

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ



The Letter to the
Church in Pergamum
Revelation 2:12-17

Seven-headed Beast from the Luther Bible

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

Introduction

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

Introduction

- **Author:** Apostle John
- **Recipients:** Churches in the Roman Province of Asia
- **Place:** Patmos, a Greek Island
- **Year:** ~ 96 AD

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

Introduction

A Fourfold Reference:

1. Originally to Local Churches
2. To All Churches in All Times (like other NT letters)
3. Personal – to the people who comprise the church.
4. Prophetic
 - a) A Repeated Pattern through the Centuries
 - b) A General Pattern of the Church Age

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

Introduction

A Summary for Us:

- Seven real churches with real people and real problems in John's time.
- These churches, people and problems are just like those we have today.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

Introduction

A Summary for Us:

- Together, they make a quick course on what it takes to have a healthy church.
- They also show us how to identify a church when it is unhealthy.

The Letter to the Church in Smyrna

Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction









The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:8-11

About Pergamum

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:8-11

About Pergamum

- A very prosperous city, it was the political capital of Roman Asia.
- It was formerly the seat of one of the Hellenistic kings.
- A city with a majestic acropolis, on which were several major temples to Greek gods.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:8-11

About Pergamum

- The special home of the worship of Asclepius, a god represented by a snake.
- He was related to healing and medicine.
- Besides him, Zeus and the emperor also had temples in Pergamum.

Pergamum



Photos from Wikipedia

By Adam Jones from Kelowna, BC, Canada - Acropolis - Bergama (Pergamon) - Turkey - 10,
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Pergamum



Photos from Wikipedia

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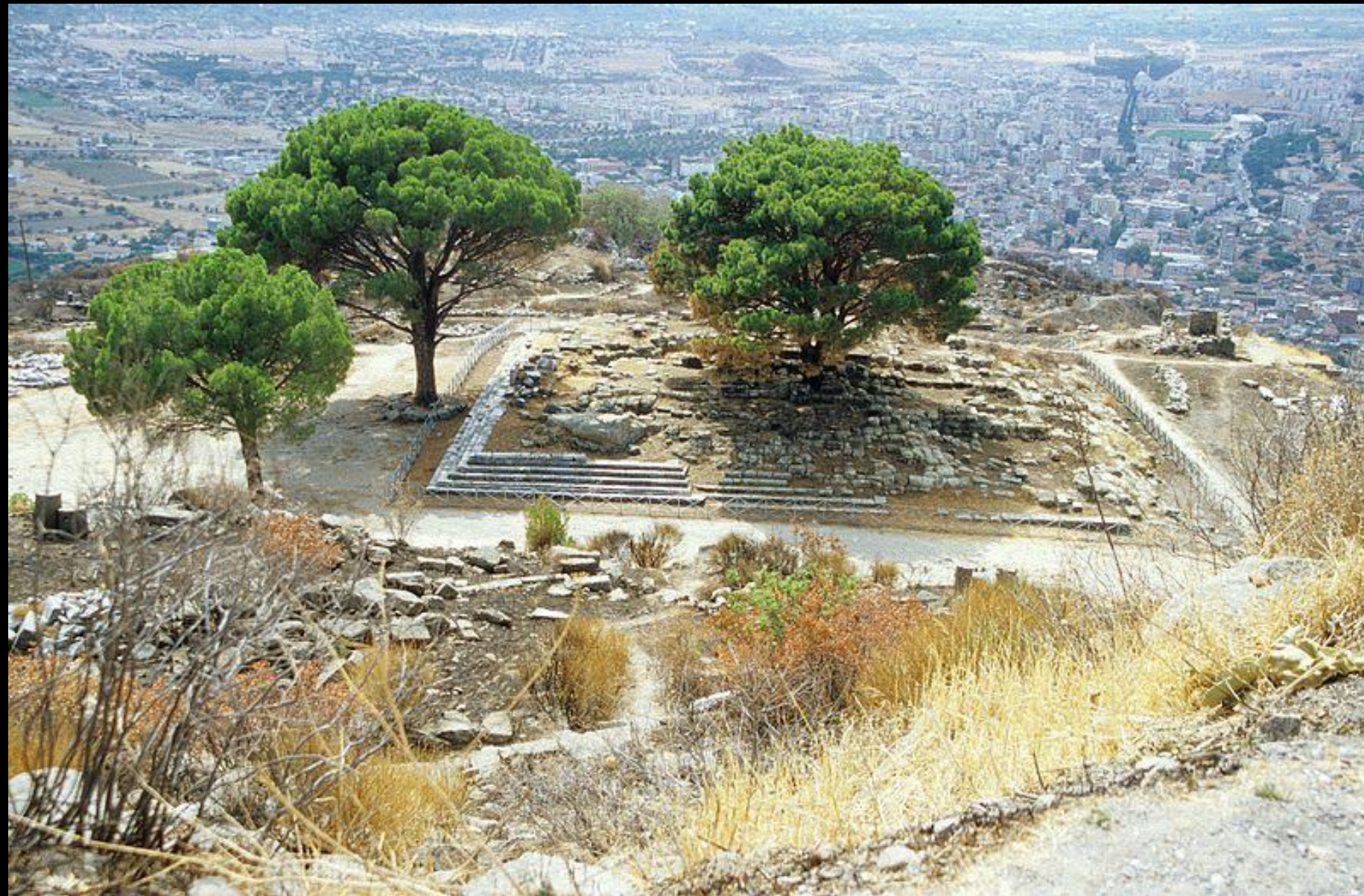
Pergamum



