

EP32 Revelation 2 verses 12-17 (part2)

The Church at Pergamum

Overall Theme: Wait for Me—I Will Satisfy!

Let's pick back up with our passage in *Revelation 2:12-17*

Revelation 2:12-17

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: "The One who is now having the sharp two-edged sword now says this: 'I know where you now dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you now hold fast **My** name and did not choose to deny **My** faith even in the days of Antipas, **My** witness, **My** faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan now dwells. But I now have a few things against you because you now have there some who are now holding the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So, you also now have some who in the same way are now holding the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I will choose to now come to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. He who is now having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit now says to the churches. To him who is now overcoming, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who is now receiving it.'

We left off discussing the one big BUT in this letter. In effect there were those in Pergamum who put a *stumbling block* before these believers, just like **Balaam** did before the sons of Israel. This instruction seems to be all about relationship, or better said, unauthorized relationships, those not established by the Father. Instead of encouraging the people to wait on **Yahweh Adonai** and **Yahweh Raah** to provide relationship in His timing, they gave them reasons they could take what they needed now.

We discussed this issue of unauthorized relationships as **Battle Plan B** in terms of the tactics of the enemy. If you cannot crush the bondservants of God and beat them into surrender (which seems to always be the tactics of **Battle Plan A**), you sneak in unawares and address their point of greatest need and get them to compromise their way into apostasy. And keep in mind, these believers' home was where Satan now dwells, where he established his throne upon this earth.

From the perspective of the "behind-the-scenes" demonic activity, it probably just took a little whispering in the night to nudge those who were lonely and desperate to form a relationship with those who were "Christian" in name only. And soon they began to eat things sacrificed to idols. And from there it was probably an easy slide into immorality, as that is just a natural and common way to bind these relationships in intimacy and commitment. And from there, it is a fast slide towards apostasy.

Our Battle is Spiritual

This should remind us that our battle in this life is spiritual. Our battle is not against flesh and blood (the people we encounter who impact our lives are just the pass-through vehicle, so to speak, the agents which the spiritual forces work through), but our fight is against principalities, powers, and spiritual forces of darkness in the unseen world.¹ We must therefore be careful not to become consumed with this life, there is so much more going on than meets the eye.

Therefore, understood through this imagery, when we take from a person in relationship (a person that God has not appointed for us) to meet our needs, whether the taking is emotional, psychological, or physical, we begin to eat things sacrificed to idols. And that meal can be delicious and ever so satisfying.

However, in doing so, we join ourselves in deep intimate fellowship and oneness with that person, and we create a physical, emotional, and spiritual bond that extends beyond just the relationship, and deep into the demonic realms. Being forged in the spiritual realms, this is a relational bond that is not easily broken.

Acts of Immorality

As we eat the things sacrificed to idols, the next step is to “*commit immorality*”. Once a person gives themselves to another in deep desirous intimacy, and that other person becomes their answer, their provision, their satisfaction, the one with whom they cannot live without, from a spiritual perspective, they have started to “*commit immorality*”.

They have looked to this person to be their provision, their sustenance, and to satisfy their cravings, desires, and lusts, instead of looking to their **I AM** to be their provision and sustenance. They have given another person a place of preeminence in their soul—a place that only God is to possess. And this invokes the jealousy of the one whose name is Jealous, **Yahweh Qanna**.²

Yahweh Substitute

Thus, when we give ourselves in relationship to someone that God has not established for us, in effect that person becomes our Dionysus, Athena, Demeter, Asclepius, Hera, Meter, Zeus, or our Baal of Peor. That special person and that special relationship becomes our substitute for **Yahweh**. They become a pathway to obtain spiritual and practical help and to enjoy spiritual and physical intimacy without having to submit to **Yahweh** and without having to wait for **Yahweh** to act on our behalf.

