

# A Study Of The Book Of Revelation

June 14, 2020

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Revelation 2:8-11

## A Church Under Pressure Revelation 2:8-11

- I. Their Challenges
- II. Their Strength

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Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Strength

- A. *Works* (verse 9)
  - 1. Active – faith was not dead
  - 2. Worked – didn't merely talk the talk – they walked the walk!
  - 3. Apparently good – no condemnation

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Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Strength

- A. *Works* (verse 9)
- B. *Rich* (verse 9)
  - 1. In what really mattered.
    - *They were rich in what counted most.*  
John 6:27; Matthew 6:19-21; 16:26.
  - 2. Faith, character, and works
    - James 2:5, "*Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world (to be) rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?*"

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Revelation 2:8-11

## A Church Under Pressure Revelation 2:8-11

- I. Their Challenges
- II. Their Strength
- III. Their Encouragement

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Revelation 2:8-11

## A Church Under Pressure Revelation 2:8-11

Revelation 2:8-9

*"These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived (again):*

*I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they art not, but are a synagogue of Satan."*

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Encouragement

## A. Resurrection – Gives Hope (verse 8)

“The Lord’s victory over death and His present position should inspire confidence within a church that was about to suffer imprisonment and tribulation even unto death.”

“For He who became dead is now alive and able to give victory over every obstacle, even death.”

Hailey, pages 125, 127

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Encouragement

## A. Resurrection – Gives Hope (verse 8)

## B. God Knows All (verse 8)

1. Knows the truth about you – what you really are at heart
2. Knows the truth about your enemy.

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Encouragement

## A. Resurrection – Gives Hope (verse 8)

## B. God Knows All (verse 8)

Revelation 2:10, “*Fear not (cf. 1:17) the things which thou art about to suffer*”

- Few now suffer the kind of persecution endured by the early Christians. Matthew 10:21-25, 34ff; Hebrews 10:32ff

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Encouragement

Revelation 2:10, “*Fear not (cf. 1:17) the things which thou art about to suffer*”

“*behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison,*

- Prison in those days was understood to be a prelude to execution.

“*that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days.*”

- Ten days represented a full period of testing which can be measured.
- Or perhaps it meant that they would suffer to their full limit.

## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Encouragement

Revelation 2:10, “*Fear not (cf. 1:17) the things which thou art about to suffer*”

“*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*”

- If their faith was loyal even to the point of death, the Lord promised an eternal crown in honor of their triumph over tribulation and death. 2 Timothy 4:6-8; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 Corinthians 9:25ff
- The hope that we have of God’s promised inheritance of the faithful should produce in us “*joy unspeakable.*” 1 Peter 1:3-9

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Encouragement

## A. Resurrection – Gives Hope (verse 8)

## B. God Knows All (verse 8)

1. Knows the truth about you – what you really are at heart
2. Knows the truth about your enemy

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Encouragement

C. *Can Overcome* (verse 11) *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”*

- All men will experience the “first death” (i.e., physical, Hebrews 9:27).
- But those who turn away from the Lord will suffer eternal separation (i.e., spiritual death) in a place described as “a lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8).

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## Revelation 2:8-11

“The beauty of this city, which rivaled Ephesus, was the beauty of a resurrection. Seven hundred years before, old Smyrna had been destroyed, and had lain in ruins for three centuries. The city of John’s time was one which had risen from the dead. And resurrection was to be the experience of its church also.”

Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Revelation*, page 45

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Test (verse 10)

A. *The Source: The Devil*

B. *The Treatment*

1. Suffer
2. Prison (meaning: exile, trial, arrest, fine, death)
3. Tribulation

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Test (verse 10)

A. *The Source: The Devil*

B. *The Treatment*

C. *The Duration*

1. 10 Days
2. Full, complete, and extensive
3. Will come to an end

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Their Test (verse 10)

A. *The Source: The Devil*

B. *The Treatment*

C. *The Duration*

D. *The Reaction*

1. Faithful anyway – even when under pressure
2. Unto death – to the point of death

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## Revelation 2:8-11

## Polycarp




- Lived 70 – 155 AD
- A direct pupil of the apostle John
- Martyred on Saturday, February 23, 155
- Probably present when this letter was received
- Charged to worship Caesar and renounce Christ.

“Fourscore and six years have I served him, and he has never done me injury; how then can I now blaspheme my King and savior?”

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Revelation 2:8-11

**Polycarp**




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- A direct pupil of the apostle John
- Martyred on Saturday, February 23, 155
- Probably present when this letter was received
- Charged to worship Caesar and renounce Christ.

“You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and is then extinguished, but you know nothing of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. Why are you waiting? Bring on whatever you want.”

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Revelation 2:8-11

**Polycarp**



- Lived 70 – 155 AD
- A direct pupil of the apostle John
- Martyred on Saturday, February 23, 155
- Probably present when this letter was received
- Charged to worship Caesar and renounce Christ.


