

Revelation Chapter 2 Second Continued

Revelation 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;"

(313 to 590 AD). The State Church. Here we have (The danger of doctrinal compromise).

Located about sixty miles north of Smyrna is Pergamos, which at one time was the official Asian center for the imperial cult. It was also the center of worship for four of the most important pagan cults of the day: Zeus, Athene, Dionysus and Asclepius. Jesus, again, calls Himself by a different name. Here He is said to have "the sharp sword with the two edges". The sword with two edges is, of course, the Bible with the Old and New Testament (see notes on 1:16).

They were not forgotten. Jesus recognized their faithfulness despite the satanic environment in which they lived. In the original Greek, the words "holdest fast" means, "to hold onto desperately with all of one's power." These Christians were holding onto their faith with everything they had and Jesus commended them for their faithfulness.

Revelation 2:13 "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's seat [is]: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."

"Where Satan's seat [is]": The headquarters of satanic opposition and a Gentile base for false religions. On the acropolis in Pergamum was a huge, throne-shaped altar to Zeus. In addition, Asclepius, the god of healing, was the god most associated with Pergamum. His snake-like form is still the medical symbol today. The famous medical school connected to his temple mingled medicine with superstition. One prescription called for the worshipper to sleep on the temple floor, allowing snakes to crawl over his body and infuse him with their healing power.

Jesus not only knows their works, He knows everything about them. Judgment begins at the house of God, because Jesus walks to and fro checking them continually.

Jesus says that He knows where they dwell. He is referring to the very evil surroundings. This was an educational center. There were great libraries and places of worldly education.

This church is committing sin; compromising with the heathen around them. Many times, worldly wisdom and faithfulness to God are not cohesive. The Bible says that "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7).

Faith is not fact. The educated mind wants to prove by facts. Faith, I say again, is not fact:

Hebrews 11:1-2 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "For by it the elders obtained a good report."

The mind and heart, even though physically a few inches apart, are miles apart in the Spirit.

There are so many ways to view these, as I have said before. For our study, we will attempt to use the problems of this church to tell us what not to do in our church today.

God never changes. The things He was opposed to thousands of years ago are the very things He is opposed to today. God never changes; we change. If we are not careful, these changes will make us complacent about the sin in our life.

Jesus says that He knows where they dwell. He is referring to the very evil surroundings. This was an educational center. There were great libraries and places of worldly education.

Jesus knew this church in Pergamos would have a very hard time. The evil outside the church and the compromise in the church tries to draw more of these people out of the church. Maybe they had very good intentions, but they got very bad results. Jesus goes so far as to call this evil city, "Satan's seat". We know by this that evil prevailed.

Jesus says to this church, you have My name on your church and I also am aware you have not denied Me. Jesus even reminds them that He is aware that Antipas was martyred because of his great faith in Jesus. This Satanic influence had come against Antipas and killed him. We must realize that we must not fellowship with those of unbelief. We must witness to them, and then go home. Fellowshiping with the world brings compromise. The shame is that some of this has crept into this church as we see (in verse 14).

Revelation 2:14 "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

But the Lord also reproved them for allowing members who practiced the "doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans" to remain within their congregation.

"The doctrine of Balaam": Balaam tried unsuccessfully to prostitute his prophetic gift and curse Israel for money offered him by Balak, king of Moab. So, he devised a plot to have Moabite women seduce Israelite men into intermarriage. The result was the blasphemous union of Israel with fornication and idolatrous feasts (for the story of Balaam, see Num. chapters 22-25).

In his message to Pergamos, Jesus compares the conduct of some of these believers with the actions of the Israelites who compromised with the Moabites. He also condemned them for allowing the doctrine of the Nicolaitans to remain in their midst.

The word "Nicolaitan" comes from two Greek words, one meaning "to conquer" and the other meaning "the laity." It is symbolic of the development of a priestly order which ruled over the laity in contrast to Christ's command regarding serving one another given (in Mat. 23:8-9). The headship of Christ had been set aside in favor of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

"Things sacrificed unto idols" (see Acts 15:19-29).

Revelation 2:15 "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."

“Hast thou also”: The teaching of the Nicolaitans led to the same behavior as Balaam’s schemes.

“Doctrine of the Nicolaitans” (see note on verse 6).

The "doctrine of Balaam" was very similar to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. They tore down the true meaning of the spiritual gifts.

2 Peter 2:1-2 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Although they were victorious in keeping their faith during persecution, they opened the door to spiritual destruction when they compromised with the world. Apostasy - Various Religions, Cults. Compromise is blending two ideas together. The dictionary says it is "to lay open to danger." In spiritual matters, any position of compromise opens you up to danger and corruption.

Compromise is rampant throughout the Body of Christ and the Spirit of God is calling us to allow the "sword of the Spirit", the Word of God, to expose and remove compromise just as a surgeon removes a cancerous growth. God cannot tolerate compromise! He hates it.

Even the smallest compromise opens the doors to additional compromise, which leads to even greater compromise and eventually, spiritual death. If you have compromised in any area of your life, you must do what Jesus told believers at Pergamos.

Revelation 2:16 "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."

“Sword of my mouth”: (see note on 1:16).

Repent means to be truly sorry and turn away from evil. Go a new direction. Walk in right standing with the Lord. The sword that Jesus fights with is His Word. There is nothing more powerful than the Word of God. Jesus has not given up on them. He just wants them to change their ways.

Jesus issued a stern warning to the church at Pergamos: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Although the majority of the church at Pergamos were not deceived and were not following the doctrine of the Balaamites and the Nicolaitans, they were guilty of indifference toward the sin within their church.

But there were some who slipped in unnoticed, and brought false teaching. If you want to know more about all of this false teaching (read 2 Peter chapter 2).

Revelation 2:17 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth [it]."

As we said before, hear with our inner man. There is a battle, and we are God's soldiers. The Spirit and the flesh are locked in battle. When we allow the Spirit of God to control our flesh, then we are His. He is our God, and we are His people.

The stone mentioned (in verse 17), most think was a diamond. It was probably the stone worn by the high priest that had God's name on it. It was hidden from view next to the heart behind the Urim and the Thummim. The other stones were symbolic for the Tribes of Israel, and all 12 of them were on the breastplate of the high priest.

We have received the name of Jesus Christ if we are truly His. We are Christians. Whatever the stone is, I am happy to know that our name will be on it.

Jesus will feed us His hidden manna. Manna fell from heaven miraculously and fed the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land (in Exodus 16:14-15). Just as Israel received manna, God promises to give the true believer the spiritual bread the unbelieving world cannot see: Jesus Christ (compare John 6:51).

Whether this is spiritual or physical, I do not really care. It will be all we need to sustain us. The original Ark of the Covenant, which the earthly Ark was patterned by, has always been in heaven, hidden to earthly eyes.

The mystery Jesus is revealing is Himself in His fullness.

- (1) He is the Tree;
- (2) He is the Bread;
- (3) He is the Manna;
- (4) He is LIFE.

We too, like Pergamos must repent and come to Jesus with all that we are or ever hope to be. We are nothing until He fills us with Himself.

“White stone”: When an athlete won in the games, he was often given, as part of his prize, a white stone which was an admission pass to the winner’s celebration afterwards. This may picture the moment when the overcomer will receive his ticket to the eternal victory celebration in heaven.

“New name”: A personal message from Christ to the ones He loves, which serves as their admission pass into eternal glory. It is so personal that only the person who receives it will know what it is.

Revelation 3:12 "The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will never again leave it. Upon him I will write the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God (the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from My God), and My new name".

Revelation Chapter 2 Second Continued Questions

- (1) Where was Pergamos located?
- (2) What do many scholars believe the church at Pergamos was a period of?
- (3) What does Jesus call Himself when addressing this church at Pergamos?
- (4) What two things did Jesus first say to this church at Pergamos?
- (5) Where was Satan's seat?
- (6) What two good things did Jesus say about Pergamos?
- (7) Who was martyred for Jesus?
- (8) What false god was the primary one worshipped in this area?
- (9) Our study tries to show what in this church?
- (10) When we change, what must we be careful not to do pertaining to God?
- (11) When Jesus says that He knows where they dwell, what is He referring to?
- (12) Besides Zeus, name some of the other false gods worshipped here in Pergamos.
- (13) In Romans 8:7, the Bible says the _____ is enmity against God.
- (14) What is faith not?
- (15) What is faith in Hebrews 11:1?
- (16) Physically the mind and heart are inches away from each other, but what are they in spirit?
- (17) What do we know about this area, by Jesus calling it Satan's seat?
- (18) Fellowshiping with the world brings what?
- (19) What evil teaching had crept into the church?
- (20) What two very evil things had they taught?
- (21) The doctrine of Balaam was similar to whose teachings?

- (22) In 2 Peter, what do we read that these false prophets shall bring in to the church?
- (23) What thing does Jesus say He hates?
- (24) What does Jesus tell them to do?
- (25) What will Jesus fight with?
- (26) Those who overcome will receive what?
- (27) What is the white stone, probably?
- (28) What is the mystery that Jesus is revealing to us?
- (29) What church in our society today do you see in this church at Pergamos? Explain.