**The Book of Revelation:**

**Pergamos: The Polluted Church**

March 25, 2017

Revelation 2:12-17 (NKJV)

12“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13“I know your works, and where you dwell, where **Satan’s throne** *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. 15Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

17“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*.” ’

**Whose throne is it?**

1. Zeus: The King of the gods on Mt. Olympus.

2. Asclepius: The god of healing.

Numbers 21:5-9 (NKJV)

5And the people spoke against God and against Moses: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.” 6So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

7Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

8Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery *serpent,* and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” 9So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

2 Kings 18:4 (NKJV) – 4He [Hezekiah] removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.

John 3:14-16 (NKJV) – 14And **as Moses lifted up the serpent** in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

1 Peter 2:24 (NKJV) – 24Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

3. Athena: City’s divine proctectress; “Who brings Victory.”

4. Dionysus: Dionysus is the god of wine and fertility.

5. Emperor Worship. (1st city to erect a Temple to emperor worship – in 27 BC).

**Description of Yeshua (Rev. 2:12).**

**Commendation to the church (Rev. 2:13).**

**Rebuke to the church (Rev. 2:14-15).**

**1. Doctrine of Balaam (Rev 2:14).**

“Revelation shows no sense of a Christianity, or even of a Jewish-devotion, unmoored from Judaism.” – ***The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 464.**

“Increasingly, scholars are looking at Revelation as a Jewish text that reveals a heavenly Christ rather than a Christian text with Jewish attributes,” – *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, p. 465.

“Kashrut is far more critical to John’s sense of religious purity (2:14, 20) than Paul’s (1 Cor 8); and the text’s focus on images of sexual purity (2.20-22; 17; 22.13) suggest that sexual purity could – even in the Diaspora – carry strict interpretations in the effort to define community.” – *The Jewish Annotated Bible*, page 465.

1. **Sexual Immorality**; (Rev 2:14; Jude 11; 2 Peter 2:15; Num. 22-24 & 31:8, 16).

Numbers 24:10-14 (NKJV) – 10Then Balak’s anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed *them* these three times! 11Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor.” 12So Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, 13‘If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord, to do good or bad of my own will. What the Lord says, that I must speak’? 14And now, indeed, I am going to my people. **Come, I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the latter days.**”

**A lesson from Balaam: sexual immorality is idolatry.**

Romans 1:22-27 (NKJV) – 22Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

24Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NKJV) – 19Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**B. Eating Foods Sacrificed to Idols.** (Acts 15:19-20 & 28-29; 21:25;

1 Cor 8:1-10 & 10:19, 31; Rom. 14:6; Phil. 3:18-21 & Rev. 2:14, 20).

Acts 15:19-20 (NKJV) – 19Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

Acts 15:28-29 (NKJV) – 28For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Acts 21:25 (NKJV) – But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV) – whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Philippians 3:18-21 (NKJV) – 18For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. 20For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

**2. Doctrine of Nicolaitans (Rev.2:15).**

A. Subjugating the people?

B. Free love?

**Instructions to the church (Rev. 2:16).**

**Promise to the church (Rev. 2:17).**

1. Hidden Manna (Rev. 2:17 & Apocrypha-2 Maccabees 2:1-12 & Mt. 16:13-17 & Jn. 6:14):
2. White Stone (Rev. 2:17):

* Courts: white stones represent acquittal.
* Races: token to be redeemed for the award.
* Social events: invitations to idolatrous feasts; an allusion to the marriage supper of the lamb (Rev. 19:7, 9 & 17)?
* New name: Name of the Lord? Or, an allusion to the bride taking on the groom’s name?

**Prophetic Message?** Time period: A.D. 312 – 600.