

Third Letter

Pergamos

The Compromising Assembly

Hazon (Revelation) 2:12–17

“And to the messenger of the assembly in Pergamos write, ‘He who has the sharp two-edged sword, says this: I know your works, and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is. And you hold fast to My Name, and did not deny the belief in Me, even in the days in which Antipas was My trustworthy witness, who was killed near you, where Satan dwells. But I hold a few matters against you, because you have there those who adhere to the teaching of Bil’am, who taught Balaq to put a stumbling-block before the children of Yisra’el, to eat food offered to idols, and to commit whoring. So you also have those who adhere to the teaching of the Nicolaites, which teaching I hate. Repent, or else I shall come to you speedily and fight against them with the sword of My mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who overcomes I shall give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I shall give him a white stone, and on the stone a renewed Name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

1- Name of the Assembly – Pergamos (Marriage)

Hazon (Revelation) 2:12a

“And to the messenger of the assembly in Pergamos write...”

Let’s begin with the name, **Pergamos**.

The word carries the meaning of *marriage*, but not in a holy, set-apart way. The root of the name is the same from which we get words like *bigamy* and *polygamy*. This hints at something deeper: a spiritual compromise, a joining together of what should never have been united.

And this is exactly what the city of Pergamos had become, a place where truth was mixed with falsehood, where belief in Elohim was *married* to idolatry.

Pergamos was a major city in Asia Minor, both **religiously and intellectually influential**. It was home to one of the greatest libraries in the world, second only to Alexandria, with more than 200,000 volumes. This was a city of **books, scrolls, knowledge, and gods**.

It was filled with altars, temples, and statues to all manner of pagan deities. The most infamous of them was **Aesculapius**, the so-called god of healing, symbolized by a **serpent**. You can still see the serpent symbol today in modern medicine. But make no mistake, this symbol has ancient roots in idolatry.

According to myth, Aesculapius was the son of Apollo, referred to by Homer as the “blameless physician.” Legend says that Zeus killed him to prevent humanity from escaping death, then later made him a god. The people of Pergamos deeply worshipped this figure. His image, the coiled serpent, appeared even on their coins.

The city was also a centre of worship of Zeus. The massive altar to Zeus towered over the city, what Yeshua would soon call “*the throne of Satan.*”

Pagan worship in Pergamos wasn’t just religious; it was sensual. Temple prostitution and wild rituals were part of daily spiritual life. Morality was trampled under the feet of pleasure. And sadly, some within the Assembly **started to blend in.**

This is why the meaning of “marriage” is so significant.

The believers in Pergamos were slowly, subtly *marrying the world*. They hadn’t fully abandoned the faith, but they had allowed compromise to creep in. The clean and the unclean were becoming one.

From a prophetic timeline view, Pergamos represents the era beginning around **313 C.E.**, when Emperor **Constantine** came to power. This marked the end of severe Roman persecution, but it came with a cost. Constantine mixed the emerging Christian faith with **pagan rituals, sun worship, and imperial authority**. This was the birth of a *state religion* that looked righteous on the outside but was filled with compromise within.

And it’s during this period that the **Name of Yeshua began to be replaced**. Early English Bibles even used the name *Iosus*, a pronunciation nearly identical to the phrase “**Ie-Zeus,**” meaning “*Hail Zeus.*” The modern name “Jesus,” with the ‘J’ sound, didn’t even exist until the 1600s, as the letter J was a late addition to the English alphabet.

This invites us to look deeper into the **linguistic and spiritual importance of the Name**. While we understand that many use the name “Jesus” with sincerity, we must also be mindful of the **history and power** behind the original Hebrew name, **Yeshua**, meaning “Salvation.”

So Pergamos represents **an Assembly that didn’t stop believing... but started blending**.

Truth + compromise = deception.

Faith + idolatry = spiritual confusion.

And it’s this “marriage” that Yeshua is about to confront.

2- Character Description of Yeshua – The One with the Sharp Two-Edged Sword

Hazon (Revelation) 2:12b

“He who has the sharp two-edged sword, says this:”

Before Yeshua speaks a single word of correction to Pergamos, He first reveals **who** is speaking. He doesn’t come with a gentle image here. He comes as **the One who holds the sharp two-edged sword**.

This is a serious introduction, and it’s intentional.

The **two-edged sword** speaks of **judgment** and **discernment**. It divides. It cuts. It separates truth from falsehood, purity from compromise, and light from darkness. It’s not a dull blade; it’s sharp and precise. And it’s not a weapon of man, it’s the **Word of YHWH** Himself.

