

# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## Chapters 2-3 – Church History – Seven Letters to Seven Churches

### THE PERGAMOS LETTER – REVELATION 2:12-17

Today's study reveals the \_\_\_\_\_ letter written to the seven churches in Asia Minor by the apostle John—the letter to the church at Pergamos. Here we see the pagan Roman empire \_\_\_\_\_ to Christianity to form a pseudo-biblical religion. It is in reality an unholy union between Church and State. It is an alliance that will prove to be the most \_\_\_\_\_ and *counterfeit* Satanic force the world has ever known. In the last two periods of history spanning from 90 AD to 325 AD the devil has been torturing, executing, and overall persecuting the followers of Christ only to have believers and churches \_\_\_\_\_ and thrive. From 325 AD to 500 AD Satan will formulate a new diabolical plan to *counter* and *confound* the thus far successful work of God.

#### The name Pergamos means:

1. Marriage; much \_\_\_\_\_ – Rev. 2:12a
  - This name supernaturally represents the \_\_\_\_\_ of this church and its time period in church history
2. The salutation – Rev. 2:12b
  - Describes Jesus Christ as *he which hath the sharp sword with two edges*

#### There are positive commendations given:

1. It was hard working – Rev. 2:13
  - Because of their works they are praised for spreading the gospel and making disciples in spite of their difficult circumstances
2. It was located where Satan's seat is
  - a. Satan's seat, where Satan dwells
    - This was a very dangerous place for believers

When Attalus III, the priest-king of the Chaldean hierarchy, fled before the conquering Persians to Pergamos and settled there, Satan shifted his capital from Babylon to the Pergamos.

The book of Revelation – Clarence Larkin – pg. 22

The mother goddess religion of \_\_\_\_\_ found a home in Pergamos.



- b. It is Satan's \_\_\_\_\_ – It was here in Pergamos that Satan spoke *ex cathedra* (Latin for “*in the chair*”). In other words, this is where Satan's proxies speak on his behalf. Of course, this is a *counterfeit* of God's prophets and preachers. Wherever believers are being murdered for their faith in Christ, you can know for a certainty that Satan *dwells* there.
- c. They held fast Jesus' name
- The faithful in Pergamos believed the only hope for a lost and dying world is Jesus Christ. They trusted in his shed blood as sole payment for sins, that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day. Because of what the Bible clearly said about Jesus, they knew that all other religions were false.
- d. They did not deny Jesus' faith
- In the face of martyrdom
 

Modern visitors to the ancient site are told by local tour guides that Pergamos was the place where Satan was worshiped. It is assumed this is where *Antipas* was martyred.  
The Patmos Prediction – Meyer – pg. 67

While their persecutors in Pergamos were threatening believers in order to recant their scriptural beliefs, the faithful saints there did \_\_\_\_\_ deny Jesus.

**There are negative condemnations given:**

1. They held the doctrine of Balaam – Rev. 2:14
  - The doctrine of Balaam is found in Numbers 22-25. Simplified it is a *fully developed doctrine* in a church that attempts to advance the cause of God by advocating an unholy alliance with pagan beliefs and practices. This is done in order to conform the body of Christ to carnality and the spirit of the world. This will change what was biblical and spiritual into what is satanic and physical.

Rather than openly worshiping Satan the followers of this religion are deceived into thinking they are operating in the power of the Spirit worshiping Jesus and believing the gospel, but in reality, it is another Jesus, another spirit, and another gospel – Mk. 7:1-13; 2 Co. 11:1-4, 13-15
2. They held the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Nicolaitans – Rev. 2:15

- In Rev. 2:6 it is called the *deeds* of the Nicolaitans, while here in Pergamos it is a *fully developed doctrine*. It is the formal adoption of a clergy or priest class that lords over the common man. It is basically the belief that common folks cannot understand the things of God, therefore, the people need a pious hierarchy to dispense and explain religious truths and practices.

### 3. They were sternly warned – Rev. 2:16

- \_\_\_\_\_ from these evil *doctrines* or else Jesus will come quickly to dispatch them with the word and words of God. Rather than condemning themselves foolishly, Jesus will do it himself!

