



## Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

# Short Study 057: Letters to Seven Churches 2 – Pergamos (or Pergamum)

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Read Revelation 2:12-17

**Introduction.** This is the third of the seven letters dictated by the Lord from heaven and addressed to churches in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Some of the allusions will have been better understood at the time the letters were written. The suggestions made in this study are subject to interpretation and readers are advised to look for alternative suggestions.

**1. Sender (v12).** He is the "Who has the sharp two-edged sword." See Rev 1:16 & Heb 4:12. A sword represents authority, power and judgment. What is the significance of this coming from the Lord's mouth?

**2. What the Lord knew (verse 13).** The Christians at Pergamos were doing good works, and were faithful to the Lord, even under persecution (at least one, named Antipas, gave his life for the Faith); this was despite living in a town where Satan was well established. There are various understandings of the phrase "where Satan's throne is" but all point to the pagan religions that were dominant in Pergamum. Find out what cults were prominent in Pergamum and consider what challenge to Christians each would have imposed. Can you think of any present-day similarities?

**3. Dodgy doctrines (vs 13 & 14).** They were holding to two doctrines (teachings) with dubious origins. Our knowledge of Balaam's unwise counsel\*, and of the teaching of the Nicolaitans, is at best sketchy, but both seem to point to a tendency to compromise with worldly practices. These would have included worship of pagan gods, emperor worship and cult prostitution.

**4. Requirement and warning (v16).** The Christians are called upon to repent. What would be the result if they did not?

**5. Promises (v17).** Two things will be given to overcomers: hidden manna and a new name written on a white stone. Manna was food given by God during the wilderness journey, some of which was 'hidden' in the Ark of The Covenant (Heb 9:4). Here it stands for sustenance for the soul, given by God. It is thought that white stones, inscribed with a person's name, may have been used as admission 'tickets' for pagan feasts. God promised to give the faithful a 'new name' (Isaiah 62:2). This being known only to God and the holder, no one can take away the divine promises granted only to you. To what feast are Christians invited and what is needed for admission (see Rev 19:9)?

**To think about:** Are there any worldly practices or false teachings I might be in danger of falling into.

**To dig deeper:** There is plenty to research in this letter. Find out what you can about Satan's throne, Balaam's counsel, the Nicolaitans, white stones and new, secret names.

\* Numbers 25:1 and 31:16 may refer to this incident. See also 2 Pet 2:15 & Jude 11.