Yohanan (John) 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim.”

Yeshua **is** the Word. He is the living, breathing expression of YHWH’s truth. He doesn’t just carry the sword, **He is the sword**. Every word He speaks carries the full weight of divine authority.

Hazon (Revelation) 19:13

“...and His Name is called: The Word of Elohim.”

When He returns in power and glory, it will be **the Word**, not weapons or armies, that judges the nations. He will speak, and it will cut through every lie, every mask, every deception.

And His judgment is not shallow. It doesn’t skim the surface. It reaches deep.

Ih`rim (Hebrews) 4:12

“For the Word of Elohim is living, and working, and sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting through even to the dividing of being and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

This is what Yeshua brings to Pergamos.

Not flattery. Not empty encouragement. But **truth**, spoken in love, yet sharp enough to pierce through every excuse and compromise.

The believers in Pergamos were living in a city full of idolatry, confusion, and spiritual mixture. And they needed to remember:

Yeshua doesn’t see as man sees.

He doesn’t just look at what we do, He looks at **why** we do it.

He searches the heart. He tests the motives. And He speaks to the deepest parts of who we are.

This sharp sword doesn’t just bring judgment; it brings healing, too.

Because sometimes, the only way to remove an infection is to cut it out.

Yeshua speaks not to destroy, but to **separate us from what’s destroying us**.

That’s what Pergamos needed.

That’s what many Assemblies today still need.

A Word that cuts, so it can also **cleanse**.

3- Recognition – Holding Fast Where Satan Dwells

Hazon (Revelation) 2:13

“I know your works, and where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is. And you hold fast to My Name, and did not deny the belief in Me, even in the days in which Antipas was My trustworthy witness, who was killed near you, where Satan dwells.”

Yeshua begins with what He always begins with: *“I know.”*

He sees. He understands. He is fully aware, not just of their works, but of their **location**, their **surroundings**, and the **spiritual climate** they were living in.

Pergamos wasn't just any city. It was a spiritual war zone.

A stronghold of pagan worship. A centre for emperor cult devotion. And right in the heart of it all stood what Yeshua calls *“the throne of Satan.”*

This likely refers to the massive **Pergamon Altar**, a structure built in the 2nd century BCE and dedicated to **Zeus**, the chief of the Greek gods. It was a towering, intimidating symbol of idolatry, visible from miles away, where sacrifices were made daily to false deities. It loomed over the city like a demonic throne, and the spiritual darkness that flowed from it influenced everything beneath.

This was not metaphorical. It was **real spiritual power**, drawing people into deception. It was this altar, **Satan's throne**, that shaped Pergamos into what it became: a city fully immersed in false worship, sensual indulgence, and emperor veneration.

In the 19th century, German archaeologists led by **Carl Humann** excavated this very altar and shipped it to Berlin. Today, it sits inside the **Pergamon Museum**, alongside the **Ishtar Gate** from Babylon, another monument to ancient rebellion against YHWH. These relics remind us that what began in Babel didn't die in history. The spirit behind it still lives.

And yet...

Right in the middle of this city, where spiritual oppression was thick and compromise was all around, **there were believers who held fast to Yeshua's Name.**

Yeshua says:

“You hold fast to My Name, and did not deny the belief in Me.”

Even in the face of pressure. Even when the cost was high.

One name stands out: **Antipas**.

He was Yeshua's *trustworthy witness*, a title that carries deep honour. Yeshua Himself is called “the trustworthy witness” in Revelation 1:5. So to share that title means Antipas reflected Yeshua's faithfulness all the way to the end.

Antipas was the **first recorded martyr in Asia**, killed publicly in Pergamos because he refused to bow to Caesar, to Zeus, or to any idol. Tradition says he was roasted alive inside a bronze bull-shaped altar. Yet he did not deny the faith.

In a place where Satan's throne stood... **Antipas stood taller.**

And so did others.

This Assembly wasn't perfect; we'll get to their compromise shortly, but they **hadn't given up.**

They were still clinging to the truth. Still confessing Yeshua. Still lifting His Name, even when that Name was dangerous to speak.

Even today, the world around us has its own "Pergamons", cities and cultures that exalt everything except YHWH.

Many still call on the Name of "Jesus," but few are willing to embrace the Hebrew Name **Yeshua**, the name that carries both identity and meaning: *Salvation*.

