



7 CHURCHES OF
REVELATION
FALL 2019 SERIES

Dr. Cody McQueen
October 13, 2019

REVELATION 2:12-17
PERGAMUM

*"And to the angel of the church in **PERGAMUM** write:
'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.'"* v. 12

JESUS SEES the pressure put on the church to accommodate _____ norms.

*"I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you **hold fast my name**, and you **did not deny my faith**, even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells."* v. 13

JESUS CONFRONTS compromises that _____ the church from within.

*"But I have a few things against you: you have some there who **hold the teaching of Balaam**, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might **eat food sacrificed to idols** and **practice sexual immorality**. So also you have some who **hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans**."* vv. 14-15

JESUS COMMANDS that we not _____ anything contrary to His transcendent truth.

*"Therefore **repent**. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."* vv. 16-17a

Don't accommodate an exception that will corrupt your relationship with Christ.

YOU CHOOSE

_____ every decision with the Word of God. (Prov 3:5-6)

Ward off accommodation with _____. (Eccl 4:9-12)

_____ un-Christlike accommodations immediately. (Prov 28:13)

JESUS REWARDS those who do not accommodate ungodliness with divine _____.

"To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it." v. 17b

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!"

FALL 2019 SERIES

BACKGROUND: Revelation 2:12-17

Pergamum, 70 miles north of Smyrna, was an impressive city of around 180,000 high atop a hill—an architectural and cultural hub that included a 200,000-scroll library rivaling the one in Alexandria, Egypt. Parchment, the processed skins of certain animals, is said to have been invented here in the 2nd century BC.; the name derives from the ancient city's name. As early as 350 BC. the Asclepium, or health spa (dedicated to Asclepius, the god of healing), had a wide reputation for physicians administering an array of treatments with apparent success. One of the founders of modern medicine, Galen, received his medical training here. And like Smyrna, Pergamum sided with Rome's dominance of the region, and was amply rewarded by being named the official capital of Asia Minor.

Jesus commends the Pergamum church's faithful endurance despite intense pressure to join in temple rituals and emperor worship. A believer named Antipas lost his life for refusing to participate, and may have even been executed at the temple of Zeus or one dedicated to imperial Rome. But some professing Christians asked questions like, "Can't we all just get along? If we don't believe it, why not just go through the motions and burn the incense?" Jesus calls this response "the teaching of Balaam," who in Numbers 22-25 enticed the Israelites to participate in idolatrous rituals. From Jesus' perspective, participation in idol sacrifices and the imperial cult amounts to spiritual prostitution.

Perhaps "Satan's throne" refers to the great altar to Zeus, a significant architectural monument standing 40 feet high. Citizens of Pergamum also venerated Rome and its emperor by burning incense before a statue of the divine Caesar. The description of Jesus holding "the sharp two-edged sword" may allude to the famous Roman short sword that was often a symbol of capital punishment; the fact that Jesus, not Caesar, holds the sword speaks volumes about who really holds the power of life and death. "Hidden manna," the mysterious substance that sustained the Israelites through the wilderness after Moses led them out of Egypt (Ex 16), is a symbol of eternal life. In the Greco-Roman world, stones of various kinds served as admission passes, so the "white stone" here admits the holder to Paradise. The giving of "a new name" indicates a completely transformed nature (Gen 17:5, 17:15, 32:27-30; Is 56:2, 62:2), and the fact that no one else knows it suggests that each believer has a unique eternal destiny.

VIDEO View Week 3 together as a group, and be sure to take notes.

DISCUSSION Read aloud Revelation 2:12-17.

1. How did the church in Pergamum compromise the purity of the church at large? What dangers lurk in our own culture that threaten to corrupt the church from the inside?
2. What from the video or *Continuing the Conversation* devotionals was notable or helpful?
3. In what ways can the church try so hard to be "relevant" that it actually becomes irrelevant? What should the church be careful do instead, and why?
4. How do you react to the idea of a stone with a secret name only you and Jesus know? How does it change the way you perceive eternity, and also your daily life now?
5. Is God's Word open to interpretation? How can we know if we interpret Scripture correctly?
6. The Pergamum church interpreted the Word of God through a lens of compromise. Strengthen your ability to study the Bible through the unprecedented opportunity to attend a short version of Dallas Seminary's Bible Study Methods course (see box at right). Consider attending the course as a group.

