

The Church at Pergamum – Intermingling With Sin

Revelation 2:12-17 ¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. ¹³ “ ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. ¹⁵ So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶ Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

❖ Introduction

- Chapter 1
- Ephesus
- Smyrna

¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

❖ The Word of Jesus Will Judge Absolutely and without Hesitation

- **The Double Edged Sword**
 - Symbol of Rule in Rome
 - Powerful weapon cutting both ways
- **God’s Word can do to their souls as a sword can do to their body**
 - **Hebrews 4:12-13** ¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
- **God’s Word is a Powerful Weapon**
 - **Jeremiah 23:29** "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"
 - **John 12:48** There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.
 - **Ephesians 6:17** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- **This Church needed to know His word Better**
 - And they needed to use it appropriately
 - As you will see.... They had not used it to get rid of false teachings

¹³ “ ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

❖ Being Faithful to Jesus does not go Unnoticed

- **Pergamos – The Throne of Satan**
 - A little about the city...
 - Huge Library of 200,000
 - Name came from Parchment...
 - Center of Ceasar worship...
 - Worship of the false god Asklepios

- God of healing
- Symbol, or idol was a serpent...
- Same snake on the medical symbol today
- **Hold Fast my name, did not deny my faith**
 - **Held on to it tightly...**
 - Would not let it go
 - **Deny**
 - Reject, or let it go...
- **His followers- Faithful to His name... even in facing death**
 - How they were persecuted by slander
 - Arrested
 - Forced to recant, but would not
 - Killed in many ways
- **Antipas**
 - Roasted to Death inside a brass bull

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❖ **Jesus is not pleased with Stumbling blocks in the Church**

❖ **Jesus holds this against them:**

- **They had some that were placing a stumbling block before others**
 - (Be Careful what you condone)
 - I always say... not sure if it is OK to do that, but I know it is ok not to do that.
 - I do not want to get carried away into legalism though... that is contrary to the grace of God as well...
 - **Food Sacrificed to idols**
 - **Practicing Sexual Immorality**
- **Some hold teaching of Nicolaitans**
- **2 Problems**
 - 1) Those who Held to the Teachings of Balaam
 - Numbers 22-24
 - 2) Those who held to the teachings of Nicolaitans
 - Either meaning Clergy over Laity
 - Or.... It is ok to sin once you have been saved...
- **Teachings of Balaam**
 - Numbers 22-24
 - Balak Summons him...
 - Tell the Story
 - Balaam was unable to curse the people of Israel
 - **In the End.... Balaam taught Balak how to harm them though**
 - **Numbers 31:16 ¹⁶ Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD.**
 - He told Balak... send your women in to seduce the men of Israel...
 - Get them to worship your false gods...
 - And eat what was being sacrificed to them....

- **This caused God's Anger to come upon Israel...**
 - At one point God has 24,000 of Israel killed for this...
- **Teaching of Nicolaitians**
 - Ok to sin however you want... or in moderation... Because God's grace covers it...
 - **Paul dealt with this**
 - Romans 6:1-2 ¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
 - **John teaches, as Peter Taught, as Jesus Taught... those who love Him will obey His commands**
 - Romans 6:12-14 ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.
- **Result of these teachings**
 - The end result is a group of people indistinguishable from the world, except in what they say they believe
- **How did this Happen in Pergamum and how can it happen to us?**
 - In the Story of Balaam, Balak and the children of Israel, the Moabites saw they had no chance of fighting Israel and winning...
 - So they tried a cursing, and that did not work, and then they tried to intermingle their idolatry and sexual immorality with Israel... And it worked...
- **For the church at Pergamos, Satan saw them as a threat....**
 - So He roared at them (1 Peter) with persecution... as was the case for many other churches at this time...
 - And they were faithful... they took his best shots... yet he did not prevail... Even in killing one of the Christians, Antipas, they church remained faithful to the name of Jesus....
 - **So, satan in His super sneaky way, found another way to attack them...**
 - in the same way He attacked Israel and that was through temptations.
 - He could not beat them, so he came in the front door and tried to trick them and cause them to sin....
 - By sinning, they would lose the blessings of God, their power in Christ, they would become sterile as Christians, producing no fruit to speak of....
 - So He had a group of people spreading false teachings...
- **Probably not having a Bible Study named: Let Us Sin so grace Will Abound....**
 - Or....Of What can We get Away With and Still be a Christian....
 - I am sure it was very subtle... I am sure it was hard to distinguish,
 - and I am also certain that many of them may not have even known what they were doing.
 - **Walking in the Darkness is subtle, and unrecognizable to the person**
 - John taught they do not even know they are walking in it...
 - John 2.11 ... the darkness has blinded their eyes
- **They probably just met and ate at homes as was their custom, and had some food, and started talking about the faith... maybe someone was teaching....**
 - They probably brought up topics about what is and what is not ok to take part in...