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Pergamum



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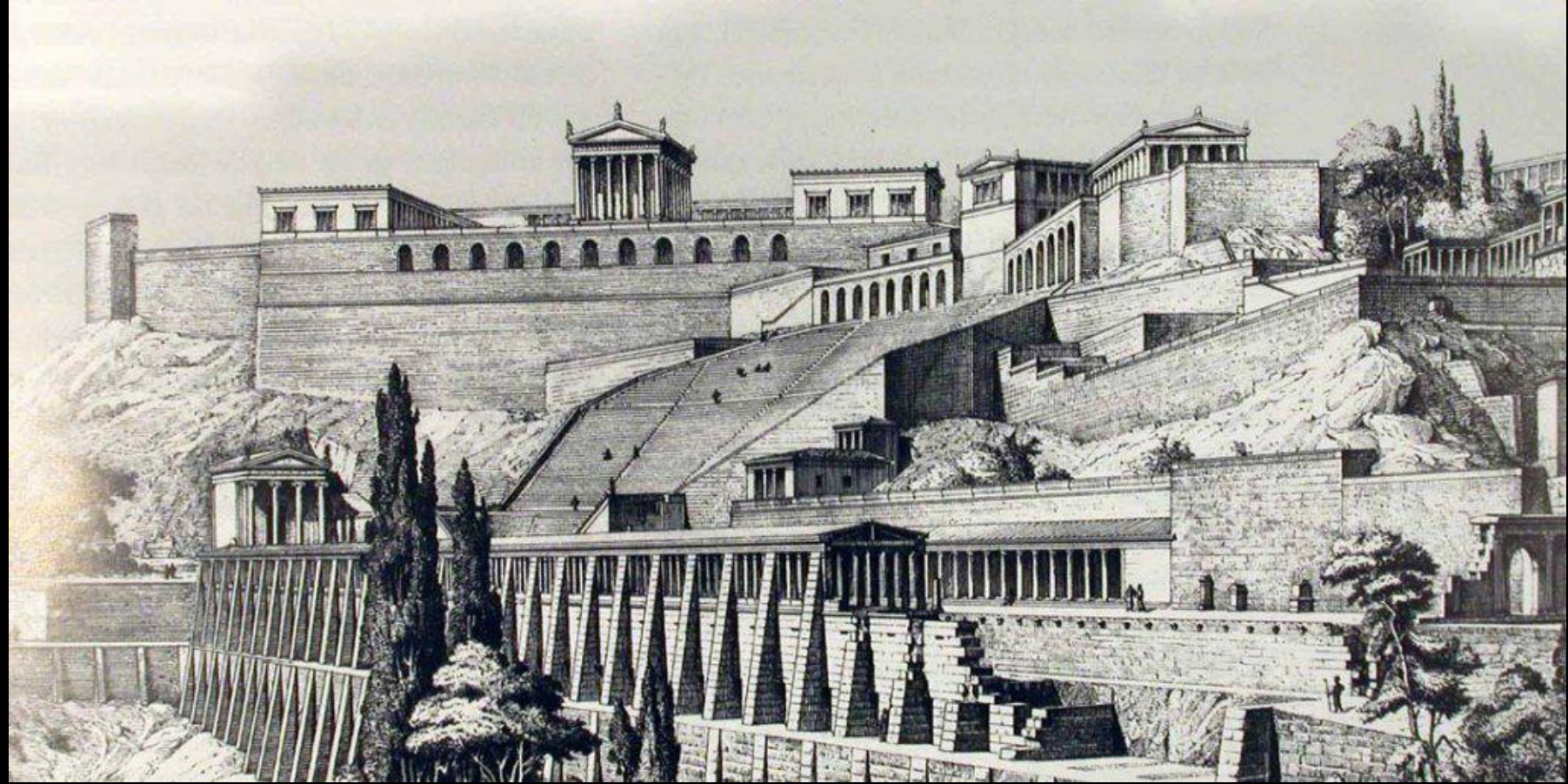
Pergamum



