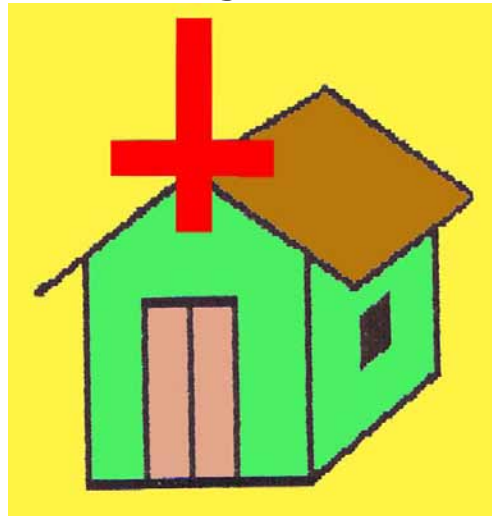
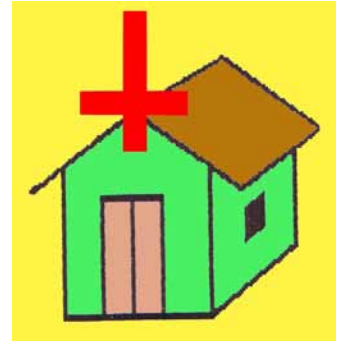


# The Seven Churches of Asia

Pergamos





than the minimum required attendance for each lesson, under no circumstances are you to take less than 1 week for each lesson.

#### **TESTS:**

Lesson tests must be taken not less than one week apart.

If you fail a test you may not retake that test on the same day that you failed it.

You must wait at least one day before retaking the test. Use that time to restudy the material and find all of the correct answers to every question missed on the test. The copy of the test automatically sent to you has all of the correct answers on it. Use that copy to make sure you have found all of the correct answers in the study materials.

#### **SCRIPTURES:**

Each scripture referenced in this lesson must be looked up and read in your KJV. Reading the scriptures in the lesson, even if they are fully quoted in the lesson, will not fulfill this requirement. They must be looked up and read in your KJV.

#### **LESSONS:**

Each lesson is followed by a test. You will find a link to the course main page at the end of each lesson. When you click that link you will be returned to the course main page where you will find a list of tests. There will be instructions concerning whether a particular test is open book or closed book.

The test for this lesson is open book, so you will not need a password to access it. Click the link for it and it will open and you can then take the test. Your next lesson attendance begins the day after you pass the current lesson test.

You may now proceed to the next page to begin the study of the Church at Pergamos.



## PERGAMOS

**The City:** Pergamos disputed with Ephesus and Smyrna for the headship of Asia. Under a succession of illustrious kings it became one of the most beautiful cities of the east.

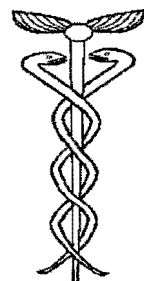
A shining light of culture, distinctively Greek, it surpassed its rival neighbors of Sardis and Ephesus in the areas of art, sculpture, and religious innovations. It became one of that brilliant group of cultural centers that deeply influenced the East, decisively preparing the way for Christianity.

As a seat of knowledge, Pergamos had a library which rivaled that of Alexandria in Egypt which was one of the wonders of the ancient world. When the Brucheion (the large inner library) at Alexandria was partially burned in 48 B.C. by Julius Caesar in the Alexandrian War, Mark Antony sent 200,000 manuscripts from the library at Pergamos to compensate Cleopatra for the loss. Spurred on by Egypt's eventual ban of the export of papyrus (which was the common writing material of the time) parchment (charta Pergamena) was invented at Pergamos. This gave the library there freedom from the Egyptian stranglehold on materials and gave them a new and readily available supply of materials for the copying of books.

