

**To the Saints of God at Topeka, Kansas
April 19, 2015**

The Church at Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17)

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

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.

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

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

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.



The city of Pergamos, often called Pergamum, was a great ancient city. It was a city of Troas. Revelation 2 is the only place in the Bible where Pergamos is mentioned, but Troas is mentioned by Paul several times. Pergamos was 60 miles north of Smyrna. Pergamos was a city of knowledge and learning and was known for its philosophers,

writers, artists and its library (which rivaled the library at Alexandria and had 200,000 handwritten books). There was a temple to Asclepius which was the god of healing in Greek and Roman methodology. The Greeks and later Romans worshipped him there and said this false god could cure diseases. There was also

a medical school there and Galen, the most famous doctor of the ancient world lived at Pergamos around the same time Christ was addressing this church. The



Rod of Asclepius

medical profession adopted the Rod of Asclepius which is a snake entwined around a staff, as its symbol. Interestingly, Satan's seat was at Pergamos, that also might be a great reason why the snake is a prominent part of this false god's symbol which the stupid medical profession adopted. Some also say the snake on the staff came from Moses when God used something like this

to heal the children of Israel by having those that were bitten by the serpents for their sin, to look at a serpent on a bronze pole and live. Another interesting aspect of Pergamos is its close proximity to the Greek island Lesbos which is sometimes translated Lesvos. Lesbos is where we get the word "lesbian." Webster's dictionary defines lesbian as: "of or relating to Lesbos [from the reputed homosexual band associated with Sappho of Lesbos]: of or relating to homosexuality between females." Lesbian is derived from the poems of Sappho (an ancient Greek poet who lived around 600 BC), who was born in Lesbos. The poems contain expressions of homosexual love among women. Because Lesbos was in such close proximity to Pergamos, some speculate that Pergamos had a close affiliation with the filth of homosexuality and Lesbianism.

"And to the Angel of the Church in Pergamos Write; These Things Saith He Which Hath the Sharp Sword with Two Edges" - When addressing this church, Christ immediately sets an intimidating tone. This is not the tolerant, hippie, peace-nik, Birkenstock, night gown wearing Jesus. This is the Jesus with a sharp, double-edged sword. He means business. This references back to Rev 1:16 *And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.* The double-edged sword was not in His hand, it was in His mouth as representative of His word. Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* His WORD is omnipotent in executing His will in punishing sinners. It is the sword of His Spirit (Eph. 6:17 *...And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*) and it represents reproof and punishment. He encourages the church for its good, and threatens the church for its bad and sinful behavior. Beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ is no one to mess with. Rev. 6:16 *And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the*

throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. This church is in a state of decline and it has people in it that are men of corrupt minds and he makes it clear there is accountability and responsibility for such behavior. There is no escaping this sword. The thunder is coming if the church does not repent and this is not an idle threat.

“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is” -

Pergamus was a place of peculiar wickedness, idolatry and filth as if Satan himself was enthroned here. In fact, the Greek word translated “seat” is “throne.” It was given to much idolatry and the influence of Satan would explain the persecution of the saints and the martyrdom of the Lord’s faithful servant Antipas. It was full of Satan’s antichrists and workers of iniquity. To dwell at Satan’s seat of power where his kingdom and authority was would have been extremely uncomfortable, as well as dangerous. It would have taken great care, long suffering, patience, and prudence to live there. There would have been much affliction there. There also would have been great temptation there – where you find Satan you find lure and enticement to great filthiness and worldly pleasure. The power of darkness would have been there and Satan would have tried with all his will to snuff out the light of the Church and kill her members.

“And Thou Holdest Fast My Name and Hast Not Denied My Faith, Even in Those Days Wherein Antipas as my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth” - The Lord gives the church credit that in such an awful place to dwell, they have by “tooth and nail” held fast His name. Under great persecution, even unto death, they refused to be ashamed of Christ. No humiliation, no embarrassment, and no amount of public ridicule up to that time, was enough to make these people surrender, but they were in danger of losing the battle. There was a core of rottenness in the church that if not cut out would consume it. There is great danger present from within the church. Rom. 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”* Phil. 1:20 *“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”* 2 Tim. 4:7 *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”* They must finish what they started.

I am thankful that WBC holds fast Christ's name and has not denied His faith. In addition, we see we are engaged in the wars of the Lord and while we are in our mortal flesh we are on the battlefield constantly. We are not riding out this war on the bench. Beloved, defense does not win wars, offense does. For the last 25+ years we have taken this fight to the enemies of God. We have taken this spiritual fight right up to the gates of hell where Satan's seat is and in this day and age I think he has many thrones beloved. We have not drawn back, neither should we. The Lord has led us to use every tool we can think of and has given us a carefully crafted team of people and resources to advance the ball down the field. Beloved we have been in many spiritual firefights (thousands) in every forum possible and we should be thankful to God for that. We have not drawn back or been terrified of our enemies. We have done battle with and before, the kings, princesses and the most powerful people and institutions in this world including Presidents of the United States, the United States Congress, the United States Supreme Court, the United States Military, Federal Courts, state courts, world-wide celebrities, media throughout the world, religious leaders throughout the world and mockers extraordinaire. These popular churches around us sometimes talk the talk, but when the battles come, they are a no-show. I am proud of you spiritual warriors that have hazarded your lives against the dark powers of this world – it is our reasonable service.

