

HARVEST ROCK CHURCH

THE UNCOMPROMISING CHURCH THE CHURCH THAT PLEASURES GOD SERIES

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November 8, 2020

TEXT: Revelation 2:12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: 13 ‘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. 14 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. 15 So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. 17 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.’”

INTRO: Before I continue our study of the seven churches in the book of Revelation, I want to make some statements about the 2020 Election. Ironically, our TV was broken from the day after the election until Friday afternoon. It was a blessing in disguise. I was not able to get caught up in all the media noise. But I did have time to pray and reflect. Here is my take on the election:

1. If there was fraud in the election, it has to be exposed. Our democracy is what makes America great. We want the truth and integrity in the voting process.
2. The polls got it wrong again. There was no blue wave. We kept the Senate and gained numbers in the House. We have doubled the number of women in the House and they are all pro-life.
3. If Trump gets reelected, it will be by the grace of God and God will get the glory.
4. Trump gained numbers in the Hispanic and African American voters.
5. No matter what happens, God is going to use this for good (Romans 8:28). No matter what happens, Jesus is Lord! He is ruling and reigning! He is in control! (Revelation 11:15)

Jesus gave a prophetic message to seven different churches in Revelation 2-3. Each one of them was in what is modern-day Turkey. The word that He gave to those seven churches was relevant for their day, but it is a prophetic word to the Church in the earth that will face the pressures, persecution, and temptations throughout Church history.

So, the reason those churches are in the book of Revelation is because the Lord is saying, “I am going to raise up a church that pleases me, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.”

The title of this series comes from one of my life passages: **Colossians 1:10 So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.**

Pergamum, or Pergamos, was 20 miles from the Aegean Sea. A wealthy city, it was a center for idol worship. They built a temple to worship the Emperor Augustus in 29 BC, making Pergamos the center of emperor worship in Asia. They built a great altar for Zeus. At each temple were many temple prostitutes, as immorality had a central role in their idolatrous feasts. Today, the village of Bergama is on its site.

I. THE REVELATION OF JESUS

1. **Revelation 2:12** “The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this... 16
“Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.”
2. Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
3. **His Word Brings Conviction, Sets You Free, Transforms You, and Judges the Nations.**
4. When we talk about the judgments of God, I want you to know that there are two different expressions of the judgments of God. There is His redemptive, divine discipline that is on His people when He disciplines us because He loves us (Proverbs 3:12). Those are redemptive disciplines. Then there are punitive judgments, where God punishes.
5. There are many saying that God never judges, but that is not being biblical. Or that the God of the Old Testament judges, but the God of the New Testament does not. In Revelation, this is the New Testament, and this is talking about Jesus.
6. We may not fully understand judgment, but we want to trust in His Lordship. God’s ways are always to promote love, humility, and gratitude.

II. THE AFFIRMATION

- A. **Revelation 2:13** “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.”
 1. **Revelation 2:13** “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is.” He said, in effect, “But I also know the unique challenges you are facing.” That is, “You dwell where Satan’s throne is.” I understand the unique and heightened pressures that you are facing.
 2. “I know the dynamics in your city, yet there are many of you **who are holding fast to My name**,” and He is affirming them. I know that there is a difference in living in LA vs. Ames, Iowa. “Where Satan’s throne is,” and “where Satan dwells,” where there is an unusual manifestation of darkness in this city.
 3. **“These are the ones who did not deny My faith, even in the days of Antipas.”** Tradition says that Antipas was the bishop of that city who was martyred for his faith. “He was killed among you.”

III. THE ADMONISHMENT

- A. **Revelation 2:14** “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.”
 1. The story is in Numbers 22-25. Balaam was a prophet who started out as a true prophet, but money corrupted him. He tried to curse Israel, but three times when He opened his mouth, he ended up blessing Israel.
 2. Balaam said, “Well, I know God enough to know this: If you get them into idolatry and immorality, God will judge them.” “You get all of your young women and you come over into the camp and get your women to seduce the soldiers, then God being a righteous Judge will punish the Israelites.”
 3. And God judged them: 24,000 Israelites were killed by the plague.

B. THE SIN OF BALAAM

1. **2 Peter 2:15 ...having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.**
2. Using your ministry gift primarily for money. E.g. Prophesying for money, having conferences for money, etc. He ultimately was used by Satan to get the people of Israel to commit idolatry and immorality.

