

## The Church of Pergamum – The Compromising Church

**Revelation 2:** <sup>12</sup>“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: <sup>13</sup>‘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.’<sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching of Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit *acts of immorality*. <sup>15</sup>So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup>Therefore **REPENT**; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. <sup>17</sup>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.’

### Where is Pergamos?

Pergamos is located north of Smyrna, which is 15 miles inland from the Aegean Sea. There was little trade from the outside world in Pergamos. Just like Smyrna, Pergamos was known for education in science & medicine.

### It is worth noting that there were four magnificent Greek temples in Pergamos:

1. One to honor Zeus – the “head god,” referred to as the “sovereign of all sovereigns”;
2. Another to honor Dionysius – the god of wine & drama;
3. A third to honor Athena – the goddess of wisdom in art & war, and
4. The fourth to honor Asclepius – the god of healing, symbolized by serpents.

The word **pergamos or pergamum** means “married”. The church at Pergamos was married to the world. It held those who were teaching heretical doctrines, either not realizing it, or not seeing the importance of keeping the doctrine pure. It marketed the gospel by making it appealing to the world and by allowing people to keep their pagan practices and simply “convert” the idols and celebrations to “Christian” ones. During this period of the Church Age, the church was basically married into the pagan world system.

### A call to repentance from occult teaching of the Nicolaitans

The Church had members who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans’. According to the writings of the Early Church leaders, **Nicolas taught a doctrine of compromise, implying that total separation between Christianity and the practice of occult paganism was not essential**. From Early Church records, it seems apparent that this **Nicolas of Antioch was so immersed in occultism, Judaism, and Christianity that he had a stomach for all of it**. He had no problem **intermingling these belief systems** in various concoctions and saw no reason why believers couldn’t continue to fellowship with those **still immersed**

**in the black magic of the Roman empire and its countless mystery cults.** The Nicolaitans' believed that if a person was saved by Grace, then it didn't matter how they lived. They misused the Grace of God and the Liberty that is in Christ to satisfy their carnal (sexual) lustful desires.

**Revelation 2: 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.**

There were members within this Church who held fast to Jesus name, meaning that they have not denied Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This means that there are "Saved" members within this Church. However, keep in mind Satan is opposed to the Word of God and where the "Word of God" is lacking, there we find Satan's throne. We find that Jesus saw within each of these seven Churches, that there were both Wheat and Tares, Saved and Unsaved members and there warning believers against false doctrines.

**Revelation 12:15 "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate".** Jesus is now saying that the doctrine of Balaam is one and the same as the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. The specific doctrine that so angers our Lord in this Church is that the "**false teaching of the Word of God**". This doctrine allows members who practice (Spiritual) Fornication. (Major emphases being on God's Grace).

#### **What Were The doctrines of Nicolaitans?**

The Nicolaitans were identified in the letter to these churches as having three undesirable characteristics;

1. **Evil – they did not condone or speak against sin**
2. **They were Liars – they claimed to be apostles**
3. **They taught the doctrine of Balaam**

**Revelation 12:16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.** The appeal to the Believers here is;

1. Return to the "Word of God"
2. Reject the doctrine of Balaam and its result (Spiritual Fornication)

**Revelation 12:17 "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."**

In this verse, Jesus is telling the church members that they can find the Word of God if they diligently seek it and long for it. Jesus is saying that He will provide the Word of God to them although it is hidden from the rest of the Church members.

**Matthew 7:7-8**

**7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**

**8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.**

**John 12:48**

**“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.**

Remember the issue is staying with the true doctrine of Christ which is ONLY found in the Word of God. Jesus is pleading with them to FIND and LIVE by the Word of God. Jesus is still pleading with His church today to live by His Word and not the doctrines of men.