

Letter to the Church at Pergamum - Rev 2:12-17

Covenant Presbyterian Church

May 12, 2021



- Pergamum (means citadel)
 - Prominent ancient Greek city from at least 4th century BC (cultural greatness as opposed to commercial greatness of Ephesus and Smyrna)
 - Came to foremost prominence in Asia Minor when came to be capital of Attalid kingdom from 282-133 BC
 - Library was second only to Alexandria – word parchment comes from Pergamum which initiated the transition from papyrus
 - Large 10,000 person amphitheater
 - City famous for medicine and healing
 - Major cultic site – Temples/altars to Zeus, Athena, Asclepius, Dionysus, Hera, Demeter, Serapis
 - First temple of Roman imperial cult built to Augustus in 29 BC – was chief city of the imperial cult
- “Sharp two-edged sword” (v12), “sword of my mouth” (v16)
 - Sword represented authority (cf. Romans 13:4) - regional proconsul’s seat was in Pergamum
 - cf. Rev 1:16, Rev 19:15, Rev 19:21, Isaiah 11:4/49:2, Hebrews 4:12, Ephesians 6:17, Acts 4:29-31
- “Satan’s throne,” “where Satan dwells” (v13) – probably reference to either temple of Zeus or Roman imperial cult



- Antipas (v13) – Possibly same Antipas as Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Saint (cf. Commentary on the Apocalypse of Andreas of Caesarea)
- witness (v 13) = Greek *martus* – KJV translates term as martyr 3 times, Acts 22:20, Rev 2:13, Rev 17:6
- Balaam – Balak (v14) – cf. Numbers 22-25 (cf Numbers 31:16, 2 Pet 2:15, Jude 11, 1 Cor 10:8)
 - “Sword in his mouth” – Numbers 23:16
 - Food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality (v14) – cf. Acts 15:20, 29

- Nicolaitans (v15) – cf 2:6 (opposite commendation), group compromised morals
 - 1 Cor 5:11 – explicit command not to associate with morally compromised “brother”
- repent, come soon (V16) - cf 1 Pet 4:17 – judgment begins with the house of god
 - them (v16) – antecedent is Nicolaitans
- “hidden manna” (v17) –
 - Manna hidden in the Ark in the holy of holies – cf Ex 16:32, Heb 9:4
 - Spiritual manna – cf. John 6:32-58
- “white stone” (v17) –
 - Ancient Greco-Roman tradition – jurors would cast a dark stone for “guilty” and a white stone for “not guilty”
 - “Tessera” – admittance object made of various materials including stone in some cases
 - Important buildings made of white marble (Greek word related more to pebbles than large stones)
 - High Priest’s ephod stones represented the 12 tribes
 - Name of Christ is “brilliant” (Grk. Leukos) display - cf. 3:12, 14:1, 22:4
 - Romans awarded white stone with name on it to victors of athletic contests for admittance to award banquet
- “new name” ... “no one knows” (v17) – cf. Rev 19:12, Rev 22:4, Isaiah 62:2, 65:15
 - Tree of life 2:7 – 22:2
 - New name 2:17 – 22:4
 - Escape second death 22:11 – 21:3, 7, 8
 - New name 2:17 – 22:4
 - Authority of Christ 2:26-28 – 21:24, 26: 22:1-3
 - Book of Life 3:5 – 22:19
 - New Jerusalem/My name 3:12 – 21; 22:4
 - Throne 3:21 – 21:1, 3, 5