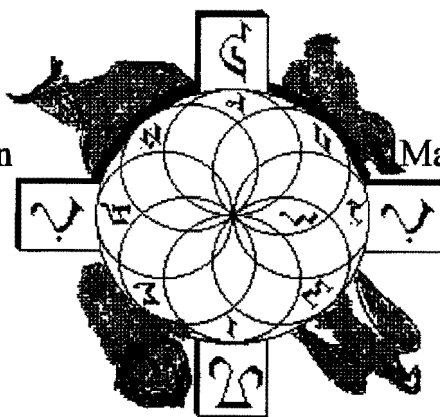
**History:** From 283-133 B.C. it was the seat of a kingdom that embraced the areas that later became the provinces of Mysia, Lydia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia. Originally a fortress between two rivers, the thousand foot hill on which it was built later became the acropolis. It is also likely that it was the capitol of the Roman province of Asia during the early part of the Christian era. Pergamos began losing power after the attack by the Arabs in A.D. 716-717. Its slow decline from that time onward culminated in its eventual ruin and destruction.

**Religion:** As a seat of Emperor worship, it gained in prominence from 133 B.C. (the date of its annexation by Rome) on through the Christian era and into the 4th century when it became an important center for the then state-run brand of Christianity, Roman Catholicism.

Arethas said of Pergamos that it was, "... given to idolatry more than all Asia." The truth of that statement was born out by the numerous temples that adorned the thousand foot high hill (the site of the original fortress) behind the city. Among the temples was the great temple to the Greek god Zeus (Soter Theo, the saviour god) who was the equivalent to the Roman Jupiter. Also, on a crag above the city, and dominating it, was a throne-like altar to Zeus on a platform hewn out of the rock. Along with its many temples to the gods, Pergamos also boasted magnificent statues of Zeus, built by Eumenes II, Dionysus, and Athena, goddess of wisdom. In addition to these, the city was also an outstanding promoter of the cult of Asculapius, god of medicine, who was symbolized by a serpent. Coins of that time show representations of a serpent entwined around a bent sapling in honor of this cult. (Eventually the sapling was replaced by the winged staff of Mercury. Compare that with the caduceus, the symbol for the medical profession today.)



**Magic:** It is said that the Chaldean from Babylon, built their of Pergamos and made their activities.



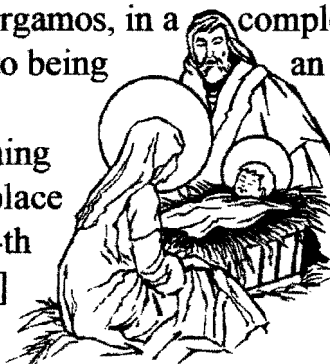
Magi (Astrologers), fleeing main college in the city that city the center of

Rose Cross supposedly worn by Magi in NT times

**Emperor-cult worship:** In the area of Emperor-cult worship, Pergamum was the first provincial territory to acknowledge the divinity of the Roman ruler. In 29 B.C. the first temple to Caesar (Augustus) was erected there. (See the section on Smyrna for information on the second temple to Caesar.) Later a second shrine was erected there to the emperor Trajan. This religio-political cult eventually became the most potent and insidious opponent of Christianity during the first century A.D.

**Christian persecution:** Because of the cult's hold on the city, Pergamos became the sight of much Christian persecution. Upon the ascension of Constantine to the throne in A.D. 312, Christian persecution throughout the empire came to a halt. And upon his profession of Christianity a short time later, Pergamos, in a complete flip-flop, shifted from being an intense persecutor of Christians to being an important center of the new "state religion" of Christianity.

[Note: This marked the beginning Roman Catholic Church. That place ing this and the next centuries (4th secure by the sixth century A.D.)]



of the real rise to power of the of power being solidified dur- and 5th) and becoming totally

John warned the church at Pergamos to remain faithful in this city where worldliness, paganism, and politics, would constantly pressure Christians to mix and compromise. In such a constant atmosphere of compromise, many would be tempted to give in to the ungodly heresies of the Nicolaitans and the leading of those who held the doctrine of Balaam.

