



## The Book of Revelation: Week 6

### Pergamos And Thyatira:

### Compromise & Tolerance

**Media & Notes at:**

[www.htchurch.com/revelation](http://www.htchurch.com/revelation)

**Video also available at:**

[www.htchurch.tv](http://www.htchurch.tv)

### Review

- Jesus had commissioned John to write letters to seven churches in Asia Minor. The Lord had specific reasons for choosing these churches, but Jesus was also using them as examples of conditions that we would face through history.
- All these words were put here to give us instruction for the last days, and to help us to become overcomers. Recall the pattern of the letters.
- We talked about the Church at Smyrna, to which Jesus gave no rebuke.

### Pergamos

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

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

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- It was where the Roman proconsul had his throne. His symbol of authority would have been a sword, and he had “the right of the sword.”
- Here Jesus wants us to know He is the one who has authority and who bears rule in the nations of the world.
- This is the long sword, symbolic of the Word of God.
- Elsewhere in Revelation we see the Lord having this sword coming out of His mouth, and He uses it to strike the nations.
- This is a word of warning as well as comfort, to know that Christ rules everything.

**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.**

What God knows

- Jesus says that He knows the works of the Church. He has been inspecting!
- He also knows where they live. It is comforting to know that only God can judge us, although we need to be in awe that he will judge us. His judgment will take into account properly, as no man can, the situation of our environment.

Satan’s Throne

- The first explanation of this phrase is that it refers to Roman power in general.
- The city was intensely devoted to Rome.
- Perhaps Pergamos was a seat for him because the city was full of idolatry.
- There is a very specific possible meaning here, that Jesus was referring to a literal throne, or seat for Satan upon this Earth: the Temple of Zeus

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- The Temple of Zeus was one of the most impressive temples in the ancient world. In the 1800's the altar it was disassembled piece by piece, and transported to Germany. The altar is now in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.



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### Antipas

- They have not denied the faith, even there where Satan dwells.
- In particular we are told of one man who was martyred, called Antipas.

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- The most common story says that he was killed at the Temple of Zeus because he would not honor the pagan gods
- In the name of Antipas there is a message for all the saints. It can mean that you are “against everyone.” The Christian is always willing to stand, if necessary, against the entire world because of his devotion to Jesus Christ.

**14 But 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.**

- He gave counsel to the king of Moab as to how Israel could be defeated: *...the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. (Numbers 25:1b-3)*
- The people of the church were being invited to pagan feasts, which were mostly idolatrous and involved sexual immorality, and they did not think it objectionable.

**15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**

- Being able to sin freely is not a mark of Christian liberty or maturity!

**16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.**

- The reference is to the Word of God, and Christ judging them.

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**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.*” ’**

- The hidden manna may be a reference to them being given the Presence of Jesus in a powerful measure in the Kingdom of God. According to rabbinic thinking, it means you will receive all the blessings of Heaven in God’s Kingdom.
- It may also be a reference to the fact that Christians would have to stand strong and trust God for their daily manna.
- In the ancient world, the white stone was how they voted in your favor. There were also white stones (*tesserae*) given to great heroes and gladiators, etc.
- Jesus will also give you a special name that is just between you and Him.
- What wonderful promises Jesus gives His people!

## **Thyatira**

**18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:**

- Thyatira was probably a center of commerce because of a trade in dyeing garments. We know that Lydia was a seller of purple dye, and from Thyatira.
- Jesus shows Himself to the Church of Thyatira as the Son of God.
- He also has eyes like a flame of fire, probing them with His gaze.
- The feet of brass refer to judgment.

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**19 “I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.**

- This church has a generally good testimony.

**20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.**

- The church was deficient because of what they were tolerating.
- There is a good tolerance, but what about the tolerance of Thyatira or today?

Jezebel

- He is telling us that she is like the Jezebel in the Old Testament in some way.
- She sought to destroy the true prophetic voice.

Jezebel's sins

- There were a number of problems with the New Testament Jezebel. *First*, she called herself a prophetess, likely as a way to obtain a following.
- *Second*, she was teaching people to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.
- *Third*, she was seducing them into doing those things.

The Problem

- Many of these cities combined immorality and the worship of demons.
- Problems in the various trade guilds – “Be one of the club!
- Apparently Jezebel was saying it was not a problem to compromise this way.

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- The danger of engaging in fellowship with demons. What Jezebel was doing was not harmless, cute, or fun. It was enslaving the people.

**21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.**

- Notice: *First*, God calls a person who is practicing sexual immorality to repent.
- Second, notice how loving Christ is – He even gives space for Jezebel to repent!

**22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.**

- Here Jesus says He will cause her to be ill, and will cause the people who practice these things with her into great tribulation, unless there is repentance.
- He will kill her followers, with death or plague.
- Everyone will be rewarded in accordance with what they have done.
- The goal of excommunication in the New Testament.

**24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast what you have till I come.**

- Nothing else will come to those who haven’t known “the deep things of Satan.”

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**26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— 27 ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’— as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star.**

- Here is the promise to overcomers: keep the works of Jesus until the end, and we will have power over the nations!
- To the Jewish mind, sexual immorality was the typical sin of all Gentiles. But Jesus says if you overcome you will get the same grant of authority as He received from the Father.
- Finally, He promises that He will give you the morning star. This I take to be a reference to Jesus Himself.

**29 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’**

- Jesus ends reminding us that although He may be addressing these seven churches, the Holy Spirit is using His words to speak to you and me!

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