

Revelation 2 Part 4

This is Richard Oliver, with part seven of our studies into the book of Revelation. We're up to Revelation chapter two and we're going to start at verse twelve, but first let's have a quick review.

The first two church ages reveal the church is declining in spirituality. It lost its first love. The Nicolaitans, the people who wanted to separate the laity and the clergy are gaining more and more strength. There are people who claim to be apostles and/or Jews, someone special and they're not, but they also start gaining a place in the church.

During the Ephesus age and the early Smyrna age, that's about 150AD, that is when instead of baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the titles Father, Son and Holy Ghost were first being used.

Remember that the letters for each church age are addressed to the messenger or the angel for that church.

True Christians are those that can hear and understand that the message is from God. They are the people with the ears to hear.

Now, into the Pergamos church age. We're looking at the time running from about 312AD to 606AD. This age starts at the time of history when Constantine became the emperor and a nominal Christian. He makes Christianity the empire's standard religion, bringing church and state together. Incredibly the name 'Pergamos' means 'marriage'.

Verse twelve, *'And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;'*

This concept of a sharp sword being the Word of God comes up in several places. Revelation nineteen, it talks there about Jesus riding on a white horse and out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword. But probably the best description is in Hebrews four verse twelve where it says the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder soul and spirit. So, the sharp two-edged sword in Christianity is the Word of God, and the Word of God is Jesus Christ. To deny the written word of God is to deny Christ. The bible is to be the final arbiter in any discussion. It answers any questions, but, of course, the church especially from the council of Nicaea time which is about 325AD, they started to make dogma, creeds etcetera, and judging on these, not on the bible. The Greek word used in John one one, *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.'* The word 'word' is 'logos' and that includes the concept of the thought. The concept, the picture, behind the actual words used. There is another Greek word for 'word' and that is 'Rhema', which is simply the actual word, the dictionary word. It doesn't go beyond to the thought or the intention or the spirit of the word. Hence in reading the bible some people, those with spiritual ears can hear what the Spirit is saying through the words written in the book, whereas others will be arguing over the actual words used and so on forever and a day. Once again there are two lines. Law and grace. Esau, Jacob. Cain and Abel.

Okay, Jesus came to reveal God because He was God. He spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and at that time many of His disciples left following Him, who could believe this sort of thing, but the believers stayed on. They didn't understand what He was talking about but they stayed on. And, of course, later, Jesus at the last supper broke the bread and gave them wine and said the bread is My body and the wine is My blood, do this in remembrance of Me.

But even that ability to recognise God's Word, to realise that this is the truth, that is a gift that comes right from before the foundation of the world. It depends on what seed is in you right from the word go. If you are a child of God planted in the original planting then fine, you'll catch it. If you're not, well, you can still be saved, but you can't be part of the Bride of Christ, you can't be part of the key group that God wants to deal with.

Now Pergamos was a town that had a very interesting seat that had been carried all the way from Babylon, the ancient Babylon. Satan's seat was moved to Pergamos and the antichrist Babylonian religion was still practised there. This now makes sense of verse thirteen, *'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, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.'*

'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 stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.'

'So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.'

Now the key thing about Balaam. Balaam was a prophet of the Old Testament. He was a genuine prophet. He had a Holy Spirit gift. He was right one hundred percent of the time. But he was false because he tried to get the children of Israel to mix with the Moabites. He intentionally did this and the churches today are often trying to mix other things in with true Christianity. It's the same false teaching and the same sort of spirit. And the key people trying to bring that unity, that mixing, is the Nicolaitans.

Verse sixteen, *'Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.'*

Once again the Word, of course, *'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;'* Not what the words say, what the Spirit says to the churches. *'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna,'* the real food, the true spiritual food for Christians. *'and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.'*

That's it for this session, we look forward to having you with us next time. Bye.