

## The Book of Revelation Lesson 5 – Chapter 2

1. **Key Verse** is Revelation 17:14 - “These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they [also shall overcome] that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.”
2. Notice how the book ties together
  - 2.1. Verses 14-18
    - 2.1.1. 2:1
    - 2.1.2. 2:8
    - 2.1.3. 2:12
    - 2.1.4. 2:18
    - 2.1.5. 3:1
    - 2.1.6. 3:7
3. The first letter was written to the church at Ephesus
  - 3.1. One of the 5 largest cities in the Roman Empire
  - 3.2. Ephesus was the most important city of Asia (western part of Asia Minor -- modern-day Turkey) as per the Biblical record.
  - 3.3. It was about 60 to 70 miles from Patmos.
  - 3.4. It was a seacoast city and lay at the mouth of the Cayster River.
  - 3.5. It was called one of the "eyes" of Asia; Smyrna was the other "eye."
  - 3.6. It was of great commercial importance.
    - 3.6.1. Many roads leading into the city
  - 3.7. It was the home of the temple of Diana or Artemis -- one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
  - 3.8. Paul visited briefly on his second missionary tour in **Acts 18** and returned for a two to three year stay in **Acts 19**. Aquila and Priscilla aided him there.
    - 3.8.1. Timothy later lived and labored there.
    - 3.8.2. Tradition says John the apostle spent many of his latter years there.
    - 3.8.3. Paul met with the Ephesian elders (**Acts 20:17-38**). Later he wrote them an epistle which bears their name.
  - 3.9. **Rev. 2:1** - To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:
    - 3.9.1. The angel of the church
      - 3.9.1.1. Some believe the angel is a human messenger -- not one of heavenly nature. He may be the one who received the letter from John, took it to Ephesus and read it there. Some think he may have been the preacher or the aggregate of the eldership.
      - 3.9.1.2. Some believe it represents the spiritual life of the church
      - 3.9.1.3. The message addressed to him is more important than our knowing his precise identity.
    - 3.9.2. Who is “he?”
      - 3.9.2.1. A twofold description is given of Jesus:

- 3.9.2.1.1. He holds the seven stars in his right hand. These are the seven angels (messengers) (Rev. 1:20). They enjoy his ardent affection and powerful protection.
- 3.9.2.1.2. He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. **Rev. 1:20** says these are the seven churches. He is in their midst; he is not remote. As candle sticks they are to reflect the light that emanates from Christ.
- 3.9.2.1.3. Golden is suggestive of their vast value. The church is intensely important to Jesus.
- 3.9.2.1.4. Light-bearers reflect with marvel their mission; their being composed of gold reflects royally their value to him who purchased the church with his own precious blood (**Acts 20:28**).
- 3.10. **Rev. 2:2** - I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false;
  - 3.10.1. Jesus starts off by commending the church at Ephesus.
    - 3.10.1.1. They were a working church.
    - 3.10.1.2. They did much for the cause of Christ.
      - 3.10.1.2.1. Works – their conduct and deeds
      - 3.10.1.2.2. Toil – work done at the cost of pain and suffering
        - 3.10.1.2.2.1. Their labor had been for the sake of the Lord. They had not fainted or retired from faith's front line.
  - 3.10.2. He knows all their works -- those good and those bad. He is cognizant of all labor they have expended. Their patience (steadfastness, endurance) is recognized by him. He knows and approves of their intolerance for evil people.
    - 3.10.2.1. They had tried or tested the self-acclaimed, self-appointed apostles. Upon finding their claims fraudulent, they rejected them as lying men -- men who claimed powers and priorities not theirs and which had never been theirs.
- 3.11. **Rev. 2:3** - and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary.
  - 3.11.1. They were faithful to the Lord and were not worn down or discouraged by anything they faced.
- 3.12. **Rev. 2:4** - But I have [this] against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love.
  - 3.12.1. The tone of the letter changes from one of commending to one of condemnation.
  - 3.12.2. He could not and would not approve everything about them. He diagnoses their spiritual disease. The Great Physician called it "heart trouble." They had deserted their first love.
    - 3.12.2.1. Their love for God and Christ was not what it once was.
    - 3.12.2.2. The labor, patience, intolerance for evil leaders and practice of discipline were all done but minus the fervency of love characteristic of them initially. For them the spiritual honeymoon with their Bridegroom was over.