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Pergamum



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Epidauros Museum 2008-09-11.jpg,
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Pergamum



<https://www.dailysabah.com/life/travel/world-heritage-in-turkey-pergamon-living-proof-of-ancient-romans-seljuks-and-ottomans>

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17 The Format of the Letter(s):

1. The Command to Write
2. Attribute(s) of Jesus
3. What's Right with the Church
4. What's Wrong with the Church
5. What They Need to Do
6. The Personal Call to Anyone with an Ear
7. A Promise to the Overcomer (One Who Conquers)

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

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Introduction

- Let's now read the whole letter.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12

- Sharp two-edged sword In 1:16, John saw this sword coming out of the mouth of Jesus.
- It reminds us of Eph 6:17, “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
- The truth of God’s word can cut through all the lies and false images that we may project or believe.

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Revelation 2:12

- Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

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The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:13

- Jesus understood the environment in which the church in Pergamum had to function.
- In this case it was the home of Satan's throne.
- I am not sure where that is today, and maybe Satan has more than one place he likes to make his home.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:13

- It may also refer to the temple of Asclepius, a god connected with snakes and healing.
- Perhaps it is the altar to Zeus that we saw in the picture.
- The city was famous for specific forms of idolatry.

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Revelation 2:13

- And yet, this church remained faithful
- This was true even though one of their number was already killed for his faith.
- When difficulties come, we must already be ready to remain faithful.

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- It is encouraging to know that Jesus knows our circumstances.
- He knows the difficulties and temptations that are associated with our personal lives
- He knows where we live and work and the things we have to deal with day to day.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:14

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:14

- The false prophet **Balaam** appears in **Numbers 22**.
- He was hired by a king named **Balak** to curse the Jews before they entered the land.
- Instead, he blessed them, but the story did not end there.
- In **Numbers 25** we see the Israelites drawn into sexual sin with foreign women and the worship of idols.

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- It turns out this was because **Balaam** instructed the women of Midian to seduce the Israelites
- They enticed them into immoral behavior and the worship of their idols.
- In **Numbers 31** we read that the Israelites later put Balaam to death.

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- In **Acts 15** it was exactly these things that the early church leaders warned the Gentile to watch out for.
- The Jewish leaders knew that converts coming out of paganism would face certain struggles.
- And of course, the same issues can affect us.

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- Most of us probably know “churches” and “Christians” who do not reject sexually immoral behavior.
- Yet, God calls it sin and Jesus clearly speaks against it throughout the Bible – including here.

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- Social pressure will increase upon us to allow sin, but we must not give in to it.
- The church in Pergamum was allowing this teaching to exist among its members.
- We can fall into the same trap – but it is **the teaching of Balaam**.

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The Devil ... evil as he certainly is, is no fool. Instead of merely trying to crush the church, he also launched a plan to join the church. In Pergamum and later in Thyatira, we see the servants of Satan beginning to infiltrate the ranks of the church.

*– Greg Laurie,
Pastor, Evangelist, Author*

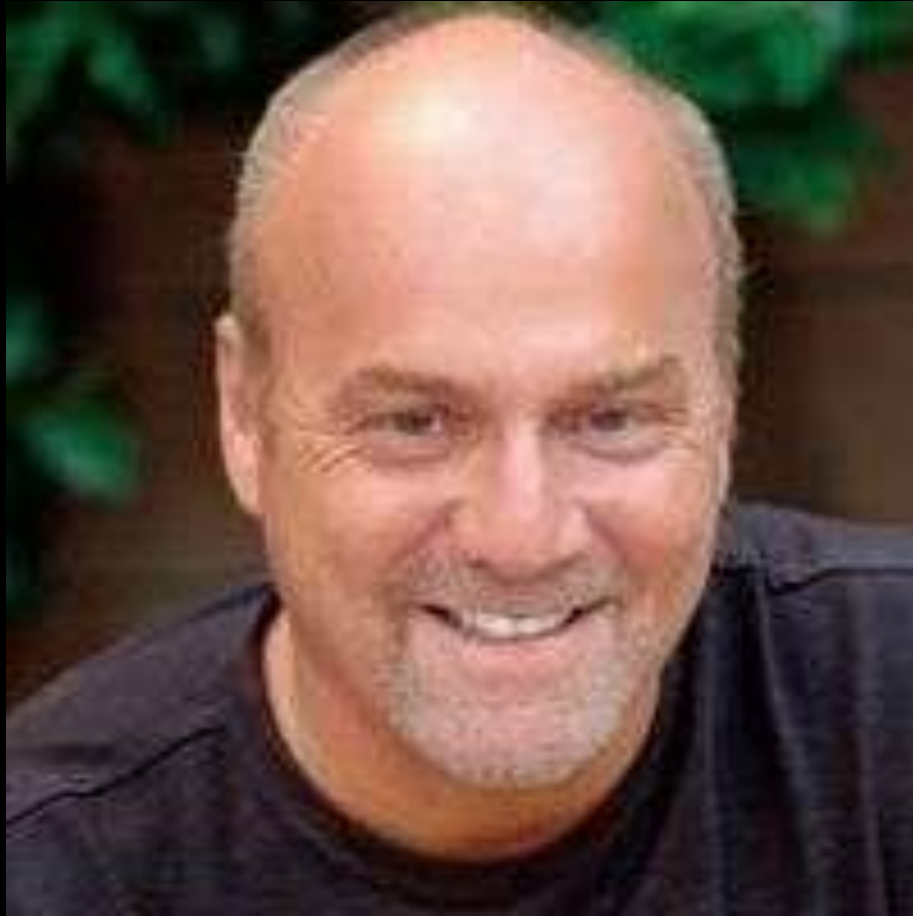
The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:14

