

Pergamos

(Revelation 2:12 NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has **the sharp two-edged sword**:

John 1:1-3 NKJV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

(Revelation 2:13 NKJV) "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.

From the context of the verse, these are good works. The church was situated in a pagan, unbelieving and hostile city. Jesus calls it "Satan's Throne"! The church held strong to His Name – clinging to Him and all that His Name represents: Faithfulness, Truth, Savior, LORD and God! Not denying His Faith can be taken 2 ways: They did not deny their faith in Him OR they did not deny His Faith in making "...you increase and abound in love to one another and to all ... so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. **1 Thessalonians 3:12-13**

Who Antipas was no one really knows. But that's not as important as knowing that there existed a man willing to be martyred rather than succumb to Satan and His world!

(Revelation 2:14 NKJV) 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.

This is directed mainly at the pastor of the church because of his responsibility for the flock. But, each one of us should be diligent in seeing that no heretical ideas come into the church and be rooted within the body!

What is the "Doctrine of Balaam"? Several study sites have this nice synopsis of Balaam a prophet in Mesopotamia back in the time of Moses and the Children of Israel. You can read all about him in Numbers 22-25 and a couple of critical verses in Numbers 31.

Ba'laam. (B.C. 1451). The son of Beor, a man endowed with the gift of prophecy. Num 22:5. He is mentioned in conjunction with the five kings of Midian, apparently as a person of the same rank. **Num 31:8**. Compare **Num 31:16**. He seems to have lived at Pethor, **Deu 23:4**; **Num 22:5**, on the river Euphrates, in Mesopotamia. Such was his reputation that, when the Israelites were encamped in the plains of Moab, **Balak**, the king of Moab, sent for Balaam to curse them.

Balaam, at first, was prohibited by God from going. He was again sent for by the king and again refused, but was, at length, allowed to go. He yielded to the temptations of riches and honor which Balak set before him; but God's anger was kindled at this manifestation of determined self-will, and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. See 2Pe 2:16.

2 Peter 2:12-16 NKJV But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, (13) *and* will receive the wages of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. *They are* spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, (14) having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. *They have* a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children. (15) They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the *son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; (16) but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

Jude 1:11 NKJV Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Balaam predicted a magnificent career for the people whom he was called to curse, but he, nevertheless, suggested to the Moabites, the expedient of seducing them to commit fornication. The effect of this is recorded in Num 25:1. A battle was afterwards fought against the Midianites, in which Balaam sided with them, and was slain by the sword of the people whom he had endeavored to curse. Num 31:8.

to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. – These 2 are connected because of the orgies associated with the practice of eating meat sacrificed to pagan idols. Since is Satan's abomination and counterfeit "communion".

(Revelation 2:15 NKJV) **Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.**

Some try to say that the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans are the same but the only thing in common is, in effect, the denial of Jesus as our LORD God. They are both heresies.

Guzik: The title *Nico-laitans* has the idea of a proud authority, and a hierarchical separatism. The name *Nikao-laos* literally means "to conquer the people." According to ancient commentators, the **Nicolaitans** also approved of immorality. This is probably why commentators who hate the Roman Catholic church believe that these were the precursors to that church.

NOTE: Remember the letter to the Church in Ephesus: **Revelation 2:6 NKJV** **But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

These people were in agreement with the Nicolaitan's doctrine but had that led them to try to spread these lies within the body? I think so! Such are the works of Satan in our midst.

Implicit in this is conformity to the world's standards – allowing worldly ideas, programs, attitudes permeate the body as leaven puffs up the whole loaf. Instead of people integrating Godly ideas into their cultural expressions, the church has been integrating worldly ideas and

actions into the church. As if adding Christ to anything the world offers makes it ok. So the world entertains...then so goes the church. So the world tolerates sin...then so goes the “radically inclusive’ church;

(Revelation 2:16 NKJV) **Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.**

Repent: the church leadership in particular that allowed such doctrines to creep in and try to steal, plunder and destroy the sheep with lies! And with those who actually hold the doctrines. Christ’s Word! It’s power has been described; it will break, it will cleanse and it can, without repentance, bring those who refuse to renounce their heresies to place where no one will ever hear from them again!

1 Peter 4:17 NKJV For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

(Revelation 2:17 NKJV) **“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.”**

To the repentant, to the overcomers who hold fast to Jesus Himself, to Jesus the Son, receive a promise to eat of “hidden manna” and to know a name that no one knows except him who receives it.

What is this manna? What is this stone?

BARCLAY on Manna and Stones

IN this letter, the risen Christ promises two things to those who overcome; the first is a share of the hidden manna to eat. Here is a Jewish idea which has two aspects.

(1) When the children of Israel had no food in the desert, God gave them manna to eat (Exodus 16:11–15). When the need of the manna passed, the memory did not. **A pot of the manna was put into the ark and set before God in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and in the Temple (Exodus 16:33–4; Hebrews 9:4).** Early in the sixth century BC, the Temple which Solomon had built was destroyed; and the Rabbis had a legend that, when that happened, **Jeremiah hid away the pot of manna in a cleft in Mount Sinai and that, when the Messiah came, he would return and the pot of manna would be discovered again. To a Jew, ‘to eat of the hidden manna’ meant to enjoy the blessings of the messianic age. To a Christian, it meant to enter into the blessedness of the new world which would emerge when the kingdom came.**

(2) There may be a wider and more general meaning. Of the manna, it is said: **‘This is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat’ (Exodus 16:15).** The manna is called ‘grain of heaven’ (Psalm 78:24); and it is said to be the ‘bread of angels’ (Psalm 78:25). Here, the manna may mean heavenly food. In that case, John would be saying: **‘In this world, you cannot share with the non-Christians in their feasts because you cannot sit down to meat which is part of a sacrifice that has been offered to an idol. You may think that you are being called upon to give up much, but the day will come when you will feast in heaven upon heavenly food.’** If that

is so, the risen Christ is saying that people must abstain from the seductions of earth if they want to enjoy the blessings of heaven.

