

REVELATION WORD BY WORD STUDY 4 (2:12-17)

Introduction: This book is the climax, all truths of the Bible are pulled together here. The knot is tied by God. The Bible is all the world will ever need. Revelation is the last of God's Word, He never gave anything else to anybody at any other time THIS IS IT.

This is a revelation of Jesus Christ, given to John on the Isle of Patmos in 96 A.D. (give details of that morning) How long did it last? If you sit down to read it it will take you about 4 to 6 hours, this is not a sermonette, sermonettes are for Christians.

This is not something weird, it is not a sensational book, it is easy to understand as you will see as we go along. There are seven Churches in Asia Minor picked out by Jesus Christ and a letter to each was sent out. These seven Churches represent all the Churches of all the ages and they haven't changed a bit. People don't change, man's nature is the same. YOU, the Church need to understand each Church.

(Satan has learned - don't persecute a Church it will grow stronger, so be subtle, sneaky.)

We now come to the third Church of the seven - PERGAMOS

v 12 - (text) - Pergamos is about 100 miles on up from Ephesus. It was the capitol of that part of the world and had more heathen temples than any where else in the world, much like some of our large metropolis cities of today, (many kooks and goons), weird religions. They were comfortable in their wealth and religions. Pergamon was a city of weird religions. They once believed in gods of mythology but not so much at this time, but had in times past, therefore there were many "emblems" of the past still there. "Emblem" is like what our ball teams and colleges and universities have (razorback pig, owl, tiger, etc.). They had Zeus, Venus, Aphrodite and Baacus (god of wine). There were more heathen temples in Pergamos than anywhere else in the whole world.

The world's largest library was there, valued today at over 20 million dollars. Cleopatra spent summers there. Anthony asked her what she would like and she wanted the library moved to Alexandria, Egypt. She was well educated as any woman ever was, speaking six languages very well.

Pergamos was where paper originated.

- "hath the sharp sword with two edges" - a picture of Jesus Christ in judgment (1:16).
- "know thy works" - Jesus always knows. How is YOUR mental attitude? Jesus knows all about it. When you are mad, when you dislike someone and why. He knows when you "fall out" with someone. God reads us like a book, there are no secrets from God.
- "where thou dwellest" - Where did they dwell?
- "where Satan's seat is" - In idolatry, an evil city (1 Corinthians 10:20-21 also referred to Satan's Communion Table)
- "holdest fast My name" - there were some true, faithful Christians still there.
- "hast not denied My faith" - talking about doctrine. They were doctrinally oriented. any Church that has no doctrine, any Church content to only have organization and do good works and deeds, doesn't amount to anything in God's eyes. THE CHURCH THAT AMOUNTS TO SOMETHING IN GOD'S EYES is the Church that knows and learns and keeps to DOCTRINE.
- "My doctrine" - it was sacred to them
- "hast not denied faith (of) Me" -
- "Antipas" - Antipas was martyred in Pergamos. There was this great metal bull and its head was on hinges and could be raised up. They would build a fire under the bull and heat it white hot, they they brought Antipas up, a faithful Christian. "Will you deny Jesus Christ? Put your hand over your heart and say 'Caesar is god.'" Antipas placed his hand over his heart and said, "Jesus Christ is God." If you say that once more we'll throw you into this bull. "Jesus Christ is God" said Antipas once again. They raised the head of the white hot bull and threw Antipas into the bull while all the Christians stood watching. It was a good way to get Christians converted over to heathen worship.

- "where Satan dwellest" - where all the heathen temples were, where Antipas was slain for the cause of Christ.

v 14 - "few things" - Jesus had evaluated them and now was going to criticize them.

- "hold the doctrine of Balaam" - An outline of Balaam's doctrine is found in Numbers 22, 23, 31. The children of Israel were coming out of the wilderness after 40 years of wandering, on their way to the promised land and were coming by the little kingdom of Moab. Balaak, the king was scared to death that they would bother his little kingdom and he wanted a curse placed upon the Israelites. he sent up into the end of the Euphrates and Tigris valley for a man who cursed others. This family had been in the cursing business for many centuries. Balaam was the head of the family at that time. The king sent to Balaam, wanted him to come down and curse the Israelites. Balaam had a sign over his door "We curse for a price." Balaak said "I'll pay 1 million for you to curse them." Balaam said "I'll take it up with the Lord." The Lord said "NO" Balaam told them that he couldn't do it. The messengers returned and the king sent them back offering 5 million. Balaam prayed again, "Lord I really could use that money"...the Lord let him go, however it displeased Him. Balaam came to Moab. The king took him up on a mountain and showed him the vast host of the encampment of Israel. Balaak told Balaam to curse them. Balaam started to curse them but instead words of blessing and prophecies and future blessings of Israel came out. Balaak said "you were supposed to curse them"...He took Balaam to another mountain, the same thing happened. God won't let me curse them he said. Again to another mountain and again he blessed them instead of cursing them. Balaak told Balaam to go back home for he was useless. Balaam said, "wait a minute" he took the king off to the side and began to whisper in his ear, the thing he whispered has been the downfall of mankind from the first century to this very day. "I can tell you how to neutralize those Jews, God won't allow me to curse them, but if you'll go around and gather up all your most beautiful women, take them down into the valley where the Jews are and let them hang around, they'll get the minds of the men off their main jobs." Well, you can only imagine what happened with all those beautiful women around them and they had been wandering the wilderness for 40 years. The men of Israel forgot their main job, being a nation for God, on their way to the promised land. They committed all kinds of adultery and immorality. They got out of fellowship with God. Although Balaam didn't curse them, he neutralized them by getting them to be immoral. THAT'S THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM.

