

# CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF PENNSYLVANIA [*Mount of Redemption*]

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## BIBLE STUDY

**COURSE OUTLINE:** REVELATION 2 v 12-29

March 7, 2012,

**NEXT WEEK:** REVELATION 3:1-13

**COURSE TITLE:** CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT PERGAMOS [THE COMPROMISING CHURCH]

**2:12** The city of Pergamos was built on a hill 1,000 feet above the surrounding countryside, creating a natural fortress. **Pergamos or Pergamum, was located 50 miles north of Smyrna. It was a sophisticated city, and a center of Greek culture and education.** Pergamos is also the center of four cults and it rivaled Ephesus in its worship of idols. The city chief god was **Asdephius, whose symbol was a serpent; and who was considered as the "god of healing"**. People came to Pergamos from all over the world to seek healing from this god.

In this verse, Jesus identified Himself as the one who has the **sharp sword with two edges**. Jesus reminded this church that He will deal with them through **His word – THE BIBLE**. Just as the Romans used their swords for authority and judgments, **Jesus' sharp two edged sword represents God's ultimate authority and judgment. (Eph. 6:17, Heb 4:12-13)**

The lesson derived is that **Jesus will use His sword to correct and convict His church and His people**. It is absolutely disastrous to compromise **God's word and our Christian testimony for holiness**. It is absolutely unacceptable to give up **godliness for anything**. The church of God cannot afford to joke with the sword of His word.

**2:13** As the center of four idolatry cults (Asdepius, Zeus, Atheue and Dionysius), Pergamos was called the city where **"Satan's throne is"**. The city is surrounded by the worship of Satan and Roman Emperor god. However, the church at Pergamos refused to renounce their faith, even when Satan's worshippers **martyred one of their members – "Antipas" (Rev 2:13b)**

The lesson derived is that standing firm against the strong pressures and temptations of the society is never easy, however we should **never negotiate nor compromise with Satan. We should cooperate with people as much as we can, but we MUST AVOID any alliance, partnership or participation that could lead to immoral practices.**

**2:14-15** The Lord condemned the **doctrine of Balaam as was practiced by this church**. The doctrine of Balaam was a compromise of **Christianity with paganism resulting in idolatry and immorality**. Balaam, a prophet, took money from a king named Balak to pronounce a curse on Israel. Balak hired Balaam to turn the hearts of Israel away from the Lord by worshipping idols and intermarriages (Numbers 31:16, 22-24, Acts 15:20, 2 Cor 6:14, 2 Pet 2:15 & Jude 11). **The Lord in this context rebuked this church, for tolerating those who, like Balaam, lead people away from God.**

Jesus also condemned this church on **the doctrine of Nicolaitaus**. As already discussed in Rev 2:6, **the Nicolaitans were believers who compromised their faith in order to enjoy some of the sinful practices of life**. This sect attempts to use Christianity liberty as an excuse for self-indulgence, moral perversion and looseness. **Their teachings and practices are false and immoral (Rev 1:14, 15)**

The Lord in this context urged the entire church **to repent of the toleration and sins of false teachers, before Christ has to judge them by Himself**. The church should discipline itself and refuse to tolerate false teaching within.

**2:16** God however has some words of encouragement for the church. He will not allow sin to dominate this people, hence His call for repentance. So that this two edged sword (this word) **would sanctify rather than sentence them**

**(Rev 19:15, 21).** The church must refuse to compromise God's holy standard. **Only those who hold unto their faith in Christ and refuse to compromise God's holy standards would immediately and ultimately overcome. AMEN.**

2:17 Hidden manna suggests **the spiritual nourishment that the faithful believers will receive.** Manna in the old testament represents sustenance and life. **Jesus as the Levine bread, (John 6:48-51), provides spiritual nourishment that satisfies our deepest hunger.** Christ is sufficient for believer's needs. The white stone (Rev 2:17b) with its new name, symbolizes **acceptance and approval by God.**

The take home lesson is that if we can persevere in our faith in God, **Jesus promises to take care of us as His people and to provide for our future. As overcomers, we will enter God's glory with many rewards from the Lord who loves us. AMEN**

## **2:18 CHRIST' MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA (THE CORRUPT CHURCH)**

2:18a Thyatira was located about 20 miles southeast of Pergamos and was the hometown of Lydia, Paul's first convert in Macedonia (Acts 16:14). The city is a working man's town, with many trade guilds for cloth making, dyeing and pottery. The people of Thyatira, apart from **the compulsory worship of its emperor, also worships one of the useless gods in the city by the name Apollo; who is regularly worshipped and referenced as the city's guardian.** Thyatira, though small in size with no focus on any particular religion **received the largest of the seven letters (12 verses) from the consuming fire, the son of God – Jesus Christ (Rev 2:18)**

2:18b The title **son of God reaffirmed Christ's deity against the useless gods in Thyatira and everywhere.** Jesus is the consuming fire (Rev 1:13-15, Dan 10:6 & Hebrew 12:29).

Jesus' eyes, like a flame of fire **shows His holy indignation (violent displeasures and righteous judgment against sin.** He sees into man's heart and judges accordingly (Mark 2:8, John 2:25)

2:19 The owner of the church – Jesus knows everything about our works, love, service, faith and patience as individuals and as congregations. We cannot deceive Him (Gal 6:7)

Unlike the Ephesians who were waning in their love for Christ (Rev 2:4), the believers in Thyatira were commended for getting better at their Christian service every day. What is our testimony in the Christian race (Gal 6:9)

The lesson derived is that **as a church, we should not feel satisfied when our church only rejoices in the salvation of its members or in the comfort of gathering for membership.** We must grow in love, faith and acts of service.

2:20 Despite their Christian testimony, the church has severe problems. They tolerated **Jezebel, the false and self acclaimed prophets who lured them into sexual immorality and taught them to eat things sacrificed to idols (1 kings 16, 2kings 9).** As a church, it's dangerous to accept false things as truth or to begin to see some good in falsehood.

2:21-22 Jesus was patient with this **so called Jezebel by giving her plenty of time to repent but she refused to listen and change her ways and persisted in her sin.**

The consuming fire and the owner of the church promised that this **Jezebel, whether a name or nickname** would be judged along with her followers, disciples and children (Rev 2:20-23).

This is a great lesson to the church of God that **falsehood would not continue forever (2Tim 3:9).** A man or a church does not fall overnight. It starts with little tolerance of **ungodly attitudes or lifestyles and trying to lower the Bible's standard for the sake of our selfish pleasure and freedom.** Let us check our spiritual temperature (2 Cor 13:5, James 1:13-15)

2:23 God's righteous abhors (hates, detests) evil in every form and the adherents (stick, unite) cannot escape severe judgment unless they repent.

As believers and as a church, we cannot hide from Christ; He knows what is in our hearts and minds, and He still loves us. **The Lord Jesus, x-rays every motive and rewards them accordingly.**

2:24-25 In those verses, the Lord talked to a godly remnant of believers at Thyatira who had not accepted these **“depths of Satan or deep falsehood teachings**. As they have rejected Jezebel’s teachings, He promised not to place any other burden upon them (Rev 2:24). Since they were already serving Him under difficult circumstances, He will not ask anything more from them. They were, however, encouraged to hold fast to what is good and to always reject evil.

**The lesson derived is that we should hold tightly to the basics of our Christian facts and view with caution any new (false) teaching that might turn us away from the Bible, the fellowship of our church or our basic confession of faith.**

2:26-27 In concluding His messages to the church at Thyatira, Jesus concluded with a promise. **Christ said that those who overcome ( those who remain faithful until the end and continue to please God) will rule over God’s enemies and will reign with Him as He judges evil (Ps 2:8, 9, Is 30:14; Jer 19:11; 1 Cor 6:2, 3 & 2 Tim 2:12).**

2:28-29 Christ also promised that **the overcomer will also share in the glory of the morning star**. A morning star appears just before dawn, when the night is coldest and darkest. **Jesus is the morning star (Rev 22:16, Rev 2:28).** **When the world is at its bleakest point, Christ will burst onto the scene, exposing the evil with His light of truth and bringing His promised reward to us – His children.**

## Study Notes