The Church at Pergamum

**Pergamum (Capital/Citadel)** a center for the worship of Domitian, Athena, Zeus (Father and ruler of the gods) and other pagan gods. Oldest in the city of the 7, official seat of the Roman government. Academic center with the 2nd largest library in the world. Message to believers at Pergamum by Jesus Christ. Pergamum was a doctrinally compromised church.

**Commendation:** Revelation 2: 12-13 The depiction of Jesus holding a sharp, two-edged sword coming out of His mouth refers to the Lord’s readiness to bring judgment. He knows the works, while living the shadows of evil. The Pergamum church held fast to the faith in Christ while surrounded by pagan influences even when their fellow believers were martyred.

**Criticism:** Revelation 2: 14 – 15 “The doctrine of Balaam” implied since Israelites were the covenant people of God, and the covenant could not be broken, and the Israelites could sin without consequences. Israelites fell to the temptations of the Moabites and Moses was instructed to stop these sins and stay the hand of God’s judgment upon the entire camp of Israel. Doctrine of Balaam today: Our covenant with Christ today does not allow us to continue to sin without consequences. Hebrews 10: 26

Every Christian is enrolled in a “race”/ obstacle course (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Timothy 4:7, 8); and every Christian is engaged in a conflict (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Timothy 2:4, 5).

**Instruction:** Revelation 2: 16 Repent - The Nicolaitans and those who were teaching Balaam’s error would be destroyed, along with their followers, from the congregation at Pergamum. The Lord will purge the church with His word of judgment.

**Promise:** Revelation 2: 17 The three blessings are hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name, reflecting the believer’s victorious reign with Christ.

Hidden manna speaks to the coming Messiah’s – the true bread of heaven. John 6:48–51, 58

White Stone/ New name: the ancient Roman custom of awarding white stones to the victors (overcomers) of athletic games with his name inscribed on it. “Ticket” to a special awards banquet, the wedding feast.

New name refers to the Holy Spirit’s work of conforming believers to the holiness of Christ. Colossians 3:10, Titus 3:5