

Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

A Letter to the Church @ Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17



¹² And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; ¹³ I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. ¹⁵ So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. ¹⁶ Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.



Revelation 2:12



- And to the angel of the church in Pergamos [Pergamum] write;
- These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

**Do you see what
John is doing with
the description of
Jesus in each
letter?**



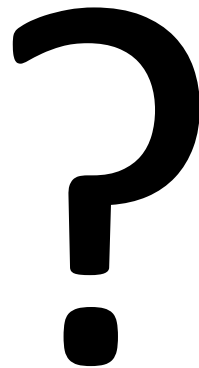
**What does the
sharp sword with
two edges
represent?**



Revelation 2:13



- “ ‘I know where you dwell,
where Satan’s throne is.





This city is the heart of paganism and idolatry. Some suggest that the worship of the Caesar, the Roman Emperor, as god began in Pergamum.



Revelation 2:13



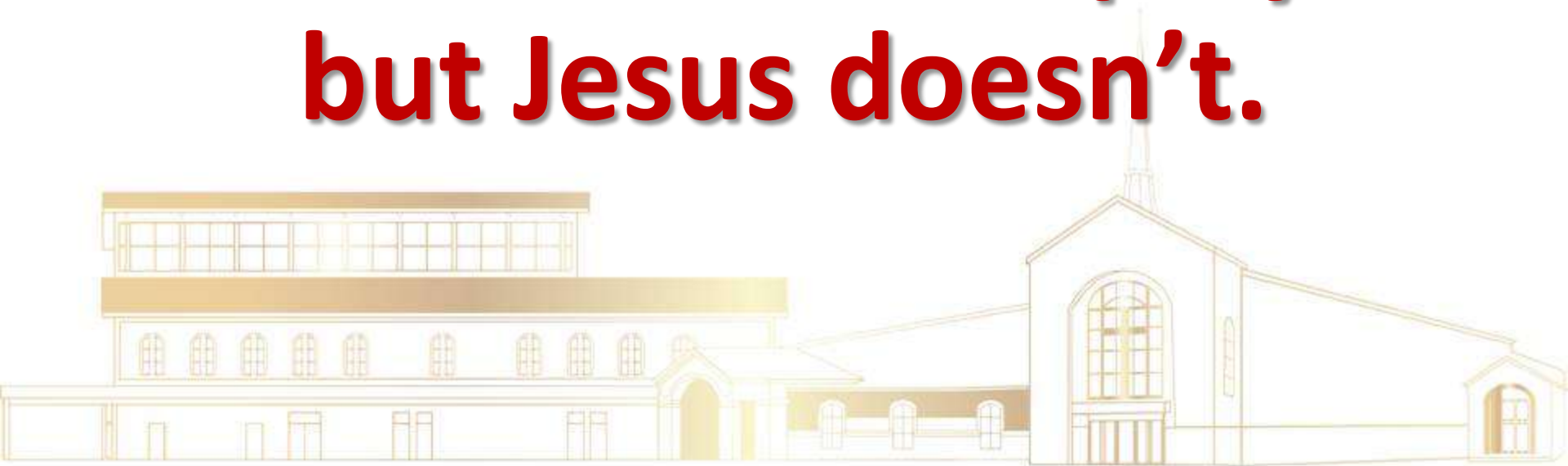
[In this city of idolatry]

- Yet you hold fast my name,
- and you did not deny my faith

Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

**This NOT denying Jesus
is a Big Deal!**

**We tend to downplay it
but Jesus doesn't.**



Matthew 10:32-33

- So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.



**Now the
significance of
keeping the faith is
further magnified
in v. 13**



**In a culture of religious freedom how
do 21st century Christians hold fast
and NOT deny my faith?**

**Aren't we denying our faith when we
don't live out Christ's
commandments?**



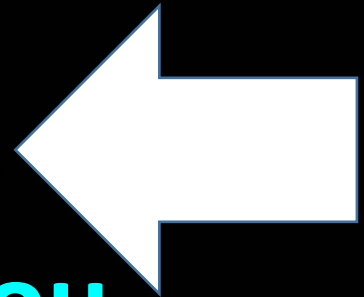
Being Nasty & Rude
Blowing off the Lord's Day
Road Rage
Denying Christ Access to Our
Checkbook
Cussing Someone Out
Cheating on Our Spouse
Remaining Silent when
Christianity is being Assaulted



Revelation 2:13



- even in the days of Antipas
- my faithful witness,
- who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.



Revelation 1:5

- and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood





Martyrs Mirror records that Antipas was roasted alive in a copper steer.

**Would I be a
faithful
witness?**



**Am I
prepared to
chose Christ
over life?**



Or

**Am I a faithful
witness?**





**Are you a closet
Christian?**



Do your neighbors KNOW you are a Christian?

