

# Revelation 2:12-17

- Pergamum – remain true to the name of Christ -

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## Introduction

- ❖ This is a message for Christians who are a religious minority among other religious groups.
- ❖ This is also a message for Christians who are living in a predominantly secular country.
- ❖ Christ wrote:
  - I know where you live. I know your situation, the struggles, the adversities, the opposition, the lies, the persecution.
  - Remain true to my name.
  - Don't renounce your faith in me, even in days of severe persecution or opposition.
  - Don't be too tolerant to those, who compromise Christianity with a worldly lifestyle or with the predominant religion or with folk religion and witchcraft.
  - I will give you eternal life and a new name.
- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological notes, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline show some overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Book of Revelation. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a "stand alone."

## Context

- ❖ The message of Jesus Christ to the church of Pergamum is part of the Book of Revelation. The Book of Revelation is like a large painting. You need to look at the whole in order to understand the details.

❖ A brief outline of the Book of Revelation:<sup>1</sup>

<b>Introduction (Rev 1:1-3)</b>	
	The origin and command to write this Revelation down.
<b>The Book of Revelation (Rev 1:4-22:21)</b>	
Rev 1:4-8	The opening liturgical setting.
Rev 1:9-3:22	PART 1
Rev 4:1-22:11	PART 2
Rev 22:12-21	The closing liturgical setting.

- PART 1: The vision of the risen and exalted Christ and his seven messages to the seven churches in the Roman Province Asia.
- PART 2: The vision of the heavenly courtroom and the judgment of God, ending with the descent of the new heaven and earth.

<b>Part 1 (Rev 1:9-3:22)</b>	
Rev 1:9-20	The risen and exalted Christ reveals himself to John and to the churches.
Rev 2:1-3:22	The seven messages to the seven churches of Asia. Jesus Christ knows the works of each church and of each individual. He calls them to repent where necessary to prepare them for the things to come, which they need to overcome.

❖ There is much discussion about the date of writing of the Revelation.

- Some commentators propose a date near the reign of emperor Nero (54-68 AD).<sup>2</sup>
- Others propose a date during the reign of Emperor Domitian (81-96 AD).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This outline for sermons is very brief and does not discuss all the (many) different theories about the structures and outlines of the Book of Revelation. Beale (1999) provides a detailed outline. For discussion see Garrow (1997).

<sup>2</sup> Nero. (2017, August 12). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero>

<sup>3</sup> Domitian. (2017, August 10). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domitian>

- In the case of the message to Church in Pergamum, the outcome of this discussion is of some importance. The persecution at the moment of writing. One of their members, Antipas, had been killed because of his witness to Christ (Rev 2:13). There has been no widespread persecution during the reign of Emperor Nero. His persecution was limited to the city of Rome. There might have been some incidental persecution during the reign of Emperor Domitian. The persecution during the reign of Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD)<sup>4</sup> at the beginning of the second century has been more severe, according to letters of Ignatius<sup>5</sup> and the [letter](#) of Pliny the younger,<sup>6</sup> as a Roman governor of Bithynia et Pontus (now in modern Turkey), to Emperor Trajan 112 AD. Reading the letter is instructive.
- ❖ The socio-economical and historical-geographical context of 1<sup>st</sup> century Pergamum is also important. See below.

## Form and structure

- ❖ Each message to one of the seven churches has the same structure:

		reference
Commission to write	Rev 2:12	
Presentation of the exalted Christ	Rev 2:12	Rev 1:16
Praises and commendations	Rev 2:13	(Rev 1:5)
Call to repentance	Rev 2:14-16	
Call to listen	Rev 2:17	
Promise	Rev 2:17	(Rev 19:12, 13)

## Theological notes

- ❖ The Book of Revelation is trinitarian (God – Holy Spirit – Jesus Christ; Rev 1:4-5) in character.
  - God is the first and the last (Rev 1:8) – Jesus Christ is the first and the last (Rev 1:17).
  - Jesus Christ speaks to the churches (Rev 2:1-6) and the churches are summoned to listen to what the Spirit (Rev 2:7) says.
- ❖ The Book of Revelation is foremost a liturgical book with prayers, doxologies, confessions, prophecies and visions. It shows the heavenly liturgy in images and this liturgy affects the history of this world when the plagues of God strike this earth. Rev 4:11 explains why: **“You are worthy,**