Christ's faithful martyr Antipas was slain at Pergamus for holding fast His name. We know very little of Antipas. According to Strong the name "Antipas" means "like the father" and is a compound of "over against." We may assume he was an elder or leader of the church there since he was singled out for death. The Greek word translated martyr means "witness – in a legal sense." Beloved, they may have put Brother Antipas on trial for his religion. We know that he bore a faithful testimony and was a faithful "witness" against all of Satan's corruptions and innovations in the very place where Satan had his most power. Beloved, we have a lot of faithful witnesses in our midst and I thank you all for the testimony you give under great affliction. I am so thankful for you all. Antipas chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, even unto blood, than to deny his Saviour. The speculation is that he was tortured and killed in 92 A.D. in the bronze bull (where victim is slowly cooked to death). Beloved, you know that did not happen in a vacuum and that would have been terribly difficult on that little church. This kind of persecution is our lot, and we must accept our evil things now. Heb. 11: 35-39 *"...and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance (that is if they would*

denounce their religion the torture would stop); *that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy...39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith...*"

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" -

Beloved, it appears the church of Pergamos may have had some members that: *crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).* These people were corrupting the church from the inside.

There were church members there that held the doctrine of Balaam which the Lord specifies as sacrificing things to idols and committing fornication. It appears there was idol worship and fornication rampant in that church. As you may recall, Balaam was a very intelligent, crafty, highly placed consultant, religious hypocrite and false prophet for hire. He was beguiled by money, covetousness, greed, wealth, power and ambition. When he could not curse Israel outright he defied and rebelled against God, knowing God was with Israel and devised an ingenious strategy to ensnare the Israelites into idol worship and committing fornication which he knew would anger God so that God would leave them and Balac could conquer them. That is evil beloved. America has yet to figure out that God hates idol worship (he is Jealous) and fornication, but Baalam did. God hates fornication. He hates it! He hates it! He hates it! 1 Cor. 6:18 *Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.* 1 Cor. 6:9 *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind...shall inherit the kingdom of God.* 1Cor. 5:11 *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater ... with such an one no not to eat (the Lord's Supper).* Every single church in this doomed country, with few exceptions has active members that openly commit fornication far and wide, just like the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 5.

Here is how it looked on the ground. Balaam, for a high price and consulting fee, advised Balac (the King of Moab) in an elaborate scheme to set up inns and restaurants/bars/hotels and to staff them with beautiful whorish women. One expositor said Balac was so pleased with Balaam's advice that he used 24,000 young women in the scheme. The scheme included selling food and drink at below market pricing to lure the Israelites in at a low price, and then the dumb Israelite men would come and eat and drink, and be drunken, and commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab (Numbers 25:1) and take up with them and then sacrifice unto their gods and bow down to them and be joined with Baalpeor. Balaam advised Balac to not engage Israel in outright war (you will lose, lose, lose), but instead play to their lusts and idolatry and entrap them and use the God of Israel as the weapon of warfare against them. By this ruse God would be displeased with the Israelites and leave them or kill them. This strategy was successful and the Lord killed 24,000 Israelites over the stumbling block of Balaam.

Even with all of the good things the church at Pergamos did, they still did not get a pass for their fornication and idolatry. You do not get to bow down to Baalpeor and bow down to "god loves everyone" and take the mark of the beast in your forehead and expect everything will be all right. When the Lord comes to punish the corrupt members of the church, he rebukes the whole church for allowing this conduct to continue in light of His clear directives against it. Of all of the seven churches it appears that the Church at Pergamus was in the worst shape and had the most corruption in it.

2nd Pet.2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: 15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. Jude 1:11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate” - The Church at Pergamus had another deadly and false doctrine in it: they had them that held to the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. As you may recall the church at Ephesus, hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans - Rev. 2:6 *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate*). This is the second time in Revelation two that Christ says he hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans. As I told you before, I believe the deeds of the Nicolaitans included sexual uncleanness, spiritual idolatry and lording it over the congregation of God.

