

Book of Revelation, part 22
The Church as Pergamos

- I.** The Church at Pergamos—thoroughly married.
 - 1. The bishop had not yet given up the faith.
 - 2. Contrariwise, Christ has a few things against the bishop.
- II.** The doctrine of Balaam.
 - 1. Financial gain.
 - 2. Entrenched in the world system, not separated.
 - 3. Bishop allowed ones in the church who wanted material gain as part of the church's objective (1 Tim. 6:1-6).
 - 4. Bishop allowed ones in the church who gave up spiritual separation (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Cor. 5:9-13).
 - 5. Bishop allowed the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (*cf.* 2:6; 1 Pet. 5:3-4).
- III.** "Repent" or go through the judgment of the Tribulation (2:12, 16; 19:11-16).
- IV.** The promises to the overcomer (Rev. 2:17).
 - 1. "Hidden" manna.
 - 1) During the Nation Israel's sojourn (Ex. 16).
 - 2) God supplied their every need.
 - 3) They had to learn dependence on God.
 - 2. Departed saints do not "see" Christ until the Rapture (1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Jn. 3:2).
 - 1) They are present to Christ.
 - 2) But not in His presence.
 - 3. Example of how Jesus was like manna (Jn. 6:32-35).
 - 1) Manna sustained physical life.
 - 2) Jesus sustains spiritual life.
 - 4. Christ will demonstrate His nearness and care while remaining 'hidden.'
 - 1) With comfort for their souls.
 - 2) Tree of life (2:7), white stone (2:17), protection from evil (2 Tim. 4:18).
 - 5. The white stone.
 - 1) White stone = yes vote (Acts 26:10).
 - 2) Vote of confidence.
 - 3) Individualized name.

The Doctrine of Balaam

In the Old Testament historical account, Balaam was approached by Balac¹ 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.

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