<sup>4</sup> Trajan. (2017, August 12). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trajan>

<sup>5</sup> Ignatius of Antioch. (2017, August 11). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatius\\_of\\_Antioch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatius_of_Antioch)

<sup>6</sup> Pliny the Younger on Christians. (2017, June 25). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliny\\_the\\_Younger\\_on\\_Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliny_the_Younger_on_Christians)

**our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”**

- The first priority in the life of every human being is to glorify God.
- This liturgical book reminds us of the liturgy in the tabernacle (especially) and the temple of the Old Testament. This explains the many references to the altars and the priestly appearances of Christ and some of his angels.
- ❖ The Book of Revelation is also a prophetic book about the past, the present and the future. It sheds light on the past, the present situation of the seven churches in Asia Minor, and the future, culminating in the promise of the new heaven and the new earth.
  - From chapter 4 onwards the judgment of God is the dominating theme. He will do justice (Rev 4-5; Rev 6:10; Rev 21:1-15 and other passages).
  
- ❖ The Book of Revelation has also an often overlooked religious-political aspect. The language, especially the figurative language, and the frequent use of metaphors, makes the Revelation only accessible for insiders, Christians. A non-Christian reader will have even more difficulty with the understanding of the message. The Book of Revelation mentions Babylon as a metaphor for Rome and her coming destruction. This is a highly subversive message for a Roman governor. By using “Babylon” instead of plainly speaking of Rome, the Book of Revelation contains a message in disguise.

## Technical and hermeneutical notes

### Some remarks about reading and understanding

- ❖ Reading and understanding the Book of Revelation requires:
  - Profound knowledge of the Old Testament.
    - The books of Exodus and Numbers, Ezekiel and Daniel are of particular importance in this regard. These books bear witness to oppression and deliverance of the people of God (Egypt and Babylon).
  - Knowledge of the Greek-Roman world of the first century.
  - Knowledge of figures of speech, because of the use of metaphors and other figures of speech.
  - Knowledge of the structure of Revelation (see above).
  - (Elementary) knowledge of Hermeneutics.
- ❖ John received this Revelation from Jesus Christ and at the same time, this Revelation reveals the risen and exalted Christ, who holds the keys of (life and) death and Hades (Rev 1:17). John

understood the words he heard and the visions he saw, though sometimes they needed to be explained to him (Rev 1:19-20).

- ❖ John wrote down what he heard and saw in this book and sent it to the seven churches in Asia Minor, an important province of the eastern part of the Roman Empire. In these seven messages to the churches of Asia, Jesus Christ addresses major aspects of church life. He praises and rebukes them and gives them promises of the life to come. Christians, members of these churches, understood these messages. Twice, people are mentioned by name and they were warned against a movement called the Nicolaitans (Rev 2:6; 2:15), active among the churches. These Christians were far more familiar with the figures of speech used in the Revelation than we are nowadays.
  - Figures of speech are not always easily understood by 21st-century readers. Sometimes they are explained, more often not. Figures of speech allow for more than one explanation and application. That explains partly the multitude of commentaries and theories.
  - In the process of explaining and applying the prophecies of this book, the interpreter should ask himself two questions:
    - To which exegetical tradition do I belong? There are a plethora of traditions, especially in the Anglo-American World. To mention only three:
      - Amillennialism;
      - Postmillennialism;
      - Premillennialism.
    - Secondly, the interpreter should be aware of his own situation and of the local Christian community. What is my own political-religious situation and how does this situation affect my reading and understanding of the Book of Revelation?

