

# Seven Pillars of a FAITHFUL CHURCH

Revelation 2 & 3

## PART THREE

### I. ***A Faithful Witness in the Midst of Evil: The Church at Pergamum 2:12-17***

#### INTRO

- 1) The Lord of the Church (v12)
- 2) The Location of the Church (v13a)
- 3) The Commendation of the Church (v13b)
- 4) The Condemnation of the Church (vv14-15)
- 5) The Caution to the Church (v16)
- 6) The Compensation of the Church (v17)

Commendation: *Steadfast identification with, and allegiance to, the Name of Christ and a strong uncompromising faith in the midst of evil.*

Condemnation: *Embraced false teaching, engaging in idolatry and immorality.*

#### I. **The Lord of the Church (v12)**

“The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. This is the Word of God” (Revelation 2:12).

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Why does the sword, which is the Word of God, have *two edges*?

##### **1. One edge of the sword is for *salvation and separation*:**

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household” (Matthew 10:34-36).

“holiness” or “sanctify” Hebrew root: ‘to cut’ or ‘to separate;’ and, ‘to set apart.’

Jesus came to earth with a two-edged sword that God’s people would be cut free from the bondage to sin and attachment to this world:

“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,  
and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord,  
and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you,  
and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.’

“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

“No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him” (2 Timothy 2:4).

The church is destroyed when its members compromise with the world.

“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

## **2. The other edge of the sword is for *judgment and execution*.**

“And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore” (Revelation 18:11).

“The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud” (Revelation 18:15).

One edge of the sword separates a person from sin; the other separates a person from God.

## **II. The Location of the Church (v13a)**

“Where Satan's throne/seat is” Gk *Hopou ho thronos tou Satana*.

“where the law of God was not studied, there Satan dwelt” (Adam Clarke)

“the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

“The whole world lies in the arms of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19).

**Pergamum was the center of several idolatrous cults—Zeus, Athena, Dionysus, and Asclepius.**

**Asclepius** was the god of medicine.

The city was known for its emperor worship.

### **III. The Commendation of the Church (v13b)**

“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” (Revelation 2:13).

In the thick of evil the church of Pergamum held fast to the name of Christ refusing to deny Him.

Their faith was unshaken.

“Antipas my faithful witness was killed among you.”

### **IV. The Condemnation of the Church (vv14-15)**

“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” (Revelation 2:14-15).

“While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel” (Numbers 25:1-4).

“Nevertheless, those who died by the plague were twenty-four thousand” (Numbers 25:9).

“Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the Lord” (Numbers 31:16).

“Therefore, the error of this group was *moral* rather than *doctrinal*.... Most likely, they were a group of anti-law practitioners who supported a freedom that became self-indulgence. It may have been the same heresy condemned in 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11. Some early church leaders believed the Nicolaitans later became a GNOSTIC sect.” (Nelson's Illustrated)

“But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They

have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing” (2 Peter 2:12-16).

Christians in the church at Pergamum were intermarrying with unbelievers. Christ hated that because it brought Him into union with Satan--and that's blasphemy!

### **The Nicolaitans**

“They abandoned themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence” (Clement of Alexandria).

### **V. The Caution to the Church (v16)**

“Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth” (Revelation 2:16).

### **VI. The Compensation of the Church (v17)**

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. 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” (Revelation 2:17).