### Three basic applications of the Pergamos letter:

#### 1. Historically – 90 AD – 96 AD

##### a. Pergamos was the \_\_\_\_\_ capital of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor

- It was the home of a plethora of demonic religions, and was the headquarters of the Babylonian mystery cult religion...

This is the old mother goddess religion of Semiramis (widow of Nimrod and mother of Tammuz—her so-called virgin born son). They had the sign of the cross in the form of a “T” for Tammuz who was born on December 25<sup>th</sup>, celebrated with holly, mistletoe, yule logs, prayer beads, candles, and rituals magnifying his supernatural birth.

- It contained a temple built to venerate the Roman Emperor, which made it favored by \_\_\_\_\_. Its famous giant altar of Zeus overlooked the city on its citadel.
- All citizens were expected to participate in the civil religious ceremonies, or they would be suspected of disloyalty against the *State*. At these ceremonies it was common to \_\_\_\_\_ things sacrificed to idols. Other immoral pagan practices would develop, namely fornication.

##### b. The Christian church of Pergamos contained compromisers

- While facing intense persecution, many believers adopted \_\_\_\_\_ practices to appease government officials and relieve punishment
- A hierarchy of \_\_\_\_\_ was established to set the doctrinal rules for the church (Nicolaitans). This was done to determine which religious practices would be adopted; these men also wrested the scriptures in order to justify those pagan practices.

c. Early records of Pergamos

- It was customary that stones were left by provincial magistrates in the possession of those who were being judged for their religious loyalties – black for guilty, white for innocent.
- John’s inspired letter from Jesus Christ would have been exactly what the church in Pergamos needed to hear.

2. Doctrinally – 325 AD – 500 AD (Church History)

a. It is the time of the Post-Nicene Church Fathers

- The Pergamos Church Period begins with Constantine and the council of Nicaea and continues until the beginning of the Dark Ages. This time period is referred to by most church historians as the Nicene and Post-Nicene period.

Remember: The word of God prohibits believers from calling any man Father (Mt. 23:1-12)

- Some of the prominent church *fathers* were:

\_\_\_\_\_ (354-430 AD)

Athanasius (296-373 AD)

Cyril (315-386 AD)

Chrysostom (345-407 AD)

Theodorat (397-457 AD)

Basil (330 - 379 AD)

Gregory Nazianzen (329-390 AD)

Gregory of Nyssa (330-395 AD)

b. A time of much marriage

- The Pergamos period is the time in church history when under the direction of Satan, the “church” is “*married*” to the world. All of the deviations that developed as a result of the first two church periods have now fully developed into Satan’s *counterfeit* church. This imposter becomes accepted as the “true church” or the “Universal Church.” This *counterfeit* church establishes itself as authoritative. It believes it is “*seated*” as the substitute in the place of Jesus Christ to dispense salvation. It believes itself to be the sole proprietor of the Bible.
- The unholy marriage ceremony – The council of Nicaea

A council convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine in 325 AD. The council assembled for the purpose of uniting Christianity under a solidified doctrinal agreement. The pagan Roman Empire which had previously been persecuting Christians, now under Constantine's "Christian" lead, would have a new, more powerful direction. What this council actually accomplished was to officially *marry* Christianity to pagan Rome.

- How Satan brought this marriage together

Pagan Roman priests stir up the emperor Diocletian. On February 24, 303 AD he issues a series of edicts. The edicts call for:


- Christian buildings to be torn down
- Christian scriptures and writings to be burned
- Christians to forfeit all civil rights

Near the end of Diocletian's reign there are two men vying for the title of Roman Emperor:

#1 – Maxentius                      #2 – \_\_\_\_\_

In 312 AD, these two men meet in a battle to determine who will reign. This is known as the "*Battle of Milvian Bridge.*"

During this battle Constantine has a "*vision.*" In his vision he sees a cross in the sky and a voice says "*In hoc signo vinces,*" or "*By this sign thou shalt conquer.*" He says that the cross was actually the first two letters of the Greek rendering of the word "Christ."