- 3.12.2.3. Much like a wife or husband who loses real love for a spouse and performs expected responsibilities for a marital mate out of a sense of duty, these people were patient laborers with hands still stuck to the gospel plow (**Luke 9:62**).
- 3.12.2.4. But the zealous love was gone out of the work being done. They had lost their love for service, for worship, for Bible study, for prayer and for soul winning.
- 3.12.2.5. Loveless church members do not fit the Loving Lord, our Affectionate Advocate on high.
- 3.13. **Rev. 2:5** - Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.
  - 3.13.1. They are told to remember from where they once were.
  - 3.13.2. A spiritual prescription is provided. Three valiant verbs spell it out. They are to: (1) remember; (2) repent; and (3) do the first works again.
    - 3.13.2.1. **Remember** - Memory is to jog them back to that priceless and precious position from which they had fallen. A loss of love means apostasy has begun. They had done what millions deny -- fall. Was it a fatal fall? It was unless they repented and came back, for the Lord threatened them with an extinguishing of the church there.
    - 3.13.2.2. In the second place, they are to **repent**. Godly sorrow produces it; repentance is a change of mind; an amended life is its sure result (**2 Cor. 7:9-10; Matt. 3:8**).
    - 3.13.2.3. In the third place they are to do the **first works**. This does not mean a duplication of obeying the gospel initially but begin to do the works they first performed so lovingly and loyally immediately subsequent to conversion.
  - 3.13.3. Unless they repented, he would come in Judgment and remove their candlestick. This referred to a removal of the congregation there. They would no longer be recognized as the Lord's church.
    - 3.13.3.1. It happened. Sometime later Ephesus was minus the Lord's church.
  - 3.13.4. **ALL churches need to heed this call!**
- 3.14. **Rev. 2:6** - But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
  - 3.14.1. Christ again commended their hatred toward the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which deeds he hated.
  - 3.14.2. While we aren't sure exactly who the Nicolaitans were, it appears they were connected with the doctrines of Balaam (**Rev.2:14-15**).
    - 3.14.2.1. They encouraged Christians to be "Christians" but also to take part in the activities of the world. The body could sin at will and its deeds had no fatal effects upon their souls or spirits.
  - 3.14.3. The Ephesian church was composed of individuals, as indeed all congregations were/are.
    - 3.14.3.1. We have the same problem today.
      - 3.14.3.1.1. We CANNOT serve two masters! (**Matt. 6:24**)

- 3.15. **Rev. 2:7** - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- 3.15.1. They are told to hear. This means to hear God's word and obey!
- 3.15.2. If they were to eat of the tree of life (eternal life in heaven), they must return to their first love, once abandoned but now there waiting to be reclaimed.
- 3.15.3. Our going there depends on our overcoming. The Lord will not do the overcoming for us. Others cannot overcome for us. We are active in this not passive. Overcoming is one of the key, kingly terms of the New Testament.

#### 4. Smyrna

- 4.1. Those who feigned a relationship to Judaism had subjected these brethren to severe persecution.
- 4.2. Smyrna lay 40 miles almost due north of Ephesus.
- 4.3. The city was exceptionally beautiful and large and ranked with Ephesus and Pergamum as "First of Asia."
- 4.3.1. It was an ancient city, had known previous destruction and had been rebuilt on even a grander scale than before its destruction.
- 4.3.2. It was a commercial metropolis and this would be sufficient to attract a large Jewish population there.
- 4.3.3. The city had long been a loyal ally to Rome and Rome rewarded the city lavishly with enviable political blessings.
- 4.3.4. Westerly breezes from the beautiful blue Aegean Sea to the west produced a remarkable climate even in the hot Mid-East summers.
- 4.3.5. It prided itself in being the light and ornament of Asia. The people felt they were first and had no close peer in that whole area.
- 4.3.6. The city numbered about 200,000 in John's day.
- 4.4. Known as the birthplace of Homer.
- 4.5. It was an important seaport that commanded the mouth of the Hermus River.
- 4.6. Huge stadium.
- 4.7. Smyrna was a wealthy city.
- 4.8. Learning, especially in the sciences and medicine, flourished.
- 4.9. It repeatedly sided with Rome and thus earned special privileges as a free city.
- 4.10. Smyrna was also a center of emperor worship, having won the privilege from the Roman Senate in A.D. 23 (over eleven other cities) of building the first temple in honor of Tiberius.
- 4.11. Under Domitian (A.D. 81-96) emperor worship became compulsory for every Roman citizen on threat of death.
- 4.11.1. All a citizen had to do was burn a pinch of incense and say "Caesar is Lord."
- 4.11.2. Yet most Christians, with their confession "Jesus is Lord", refused to do this.
- 4.11.3. Perhaps nowhere was life for a Christian more perilous than in this city of zealous emperor worship.

