Revelation 2:12-17

Review...

- Outline of Revelation...
 - o PAST the things John HAD seen vison of Jesus **Revelation 1**
 - o PRESENT the things which ARE the SEVEN churches Revelation 2-3
 - o FUTURE the things AFTER this the rapture wrath and return of Jesus Revelation 4-22
- SEVEN letters...
 - o Given by Jesus written down by John with THREE possible interpretations...
 - o SEVEN literal churches in Asia Minor [modern day Turkey]
 - o Different KINDS of churches the TOTAL [seven] church...
 - o The HISTORY of the church from PENTECOST to the RAPTURE!
- Ephesus Loveless church...
- Smyrna Persecuted church…
 - o Smyrna was the HEART of EMPEROR [Tiberias] worship is the easter Roman Empire...
 - o The penalty for refusing to WORSHIP the EMPEROR was DEATH...
 - o Therefore they suffered great TRIBULATION because of their FAITH...
 - o But Jesus told them NOT to FEAR because He death was not the end...
 - o If they were faithful unto DEATH they would receive a crown of LIFE...
 - o To those who OVERCOME the SECOND death would not hurt them!

THE COMPROMISING CHURCH...

- 1st The introduction... vs. 12
 - o FOUR sections
 - Each of the LETTERS to the churches contains FOUR sections...
 - Introduction Positive Negative and Encouragement...
 - Not all of the churches receive all FOUR sections!
 - o 1st The Angel...
 - To the angel!
 - The letters to all SEVEN churches open up with this same introduction to the angel...
 - As you will recall there are TWO thoughts on WHO this ANGEL was...
 - FIRST a guardian ANGEL who watched over Pergamos Hebrews 1:14
 - SECOND it could be the PASTOR of the church...
 - ANGEL [ἄγγελος] means messenger one who gives Gods WORD…
 - Therefore Jesus could be talking about the PASTOR who gave the church His Word!
 - o 2^{nd} The City...
 - The church of Pergamos write!
 - Pergamos [Pergamum] the modern city of Bergama located in Caicus river valley...
 - A beautiful fertile valley that is around 30 milometers inland from the Aegean Sea...
 - Pergamos was the CAPITOL of the Roman province of the Asia Minor for over 250 years...
 - It was well known for having one of the LARGEST library in ROME 200k scrolls!

- The ruins of Pergamos are some of the most impressive in Turkey...
 - Pergamos [Πέργαμος] the name means the HIGH place...
 - Has TWO sections the Acropolis [high city] over 300 meters above the valley floor...
 - The theater on the Acropolis is the steepest theatre in the world...
 - It seats 10-12k people and has an almost vertical incline overlooking the valley below...
 - There are FOUR major temples: Athena Trajan [emperor] Dionysus Zeus!
- In the valley is a second set of ruins...
 - The Asklepion was a world class medial facility...
 - They treated not only the physical maladies of the people but also the emotional...
 - In Greek mythology Asclepius was the Grecian God of healing [son of Apollos]
 - The symbol of Asclepius was a serpent spiraling up a pole Medical Association...
 - People would come from all over the world to be healed in the Asklepion!
- The result of all of this PAGANISM had a NEGATIVE influence on the church...
 - Which is why the church in Pergamos is often called the COMPROMISED church...
 - Too often rather than looking to the Lord the church is influenced by the world...
 - Rather than follow after the example of the world we are to be an example to them!
 - **Jeremiah 15:19** "You are to influence them. Do not let them influence you!"
- o 3rd The Tone...
 - Describing Jesus...
 - In His INTRODUCTION to each of the Churches Jesus looks back...
 - Highlighting specific CHARACTERISTICS of the Vision from **Revelation 1:11-18**
 - The choice of CHARACTERISTICS will set the TONE for the LETTER to that church...
 - With PERGAMOS Jesus will highlight His WORD which bring JUDGEMENT!
 - These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword!
 - Sword [ῥομφαία] 7x NT [6x in Revelation] speaks of a LARGE two-handed sword...
 - The same sword that comes out of the mouth of Jesus Revelation 19:15
 - The idea of the sword referrers to His Word which brings judgement...
 - Because of their COMPROMISE Jesus was going to bring his WORD to JUDGE!
 - Because it is the WORD of God that reveals the TRUTH…
 - It is the instrument that Jesus will use to EXPOSE who we REALLY are!
 - **Hebrews 4:12** "The word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword $[\mu \acute{\alpha} \chi \alpha \iota \rho \alpha]$... a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- 2^{ND} The Positive... vs. 13
 - o 1st Jesus KNOWS...
 - I know your works!
 - KNOWS [εἴδω] to SEE and UNDERSTAND...
 - Jesus will make this statement to all SEVEN churches He sees EVERYTHING!
 - GOOD and BAD nothing [perfect] is hidden from our Lord!
 - **Hebrews 4:13** "There is no creature hidden from His sight but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."
 - o 2nd Their LOCATION...
 - Where you dwell where satans throne is!
 - Satan is not omnipresent he can only be at one place at one time...
 - And the city of Pergamos was the CITY where satan ruled [throne] in the days of John...
 - It is repeated again at the end of the verse this is where satan dwells!
 - Temple of Zeus...