The Greek *Chi*, which is like our letter X }  
The Greek *Rho*, which is like our letter P } 

Constantine wins the battle and becomes the new emperor of the West. Because of this *experience*, Constantine now claims to be a "Christian." (Does his experience make him a Christian? NO way! Only by grace through faith, believing on and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ alone as our substitute, are we saved)

Constantine is now Emperor and "Christian" (he will reign until 337 AD). He immediately erects a statue of himself in Rome with a cross in his right hand and the inscription: "*By virtue of this salutary sign, which is the true symbol of valor, I have preserved and liberated your city from the yoke of tyranny.*"

After this experience he has the *symbol* of the cross placed upon all his soldier's helmets and shields! Now, all true Romans will \_\_\_\_\_ under the sign of the cross!

He has a meeting with Licinius (the leader in the East) in a place called Milan, in 313 AD...

- The result is: The edict of Milan

It granted Christians absolute religious freedom  
Church property formerly confiscated would be returned  
Pagan temples that were particularly offensive to Christianity were destroyed...  
Christian clergy were exempt from taxation and were soon paid by the *State*...

By 321 AD Sunday was proclaimed a day of rest

By 324 AD Constantine promises 20 pieces of gold and a white robe for all new Christian converts  
To “convert” means to be “baptized” (in the first year 12,000 men were baptized)

Constantine invites all clergymen to an “all-expense paid” meeting to determine the official doctrines of the Church. Approximately 318 bishops assembled (*about one-sixth of all bishops in the Empire*). Eusebius of Caesarea, *known as the Father of Church History*, delivers the opening address of the council. He is seated at Constantine’s right hand throughout the proceedings. During the council they try to come to a doctrinal agreement concerning the trinity. They believed (and documented) they were championing the cause for sound doctrine. They believed that this issue was the real crisis in Christianity at this time in history. What they authored is the following:

#### THE NICENE CREED – 325 AD

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father the only begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both in heaven and in earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead: And in the Holy Spirit. But those who say: there was a time when he was not; and he was not before he was made; and he was made out of nothing, or he is of another substance or essence, or the Son of God is created, or changeable, or alterable - they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.

The “good” that came from the Council of Nicaea: The person of Jesus Christ – Jesus is God.  
God is three in one—a trinity. The horrific persecution of the church stopped.

The “better” that was *lost* at the Council of Nicaea:

The true doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_ – by grace through faith in Christ alone

The final \_\_\_\_\_ for the church is no longer the word of God

From the Council of Nicaea on, final authority is now vested in councils. To this very day, the *counterfeit* Church places the creeds developed at this and later Councils on an equal or higher level with the scriptures—which are alone the inspired preserved words of God.

#### c. The paganism that floods “Christianity” as a result of the unholy marriage

- Christmas
- Easter
- The veneration of Mary
- The rosary

- All the statues are renamed or replaced
- Pagan Roman Government Officials      to      Roman Universal Church Hierarchy
 

Pagan Roman Emperor...	Pope
Pagan Roman Senate...	College of Cardinals
Pagan Imperial Governors...	Archbishops
Pagan Provincial Governors...	Bishops
Pagan Civitas or Mayors...	Priests
Pagan Temple ( <i>Vestal</i> ) Virgins...	Nuns
Pagan Queen of Heaven (Semiramis)	The virgin Mary
Pagan gods and mycological figures	Saints
- Symbols and icons are now part of worship (crosses, steeples, fish, doves, statues, sun, etc.)
- They begin to develop Counterfeit Bibles
 

Constantine orders 50 Bibles from Eusebius for the Roman Empire. \_\_\_\_\_ *English* versions of the Bible are traced back through Eusebius to Origen’s texts which were used to produce these 50 Bibles (all except the *English* Authorized Version – King James Bible). Codex Aleph otherwise known as Sinaiticus and Codex B known as Vaticanus are the catalyst for \_\_\_\_\_ modern *English* versions. These Codex are from the 4th century and are likely one of these original 50 Bibles!

d. The historical establishment of the Universal Church during the Pergamos Church Period

- As sovereign ruler of the Roman Empire, Constantine has the wherewithal to establish the *political* structure of the new Roman Church—Constantine is the *political* architect.
- On November 13<sup>th</sup>, 354 AD in the village of Tagaste, in the province of Numidia in North Africa, not far from Hippo Regius, was born Aurelius Augustine. Augustine was an intellectual giant and religious scholar. He was an extraordinary theologian. He became one of the most influential men to ever affect human history. As the new ruling theologian of the Roman Empire, Augustine has the wherewithal to establish the theological and doctrinal structure of the new Roman Church—Augustine is the *religious* architect.