And it is far too easy to use Christian principles, like the fact that God Himself said that “*it is not good for man to be alone*,”³ to justify what we do. But regardless of how we couch things, the issue is one of idolatry and who it is that we truly consider to be our **I AM**. And while it is likely that all the single and lonely people of the world have wrestled with this issue, Jesus will be clear that He looks at all of it through the lens of idolatry and immorality—to whom we go to find our meal and satisfaction.

¹ **Ephesians 6:12**

² Exodus 34:14

³ **Genesis 2:18**

Waiting on God

Waiting on God to be our source of provision, especially for love and intimacy, is one of the hardest things there is to do. Loneliness of the soul and the body is beyond terrible. Therefore, it is easy to compromise and to seek our own answer under our own religious guidance, instead of waiting on God to provide the person with whom He wants us to be in relationship (if He even wants us to be with someone).

It seems that when it comes to this issue of the loneliness of the heart, we easily set aside the idea of being a bondservant doing only what God wants us to do, and we are *easily* tempted to take matters into our own hands and do what we want to do; of course, all in Jesus' name.

Waiting on God to act on our behalf is such an important aspect of our relationship with Him. It is our declaration that we are a bondservant and will only do **what** He wants us to do **when** He wants us to do it. But waiting, especially for something as important to us as relationship, companionship, and sexuality, is very difficult, especially when the days turn into months which turn into years, and years, and years, and God has not adequately explained to us, with any true emotional satisfaction, why we must suffer so.

Hence, it is often easy for people who function as predators, like **Balaam**, to have their way with those in that situation. They know the weakness in our soul and our flesh—our craving for intimacy, our need to be wanted and desired, to be that someone special, and our craving for sexuality—and they just tap into that desire and let it run its course.

Moreover, we must not forget that the enemy is always stalking us, and he also knows our weaknesses, for he studies us intently.⁴ If he even thinks for a moment that we will stray away from God being our **I AM**, and that we will look to that someone special to be our **I AM**, then he will serve up on a platter a wonderful meal—that “perfect” person that we cannot live without. And before long we will exchange the intimacy which God desires to share with us for the intimacy that our special someone desires. That is the power and effectiveness of *Battle Plan B*.

Disappointment with God

Idolatry and committing acts of immorality are fundamentally rooted in dissatisfaction, being disappointed with the way **Yahweh Raah** is leading our life. Whether it is ministry, careers, relationships, marriage, family, children, financial stability, and so on, we want more, or at least something other than what God has prescribed. We do not trust that His way for our lives is indeed good, much less pleasing, and perfect, especially when His mode of communication is far too often silence, and the place we find ourselves feels so empty and meaningless. After all, for example, how can loneliness, and withholding of relationship and sex be good for anyone?

The Dangers Within

In **Jude** we learned about the dangers of religious licentiousness and a form of *instinctual religious wisdom* that poses as the truth but is rooted in a form of idolatry that exalts our own wisdom, understanding, and spirituality; of course, all done in Jesus' name.

In that vein, these “leaders” were not teaching people **HOW** to wait on **Yahweh** and **WHY** they should

⁴ **1 Peter 5:8**

wait on **Yahweh** to provide what He knows they need, when He determines they need it. And this is still being done today as people move forward in relationship and take into their hands what they want and what they think they need, so long as they “pray about it” and do it all in Jesus’ name. This type of taking, it is a form of spiritual harlotry and blasphemy.

The problem is that we are not now choosing to first-and-foremost now be living as bondservants of Christ. Yet, if we know Him, if we know His voice in our lives, if we now and continually seek Him with our heart, soul, mind, and strength, if we have ears that are now hearing, **Yahweh Raah** will lead us exactly where we need to be with whom we need to be, when we need to be there.⁵ He just asks us to wait on Him to act.

This waiting becomes double hard, especially when He provides for others, but we are still the ones sitting alone waiting for Him to act. Why He chooses some to wait while He provides for others is beyond our understanding, but it is all tied to HOPE and to His glorious purposes. Just like He chose Antipas as His witness, His faithful one, so He chooses others to be His witness, His faithful one. But instead of being martyred, they must learn to wait on Him. And if you think about it, waiting is another form of martyrdom, as it results in the painful death to our *flesh*.