- On the Acropolis in Pergamos was a temple to Zeus and the altar to Zeus...
- The foundation and steps of the remains of the altar can still be seen today 80x80m
- The actual altar was moved to the Pergamon museum in Berlin Germany [Nazis]
- Zeus was the greatest of the Greek gods so perhaps this altar was the throne of satan!
- I am not sure about you but if Jesus told me satan lived in my city I would move...
- Needless to say the church in Pergamos certainly did not have it easy...
- They were striving to be a light in arguably the darkest place on earth!
- o 3rd Hold fast...
 - You hold fast to My name!
 - HOLD fast [κρατέω] to hold onto something carefully refuse to let go...
 - MANY in the church put their TRUST in the NAME of Jesus...
 - There were a lot of other NAMES that they could have put their faith in Zeus Caesar...
 - But they believed there was ONE name that was above all others!
 - Acts 4:12 "Nor is there salvation in any other- for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
- o 4th Not DENY...
 - Did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr...
 - Who was killed among you where Satan dwells!
 - Those in Pergamos who HELD onto the NAME of Jesus we VERY faithful...
 - Even the point of giving their lives for sake of their FAITH!
 - There is a TEMPLE in the lower part of the city of Pergamos called the RED Basilica..
 - It was used in the worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis Serapis...
 - Antipas the Pastor of Pergamos was killed there by worshipers of Isis!
 - Because holding fast to the Lord our FAITH is also not about a better life now...
 - If we are looking for earthly rewards in return for our obedience to Christ...
 - We might very well be disappointed God promises us tribulation here John 16:33
 - The rewards for serving Jesus are far greater they are eternal it is about heaven!
- 3RD THE NEGATIVE... vs. 14-16
 - o 1st Doctrine of Balaam... vs. 14
 - I have a few things against you!
 - Not EVERYONE in the church was holding onto the BIBLE...
 - There were TWO other TEACHINGS [doctrines] that were POPULAR in PERGAMOS...
 - They HELD $[\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\omega]$ to the TEACHING of Balaam and the TEACHING of NICOLAITANS!
 - You have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam!
 - Balaam was one of only a handful of non-Jewish prophets in the Old Testament...
 - There is no doubt Balaam KNEW the Lord and that the Lord SPOKE to him...
 - Balaam referred to God by his true name [יְהוָה] Numbers 22:8
 - King Balak of Moab sent to Balaam and asked him to CURSE the people of Israel...
 - When Balaam asked the LORD if he could go the LORD told him NO TWO times...
 - But he pleaded with the LORD [he was offered a LOT of money] and God let him go...
 - God sent an angel to KILL Balaam but his DONKEY kept avoiding the angel...
 - The THIRD time it happened Balaam beat his DONKEY and the DONKEY spoke...
 - What is AMAZING is not that a DONKEY talked it is that Balaam ARGUED back...
 - Then Balaam saw the angel and the LORD told Balaam to ONLY speak what God said!
 - What was OBVIOUS to a dumb DONKEY was HIDDEN from Balaam...
 - Because GREED will BLIND us to the DANGER right in front of us!
 - Who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel...