It's more than a title. It's a **covenantal name**, rooted in Torah and prophecy.

But tradition, fear of offending, and cultural conditioning keep many from returning to the fullness of that truth.

Yet the call of Pergamos still speaks:

Will you hold fast to His Name?

Will you stand firm, even if the world around you bows to idols?

Will you be like Antipas, who valued truth more than life itself?

Yeshua sees. He knows. And for those who stand firm in His Name, **He remembers**.

4- Shortfalls – Compromise with the World

Hazon (Revelation) 2:14–15

"But I hold a few matters against you, because you have there those who adhere to the teaching of Bil'am, who taught Balaq to put a stumbling-block before the children of Yisra'el, to eat food offered to idols, and to commit whoring. So you also have those who adhere to the teaching of the Nikolaites, which teaching I hate."

Yeshua had commended the believers in Pergamos for holding fast to His Name, even where Satan's throne was.

But He doesn't turn a blind eye to their failures.

He says, *"I have a few things against you."*

Not everything, but enough to cause concern.

Because while they remained faithful in name, they had begun to **tolerate compromise**, the same kind of compromise that destroyed Yisra'el in the days of Bil'am.

Let's go back.

Just before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they had already defeated powerful kings in the land of Ammon, what we know today as Jordan. These victories made **Balaq**, king of Moab, afraid. So, he hired a well-known diviner named **Bil'am** to curse Yisra'el. (*Numbers 22–24*)

At first, Bil'am refused, but once bribed, he agreed to go. Yet YHWH prevented him from cursing the people. Every time he tried, blessings came out instead of curses.

But Bil'am wasn't finished. He found another way to destroy Israel, not by curses, but by corruption.

He advised Balaq to send in Moabite women, **prostitutes**, to tempt the men of Yisra'el. They were lured into **sexual sin** and **idolatry**, eating food offered to idols and bowing down to

pagan gods. The trap worked. A plague broke out among YHWH's people. *Numbers 31:16* confirms this:

“Look, they were the ones who caused the children of Yisra’el, through the word of Bil’am, to trespass against יהוה in the matter of Pe’or, and there was a plague among the congregation of יהוה.”

Both *Kepha (Peter)* and *Yehudah (Jude)* wrote about this incident too:

Kěpha Bět (2 Peter) 2:15

“Having left the right way they went astray, having followed the way of Bil’am the son of Be’or, who loved the wages of unrighteousness...”

Yehudāh (Jude) 11

“Woe to them! Because they have gone in the way of Qayin, and gave themselves to the delusion of Bil’am for a reward...”

This was the issue in Pergamos. The Assembly had not fully turned away from Yeshua, but they allowed *“those who hold to the doctrine of Bil’am”* to remain among them.

And worse still, they had embraced the **Nikolaites**, whose teaching Yeshua says plainly: *“I hate.”*

The **Nikolaites** twisted the faith to serve their flesh. They **blurred the lines** between clean and unclean. They taught that you could serve Elohim and still eat things offered to idols, still engage in sexual immorality, still blend pagan worship with true worship.

Paul confronted the same thing in Corinth:

Qorintiyim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 10:21

“You are not able to drink the cup of the Master and the cup of demons. You are not able to partake of the table of the Master and the table of demons.”

And Yeshua's brother **Ya'aqob (James)** made it just as clear when writing to the new Gentile believers:

Ma`asei (Acts) 15:19–20

“...that we should not trouble those from among the nations who are turning to Elohim, but that we write to them to abstain from the defilements of idols, and from whoring...”

Despite these clear warnings, Pergamos allowed **spiritual mixture** to enter in. A little tolerance here. A little compromise there. Until what was once clean became polluted.

And isn't that the challenge we face today?

Are we allowing the **spirit of Bil'am** into our assemblies?
Are we tolerating what YHWH calls sin, just to stay relevant or avoid offense?

Do we call sexual immorality “identity”?
Do we call abortion “choice”?
Do we call rebellion “freedom”?
Do we say, “*Let's not judge,*” when what's really happening is **a slow drift into deception**?

And what about **Nicolaitanism**?

Yeshua's words here are not gentle: “*Which teaching I hate.*”

This is not just about bad theology; it's about power-hungry leaders who elevate themselves above the people, ruling with pride, silencing accountability, and saying, “*I am the head, you follow without question.*”

This breaks YHWH's heart.

Because true leadership serves. True shepherds lay down their lives.
Anything less is dangerous. And Yeshua won't ignore it.