- "there are those that hold the doctrine of Balaam"

- "eat things sacrificed to idols, commit fornication" - the doctrine of Balaam had gotten the WHOLE nation of Israel to fall out of fellowship with God and lose their spiritual power. THAT IS WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS.

- Immorality has always been one of the main sins of the Christian world. If you can get men's minds off purity of God and on to immorality, you've defeated them..thus the doctrine of Balaam.

v 15 - Here is the New Testament counterpart of the doctrine of Balaam.

- "hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans" - Same as Balaam. Nicolas was one of the original seven deacons and got the idea that doctrine wasn't important. It was not what you knew so much as what you do. He started an eccumenical movement, go worship in the heathen temple and they would come worship with Christians. "Brotherhood" "We're all going to the same place" attitude. We'll worship with you and you come worship with us. Doctrine wasn't important. He went down because he left DOCTRINE.

Anytime anyone says doctrine isn't important, that all are going to the same place anyhow, is dangerous. THAT IS JUST NOT SO. The only way to get to heaven is by faith in Jesus Christ. One may be good, sweet, moral, millions of good deeds, work fingers to the bone, BUT if he/she doesn't believe in Jesus Christ is going to an eternal HELL. That's what the Bible says, clear as daylight. Nicolas fell into that soft kind of religion that doesn't believe in anything and there are millions of

them today - all going to the same place. "It doesn't matter, just get in there, go to work, look sweet, dress up on Sunday mornings, salute God every Sunday morning and then go out and live like you want."

You won't get it done that way, the Church of Pergamos was being condemned by Jesus Christ because it was falling away, following the doctrine of Nicolas.

- "hate" - here John was putting into human terms the attitude of God.

v16 - "repent" - means to change your mind.

- "will fight with the sword of My mouth" - "If you don't repent, I will come and discipline you."

v17 - "hath an ear" - KEEP ON having ears, always have ears. I.Q. is not so important. The important thing is that you have your ears. You can remove clothing, shoes, glasses, wigs, etc., but NOT YOUR EARS.

"hath" indicates a situation of a permanency - ALWAYS YOU WILL HAVE EARS.

- "let him hear" - Every time the preacher preaches/teaches, be there to HEAR, HEAR, HEAR, HEAR.

- "what the Spirit saith unto the Churches" - ARE YOU AWAKE? Some are wide awake, some not so wide.

Some perhaps asleep. LISTEN, the Spirit of God speaks through the Bible and ONLY the Bible.

John 14:26; 16:13 - The Spirit of God speaks the Word of God, nobody has a "corner" on God, nobody is more privileged than anyone else. The Holy Spirit speaks through God's Word.

WHEN GOD SPEAKS TO YOU..IT IS ALWAYS THROUGH THE BIBLE. That's why so many think God is silent today - HE'S NOT SILENT ...God speaks through the Bible. There was a man who spent years of his life, saving himself for God to use him in some "special" way. The man never did anything for God. He never got into God's Word, he was waiting for some special voice to speak to him.

Everything you need to know is in the Bible. If you are waiting for some personal vision, some great revelation, you're only fooling yourself. GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE BIBLE. Read the Bible if you want to know what God has to say.

- "to him that overcometh" - 1 John 5:4 - It is not somebody living the "victorious Christian life", not somebody who has a corner on Christianity, not somebody who has been to a special camp (seminars) somewhere and received something nobody else has.

- "who" - Anyone that puts his/her faith in Jesus Christ is born again. Everyone who has ever believed is put to the top of God's circle and STAYS there. That person is the "overcomer" not those who appear to be extra spiritual, but that one who is BORN AGAIN. ARE YOU BORN AGAIN? If so then YOU are an overcomer.

- "give to eat" - (to eat is not in the original).

- "give what?" - of the hidden manna. Simply referring to the food Jesus Christ will give to His Christians to sustain daily life. NOURISH ON THE WORD OF GOD EVERY DAY, that is the "hidden" manna. You never need any other spiritual food BUT THE WORD OF GOD.

- "white stone" - a way of voting - white stones and black stones - vote "yes" by picking up a white stone, vote no by picking up a black stone. When you believed in Jesus, God picked up a white stone, cast His vote for YOU. A million years from now, you will still be in the Kingdom of God because God voted for you.

That's the doctrine of Election - God looked down from eternity and saw you had good judgment and would accept Jesus Christ. Long ago in eternity God picked up a white stone and voted for you because you were going to believe in Jesus when you came to live on this earth. THAT'S ELECTION. Look at that: "have given you the living manna and have voted YES for you. You are mine throughout all eternity.

- new name written" - We won't be our mean old selves when we get to heaven. We will have new personalities...(describe some of our present weaknesses in personalities, etc.)

Won't it be wonderful and all our meanness will be taken away (describe some times of meanness).
No more lies, all will be perfect.
That's what this verse means

This ends this study about the Church of Pergamos. Beware and do not fall into the same trap of Satan that Nicolas did and thought he was doing good by intermixing Christianity with Paganism.