#### Background of the city of Pergamum (Pergamos)

- ❖ In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, B.C. Pergamum emerged as one of the great artistic and intellectual centres of the Greek world. It was only in the reign of Augustus that Pergamum began to recover from decline. The sanctuary of Asclepius (Asclepeium, god of healing) just outside the city became a major intellectual centre. In the early years of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Pergamum was once again one of the great cities of the region. There is some evidence that, despite the presence of a Christian community in the city since the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the city as a whole was very slow to adopt the new faith. One reason for this may have been the



importance to the city of the cult of Asclepius, who was himself a god of healing, and the feeling among many pagans that the healing miracles that Asclepius was believed to have performed proved that he was a true protector of his people.<sup>7</sup> There were major temples in this city. The most famous probably being the altar dedicated to the Greek god Zeus.

#### Emperor Cult

- ❖ “In 88 BC king Mithridates VI came into possession of the realm and was greeted as both god and savior. This title was nothing new since king Eumenes II, who ruled from 197 to 159 BC, had also desired to be referenced as both god and savior. All of this description is sufficient to establish the prevalence of the worship of rulers in the environment of Pergamum.”<sup>8</sup>

#### Asclepius, the god of healing

- ❖ Pergamum was particularly connected with the worship of Asclepius, so much so that Asclepius was known as ‘the Pergamene god’. Asclepius was the god of healing, and his temples were the nearest thing to hospitals in the ancient world. From all over the world, people flocked to Pergamum for relief from their sicknesses.  
**The most common and most famous title for Asclepius was *Asclepius Soter*, *Asclepius the Saviour*.** It might well be that the Christians felt a shudder of horror that the name *Saviour* should be given to anyone other than Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.  
**The emblem of Asclepius was the serpent.** Many of the coins of Pergamum have Asclepius’ serpent as part of their design.<sup>9</sup> This emblem passed through time and today it is still the medical symbol.
- ❖ **In pagan debates with Christianity, Asclepius as savior and healer played a distinctive role.** Both Celsus and later Julian portrayed **his activity as clearly parallel to Christ.** Christian polemic disparaged many details of the myths attached to Asclepius, and even when powerful deeds were conceded to him (such as driving the plague out of Rome), these were attributed to the power of the devil, since Asclepius himself was a demon. In spite of Christian persecution, the cult continued until the 5th century A.D.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Potter, D. S. (1992). Pergamum (Place). In D. N. Freedman (Ed.)(Vol. 5, pp. 228–230).

<sup>8</sup> Patterson, P. (2012, p. 100).

<sup>9</sup> Barclay, W. (2004, p. 98-99). Patterson, P. (2012, p. 101).

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, T. L. (1992, Vol. 1, p. 476). *Asclepius, Cult of*. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.).



Figure 1. Artist impression of the Acropolis of Pergamum.

### The use of a “Semantic Domain”

- ❖ In lexicography, a semantic domain or semantic field is defined as "an area of meaning and the words used to talk about it ... For instance, English has a domain ‘Rain’, which includes words such as rain, drizzle, downpour, raindrop, puddle."<sup>11</sup>
  - The following words belong to the domain “administration of justice”:
    - **“The sharp, double-edged sword”** = metaphor: the (final) judgment of the judge. Compare Hebrews 4:12. (Roman governors had the ultimate “right of the sword.” See also Romans 13:1-7, especially verse 4: *the governing authority does not bear the sword for nothing.*)
    - “Throne” = **“Θρόνος”** 5. *judge’s bench*.<sup>12</sup> The seat of the judge (Rev 20:4; Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30).
    - “Put to death” = **“ἀποκτείνω”**: 2. of judges, *condemn to death*.<sup>13</sup> Capital punishment.

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<sup>11</sup> Semantic domain. (2016, December 23). Retrieved July 11, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantic\\_domain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semantic_domain)

<sup>12</sup> Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996, p. 807).

<sup>13</sup> Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996, p. 205).

