

## 7 LETTERS AND 7 CHURCHES (part 3)

Greetings precious ones, we continue this seven part series entitled “7 Letters to 7 Churches”. This week we will look at the third Church to whom Jesus wrote to in the Book of Revelations. Keep in mind that each of these 7 Churches were real churches that existed 2000 years ago and the message that Jesus wrote to them continues to speak to the Church today.

The following is the letter as found in Revelation 2:12-17, "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly 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 to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it." '

Due to limited space and time we are only able to examine part of the letter. Like the letter Jesus wrote to the Church of Ephesus, there were many good qualities that the Church of Pergamos was commended for such as: they held fast to Jesus' name (character); they did not deny the faith in times of testing.

But also like the Church of Ephesus, Jesus had something of great concern against them. They (the members in general and more specifically the leadership of the church, the elders who should have stood up against such things) allowed/tolerated the teaching of Balaam (a false prophet of the Old Testament) and allowed those who held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

Balaam was a prophet for hire, if you had the money he would come and prophesy (tell you what you wanted to hear). He was all about money. Unfortunately the spirit of Balaam continues today. “Name it and claim it” preachers such as Benny Hinn; Kenneth Copeland; Bernard Jordan known as “the master prophet” (more accurately the master deceiver) and a score of others. These false prophets are in it for the money; they twist the Word of God to their own benefit as they tell the people what they want to hear.

The Apostle Peter wrote of these in 2 Peter 2:1-3, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. **And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:** whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

They also allowed those who embraced the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. As we have seen in previous letters, the Nicolaitans were those who elevated themselves above the laity (common people). Jesus DEMANDS that all that will follow Him to follow His example as is revealed to us in Mark 10:44-45, “And whoever of you desires to be first

shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Elevating oneself above others reeks of pride and God hates pride in any shape or form. God resist the proud but gives grace to the humble.

God both confronts the church with their sin as well as invites them to get right with Him revealing the way, "Repent" God demands repentance from all of our sin. Finally He admonishes, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." When God uses the word "Hear" it implies: obey what I said!

Drew Macintyre is pastor of Calvary "Chapel of Alpine and can be reached at 619-445-2589, or [ccalpine@juno.com](mailto:ccalpine@juno.com)