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W.A. R. Bible Study

The Seven Churches of Asia Minor Bible Study

The Church in Pergamos Part 1 – Lesson 4

The Compromising Church

The Danger of Trading Eternal Truths for Temporary Trinkets

Revelation 2:12-14

On July 4, 2025, President Donald J. Trump's Big Beautiful Bill (BBB) was signed into law. It is a bill that is entangled with spiritual, ethical, and moral compromises. It is a bill that will at alarmingly, proportions devastate the lives of many lower income Americans. I have said before that we are living in a time I call The Danger of the Five D's; the danger of *disease, devastation, discrimination, democracy, and doctrine*.

Medicaid and SNAP recipients with nearly \$1trillion in Medicaid cuts and stricter work requirements and eligibility will be affected.

Nearly 8-12 million people will lose coverage by 2034. SNAP (food stamps) would suffer a \$68 billion lost causing food insecurities for millions of Americans. **Rural Communities & Local Hospitals** – Rural hospitals rely heavily on Medicaid funding and are threatened to be closed down. This could lead to major health disparities in those areas.

Working Class Household at the lower end: Yale Budget Lab Analysis: the bottom 20% would see income drop by 2.9% (\$700 a year) while the top 20% would enjoy 2.2% gain of nearly \$5,700 and year. **People in Clean Energy & Emerging Sectors** (EV's Solar, Wind) including **Calvary Baptist Church** will be affected. The bill phases out green energy tax credits and EV incentives threatening thousands of jobs.

Middle-Class Americans Over Time - Temporary middle-class tax breaks expire in 2028, while permanent corporate and wealthy tax cuts remain, shifting long-term benefits upward. **Future Generations & the Broader Economy** - The bill is predicted to add \$3.3–\$3.9 trillion to the national debt, risking higher interest rates, slower economic growth, and less fiscal flexibility. **Immigrant Communities**- The bill includes \$170–210 billion for ICE expansion, with tens of thousands of new detention

beds, border wall funding, and fees on migrants—which critics warn will fuel mass deportations and reduce asylum access.

According to the bible I read and the narrative theme of God’s care for the poor and vulnerable; this bill is an expression of self-absorption and greed with misrepresentations and manipulation. The BBB is an act of exploitation of societies vulnerable with a blending of Christian language with un-Christlike actions. This is where this bill takes a turn for some, not all, who say they represent the Church of Jesus Christ.

Many evangelical leaders and organizations strongly supported Trump’s Big Beautiful Bill although it targets the overall welfare of poor and marginalized people. Evangelicals define their support of BBB as a transactional exchange for policies for use as a bargaining chip. Many religious scholars, theologians and pastors have stood boldly and stated the Evangelical Church has exposed a moral flaw by aligning with the Trump agenda as an undermining of the Churches agenda. This is a clear case of the church compromising. The Evangelical Church is more and more viewed as partisan as opposed to being prophetic. This is nothing new. Jesus warned about the compromising Church in His letter to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Here is the lesson in a sentence: Compromise with worldly power and corruption cloaked in religious justification places the church in a dangerous light.

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Context

Pergamos symbolizes the danger of the church aligning with imperial or political powers to maintain *power, protection, and position*—at the cost of spiritual purity. *Pergamos was known for culture and education, having one of the great libraries of the ancient world, with more than 200,000 volumes.*¹ Similarly, to the times in which we live, those who called themselves believers, aligned uncritically with those who had power, position, and protection compromising their faith in Christ.

¹ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-2/>

Cultural dominance was the opiate of the masses. Cultural dominance demanded immorality, injustice, and deception.

The church of Pergamos, is the third of the seven churches Jesus addresses in the Book of Revelation. Pergamos was situated in a wealthy, religiously pluralistic city. *This city was especially known as a center for the worship of the deity known as Asclepios. Represented by a serpent, Asclepios was the god of healing and knowledge. There was a medical school at his temple in Pergamos. Because of the famous temple to the Roman god of healing, sick and diseased people from all over the Roman Empire flocked to Pergamos for relief.*² In **Revelation 2**, Jesus commends the church in Pergamos for holding fast to His name despite living in a city saturated with idolatry and imperial worship. But He also rebukes some of them for tolerating false teaching—specifically, the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.

Verse 12 – The Straight Truth - Jesus describes Himself as a sharp two-edged sword. *The description of the sword in Revelation 1:18 helps us to associate it with the mouth of Jesus. Jesus will confront this church with His word, and they will feel the sharp edges.*³ **Hebrews 4:12** - *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged*

² <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-2/>

³ Ibid

sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Jesus would use this sharp two-edged sword to reveal truth and to make some separation among the Christians in Pergamos. Jesus is the **Straight Truth**.

Verse 13 – The Satanic Throne - Jesus commended the believers there: *You dwell where Satan's throne is, and you hold fast to My name.* Despite pressure and persecution, they did not deny their faith.

Pergamos was known as the throne of Satan— *In the ancient Cretan city of Pergamon (Pergamum) is said to be the City and Throne of Satan, and home to one of the seven churches written about by Saint John in the Book of Revelation. It was the original uncorrupted church of Christ that later became the seat of Antichrist or Throne of Satan.*⁴ Pergamos was the epicenter of idol worship. *The seat of Satan was a reference to the center of idolatry, as Pergamos practiced sun worship, which originated from Babylonian idolatry, and their priests used the same vestments and title of pontiff.*⁵ Jesus commended Antipas. Many scholars agree that Antipas is a mystery. However, we know him to be a martyr for Jesus

⁴ <https://www.gnosticwarrior.com/pergamon.html>

⁵ <https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/29186/in-revelation-213-why-does-jesus-say-that-satans-throne-is-in-pergamum>

Christ. *Church tradition says that Antipas was a physician suspected of secretly propagating Christianity. The Aesculapian (members of the medical guild) accused Antipas of disloyalty to Caesar. Upon being condemned to death, Antipas was placed inside a copper bull, which was then heated over a fire until it was red-hot.*⁶ Pergamos was known as the Satanic throne.

Verse 14 – The Stumbling Block - Verse 14: Jesus also gives a sharp corrective warning: *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.* Here Christ issues a sharp warning: Some in the church had begun to compromise. They tolerated false teachings, mingling truth with error, and spiritual loyalty with cultural convenience. *Balaam was a prototype of all corrupt teachers. According to Numbers 22-24 and 31, Balaam combined the sins of immorality and idolatry to please Balak, the king of Moab, because he could not curse Israel directly.*⁷ The stumbling block was related with idolatry and sexual immorality. *If the church in Pergamos*

6

⁷ <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-2/>

*had those who did hold the doctrine of Balaam, it showed they had tendencies towards both idolatry and immorality.*⁸ This church clearly compromised to appease culture but to abandon Christ.

⁸ Ibid

Bible Questions

1. What did the Church of Pergamos compromise?
2. Why does Jesus refer to Himself as he which hath the sharp sword with two edges?
3. What works was Jesus referring to in verse 13?
4. What does the Satan's seat refer to and who was Antipas?
5. What was Jesus' correction for the Church of Pergamos?

Keeping It Real

1. What are the challenges of the Church holding fast to Christ in this hostile BBB culture?
2. How much do cultural values challenge our faith?
3. Should the church teach on these issues?
4. What pillar of F.O.O.M.M. does this lesson relate to?