



Forsake False Teachers

Revelation 2:12-17

1. A Sharp Sword (verse 12)
2. A Strong Stand (verse 13)
3. A Soft Stance (verses 14-15)
4. A Strong Sword (verse 16)
5. A Signed Stone (verse 17)

In four weeks (June 15-18), Gary, Jake and I will spent some days in Jail, ministering to those in the jail during a Spiritual Impact Weekend. One of the ways that we have to make an impact is to write letters to the inmates. There are personal (but anonymous), hand-written letters that are given to the inmates at one point in the weekend. I have heard that this makes a huge impact upon those in jail, because, for the most part, they have been forgotten by the outside world. Many of them haven't received a letter from anyone for years. And so, when they receive a bag of letters from the outside, it makes a huge impact, to know that they are not forgotten. In fact, if any of these men are transferred to prison, they often take this bag of letter with them, to read them again and again to encourage them in their difficult time.

There will be 34 residents who will attend the program. So, each of us have to write 34 letters to the inmates. I have invited you all to join with me in the letter writing campaign. If you want a heart for the ministry in the jail, I would encourage you to write a few letters for us. The instructions are in the weekly word, you simply need to address them as, "To your brother in Christ." write some encouraging words of hope (It doesn't have to be long) then sign it, "From your brother (or sister) in Christ."

If you write some of these letters for us, I guarantee two things: (1) You will make an impact in someone's life; and (2) You will develop a heart for the jail ministry. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). If you put some treasure of your time into writing these letters, your heart will be with the jail ministry. So, please consider doing so.

These letters make a good transition to our text this morning. For, we are looking at a letter that Jesus wrote. He wrote it to the church in Pergamum. We will read this letter in Revelation, chapter 2, verses 12-17. So, I invite you to open in your Bibles to Revelation. This letter is to be cherished by us all.

As you are turning there, let me tell you about one of the most important events in Ancient Greek mythology: the legendary story of the Trojan War. The war between the Greeks and the city of Troy began when a man from Troy named Paris took a woman from Sparta, named Helen. Helen happened to be the wife of the king of Sparta, named Menelaus. The war was fought to rescue Helen from the Trojans and avenge the honor of the city of Sparta. The war was fought for ten years. Despite all of their efforts, the Greeks could not breach the walls of Troy. The Trojans were simply too strong in defending their city.

It was then that Odysseus, who was known for his shrewd intelligence, devised a plan. I trust that you have heard of it. He devised the plan of constructing a large wooden horse. Epeius, the master carpenter built it. Then one day, the Greeks brought the horse to the gates of the city of Troy. and proceeded to sail away in the sight of all those in the city of Troy. The Trojans took this as a congratulatory concession! They believed that they had emerged victorious in the law war against the Greeks! So, in celebration, they brought the gift horse inside their city as a symbol of their triumph! That night, they celebrated! A decade of war was over! or so they thought.

Because, that night, while the Trojans celebrated their presumed victory, the Greek warriors hidden within the horse emerged and opened the gates of Troy, allowing the rest of the Greek army, which had secretly returned, to enter the city. The Greeks unleashed a devastating attack, catching the Trojans off guard and overwhelming them. Troy, unable to defend against the surprise assault, fell to the Greeks. The city was sacked, its treasures plundered, and its citizens either killed or enslaved. The Trojan War came to an end, with the Greeks emerging as the victors and Troy reduced to ruins.

The story of the Trojan Horse has been told for centuries. There is debate as to whether this actually happened, or whether it is mere mythology. Yet, the moral of the story remains true: When the enemy is clear, one can stand firm. But when the enemy is cunning, one can lose the war.

There are Biblical examples of this as well. Samson was victorious over the Philistines, But when Delilah seduced him to tell her his secrets, She cut his hair and Samson's strength was gone. The Philistines rushed upon him, captured him, gouged out his eyes, and took him as a prisoner. Goliath was stronger than any man that Israel could put forward. But when young David came out with a sling, and not a shield and sword, Goliath was unprepared, and was killed by a single rock to the forehead.

This morning, we will this in our text. We will the those in Pergamum capable of defending against the outright attack of the enemy. yet, falling to the subtle ways of false teaching. The church in Pergamum was strong when facing the onslaught of the enemy, only to be seduced by the deceitful lies of the false teachers. Let's read our text.

