

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

THE CHURCH IN PERGAMUM

2:12-17

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Revelation 2:12-17

Jesus Writes to the Church in Pergamum

...Jesus is still speaking...

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: “I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you...” Revelation 2:12-14

Look at the church in Pergamum. Wow! Satan’s Kingdom is ruling over their city, he is in their midst—but they were faithful even when other Christians were being murdered right around them! They were holding the Name of Christ fast; they did not deny the faith even during the worst time of torture and persecution imaginable. Yet, unbelievably, Christ, the One Who has the sharp two-edged sword, says...

But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Revelation 2:14-15

What is it that they are doing wrong? They are tolerating those among them who hold to false teaching. You have to judge to know whether it is false teaching or true teaching and if it is false teaching you are not allowed to tolerate them being among you. They either repent of false beliefs and believe the truth or you cannot be with them.

Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. Revelation 2:16

How are the Christians in Pergamum supposed to repent? What do they need to do? They need to make war against false believers with the Sword of the Lord—His Word. How often do you see that taking place today? The idolatry of tolerance has morphed into entitled respect for people who hold to false teaching. How tragic. How ungodly. How evil.

What if they don’t repent? What is the “or else” if they do not repent? What happens if they don’t repent; if they don’t stop tolerating having people among them who have false teaching? You understand what I am talking about—church discipline. This is talking

about putting people out of church if they don't change their belief. These are not even teachers; these are simply people in the pew who hold to false teaching.

Let's say, in your church you sit next to a person who holds to false teaching, but you sit with him as if he did not. You cannot do that. You do not have the right to do that. You must repent. You must not have anything to do with the person who holds to false teaching, not even talking to him—inside or outside of your “church time”. And if you don't repent God will come and make war with the sword of His mouth. He is going to judge the man with the Word of God and then He is going to judge *you* with the Word of God.

This is big, important stuff. Right before His death Jesus met with His disciples and told them specific things—the most important things He had to tell them before He left them. These letters also contain what Jesus considered the most important things to say to the churches the last time He would speak to us in His Word. He's going to give His last instructions, His last directions, to us. This is of great significance. Nowhere else do we have a list this clear of what Jesus approves of and what Jesus condemns in the churches, in the body of Christ.

This is big time stuff, although it's probably not the list people would pen as the most important things for the church to know. Honestly, most people who go to church probably would not even agree with Jesus' list. The things that Jesus loves are not the things that today's “pew people” love. And the things that Jesus hates are not the things that today's “pew people” hate. This is a tough list to reconcile to the present day behaviors of most churches. And if it can't be reconciled (and it can't) then what can be said about most of today's churches?

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches... Revelation 2:17

Here the Spirit is saying that Christians are not allowed to tolerate false teaching in the body of Christ. You cannot tolerate false beliefs in the body of Christ.

...to him who overcomes... Revelation 2:17

Who would be the ones that would overcome? The ones who continue to be faithful until death, even if you live where Satan's throne is, and even if you're being persecuted. How do you overcome? You repent—overcome your sin of tolerating people among you that have false beliefs.

To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it. Revelation 2:17

Please take my word for it, these promises for the overcomers are loaded with wonderful truths—in this case the white stone and why and when you get it. Each

church could be studied for several weeks, but we are just looking at the mountaintops and must move on. However, you are definitely free to study as much as you like!

Pergamum. The Bible says we are to live a separated life. We are to be in the world but not *of* the world. Should we be only concerned about our own beliefs and behaviors or should we be concerned about other peoples' beliefs and behaviors? How tolerant can we be in a world that is screaming diversity? Have you been caught up in false teaching? Have you held fast His Name but tolerated false teaching? That is what the church of Pergamum was guilty of. Are you living a separated life?

These messages to all the churches should be a measuring stick for our lives. We can take these messages to the churches and use them to line ourselves up with what Jesus approves of and what He disapproves of—and then we need to make the necessary adjustments...