

# Bible Study #20

*2/22/22*

# Revelation 2 (Cont) Pergamum

- The two edge sword refers back to **Revelation 1:16**
- Satan's throne – the immense temple of *Zeus* that dominated the horizon when one approached the city
- The Jewish and early Christian culture understood the primary Roman gods of their pantheon was understood as simply Satan
- *Zeus* was the primary god of the Greek pantheon and was seen as a manifestation of Satan and the sub gods were his primary demons who were everywhere

# Revelation 2 (Cont)

- Paul, in *1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:20\** said what the pagans worshiped were demons
- Any pagan god had a demonic personality, a fallen angel that was driving it, and doing things to those who were worshiping it, to include beating them to death
- This was the goal of Satan, their general
- Jesus told John that He knew where Satan's throne was as there was a great deal of heavy demonic activity in that city as there was much *Zeus* worship going on

# Revelation 2 (Cont)

- Father said that we could imagine what was going on demonically in that city
- And, we see Jesus stating that with all that evil going on, they did not deny His name even under duress as they witnessed to Him as His faithful ones
- According to tradition, *Antipas* was Bishop of Pergamum, and martyred around 92 A.D.
- This helps us date the **Book of Revelation**
- Jesus (through John) criticizes him for those who were keeping the teaching of *Balaam* (**Numbers 22-24**)

# Revelation 2 (Cont)

- According to Numbers, *Balak* hired the prophet *Balaam* to curse Israel as they paused in their journey to the Promised Land in ***Moab***
- After failing to curse Israel, *Balaam* told *Balak* that the only way to defeat them was to introduce the Israeli men to the Moabite prostitutes, and thus get them to worship their Moabite gods (**Numbers 25:1-5**)
- Even though Balaam was long dead, his actions put a stumbling block in front of the sons of Israel that they might eat the food sacrificed to idols
- This apparently was what was going on in *Pergamum*

# Revelation 2 (Cont)

- Father said that this was *pornea* and it went hand in hand with the food offered to idols discussed in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians**
- Pagans who had converted to Christianity were often tempted to go back to the temple system of *Corinth* and eat food offered to idols, and while there, visit the *temple prostitutes*
- The Christians in *Pergamum* were suffering from this problem
- This letter also indicated that they were following the teaching of the *Nicolaitans* (as in **Revelations 2:6**)

# Revelation 2 (Cont)

- As discussed earlier, the *Nicolaitans* were heretics who followed *Nicolas*, one of the seven Deacons in **Acts 6:5** who had a dangerously casual attitude toward idolatry and sexual immorality
- The last phrase discussing the white stone was speaking about the Eucharist
- Father pointed out that each of these little letters made reference to eternal life as the Eucharist was understood to be a participation in the resurrection of Jesus and eternal life
- **Revelation 2:18 - 3:22** contains the rest of the 7 letters
- For the sake of time, we will now continue with **Revelation 4**

# Revelation 4



# Revelation 4

- **Revelation 4**

- Father began by referring us back to **Revelation 1:3** (where John told his readers that the time was “*near*”)
- In this passage, he speaks about, what must take place “*after this*”
- Hereafter is governed by “*soon*” and “*near*”! (not about events in 2022)
- We have just heard about what was going on in the seven churches of *Asia Minor*
- From here on, we will be introduced to what will take place “*here after*” (to those in all of the churches)

# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- As discussed earlier, these events were relative to those to whom John was writing (those living at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century or beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.)
- Father discussed a time when he heard someone say that the **Book of Revelation** is a really good thing to read because it is the only book in the Bible that contains a “blessing” (**Revelation 1:3**)
- For a second time Father explained that this meant that if one read this book, they would be blessed by God!
- Father hoped that any time we read the Word of God, we will be blessed

# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- Father once again put this passage into context
- The seven letters were a warning to those Christians to be careful with what they did as it would impact on whether or not these churches would survive the continuing Roman onslaught against Christians
- This was what the seven letters are all about
- John was warning them not to apostatize, and worship pagan gods
- If they did that, God would remove their lampstands (meaning that their churches would die)

# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- If they remained fast, some members would die, but others would live, and the persecution would soon be over
- They were being called to patiently endure until the end of the persecution (**Revelation 1:3** again gives the historical context)
- The **Book of Revelation** was written and passed on to *Ephesus*
- The Bishop would have gathered his flock and read them the letter and arranged for copies to be made for delivery to all the seven churches
- John was warning that if any of the churches did not hear and heed this information they were going to be in big trouble

# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- John gave them a choice: apostatize and their church will be wiped out or remain faithful, and even though some may die your church will survive
- He told them that they had to endure the present tribulation which will soon be over
- Father compared the **Book of Revelation** to the cheering of a crowd at the finish line of a race that encouraged an exhausted runner from giving up
- The persecutions of Caesar Domitian (81-96 A.D.) had steadily been getting worse for several years and at this point they did not know where their beloved Apostle John was
- Each day more people (including women and children) were being rounded up and burned at the stake

# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- So this book arrived at the moment they needed reassurance (and cheering on to finish the race) the most to prevent Christianity from being extinguished in Asia Minor
- Father said this was exactly what they needed to hear to give them courage and energy to hold on to the faith
- At this point, Father asked that we highlight **Revelation 1:3** and **Revelation 22:18-19** which are often misunderstood

# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- These passages contain a serious warning to make sure that everything in the original copy was written down as other copies were made for the rest of the Churches
- This was said to ensure that the scribes did due diligence as this critical information was coming directly from God through John
- Thus, John provided a blessing at the beginning and end of the book for those who read and heard its message and avoided apostatizing
- There was also a curse at the end to anyone who did not loyally pass on this information

# Revelation 4

From Father Sebastian's Parish Presentation



# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- **Revelation 4:1-3** *“After this I looked, and lo, heaven an open door....and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald”*
  - The voice we heard speaking should remind us of **Revelation 1** which continues to be governed by “soon” and “near”
  - The first image is that of Jesus sitting on the throne of God (**Daniel 7**)
  - Father pointed out that this point our attention should shift to the imagery of **Ezekiel 1\***
    - The prophet Ezekiel, while in the exile in Babylon, had a vision of the throne of God
    - Many people, when reading this section, do not see what looks like a throne above which is sitting on the throne one like the son of man

# Revelation 4 (Cont)

- Here, in **Revelation 4**, John is pointing out not just the ancient of days of **Daniel 7**, but Jesus sitting on the throne in **Ezekiel**
- This would be a strange image if we were not familiar with **Ezekiel**

# 16 Ezekiel 590-571 BC Exile

- Ezekiel was:
  - Called while his people were reeling in the depths of spiritual desolation and confusion
  - A priest born in Judah during the reign of Josiah (640-609 BC)
  - A younger contemporary of Jeremiah
  - Called by God at the age of 13
  - Exiled to Babylon along with 10,000 including King Jehoiachin in the 2<sup>nd</sup> exile in 597 BC

# Ezekiel

- Married but his wife died in 587 BC just before the fall of Jerusalem
- An exilic prophet whose visions were presented to the Jewish elders after arriving in Babylon
- His book contains four sections:
  - His calling and oracles of judgment against Judah and Jerusalem
  - Oracles against foreign nations

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- A promise of future restoration for Judah
- A vision for the restored temple and land
- He was called to foretell God's faithfulness in the midst of trials
- The fall of Jerusalem was the turning point in his oracles after which he presented God's judgment , a promise of salvation, and restoration
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# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ez 1 – His first vision where he sees the throne of God in a heavenly temple (as did Moses in Ex 25 - hard to describe)
  - He sees *Cherubim* (angels) each with four faces reflecting the great powers of God:
    - A man as a sign of wisdom
    - A Lion as a symbol of prophesy
    - An Ox as a symbol for strength
    - An Eagle as a symbol of speed
  - He sees God as “one like the son of man”

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ez 2 Out of mercy God sends his prophet to his “stiff necked people”
  - Some Judeans are still in Jerusalem
  - Two groups of exiles
  - The understanding of those in Babylon is wrong as the city and temple will be destroyed

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ez 4 Presents the most important vision as he describes what will happen to Jerusalem
- Ez 5 He demonstrates how serious things are becoming by shaving his head and beard
- Ez 8 God takes him to Jerusalem and shows him the abominations including Judeans worshiping East (the sun god)



# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ez 9 God places his mark on the forehead of the righteous before destroying the rest
  - The mark of baptism
  - Fall back on the edict of Moses to wear the phylacteries
  - Concern of the people as to where God will dwell when the temple is destroyed

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ez 10 He sees the Glory Cloud leave the temple
- Ez 11 He sees the Glory Cloud being taken to the Mount of Olives and beyond
  - Look at 2 Mac 2:4-7
  - Jeremiah is giving almost the same message to those in Jerusalem
- Ex 15 He depicts Jerusalem like a bad vine being burned