(3) There is one possible further interpretation of this. Some have suggested that the hidden manna is the bread of God given to Christians at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. John tells us that the Jews said to Jesus that their ancestors had eaten manna in the wilderness, so receiving bread to eat. He goes on to explain that Jesus said that only God could give the true bread from heaven and that he made the claim: 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:31–5). If the hidden manna and the bread of life are the same, the hidden manna not only is the bread of the sacrament but also stands for nothing less than Christ, the bread of life; and this is a promise that to those who are faithful he will give himself.

THE final promise of Christ to the faithful in Pergamum is that he will give them the white stone with the new name on it. This is a passage of which there are almost endless interpretations. In the ancient world, a white stone might stand for many things.

(1) There was a Rabbinic legend that precious stones fell from heaven along with the manna. The white stone would then simply stand for the precious gifts of God to his people.

(2) In the ancient world, coloured stones were used as counters for doing calculations. This would mean that Christians are counted among the number of the faithful.

(3) In the ancient law courts, white and black stones were used for registering the verdicts of juries – black for guilty, white for not guilty. This would mean that Christians are acquitted in the sight of God because of the work of Jesus Christ.

(4) In the ancient world, objects called tesserae were much used. A tessera was a little tablet made of wood or metal or stone; it had writing on it; and, generally speaking, the possession of a tessera conferred some kind of privilege upon an individual. Three of these tesserae add something to the picture.

(a) In Rome, the great houses had their clients, dependants who each morning received from their patron food and money for the day. They were often given a tessera by which they identified themselves as having the right to the free gifts. This would mean that Christians have the right to the free gifts for life which Christ can give.

(b) To win a victory at the games was one of the greatest honours the ancient world could give. Outstanding victors were given, by the master of the games, a tessera, which in the days to come conferred upon them the right of free entry to all public entertainments. This would mean that Christians are the victorious athletes of Christ who may share in the glory of their Lord.

(c) In Rome, a great gladiator was a hero admired by everyone. Often, a gladiator had to fight on until he was killed in combat. But, if he had had a particularly illustrious career, when he grew old he was allowed to retire in honour. Such men were given a tessera with the letters SP on it. SP stands for the Latin word spectatus, which means a man whose valour has been proved beyond a doubt. This would mean that Christians are the gladiators of Christ and that, when they have proved their valour in the battle of life, they are allowed to enter into the rest which Christ gives with honour.

PERHAPS IT'S THE 'TICKET' TO GET INTO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB!!!???!!!

(5) In the ancient world, a particularly happy day was called a white day. The Greek historian Plutarch tells that, when Pericles was besieging Samos, he knew that the siege would be long. He did not want his army to grow weary, so he divided it into eight parts. Every day, the eight companies drew lots; one was a white bean; and the company which drew the white bean was exempt from duty for the day and could enjoy itself as it wished. So it was that a happy day came to be called a white day (Life of Pericles, 64). In one of his letters, Pliny tells a friend that that day he had had the joy of hearing in the law courts the cases made by two magnificent young advocates in whose hands the future of Roman oratory was safe; and, he says, that experience made that day one marked candidissimo calculo, with the whitest of stones (Letters, 6:11). It was said that the Thracians and the Scythians kept in their homes an urn into which for every happy day they threw a white stone and for every unhappy day a black stone. At the ends of their lives, the stones were counted; and, depending on the greater number of white or black stones, a person was said to have had a wretched or a happy life. This would mean that, through Jesus Christ, Christians can have the joy that no one can take from them (John 16:22).

(6) Along this line, there is another and most likely interpretation. One of the most common of all customs in the ancient world was to carry a small lucky object, or charm. It might be made of a precious metal or a precious stone, but often it was nothing more than a pebble. On the pebble there was a sacred name; to know a god's name was to have a certain power over that god, to be able to summon him to one's aid in time of difficulty and to have control over the demons. Such an object was thought to be doubly effective if no one but the owner knew the name that was inscribed upon it. Most likely, what John is saying is: 'Your friends – and you did the same in the days before you became a Christian – carry charms with superstitious inscriptions on them and they think they will keep them safe. You need nothing like that; you are safe in life and in death because you know the name of the only true God.'

GUZIK: Is it God's name, or is it the believer's name? This is probably the believer's new name, **and the name itself is probably more important than the stone itself.**

- i. One idea behind this new, secret name is that it shows what an intimate relationship we have with God. When a couple is close, they often have "pet names" for each other. This is the same idea.
- ii. Another idea associated with the new name is simply the assurance it gives of our heavenly destination. Your name is there, waiting for you. It is as if your "reservation" in heaven is made.

(Revelation 2:18 NKJV) "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:**

(Revelation 2:19 NKJV) "I know your **works**, love, service, faith, and your patience; and *as* for your **works**, the last *are* more than the first.

(Revelation 2:20 NKJV) 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.**

(Revelation 2:21 NKJV) And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

(Revelation 2:22 NKJV) Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

(Revelation 2:23 NKJV) 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.

(Revelation 2:24 NKJV) "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.

(Revelation 2:25 NKJV) But hold fast what you have till I come.

(Revelation 2:26 NKJV) And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

(Revelation 2:27 NKJV) '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;

(Revelation 2:28 NKJV) and I will give him the morning star.

(Revelation 2:29 NKJV) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "