

## **Study Five—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.**

Jesus now addresses the third church, this one located in Pergamum. Not much is known about this church.

Someone who has a sword can either defend or attack. I want Jesus to defend me with that sword not use it against me!

The written word with the power of the Spirit is a powerful weapon! That is why I like to write. I am not equating my writings with the inspired word of God, but writing was a medium the Spirit has used through the centuries to direct, rebuke and instruct the Church. And writing is a powerful tool.

How is your journal coming along? Are you being faithful to write down what you see and hear? If not, why not start (or re-start) today?

We saw Jesus as one that had a sharp sword coming from his mouth in Revelation 1:16

Let's look at one of my favorite passages, **Hebrews 4:9-13**: **"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."** (NIV)

1. Rest and word of God are related. We can put our trust in the word of God and rest from our labors, rest from trying to make things happen.
2. The Bible, a book written thousands of years ago, is alive and active. You can read the Bible and it can judge whether you love your spouse, are generous or love your neighbor. That's powerful! It can judge your thoughts. You can rest in the accuracy of the Bible, not only in doctrine, but also in its ability to tell you what spiritual condition you are in now.
3. Nothing is hidden from God's sight, as we can see from Revelation. Jesus knew exactly what was going on in each of the seven churches.

He knew the good and the bad. Someone once said don't read the word of God, but let the word of God read you!

**13 I know where you live-- where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city-- where Satan lives.**

I think I would move if I lived where Satan lived. That would certainly be an evil place.

Satan cannot be everywhere all the time. He is a created being and is limited in knowledge and scope. Few of us will ever deal directly with Satan, but will most certainly deal with his kingdom and demons.

Satan has some authority as indicated by the fact that he has a throne. I am never comfortable with people who mock or taunt Satan. I have faith in the Lord my God, but I have a healthy respect for our great adversary. I will let God deal with the devil and try to stay out of his way.

Yet spiritual warfare is part of our walk with God. Because I am a friend of God, I am an opponent of the kingdom of darkness. There are times when I must fight a spiritual battle with my spiritual enemy.

***ASSIGNMENT: This week's study has many more cross references than usual. Your assignment is to take the time and look up these verses for yourself. You may find additional verses to add to this study. I encourage you to add them and develop your own Bible study from this one.***

What do we know about Satan?

1. The Greek word for devil is "diabolos," which means "an accuser, a slanderer" From it the English word "devil" is derived, and should be applied only to Satan, as a proper name. Daimon, "a demon," is frequently, but wrongly, translated "devil"; it should always be translated "demon."
2. There is one devil, but there are many demons. Being the malignant enemy of God and man, the devil accuses man to God, (see Job 1:6-11; 2:1-5; Rev. 12:9,10), and God to man (see Genesis 3).
3. He afflicts men with physical sufferings (see Acts 10:38).

4. Being himself sinful (see 1 John 3:8), he instigated man to sin (see Genesis 3), and tempts man to do evil (see Ephesians 4:27 and 6:11), encouraging him also to deception (see Ephesians 2:2).
5. Death having been brought into the world by sin, the devil had the power of death, but Christ through His own death, has triumphed over him, and will bring him to nothing, (see Hebrews 2:14); his power over death is intimated in his struggle with Michael over the body of Moses (see Jude 9).
6. Judas, who gave himself over to the devil, was so identified with him, that Jesus described him as such (see John 6:70 and 13:2).
7. As the devil raised himself in pride against God and fell under condemnation, so believers are warned against a similar sin (see 1 Timothy 3:6).
8. He lays snares seeking to devour believers as a roaring lion (see 1 Peter 5:8).
9. If believers resist him, he will flee from them (see James 4:7).
10. His fury will be especially exercised at the end of the present age (Revelation 12:12).
11. His ultimate doom and destination is the lake of fire (see Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 20:10).

Most of the above study on the devil is taken from ***Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words***, copyright 1985, from Thomas Nelson Publishers. If you don't have a copy of this classic book, you need to obtain one. It will be an important part of your Bible study library. It is easy to read yet comprehensive.

**14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.**

Jesus endorsed certain attitudes at Pergamum, but he also had a few things against them. One thing in particular was in connection with the teaching of a man names Balaam.

What do we know about Balaam?

1. We first see Balaam in Numbers 22 when Balak, king of an enemy people of Israel, tried to hire him to curse Israel. Balaam rejected Balak's first overture, but when Balak offered more money, Balaam asked his servants to stay so that Balaam could ask God's permission to go one more time (see Numbers 22:1-20).
2. When he asked for permission to go a second time, God gave Balaam permission to go. But it says when Balaam set out, God was angry and blocked his way, causing Balaam's donkey to stop when he saw the angel of the Lord blocking the way (Numbers 22:35). It seems like God will grant you to go your own way if you disobey what He initially speaks. God let Balaam go, but then He was angry when he went.
3. Balaam spoke four blessings over Israel, and this angered his "employer" Balak. Balak's plan to have Balaam the prophet curse Israel failed (see Numbers 23 and 24) and actually backfired when Balaam proclaimed a blessing..
4. Then Israel's men fell into sexual immorality with the Moabite women. It seems that Balaam counseled Balak to thus ensnare Israel with foreign women, incurring God's wrath when they do. Thus, Balaam did not curse God's people directly, but rather devised a scheme that would accomplish the same end (see Numbers 25:1-4).
5. When Joshua entered the land, he put Balaam to death (see Joshua 13:22).
6. Peter told us that Balaam's sin was to sell his power to the highest bidder, for "he loved the wages of wickedness (see 2 Peter 2:15).

**15 Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.**

There have always been false teachings in the Church. Paul wrote to Timothy, **"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed (1 Timothy 4:1-6).**

There are doctrines of demons, which explains their popularity. They are demonically and Satanically inspired!

Brothers and sisters, if a doctrine sounds weird, it probably is! Stay away from strange interpretations and stay away from people who come across like they are wiser than most, with special insight on obscure things.

The gospel is basically about how to live, work and take care of your family. Don't worry about understanding all that the Bible teaches, but rather apply the clear teachings to your everyday life.

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

What Jesus says is powerful! His word alone can fight His battles, correct problems, tear down strongholds and set people free. You and I are agents of His Word. We carry it with us and when we apply that Word, it has the same power.

Repentance is not just for the sinner. Anyone who is caught in a wrong attitude, practice or behavior can repent or turn around and go in another direction.

Asking forgiveness for sin is not enough. We must also repent or set off in another direction. Is there anything you need to repent of?

**17 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. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.**

I use this verse when I talk to people about finding their life purpose.

God is able to give you something that can feed you like he fed the Israelites on manna. Manna literally means "What is it?" God can give you a statement that for you is a special summary of your life's purpose. Others can look at that same statement and not appreciate it, asking, "What is that?" But you know that it is hidden manna, something that is to nourish you and you alone.

God can also give you a white stone that has a name written on it that only you can see. Others can look at that stone and declare, "It's blank!" But you know otherwise, for God can give you a purpose statement that defines who you are and why you were born. It may not be special to anyone else, but it's special to you.

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To get this purpose statement, you must overcome. What must you overcome? The temptation to quit before you find it, to settle for some religious, trite purpose statement, or to allow others to write what they think your purpose should be on your white stone.

I have many resources that can help you find your purpose. Those can be found on my website, [www.purposequest.com](http://www.purposequest.com) or in several of my books.