C. THE SIN OF IDOLATRY

1. Idolatry: Paul taught that covetousness was idolatry—pursuing riches without reference to Jesus’ leadership. Most idolatry throughout history and at the end of the age is economically driven.
2. **Colossians 3:5 Therefore, put to death... greed, which amounts to idolatry.**
3. Many of the people in the ancient world were involved in idolatry because if you made the Greek gods happy by sacrificing and giving money to them and being involved in all the immorality of all the rituals and rites around the temple, those gods would give you more money, and the rains would come, and your crops would be bigger, and your animals would produce more. And so, it was about money. E.g. Buddha statue in a restaurant.
4. Others committed idolatry because they wanted the alliances, the networking, and the support of the state. They did not really believe in the Greek gods. For them it was like, “Whatever, I will go and do all the stuff because I want the favor of the government and the social networking involved for participating in that.” The bottom line: It was still about money. It was about trusting that way of money instead of the Lord. So, idolatry, though there is a demonic power that most people are not aware of, is mostly money driven.

D. Revelation 2:15 “So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.”

1. In the second century, Irenaeus taught that the Nicolaitans were without restraint in their indulgence of the flesh, especially with immorality. This distortion of “liberty in grace” is common today. Jesus corrected believers in Ephesus related to the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6).
3. Twice Jesus mentions His hatred of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6,15). The deeds in Ephesus and the doctrines in Pergamos allowed immorality to go unchallenged.
4. Now, the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans were similar. In essence they were telling them that it was OK to be involved in immorality and it was also OK to be involved in idolatry. Today we would call this **hyper-grace teaching**.
5. In verse 16, He said, **“Therefore repent!”**
6. He continued, **“If you do not, I am going to come to you quickly,”** and He did not mean the second coming. He meant, “I am going to visit you and bring you to an account.” Then He said, “I am going to fight against those with the sword of My mouth.” Remember, that is how He introduced Himself back in verse 12: “I am the one who has the sharp two-edged sword in My mouth. I am the one talking to you, and I want you to take a stand right now. And if you will overcome...”

IV. THE AWARD

A. HIDDEN MANNA: Revelation 2:17 “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.”

- 1. The hidden manna, in one sentence, speaks of an increased capacity to delight in the Word of God and to receive it.** We are talking about the Word of God. Jesus says in John 6, “I am the manna! I am the bread from heaven! I am going to feed your soul with the revelation of who I am!” I feel that reading the Word has been manna from heaven!
2. Jesus is the true bread, the true manna from heaven that sustains us (John 6:48-51).

B. WHITE STONE

- 1. “I will give him a white stone”:** Precious stones were given to honor those who offered valiant service to their community or in battle. Those receiving these stones were also given special privileges. This was similar to winning a gold medal in the Olympics. A stone with a person’s name on it gave them admission to special events hosted by the emperor or a senator in Rome.
2. Jesus was alluding to this and said, “I have a stone that is way beyond a trophy or gold medal.” Jesus is saying, “Trust Me, this is an unimaginable reward.”
3. A stone that is “white” (Greek: *leukos*) refers to one that is shining, bright, brilliant, or glistening (Matthew 17:2; Revelation 3:4,5; 6:11; 7:9,13; 19:14).
4. On this stone, it says, “**I will write your name on it,**” and when God writes your name, it means that He tells your story. When Jesus says, “I will speak your name to the Father,” He is telling the story of your dedication. It will never ever be forgotten.

C. NEW NAME

- 1. “On the stone a new name written”:** A special name will be given to indicate one’s faithfulness, character, and role in the heaven to come and the assignment to come (Genesis 32:28; Isaiah 62:2; 65:15).
2. Simon was renamed Peter. Abram’s name was changed to Abraham to indicate that he was to be the father of a multitude (Genesis 17:5-15). God changed Sarah’s name. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel to speak of his place of government and access to God.
3. **Overcome:** To overcome in this context is to refuse to participate in idolatry or immorality and to stand up against false teaching on grace that allows others to be confident in their compromise.

D. Phinehas: The great overcomer

1. I want to go back to Numbers 25 and finish Balaam’s story. You know how I told you Balaam got Balak to get the Moabite women to come over and seduce the Israelites. God’s judgment hit, and 24,000 people were killed by a plague that came over the land. Phinehas was a priest of Israel and the grandson to Aaron, the High Priest. In Numbers 25, Phinehas took a spear and pierced an Israeli man having sex with a Moabite woman while they were having sex. This zeal pleased God, and the plague was halted.
2. I believe that God is looking for modern-day Phinehas who will not tolerate idolatry or immorality. I believe that we have such a church.