- 4.12. The founding of the Smyrna church??
  - 4.12.1. We have no information other than in this letter.
  - 4.12.2. Possibly on Paul's 3rd missionary journey (**Acts 19:10**) in AD 53-56.
  - 4.12.3. Polycarp was a bishop of the church there --- burned at the stake in 155 AD for refusing to say "Caesar is Lord".
  - 4.12.4. Though they were economically destitute (**Heb.10:34**), these saints were spiritually rich in their service to the Son God (**2:9**).
  - 4.12.5. They were wealthy in good works (**1 Tim. 6:18**).
- 4.13. Jesus addressed the angel (messenger) with his intended message.
  - 4.13.1. This letter is composed of a description of Jesus
  - 4.13.2. An appraisal of the church
    - 4.13.2.1. This church was NOT condemned for anything proving that churches CAN be what God wants them to be!
  - 4.13.3. A warning of what persecutions the future held for these faithful followers of his
  - 4.13.4. Encouragement toward continued faithfulness
  - 4.13.5. Individual responsibility to hear what the Spirit said
  - 4.13.6. A precious promise to the steadfast, triumphant overcomer of their immunity against the second death or Eternal Gehenna.
- 4.14. **Rev. 2:8 - And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived [again]:**
  - 4.14.1. The Savior was the first and last. He is the Alpha and Omega -- first and final letters of their native tongue -- the Greek. He would be styled the A and Z in our language usage.
  - 4.14.2. He was before Smyrna; he would still be when Smyrna was no more.
  - 4.14.3. He was the dead one -- between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning of the Final Week -- and is now the Living One.
  - 4.14.4. **Rev. 1:18** states, "**I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hades and of death.**"
  - 4.14.5. This acknowledgment of himself is most appropriate in viewing the imminent martyrdom for some of them.
    - 4.14.5.1. Men could kill their bodies and do so only once (**Matt. 10:28**).
    - 4.14.5.2. The enemies of the Christians at Smyrna could not touch their souls. This was the realm wherein the Saviour was all powerful and held sovereign sway.
- 4.15. **Rev. 2:9 - I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they art not, but are a synagogue of Satan.**
  - 4.15.1. Jesus knew and in regards to us he knows.
  - 4.15.2. How comforting this precious concept is when what He knows is on the side of right and true as was eminently the case with these Smyranean saints.