Revelation 2:12-17

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. I know where

you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

Now, for the past two weeks we have been looking at the churches of Revelation. These are real churches that existed in real cities, in Asia minor, that is, Modern Day Turkey. John wrote to these churches while on the prison island of Patmos.

Two weeks ago, we looked at the church in Ephesus, discovering that they had lost their first love. Jesus called them back to do the deeds they did at first (Revelation 2:5). Last week, we looked at the church in Smyrna, the persecuted church. We discovered there that Jesus called them to endure the tribulation that they were facing and to be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). This morning, we look at the church in Pergamum, a wayward church. a church that held the name of Jesus, but were following after the false teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.

The title of my message this morning is simply this: "Forsake False Teaching." We see this letter begin like all of these seven letters begin: by addressing the angel of the church. Again, we don't know if this was a literal angel, a spiritual being given the duties of overseeing this church or a leader in the church, who would speak to the church, like a pastor. But the effect is the same. This is Jesus, writing to this church.

And he begins the letter to those in Pergamum just like he begins every letter, with a description of himself, taken from Revelation, chapter 1.

Revelation 2:12

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.'

If you look back to chapter 1, you see the apocalyptic description of Jesus. Jesus was standing "in the midst of the lampstands . . . like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 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" (Revelation 1:13-16).

Here is a bright appearance of Jesus, brighter than the sun. This appearance of Jesus is loud! his voice was like the roar of many waters. And out of his mouth (Revelation 1:16), came a sharp, two-edged sword. The same description comes here written to the church in Pergamum: "The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword." This is my first point.

1. A Sharp Sword (verse 12)

We see it clearly. But what does it mean? That's the big question. We know from Hebrews that the word of God is sharp. "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The next verse tells us of how deeply this word penetrates. "And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13). In some regards, this is the imagery of the sword here in Revelation, chapter 1. It's the words of Jesus, that come sharp and penetrating. It's the strong word that comes out of his mouth. It's the convicting word, that pierces us deep within showing us our sin. It's the judging word, that we all will face at the judgement day.

But beyond that, Jesus himself tells us of the sharp sword that comes out of his mouth later in this letter to Pergamum. Look over there to verse 16. This is the clear call of Jesus to the church in Pergamum: Repent! "Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth" (Revelation 2:16). Again we enter into the mysteries of the apocalyptic literature. What does this mean? Is this a physical sword that Jesus will wield! Is this the word of confrontation that will come upon those who refuse to repent? Is this the word of judgement, that will ultimately bring these false teachers into condemnation? We don't know, but we know that it's bad for those who fail to repent!

Such is the strong sword that comes out of the mouth of Jesus. It will come to right the wrongs in the church in Pergamum!

This, by the way, is the message of Revelation! Jesus is coming to right the wrongs! Jesus is coming to establish his kingdom in righteousness! And we, who have repented of our sin, and experienced forgiveness of sin, and found our joy and hope in Christ! We will join in that kingdom with him! But for those who have failed to repent, even in the church! like those here in Pergamum! will fail to join in that kingdom! and will face the wrath of the Lamb! That's the sword that comes from the mouth of Jesus.

Let's move on to verse 13.

Revelation 2:13

I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Here is my second point:

2. A Strong Stand (verse 13)

That is, those in Pergamum have taken the stand against Satan's influences in the city. In fact, look at how Jesus describes the city: "I know

where you dwell, where Satan's throne is." Jesus describes the city this way twice. Look at the end of the verse: 13 where Satan dwells.

Pergamum was a very religious city. One commentator said, "Pergamum regarded itself as the custodian of the Greek way of life and of the Greek worship."^[1] And if you know anything about the Greek worship, you know that it was filled with idols and gods and sexual immorality. Particularly here in Pergamum, they worshiped Asclepius, known as "the Pergamene god."^[2] The emblem of Asclepius was the serpent. "Many of the coins of Pergamum have Asclepius' serpent as a part of their design."^[3] the serpent is a clear symbol of Satan, dating back to the garden of Eden.

