

Cultural, Historic, and Geographic Context



Revelation Backgrounds 8

Pergamum Part I

Revelation 2:12-17



1

Acts 17:11 (KJV)

These (Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are from the Complete Jewish Bible by David H. Stern. (Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 1998).

Unless otherwise noted, images courtesy of the Satellite Bible Atlas and the Pictorial Library of Bible Lands (BiblePlaces.org)



2

Topics

- Pergamum
 - Background
- Sevenfold structure of each letter:
 - Name of the city
 - Specific attributes of Messiah
 - Praise - "I know..."
 - Judgment
 - ~~Encouragement~~
 - Promise to the Overcomer
 - "He who has an ear..."
- Cryptic references
 - Where Satan dwells / Antipas / Nicolaitans / Hidden Manna / White Stone
 - Not a cryptic reference: Balaam and Balak



3

Revelation 2:12-17(CJB)

Rev 2:12-17 "To the angel of the Messianic Community in Pergamum, write: Here is the message from the one who has the sharp double-edged sword: (13) "I know where you are living, there where the Adversary's throne is. Yet you are holding onto my name. You did not deny trusting me even at the time when my faithful witness Antipas was put to death in your town, there where the Adversary lives. (14) Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: you have some people who hold to the teaching of Bil'am, who taught Balak to set a trap for the people of Isra'el, so that they would eat food that had been sacrificed to idols and commit sexual sin. (15) Likewise, you too have people who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. (16) Therefore, turn from these sins. Otherwise, I will come to you very soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. (17) Those who have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the Messianic communities. To him winning the victory I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone, on which is written a new name that nobody knows except the one receiving it."



4

"Today there is a false god for anything and everything, and they offer immediate satisfaction. But they are not the truth."

In contrast, Jesus doesn't always offer immediate satisfaction. He requires trust, faith, and obedience.

Believers must be willing to exchange a comfortable, instant-gratification life today for the promise of not just greater rewards but eternal rewards whose significance we can't yet understand.



5

Pergamum Acropolis



6

"Pergamum became the center of the official religion of emperor worship."



Pergamum acropolis Trajan temple aerial



7

"where Satan has his throne" (?)



Pergamum acropolis great altar of Zeus



8

"where Satan has his throne" (?)



Pergamum Asclepiion snake on column base



9

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness



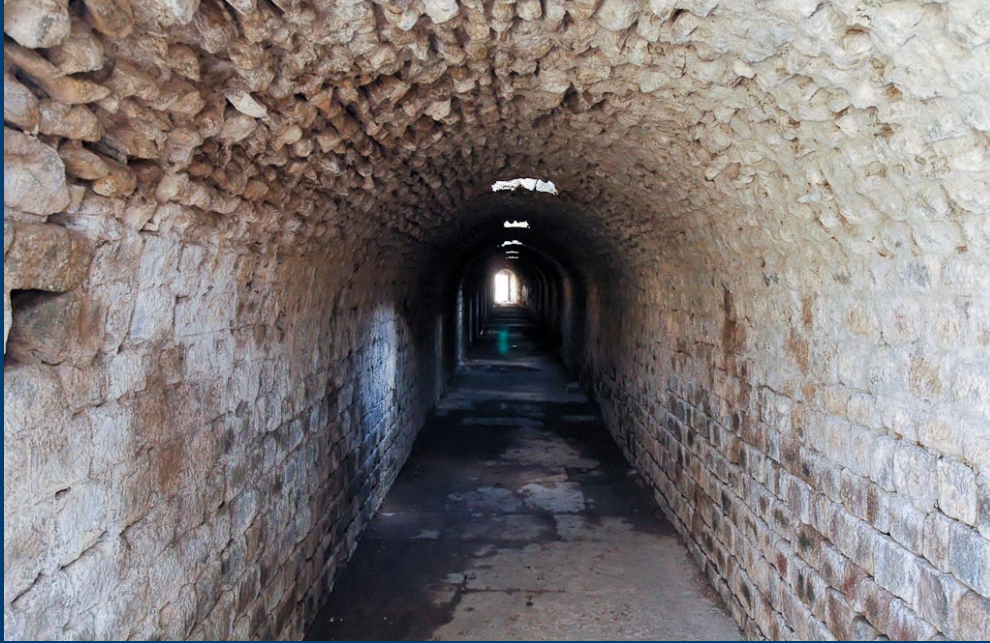
Serpent symbol on Mount Nebo

John 3:14



10

"Where Satan has his throne" (?)