- “White stone” = token of acquittal. “Ψῆφος”: 1. **a pebble used in voting: a black one for conviction, a white one for acquittal**, *voting-pebble*, used in cases of injuries and in other circumstances. See also Acts 26:10.<sup>14</sup>
- “Satan” = “Σάταν”: “Hebrew word for *adversary, opponent*; **also accuser**, translated by ὁ διάβολος (devil) in Jb 1.6-2:10, Za 3:1.<sup>15</sup>

### Verse 13

- ❖ Renounce = “ἀρνέομαι”: 3. **to disclaim association with a person or event, deny, repudiate, disown** (verbally or nonverbally).<sup>16</sup>

### Verse 14, 15

- ❖ Balaam = “בִּלְעָם”: Bileam. There is some discussion about the meaning of this name. “To be preferred is the view of Simonis and Hengstenberg: *bela*´ and *ām* “**destruction of people**” which accords with his reputation as a charmer and conjurer. (Some have suggested that *Nikolaos* “**conqueror of the people**” in Rev 2:6,15 is a translation of this name.)<sup>17</sup> Or Nikolaos is a Greek equivalent to the Balaam.

### Verse 17

- ❖ To him who overcomes = “νικάω”: 1. **to win in the face of obstacles, be victor, conquer, overcome, prevail**. The Christian as “ὁ νικῶν” *the one who is victorious*.<sup>18</sup>
- ❖ A new (name) = “καινός”: 3. **that which is recent in contrast to something old, new**. b. In the sense that what is old has become obsolete, and should be replaced by what is new. In such a case the new is, as a rule, superior in kind to the old, *the new covenant or declaration, the new Jerusalem*.<sup>19</sup>

## Exposition

### Verse 12-13

- ❖ “To the angel of the church in Pergamum write”: The identity of the angel is unknown. It might be a heavenly being, but also a human messenger:

<sup>14</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, 3rd ed., p. 1098).

<sup>15</sup> Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996, p. 1585).

<sup>16</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 132).

<sup>17</sup> Kaiser, W. C. (1999). 251 וְלִזְבָּ. In: R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.).

<sup>18</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, 3rd ed., p. 673).

<sup>19</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 497).

- **“a human messenger serving as an envoy, an envoy, one who is sent.”**<sup>20</sup>
  - By humans or by God; prophets.
- **“a transcendent power who carries out various missions or tasks, messenger, angel.”**<sup>21</sup>
  - By God.

The most obvious explanation is a messenger sent by John to the church of Pergamum, carrying not only this message but also a “copy” of the Book of Revelation in order to read it aloud in front of the congregation. So that the members of this church can “hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev 2:17).

❖ **“These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.”**

- This refers to Revelation 1:16, where Jesus Christ revealed himself to John as the one who is coming to judge the living and the dead. He will judge this world and the church(!). He will do justice to all who are faithful to the gospel and to witness of Christ and who have suffered persecution. (See also Rev 6:9-11 and Rev 20:1-6.)
  - The faithful and true witness refers to Rev 1:5 and to the crucifixion of Christ. Jesus Christ is the faithful witness unto death (cf. Antipas; Rev 2:13).
- The “sword” probably refers to

❖ **“I know where you live—where Satan has his throne.”**

- “Christ has in mind not only the city of Pergamum as such, but **the conditions—religious, social, and moral**—in which the Christians in Pergamum live.”<sup>22</sup> “In brief, Satan is working here through the pressures of non-Christian society. He persecutes; he seduces.”<sup>23</sup>
  - These conditions might refer to idolatry, persecution, false accusations, social and economic pressure, seduction.
  - Especially false accusations are the weapon of Satan.
  - The throne possibly refers to the judgment seat of the Roman governor. It indicates strong opposition against the Christian church.
- “Since the phrase **“where Satan’s throne is”** may only indicate location, it may be better to translate ‘where Satan is king,’ ‘where Satan rules.’”<sup>24</sup>
- “The concluding phrase of v 13 (‘where Satan dwells’) is a contrast with the first clause of the verse (‘I know where you dwell’) in order to accentuate the idea that light and darkness cannot dwell together in peaceful coexistence. Therefore, a witnessing church will be a persecuted church.”<sup>25</sup>

❖ **“Yet you remain true to my name.”**

- Compare Mk 14:30: “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice **you (Peter) yourself will disown me three times.**”

❖ **“You did not renounce your faith in me.”** (ESV: **“deny my faith”**)

<sup>20</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, 3rd ed., p. 8),

<sup>21</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, 3rd ed., p. 8),

<sup>22</sup> Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 52).

