Satan’s throne** is; & you hold fast My name, & did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells*

Pergamum--mixed marriage - 314-590 AD – church wed to world—union--alliance in evil sense for status. 70 mi N Smyrna 3 cities competed for popularity Smyrna-great commercial center; Ephesus-great political center; Pergamum-great religious center

*Sharp two-edged sword—judge **critikos** (churches) Heb 4:12 12For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. – **weapon of war** Rev 19:21 to smite nations*

Pergamum- English root is bigamy or polygamy—compromise word 2Cor 6:14 *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God... **Jesus** Jn 15:18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

Up to this point millions of believers martyred for faith but now church & state united. Pergamum carries idea of elevation-lifted up/gain thru marriage **‘trophy wife’**. Church a polygamist to gain status –**seeker-combine a rock concert, a shopping mall, and a self-help seminar**

P was capital of Asia Minor—famous library of 200K hand copied volumes or parchments **pergamena** from which city got name & famous for architecture, sculptures--most of all a religious center—many gods-Zeus, Minerva, Apollo, Venus, Bacchus, Mars w/ perverted immoral practices. Jupiter ruler of gods was said to be born in P.

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Aesculapius--god of medicine the savior-patron god of the city & worshiped by image of serpent (**medical insignia**)-- Sick sleep temple if serpent crawl over infirmity healed--superstition directed by demons.

Emperor worship called '**imperial cult**' once a year citizen pinch incense to temple burn to Emperor '**Caesar is lord**'.

Alexander Hislop 'Two Babylons' traces devil worship of Babylonian priesthood to Pergamum & later to Rome under Constantine & Roman Catholic church. Satan's most effective work is in the church thru false teaching & practice. P 'where **Satan's throne is**' – Any church that subverts-

How unholy alliance happen? Early 4th C. Roman Emperor Diocletian died leaving Rome leaderless. Two generals squared off in battle to Rule.

Marcus Aurelius Valerius **Maxentius** from the East. Flavius Valerius **Constantine** from the west—Battle for the right to rule.

Each army camped at Milvian bridge awaiting call to battle. **Constantine** had minor contact w/ Christianity & vowed that night if he was victorious he would convert to Christianity. Tradition says he saw in the sky a flaming cross w/ inscription '**By this sign conquer**'. True or not he entered into a pact w/ unseen forces whether God or the devil time would tell. Jesus said '*My sheep hear my voice & follow Me....you do deed your father the devil*

Constantine won the battle & supposedly converted--yet no real fruit to show Christ in him. He brought about a mixed marriage. In British museum a coin minted by C. w/ one side Christian symbol & other side pagan gods.

C. assumed title 'Pontifex Maximus' *lit* "high priest of heaven"—reworded 'great bridge builder' used of Pope today.

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313 AD C. called for '*edict of toleration*' all persecution stop. Pagan priests & temples declared Christian. Roman Empire now Christian--infant baptism required by law. Believers out of Catacombs in hiding into prominence--now popular to be a Christian, accepted by the world

Priest of pagan temples, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, ran to baptism to stay of government payroll---Caesar now presided over the Church. Pagan priests and temples now churches adopted pagan rites and ceremonies. Basilicas '*heathen temples*' now called churches.

Church Bishops became rulers of state & state officials became rulers of church policy. No longer looking for Christ 2nd Coming but '*we've been looking for Christ's reign but we were wrong, Constantine's Empire is Christ's reign*'. Believing Millennial reign of thousand years had begun..

Regiments of soldiers marched thru rivers on horseback in ritual baptisms.

And yet God still has commendation for them '*you hold fast my name*'.

Time of Arian controversy who denied deity of Christ and His eternal nature God the Word **John 1:1**. Arius-Jesus created not eternal (*Unitarianism, JW*)

Challenged at Nicean council-Jesus one w/ Father, eternal, trinity-one God in 3 persons Father-Son-HS. Over 300 overseers met--Constantine presiding—acknowledged head of Christian church, sitting golden throne w/ title '*Pontifex Maximus*' beginning of succession of Popes.

Jesus all God all man settle & proved from scripture, so God's word to P '*you hold fast My name and did not deny my faith*'

14 '*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.* **15** '*Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.*

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Two things against—*teaching of Balaam* ‘destroyer of the people’ Nu 22-25
Israel camped plains Moab-King Balak felt threatened & hires Balaam to curse. Promises honor & riches. God not allow but blesses each time w/ messianic prophecies. Balaam plotted w/ Balak to cast stumbling block. Parade Moabite women seduce men into worship pagan gods w/ sexual rituals & marriage. Unholy alliance 24,000 died in plague-**judged**.

Doc of Balaam—people can join unholy alliances & still worship God in compromised life. Picture of church in union w/ world system. Satan sought to destroy church from w/o & only made it stronger now destroy from w/in.

