

Revelation and Daniel – Revelation 2:12-17

Church and Passage	Characterization Verse 12	Commendation Verse 13	Criticism Verses 14-15	Charge Verse 16	Consequence Verses 10-11
Pergamum 2:12-17	The One who has the sharp two-edged sword	They held fast to Christ's name and did not deny the faith	Some held the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans	Repent or expect an attack from the sword of His mouth	Will receive hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name

Verse 12

The One who has the sharp two-edged sword – The sword stands for the Word of God. The Word can bring forth either life or death, depending on how men respond to its hearing. Note also Revelation 19:15, 21, Ephesians 6:17. Roman soldiers had the right to carry a double-edged sword and Pergamum was a city to which Rome had given the right of capital punishment.

Verse 13

You dwell where Satan's throne is – Pergamum was known for its many pagan temples and was also well known for its emperor worship.

You hold fast to my Name, and did not deny My faith – They held firmly to the deity of Christ and were strong in their stand for the faith. *My faith* refers to the body of true doctrine, the teachings of Christ.

Antipas, My witness, My faithful one – A church member who was martyred for his testimony.

Verses 14-15

The account of Balaam and King Balak is recorded in Numbers 22 – 24. Balaam's true motives are brought to light in Numbers 31. Moses is angry with Israel for not slaying the women of Midian. In verse 15 Moses writes, "*Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, so that the plague was among the congregation of the Lord.*" Notice in Numbers 31:8 that they do kill Balaam.

Some hold the teaching of Balaam –

1. The way of Balaam (2 Peter 2:15) – Trying to sell his prophetic gift for money.
2. The error of Balaam (Jude 11) – Balaam's assumption that God would curse Israel.
3. The *teaching* of Balaam (Revelation 2:14) – That Israel should intermarry with the heathen and compromise in the matter of idol worship and immorality.

Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans – Nicolaitanism seems to represent immorality and moral departure from the truth similar to the teaching of Balaam.

You have some who hold – In context the "some" appear to be believers who have gone astray. They are called to repent.

Verse 16

Repent therefore; or else I am coming quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth – If a believer

takes sides with the enemy the he is at war with Jesus. Temporal judgment can be expected if there is no repentance. Note 1 Corinthians 11:29-32, Galatians 6:7-8, James 5:20, 1 John 5:16-17. It is by the sword of His mouth that Jesus smites the nations when He goes to war with them in Revelation 19:11-21.

Verse 17

To him who overcomes, to him I will...

1. *Give some of the hidden manna* – Manna was God's miraculous provision for Israel. Jesus as the Bread of Life (John 6:48-51) is the true manna, even though He is hidden from sight now. Note Colossians 3:3-4.
2. *Give him a white stone* – This may refer to the stone of acquittal or stone of a favorable vote. Victors in contests or battles also received a white stone. It also could refer to the *tesseron*, a stone given to those invited to pagan feasts that functioned similar to ticket.
3. *Give a new name written on the white stone* – The name engraved on a *tesseron* would be the name of the deity to be worshiped. Here the name is probably a name of Christ that only those who overcome are privileged to know or possess. Note Revelation 19:12.