

**Book of Revelation, part 21**  
*The Church as Pergamos*

**I. The Church at Pergamos—thoroughly married.**

1. The city had a renowned university, legal center.
2. “Angel”, messenger = pastor/bishop.
  - 1) Accountability.
  - 2) Extends to congregation, plural “you” in verse 13.
3. Image of judgment in chapter one.
  - 1) Sharp two-edged long sword (2:12, 16; cf. 1:16).
  - 2) Warning of Second Coming in judgment (Rev. 19:15-21).

**II. Christ knows the bishop’s works (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5).**

1. The bishop is settled-down at home there.
  - 1) Neglected his alien/foreigner and non-resident status in this world (1 Pet. 2:11).
  - 2) Lost his focus on his true citizenship (Phil. 3:20).
2. Satan rules the systems in the city.
  - 1) Satan’s kingdom (Lu. 4:5-6; Jn. 14:30).
  - 2) Has his throne there.
  - 3) Has made himself at home there.
3. The bishop currently holds fast Christ’s name (v. 13).
  - 1) ‘Name’ means character and quality.
  - 2) He has not denied the faith regarding Christ.
  - 3) He held even when Antipas was killed.
    - i. “Antipas”, ‘against everything’.
    - ii. Faith full witness for Christ.
4. Contrariwise, Christ has a few things against the bishop.
  - 1) The doctrine of Balaam.
    - i. Financial gain.
    - ii. Entrenched in world system, not separated.
  - 2) He allowed ones in the church who wanted material gain as part of the church’s objective (1 Tim. 6:1-6).
  - 3) He allowed ones in the church who gave up spiritual separation (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Cor. 5:9-13).
  - 4) He allowed the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (cf. 2:6; 1 Pet. 5:3-4).

## **The Doctrine of Balaam**

In the Old Testament historical account, Balaam was approached by Balac<sup>1</sup> three times to thwart the advancement of the Nation Israel. Balac offered Balaam riches, fame and power (Num. 22:1 to 24:10). In each of these three instances God prohibits Balaam from causing the tribes of Israel problems. However, Balaam loved physical reward regardless of God's prohibitions (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11). Since Balaam could not directly attack Israel, he chose a more nefarious method to stop the Nation. Balaam taught Balac to entice the Israelites into first physical then spiritual fornication (Rev. 2:14 cf. Num. 25:1-2). Israel thus broke from God's requirement of separation as a result of Balaam's plotting and Balac's implementation. Balaam was killed by a sword (Josh. 13:22).

Balaam placed the pursuit of physical riches above God's plan. Although told three times by God to resist the lures presented by Balac, Balaam devised a less overt, subtle method to gain riches. What Balac could not gain by direct conflict with Israel, he was taught by Balaam to cunningly accomplish by causing the Nation to dilute its separate nature (Num. 25: 1-2).

The doctrine of Balaam results in spiritual fornication: aligning one's self with other gods, or idolatry. This manifested itself at Pergamos with "eating things offered to idols and to fornicate." Historically, during the early church the temptation was to be accepted by the world and to listen to the pagan old ways that honored the temple idols and temple prostitutes, forsaking the "called out" nature of the church. The physical and spiritual fornication were combined in their idolatry, even though they call themselves Christians.

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<sup>1</sup> Balac, KJV, in the Book of Revelation is the same Balak of the Old Testament: two different spellings of the same person.