

# The Church at Fifty: Seven Case Studies from Revelation

Case Studies #2 and #3—The Churches in Smyrna and Pergamos

*Revelation 2:8–17*

- I. **A description of Smyrna:** Smyrna was a seaport, and its prosperity on account of its position was well established before Christian times and continues (as Izmir) to this day —2:8a.
- II. **The portrayal of Jesus:** Christ revealed Himself as the pre-eminent One who conquered death and who provides resurrection life —2:8b.
- III. **His commendation:** The Lord of the church in Smyrna commended her for faithful obedience in the midst of persecution from the Jews and for being spiritually wealthy in the midst of poverty —2:9.
- IV. **His censure:** The church at Smyrna receives no censure from the Savior. Often a persecuted church permits the fires of trials to purify its life.
- V. **His exhortation:** Christ promises the believers of Smyrna the crown of life if they choose to not fear the coming Satan-led persecution in which they will be tested by being thrown into prison and possibly even lose their lives —2:10.
- VI. **His promise:** The Lord promises those who hear His words and act on them that they will never experience His judgment but will have His life —2:11.
- VII. **A description of Pergamos:** Pergamos rivaled Ephesus and Smyrna as one of the leading cities of the area. It claimed the place as the religious center of the area with numerous temples including one dedicated to Augustus, which described him as Lord, Savior, and God —2:12a.
- VIII. **The portrayal of Jesus:** He is the one who possesses a sharp two-edged sword which looks at His piercing Word —2:12b.
- IX. **His commendation:** The church at Pergamos remained faithful to Christ, refusing to deny Him in the face of severe persecution —2:13.
- X. **His censure:** Christ rebukes the church at Pergamos for their moral and doctrinal compromise —2:14–15.
  - They pressed their freedoms causing others to stumble into immorality.
  - They embraced the doctrines of the Nicolaitans, indicating their theological compromise of the truth.
- XI. **His exhortation:** Repent (change your mind) or face the sharp sword of His words of discipline and rebuke —2:16.
- XII. **His promise:** Christ promises to give two rewards to those who overcome by embracing His Word: hidden manna and a white stone with a new name that only the recipient knows —2:17.