

Pergamos

The church that committed adultery with the world system

***Background:** Pergamos was the great religious center of the area. **Zeus was said to have been born there.** The great altar of Zeus stood on a foundation 115 feet above the ground level. Zeus the (savior god) were actively worshiped. The pagan practices that took place there can be traced back to the time of Nimrod who founded the Babylonian religion. This ancient religion included the worship of his widow Semiramis and her son, also known as Ashtoreth and Tammuz of Phoenicia, Isis and Horus of Egypt, Aphrodite and Eros of Greece and Venus and Cupid of Rome. (Hislop).

Pergamos became the center of the official religion of emperor worship. A temple for this was erected at Pergamos in 27 BC, when Cyrus conquered Babylon and founded a new center at Pergamos and the king of Pergamos became **Pontifex Maximus** (high priest), of that pagan system (Pember). Both Hislop and Pember trace the subsequent transfer of the cult from Pergamos to Rome, with the appointment of successive Caesars as high priest and ultimately, to that office in 378 AD of Damasus, the Bishop of Rome, with the complete and permanent absorption of “Babylonianism” into the Roman Church.

In 312 AD, Constantine claimed a vision from God and declared his conversion to Christianity. He assumed headship of the Church, repealed the persecution edicts of Diocletian and advanced Christians to high office in the state.

It was only a small step to convert the worship of the queen of heaven (Semiramis and her son) to the worship of Mary and an infant Jesus.

***(Most of this information on the background of Pergamos was taken (but modified by me) from Chuck Missler’s supplemental notes on *The Book of Revelation*, pages 29 - 32, Koinonia House inc., 1995. Missler used information from Hislop and Pember. Missler has more to say about the background of Pergamos than what I have here.)**

Prophetic application of this church on Earth is from 312 AD to about 600 AD (the Papacy).

12 And to the angel of the Church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Out of Jesus mouth comes a two-edged sword. His words cut so deep that they affect more than just our body of flesh.

*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.*

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

This church at Pergamos dwelled where Satan's seat is (or throne). Satan dwelled in the Babylonian priesthood. The throne spoken of could be that of Zeus but the high priest also had a throne. This throne was originally at Babylon but when Cyrus conquered Babylon, they founded a new center for the priesthood at Pergamos and the king of Pergamos became Pontifex Maximus (high priest), of that pagan system.

The seat of the Pontifex Maximus was moved to Rome at a later date when Attalus III gave Pergamos to Rome in his last will and testament (Agee, *Revelation 2000*, p68). The city of Rome is where many believe the seat of Satan is now located. In the future, at the time of the tribulation, Satan's seat will be moved back to Babylon. Some even say there is an actual physical throne that was moved from Babylon to Pergamos and that this throne is now located in the Vatican.

Jesus had commendation for this church because although they were in the heart of paganism, they did not deny his name or deny their faith in Him. Antipas may have been the dentist and physician accused of disloyalty to Caesar. Legend has it that he was condemned to death by being shut up in a brazen bull heated until red-hot (Tertullian legend).

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

We see in this verse that one of the problems Jesus had with this church is there were those in it who had the doctrine of Balaam. This prophet for hire taught the enemies of Israel how to get God to curse Israel. This was done by enticing them with women so that they would fornicate with the pagans, intermarry, worship their gods and thus corrupt Israel from within. In those days, some were teaching that the Church was free to sin with the things of the world (Gnosticism). We see in the prophetic time of this church on earth that this fornication with the world caused a spiritual disaster. The Church became infiltrated by Babylonian practices.

***Some pagan practices introduced to the Church during this period include:**

- The Rosary
- Celibacy of the clergy
- Prayers for the dead
- Adoration of saints and angels
- Worship of Mary with child
- The Mass
- Priests dressing in clothing similar to pagan priests
- Extreme unction
- Doctrine of a Purgatory
- Worship in Latin
- Prayers directed to Mary instead of to God