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ez 16 He depicts Jerusalem like a little girl who grow up to be a harlot
- Ez 22 Provides a list of the sins of the people
- Ez 24 He is told by God not to mourn the death of his wife
- Ez 33 A runner arrives in Babylon with the news of Jerusalem's destruction

# Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ez 34 God promises a shepherd for Israel who will seek out the lost sheep
- Ez 37 The restoration in the image of the dry bones

# The Prophet Ezekiel

Father Sebastian's class

# Ezekiel 593-571 BC Exilic

- Was born into a priestly family in 623 BC and lived during the reforms of King Josiah of Judah (640-609 BC)
- Witnessed the fall of the Assyrian Empire and the growing power of Babylon beginning in 626 BC
- Lived through the foreign control of Jerusalem by Egypt (609 BC) followed by the first Babylon incursion (605 BC)
- Witnessed the first deportation to Babylon in 603 BC of many leading members of the Jewish community including the prophet *Daniel*
- Witnessed the looting of Jerusalem and the temple in 597 BC

# PROPHETS

Biblical prophets were God's servants especially called to be his witnesses. God sent prophets to his people during times of crisis. Old Testament prophets were intermediaries between God and his people. They brought the word of God to people. As Scriptures says, *"Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets"* (Amos 3:7).


PROPHET	PROPHESED	DATE (BC)*	HOME/LOCATION
Samuel	To Israel	1060-1020	Ramah
Elijah	To Israel	870-845	Tishbe
Elisha	To Israel	845-800	Abel Meholah
Jonah	To Nineveh	781	Gath-hepher
Amos	To Israel	765-754	Tekoa
Isaiah	To Judah	760-673	Jerusalem
Hosea	To Israel	758-725	Israel
Micah	To Judah	738-698	Moreseth-gath
Nahum	Concerning Nineveh	658-615	Elkosh
Jeremiah	To Judah	650-582	Anathoth
Zephaniah	To Judah	640-626	Unknown
Ezekiel	To Exiles in Babylonia	620-570	Babylon
Daniel	In Babylon	620-540	Babylon
Habakkuk	To Judah	608-598	Unknown
Obadiah	Concerning Edom	590	Judah
Zechariah	To Judah	522-509	Jerusalem
Haggai	To Judah	520	Jerusalem
Malachi	To Judah	465	Unknown
Joel	To Judah	450	Jerusalem

\* Dates are approximate

# Israelite Kings Date Chart

(Based on the chronology of John Bright)