Psalms 27:13-14

Yet I am confident I will see the **Yahweh's** goodness while I am here in the land of the living. Wait patiently for **Yahweh**. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for **Yahweh**.

Lamentations 3:24-33

Yahweh is my portion,” says my soul, “**Therefore I have hope in Him.**” **Yahweh** is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of **Yahweh**. It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent since He has laid it on him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, perhaps there is hope. Let him give his cheek to the smiter, let him be filled with reproach. **For Yahweh will not reject forever, for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion according to His abundant lovingkindness.** For He does not afflict willingly or grieve the sons of men.

Psalms 130:5

I wait for **Yahweh**, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.

When we are seduced and captured by the temples of relationships, unauthorized sexuality, or any activity, really, that is intended to numb our pain or lower our defenses, etc., we have chosen to give our heart (our emotions), our soul (since we go to these places to get relief from the agony within), our mind (it’s a choice we make), and our strength (our physical body) to those who worship the pleasures and

⁵ ***Mark 12:30***

appetites of the *flesh* over-and-above the worship of God.

In addition, for the sake of that special man or a woman that they cannot live without, believers tend to make room for Catholicism, Mormonism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or any other form of belief to which their “loved one” holds. And this compromise eventually corrupts them so thoroughly that in terms of their faith, they fall off the map. All of it is just self-love, and it pulls away from their commitment to **His** name, to **His** witness, and to **His** faith.

Nicolaitans (the Apostasy of Cain)

Revelation 2:15

So, you also **now** have some who in the same way are **now** holding to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

We learned in the letter to Ephesus that the teaching of the Nicolaitans is essential **the apostasy of Cain**, represented by the lust of the *flesh*.⁶

The idea was that the spirit of man became holy when he accepted Christ, but since man practically still sinned there logically must be a complete division in God's eyes between one's spirit and one's body. Thus, they taught that since God has forgiven us for the deeds done in the flesh (in our body), and our spirit is holy and undefiled by the body (because God calls us holy), we are free to engage in all manner of sexual sin, physical passions, and even idolatry, for deeds done in the flesh are inconsequential and have absolutely no impact on our spirit.

In the religion of Christianity, the philosophy of the Nicolaitans is alive and well (hence, the use of the *participle*, “*are now holding*”⁷), but it has mutated over the centuries such that it promotes not so much the lawless deeds of sexuality (though I am sure that takes place), **but the lawless deeds of spirituality**, which is a more subtle and dangerous form of idolatry. The religion of Christianity has become the largest peddler of “good works” that are lawless, licentious, and unauthorized by the Father, and motivated by *instinctual religious wisdom*, just as we studied in **Jude**. We will see this clearly in **Revelation 18**.

The name **Balaam** means “lord of the people,” whereas the name **Nicolaitan** means “victory of the people” or “power of the people”. These names support the idea that what people want is more important than what God wants. The people will have victory, the people will rule their own lives, the people will live in “freedom” and will not be ruled by another. They will be lord of their own lives.

In this vein, the Nicolaitan philosophy of our day states that we are free to do what we want if we are doing it for God, so long as what we do is Biblical and not blatantly sinful. This places man's wisdom and man's goodness on a pedestal equal to that of the Father's will and His goodness. This is blatant idolatry, all disguised in good religion. This form of **apostasy** is widespread and so prevalent that it marks a large part of the spiritual condition of the church of the **End Times**.

⁶ **Jude 11; 1 John 2:16**

⁷ “hold” is rendered in the *present active participle*

THIS IS A PHILOSOPHY THAT WE MUST LEARN TO HATE!

The problem with the teaching of the Nicolaitans is that it becomes all-consuming to the heart and the soul. It is a difficult teaching to just indulge in from time-to-time because it awakens that part of our being that is supposed to be dead and dying—the religious sensuality of our *flesh*—that part of us that can justify anything spiritually such that we convince ourselves that we are “good with God.” And once our religious *flesh* is active, it is extremely hard to agree to let it be crucified.