Second evil *hold teaching Nicolaitans* – *nico*=victory; *lao*=people –a class of people or leaders who exalt themselves above the people—clergy lording it over the flock. **1Pet 5:2-3** *shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.* —

Priesthood replaces body of Christ for ritual-ceremony-sacraments.
Reversal of Christ to pagan priesthood practices & a dead formalism

16 ‘Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war 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, 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.’

Repent – stop compromising & turn from alliance w/ world system. Balaam told Balaam ‘*God has kept you from honor and riches*’. World system says only way to get ahead is follow us in crime corruption duplicity dishonesty-- compromise your morals & belief in God & scripture. You will be popular and draw many—be a church ‘celebrity Christianity’ w/ celebrity pastors

Hidden manna Jn 6:31-35; 48-51—closeness to Jesus-the bread of life

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White stone—criminals tried in Areopagus for Capital crimes—black stone to condemn white stone to acquit—word for stone is *ballot*—Jesus gives us a stone, ballot, vote of acquittal for sins committed past, present, future & a *new name*—of intimacy only we & Lord know—enduring, eternal name.

18 “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: 19 ‘I know your deeds, and your **love and faith and service and perseverance**, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

Thyatira—insignificant city of no historical importance. Lydia Acts 16:14 a woman who died for a living was from Thyatira. *Expensive* purple dye from Madder root and small shellfish Murex one drop from throat—liquid as pigment for rich color to dye garment. 1lb of dye = 1000 denari 3yr wage

Thyatira from two Gk words sacrifice and offering or *continual sacrifice*’ perpetual offering--what goes on continually.

7th C Bishop of Rome was officially recognized as the visible representative of Christ on earth. Beginning of Papacy, Pope as head of Christianity. Roman church introduced a continual sacrifice for sins of living and dead. Said only way Christ can be a sacrifice is **put Him to death**--thus denying the finished work of Christ on cross *‘It is finished’*.

So Priest kills Christ afresh each time sacraments of Catholic Mass are preformed-**transubstantiation**. Deviation of scripture that says **Christ died once for all 1Pet 3:18** False doctrine to say death on cross is insufficient.

Inquisition began--those not agreeing w/ Pope & his Doc in Catholic church were purged or put to death--lands confiscated as Ahab w/ Naboth. Idolatry, veneration of Saints, false teaching, worship of Mary as co-redeemer, purgatory, mass for dead, Pope infallible

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Trade guilds in city social, political, religious. If not belong not survive—
Unions control existence of people--dominated by pagan practices &
religion—weak, unstable believers gave in and joined.

Son of God as contempt for pagan god Apollo ‘*sun god*’

Eyes-flame fire--holy, righteous--sees all & reveals hidden **Heb 4:13** *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

Feet burnished bronze-metal of judgment—*feet on enemies neck Josh 10:24 (conquered)* Jesus w/ piercing eyes & fiery feet stands in judgment.

Love, faith, service, perseverance, deeds and increasing--all commendable for any church in days of John Wycliffe, John Huss, Savonarola, Anselm

20 ‘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. 21 ‘And I gave her time to repent; and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 ‘Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. 23 ‘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.

Tolerate Jezebel – compromise, do nothing, allow evil—doctrine & morals things go unchecked & permitted. Jesus warns-woman hid leaven in three measures of dough until all leavened—sin **Mat 13:33**

Jezebel’s teaching is leaven, sin in church **1cor 5:6-8** *Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little [h]leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let’s celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Jezebel means unchaste-calls her *prophetess* one speaking for God yet God says she teaches & leads astray--immoral acts, idol sacrifices

History **1Ki 16:29** usurped authority, dominated Ahab, introduced Baal worship—principle in nature for propagation, fertility god. She revived idolatry & persecuted true believers. Profaned temple w/ idols

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Lying, false witness, perjury replaced justice in legal system **Naboth 1Ki 21**

Repent but unwilling—not a state of mind or intellect but heart and will

Judgment bed of sickness, great tribulation, kill children=those brought up under & adhere to teaching. Dark ages 500-1500 Ad

*24 '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. 25 'Nevertheless what you have, hold fast **until I come**. 26 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, **TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 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; 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.'*

The rest—not hold teaching, she arrogantly calls '*deep things*' deceives those who like to be thought of as deep, superior, above the rest. She **(personified)** makes sin look harmless, seduces her prey claiming deeper teaching given by higher revelation. Greater than anything yet taught--God calls them '*deeper things of Satan*'

Until I come--Rapture

Authority over nations to rule w/ rod of iron. Overcomers to be God's instruments of righteous reign on earth. 1000 yr reign 20:4

Jesus the *Morning star* 22:16 *16 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."* Hope for church '*looking for blessed hope....Titus 2:13*

29 He who has an ear Jezebel's followers not hear--HS open to those willing to listen '*The hearing ear, the seeing eye the Lord has made both of them.....Pr 20:12* **WW 'unloving orthodoxy and loving compromise are both hateful to God'**