Pergamum Asclepion Sacred Passageway



11

Modern Bergama



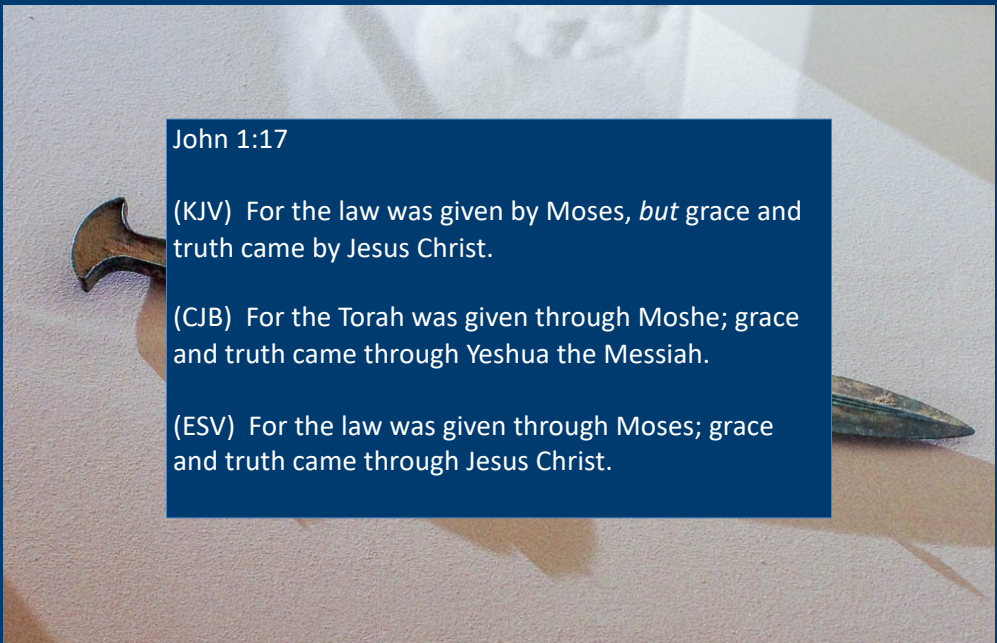
12

Revelation 2	References
(12) "To the angel of the Messianic Community in Pergamum, write: 'Here is the message from the one who has the sharp double-edged sword:'	<p>Rev 1:16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.</p> <p>Joh 1:17 For (just as) the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Isa 11:4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.</p> <p>Isa 49:2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.</p> <p>2 Th 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.</p>



13

The one who has the sharp double-edged sword:



John 1:17

(KJV) For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

(CJB) For the Torah was given through Moshe; grace and truth came through Yeshua the Messiah.

(ESV) For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Bronze sword, circa 1200–600 BC



14

Revelation 2	References
<p>(13) "I know where you are living, there where the Adversary's throne is. Yet you are holding onto my name. You did not deny trusting me even at the time when my faithful witness Antipas was put to death in your town, there where the Adversary lives.</p>	<p>Luke 21:17 You will be hated by all for my name's sake. Jude 1:4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. 2 Ti 2:12 if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;</p>

15



16

שֵׁם

(SHEM) NAME, CHARACTER, REPUTATION



17

And King Herod heard of it



Bronze coin of Herod Antipas, AD 30/31, from the Tiberias mint

Mark 6:14



18

