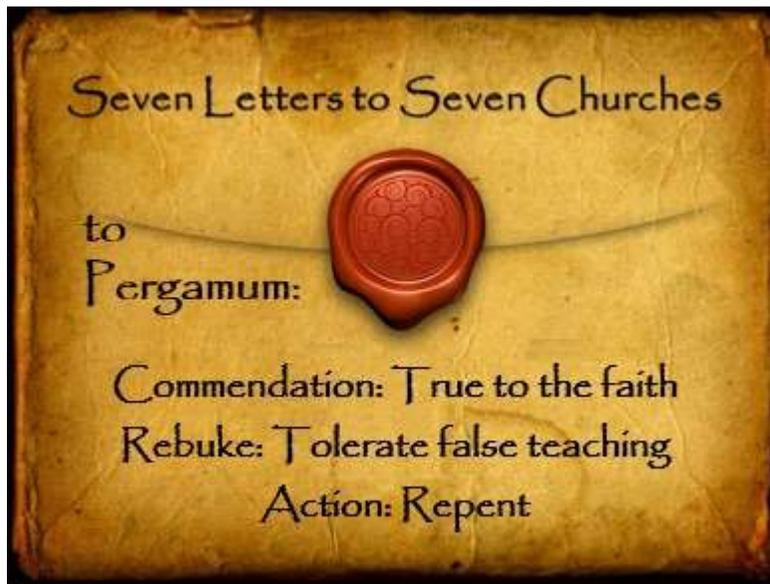


## CCCN Bible Study End Times Notes – Pastor John Stackhouse

### Revelation 2 – Letter to the church in Pergamum

2:12 – Commentary states, “The inland city of Pergamum lay about sixty-five miles north of Smyrna. Pergamum held the official honor of being the provincial capital of Roman Asia, though this was also claimed by Ephesus and Smyrna. Among its notable features were its beauty and wealth, its library of nearly two hundred thousand volumes (second only to Egypt’s library of Alexandria); its famous sculpture; its temples and altars to various gods and goddesses, three temples to the emperor cult; and its many palaces. The two main religions seem to have been the worship of Dionysus, the god of the royal kings, symbolized by the bull, and Asclepius, the savior god of healing, represented by the snake (Ramsay, *Seven Churches*, p. 284). This latter feature made Pergamum the “ Lourdes of the ancient world” (Charles, *Commentary on Revelation*, 1:60). Tradition also records that in Pergamum, King Eumenes II (197–159 b.c.) planned to build a library to rival the one in Alexandria. Ptolemy Epiphanes of Egypt (205–182 b.c.) took action to stop this venture by cutting off the export of papyrus sections. It was this embargo that forced Eumenes to develop vellum or parchment (*pergamēnē*, “from Pergamum”), a writing material made from animal skins. Josephus mentions a Jewish community at Pergamum.”



2:13-15 - Pergamum was the center for emperor worship, as well as classical Roman and Greek god worship. The teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans are likely of the same type. They are deceptive. Satan uses tactics that don't seem overtly evil, but begin to take down the church in the same manner as Balaam did to Israel. “While the Ephesians recognized the Nicolaitan error, apparently Pergamum and Thyatira were deceived by it.”

2:16 - The words “I will soon come to you” should be understood as a coming “against” the congregation in judgment, as in v. 5, and not as a reference to Christ’s second coming.

2:17 - The promise to the overcomer includes three difficult symbols:

- “hidden manna”
- “a white stone”
- and “a new name”

The commentary notes, in apocalyptic Jewish teaching, the era of the Messiah will see the restoration of the hidden wilderness **manna**: “*And it shall come to pass at that self-same time (in the days when the Messiah comes) that the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years*” (2 Baruc. 29:8; Sib Oracles 7:149). To those at Pergamum who refused the banquets of the pagan gods, Christ will give the manna of his great banquet of eternal life in the kingdom (John 6:47–58).

The **white stone** may either be the “voting stone” that was common of the day or possibly an invitational token that gives the holder a seat at the banquet table.

The **new name** is either a new name for Christ that only those that persevere will be told, or (more likely) it is a new name given to those that persevere. Just as we are given a new body, we may be given a new name.