CLOSE your group time in prayer.

LEARN HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE AT A DEEPER LEVEL

This is a rare opportunity to learn up close from Dallas Theological Seminary President Dr. Mark Bailey with other Christ Chapelites! Dr. Bailey will be teaching an in-depth strategy for studying Scripture and drawing on cultural contexts to better understand the Bible. Normally a semester-long seminary course, this class is two days:

**Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1 and 2
at Christ Chapel
Cost: \$25**

Register at www.ccbcfamily.org/events

Here's a glimpse at what you need to know for this week. Like to plan ahead a little more? Pick up a copy of *The Source* at a stand around campus or near the exits, or visit www.ccbcfamily.org/events. They're your source for everything going on at Christ Chapel.

TEXT "CCBCSHARE" FOR YOUR NEXT STEP. If you've been growing in your faith for a while, your next step is to start considering who God has put in your life to have faith conversations with or to disciple. We'll help you get started—text "CCBCShare" to 555-888 for some gospel-sharing ideas and suggestions.

SINGLE MOMS, OASIS MEETS THIS FRIDAY, OCT. 18. Oasis is a monthly gathering created for single moms to relax in an encouraging, supportive community. Join us this Friday for dinner and fun at 7 p.m. in The Den. You can email Kristin at KristinH@christchapelbc.org or RSVP for yourself and visit www.ccbcfamily.org/KidsRSVP to RSVP for Kids Care for your children, ages 0 to 11.

TA ETHNE MISSIONS LUNCH IS NEXT SUNDAY, OCT. 20. Have lunch with us next Sunday at 12:30 p.m. in the Oak Room and get to know a Christ Chapel missionary family in town from Southeast Asia! They'll be sharing how God is at work in their Muslim-majority country and you'll gain a larger perspective of God's love for our world. RSVP for Kids Care, available for ages 0 to 11, at www.ccbcfamily.org/KidsRSVP by this Thursday, Oct. 17.

DADS, REGISTER FOR "DADDY DAUGHTER ADVENTURE." We've created a fun and intentional day just for you and your little girl on Saturday, Nov. 9. Join us at Camp Thurman in Arlington and spend a memorable day laughing, adventuring, and speaking blessing and encouragement to your daughter. The event is designed for daughters in Grades K-8 and the cost is \$60 per person. Register today at www.ccbcfamily.org/events.

SIGN UP FOR "YOUR WORK MATTERS." Do you go to work every day wondering if any of it matters? In this new class about work and faith, you'll learn how—no matter your office or title—God is with you in your work. Men and women from a diverse range of Fort Worth industries will lead the class, challenging and encouraging you to see how your work is rooted in God and can change our city. The class will meet Sundays, Oct. 27 through Nov. 1 at 11 a.m. Sign up at www.ccbcfamily.org/events.

JOIN THE CANTATA CHOIR AND BE A PART OF A CHRIST CHAPEL HOLIDAY TRADITION. The Christmas Cantata is a worship service that kicks off the Christmas season for our entire church! If you'd like to sing in the choir, rehearsals are now underway from 7 to 7:45 p.m. on Thursdays. Kids Care is available. Email Cynthia at CynthiaF@christchapelbc.org to join the fun.

CONTINUE THE REVELATION CONVERSATION! If you'd like to keep mulling over what we're learning in Revelation, we've created extra content to go along with our fall series. Head to www.ccbcfamily.org/7churches for info on how to get devos throughout the week, recipes to make a full Mediterranean meal, articles on each week's sermon topic and more.

BREAKAWAY IS BACK THIS FRIDAY, OCT. 18! Breakaway is a monthly get-together for kids and young adults with special needs to hang out and have fun while parents get a few hours to themselves. The event is open to the public, so if you have a friend who might be interested, share it with them! Breakaway will meet from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall and RSVPs are required. Email Emma at EmmaW@christchapelbc.org to learn more and to RSVP by this Wednesday, Oct. 16.