Does your travel ball team know you are a Christian?

Do your teammates/coworkers know you are a Christian?

Does Facebook know you are a Christian?

Does your family know you are a follower of Christ?

Have you been legitimately baptized as a believer?



Revelation 2:14



- **But** I have a few things against you:

At this point, we ask:

Would Jesus have a few things against us?

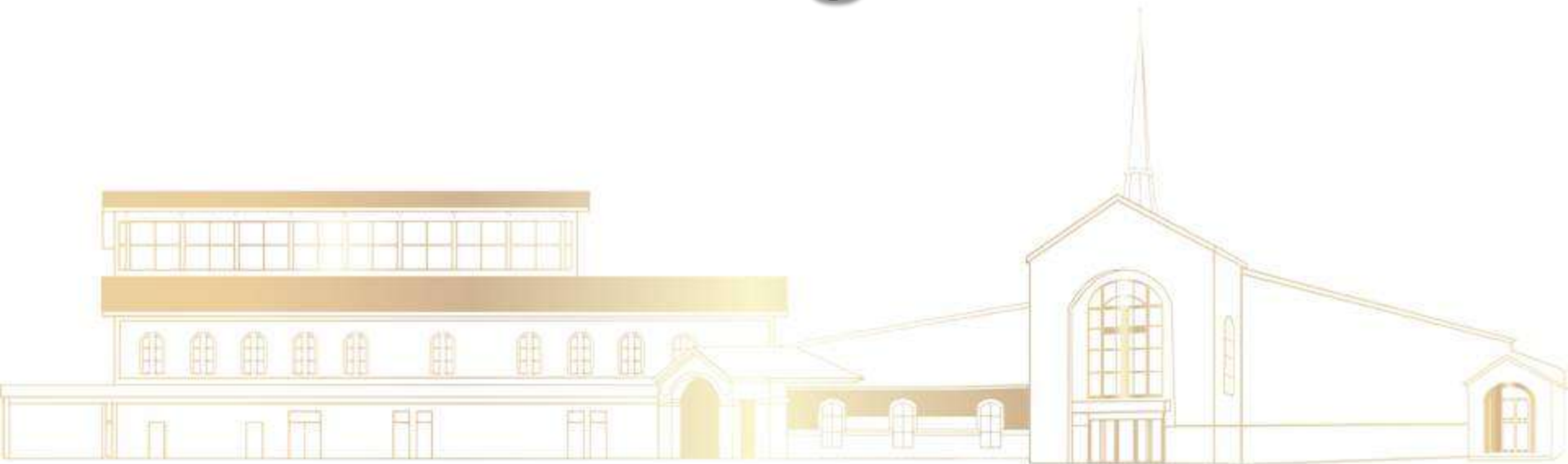
Revelation 2:14



- 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.

Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

What is a Stumbling Block?



A stumbling block is a choice or behavior (sinful or not so sinful) that directly or indirectly causes another person to trip in their walk with the Lord.



“Food offered to idols” is an example of “not-so sinful.”

Since idols are NOT gods—the meat was not technically offered to a god and as such it was not contaminated.

Therefore buying and consuming this cheap meat was technically not sinful BUT this practice caused those who had been saved out of idolatry to struggle.



Acts 15:20

[The Jerusalem Council concluded:]

- but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.



Food sacrificed to idols is NOT an issue in North Carolina but overeating, laziness, profanity, alcohol, and tobacco IS.

I need to be careful with this liberty that God has given me.



1 Corinthians 8:9

[Paul says:]

- But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.



Romans 14:13

- Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer,
- but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.



Balaam



Numbers 22-24



The book of Numbers devotes a long section to the incident involving Balaam and Balak, covering chaps. 22–24 and portions of chap. 31. Moab is terrified at the prospect of the obvious success of Israel, even as she marches her vagabond horde through the territory of Moab. So, Balak, who at that time is the king over Moab, becomes convinced that he cannot make a successful battle out of a direct confrontation. Thus he determines to bring Balaam, who claims to be a prophet, to curse Israel. In a long and strange incident, Balaam receives clear indication from God that he is not to go to Moab or curse Israel. His violation of the mandate of the Lord places him in the position of experiencing a confrontation with an angel and receiving a rebuke from the donkey that provided his conveyance.

Paige Patterson

Numbers 31:15-17

- Moses said to them, “**Have you let all the women live?**”¹⁶ Behold, these, on Balaam’s advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD.¹⁷ Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, **and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him.**



**Sexual
immorality is a
GIANT problem
in the church.**



**Is it a
problem in
Berean?**





© Dave & Les Jacobs/Blend Images/Corbis



**Do you have any idea the
number of single church
members who stop
participating in worship
when they hook up with a
friend and start sleeping
with them?**



Let's be clear.
This is NOT a gray
area of behavior
for Christians.



