

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ – 07

### 2:12-17 – Pergamum – The ‘Woke’ Church

1. **“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write the following: “Thus says the one who has the sharp double-edged sword: -** The ‘sword’ is the Word of God, which, seen through the eyes of the prophet, appears as a double-edged sword (see Ephesians 6:17), though Hebrews 4:12 describes this “sword” more like a surgeon’s scalpel, that identifies, isolates and cuts away sin
2. **‘I know where you live – where Satan’s throne is. –** Pergamum - capital of the Roman province of Asia, known for its Altar to Zeus (king of the gods) – the altar looked like a huge throne or seat (see bulletin cover); thus Jesus’ description ‘where Satan’s throne is’ (1 Corinthians 10:20)
3. **Yet you continue to cling to my name and you have not denied your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed in your city where Satan lives. –** Amid such a pagan stronghold, Pergamum did well to honor Jesus by Name, which led some inevitably to persecution and even death
4. **But I have a few things against you: -** Yet others, instead of honoring God’s Name as holy, saw nothing wrong with taking part in things that honor false gods and empty idols of man’s own devising; and as with individuals so too with churches, a little sin threatens the whole body (1 Corinthians 5:6)
5. **You have some people there –** Instead of addressing the whole church as in the first two letters, here Jesus isolates “some” in the church who need correction, from the rest of the church, reminding us that the True Church (made up only of believers) is not the same as the Visible Church the world sees.
6. **Who follow the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel so they would eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality. –** See Numbers 25:1-9 and 31:16, where the people mingled the God of Israel with pagan gods; so some in Pergamum worshiped Jesus but also worshiped in pagan temples; but see Isaiah 42:8 (those who encouraged this were not named Balaam – Jesus calls them this because they follow his example)
7. **In the same way, there are also some among you who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans. –** Here Jesus condemns the **teaching** of the Nicolaitans, where in 2:6 it was their practices - faulty thinking and sinful lifestyles go hand in hand (So, what teachings and deeds in our day does Jesus hate, as He hated the Nicolaitans’, verse 6?)
8. **The ‘Woke’ Church -** Together, these errors reveal ‘believers’ who worshiped Jesus, but saw nothing wrong with the worship of other gods or the morality it promoted, fitting in more with the city than with the God they claimed to believe in.
9. **Therefore, repent! If not, I will come against you quickly and make war against those people with the sword of my mouth. –** The only cure for error is repentance – abandoning what is false and clinging to what is true.
10. **The one who has an ear had better hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give him some of the hidden manna, -** Jesus calls Himself the living bread from heaven to nourish the soul.
11. **and I will give him a white stone, and on that stone will be written a new name that no one can understand except the one who receives it.’ –** This new name is promised first in Isaiah 62:2 and represents a new identity, the new creation in us; it is a promise that God will have a unique relationship with each person who receives Eternal Life from Him, as we finally become what He has always intended us to be (1 John 3:2).
12. **What is there to “keep” or “obey” in this passage (1:3)**
  - a. The Gospel is a double-edged sword - both good news and bad news. We can’t simply dismiss what we don’t like to fit in with the world
  - b. God has promised us a unique place in the heart of God that nothing on earth can come close to offering – we must find our true identity in Him