Delusion (religious delusion) to justify their spiritual and moral compromise became the norm for the Nicolaitans as they became more-and-more addicted to getting what they want in this life. It is a slippery slope. The **apostasy of Cain** easily rolls over from the **apostasy of Balaam**. In fact, the **apostasy of Cain** is necessary when a believer falls into the **apostasy of Balaam**. It is how they justify what they do and what they believe while still “worshiping” God.

Of course, they had to deal with their conscience as the Spirit of God within them would be in confrontation with their *flesh*, urging them to not do what they want to do.⁸ But this teaching of the Nicolaitans had the power to assuage their conscience by reminding them that Jesus died for their sins in the body. Thus, they were free, without law, so they could indulge without fear or incrimination, for He sees their spirit as holy. They took the truth of our **unrestrained freedom**, but they did not incorporate the entire truth. And partial truths are always aimed toward manipulation and getting what we want. We learned this from the temptation which Satan laid before Eve as he used partial truth to manipulate her, and she relied on that partial truth to get what she wanted—a chance to be like God.⁹

The Nicolaitans skimmed over the part that says all things are lawful, but not all things are profitable and not all things edify.¹⁰ And they did not hold to the truth that the mind set on the *flesh* is not just death (whereas the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace) but is hostile toward God and does not subject itself to God—is not even able to do so. And those who are in the *flesh* cannot please God!¹¹ After all, without faith it is impossible to please God.¹²

Because they bought into the partial truth that **Step 1** (being born-again) is all that was necessary for salvation, they did not realize that the promise of “*no condemnation*” is made to those who are found “in Christ”—those who abide in Him such that “in Christ” defines their very existence as they look to Him to be their only source of provision and sustenance.¹³ And that only comes about through **Step 2** (through learning how to cling to the vine trusting, just like a little child, that Jesus is our **I AM** and our sole source for all we need, all the time).

But the problem is that they were seduced by this heretical teaching and had become used to abiding in “death,” because it could all be made to sound so Biblical, and it could all be done in His name.

But being a temple of God, the body is for the Lord and not for immorality, not for idolatry, and the

⁸ **Galatians 5:17**

⁹ **Genesis 3:1-5**

¹⁰ **1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23**

¹¹ **Romans 8:6-7**

¹² **Hebrews 11:6**

¹³ **Romans 8:1** (note: in Christ is rendered as a noun and not a verb); **John 15:1-11**

Lord is for the body; after all, our bodies are members of Christ. Our bodies are no longer our own to do with as we please, but they belong to the Holy Spirit who dwells therein. Therefore, we are instructed to flee immorality, for we have been bought with a price, and therefore we are to glorify God in our body.¹⁴

**THE TEACHING OF BALAAM IS IDOLATROUS
AND THE TEACHING OF THE NICOLAITANS (THE APOSTASY OF CAIN) IS BLASPHEMOUS!**

These teachings tend to complement each other (idolatry and blasphemy), so it is no surprise that both were and are present in the church of “Pergamum.” One acts as a stumbling block and the other keeps them and many of us down and prevents us from getting back up from where we have fallen.

Revelation 2:16

Therefore repent; or else I choose to now come to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

The **Code** provides us some interesting insight since “*repent*” is rendered in the *aorist active imperative*; “*coming*” is in the *present middle indicative*, and “*will make war*” is in the *future active indicative*.

Repent

When we become convicted by something God shows us, or we get caught and our sins are pointed out before others, we tend to immediately “repent” in our now. But more-often-than-not, it is not a true repentance, it’s not a true turning away from that which gripped us. It is more of a response to being found-out—an act that springs forth from our guilt and shame (which is all a product of our religious *flesh* which, as we have learned, is an enemy God).

Now, the religion of Christianity is big on “repentance” in the now, requiring great acts of remorse and contrition. After all, how else can we know a person is serious about their sin, and how else can we ensure that they will not shame us or hurt us again? Hopefully, my sarcasm is noted.