Beyond that, Pergamum was the administrative center of this entire region of all of these cities in Revelation 2-3, which means that it was the center of Caesar worship, which was the practice of acknowledging Caesar as Lord! Ultimately, as we saw last week with Polycarp, a church leader in Smyrna who was burned at the stake! This is why the Romans killed him. He refused to bow to Caesar, and pledge allegiance to him! As a result, it cost him his life

And we see another martyr here in Pergamum. His name is Antipas. Look again at verse 13, "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells." We don't know exactly when Antipas died. Those in Pergamum knew. But we don't. It could have been during the reign of Nero, Or perhaps it could have been during the reign of Domitian. It was some time before John wrote the Revelation. Nor do we know exactly the circumstances behind the death of Antipas. Tradition has it that Antipas was burned in a brazen bull-shaped altar for casting out demons worshiped by the local population. This was a common torture and execution device used in ancient Greece.^[4] That's tradition on the manner of his death. We don't know if that was the case.

But we can safely assume that we know why he was put to death. It was his refusal to acknowledge Caesar as Lord, holding fast to the testimony that Jesus is Lord. This is the one fact that Jesus mentions about Antipas, that he was "my faithful witness." That is, he stood firm in testifying to the lordship of Jesus! and refused to acknowledge the lordship of Caesar! And it cost him his life. He was one of those who followed in the ways of those who conquered Satan, as mentioned in Revelation 12:11, "They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." Antipas loved not his life, even unto his death! He made a "strong stand"

Again, I must remind you that this is the culture to which John was writing. John wrote his Revelation to a persecuted church! To those who were facing hardship because of their faith in Jesus Christ! You must understand that Revelation was not written to a church at ease, like the church in America. For us, we struggle with the message of joy at the judgment coming upon unbelievers. Not so those of the first century, whose property was plundered whose reputation was slandered, and who were killed for their faith.

Isn't it interesting here that Jesus simply says to those in Pergamum, "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is." Isn't it interesting that Jesus doesn't say, "move away!" As most of you know, my wife is from California, so we go there often to visit her folks. A few years ago, we were driving along the highway and happened upon a U-Haul trailer. It was so interesting that I took a photograph of the trailer. What made this U-Haul so interesting was the sign on the back of the trailer. It was a bright, neon green sign that said, "GOOD BYE CA GOOD BYE NEWSOM GOOD BY LEFT WING DEMS EAT MY DUST YOU HAVE RUINED MY STATE GOOD LUCK MAGA"

I know what these people were talking about. California is the most liberal of all states! The taxes are high! They tolerate many evil things! But as evil as California is, it wasn't as bad as Pergamum! Satan's throne was in Pergamum. In Pergamum, people were killed for their faith in Christ! Some may argue that Satan's throne is in Sacramento. But people aren't being killed for their faith in California. And Jesus nowhere tells those in Pergamum, to move out of the city! "Move to Ephesus!" Jesus doesn't say that! He simply says, 13 "I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is."

Jesus is sympathetic to where we live and the pressures that we face in our society. I don't think that the call on our lives are to move to a place that more aligns with our vision and our values. Not that it's wrong to do so. But we are not, in any way commanded to desert our state for a better one. Instead, we are called to stand strong, like those in Pergamum did.

Can you imagine the stir that this must have caused for those in the church in Pergamum? The best way to do this is the think of one of our own, one of the members at Rock Valley Bible Church, who refused to bow in worship to the lordship of our government and was put to death as a result of his or her rebellion toward the government. Further imagine that this member of ours was put to death by lethal injection precisely for not worshipping the government, not killed for refusing to pay taxes, or for brandishing weapons in the Capitol building, or for threatening government officials, or for any other crime of the state. No, put to death for not bowing upon his knees, and confessing Caesar as Lord! It's hard even to conceive of this happening today. In fact, I know of nobody in the history our country, who has been put to death because he refused to acknowledge the president of the United States as the sovereign Lord! insisting, instead, that Jesus is Lord. Yet, that happened in Pergamum.

Those in the church refused to compromise. They stood firm. Look again at verse 13, "you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas." They didn't deny Jesus. Yet, not all was well in Pergamum. Though they stood for Jesus, not all was well with them. Jesus continued in this way:

Revelation 2:14

But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

This is my third point:

3. A Soft Stance (verses 14-15)

They took a soft stance on sin. Some false teaching came into their church, and they tolerated it. In verse 14, this teaching is identified as

"the teaching of Balaam." Now, if you know your Old Testament, Balaam was an interesting character. He was a prophet of God, who spoke the truth of God, but was wicked in his heart! Eventually, he led Israel into sin.