Beloved, I read an article in a Baptist newspaper recently about the church at Pergamus. The author has now been dead for some time. Interestingly, he characterized Balaamism as this: *the teaching that a child of God may freely mingle with the world without losing any spiritual power or status with God. This was the damnable heresy being taught in the church at Pergamos. Some in the church at Pergamos took the same doctrinal position that Balaam held. They taught that church members could worship at heathen temples and engage in gross immorality and remain good church members.* Beloved, there is truth in what he said, but he left out fornication. He never mentions anywhere in this long article fornication. This coward had the opportunity to preach against rampant fornication in this country and throughout all the churches in this country, including his own and he left it out. This country and the churches of this country are absolute cesspools of fornication and idolatry and primarily in the churches and he gave it a pass. That was not an oversight on his part and I imagine he has had to answer for drawing back on that lukewarm position. Beloved when you are on the field and you are at bat, we better use every opportunity we have to hit homeruns and not coward out. If you have an opportunity to take the message of God to Satan’s seat you better use it.

“Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth” - The Lord Jesus Christ makes an open threat against the church of Pergamus. He does not just tell them that he is going to take their candlestick – he tells him that he is going to openly fight against them. The thought is that he is going to “war against them.” This is the only church that he makes this threat to. The Lord Jesus Christ is a man of war (Exodus 15:3) and he is no one to

mess with and he will fight against any so-called church that duplicates the misdeeds of the church at Pergamos. Repent or face the wrath of God! The Lord Jesus Christ is not like man. He does not make vain threats. Robert Haldane, a famous preacher in the Church of Scotland, in his exposition on the epistle to the Romans in the early 1800's, said that men have a tendency to soften the characteristics of a sovereign God and that this is a mistake. Ezekiel 5:8-10 *"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations.... Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds."*

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 - If the Church at Pergamos will repent of their sins and overcome the world, the Lord Jesus Christ promises that they will eat of the hidden manna of a Sovereign God (as opposed to the things eaten as a sacrifice to false idols). This is a reference to the supernatural manna which God provided to the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years during the Exodus. A pot of this manna is in the Ark of the Covenant which shows God's mercy keeping the children of Israel alive in the wilderness. No one but the elect of God eats of this hidden manna! It is nourishment for the souls. It is prepared for us in heaven! It is the food of righteousness. This manna is hidden from the carnal world of unregenerate man. I Cor 2:7-9 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

This hidden manna is reserved to the elect as a part of their inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and which fadeth not away, I Pet. 1:4. It quickens, comforts and strengthens our soul. It is a personal and enduring gift from the Godhead. It is a clear reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have told you before that I believe the best and most enduring part of heaven is to have communion with the Lord Jesus Christ and to bask in His love and affection for eternity.

John 6:31-35 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

To him that overcometh God also promises to give him a free gift of a white stone. This is a token of his love and affection and a pledge of his favor. The white stone is absolution from the guilt of sin or a pardon, alluding to the ancient custom of giving a white stone to those acquitted on trial and a black stone to those condemned. White stones were also given to the victor's in sporting events (Olympics). It is given individually to each of God's elect. No one is going to slip in unawares. This white stone cannot be purchased with money even if a person had the fortune of Bill Gates. Money is useless and without value in the heavenly realm. It is a personal gift from the Lord Jesus Christ to each of God's elect. The white stone is an everlasting symbol which will never fade away and is given from the Lord Jesus Christ to his elect for their individual persecutions they endured for his name sake, for keeping His words and testimony when all around them were forsaking them and were ashamed of them. These stones will be distributed at the Last Day in front of the innumerable host of heaven and the inhabitants of hell. It will be a great testimony to all of the love of God to each of his people. Those in hell that persecuted you, said all manner of evil against you falsely, flipped you off, screamed at you, hit you, spit on you, blew horns in your ears, pushed you, fired you from your jobs, sued you, secretly moved others to hurt you, vandalized your property, and people in high places that abused their power privately to harm you without a cause will see it and be ashamed of themselves and see their arch enemies receiving the praise of The Only Wise God. It is a white stone so as to represent purity and absolution. It will be a precious stone – much more precious than a diamond! It will be beautiful!

And, each one will be individually made for its owner and it will either:

- 1) Have the owner's new heavenly name in it – in such case we will no longer will be called by our sinful, depraved name – we will have a new one – chosen by our God just for us! Isaiah 62:2 *“and thou shalt be called by a new name,*

which the mouth of the Lord shall name.” Often, families will have their own names of love and affection for their loved ones that no one else knows or uses. In Genesis 32:28 God changed Jacob’s name to Israel: “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed”; 2 Cor. 12:4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter; or,

- 2) The new name is the name of adoption: adopted persons take the name of the family into which they were adopted. In that case, it will be the name of Christ. Rev.3:12 *Him that overcometh... and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

This is another token of Christ’s love and affection (like the crown of glory) for us showing that we are princes with God and that we have prevailed overcome our enemies.

I love you all. Amen.