

# **When Jesus Comes To Church**

## **4) Separated, But Infiltrated**

***'And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, "These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: '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'"'***

**(Rev.2:12-13)**

**'Satan's circuit is throughout the world; his seat is in some places that are infamous for wickedness, error and cruelty'**

- ✓ **Pergamos was the official political capital of Asia Minor. It won the right to build the first temple to worship Caesar Augustus in the province of Asia**
- ✓ **It was the HQ of the Babylonian priesthood, which originated with Nimrod**
- ✓ **A great altar to Zeus (90 feet x 40 feet) jutted out from the top of the mountain**
- ✓ **Outside the city wall was a shrine to Asklepios, the god of healing. The symbol of this god was a serpent. People traveled here from all over to learn about medicine and to be healed much like some towns are given over to new age teaching. 'Asklepios is Saviour.' Those who wanted to be healed would spend nights in the temple hoping a snake would touch them**

- **Pergamos was the most demonized religious centre of the time. Some say there were more idols here than in all of Asia combined**

### **Jesus commended them for:**

- **Being parked right outside this Satanic centre and not running away. The word 'dwell' suggests a more continuous idea than just temporary living. They didn't pack up and leave**
- **They not only remained there, they remained true, not succumbing to Caesar worship. Antipas means 'against all or many'. He was a faithful witness (*martus*). No one knows who he was, only that he was faithful in death for the name of Christ**

***'But 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'***

**(Rev.2:14)**

**Though the Church at Pergamos remained  
separated from the world it was infiltrated  
by false teaching**

**The NT speaks of the way of Balaam, the  
error of Balaam and the doctrine of Balaam**

**1) Balak, king of Moab hired a prophet, Balaam, to curse them. When the gift from Balak was offered to him he immediately wanted to go. This is the way of Balaam**

***'They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness'***  
**(2 Pet.2:15)**

**One who ministers merely for monetary gain. This doesn't mean that it is wrong for ministries to be supported financially. But when our motive is money we become hirelings.**

**The ultimate sin of Judas was to make money out of Jesus**



## 2) The error of Balaam

Seeing their faults, Balaam supposed that a righteous God must curse Israel. He thought he could get God to circumvent His covenant promises because of their sin

*'They have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit' (Jude 11)*

But he was blind to God's faithfulness to His promises which were based on the higher morality of the cross and God's grace through the sacrifices that pointed to the cross

God did not allow him to pull off his devious plan, but sent him to speak His Word. Balak heard the prophetic word of blessing

**3) Since Balaam could not curse Israel, he sought to corrupt them by advising Balak to send the daughters of Moab into the camp of Israel to fornicate with the men and even marry them. This would defile their separation and cause them to abandon their pilgrim character.**

**This was the doctrine of Balaam  
Pergamos comes from two words:  
*per* = 'completely, thoroughly,'  
*gamos* = 'marriage'**

**The church at Pergamos began to lose their distinct identity by intermingling and intermarriage with the world *'Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul'*  
(1 Pet.2:11)**



***'Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine  
of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate'  
(Rev.2:15)***

**'Thus', i.e. so... in the same manner. These Nicolaitans are comparable to Balaam of old. Just as Israel could not be cursed, but yielded to temptation and compromise by Balaam, so these Christians resisted the imperial cult of Rome but succumbed to a group of people who exerted another kind of power.**

***'For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ'  
(Jude 4)***

**Martyrdom purifies the church;  
mixture putrefies it**

**God hates mixture. Jesus rebuked this church  
for tolerating those who taught mixture**

**The heresy that was hated by the Ephesians  
was tolerated by this church**

**They allowed the heresy to go unchallenged  
and it took root amongst them**

**How did the heretics get this kind of control  
over the church at Pergamos?**

**It would seem that these teachers at Pergamos  
had induced Christians to attend the pagan  
feasts which included idolatry and sexual  
immorality**

**Eating meat offered to idols is one thing, but  
attending pagan festivals which involved idol  
worship and immorality in another thing  
altogether**

**Just like Corinth, Pergamos tolerated  
immorality and Jesus had to rebuke it here, as  
Paul did in Corinth**

*'Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth' (Rev.2:16)*

*\*It is a sword of judgment for the heretics. 'He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day' (John 12:48). Christ's acts of judgment will be carried out on the basis of His Word. 'Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations... And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse...' (Rev.19:15,21)*

*\*It is a sword of separation for believers*

*'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' (Rev.2:17)*

**Hidden Manna.** *'He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him' (Jn.14:21)*

**White stone.** In the ancient world a white stone was a ticket to a banquet

**A new name** which no one knows. This shows intimacy between Jesus and the individual