Dennis Bratcher

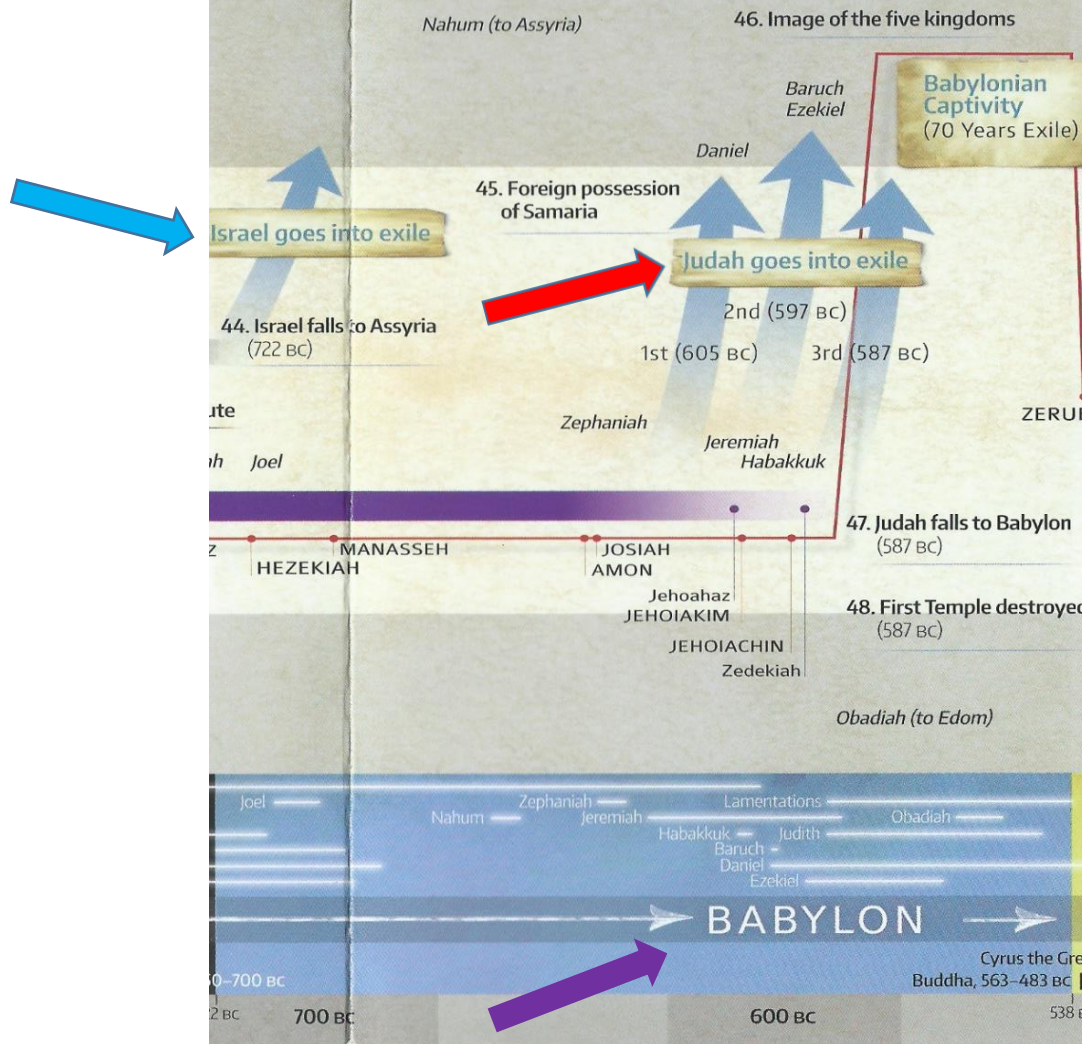
The United Monarchy				
Dates (BC)		Kingdom of the Israelites		
1020-1000		Saul		
1000-961		David		
961-922		Solomon		
The Divided Kingdoms				
Dates (BC)	Israel (Northern)		Judah (Southern)	Dates (BC)
922-901	Jeroboam I		Rehoboam	922-915
			Abijah	915-913
901-900	Nadab		Asa	913-873
900-877	Baasha			
877-876	Elah		Jehoshaphat	873-849
876	Zimri	Tibni		
876-869	Omri			
869-850	Ahab			
850-849	Ahaziah			
849-843	Joram (Jehoram)		Jehoram	849-843
843-815	Jehu		Ahaziah	843
			Athaliah (non-Davidic Queen)	843-837
815-802	Jehoahaz		Joash	837-800
802-786	Jehoash (Joash)		Amaziah	800-783
786-746	Jeroboam II		Uzziah (Azariah)	783-742
746-745	Zachariah		Jotham (co-regent)	750-742
745	Shallum		Jotham (king)	742-735
745-737	Menahem			
737-736	Pekahiah			
736-732	Pekah			
732-724	Hoshea		Ahaz	735-715
721	Fall of Samaria		Hezekiah	715-687
			Manasseh	687-642
			Amon	642-640
			Josiah	640-609
			Jehoahaz	609
			Jehoikim (Eliakim)	609-598
			Jehoiachin (Jeconiah)	598-597
			Zedekiah (Mattaniah)	597-587





# EXILE

2 Kings 17-25



# RETURN

Ezra

Nehemiah

51. Esther saves her people

1st (538 BC) 3rd (444 BC)

2nd (525–457 BC)

Three Returns

Ptolemies

Seleucids

52. Nehemiah returns and rebuilds Jerusalem walls (444 BC)

JERUSALEM

49. Zerubbabel rebuilds the Temple (537 BC)

50. Ezra returns and teaches (458 BC)

Haggai  
Zechariah

Malachi

Zechariah  
Haggai

Esther

Malachi

2 Maccabees

PERSIA

GREECE

Great Wall of China, 300 BC  
Marius, 511–479 BC

Plato, 427–347 BC | Socrates, 470–399 BC | Aristotle, 384–322 BC | Alexander the Great, 336–323 BC

Septuagint begun, c. 283 BC | Antiochus Epiphanes, 175–163 BC | Great Wall of China completed, 206 BC

500 BC

400 BC

300 BC

200 BC

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