The heart of his story is told in Numbers 22-24. In these chapters, Israel is wandering in the wilderness, and the other nations around were aware of the danger that they were to their own nation. One king in particular, Balak, the king of Moab, was fearful of Israel. And so, he summoned Balaam to come and pronounce a curse upon Israel. Balak knew the power of the words of Balaam, saying, Numbers 22:6 I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.

If Balaam would come and curse Israel, Balak would give him a nice reward. Balaam went back and forth about what he should do. God told him, "No. Don't go. Don't curse Israel, because they are a blessed people" (Numbers 22:12). But Balaam asked the LORD again and again. Finally, the LORD said, Numbers 22:20 "Go, but only do what I tell you." Along the way, Balaam's donkey spoke to him and rebuked him. Finally, Balaam arrived to speak with Balak, the king of Moab. Balak asked Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam sought the LORD and blessed Israel. Balak was angry! He said, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have done nothing but bless them" (Numbers 23:11). Balaam responded in the right way, "Must I not take care to speak what the LORD puts in my mouth" (Numbers 23:12).

The scene repeated itself twice more. Balak asked Balaam to curse Israel. Balaam seeks a word from the LORD. Then, Balaam blesses Israel. On the one hand, Balaam looked pretty good! He was a prophet speaking the words of the LORD! But Balaam was a Trojan Horse. In the public, it all looked good. He looked like a gift! He said all of the right things. But there was deception with Balaam. It was Balaam who counseled Balak to defeat Israel in another way. He advises the Moabites "to entice the people of Israel with prostitutes and idolatry" (see Numbers 31:16).^[5]

We read of the sad situation at the beginning of Numbers 25, Numbers 25:1 While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. Numbers 25:2 These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. Numbers 25:3 So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And the LORD brought a plague upon Israel, and 24,000 people died!

This was how Balaam was so wicked, professing the LORD in public! never going against the LORD! And yet, on the back side, he was the one who brought immorality and idolatry into the camp of Israel. This is exactly why Jesus rebuked those in Pergamum. because they were teachers there, teaching the same thing: "You have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality."

I'm calling my third point, "A Soft Stance" because these people were taking a soft stance on sin. Oh, they didn't deny the name of Jesus. They are commended in verse 13, "you hold fast my name." Yet at the very same time, there were teachers in Pergamum who tolerated idolatry and immorality!

Today in America, there are many who don't deny the name of Jesus, but tolerate sin. It might go like this! A church gathers, and songs are sung to Jesus. The public word is proclaimed! But sin is tolerated. It's not so much what it said in the church, it's what isn't said. There are many churches like this in America that preach Jesus; that preach faith in Jesus; that preach hope in Jesus; that preach the gospel! People are told that if you believe in Jesus, that he died on the cross for your sins, all your sins will be forgiven! You will be holy before the LORD! You will enjoy everlasting life! It's the grace of God that saves us! By faith alone in Christ alone! Many churches in America get this exactly right! But they fail to speak much against sin.

In other words, "A Soft Stance" against sin. Nowhere is the implication of the gospel proclaimed! These churches are silent in saying that when we believe, God will change us! Our desires will be different! We will shed our sin! Yes, it is Ephesians 2:8, "By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." Yes, it is Ephesians 2:9, "not a result of works, so that no one may boast." But the gospel doesn't end there. When God's grace comes upon our lives, God does a work in us. It is also Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." We aren't saved by our works. We are saved unto works.

And it's important always to understand the worth and value of our works. They don't save us! But they show us that God has worked in us! They give glory to God! Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). But there are churches in America, who won't talk about the implications of the gospel! It's faith alone, apart from works!

The assumption comes (though never stated publicly), it's OK for believers to engage in idolatry and sexual immorality. because they believe in Jesus! This is the teaching of Balaam that Jesus had against Pergamum. In many ways, I think that this is a Trojan Horse, used by Satan to infiltrate the church with sin. Once the gospel of faith comes into the city, the people come out of the horse, and bring sin into the church. I think that the Nicolaitans were much the same.

Revelation 3:15

So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

We know nothing about the Nicolaitans, except that Jesus mentioned them when he wrote to those in Ephesus: "Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate" (Revelation 2:6). Note that Jesus especially mentions their "works." Jesus says that he "hates" their works.

