

ENDGAME

A Study On Revelation (Week #13)

Pastor Jason Goss

Revelation 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write... (NASB)

Revelation 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write... (NKJ)

Revelation 2:12 "Write this to the angel of the church in the city of Pergamum... (NLT)

Important Cities

- Ephesus
 - _____ Center (theater, stadium - copy of Roman cities)
- Smyrna
 - _____ Center (Agora market)
- Pergamos
 - _____ Center

PERGAMOS: LOCAL APPLICATION

Geography

- Pergamos is about 16 miles from the sea, about 80 miles north of Ephesus, 48 miles north of Smyrna.
- The present city of Bergama has a population of only 20,000 (vs. almost 200,000 in NT times).
- Zeus is said to have been born there.
- The great altar of Zeus stood on a foundation 125 ft by 115 ft, over 50 ft high, set in a colonnaded enclosure (Satan's throne? Rev 2:13).

Background / History

- "The City Of The _____"
- Pergamos is the feminine form.
- Pergamum is the neuter form of the name; both were used.
- Its early history is obscure; there are evidences that it was occupied during the stone and bronze ages, but prior to Alexander the Great, Pergamos was little more than a castle on top of a hill.
- Its foundation is ascribed to Arcadian (Greece) colonists under the Heracleid Telephus (who routed the Achaeans on their landing in Mysia to attack Troy).
- Its name is said to have been derived from the son of Pyrrhus and Andromache who made himself king of Teuthrania by killing the king in single combat.

- Wisely allying with Rome, it became an extremely wealthy and prosperous city, and for two centuries it became the official capital of the Roman province of Asia.
- Lacking proximity to the key trade routes, it eventually yields economic advantages to its better located rival, Ephesus.
- Although not the seat of imperial and judicial authority, Pergamos became the center of the official religion of emperor "Caesar" worship.
- Alexander the Great dies 323 BC, his generals divide the kingdom. (Map)
 - There would be almost constant war among them until 275 BC
- War of the Diadochi (Wars Of The Successors).
 - First War: 322-320 BC
 - Second War: 318-315 BC
 - Third War: 314-311 BC
 - Fourth War: 308-301 BC
 - Problem: How do you defeat an army equipped in the same manner and using the same basic tactics as you do?
- Battle of Ipsus:
 - Antigonus - ruler of Phrygia; and his son Demetrius - Macedon
 - Demetrius created a battering ram 180 feet long, requiring 1000 men to operate it; and a wheeled siege tower named "Helepolis" (or "Taker of Cities") which stood 125 feet tall and 60 feet wide, weighing 360,000 pounds.
 - Cassander, ruler of Macedon; Lysimachus, ruler of Thrace; and Seleucus, ruler of Babylonia and Persia.
- Antigonus defeated and killed at Ipsus in 301 B.C.; His son Demetrius flees and hides in Ephesus.
- The northwest Asia Minor was united to the Thracian kingdom of Lysimachus.
- Philetaerus is named commander of Pergamos, ruled for almost 40 years.
- Its impregnable position lent itself to its use as a treasury.
 - Lysimachus kept a treasury of 9,000 talents of silver in Pergamos.
 - 1 talent valued at about 9 years skilled work. (About \$4,050,000,000)
- Philetaerus betrayed Lysimachus' trust by allying himself with Seleucus, Lysimachus' rival.
 - Seleucus would be killed a few months later.
- Augustus inaugurated emperor worship in order to give the empire a bond of common sentiment, and the first temple of this cult was erected at Pergamos in 27 B.C. Under Vespasian and his successors, it became a test of one's faith if one would or would not offer incense to the statue of the emperor.
- Subsequent rulers skillfully established themselves as a dominant power in Asia Minor and one of the principal centers of Hellenistic culture.
- City is very rich and powerful, well defended, becomes one of the major cultural centers in the Greek world.
- 123 AD given rank of metropolis, elevated status above Ephesus and Smyrna.