The story of Pergamos is a warning.

It's not enough to cling to His Name while **compromising with the world**.

We must love what He loves and **hate what He hates**.

We must remain **pure**, not just in doctrine, but in heart, in worship, and in leadership.

The question is simple, and it cuts deep:

Is there any Bil'am or Nikolaitan spirit in us? In our assemblies? In our pulpits?

If so, the call is clear: **Repent. Before the sword comes.**

5- Corrective Action – Repent Before the Sword Comes

Hazon (Revelation) 2:16

“Repent, or else I shall come to you speedily and fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”

Yeshua doesn't leave the Assembly in Pergamos without a path forward.

He doesn't abandon them.

He doesn't say, “It's too late.”

He says, “**Repent.**”

Turn around. Change direction.

Walk away from the compromise, before the consequences fall.

Those who had embraced the teachings of **Bil'am** and the **Nikolaites**, those who blurred the lines between holiness and idolatry, were being given a final chance to let go of deception and return to **YHWH's commandments**.

Just as Bil'am tempted Israel into sin at Pe'or...

Just as the Nikolaites seduced early believers into sexual immorality and spiritual

corruption...

So too were the Pergamos believers walking dangerously close to destruction.

And Yeshua warns them clearly:

If you do not repent, **I Myself** will come, not with physical weapons, not with earthly armies, but with **the sword of My mouth**.

This is no idle threat.

This sword is the **Word of Elohim**, living, powerful, and sharp.

Ib`rim (Hebrews) 4:12

“For the Word of Elohim is living, and working, and sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting through even to the dividing of being and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Yeshua doesn't just see actions, He sees intentions.

He discerns between what's genuine and what's religious performance.

And His Word doesn't miss.

Qorintiyim Bět (2 Corinthians) 10:4–5 explains it this way:

“For the weapons we fight with are not fleshly but mighty in Elohim for overthrowing strongholds, overthrowing reasonings and every high matter that exalts itself against the knowledge of Elohim, taking captive every thought to make it obedient to the Messiah.”

When He comes with that sword, it's not to wound randomly, it's to **cut down strongholds**, to destroy **false doctrines**, and to expose every lie that has taken root in His people.

And here's the serious part:

Yeshua doesn't say He'll fight against the pagans.

He says He'll fight **against them**, *those within the Assembly* who refuse to repent.

That should stop us in our tracks.

If His people cling to teachings He hates, if they refuse to separate from the ways of Bil'am and the spirit of Nicolaitanism, **they become His enemy**, and He will fight against them with the very truth they rejected.

This is why repentance is not optional. It is **urgent**.

The Assembly, and individuals within it, must **turn back**.

Not just with their lips, but with their hearts, their doctrines, their actions.

YHWH will not tolerate mixture.

He will not accept a divided bride.

The sword is not just for judgment, it's also for **realignment**.

It cuts us free from deception, if we'll let it.

It divides what's flesh from what's spirit.

And it brings us back to **the true foundation, Torah and Messiah**.

So, the question is:

Do we fear man more than YHWH? Or do we fear the sword of His mouth more than the approval of this world?

Now is the time to repent.

Now is the time to purge our assemblies, and our hearts, of every teaching that leads us away from His truth.

6- Challenge – The Hidden Manna and the White Stone

Hazon (Revelation) 2:17a

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.”

Once again, Yeshua ends with the same familiar phrase:

“He who has an ear, let him hear...”

This is not a call to the masses, it's a **personal invitation**.

Not everyone will hear. But those who do... they'll understand what the Spirit is saying to the Assemblies, **then and now**.

And to the one who **overcomes**, Yeshua offers two beautiful promises:

1. Hidden Manna

Manna was the **bread from heaven**, the miraculous food that sustained Yisra'el in the wilderness (Exodus 16). But this isn't ordinary manna; this is **hidden manna**.

Why hidden?

Because it speaks of something deeper, **spiritual nourishment** that the world cannot see or understand.

In the Roman world, eating food offered to idols was common. But Yeshua offers something better: *Himself*.

Yohanan (John) 6:50–51

“This is the bread which comes down out of the heaven, so that anyone might eat of it, and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of the heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live for ever...”

Hazon (Revelation) 7:16

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more...”

Yeshua is the **true bread**, the one who satisfies the soul. While Pergamos was filled with idolatrous feasts, Yeshua offers **covenant communion**. A nourishment the world cannot give. A strength that comes from abiding in Him.

