

THE BOOK OF REVELATION 20

The Church at Pergamos 2

I. Review: (Rev. 2:12-17 NKJV) ¹²"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: ¹³"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. ¹⁶Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight 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 him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.'"

II. Two things Jesus corrected them for.

A. they had those who held the doctrine of Balaam who taught the children of Israel to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.

B. they had those who held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

1. Nicolaus was a heretic (a false teacher).

2. Nicolaitans were a sect of Gnostics (a philosophical and religious system teaching that knowledge rather than faith is the key to salvation.)

3. It denied the Deity and redemptive sufferings of Christ, taught impure and immoral doctrines such as the community of wives, that committing adultery and fornication was not sinful, and that eating meats offered to idols was lawful.

4. Jesus said that He hates the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

III. Jesus commanded them to repent or face judgment.

A. Repentance was called for on two levels.

1. First on the part of the church for not correcting the sinning members.

2. Second, on the part of the sinning members or else Jesus would fight against them with the sword of His mouth (the Word of God.)

IV. Jesus promised two rewards for overcomers.

A. They will eat of the hidden manna. (This could refer to literal, hidden manna in heaven.)

1. In the Bible manna is symbolic of Christ. To partake of the living bread is to live forever. (John 6:48-51 NKJV) *48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."*

2. The promise of partaking of the living bread and living forever is made only to overcomers...those who hold fast His Name, do not deny His faith.

B. They will receive a white stone and a new name.

1. Dake's note: "These stones were known to the ancients as victory stones. Also in ancient times they meant pardon and the evidence of it. Judges had white and black stones. If a black one was given the criminal would be condemned. If a white stone was given he would be pardoned. Conquerors in the public games were also given white stones with their names in them, which entitled them to be supported the rest of their lives at public expense. Perhaps all three things are meant by the white stone to the overcomers."

2. So the stones were a symbol of pardon, the symbol of a conqueror, and the symbol of enjoying the rights and privileges of the conqueror.