

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalm 139:23,24

The Bible Reading Revelation 2:12-17

¹²“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. ¹³I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. ¹⁴Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.

¹⁵Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the

Nicolaitans. ¹⁶Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

¹⁷Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it. (NIV)

A Prayer:

Almighty God and loving heavenly Father, guide me and teach me of yourself from your Word. Help me and others to see the wisdom and value of living life according to your word the Bible; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. **Amen.**

A background to understanding:

The literature of Revelation is what's called “Apocalyptic” (like parts of the books of Daniel and Ezekial). A style of writing used by the author to say to their readers “I know that you are undergoing

persecution but God is in control and all will turn out ok for the faithful”. Old Testament Jewish imagery is used and would have been understood what it meant by the original readers familiar with it.

“To the angel of the church” = The Church leader/Minister/God’s messenger to His people.

“Pergamum” = City now in present day Türkiye. Roman. Renowned place of learning and proud of Caesar worship.

“him” (vs 12) = Jesus Christ.

“double-edged sword”= Word of God (See Hebrews 4:12)

“Antipas” = A Christian martyr/witness, known to John, possibly the appointed bishop of Pergamum.

“Balaam” = Read of the story in Numbers 22-24.

“Nicolaitans” = *uncertain* but could be linked with those Christians who taught it was ok to worship both Christ and Caesar. *Neokoros* was an honour given to a city that establish temples for Ceaser worship.

“Hidden manna” = link back to the story of the Exodus (See Exodus 16 and Numbers 11:6-9) God providing what’s needed to survive and be satisfied in the face of grumbling and wanting to compromise.

“White stone” = white stones were used at the time to grant entrance like tickets to places, pronounce not

guilty, victory, a symbol of safety and joy.

A Bible Study:

Read Revelation 2:12-17 and the background to understanding. Then read the passage again. Then pray the prayer given.

Questions:

1. What are your impressions of what it would have been like to have been a Christian in Pergamum? Why?
2. Who is the message from? (See Chapter 1)
3. What encouragement is given to the readers in verses 12 and 13?
4. What is the purpose of ‘disciplining someone’?
5. What were the “few things” he had against the church? What do you understand them to be and why do you think they needed to be addressed? What are they told to do?
6. Being obedient and loyal to Christ in the face of great temptations and persecution is described as being “victorious”. What assurance and reward is given to those who are? (See verse 17)