

Pergamum

Series – God's Score Card

- Letters to the seven churches in Revelation
- Stunning picture – seven lamp stands, Jesus, angels
- Key information – clear we need to know this
- Image of Bride & Bridegroom
 - chosen and faithful
 - anticipating reunion and marriage
 - qualities the bridegroom returning to find

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City of Pergamum

- 10 miles inland from Aegean sea
- Advanced city – library with 200 000 volumes
- legend says birthplace of parchment – after papyrus
- major religious center
 - throne like altar to Zeus
 - Cult of Asklepios – symbol of snake – healing
 - birthplace of emperor worship – major temples to
- inclusive, blended, advanced, embracing place

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"To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 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. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

Revelation 2:12-17

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1. Commendation – God is Pleased with.....

- acknowledgment of the difficult living circumstances
- “where Satan has his throne” – enemy territory

a) Remained True to My name

- living up to the family name – difficult
- remained true – bride & bridegroom
- represented well.....

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b) Did Not renounce faith in God

- immense pressure to compromise or deny
- recorded that there was one killed for His stand
- did not participate in burning incense to emperor
- in light of that kind of consequence – stood true
- standing in light of physical threat – true to God

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2. Condemnation

- 'have a few things against you'

a) Those Listening to False Prophets

- Balaam – influenced by local leaders and money – yet refused to curse God's people – Numbers 21-25

- Numbers 31:15-16 ***"Have you allowed all the women to live?" he asked them. "They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD's people "***

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- advised the intermarriage and mingling of worship practices that brought about idol worship and consequence
- Num. 25 – Moabite women & Israelite men who by becoming involved sexually began to take part in worshipping their gods and sacred meals
- Nicolaitans – lax attitude towards pagan society and religion. Believed they could participate in feasts and festivals that honored other religions without it affecting standing with God.
- two key things – participation in celebrating other gods and practices, and sexual immorality – loss of purity in the bride.

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3. Decision Time

- repent – if this is happening, confess, accept, turn, live differently

- notice the condemnation seems to be both for the actions and that it is not dealt with in the body – accepted

- call to take action – due to what has been exposed

a) Otherwise

- clear consequence for ignoring or continuing

- fight against them with the sword of my mouth

- truth exposed and justice delivered

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4. Proclamation

a) Has ears let them hear what the Spirit says

- listening to the indwelling spirit of God
- examining, reflecting, open and allowing correction
- search me and reveal if there be.....

b) To Him Who Overcomes

- hidden manna – God himself providing, sustaining
- white stone with new name – eternal rewards

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So What

1. Be Faithful

- remain true to the family name
- be steadfast in difficulty – careful not to renounce the family name by which you are known

2. Be Forewarned

- called to be in the world – not of the world
- compromise happens slowly – culture dulls the senses

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- Balaam encouraged intermarriage, being open to other experiences and religions, forgetting God is jealous, pure, holy and just.
- Nicolaitians encouraged participation in cultural festivities, resulting in eating meat sacrificed to idols and the slide of morals called for in God's people
- We are the bride of Christ – are we maintaining purity and focus while we prepare for His return?
- is there 'innocent' practices you have not tested before God or carefully investigated before participating?

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- what about horoscopes, magic 8 ball, fortune tellers
- what about immorality – what you view, what you say, how you dress or act, places you can be found?
- want to be known for what I am for, not against, however must be careful
- if you have the Holy Spirit alive within you – are you carefully listening and responding?
- practice repentance and return to right action as the bride