2. The White Stone with a New Name.

This is one of the most mysterious and beautiful symbols in all of Revelation.

In ancient Rome, a **white stone** had several meanings:

- In the courts, jurors would cast a **white stone** to declare someone **innocent**, while a black stone meant guilt.
- Victorious gladiators or honored citizens were often given white stones engraved with a **new name**, a mark of honour, freedom, and reward.
- That stone was like a **passport**, it gave access, identity, and privilege.

Yeshua promises this to the overcomer:

A stone that declares you clean.

A stone that speaks of covenant and belonging.

A stone that gives you access to the Kingdom.

And on it?

A **renewed Name**, one that **no one else knows**, except the one who receives it.

This speaks of **intimacy**. Of **identity**. Of a deeply personal relationship between you and YHWH.

We've seen this before. *Berēshith (Genesis) 17*, When **Abram** entered into covenant with YHWH, He added a letter from His own Name, transforming him into **Abraham**. That "H" sound comes from the Hebrew letter "**Heh**" (ה), symbolising **breath**, **Spirit**, and **life**.

Hazon (Revelation) 19:12 tells us that **Yeshua Himself will also receive a new Name**.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 62:2 promises:

*"...and you shall be called by a **new name**, which the mouth of יהוה designates."*

This isn't just poetic. This is **covenant language**.

When you come into **renewed covenant** through Yeshua and walk in His Torah, you are not just forgiven, you are **transformed**. You receive a **new identity**, a Name known only to you and YHWH, because it's **personal**. It's **relational**. It's **eternal**.

This white stone, this new Name, this hidden manna, it all points to one thing:

Yeshua doesn't just save us. He sets us apart. He gives us Himself.

Pergamos was a city of mixture, compromise, and false identity.

But to the one who overcomes?

Yeshua offers **purity**, **truth**, and a new name written by His own hand.

So, the challenge remains:

Will we feed on what the world offers, or will we hunger for the hidden manna?

Will we wear the titles the world gives, or will we wait for the **new Name** written in eternity?

Let him who has ears... hear.

7- Reward

Hazon (Revelation) 2:17b

“To him who overcomes I shall give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I shall give him a white stone, and on the stone a renewed Name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

Yeshua, described as the true Bread of Heaven, offers spiritual sustenance that transcends any earthly nourishment. As stated in:

Hazon (Revelation) 7:16

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore, neither shall the sun strike them, nor any heat,”

Yohanan (John) 6:50–51

“This is the bread which comes down out of the heaven, so that anyone might eat of it, and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of the heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever. And indeed, the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

Those who partake in Him, consuming His teachings and embodying His life, will never need to partake in the compromised offerings like those sacrificed to idols. This metaphor highlights the completeness and sufficiency of Yeshua's provision for spiritual life, ensuring that His followers are nourished by truth and life, not defiled by worldly or idolatrous practices.

The symbolic use of stones and names in ancient Roman and biblical contexts further enriches our understanding of identity and transformation in the spiritual journey. In ancient Rome, jurors in courts would use a white stone to signify innocence and a black stone for guilt, illustrating a clear verdict. Similarly, gladiators or other figures might receive a "new name" on a stone following their victories, symbolising a new identity and freedom to move and act within society, a reward for their triumphs.

This practice parallels significant biblical themes where names are exchanged or transformed as part of covenants with YHWH. For example, Abram received a new element, "H," in his name, becoming Abraham when he entered into a covenant with YHWH, signifying a new phase of his life and relationship with Elohim.

In the eschatological context, entering into a covenant relationship with Yeshua promises a transformation that includes receiving a new name in the Kingdom of Heaven, as reflected in:

Hazon (Revelation) 19:12

“And His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns, having a Name that had been written, which no one had perceived except Himself, ”

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 56:5

“To them I shall give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters, I give them an everlasting name that is not cut off.”

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 62:2

“And the nations shall see your righteousness, and all sovereigns your esteem. And you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of יהוה designates.”

This new name represents a profound change in identity and status, marking a believer's full acceptance into YHWH's eternal covenant and family. Yeshua Himself will receive a new name, symbolising new aspects of His eternal reign and relationship with His people.

This concept of receiving a new name underscores the transformation and renewal inherent in the covenant relationship with YHWH through Yeshua. It highlights a future promise of redemption and restoration, where believers will not only enjoy a new spiritual status but also a new identity that reflects their eternal relationship with their Saviour and King.