1 Thessalonians 4:3

- For this is the will of God, your sanctification:
- that you abstain from sexual immorality;



Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

What are the solutions to sexual immorality in the church?



Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Solutions

#1 Be on Guard.



Proverbs 4:23 (NET)

- Guard your heart with all vigilance, for from it are the sources of life.



To the married I say:

Work on your own marriage.

**Protect yourself from situations
where feelings may develop.**



To the single I say:

Don't even consider for a moment an man/woman who isn't in love with Jesus.

Protect yourself from situations where the temptation would be greater.





**Is this appropriate behavior for
single adults?**



Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Solutions

#2 Self-control.



Self-control to regulate:

- What I watch
- Who I am with
- What I think
- Where I allow myself to go
- What I touch
- What I drink (or smoke)





**I need to be careful with this liberty
God has given me.**



Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Solutions

#3 Marriage.



1 Corinthians 7:9

- But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry.
- For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.



Hebrews 13:4

- Let marriage be held in honor among all, and
- let the marriage bed be undefiled,
- **for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.**



Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Solutions

#4 Church Discipline.



1 Corinthians 5:1-2

- It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. ² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? **Let him who has done this be removed from among you.**



1 Corinthians 5:6b

- Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?



Revelation 2:15



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

A large black question mark centered within a white square.

**False teachers
are
everywhere.**



Revelation 2:16



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

2 Peter 2:1

- But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there **will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.**



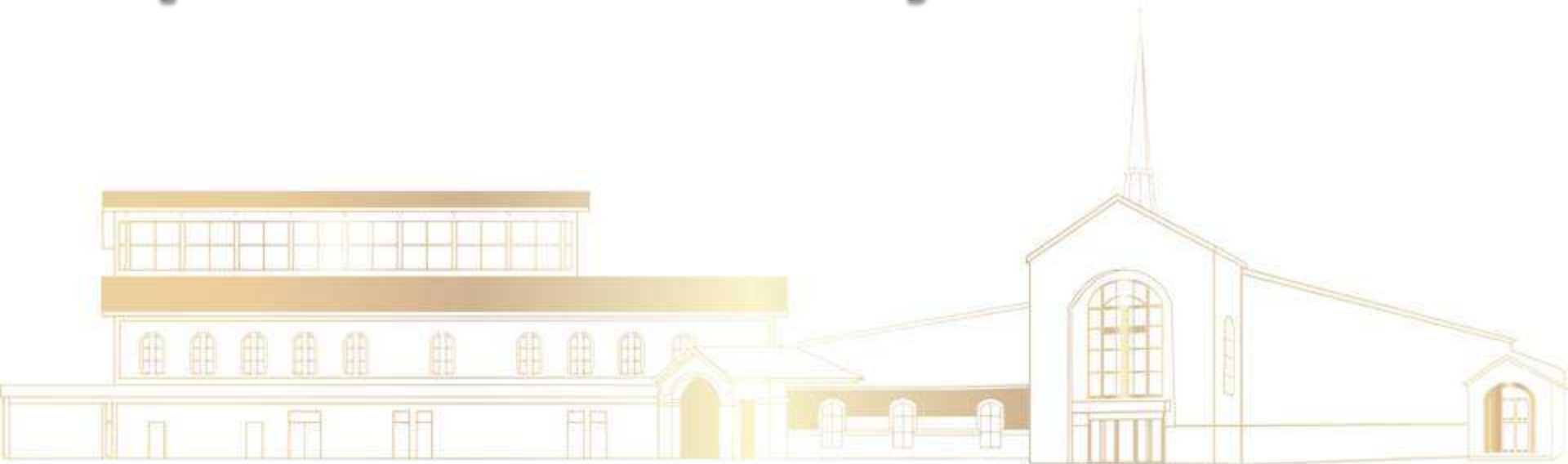
Revelation 2:17



- He who has an ear,
- let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Apocalyptic Literature is packed with symbolism



Revelation 2:17



- 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.'

2:17 As God fed Israel in the wilderness, Christ supplies hidden manna to the one who conquers, who endures persecution and stays pure from defilement (12:6, 14–17). Historically, a white stone was given to victors at games for entrance to banquets (cf. the messianic banquet); such a stone was also used by jurors at trials to vote for acquittal. The new name, given to the one who holds fast to Jesus' name (2:13), may refer to the Holy Spirit's work of conforming believers to the holiness of Christ (Rom. 8:29). The manna and the white stone suggest differing types of eternal blessings and rewards, as appropriate in each situation.

Celebrating 50 years of Proclaiming Christ
BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH

Christ Promises

Eat of the Tree of Life

No Second Death

Hidden Manna & White Stone