- 4.15.3. Jesus knew their works. They had been working righteous works (**Acts 10:35**).
- 4.15.4. Theirs was a "work of faith" and a "labor of love" (**1 Thess. 1:3**).
- 4.15.5. They were working the works of God and persisting in that for which they were spiritually created (**John 6:29; Eph. 2:10**).
- 4.15.6. He knew their tribulation.
  - 4.15.6.1. Great pressures were theirs to bear.
  - 4.15.6.2. Intense suffering inheres in the term.
  - 4.15.6.3. He knew their poverty. In physical matters they were at the bottom of the financial scale. They were far below the poverty level.
    - 4.15.6.3.1. When they became Christians they lost property, jobs and earthly security.
    - 4.15.6.3.2. Christianity was a real sacrifice for them.
    - 4.15.6.3.3. Yet they were rich. Riches of redemption were their precious possession.
    - 4.15.6.3.4. They were in line for the true riches of heaven of which the Christ spoke in **Luke 16:11**.
    - 4.15.6.3.5. They laid up treasures in heaven (**Matt. 6:20**).
    - 4.15.6.3.6. They were rich in faith, in grace and in mercy (**James 2:5; Eph. 2:3-7**).
    - 4.15.6.3.7. They were recipients of the unsearchable riches of Christ (**Eph. 3:8**).
- 4.15.7. Jesus knew the blasphemy (slander, misrepresentation) of infidelic Jews toward his people -- the true Israel of God (**Gal. 6:16**).
  - 4.15.7.1. Their counterparts in the past in Palestine had treated him the same way 63 years earlier.
    - 4.15.7.1.1. They claimed to be Jews; Jesus denied the claim.
    - 4.15.7.1.2. They claimed to be God's synagogue; Jesus said Satan held the title of ownership.
    - 4.15.7.1.3. They were not even Jews who honored Abraham or Moses.
    - 4.15.7.1.4. They surely were not true Jews about which Paul wrote in **Rom. 2:28-29**.
- 4.15.8. We are not immune from suffering even today.
- 4.16. **Rev. 2:10 - Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.**
  - 4.16.1. The Saviour did not promise an easy road to the suffering saints at Smyrna. In fact he counseled that more sufferings are on the way. Yet they are not to exhibit fear.
    - 4.16.1.1. The suffering would be sure, but short, and very short in view of the eternal reward ultimately theirs.
    - 4.16.1.2. The devil, working through his human puppets there at Smyrna, would cast some of them into prison. John, the writer, had faced imprisonment as we learn in Acts 4 and Acts 5. Smyrnan Christians

would be enduring no more than others before them had done. Such imprisonments would test the mettle of their heroic faith. Their tried background of success in past persecutions would stand them well for any future trials.

- 4.16.2. Tribulation would be their lot for 10 days. There is really no uniformity among Revelation commentators as touching the precise duration of this tribulation.
  - 4.16.2.1. Some say 10 days; some allow a day for a year in harmony with prophetic duration in Old Testament times and say it would be for 10 years. Some say it would be just for a short but indefinite period of time.
  - 4.16.2.2. Ten was a number of completeness, or entirety in Bible times.
  - 4.16.2.3. The important thing was not so much the quantity of time but the quality of their faithfulness through it all.
- 4.16.3. The Lord issued an intense charge that they be faithful unto death.
  - 4.16.3.1. "Unto death" does not mean until natural death. It means to be faithful even up to the point of death. Martyrdom was not out of the picture at all. The same is expected of us!
  - 4.16.3.2. History reveals that Polycarp, a Smyranean saint and a personal acquaintance of John the apostle, died as a martyr to the Master about A.D. 155.
    - 4.16.3.2.1. He was given a choice. If he recanted, he could live.
    - 4.16.3.2.2. A denial of Jesus and a public avowal that Caesar is Lord would have spared his life and rewarded him with political favors.
    - 4.16.3.2.3. The price was too high. They could not frighten him with the threat of wild beasts or making him a burning martyr.
    - 4.16.3.2.4. He told his enemies that they threatened him with a fire that burned for awhile, but were ignorant of that fire that never could be extinguished -- the eternal fires of Hell.
    - 4.16.3.2.5. Relative to the recanting of his Redeemer he reminded his determined enemies that he had served his Lord 86 years and that Jesus had never done him any harm. He was not about to turn against him now.
    - 4.16.3.2.6. He invited them to do what they willed in his case. They made plans to burn him. Infidelic Jews eagerly supplied wood for the heartless and calloused procedure.
    - 4.16.3.2.7. The fire would not burn properly so they spilt his blood with a sword through his side and burned his remains
- 4.16.4. Faithfulness on their part meant the rich reward of life's crown.
  - 4.16.4.1. The Savior pointed them to something far greater, grander and more glorious -- the crown of life.
  - 4.16.4.2. Peter called it a "crown of glory," Paul a "crown of righteousness," and James, as does John here, "the crown of life" (**1 Pet. 5:4; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12**).
  - 4.16.4.3. Peter styled it also as "**an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you**" (**1 Pet. 1:4**).

- 4.16.4.4. Paul called it an incorruptible crown in **1 Cor. 9:25**.
- 4.16.4.5. All these are forceful designations of eternal life in heaven.
- 4.17. **Rev. 2:11 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**
  - 4.17.1. Each serious saint and responsible recipient of this epistle was charged to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
  - 4.17.2. The overcomer will not be hurt of the second death.
    - 4.17.2.1. This means he will escape the eternal penalty of Gehenna -- final separation of the person from God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, elect angels and all the redeemed from patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian ages.
    - 4.17.2.2. If Eternal Gehenna was not to be their ultimate lot, then Eternal Heaven was to be. Heaven is linked with eternal life; hell is linked with eternal death.
    - 4.17.2.3. Both destinations call for eternal existences. Yet eternal life is never linked with hell. Why? Because there is a quality associated with eternal life never associated with everlasting damnation.
  - 4.17.3. What a marvelous congregation who received all commendation and no condemnation!
  - 4.17.4.** Could you have been a Christian at Smyrna?
- 5. Pergamos (Pergamum -- ASV)
  - 5.1. Located about 40 miles north of Smyrna.
  - 5.2. It was inland from the Aegean Sea by some 15 miles.
  - 5.3. It did not enjoy the commercial success of either Ephesus or Smyrna, but it was called Asia's most illustrious city.
  - 5.4. It was the political capital of Asia.
  - 5.5. It had the second largest library of the ancient world (the largest being in Alexandria, Egypt). It boasted a library of 200,000 volumes, second only to that housed at Alexandria of Egypt.
  - 5.6. The city had a medical center where Galen, second only to Hippocrates in medical fame of ancient times, lived and practiced as the most renowned physician of his day.
  - 5.7. Idol temples were there.
    - 5.7.1. It was the first city in Asia to have a temple to the Emperor. It was built in A.D. 29 to honor Augustus Caesar. Two more would be built later.
      - 5.7.1.1. Pergamos was a center of emperor worship. Idolatry and immorality flourished there and usually were handmaidens of social and religious activities.
    - 5.7.2. In addition to the emperor worship cult, it had four other major pagan temples plus many smaller ones. There was one to Zeus, Athena, Dionysus and Asklepios.
      - 5.7.2.1. People of Pergamos worshipped Aesculapius, the god of medicine under the form of a serpent.
      - 5.7.2.2. R. H. Charles has referred to Pergamos as "the Lourdes of the ancient world" due to so many coming there to be healed.
  - 5.8. In that powerful and prestigious Asian city the Lord's church had been planted, but we do not know by whom.



**5.9.12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword:**

5.9.1. The Lord's ascribed attribute here is a passionate reference to his wielding the sharp sword with a double edge.

5.9.2. Since it is proceeding from the Lord's mouth in this vision, it surely stands for the word of the Lord.

5.9.2.1. The Word of God is alive and powerful; it is sharper than a two-edged sword

5.9.2.1.1. **Heb. 4:12 - For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

5.9.2.2. The great offensive weapon adorning the Christian armor is the "sword of the Spirit" (**Eph. 6:17**).

5.9.3. Men will be judged by the Word of God (**James 2:12**).

5.9.3.1. The law of liberty is the same as the Word of God, the Gospel.

5.9.3.2. Those who humbly submit their wills to the will of God will find their home in heaven.

5.9.4. The avenging and judging work of the Lord through his word must be the intended application of the symbol, even as it is in **Rev. 19:15**.

**5.10. 13 I know where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth.**

5.10.1. The church at Pergamos was in a life and death struggle.

5.10.1.1. Forces faced them from without; enemies endangered them from within.

5.10.1.2. It was a time of crisis for this congregation.

5.10.1.3. Satan was so successfully entrenched there that Jesus spoke of it as the very place where Satan was sitting or enthroned.

5.10.2. Jesus found good in their midst.

5.10.2.1. He knew their works; he was walking in their midst.

5.10.2.2. He knew the difficult surroundings and circumstances they faced.

5.10.2.3. Yet in such Satanic surroundings they were holding fast the name of the Christ in unwavering loyalty.

5.10.2.4. They had not denied the faith.

5.10.2.4.1. This is the one faith of **Eph. 4:5**.

5.10.2.4.2. It is the faith delivered once and for all about which Jude wrote in **Jude 1:3**. It is the gospel.

5.10.3. Even in the fiery persecutions that claimed one of their own beloved members -- Antipas -- they had stayed true and loyal.