In terms of this command to repent, what the Spirit has in mind has nothing to do with remorse, regret, shame, nor does it require theatrics or acts of penance. Technically, the Spirit is commanding us to think differently about things; in effect, to agree with how He sees things.¹⁵ He knows that if we are willing to agree with His perspective, then what we do will eventually line up with His view of life. And it is in this **agreement** that He wants us to live. As such repentance is a lifestyle choice and **NOT** a reaction to our sin.

Hence, the Spirit used the *aorist* tense (and not the *present*) to speak to what He expects from us in terms of our overall way of life. In that light, this **agreement** comes about when we believe what He wants us to believe about some area of our life, some area where we do not now trust **Yahweh** to be our **I AM**

¹⁴ See **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

¹⁵ In Greek, “repentance” (*metanoeo*) means to think differently.

and have therefore taken matters into our own hands.

He wants us to let Him transform our minds to think like He thinks, and that requires that our baseline beliefs to be transformed. After all, we act based on what we think, we think based on what we feel, and we feel based on what we believe. Let me rephrase that:

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT A MATTER DETERMINES HOW WE FEEL ABOUT IT.

WHAT WE FEEL ABOUT A MATTER DETERMINES HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT A MATTER DETERMINES WHAT WE DO WITH IT.

If deep down inside we do not believe that everything God does is an expression of His great love for us and is therefore good for us, we will likely feel that we are being unfairly treated by God, since He is withholding relationship and companionship from us. This feeling will arise deep from within our reactive brain and not our logical brain. This feeling will drive how we think about our loneliness and the various options in front of us, which might very well include eating the things sacrificed to idols and committing acts of immorality. The answer is to agree with Him, or else we will find that the choices we make are in perfect alignment with our true beliefs and not our stated beliefs.

**TRUE REPENTANCE IS NOT A REACTION TO OUR SIN,
BUT A CHOICE TO KNOW JESUS BY HIS NAME, YAHWEH.**

Be Transformed

Romans 12:1-2 addresses this issue of our true belief versus our stated belief and our need to live in repentance when we are commanded to let God now transform us through the renewing or the renovation of our mind.¹⁶ He wants us to be **willing** to let Him do this massive renovation of both our reactive brain (our feelings) and our logical brain and thereby alter how we see and understand what He is doing in our lives. In effect, He wants us to see everything as He does.

His intent is clear, that we might, in our now, approve that good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.¹⁷ In other words, He wants our true beliefs to be in line with our stated beliefs—that God is good, and He is our loving Father.

For instance, in this matter of relationships, if His will for our lives requires waiting and waiting (in effect, prolonged suffering), He wants us to understand that it is good, pleasing, and perfect, even if it does not feel that way. I know, believe me I know, that is a hard one to swallow. But if we let Him transform how we feel and think about our circumstances, it will have an impact on the choices we make because our true beliefs will finally match our stated beliefs.

Thus, repentance is a result, a lifestyle result, of letting God transform us at our deepest levels such

¹⁶ “transformed” is rendered in the *present passive imperative*

¹⁷ “prove” is rendered in the *present active infinitive*

that we agree with Him in all things. That is probably the best definition of repentance. It is a result that is expressed through our lifestyle, and it is **NOT** a reaction to our sin.

The Best Pathway?

So, we might ask **WHY** should we believe that this plan He has for us is good, pleasing, and perfect when it basically stinks? Isn't that just religious delusion? Aren't we just tricking ourselves into being good? Well, the answer goes to our core belief or the **agreement** which He desires us to adopt. He explains Himself as follows:

Psalms 32:8-9

Yahweh says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."

