

Pergamum the Compromised Church

Rev 2: 12-17

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- We are now studying the 3rd letter written to the churches
 - Some say these letters to the churches only apply to those churches mentioned
 - Yet, we have no problem relating other letters written to churches and applying those to our church today
 - Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians etc
 - Consequently, what is written the churches in Revelation also must be applied to our church

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- From an historical view both the church in Ephesus (AD 100 and Smyrna (AD 100-330) endured some persecution.
 - Now in AD 340 or so Constantine ascends to the throne of Roman empire
 - He has a dream in which he see a cross which is the sign whereby he is to conquer his enemies
 - He then issues the Edit of Milan which outlawed persecution and recognizes Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire

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- Constantine who is a pagan seeks to unite the empire under Christianity
 - He then convened the first church counsel in Nicea, Bithynia and the Nicene Creed is issued
 - When he convened this counsel he entered the gathering in his royal robes
 - The 318 Bishops in attendance cheered him as the moderator of the meeting
 - The “church” then became the official church of the Roman Empire

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- This helps to clarify our passage today
 - To the church in Pergamum write...
- “The One who has a sharp two-edged sword says”
 - What is this sword?
 - Eph 6: 17....”and the sword of the Spirit which the Word of God
 - Heb 4: 12...”For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword”

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- John 1: 14..."And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
 - This "Word" is the Incarnated Christ
 - Note here that the "Word" contains both grace and truth and we will find both in Rev 2: 12-17
- First....truth
 - "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is"
 - Pergamum was a pagan city (Zeus and Aesculapius)

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- Second....grace
 - “you hold fast”
 - Note the listing (4)
 - My name, My faith, My witness, My faithful one
- However,.....truth again come forth (4 things)
 - Some of you hold to the teaching of Balaam
 - To eat things sacrificed to idols
 - Commit acts of immorality
 - The teachings of Nicolaitans

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- The teaching of Balaam
 - Balaam was for-profit prophet
 - He would do almost anything for money
 - I Tim 6: 10...For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
- Eat things sacrificed to idols
 - It does not matter what the wicked do, I can do those same things because I am saved by the blood of Jesus
 - I Cor 8: 12-13.. And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.

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- Commit acts of immorality
 - Gal 5: 19-20...Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

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- The teaching of the Nicolaitans
 - Nikao..from the Greek....”to conquer”
 - Laos...from which we get “laity”
 - This led to a hierarchy in the so-called “church”
- Grace.....Therefore repent.....
 - Turn around go in another direction
 - Rev 2: 17....“Hear what the Spirit says to the churches”
 - I Tim 4: 1-3...When believers leave the Cross, their faith is placed in something else
 - Gal 6: 14...But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

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- Heb 12: 2...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- Note the next words of judgment (Vs 16)
 - "I am coming quickly...to make war against them"
 - This judgment is intended to bring the individual back to Christ and the Cross

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- Vs 17...The promise
 - I will give some of the hidden manna
 - I will give him a white stone
 - I will give him a new name written on the stone
- The hidden manna.....
 - If you do not like the earthly form of feeding upon Jesus Christ, which is trusting Him, giving your heart to Him, obeying Him, thinking about Him, walking in His footsteps, you would not like, the heavenly form of the “hidden manna” which is fellowship with Christ

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- The white stone...
 - The jury of this time would give either a black stone of guilt or a white stone of innocence.
 - Isaiah 1: 18.....
- A new name written on the stone....
 - This tells us that each person will be unique in heaven
 - Individual character will be perfected
 - God Himself will be forever glorified in our new name
 - Because He gave that new name to us!!!

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- So, what are we to learn from this passage?
 - First....Faithfulness to Christ means you and I must stand ever when no one else does
 - Second....Keep your eyes and ears on high alert conscious of the stumbling blocks Satan sets before us.
 - Third....Feast with Christ today and tomorrow and the next day for one day we will feast with Him forever on the “hidden manna”.....