

>>>>>> Lesson 05 <<<<<<<

- 1) We will begin our discussion at verse 17 but, like last time, I'll start reading with the entire letter to the church at Pergamum beginning in verse 12 of chapter 2.

Rev 2:12-17 (NIV)

- 2) As we discussed last time, the hidden manna of verse 17 represents Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life who came down from heaven.

John 6:51 (NIV)

- 3) Next, we have one of those portions of the Revelation that remains a mystery.
- 4) There has been a lot of speculation about what the white stones with the new name represents or symbolizes.
- 5) I read probably 8 or 10 different ideas that different scholars had put forth.
- 6) Some very complex in their derivation others seemed to be a real stretch.
- 7) I probably could have found more however, looking at the basic premise that this writing would be clear to the readers of that time, I found MacArthur's idea the most plausible.
- 8) He explains the white stone in light of the Roman custom of awarding white stones to the victors in athletic contests.
- 9) The white stone was inscribed with the athlete's name and served as his ticket to a special awards banquet.
- 10) In this view, Christ promises the overcomers entrance to the eternal victory celebration in heaven.
- 11) In this case, there will be a new name written on the stone which no one knows but the one who receives it.
- 12) It is evident from the verse that we cannot know what that new name is until we receive it.
- 13) The Greek word for "new" here does not mean new in contrast to old in time, but new in the sense of qualitatively different.
- 14) The new name will serve as each believer's admission pass into eternal glory.
 - a) It will uniquely reflect God's special love for and adoption of every true child of His.
- 15) Again, turning to John MacArthur, his closing comment here was I think truly on point!

The Pergamum church faced the same choice that every similar church faces. It could repent and receive all the blessedness of eternal life in the glory of heaven. Or it could refuse to repent and face the terrifying reality of having the Lord Jesus Christ declare war on it. Maintaining the path of **compromise** ultimately leads to **judgment**.
- 16) I feel we must make the very solid and real connection between the church as a body and the individuals that make up that body.
- 17) The leaders of the church – the elders – must set the tone and insist on the correct direction.

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18) However, there is no escaping the fact that the individual member of the body must do the repenting and turning from what is wrong to what is right in their individual lives.

Rev 2:18-29 (NIV)

- 1) Christ's introductory phrase is chosen here to identify Himself with focus on His role as divine Judge.
- 2) To possibly enhance that idea, here He departs from the original phrase in 1:13 – instead of “Son of Man” he uses the term “Son of God”
- 3) This emphasizes Christ's deity, stressing the truth that He is of one essence with the Father.
- 4) The Son of Man emphasizes His human incarnation,
 - a) Also, His sympathetic identification with believers as their merciful High Priest.
 - b) “Son of Man” offers encouragement to persecuted Christians.
- 5) Jesus identifying Himself as Son of God
 - a) emphasizes His deity, because His approach to the church at Thyatira is not as sympathetic High Priest, but as divine judge.
- 6) Comfort is not instore, but judgment is for the church at Thyatira when Christ's divine power moves against this adulterous assembly.
- 7) The description of His feet as being like burnished bronze is reminiscent of Rev 19:15, where it says of Christ that

"He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty."
- 8) That Christ's feet glowed brilliantly like burnished bronze depicts His purity and holiness as He tramples out impurity.
- 9) This terrifying description of the Lord Jesus Christ must have created shock, consternation, and fear when this letter was read to the congregation at Thyatira.
- 10) As Christ begins his address to the church, he again commends them for their faith and the fact that they are improving in their service.
- 11) However, again, good does not outweigh bad.
- 12) Bottom line, unrepented sin **WILL BE JUDGED!**
- 13) Christ says this clearly in vs 23

all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.
- 14) Jezebel was likely not the person's real name but, there was a person who purported herself to be a prophetess and was teaching wrong things!
- 15) She obviously led a large portion of the congregation into immorality and eating food sacrificed to idols.

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- a) Jezebel and her followers claimed to be exploring the very depths of Satan's domain and remaining spiritually unscathed.
- b) They believed they could do so with impunity.
- c) This pre-Gnostic teaching said that one was free to engage the sphere of Satan and participate in sins of the body without harming the spirit.
- d) Since the spirit belongs to God, their twisted logic went, what does it matter if the body attends idolatrous feasts and engages in sexual immorality?
- e) They imagined themselves to be free to explore the satanic sphere and then brazenly come to worship God.

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- 16) This is the same general explanation of their sin as that of the church at Pergamum.
- 17) We can only speculate about the specifics of the sin but, that is truly not important here.
- 18) Christ goes on to explain that he gave her time to repent, and she did not.
- 19) In the result applied to her, we run into a small difference.
 - a) Some translations add the phrase “bed of suffering” or something similar.
 - b) This was not part of the original Greek. Young’s Literal Translation says:

Rev 2:21-23 (YLT)

21 and I did give to her a time that she might reform from her whoredom, and she did not reform;

22 lo, I will cast her into a couch, and those committing adultery with her into great tribulation — if they may not repent of their works,

23 and her children I will kill in death YLT

20) It is most likely that the “couch” (YLT) or “bed of suffering” (NIV) refers to hell and eternal damnation.

21) For those who follow her, the same fate awaits them.

22) However, Christ gives words of comfort to the others who have not fallen prey to the Jezebel’s false teaching. “I will place not further burden on you”.

23) Then, to the counsel,

Rev 2:25-29 (NIV)

24) There are some differences of opinion on exactly what this means.

25) One opinion is that this refers to the millennial kingdom.

26) The other is a more general interpretation relating to the messianic promise that Christ will have authority over all the nations and those who overcome will reign with him.

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- 27) If it refers to the millennial kingdom, in order for this to be an encouragement, they would have to have an understanding of the millennial kingdom.
- 28) Since at this point, one must assume they did not, I think this more general interpretation is most likely.
- 29) Additionally, Christ says that he will give those who remain faithful the “morning star.”
- 30) Christ is referred to as the morning star in 2 Peter 1:19 and in Rev 22:16.
- 31) Though Christians will reflect Christ's glory, here, it is better to see the morning star as Christ Himself.
- 32) Christ promised believers Himself in all His fullness; the One whom we "now . . . know in part [we will] then . . . know fully just as [we] also have been fully known" (1 Cor 13:12).

Rev 3:1-6 (NIV)

- 1) The first point of note here is that the Lord has no words of praise for this church.
 - a) There are a few people in Sardis church who are living the Christian life.
- 2) The Sardis church has a reputation of being a living functioning church but thru their deeds, they are truly dead.
- 3) Here we must really read between the lines, so to speak, when it comes to what is really wrong in detail.
- 4) What we can surmise is there is much sin in this church and, yet there is still a bit of correctness because the Lord tells them to strengthen what remains and is about to die.
- 5) Christ had commended the other churches for their love, faithfulness, obedience, and perseverance.
- 6) There is none of that here.
 - a) This may be what he means when he says their deeds were not complete before God.
 - b) They knew the right things to do but did not do them.
- 7) We must at least consider the fact that at the founding of this church, there was a rightness about them.
- 8) They must have started out correctly but perhaps, they became very lax in their pursuit of right things.
- 9) They may have been content to meet and fellowship but never reach out, never do anything to show Christ to others.
- 10) Again, all of this is supposition.
- 11) What we do know is that they were in danger of death – ***being completely cutoff from God.***
- 12) As we said a moment ago, There are a few people in Sardis church who are living the Christian life.

13) Christ uses them as an example and their lives as lives to be imitated when he says:

They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.