

Jesus Message to the Church – Pergamum

Rev.2:12-17

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Revelation 2 and 3 are letters from Jesus to seven churches in Asia Minor. We have already looked at the church in Ephesus and Smyrna, today we'll look at the church in Pergamum or (Pergamos) *Pergamum was one of the most prominent cities of Asia, located in the western part of Asia-Minor, about 45 miles north of Smyrna and about 20 miles from the Aegean Sea. Pergamum was very wealthy, the center of emperor worship with many temples devoted to idolatry. Here was the magnificent temple of Aesculapius, a pagan god whose idol was in the form of a serpent. Greco-Roman god of medicine. (Bible.org:studies on Revelation)*

Read text. Rev.2:12-17

Title of Christ. Him who has the sharp, double-edge sword. Rev.1:16 (John's vision of Jesus) The word of God is described by the author of Hebrews as a double-edged sword. **Hebr.4:12** (For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart).

Jesus is the one portrayed by John here and also in **Rev.19:15 (Jesus strikes the nations with the sword that comes from his mouth). This is judgment.**

Jesus knows what goes on in his church. (v,13) "I know where you live (Where Satan has his throne. Jesus called Pergamum the city of Satan. A follower of Jesus had been put to death here already. This city was very much anti-God or anti-Jesus. Persecution was rampant.

-The church didn't renounce their faith in Jesus

-They remained faithful to Jesus

Warning (v.14-15)

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you.... There were people in the church who held to the teaching of Balaam. (Balaam Taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

Balaam (Num.25:1-3; 31:16) Peter mentioned Balaam when he reminded the church about false teachers and people who followed their teaching Peter said: **2 Pet.2:15 (They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness, but he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey-a beast without speech-who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.**

Jude1:11)

People in the church of Pergamum were trying to corrupt the rest of the church to engage in idolatry (eating food sacrificed to idols and engage in sexual immoralities which took place in the temples of these idols).

(v.15) Those who held to the teaching of the Nicolaitans (a group who didn't have a problem mixing Christianity with pagan practices. **Syncretism: the combination of different forms of belief or practice.** This menace was in the church already and Jesus was not very happy about this.

Repent or else! (Repent means to change your way, change your perspective) If these people didn't repent for their error Jesus said that he'd come and fight against them with the sword of my mouth. (This is a sign of judgment Jesus would pour out on these people following the false teachings of Balaam and Nicolaitans)

He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (v.17) To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it. Known only to him who receives it. -the hidden manna (Manna was the food God provided for Israel in the desert. It represented God's provision. Jesus is saying if you overcome and don't compromise, but remain faithful to me, I will give you real food to eat, not like the food sacrificed to idols

A white stone with a new name: This imagery takes us to the time of the Roman games. The ancient Roman custom of awarding white stones to the victors of athletic games. The winner of a contest was awarded a white stone with his name inscribed on it. This served as his "ticket" to a special awards banquet. Jesus is promising to those who conquer admission into his kingdom and banquet he has prepared for his people.

What does Jesus expect of his church today?

Jesus expects his church to remain true to him in the midst of a syncretistic culture. No compromising our Christian beliefs with false ideologies. Christ church has to watch it for cheap grace theology, water down gospel, gospel who doesn't call people to repent.

Jesus wants his church to be faithful in the midst of persecution, even when we may live in the town where Satan is in charge, Jesus expects you to be faithful to

him. You may work where Satan is the boss, there Jesus expects you to be his faithful witness.

Jesus doesn't want a syncretistic church: married to him and to the world. His church needs to be faithful to Christ. There will be lots of obstacles and things to overcome before finishing this race. . *Jesus expects his church to overcome the world and not be molded by the world's ideologies. It is after we have triumphed in this world as his church that Jesus will reward our faithfulness.*

-Jesus has said to the churches thus far:

-Don't stop loving me

-Remain true to me despite persecution

-Don't compromise your faith but remain faithful to me

-Overcome the world for my sake

-Your faithfulness will be rewarded.