- To eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality!
- Balaam wanted to earn the REWARD King Balak had for him...
- He did not care what effect his actions would have he ONLY thought of the MONEY...
- He was more concerned with RICHES in this life than ETERNAL life...
- If he could not CURSE Israel he knew how to get them to CURSE themselves...
- Balaam gave king Balak the idea to TEMPT the men of Israel with the women of Moab!
- **Numbers 31:16** "These women caused the children of Israel through the counsel of Balaam to [sin] against the LORD..."
- Balaam DIED for his MONEY...
 - Because MOAB caused a SCANDAL [σκάνδαλον] in Israel..
 - And got them to curse themselves by committing sexual immorality [πορνεύω]
 - God commanded Israel to attack the Moab Numbers 25:16-18
 - When Israel defeated them Balaam also died in the battle Numbers 31:8
 - SADLY many people are DETERMINED to miss out on HEAVEN...
 - They are confident MONEY will make them happy they will SACRIFICE anything to get it!
 - The problem is people make MONEY their god instead of Jesus...
 - We cannot dedicate our lives to MONEY and possessions and to the LORD...
 - We waste our life on possessions that do not last rather than on eternal rewards...
 - If we desire more MONEY we are missing the greatest riches of all Jesus!
 - I Timothy 6:10 "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
- o 2nd Doctrine of the Nicolaitans... vs. 15
 - Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans which thing I hate!
 - The church in Ephesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans Revelation 2:6
 - But the church in Pergamos HELD [$\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\omega$] to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans...
 - As you may recall there are TWO views as to what this doctrine might have been!
 - The teachings of NICHOLAS...
 - NICHOLAS was one of the SEVEN deacons raised up at the church in Jerusalem Acts 6:5
 - Some of the early church fathers [Irenaeus] taught that he became a HERETIC...
 - Teaching that it was OK to practice adultery promiscuity...
 - Which would have been well received in the sinful culture of Artimus worship!
 - Hierarchy...
 - Nicolaitans [Νικολαΐτης] is a compound word Victory [νῖκος] and People [λαός]
 - Meaning those who RULED over the PEOPLE speaking of HIERARCHY in the church...
 - The idea being leaders who taught people could not come directly to the Lord!
 - Doctrines of compromise...
 - Both the doctrines of BALAAM and the NICOLAITANS speak of COMPROMISE...
 - Being influenced of the WORLD around them rather than the WORD!
 - The only reason someone HOLDS to the WORLD rather than the WORD...
 - Is because there is something else that they WANT more than God...
 - We WANT to be accepted by people making us unwilling to STAND for Jesus...
 - We WANT drugs alcohol pleasure ONLY living for the moment...
 - We WANT money desiring the things of THIS world!
 - Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters..."
 - We all have to make a choice we cannot serve TWO masters...
 - Beware a divided heart desiring to follow Jesus but flirting with the world...
 - Trying to LOVE this world and the Lord is in essence cheating on Jesus...
 - We have a simple CHOICE who do we CHOOSE to live for who do we SERVE...

