

SEVEN

CHURCHES IN REVELATION



- Church in Pergamum
- June 7, 2026
- Shalom Ministries International

Zambia: SMI 2026 Mission Project

- Breath of Heaven Teacher Training; Preaching at the School Worship;
- Preaching at Lusaka Local Churches
- SHAPE Workshop (June 22-24): 30 African pastors



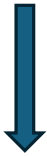
The Church in Pergamum

- The contexts of Pergamum
 - 100 miles from Ephesus, current location is Bergama in Turkey.
 - One of the most famous libraries in the ancient world (200,000 books).
- No record about the founder: Maybe Paul
 - When the empire of Alexander the Great was broken, Pergamum became the capital of the kingdom of Mysia; then Romans made it the capital city of the province of Asia.
 - When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas (Acts 16:7-8). Mysia is very close to Pergamum.
- A famous center of religious worship
 - The center of the worship of Asclepius (the emblem is the serpent; the god of healing).
 - Pergamum was the center of Caesar worship.
 - Altars to Zeus, Dionysus (the god of wine), Athena (wisdom).
 - Participation in such worship became a frequent ground for Christian martyrdom.

Revelation 2:12-17

To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

Commendation



Condemnation



Commitment

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

Who is Jesus?

- Jesus Omnipotent

- (Ephesian): Who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden lampstands (Rev. 2:1) -> The intimate presence as the Head of the Church.
- (Smyrna): The First and the Last, who died and came to life again (Rev. 2:8) -> The hope of the resurrection and strength.
- (Pergamum): Who has the sharp, double-edged sword (Rev. 2:12) -> A sharp rebuke and judgement.

- Jesus Omniscient

- I know where you live—where Satan has his throne (where Satan is king). Yet you remain true to my name (Rev. 2:13).
- Jesus knew deeds/hard work (Ephesians, Rev. 2:2); tribulation (Smyrna, Rev. 2:9) vs. where you live (Pergamum, Rev. 2:13). Satan has authority and rule in Pergamum.
- They loved a living of luxury but plagued with many wicked sins where the Anti-God forces of Satan were at the most authoritative and powerful.

Commendation

- Hold fast to **My Name**
 - To be true to, to be faithful and loyal to Jesus.
 - Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32-33).
- Did not deny the faith
 - When you had the opportunity to break your vow and walk away, you did not do it.
 - Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2).
- Antipas (Antipater)
 - You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives (Rev. 2:13).
 - He was a presbyter, disciple of John and a martyr of the church of Pergamum, who was roasted alive inside a brazen bull (AD 92).

Condemnation

- The compromising church
 - Jesus rebukes them for tolerating false teachings (the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans) that promoted idolatry and sexual immorality.
 - For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Peter 4:17).
- Following the example of Balaam
 - Balaam counseled Balak that he could ensnare Israelites by offering them prostitute (intermarry with Canaanites) and unclean food sacrificed to idols.
 - They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and enticed the Israelites to be unfaithful to the LORD in the Peor incident, so that a plague struck the LORD's people (Numbers 31:16).
 - Some of Christians attend pagan feasts with immoral, sexual sins, and the church didn't take no action.
- Following Nicolaitan's teaching
 - The Nicolaitans promoted a grace-to-license philosophy, arguing that since physical actions do not affect spiritual standing. Believers were free to participate in the local pagan culture and temple worship without consequence.

The Modern Church Faces This Same Problem

- Cultural accommodation:
 - Believers often adopt the shifting moral standards of secular society rather than holding to biblical principles.
 - Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2)
- Moral compromise:
 - Tolerating sinful behavior and justifying it in the name of grace or cultural relevance.
 - For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age (Titus 2:11-12).
- Competing loyalties:
 - Placing money, status, or materialism above absolute devotion to Christ.
 - No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24).

Commitment

- Repent
 - Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth (Rev. 2:16).
 - A congregation that tolerates any compromise in religious practices would need to repent and change their ways. If the church can't handle this, the Lord will.
- The promised reward
 - To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it (Rev. 2:17).
 - To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God (Rev. 2:7).
 - The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death (Rev. 2:11).
 - The hidden manner: Spiritual nourishment, eternal life, and deep, personal fellowship with Jesus Christ
 - A white stone with a name written on it: Representing a reward, an assurance of salvation, and a new identity in Christ. New name is deeply personal, known only to God and the individual who receives it.