Aesculapius

- Aesculapium—health institutions before the scientific medical practice begun by Hippocrates—prospered for eight centuries. Functioning mostly by psychiatry and suggestion; sleep was induced and priests used their own methods (drugs and others) to cause patients to dream, and then interpret, etc. Bathing, whispered consultations, music, plays, and other techniques were employed as therapeutic aids.
- Long before the New Testament days, Aesculapius had been recognized as a god (the son of Apollo and the virgin Cornois).
- He was termed "_____ " and it was claimed that he had the power to avert death.
- He was originally represented by the Anatolians as a serpent, and the Greeks later depicted him holding Hermes' staff (the Caduceus) with the two-headed snake.
- The Caduceus was the official emblem of the city.
- The Caduceus is a symbol for commerce and negotiation, not the symbol for medicine. [Hermes is the god of commerce!]
- Hermes was the emissary and messenger of the gods.
 - Other symbols were winged sandals or winged cap.
 - Hermes was also "the divine trickster" and "the god of boundaries and the transgression of boundaries.
 - The patron of herdsmen, thieves, graves, and heralds."
 - He is described as moving freely between the worlds of the mortal and divine, and was the conductor of souls into the afterlife.
- The Caduceus is associated with commerce, theft, deception, and _____.
- The traditional symbol for medicine is the rod of Asclepius.
- It originally emerged from the brazen serpent of Moses.
 - This is an example of a "macrocode": an anticipatory sememe, explained by Christ (John 3:14) and leading to the most famous verse of all: John 3:16.
 - It became a fetish and was destroyed as "Nehushtan"!
- Walter Friedlander surveyed 242 logos or insignias of American organizations relating to health or medicine in which the caduceus or staff of Aesculapius formed an integral part dating from the late 1970s to early 1980s. He found that professional associations were more likely to use the staff of Aesculapius (62%) while commercial organizations were more likely to use the caduceus (76%). The exception is for hospitals, where only 37% used a staff of Aesculapius versus 63% for the caduceus (but remember that U.S. hospitals are usually commercial ventures). [Friedlander, Walter J., The Golden Wand of Medicine: A History of the Caduceus Symbol in Medicine, New York, Greenwood, 1992.]



Numbers 21:6 Then the Lord sent snakes with a bite of poison among the people. They bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. **7** So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and you. Pray to the Lord, that He will take away the snakes from us." So Moses prayed for the people. **8** The Lord said to Moses, "Make a special snake and put it up on a long piece of wood. Everyone who is bitten will live when he looks at it." **9** So Moses made a brass snake and put it up on the long piece of wood. If a snake bit any man, he would live when he looked at the brass snake. *(NLT)*

John 3:14 As Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up. **15** Then whoever puts his trust in Him will have life that lasts forever. **16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever. *(NLT)*

2 Kings 18:3 Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done. **4** He took away the high places. He broke down the holy pillars used in worship and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the brass snake that Moses had made. For until those days the people of Israel burned special perfume to it. It was called Nehushtan. *(NLT)*

Architecture

- The Great Altar of Pergamum, was moved to Berlin in the 19th century by German archaeologists.
- Between the Temple of Zeus and site of the Great Altar of Pergamum there are the remains of the Temple of Athena, constructed at the end of the 4th century or beginning of the 3rd century BC, and dedicated to the city's patron goddess.
- _____ - Just beyond the temple is the magnificent structure that was the city's famous library. According to the writings of Plutarch the estimated 200,000 documents of both papyrus and parchment were stored here. Second Largest in the ancient world largest collections of written material in the ancient world and was famous throughout the Mediterranean.
- It also housed one of the most extravagant wedding gifts of all time: Marc Antony is said to have presented Cleopatra with a sizable portion of the Pergamum library's collection, in part to restore Alexandria's own collection that burnt down in flames during Julius Caesar's occupation of the city.
- The best-preserved ancient sacred structure on ancient Pergamum's Acropolis is the Temple of Trajan, built during the reign of Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) and dedicated to his predecessor. Towering over the surrounding structures and ruins, its commanding presence is a testament to the strength of the imperial cult.

- It is hard to imagine, looking at its enormous height, that this was actually one of the smallest sacred structures in the temple precinct of the Acropolis. The sheer size and majesty of the building against the dramatic backdrop of the valley below and the ocean and sky beyond is truly awe-inspiring.
- Theatre of Pergamum - The architecture of the nearly intact theater of Pergamum not only attests to the city's importance but also provides what is surely one of the most spectacular settings of the ancient world.
- Cascading sharply down the precipitous slope of the Acropolis toward the sea, the theater is one of the steepest of its kind. The 10,000 visitors per night would have occupied the 80 rows of horizontal seating. Like many ancient Greek theaters, the theater at Pergamum is an acoustic marvel: an actor who was speaking normally on the stage could be heard even at the top.
- During the 2nd century AD, Pergamum's fame as a center of healing and medical science eclipsed its reputation for anything else.