Constantine, after successfully merging the church into the secular Roman civil structure, created an unholy alliance with the satanic pagan religious world. Augustine, following in the footsteps of his predecessor Eusebius, developed the theological cesspool that brought all the false teachings from the past 300 years of paganism together with a new pseudo-bible religious cult called:

THE HOLY \_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH

Which resulted in:

The establishment of the *political* structure of the Roman Catholic Church

The establishment of a new Capital City in the East - Constantinople...

The establishment of the *theological and doctrinal* structure of the Roman Catholic Church

The ultimate establishment of Jerome's Latin Vulgate as the official Roman Bible

The establishment of the first official Pope - Leo the Great (440 -461 AD)

The adoption of the declaration that the Pope is the *Vicar of Christ*

This new *Vicar* is the spiritual lineage of the apostle Peter (Vicar literally means – substitute)

### 3. Devotionally – 2025 – Rev. 2:17

#### a. The believer's instructions concerning the world:

- We have been espoused to one husband – 2 Corinthians 11:2

- We are to be a chaste virgin – 2 Corinthians 11:2

Satan is the god of this world and by connecting us to this present evil world, he connects us to himself!

#### b. This is why God instructs every believer concerning the world:

- Do not love it – 1 John 2:15

- Do not be friends with it – James 4:4

- Do not fellowship with it – 2 Corinthians 6:14

- Do not be yoked to it – 2 Corinthians 6:14

- Do not set your affections on it – Colossians 3:2

- Do not be entangled in its affairs – 2 Timothy 2:4

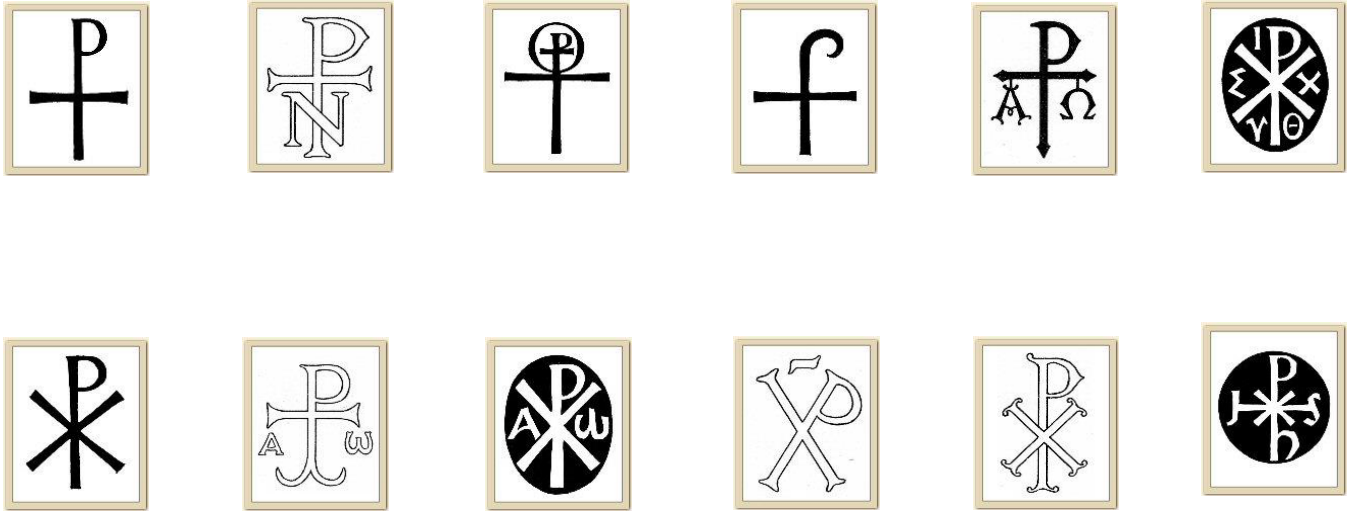
- Do not lay-up treasures in it – Matthew 6:19-21

