

The Church In Pergamos

Revelation 2:12-17

1. Who is addressed in Revelation 2:12?

The portion of the letter of Revelation that we are studying says: *“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos...”*

- The letter called Revelation was written to seven congregations in Asia (**Revelation 1:4; 1:11**) concerning prophesies [visions] that were shortly going to come to pass (**Revelation 1:1-3**).
- The term translated “angel” means: “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent” (Thayer; Strong’s #32).
- The term could literally mean an angel (**Matthew 1:20-24, Matthew 2:13, Matthew 4:6, Matthew 4:11, Matthew 13:41, Matthew 24:36**, etc.), a spirit from Heaven (**Psalms 104:4**, and **Hebrews 1:7; 1:13-14**).
- The Greek term can also mean men that were messengers of God’s word (**Matthew 11:7-10** and **Mark 1:1-4**).
- The Greek term can also just mean messengers (**Luke 7:24** and **James 2:25**).
- If this was an angel from Heaven, the angel would have spoken to the congregation directly (**Acts 12:1-11**) or through a clear vision (**Acts 10:1-7**). If it was an angel from Heaven, the angel could not reveal anything of his own thinking (**Galatians 1:8-9**).
- However, when angels could have declared the word of God in the New Testament, they generally did not (**Acts 8:25-39**; cf. **Titus 1:1-3**). This is one distinction between the old law and the Gospel (**Hebrews 2:1-4**).
- Therefore, it is most likely the teacher of this congregation being addressed (**Acts 19:21-22, I Corinthians 4:16-17, Ephesians 6:21-23, Colossians 4:7-8, I Thessalonians 5:12**, and **Titus 1:5**).
- Even when there were elders in congregations, evangelists/teachers had a role that was unique (**Acts 20:17-31** and **I Timothy 1:3-7**).
- The end goal of the Lord, regardless of the messenger, was that this message made its way to the congregations in Asia (**Revelation 2:7, Revelation 2:11, Revelation 2:17, Revelation 2:29, Revelation 3:6, Revelation 3:13**, and **Revelation 3:22**).

2. Who is “he which hath the sharp sword with two edges” (Revelation 2:12)?

The first chapter of this book reveals this is Christ (**Revelation 1:9-20**). The language of “I am he that liveth, and was dead” is irrefutably in reference to Christ (**Luke 24:44-51, Acts 26:23, Colossians 1:12-19, II Timothy 2:8**, and **Revelation 1:5**).

3. Though the congregation in Pergamos existed in an area wherein evil abounded, did they deny the faith of our Lord?

No: *“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith...”* (**Revelation 2:13**).

- The idea of where Satan is was to them a figure of speech about Jews persecuting them and those holding false doctrines (**Revelation 2:8-10**, **Revelation 2:24**, and **Revelation 3:9**).
- In light of the persecution they were facing (**I Thessalonians 2:13-16**), they held fast (**Hebrews 10:23**).
- Remember, the Jews wanted saints to deny Christ (**Acts 9:1-2**; **9:13-14** and **Acts 26:1-11**).
- Some Jews were very committed to the persecution of saints (**Acts 23:12**).
- Jesus gives a distinction saying that this is where Satan's seat [throne] is. The word "seat" in the KJV is derived from the Greek word "Strong's #2362 thronos". Translated in the NKJV and the ASV of 1901 as "throne". Defined as: "a chair of state having a footstool; assigned in the NT to kings, hence, kingly power or royalty - Thayer". One can only imagine, with that distinction, what the saints must have been facing in their vocations and lives outside of the assembling times with the Saints. Jesus warned that His work would be done among the evil of the world (**Matthew 10:16-25** and **John 17:13-20**).

4. What happened to Antipas?

"...even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (Revelation 2:13).

- Antipas is not mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures. All we know from this is that he was a faithful brother who died for the cause of Christ among the saints there. His loss of life would be his gain (**Matthew 5:10-12**).
- In light of our context, think about this: *"These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:1-3; cf. Acts 6:1-8:3 and Galatians 1:13-14).*

5. What errors existed within the congregation in Pergamos?

"(14) But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. (15) So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:14-15).

- Balak (king of Moab) hired Balaam (a prophet) to stop the progress of the children of Israel (**Numbers 22-24**). Balaam taught Balak to have the children of Israel to eat meat sacrificed to idols, to commit fornication, and it worked (**Numbers 25:1-6**, **Numbers 31:16**, and **Psalms 106:28**).
- False teachers at worked among some of these brethren (**II Peter 2:1-3**; **14-16**).
- What we know about the doctrine of the Nicolaitans is that the Lord hated it (**Revelation 2:6**). Some dictionaries say the doctrine of the Nicolaitans was the doctrine of Balaam. The language in this context says it is not the same.

- The Lord's issue is that some of them held those false doctrines (**Ephesians 5:6-11** and **Colossians 2:4-23**).
- Whether it was known to the congregation before or not, it is now known. Now that it is known, it MUST be dealt with (**Romans 16:17-18**, **I Timothy 1:19-20**, **I Timothy 5:22**, and **Titus 3:9-11**; cf. **Galatians 5:7-9**).
- A congregation of the Lord cannot faithfully exist with multiple beliefs in place (**Psalms 133:1**, **Amos 3:3**, **Mark 3:24-25**, **John 17:20-23**, **Romans 12:16**, **I Corinthians 1:10**, **II Corinthians 13:11**, **Ephesians 4:1-6**, **Philippians 2:2**, **Philippians 3:16**, **I Corinthians 10:21**, **II Corinthians 6:14-7:1**, **I John 1:3-7**, and **II John 1:9**).
- We are not brethren when we're not obeying the Lord (**Matthew 12:46-50**).
- The whole congregation, now for sure knowing what is going on, must not continue with corruption therein (**Ephesians 5:27**).

6. Since the congregation in Pergamos didn't deny the faith, was the Lord going to cover what He had against them with His grace?

No: *"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth"* (**Revelation 2:16**).

- Grace doesn't cover sins not confess and repented of (**Romans 6:1-2**, **Romans 6:14-16**, and **I John 1:9**).
- Grace teaches us to live faithfully (**Genesis 6:5-22** and **Titus 2:11-14**).
- Grace belongs to those whom sincerely love Jesus Christ (**Ephesians 6:24**). Our love for Christ is shown through our obedience to His will (**John 14:15**, **John 14:23-24**, **John 15:10**, **I John 5:2-3**, and **II John 1:6**).
- If a Christian sins he or she has to be converted back to Christ (**James 5:19-20**). If he or she does not return to the Lord, that individual is then a child of Satan (**I John 3:1-10**).
- Jesus takes adversarial language here for a reason (**Psalms 34:16**, **Ezekiel 14:1-8**, **Matthew 12:30**, and **Luke 11:23**).
- The sword (**Ephesians 6:17**) against them (**John 12:48**).

7. What was promised to those that would overcome the issues in Pergamos?

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (**Revelation 2:17**).

- Since the days of the Law and Prophets, men have spoken and written by the Holy Spirit of God (**II Samuel 23:2**, **John 16:1-13**, **I Corinthians 2:9-13**, and **II Peter 1:20-21**).
- They had to overcome their current status. If they did, rather than their identity stripped (i.e. **2:5**), it would be found. The figurative stone with a new name (**Revelation 3:12**). Similar to imagery of Christ (**Revelation 19:11-13**) and the victory for these saints with the restored church (**Revelation 22:1-4**).
- The hidden manna is a reference to Christ (**John 6:48-58**).