5.10.3.1. All we know in the Bible about Antipas is presented right here.

5.10.3.2. He was faithful to the Lord, "faithful unto death", and we know he will be given the crown of life.

5.10.3.2.1. **Luke 16:22; 25 - and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom... but now here he is comforted.**

5.11. **14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.**

5.11.1. Not all was well at Peramos. The Lord did not have many things against them but he did have a few.

5.11.1.1. They, the faithful element, were too tolerant.

5.11.1.1.1. They were allowing some there to set forth the doctrine (teaching) of Balaam.

5.11.1.1.2. We read about his efforts to curse God's people in **Num. 22-24**. Jehovah would not permit such.

5.11.1.1.3. But Balaam's covetous eyes toward the riches promised him by Balac, the Moabite king, led him to set forth another devious plan to ensnare and injure Israel.

5.11.1.1.4. He advised Balac to place his attractive Moabite women as enticing bait before the Israelite men. They led Israel into idolatry and immorality.

5.11.1.1.5. This current element at Pergamos in the first century were devotees of Balaam's devious designs from olden times.

5.11.1.1.6. They taught God's people at Pergamos that eating things sacrificed to idols and the committing of fornication were quite innocent, constituted much fun and really ought not to be off limits for any church member.

5.11.1.1.7. Unless the Christians joined in, they were outcasts.

5.11.1.1.8. They are faulted because they allowed such teaching to go uncurbed and unchecked.

5.12. **15 So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner.**

5.12.1. While we aren't sure exactly who the Nicolaitans were, it appears they were connected with the doctrines of Balaam.

5.12.2. They encouraged Christians to be "Christians" but also to take part in the activities of the world. The body could sin at will and its deeds had no fatal effects upon their souls or spirits.

5.13. **16 Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.**

5.13.1. Repentance is a change of heart.

5.13.1.1. Godly sorrow precedes it; amended lives follow it.

5.13.2. In reality three groups needed to repent at Pergamos.

5.13.2.1. The Balaam errorists needed to repent.

5.13.2.2. The Nicolaitan elements of error needed to repent.

5.13.2.3. The saints who had practiced neither error but had tolerated the adamant advocates of both needed to repent.

5.13.3. If this demanded repentance was not forthcoming promptly, the Lord promised a quick coming with punishing justice. He would fight against these licentious, idolatrous sinners with the sharp sword of his mouth his all-powerful, penetrating word.

5.14. **17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.**

5.14.1. Each saint at Pergamos had ears with which to hear. Let him therefore hear the Spirit's message to the churches. No other charge in the New Testament is repeated so frequently.

5.14.1.1. They are to hear, understand, believe and obey what is said. Christians must do this today. Jesus is encouraging those who will overcome.

5.14.2. As with the Ephesian disciples and the saints at Smyrna, there is extended to God's people at Pergamos a precious promise.

5.14.2.1. It is a powerful encouragement for them to overcome. The overcomers are promised hidden manna to eat.

5.14.2.2. Throughout the Christian Dispensation Jesus has been the bread of God or heavenly manna upon which his people have feasted. Hidden manna belongs to heaven and the redeemed.

5.14.2.3. It refers to the same rich eternal blessing as eating of the tree of life in God's Eternal Paradise portrayed in **Rev. 2:7**.

5.14.3. To the overcomer will be given a new stone which encompasses a new name.

5.14.3.1. In ancient times those acquitted in a trial were informed of it by a white pebble dropped into an urn; those judged guilty had a black pebble dropped into the urn. The overcomers are those eternally justified or forever redeemed. Pergamos would have realized the significance of this forceful description.

5.14.3.2. The hidden manna is heavenly food versus physical food. It is hidden since it will be received in heaven. It comes from God and only the saved will enjoy it.

5.14.3.3. The new name written is unknown except to the rich recipient of the same. It is of no value to speculate pertaining to its precise identity.