- Do not be conformed to it – Romans 12:2

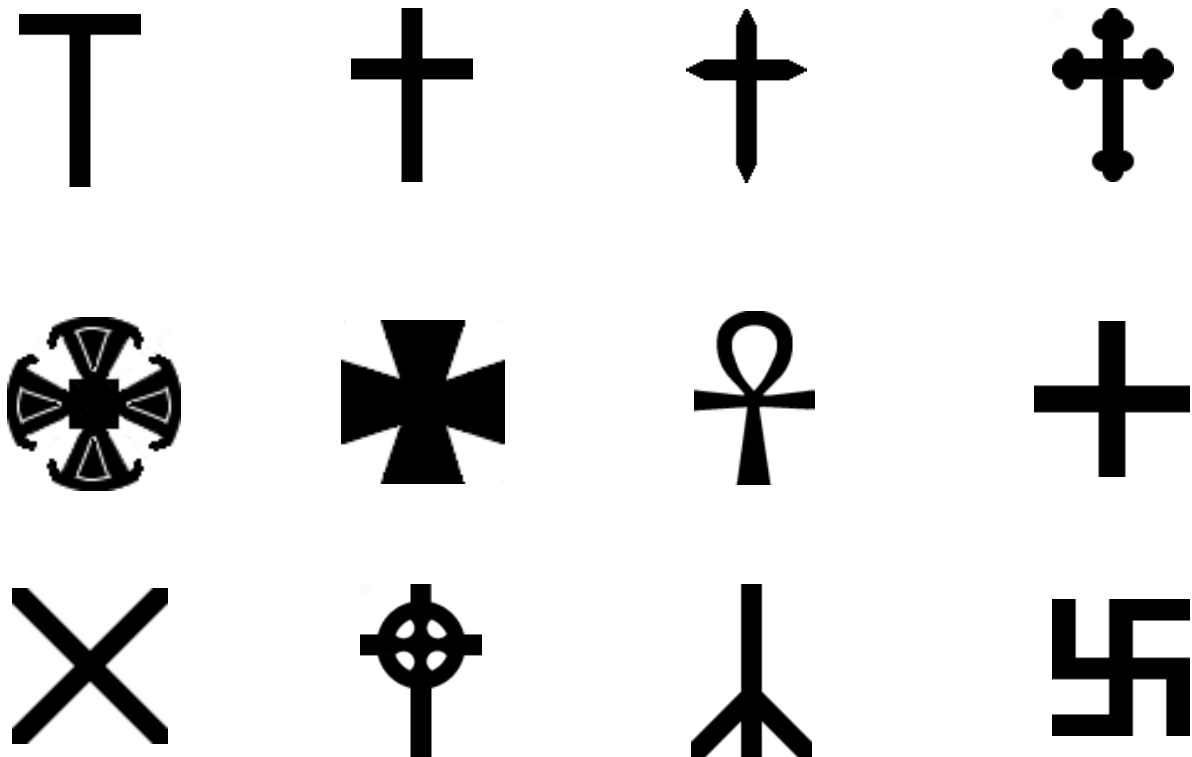
NEXT WEEK: The Thyatira Letter

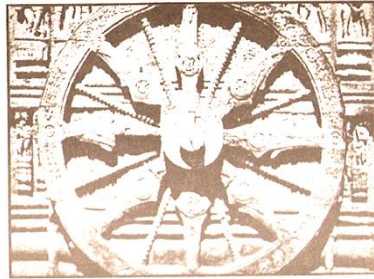


## Examples of Chi Rho symbols

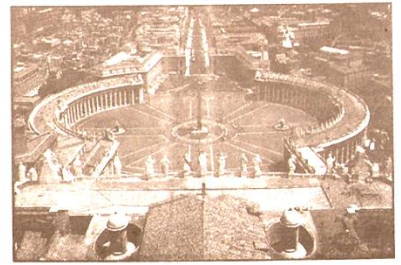


## Examples of Cross symbols





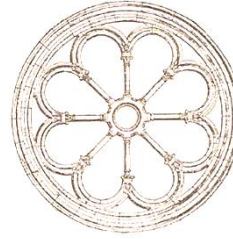
Babylonian solar wheel.



Dagon



Dagon in Mesopotamian sculpture.



Pope Paul VI wearing mitre.



St. Ambrose, by Moretto



Vatican Statue of Peter.