I would suspect that the teaching of the Nicolaitans are much the same as the teaching of Balaam. It was their works that Jesus hated, not their teaching. They could preach all about the forgiveness that comes through Jesus, "Believe and trust in Jesus! And your sins can be forgiven!" Yet, by their works, they deny him (see Titus 1:16).

God doesn't save us to wallow in our sin! He makes us into a new man! "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has

passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). But the Nicolaitans, apparently, weren't walking in this new way! They were still indulging the flesh! Jesus said to the church in Pergamum, "You are talking a soft stance on sin!"

Let's move on to my fourth point.

4. A Strong Sword (verse 16)

Revelation 3:16

Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

This is a threat to those who think that they can profess Christ with their lips, and live lives of wickedness. Jesus will come and judge you. Jesus is calling us all to repent. Repent of our immorality and idolatry.

Note who is being called to repent: "Professing Christians in the church!" Lip service to Jesus won't suffice. Jesus once said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:21-23). We can't be practicing lawlessness and professing faith in Christ. When Jesus came on the scene in Galilee, his first words were this: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Jesus is calling us to repent of our deeds!

These in Pergamum were called to turn from their idolatry and from their immorality.

You say, "What is idolatry?" Let the words of the New City Catechism^[6] speak to us.

Question 17: What is idolatry?

Answer 17: Idolatry is trusting in created things rather than the Creator for our hope and happiness, significance and security.

What about sexual immorality?

Question 11: What does God require in the seventh commandment?

Answer 11: that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them.

This is what Christ is calling us to turn from. He is calling us to turn from trusting in created things. He is calling us to turn from all unfaithfulness in mind and body. This is what Christ was calling those in Pergamum to turn from. In Pergamum, there were those had let these sins into their lives. Sadly, this may be true of some of you. And Jesus hates this. He will make war against those who are so engaged in these deeds in the church.

May God grant all of us repent of these things. May the glory of the grace of God so stir us that it causes us to walk in those ways. "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12). This is what we need, a heavy dose of the grace of God.

Finally, we come to my last point:

5. A Signed Stone (verse 17)

Revelation 3:17

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.

As I have said before, these letters that Jesus wrote are open letters. "If you have an ear," you should be listening to these letters. All of these churches were hearing what Jesus was saying to the other churches, so that they all could learn from the commendations and condemnations of Jesus. Learn to love what Jesus loves. Learn to hate what Jesus hates.

This church receives a promise. To the one who conquers, that is holding fast to the words of Christ and walking in his ways, to this one, Jesus will give some of the hidden manna. What is this? The reference to "manna" goes back to Exodus 16 in which God provided for the people of Israel in the wilderness. It was a flake-like substance like coriander seed that could be eaten. But that "manna" wasn't hidden.

So, what is the "hidden" manna? It could be what Jesus referred to in John 6, where Jesus talks about the true manna that he will give. He is the bread of life. Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:51). Perhaps this is the hidden manna: the flesh of Jesus, himself. It is hidden in the sense that it's veiled. The Pharisees didn't see it. The flesh of Jesus doesn't look like manna. But it gives life!

He will also give him a white stone. A stone! I would rather have a dollar bill. What does this mean? I have no idea. Some have talked about how a white stone was involved in the voting process. You cast your stone into the booth. Others have thought that the white stone served as a ticket of sorts, to let you into wherever it is that you wanted to go. It may have been a good sign in the same way that a black dot on a paper is a bad sign in Treasure Island. We have no idea. Perhaps there were some culture practices.

On that stone, there was a new name. Do you know what the name is? None of us know! That's the idea. Nobody will know until they receive

the stone from Jesus. Perhaps each stone will be personalized in some way, with a special name, written just for me.

I opened my message talking about writing letters to those in jail. When they receive these letters, they cherish them and hold on to them and cling to them. They read them over and over again. Those are anonymous letters. But this note on the white stone is specially written to everyone who conquers. I get this special name. I won't know what it is until then. How much will you treasure this stone of yours? Perhaps we will share what is written with each other.

It's a sign of abundant blessing.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on May 21, 2023 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] William Barclay, *The Revelation of John, Volume 1* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 88.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., 89.

[4] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipas_of_Pergamum https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazen_bull.

[5] See <https://www.gotquestions.org/Balaam-in-the-Bible.html>.

[6] See <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/new-city-catechism/>.