5.14.4. The stone is white; the name is new. White and new are key, kingly terms throughout Revelation.

**5.14.5.** Could you have been a Christian in Pergamos?

6. Thyatira

6.1. Located about half-way between Pergamos and Sardis.

6.2. It did not enjoy the economic, political and prestigious rank of Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos.

6.3. It was a city of labor associations and these in turn produced many problems for Christians.

6.3.1. To pursue a trade or skill demanded one's belonging to that particular guild. But each guild had its idol.

- 6.3.2. Guild members were expected to eat common meals together. These were linked with meats offered to the gods and often the entertainment was very immoral.
- 6.3.3. A failure to conform on the part of Christians meant exclusion and loss of jobs.
- 6.3.4. Thyatira worshipped the sun god -- Apollo.
- 6.3.5. Adverse circumstances faced faithful Christians everywhere they turned in Thyatira.
- 6.4. This is the longest letter of the seven letters and it is written to the church in the smallest city.
- 6.5. **Rev. 2:18 - And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass:**
  - 6.5.1. Jesus addressed the Thyatira saints as God's Son.
  - 6.5.2. People at Thyatira were looking at the physical sun in the heavens which was represented by Apollo.
  - 6.5.3. God's Son has eyes like unto a flame of fire. He sees all; he knows all.
  - 6.5.4. Feet like unto burnished brass indicate strength, splendor and emphasizes His purity, because brass is pure, and highly refined in the fire..
- 6.6. **Rev. 2:19 - I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first.**
  - 6.6.1. Jesus knew the Thyatira congregation.
    - 6.6.1.1. Works, Love, Faith, Service, Patience
    - 6.6.1.2. Last works more than the first
    - 6.6.1.3. In many ways, the church at Thyatira was a model church. They had the great essential qualities.
    - 6.6.1.4. Not only do they have these qualities, but they have them in increasing measure!!!
  - 6.6.2. He knew their works.
    - 6.6.2.1. They were not idle.
    - 6.6.2.2. This was a working church, a church that was filled with love for God and love for their fellowman.
  - 6.6.3. He knew their faith.
    - 6.6.3.1. They had trust (faith) in Jesus. Due to their faith that worked through love, they were busy in Christian service.
  - 6.6.4. He knew their love.
    - 6.6.4.1. This love extended up to God, out to each other and toward the saving of their own souls.
- 6.7. He knew their service.
  - 6.7.1.1. They were not selfish; they were mindful of others. He knew their patience. This is steadfastness, endurance, a refusal to surrender. He knew their last works to be more than the first.
  - 6.7.2. Unlike Ephesus, they were not going backward. They were growing.
- 6.8. **Rev. 2:20 - But I have [this] against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.**

- 6.8.1. This church which was so good in many ways had a serious problem.
  - 6.8.1.1. They had a woman who claimed to be a prophetess whom the Lord calls Jezebel.
  - 6.8.1.2. They permitted, allowed or tolerated this woman to restructure the church there.
  - 6.8.1.3. This may not have been her literal name, but a “title” that clearly represents a self-styled prophetess within the church, after the pattern of Jezebel in the Old Testament (**1 Kings 16-21 and 2 Kings 9:30-37**).
  - 6.8.1.4. She was one of the most evil characters of the Old Testament, who attempted to combine the worship of Israel with the worship of the idol Baal . . .
  - 6.8.1.5. Thyatira's Jezebel styled herself a prophetess. She was not the Lord's prophetess.
  - 6.8.1.6. She taught God's people to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols.
  - 6.8.1.7. This would have included telling workers that they could hold their jobs by joining in with the idolatrous feasts and participating when the sensual orgies began.

**6.9. Rev. 2:21 - And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication.**

- 6.9.1. The Lord had been long-suffering allowing time for her repentance. But it was her will to remain adamantly impenitent, a lover of idols and a lover of forbidden flesh.
- 6.9.2. God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, and gives men time to come to repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**). But if they do not repent, they will be punished.