Asclepion

- One of the most famous in the ancient world, and this ancient version of a medical spa attracted pilgrims from all over the Mediterranean region who came seeking the restorative powers of its thermal waters and medical treatments for various ailments and injuries.
- This was a cross between a hospital and a health spa, where patients could get everything from a mud bath to a major surgery. Even the emperors came all the way from Rome to be treated here, but this was no ordinary doctor's visit.
- Author Rick Renner, "If you were a terminal patient, you were not allowed to go into the Asklepion, These Asklepion priests didn't want anyone hearing that someone had died in the Asklepion. There was a huge sign just above the official entrance to the Asklepion that said, 'Death is not permitted here.' So the only way you were going to get in to begin with is if they knew you were going to live."
- Patients entered through an underground tunnel. Then they drank a sedative, and spent the night in the dormitories of the Asklepion, while non-poisonous snakes crawled around them all night. They were told that the serpent-god Asklepios would speak to them in their dreams and give them a _____.
- "It was believed that the snakes carried the healing power of Asklepios," and if a snake slithered across you while you were sleeping at night, that was a divine sign that healing power was coming to you."
- Red Basilica (Serapis Temple) - The _____ gods Isis or Serapis
- It consists of a main building and two round towers within an enormous sacred area. The temple towers flanking the main building had courtyards with pools used for cleansing at each end.
- As part of the Roman Empire, Pergamum's decline mirrored that of the empire as a whole.

- Many of the rulings in Pergamos affected all of Asia Minor.
- People of Pergamos were innovators and inventors. Perfected parchment made from calfskin, world's first psychiatric hospital.
- The city's acropolis rivaled Athens.
- Author Rick Renner: "On one side, it was a very beautiful city, But on the flip side, it was one of the darkest, eeriest cities in the whole Roman Empire."

Revelation 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; 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.'" (NASB)

Revelation 2:12 "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.'" (NKJ)

Revelation 2:12 "Write this to the angel of the church in the city of Pergamum: 'The One Who has the sharp sword that cuts both ways, says this: **13** I know where you live. It is the place where Satan sits. I know that you are true to Me. You did not give up and turn away from your faith in Me, even when Antipas was killed. He was faithful in speaking for Me. He was killed in front of you where Satan is.'" (NLT)

The Temples

- The people of Pergamum were known as the "Temple-keepers of Asia."
- The city had three temples dedicated to the worship of the Roman emperor, another for the goddess Athena, and the Great Altar of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods.
 - "Throne of Satan" - That word 'throne' was used in a personal private residence, and it was a chair for the lord of the house, the _____ of the house, when Jesus uses this word it means that Satan felt at home there.
- Altar of Zeus, Temple of Zeus, Temple of Dionysus, Temple of Athena, Temple of Trajan, Sanctuary of Hera, Sanctuary of Demeter, Sanctuary of Asciepius, Temple of Asiepius, Temple of Telesphorus, Serapis Temple (Red Basilica),

Antipas

- He was the bishop of Pergamum, ordained by the Apostle John, and his faith got the attention of the priests of Asklepios.
- He had cast out so many devils that the demons had been complaining to pagans, saying, 'You've got to do something about this Antipas.'
- The pagan priests went to the Roman governor and complained that the prayers of Antipas were driving their spirits out of the city and hindering the worship of their gods.
- As punishment, the governor ordered Antipas to offer a sacrifice of wine and incense to a statue of the Roman emperor and declare that the emperor was "lord and god."
- Antipas refused.
- If you reject the divinity of the emperor, then that is the equivalent of rejecting the city of Rome, and believers were killed for this.
- In 92 AD Antipas was sentenced to death on the Altar of Zeus. At the top of the altar was a hollow bronze bull represented the bull god Apis, designed for human sacrifice.
- They would take the victim, place him inside the bull, and they would tie him in such a way that his head would go into the head of the bull. Then they would light a huge fire under the bull, and as the fire heated the bronze, the person inside of the bull would slowly begin to roast to death. As the victim would begin to moan and to cry out in pain, his cries would echo through the pipes in the head of the bull so it seemed to make the bull come alive."
- Even in the midst of the flames, the elderly bishop Antipas died praying for his church.
- The execution of their bishop certainly would not have endeared the city to its Christian inhabitants.
- The early Christians viewed Pergamum as a bastion of all that was loathsome to Christian beliefs.
- In the 19th century, German engineers dismantled the altar and took it to Berlin. The so-called "Throne of Satan" went on display in the city's Pergamon Museum in 1930, just in time to inspire one of the most brutal dictators the world has ever seen.