

Mount Up Wednesday
The Wednesday Night Bible Study Ministry of
East Mount Zion Baptist Church
Dr. Brian A. Cash, Lead Pastor
Kathy Booker, Exec. Pastor and Facilitator
The Study of Revelation
The Letter to the Church at Pergamum

Message to Pergamum

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”

The History of Pergamum:

- Pergamum was a beautiful and art-filled city in the province of Asia built along two tributaries of the Caicus River. It had a rich and complex history and was the center for the worship of Dionysus, Zeus and other pagan gods. Additionally, it was a major center of culture, learning and religious practice in ancient times, including a significant degree of Roman Emperor worship. Pergamum was called “Satan’s throne” in the Book of Revelation (2:13) because it was a city deeply entrenched in idolatry and pagan worship, particularly the worship of the Roman Emperor and the Greek god Asclepius, who was associated with healing and serpents. This made the city a center of opposition to Christianity and a place where worldly power and false worship dominated, leading Jesus to describe it as the “seat of Satan.”
The modern Turkish city of Bergama stands on the site of ancient Pergamum.

Significance of the Letter:

Jesus' salutation as being from the one who has the sharp two-edged sword, refers to the Lord's readiness to bring judgement. (Rev. 1:16) Hebrews 4:12 is a central passage that uses the imagery of a two-edged sword to illustrate the power of God's word. It states that God's word is "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." This highlights the characteristics of judgement that are foundational in the Word of God.

Jesus' acknowledgement of the Christians of Pergamum's faith in His name, despite the demonic influences surrounding them is a strong commendation. Many times, Christians in difficult circumstances don't realize that the Lord sees and knows their condition. They are also commended for remaining faithful even when they are "walking through the valley of the shadow of death (Ps. 23:4)." One of their own, Antipas, was martyred for his faith and yet the others did not fall away.

However faithful, they were also compromising. They tolerated false teachings, such as the teaching of Balaam, who led the Israelites into the sin of idolatry and sexual immorality (Numbers 25:1-9). More compromise was criticized as they allowed the teachings of the Nicolaitans, who promoted beliefs that did not line up with the gospel.

Jesus' reference to the "sword of his mouth" in the 16th verse of chapter two, reinforces the actions of judgement that are inevitable, if the people don't turn from their wicked ways or repent. Discernment is necessary to walk in true freedom.

However, to the overcomer there were three promises made: 1) hidden manna, 2) a white stone, and 3) a new name. The hidden manna could refer to treasures of the past that God has kept secret. The white stone is reference to a person's acquittal in a court of law during the ancient times. The stones, white meaning not guilty and black meaning guilty, were objects that were used by judges to show their decisions at the end of the trial. Jesus' mention of giving the white stone to the overcomers is an indication of their release or freedom from the bondage that they were formerly accused of. Lastly the giving of a new name that no one knows except the person who receives it has a direct connection to Revelation 19:12, where Jesus bears a name that only He knows. This signifies a unique, divine identity and authority that is beyond human comprehension. For the believer, this refers to his/her perfected identity in Christ.

Is the city of Cleveland or the Cleveland Metropolitan area, endanger of Jesus describing it as "the place where Satan's throne is." Explain.

Reflect on your church's impact in Cleveland and the city's effect on your church and answer the following questions.

What redeeming qualities can your church be commended for?

What do you believe Jesus is expecting from your church.

Is your church living up to these expectations. Explain

What might Jesus criticize or bring judgement against your church for?

Once the message to repent is given, what three blessings would you like to receive from the Lord?

1.

2.

3.

How could you minister to the people in your church to help them to see what you have been shown today in the answers to these questions?