***Burned Alive At The Stake***

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Revelation 2:8-11

How Does This Compare?

Faithful unto Death  
Burned Alive



- Half-hearted service
- Miss lot of services
- Casual / Carefree Spirit
- Don't Have Time to ...
- Lack of Spirituality

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Revelation 2:8-11

**Their Test (verse 10)**

- A. *The Source: The Devil*
- B. *The Treatment*
- C. *The Duration*
- D. *The Reaction*
- E. *The Result*
  - 1. Crown of life – Victory (heaven)
  - 2. Not hurt in the second death

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Revelation 2:8-11

Wicked  
Ungodly  
Unfaithful

DEATH

Another Death (2<sup>nd</sup>)  
HELL

Righteous  
Godly  
Faithful

Life Eternal  
HEAVEN

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**A Church Under Pressure**  
**Revelation 2:8-11**

- I. Their Challenges
- II. Their Strength
- III. Their Encouragement
- IV. Their Test

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**Revelation 2:12-17**

**“Letter to the Church at Pergamum”**  
*The Church That Compromised*

- Identification of the Author (verse 12)
- Commendation (verse 13)
- Condemnation (verses 14-15)
- Plea to Repent (verse 16)
- Promise if they Overcome (verses 10-11)

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**“Letter to the Church at Pergamum”**  
*The Church That Compromised*

**Key Verse**

**Revelation 2:14**

**“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.” (NKJV)**

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**Letters To Seven Church of Asia**  
(Revelation 2-3)

- Some were **good** (Smyrna, Philadelphia)
- Some were **good / bad** (Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis)
- One was **bad** (Laodicea)

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**Letters To Seven Church of Asia**  
(Revelation 2-3)

Good

Bad

Good/  
Bad

Good/  
Bad

Good

Good/  
Bad

Good/  
Bad

- Most of us would like to be in a GOOD church (no condemnation)
- None of us would have anything to do with a BAD church (no commendation)
- Reality: may be in a church that is GOOD / BAD (Some commendation and some condemnation)

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**The Church At Pergamum**  
(Revelation 2:18-11)

**Get a letter – You Live Where Satan Does and You Have Struck A Compromise**

Dear  
Pergamum,  
Don't  
Compromise

**A Church That  
Compromised**

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**P  
E  
R  
G  
A  
M  
U  
M**

- 30 miles North of Smyrna
- Northernmost of 7 churches
- “The proper form of the name is *Pergamum*” (M.R. Vincent)
- 190 BC with help of Rome expelled Antiochus III (Syrian king) – King Attalus III bequeathed the city and the entire kingdom to Rome.
- The official capital of Asia Minor.

Of all 7 cities Pergamum was perhaps the worst!

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**P  
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- No mention of this church any where else in the NT.
- Thoroughly pagan city.
- A city of temples devoted to sensuous worship. Various patron deities were worshiped here: Zeus, Athene, and Dionysus.
- Especially abhorrent to Christians was the temple built in honor of Aesculapius, the god of healing, whose emblem was that of a serpent, a symbol to Christians of the serpent of Eden.

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**P  
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M**

- Perhaps of greatest significance affecting the church was that Pergamum was the center of the imperial cult.
- In 29 BC the first temple was approved to be built in Asia in honor of the divine Augustus and the goddess Roma.
- The establishment of this temple and the development of the imperial cult gave rise to the city's enforcement of loyalty to "Lord Caesar."

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**A Church That Compromised**  
Revelation 2:12-17

**The Author:**  
Revelation 2:12, "These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword" (1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21)

*rhomphaia* – "a large, broad sword used for both cutting and piercing." (Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain)  
The sword indicates keen and accurate judgment.  
*machaira* – cf. Hebrews 4:12 "death by violence or execution" (Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domain). Used of the short Roman sword, used in Revelation 6:4; 13:10, 14; Romans 13:4

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**A Church That Compromised**  
Revelation 2:12-17

**I. Its Strength**

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Revelation 2:12-17

**I. Its Strength**

**A. Works (verse 13),** "I know where thou dwellest, (even) where Satan's throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth."

1. Active
2. Busy
3. Do more than think, talk, and plan

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## Revelation 2:12-17

**I. Its Strength**

- A. Works (verse 13)** *"I know where thou dwellest, (even) where Satan's throne is"*
- B. Pergamum had become the stronghold of Satan's activity. He had established himself as a king on his throne in this city.**
- C. Christians were not told to leave a situation or to live in isolation.**
- D. Instead, the Lord encouraged them to stay and fight. They could still shine as a light in the midst of darkness.**

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## Revelation 2:12-17

**I. Its Strength****C. Hold fast to my name (verse 13)**

The emperor insisted upon being addressed as *dominus et deus*, a title corresponding to the one given to Jesus in Thomas' confession, *"my Lord and my God"* (John 20:28).

1. Christ is Lord of Lords (Revelation 17:14) – cannot acknowledge any other Lord (i.e. Caesar)
2. Recognize his authority (Acts 4:7)

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