**6.10. Rev. 2:22 - Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works.**

- 6.10.1. The reference to adultery is important. It speaks of both literal, sexual adultery and spiritual adultery. When these Christians honored other gods, they were unfaithful to the Lord who saved them.
- 6.10.2. Spiritual adultery is what those who Satan's teachings are committing.
- 6.10.3. Her followers may still repent and be forgiven.
  - 6.10.3.1. God is always ready to forgive Christians when they sin, but repentance must come first. If Christians do not repent, they will be punished.
  - 6.10.3.2. **Christians can fall from grace!**

**6.11. Rev. 2:23 - And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works.**

- 6.11.1. “Her children” are those who have accepted and follow her teachings
- 6.11.2. All churches, not just the one at Thyatira, need to recognize that Jesus searches every individual to the deepest depths and gives to all according as their conduct demands.

- 6.11.3. Not all at Thyatira had succumbed to her sensuality. Yet the ones who had not succumbed to it had allowed her to teach it and practice it.
- 6.11.3.1. Jezebel had enticed the Christians by telling them that to appreciate the grace of God, they needed to know the deep things of Satan.
- 6.11.3.1.1. Later some taught that your body could do fleshly things, but your soul could still be pure.
- 6.11.3.1.2. The Bible does not teach this (**2 Peter 2:18**).
- 6.11.3.2. Satan has a very skillfully laid strategy to ensnare others into his trap.
- 6.11.3.2.1. The bottom line is the same, join the sinners and live it up with gusto! But such is fatal to spirituality. When such is done Satan and his servants, not the Savior and his saints, are the temporary victors.
- 6.11.3.2.2. One does not have to murder, cheat on his spouse, smoke, get drunk and become addicted to some hard-line drug to know that such things are wrong spiritually and injure the person who so engages.
- 6.12. **Rev.2:24 - But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden.**
- 6.12.1. He never loads us beyond our ability to bear such.
- 6.12.2. Obviously, they were obligated to remain detached from such idolatrous, immoral practices and to discipline those who adamantly remained impenitent. This was part and parcel of holding fast till his coming.
- 6.12.3. This was a courageous charge that they remain faithful to him all their lives.
- 6.13. **Rev. 2:25 - Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come.**
- 6.13.1. Just as he had done with the three other examined congregations he encouraged their overcoming.
- 6.13.2. He did not want them to forfeit their salvation and come over to Jezebel's side and Satan's camp. That is what this sensual group desired. It is what Jezebel encouraged and enticed them to do. They were to resist with persistent success her blandishments.
- 6.13.3. Furthermore, he emphasized the need for them to keep his works to the end.
- 6.13.3.1. Victory is not for those who give up halfway through the battle. No one ever won a race who quit midway in its course.
- 6.13.3.2. The reward of righteousness is for the person who begins well and ends well.
- 6.13.3.3. The ideal is really threefold: (1) We need to begin well; (2) we need to continue well; (3) we need to conclude well. That was how the banished John on rocky Patmos was doing.
- 6.13.4. They could do and must do the same at Thyatira if their eternal reward was to be inherited.

- 6.14. **Rev. 2:26 - And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations:**
- 6.14.1. In order for a Christian to overcome, he must faithfully obey Christ all his life.
- 6.15. **Rev. 2:27 - and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father:**
- 6.15.1. The key to understanding this verse is what is done with the authority and rod of iron. It is used to break the vessels of the potter.
- 6.15.2. The meaning is that those who are faithful to Christ when Christ comes again will share in his victory over the enemy who is Satan and his forces. This is referring to the ultimate victory and the home in heaven, not literal ruling.
- 6.15.3. Those who fail to follow Christ will be crushed like a pottery bowl shatters when hit by a rod of iron.
- 6.16. **Rev. 2:28 - and I will give him the morning star.**
- 6.16.1. The overcomer who is faithful to the end will be given the morning star. Jesus is "the bright and morning star" (**Rev. 22:16**).
- 6.16.2. Having Jesus as our heavenly reward makes heaven all that much more precious and inviting.
- 6.16.3. How much better to work toward that goal than to follow in the idolatrous, sensual lifestyle of the arrogant element, in this case Jezebel and her crew of liberal followers.
- 6.17. **Rev. 2:29 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.**
- 6.17.1. All Christians should hear God's word, believe it and obey it.
- 6.17.2. Could you have been a Christian in Thyatira?