## THE LETTER TO PERGAMOS

(Rev 2:12-17)

### 2:12 COMMISSION: The Pastor and the church at Pergamos.

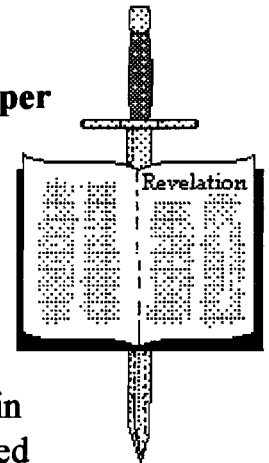
Who from and who to? From Jesus Christ to the pastor & church at Pergamos.

### 2:12 CHARACTER:

- A. A description of Christ as one judging, wielding His Word. (Sword.)
- B. Sharp sword with two edges.

**Heb 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."**

1. It is living, irresistible, sharp, and able to judge (a discerner of) the thoughts and intents of the heart.
2. Surgery hurts; and when Christ performs surgery with His sword, the Word, on any church that has allowed worldliness to grow within it, then those who are well will feel the pain and shock as the infected tissue is scalped away. (I Cor 5:1-5; 12:25-26)



### 2:13 COMMENDATION:

- A. Works under trying circumstances.
- B. Faithfulness, even to the death.  
 ("... Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you...")
- C. Even though they lived in the very stronghold of Satan.  
 ("... even where Satan's seat is...")

### 2:14 CONDEMNATION:

- A. Doctrine of Balaam. ("... cast a stumblingblock...")  
 Mixing worldliness and idolatry into the church. (Old Testament- mixing pagans, and their customs, with God's people in order to corrupt the people so that God will have to curse them.)
- B. Doctrine of the Nicolaitans.  
 (See the section on the letter to Ephesus and the Nicolaitan heresy there.)  
 Basically it is putting the people under the rule of someone other than Christ.

### :15 C. This is the second time that Christ says He hates Nicolaitanism.

Whether it is a Roman Catholic clergy, "conquoring the people," or if it is, "conquoring the people," with licentiousness (total immorality) makes no difference. Any time the people are under the sway of other people rather than Jesus Christ, then Christ says that He hates that.

**NOTE:** It is interesting to note that Nicolas (the leader of the Nicolaitans) and Balaam mean approximately the same thing:

"Nicolas," means, "he overcomes the people."

"Balaam," means, "he has consumed the people."

**2:16 CORRECTION: "... repent..."**

Repent or else Christ will come and cut out the infection; i.e., He will do surgery with His "sword."

**2:17 CALL: "... he that hath an ear, let him hear..."**

The call is to anyone who will listen.

**2:17 CHALLENGE: Overcome and receive the promises.**

- A. "... hidden manna..."** Don't partake of the food sacrificed to idols (v:14) which must have been a constant temptation in Pergamos, but instead partake of Christ, the true manna. (Jn 6:31-35)
- B. "... white stone..."**
1. A custom in the Grecian courts. A vote of not guilty.
  2. Or the victors stone which gave him entrance to all public festivals, and us entrance to all of heavens festivities, blessings, joyous celebrations, etc.
- C. "... a new name..."**
1. Either the name of God and Christ, (cf. 3:12; 19:12) as the one proclaiming us not guilty, giving us the right to the power inherent in God's name and appropriation of the character of God through that power.
  2. Or the *"tessern hospitalis"* a two-part stone, each part bearing the name of the one giving it. This stone gave an open invitation to the bearer to the house of the giver. Thus symbolizing an open invitation for us to come to God's house, Heaven.
  3. Finally, it could be alluding to the custom of giving a new name to someone who has been given a new status by God. (cf. Abram/Abraham; Jacob/Israel.) This would signify the overcomer's right to enter the Kingdom of God with a new God-molded character all his own by God's grace.
  4. The common thread in all of these is the thought of a special place given to the overcomer by God; and the special rights conferred on the overcomer because of their new status with God.

**NOTE: "Overcomer."** (I Jn 5:4-5)

**Click the blue button to return to the course main page. Then scroll down to the test links for Revelation I. and click the test link for this lesson.**