

AN UNHOLY MARRIAGE

Scripture: Revelation 2:12-17

Introduction:

- A. The name of this church is very instructive as to her character and to the shadow she cast across church history from that time until now and unto the end of this church age.
- B. The name Pergamos comes from the word “gamos” which refers to marriage and sexuality. The prefix “per” means thoroughly or throughout. Thus Pergamos means thoroughly married or thoroughly involved sexually.
- C. The letter to the Smyrna church covered the years of 96 A. D. to 305 A.D., a time of severe persecution by the Roman Emperors.
- D. In about 313 A.D. Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity and stopped all persecution of Christians by the state.
- E. Constantine called churches to send representatives for a church council. Many churches sent representatives; but some did not.
- F. Constantine led in the formation of an alliance out of those that came and he was enthroned as head of the church. This was the beginning of the universal, invisible church idea which now is embraced by the great majority of the Christian world.
- G. During the next few centuries, the Roman Catholic Church evolved from this unholy marriage between the government and the church.
- H. This had from its beginning the seed germ that grew into the devil’s doctrines of idolatry, immoral living and clergy rule.

I. LEARN THAT THE LORD KNOWS ABOUT HIS CHURCHS.

- A. Note some things the Lord knew about the church in Pergamos.
 - 1. He knew their works
 - 2. He knew that they lived where Satan’s seat was and where Satan lived.
 - 3. He knew that they held fast to the Lord’s name.
 - 1. He knew that they had not denied the faith once delivered. Even in the days when their pastor was martyred.
- B. This is a most sobering truth – Jesus knows all about this church and all about each member that claims membership here.
 - 1. Jesus knows all of our works – good or bad.
 - 2. Jesus knows that conditions under which we are forced to live make it hard for us to live clean, moral lives; but He expects clean living none the less.
 - 3. Jesus knows that we hold fast the name Jesus Christ.
 - 4. He knows that this church hold fast the doctrines delivered to us.

II. LEARN OF THE DANGERS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE EVIL SOCIETY IN WHICH GOD’S PEOPLE LIVE. Vs. 13, 14

- A. Pergamos was a very wicked city; the home of a many idols with the unholy life style that was included in the worship.
 - 1. The Lord charges some for holding to the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel.
 - 2. The doctrine of Balaam consisted in worshipping idols and committing fornication.

3. This reveals that some of the membership had fallen into these evils and the rest of the membership did not stand against this evil.
- B. Some held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ hated.**
1. The deeds of the Nicolaitans were named in the letter to Ephesus where Jesus said He hated them.
 2. Now, the deeds have become a doctrine, which thing Jesus hates.
 3. There are different views concerning what constitutes this doctrine, but the one that fits my thinking is Clergy Control.
 4. The word is derived from two root words. *Nikao* which means to conquer and *laos* which means the people or laity.
 5. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans then refers to church leaders ruling over the people --Bishops, Pastors, or a Pope. Whether by deeds or doctrine, Jesus hates it.

III. LEARN THAT HATEFUL DEEDS CAN BECOME HATEFUL DOCTRINES IF LEFT UNCHECKED.

- A. The hateful deeds of the Nicolaitans were not corrected. The people may not have liked it, but they did nothing to correct it.
- B. Sometime in the next few hundred years, the deeds became a doctrine.
- C. This should cause all of the Lord's churches to check all deeds by the faith once delivered to the saints and make any corrections needed.

IV. LEARN THAT REPENTENCE IS GOD'S REMEDY FOR HATEFUL DEEDS AND DOCTRINES.

- A. Jesus commands, REPENT – admit that you are wrong and ask His forgiveness.
- B. Jesus declares that He will come QUICKLY upon those who fail to repent and will fight against them with the sword of His mouth.
- C. Jesus adds another warning, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Lord says.

V. LEARN THAT THE LORD HAS SOME NOBLE PLANS FOR THOSE WHO HEED HIS WARNING.

- A. Verse 17 may be referring to the same things Paul spoke of in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day: and not to me only, but unto all them which love his appearing.
- B. No earthly person knows for sure what the Lord promises to those who live for Him; but whatever these promises contain can be put in the words of a song – It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus.