<sup>23</sup> Wilcock, M. (1986, p. 47).

<sup>24</sup> Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 52).

<sup>25</sup> Beale, G. K. (1999, p. 247).

- In a letter from Pliny the governor of Bithynia to emperor Trajan, we have an example of a persuasion of Christians to renounce their faith:
  - *“In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians is this: I asked them whether they were Christians; if they admitted it, I repeated the question twice, and threatened them with punishment; if they persisted, I ordered them to be at once punished: for I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation, but being Roman citizens, I directed them to be sent to Rome.”*<sup>26</sup>
- **“renounce your faith in me”** (NIV) / **“deny my faith”** (ESV). Both translations are correct.
  - **“your faith in me”** = personal faith in Christ, the faith by which it is believed.
  - **“my faith”** = what the church believes about Christ, especially: “Jesus is Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36), the faith which is believed.
  - Both meanings should be held together.
- ❖ **“even in the days of Antipas.**
  - Some time ago Antipas has been put to death. At the time of writing, there is less pressure in the society. But still, it is difficult for the Christian church, because “Satan is king” in the city. He is exercising his power through the religious and political leaders (Eph 6:10).
    - The death of Antipas doesn’t indicate that there has been systematic persecution of Christians. But, a government could have set an example by executing Antipas. Antipas might have been a leader of the church. The purpose of his death might have been to weaken the church.
    - He was **“my faithful witness.”** He was just like his Lord Jesus Christ a faithful witness unto death (Rev 1:4, 5). Christ is identifying himself with this martyr.
    - “The phrase *my witness* (see 1:5) means not “a witness who belongs to me” but “one who witnesses about me,” not as a witness in court but as a faithful believer who bears witness to Christ by means of words and actions.”<sup>27</sup>
- ❖ Compare NIV and the ESV (2:13):

NIV	ESV
“who was put to death in <b>your city</b> ”	“who was killed among <b>you</b> ”

- Who are these **“you.”** The NIV clarifies **“you”** by **“your city,”** the location. The ESV leaves room for another possibility, which might carry a stronger meaning:
  - **“among you”:** **you** were the witnesses at the moment of his death. **You:** the members of the church, and also those who hold to the teaching of Balaam, and

<sup>26</sup> (n.d.). Retrieved July 12, 2017, from [http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/pliny\\_letter\\_to\\_trajan\\_about\\_christians.htm](http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/pliny_letter_to_trajan_about_christians.htm)

<sup>27</sup> Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 52).

who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. In this case, the faithfulness of Antipas is contrasted with the tolerance of the church (Rev 2:14-16).

#### Verse 14-16

- ❖ **“Nevertheless, I have a few things against you:”**
  - There are two groups active in the church. The two groups are slightly different from each other. The first group consists of individuals (“**You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam**”), the other group is organized and is also found in other churches (Ephesus, Rev 2:6; **Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.**“
  - Hebrews 4:12 is illuminating: “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**”
- ❖ “the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality”:
  - “While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. And the Lord’s anger burned against them” (Num 25:1, 2).
  - “‘Have you allowed all the women to live?’ he asked them. They were the ones who followed Balaam’s advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD’s people” (Num 31:15, 16).
  - Compare Acts 15:19-20:
    - “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.”
- ❖ **“Repent therefore!”** This is a repentance from tolerance. There is still some time left: **“Otherwise.”**
  - There is double repentance needed:
    - Once the church has repented from its tolerance, the church will call followers of the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans to account and to repent
- ❖ *I will come to you soon:* this is a coming for judgment and punishment (see comments on the similar expression in 2:5).<sup>28</sup>
  - **“And will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”** The words of Christ will separate the faithful from the unfaithful.
  - If the church won’t take action against these two groups, I will do it myself.

#### Verse 17

- ❖ This message is not only meant for this church, but for all the churches. These are words of the Spirit, who is the Spirit of Christ and of the Father.

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<sup>28</sup> Bratcher, R. G., & Hatton, H. (1993, p. 55).

