

## **ANTIPAS, THE FAITHFULL WITNESS OF PERGAMUM**

Today, all that's left of the city of Pergamum now in modern-day Turkey, are ruins. But when the Apostle John wrote his letter to the church there, it was one of the most influential cities in the Roman Empire.

In A.D. 92, according to tradition, Antipas of Pergamum, a personal disciple of the Apostle John, was roasted to death in a brazen or copper bull during the persecutions of Emperor Domitian.

YaHUsHa called Antipas “My faithful witness” in Rev. 2:13. The word “martyr” comes originally from the ancient Greek where it is a legal term for a “witness”, as for someone who would give a testimony in a court of law.

To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: *‘I know your works, and where you dwell... where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to my name, and did not deny my faith even in the days in which Antipas was my faithful martyr (witness), who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.’*

Pergamum was a political center from where all the rulings were made that affected the whole of Asia Minor. The people living in Pergamum were inventors. The city was well known for the arts. The city also had a big theater where ten thousand people could be seated. Its library was the second largest in the ancient world. Marc Antony gave it as wedding present to Cleopatra.

It was a thriving city, but had much occult practices and it is there where the “Throne of Satan” was and it became relevant because of the healing center in the city.

The healing center was called the “Asklepion”, built in honor of Asklepios, the Greek serpent-god, but this was no ordinary doctor's visit. Patients entered through an underground tunnel. Then they drank a sedative, and spent the night in the dormitories of the Asklepion, while snakes crawled around them all night. They were told that the serpent-god Asklepios would speak to them in their dreams and give them a diagnosis. It was believed that the snakes carried the healing power of Asklepios, and if a snake slithered across you while you were sleeping at night, that was a divine sign that healing power was coming to you.

The people of Pergamum worshipped a myriad of Greek and Roman gods, but when Christianity arrived with the belief in just one god, the city's pagan priests went on the attack and their most famous victim was a man named Antipas because, as the bishop of Pergamum, his faith became a problem for them. It is also said that Antipas might have been a physician and that he was suspected of secretly propagating Christianity.

He had cast out many devils and his witness to YaHUsHa Messiah by word and deed and miracles of healing, began turning the people of Pergamum from offering sacrificial worship to idols that can neither see, nor hear, nor move, nor breathe.

When instructed to serve the pagan gods, Antipas calmly answered that he was not about to serve the demons that fled from him who is a mere mortal. He said he worshiped YaHUsHa the Almighty, and he

would continue to worship Him. The pagan priests retorted that their gods existed from of old, whereas YaHUsHa was not from of old but was crucified under Pontius Pilate as a criminal. The saint replied that the pagan gods were the work of human hands and that everything said about them was filled with iniquities and vices. He steadfastly confessed his faith in YaHUsHa Messiah.

The pagan priests then went to the Roman governor and complained that the prayers of Antipas were driving their spirits out of the city and that he was hindering the worship of their gods.

It is said that as punishment, the governor ordered Antipas to offer a sacrifice of wine and incense to a statue of the Roman emperor and declare that the emperor was "lord and god."

But Antipas refused and if one would reject the divinity of the emperor, then that is the equivalent of rejecting the city of Rome and believers were killed for this.

Antipas was thus sentenced to death on the Altar of Zeus. Most of that altar still survives today, and surrounding it are some of the world's most famous marble friezes. They depict the battle between the Greek gods and the giants.



At the top of the altar was a hollow bronze bull, which some sources say was designed for human sacrifice. They would take the victim, place him inside the bull, and it is said that they would tie him in such a way that his head would go into the head of the bull. Then they would light a huge fire under the bull, and as the fire heated the bronze, the person inside of the bull would slowly begin to roast to death. As the victim would begin to moan and to cry out in pain, his cries would echo through the pipes in the head of the bull so it seemed to make the bull come alive.

Other sources say that the pagan priests became enraged and dragged Antipas to the altar, and there they threw him into the glowing, red-hot copper or brazen metal bull where they normally put their sacrifices to the idols to cast demons out of their own people.

But even in the midst of the flames, the elderly bishop Antipas died while praying for his assembly. Instead of screaming, he loudly prayed to Elohim to receive his soul and strengthen the faith of the followers of YaHUsHa Messiah, and begged Elohim to forgive those who were inflicting this torment on him. He then departed as peacefully as if he fell asleep.

Today, all that is left of this Throne of Satan is the foundation, but the Altar of Zeus can still be seen in Berlin in Germany where it went on display in the city's Pergamon Museum in 1930. Both Hitler and President Obama honored it.

That is the history and testimony of Antipas, YaHUsHa's faithful witness, who is still witnessing to YaHUsHa as Messiah, every time that this letter is being read (compare Rev. 12:17).

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