- Jesus warned about this exact kind of thing in his Parable of the Weeds.
- Let's read it in **Matthew 13:24-30**.
- Early on it is too hard to tell one from the other.
- The full separation will not take place until the harvest.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:14



*So are there fake Christians?
Yes, there are. But take note of
this: it is not necessarily my job
to figure out who the fakes are;
it's my job to make sure that
I'm not one of them.*

*– Greg Laurie,
Pastor, Evangelist, Author*

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:15

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:15

- It is possible that this is the same thing as the teaching of Balaam.
- Several commentators think that it is.
- But Jesus seems to be making a distinction between the two when he uses the words, “So also ...”
- Robert Thomas makes a good point here.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:15

The best conclusion is that there were two different but similar groups in this church, both of which had disobeyed the decision of the Jerusalem council in regard to idolatrous practices and fornication.

*– Robert L. Thomas,
The Master's Seminary,
Los Angeles*



The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:16

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Revelation 2:16

- Ephesus was told to repent and so also is Pergamum.
- Smyrna was not, but five of the seven churches in Revelation are told to repent.
- In other words, most of them had something important that needed to change.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:16

- If we are a typical church, then we need to examine ourselves.
- Churches do not become corrupted all at once.
- It usually begins with the compromise of a few members or a few leaders who influence others.

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Revelation 2:16

- If the church does not repent, Jesus will confront them with **the sword of his mouth** – his holy word.
- Staying faithful to the Scriptures will be a safeguard against false teaching and wrong behavior.

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- **The one who conquers** is the person who stays faithful to Jesus despite the frequency or severity of trials.
- There are daily victories to be won and future rewards to be received.

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Revelation 2:17

- **Hidden manna** When the people of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, God satisfied their hunger with this miraculous “**bread from heaven.**”
- When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, Satan told him to change the stones into bread.
- He pointed back to that manna, quoting Moses.

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Revelation 2:17

- Deuteronomy 8:3

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

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Revelation 2:17

- A white stone
- In those days, a judge put a white stone into container to vote for an acquittal for a person on trial.
- Another ancient picture is a special white stone that was used as a “ticket” to gain entrance to a feast.

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- A white stone
- Both of these pictures can apply to believers in a spiritual sense.
- We have been declared righteous – we receive our acquittal – through faith in Christ.
- We are allowed entrance to feast with Christ today and will one day feast with Him in glory.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

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- A new name
- The word Jesus uses for “new” is not so much new in contrast to old.
- It is more like something that is new and different.
- The one who conquers will receive a name that is of superior quality.

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- A new name
- It is a name personally given by Jesus Christ himself – like Simon becoming Peter.
- It will reflect the believer's standing in fully belonging to Christ.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

Conclusions

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

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Conclusions

- Remember that Jesus knows your circumstances.
- He knows the details of your life.
- He knows where you live and work, and what the special temptations are that you face.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

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Conclusions

- Sexual immorality and false ideas of God are common in the history of the church.
- Any church that allows such teaching is in trouble.
- Notice in 2:14-15 that it is not (yet) the official teaching of the church.
- It is just that the church had some members who believed these false doctrines. This is how it starts.

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Conclusions

- The way to prevent the entrance of false teaching is to stay faithful to the word of God.
- And if we are victorious, we will receive **hidden manna** or nourishment from Jesus.
- There will be **a white stone with a special name** – a personal honor given by Jesus himself.

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Conclusions

- Revelation 2:7

To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

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Revelation 2:12-17

Conclusions

- Revelation 2:11

The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

Conclusions

- Revelation 2:17

To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.