He does not say that He might, but that He will guide us along the **best** pathway for our lives, or literally in the Hebrew: "*I will guide you with my eye*". This is the role of **Yahweh Raah**, our Great Shepherd. And He wants us to be willing to let the Spirit transform our thoughts and our feelings with this fundamental belief: The paths He has determined for our lives are the paths He has chosen and watched over. They are not the paths we have chosen. As the **Codex** clearly says, "*I know, O Yahweh, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.*"

This is in alignment with the notion that it is in His foreknowledge of the choices we will make, given any set of circumstances, that He predestines the paths of our lives. So, they are still our choices, He does not make those for us, but He has determined every set of circumstances that He knows will drive the choices we will make. Understanding this, King David wrote: "*... in Your book were written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there were none of them.*"¹⁸

And while that may sound a bit like a game of words, it is all with a purpose: that we might be conformed into the image of the Son.¹⁹

The Only Pathway

Let's look at this from another angle. When Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion, He was praying to His Father and cried out, "*My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.*" He prayed this 3 separate times (it was a perfect plea).²⁰ We are told that Jesus was grieved to the point of death. "*And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.*"²¹ So this was a very intense moment, a moment which falls on the heels of a questions Jesus previously asked His disciples, "*Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink.*"²² Let's keep this previous discussion in mind.

For the most part, we have all heard that Jesus, in His humanity, was having a moment of personal

¹⁸ ***Psalm 139:16***

¹⁹ ***See Romans 8:29***

²⁰ ***Matthew 26:39-44***

²¹ ***Luke 22:44***

²² ***Matthew 20:22***

crisis given that He was to soon face the beating, the rejection by His own people, and ultimately the Roman cross. But that is **ALL WRONG** and does not align up with the **Codex**. It is bad teaching.

Jesus came down purposed to die; there is no doubt about that.²³ In fact, in a prophetic statement from **Isaiah** looking forward to His physical demise, Jesus said, *"I have set my face like flint, and I know I will not be ashamed."*²⁴ He purposely left His place in the heavens and came down to earth taking on humanity in order that He might die a perfect death as a perfect man, thereby satisfying on our behalf the requirement of the Father for perfection. He did for us what we could not do and thereby fulfilled the law on our behalf.²⁵

The point being that He did not struggle with His purpose. There is more to the story and more to the garden drama than meets the eye.

Later in the **Codex**, we are told that when Jesus was offering up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the one able to save Him from death, He was functioning as our **Great High Priest** (in the order of the spiritual priesthood of Melchizedek not in the Levitical order).

In other words, this prayer of agony in the garden was not a prayer for Himself, remember, He came purposed to die. Rather, it was a prayer for all of us who would have to *drink the cup that He was about to drink*. As our **Great High Priest**, He was doing what a High Priest is supposed to do; He was interceding for us, knowing that we would also have to *drink the cup that He was about to drink*. And because of His love for us, He was hoping there was another way.²⁶ But the silence of the Father was clear, there was no other way for Him, therefore there would be no other way for His Chosen ones than the pathways which the Father established before time. As Jesus told us, the pathway to life is a pathway of tribulation and suffering.²⁷ *"Just as it is written: For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."*²⁸

With that said, it is far too easy to forget that **Yahweh's** goal for our life is first-and-foremost that we be conformed into the image of the Son, and that like the Son, we boldly declare: *"not as I will, but as You will."*²⁹ You see, if we are **willing**, in all these things we will overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.³⁰

With all that said, to obey this command to repent, as a matter of lifestyle and **NOT** as a reaction to our sin, we must be **willing** to let Him cause us to come into **agreement** with how He sees and understands the "best pathway" He has laid out for our lives, despite the suffering, the loneliness, the pain, the distress, and the other things that tend to squeeze our souls. There was no other way!

We will finish this letter to the church at Pergamum in our next Podcast.

²³ **Matthew 16:20-23, 17:22-23, 20:17-19; John 3:16; Luke 22:44-47, 24:25-27**

²⁴ **Isaiah 50:7**

²⁵ See **Romans 8:3-4; Philippians 2:5-8**

²⁶ **Hebrews 5:1-10**

²⁷ **Matthew 7:14**. Note: the word we have translated as "narrow" means crowded, filled with external pressure, and is translated as "tribulation," "trouble," and "afflicted".

²⁸ **Romans 8:36**

²⁹ **Luke 22:42**

³⁰ **Romans 8:37**