- ❖ **“To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.”**
  - There is a sharp contrast between the **“hidden manna”** and **“eating food sacrificed to idols.”**
    - Hidden manna refers to the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the throne of God, where some manna was kept. (Ex 16:32-34; Heb 9:4)
    - Hidden manna may implicitly mean eternal life in the presence of God because Christ himself will give this “manna.”
  - A new name – the meaning of this promise, Victorinus of Petovium remarked: The “white stone” is the adoption as a son of God. The “new name” is that of Christian. Commentary on the Apocalypse 2.3.<sup>29</sup> The new name refers to the age to come (Isa 62:2).

## Application

### Remark

- ❖ It is possible to write two or more sermons based on Revelation 2:12-17.
  - Pay attention to the religious-political and societal situation.
    - What is the predominant religion?
    - What is the predominant philosophy?
    - Which role does folk religion play in daily life?
  
- ❖ “Seduction, or persecution—a choice of evils which the world offers the church. For a soft-centred permissive society can be curiously hard on those who refuse to go along with it. “They are surprised that you do not now join them in the same wild profligacy, and they abuse you” (1 Pet 4:4). The gay streets of Vanity Fair can still lead to prison and a stake: either you buy or you burn. ... Antipas was apparently the only member of the church at Pergamum who had actually been martyred. But how does Christ’s commendation read? “You did not deny my faith *even* in the days of Antipas”; implying that it was always a temptation, though especially of course at that time.  
 For some, the temptation is too strong, and they give way. **Compromise creeps in; the distinction between the church and the world is blurred; there is too much tolerance, too little discipline.**<sup>30</sup>
  - Persecution might occur in countries and areas where the predominant religion has a strong hold on the government.
  - Intolerance might occur in countries where the government is proclaiming its strict neutrality and is banning all kinds of religious signs from public life.
  - Seduction might occur where materialism and wealth are “high” standards in society.
  
- ❖ **“A witnessing church will be a persecuted church.”**<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Weinrich, W. C. (Ed.). (2005, p. 29).

<sup>30</sup> Wilcock, M. (1986, p. 48).

<sup>31</sup> Beale, G. K. (1999, p. 247).

- ❖ Satan lives in the city. He is exercising his power. In this situation Christians need to be equipped with the spiritual armour:
  - “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:10-17).
- ❖ Jesus taught us:
  - “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?” (Mt 5:44-47).

## Quotes

Prayer of Polycarp (AD 69 – 155), a martyred 2<sup>nd</sup>-century Christian bishop of Smyrna.<sup>32</sup>

- ❖ Before Polycarp was martyred he prayed:

33. 'Father of your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the knowledge of you, the God of angels and of powers and of the whole creation and of the entire race of the righteous who live in your presence, I bless you that you have deemed me worthy of this day and hour, that I might receive a portion in the number of the martyrs, in the cup of Christ, unto resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and of body, in the immortality of the Holy Spirit.

34. Among these may I be received before you this day, in a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as you, the faithful and true God, have beforehand prepared and revealed, and have fulfilled.

35. Wherefore I praise you also for everything; I bless you, I glorify you, through the eternal high priest, Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, through whom, with him, in the Holy Spirit, be glory unto you, both now and for the ages to come, Amen.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Polycarp. (2017, August 12). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycarp>

<sup>33</sup> Eusebius. *Church History* (Book IV). (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250104.htm>

Also Eusebius of Caesaria. (1890). *The Church History of Eusebius*. In P. Schaff & H. Wace (Red.), A. C. McGiffert

### Other quotes

- ❖ “I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church.” (Spurgeon)
- ❖ “The chief danger of the Church today is that it is trying to get on the same side as the world, instead of turning the world upside down. Our Master expects us to accomplish results, even if they bring opposition and conflict. Anything is better than compromise, apathy, and paralysis. God, give to us an intense cry for the old-time power of the Gospel and the Holy Ghost!” (A.B. Simpson)<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> 17 Quotes About Compromise. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2017, from <https://www.christianquotes.info/quotes-by-topic/quotes-about-compromise/#axzz4plO4RX1V>

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