- If we live for this world then we are not going to be a friend of Jesus!
- **James 4:4 -** "To be a friend of the world makes [us] an enemy of God."
- o 3rd Repent... vs. 16
 - Repent!
 - The command [imperative] was to STOP the compromise...
 - The church needed to TURN around come back to the WORD come back to Jesus!
 - Or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth!
 - If they did NOT repent Jesus would come QUICKLY with His SWORD [ῥομφαία]
 - And He would make WAR [πολεμέω] with them...
 - NOTE: there are TWO groups that are in danger of being JUDGED by the sword...
 - Jesus will come to YOU and fight against THEM...
 - The THEM refers to those who HOLD the doctrines of Balaam and Nicolaitans...
 - But the YOU refers to those who HOLD fast to Jesus...
 - Why would they be JUDGED because they did not stand up to the false teachings!
 - The Holy Spirit killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying Acts 5 -
 - Achan and his family we killed when they compromised at Jericho **Joshua 7:25**
 - Because just as a LITTLE mud can quickly contaminate make all the water unclean...
 - And it only takes a LITTLE cancer before a life is in peril!
 - When COMPROMISE goes unchecked it encourages others to SIN...
 - That sin can quickly spread out and infect a whole family or church...
 - The longer it goes untreated the more dangerous it becomes...
 - The only solution cut out the cancer remove the problem!
- 4^{TH} The encouragement... vs. 17
 - o 1st LISTEN...
 - He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!
 - This was NOT written just for the church in PERGAMOS...
 - It is for ANYONE who has an EAR they MUST [imperative] LISTEN...
 - Because the SPIRIT of God is SPEAKING [present] to ALL churches [plural]
 - This LETTER is for us Jesus is writing to us TODAY...
 - If we are willing to LISTEN to what His SPIRIT has to SAY...
 - He is telling us NOT to listen to the WORLD but LISTEN to the LORD...
 - I have met believers who are MISERABLE COMPROMISED UNSTABLE...
 - The problem is they have ONE foot in CHURCH and ONE foot in the WORLD...
 - Therefore they are miserable in CHURCH because they WANT the WORLD...
 - But they are also not happy with the WORLD because they know too much about the WORD...
 - They are just MISERABLE because they COMPROMISED and need to REPENT!
 - James 1:6/8 "He who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind... he is a
 double-minded man unstable in all his ways."
 - o 2nd The PROMISE... vs. 17
 - He who overcomes!
 - This same CONCLUSION is given to all SEVEN churches...
 - There are a variety of REWARDS described but all with the same CONDITION...
 - OVERCOME [νικάω] to those who have VICTORY [present]
 - For PERGAMOS VICTORY meant no long COMPROMISING...
 - And the REWARD for doing that was TWO things!
 - I will give some of the hidden manna to eat!

- When Moses brought Israel out of Egypt and they wandered in the wilderness...
- There was NO food to eat so God sent them MANNA [מָה] **Exodus 16**
- When the people saw it they asked what is it the word in Hebrew is [מַה]
- But those who ate the MANNA in the wilderness all died John 6:49
- Jesus is the true MANNA that comes from heaven anyone who eats NEVER die...
- He is the HIDDEN manna that comes down from heaven!
- I often get busy in the morning and do not take the time to eat...
- The result is by about NOON my tummy is telling me it NEEDS food!
- In the same way if we get busy and MISS our time with Jesus the hidden MANNA...
- When we do NOT take time to get into His word our SPIRIT is STARVING...
- If we do not want to become spiritually WEAK we need HEAVENLY food...
- When we are DAILY in His WORD we will be STRONG and never COMPROMISE!
- I will give him a white stone!
 - In Greek courts the jurors would have TWO stones one WHITE and one BLACK...
 - When they were asked to give their verdict in a case they would cast their STONE...
 - The WHITE stone for INNOCENT the BLACK one for JUDGEMENT!
 - Acts 26:10 "...when they were put to death I cast my vote [stone] against them..."
 - We are sinners and deserve the BLACK stone Romans 6:23
 - But if we HOLD to the name of Jesus listen to His word we get the WHITE stone!
- On the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it!
 - In Pergamos at the Asklepion there is a tunnel...
 - The 90m tunnel crypto porticus would be filled with steam and music...
 - At the top are several openings a physician would speak ENCOURAGING words...
 - When you came out you would be given a WHITE stone with a NAME etched on it...
 - The idea was you were HEALED from your infirmity and given a NEW life!
 - Jesus is the ONLY one who can HEAL us [not just give us encouraging words]
 - He gives us a NEW character with a NEW name because we are NEW creations!
 - Like Saul who had his name changed from Saul [great] to Paul [little]
 - A man with a tainted history murderer never really used by God...
 - Who became one of the greatest men used by God in history!
 - God does not want to leave us as we were before Christ He wants to make us great...
 - God wants to give us a new name change our character II Corinthians 5:17