- And some of them were probably... it is ok to eat food sacrificed to idols and burn some incense to ceasar, and maybe some of these other idols around here... as long as we include Jesus in it....
- It is ok now that we have been saved to be in sexual immorality,
- we know Jesus now, He has covered our sins, so as long as we possess that knowledge about Jesus, it doesn't really matter about our sins...
- because remember... We are not under any law....
- **And they were mainly Gentiles, so they were never burdened by the law in the first place...**
 - with all the religious rules, etc.... they were in danger of falling right back into their previous lifestyle...
- ❖ **Jesus is not Pleased with them Putting up with this in their Church**
 - They had not used their sword appropriately
 - They had not fought against these stumbling block teachings appropriately
- **The Reason He comes as the Double Edged Sword**
 - **This is why a very indepth understanding of the word of God is so important...**
 - **Many in here fail to realize why they need to read God's Word....**
 - And I say... if you are not currently reading God's Word daily,
 - and purposely memorizing His Word... you are in great danger...
 - **God's response on Israel was swift...**
 - He responded with disciplinary action... 24,000 men of Israel were slain because of their intermingling with Moab (their disobedience to God)....
 - When they were killed, it stopped the wrath of God on Israel.
 - The extent of God's discipline proves the extent of his hatred toward the sinfulness...
 - And we see, although not everyone of Israel was involved, the whole nation was implicated in the sin.
 - They are commanded to rid themselves of those involved....
 - **It is similar to the situation in Pergamum...**
 - and we see Jesus is equally serious about the sin of those in the church that are leading people astray
 - **Why is the discipline so swift and serious.... ?**
 - In Israel's Day God knew the sin of a few would pass on to the others,
 - it would become more acceptable...
 - And for Pergamos the leading astray by the few would eventually turn away many...
 - **A little leaven leavens the whole lump....**
 - **So, Jesus takes it very serious... if not, he would not have used the example of Pergamos...**
 - And he would not have said he would come and make WAR... against them with His Word...
 - And when He makes war, He doesn't just put people in their place, He judges, and as we see later in Revelation, people are slain by His words...
 - He can speak things into being and He can speak the end to someone.

Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

❖ **Jesus wants them to repent**

- Of putting up with these people
- For those who are doing these things

❖ **Consequences:**

- **I will come to you** (your church)
- **I will make war with them** (the stumbling blocks)
 - **Not sure how He will make war....**
 - He tells some later He will throw them into a sickbed if they do not repent...
 - **In the last Days He brings Destruction when He makes war...**
 - **Revelation 19:11-16** ¹¹Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - **Revelation 19:21** ²¹And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse,
- **How Will He war with them...**
 - He may judge them, and take their life from them for perverting the truth...
 - He may bring His word through a prophet or teacher to show them to be wrong...
 - He may through His word Remove them from this church... Proving them to be what they really are...
 - And this... for every one to see...
- **I just Know you do not want to make war with Jesus**
 - I am certain of this...
 - No one has been successful... even when they thought they were it turned out to be the opposite

❖ **Hear what the Spirit says**

- **Clear Statement of the Unity of Jesus and the Spirit...**
 - When One Speaks, the Other is speaking also
- **Do You Assume we are immune to this...**
 - In no way!

❖ **Your Reward:**

- **Hidden manna**
 - Jesus is the hidden manna
- **White Stone with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives**
 - The victor's stone