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THE SEVEN CHURCHES – LESSON 4

PERGAMOS

Now we shall consider the third of the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 being Pergamum (Pergamos in KJV). As the northern most of these seven Asia Minor cities, it had an inland river port. It had been under Rome's dominion since 133 B.C. and became Rome's chief city in the province of Asia.

Pergamum established itself early as the center of Caesar worship. It built a temple in 29 B.C. in worship of Caesar Augustus. The worship of Zeus and Asklepios was also prominent. The symbol of Asklepios was a serpent on a pole, so it is no wonder that Pergamum was called the seat of Satan in Revelation 2:13, ***"thou dwellest even where Satan's (the serpent) seat is...where Satan dwelleth."*** The church was commended for not forsaking the name of Jesus despite the evil city in which they lived.

Nevertheless, they were rebuked for holding the doctrine of Balaam. They ate food that had been sacrificed to pagan idols. They were also living in the sexual sin of fornication. They also had some among them who held to the hated heretical doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

What is this about eating food previously sacrificed to idols (images) of pagan gods? These images represented the demon spirits that were worshipped as gods (Zeus, Asklepios, Diana Caesar or any others). Demonic spirits attached themselves to these things. To eat the food invites a demon spirit to attach itself to a person. The same would apply to any artifact of religious symbolism (a crucifix, image of Mary, Jesus on the cross, or any "dead" saint.)

The "doctrine of Balaam" essentially means to compromise the purity of faith by embracing worldliness. It clearly describes the general state today of "the church at large." Worldliness has even become widespread in conservative, evangelical, holiness, and Pentecostal churches. Verse 2:16 says (Jesus is speaking) ***"repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly and fight against them with the sword (two-edged) of my mouth."*** To divide them asunder soul and spirit.

However, to those that were faithful and true overcomers in Pergamum Jesus said in verse 17, ***"...will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and...a white stone (with) a new name written..."*** known only to the recipient.

Some scholars think that the "hidden manna" may be the fruit of the Tree of Life in heaven. Since manna was bread, and Jesus is the bread of life, it could also possibly mean that we would be given the fullness of all knowledge of the Word that we have not yet attained.

Our new name written in heaven is on a clean slate, a white stone, denoting that all from earth has been made new and clean. White represents purity. It kind of makes you want to be there, huh?