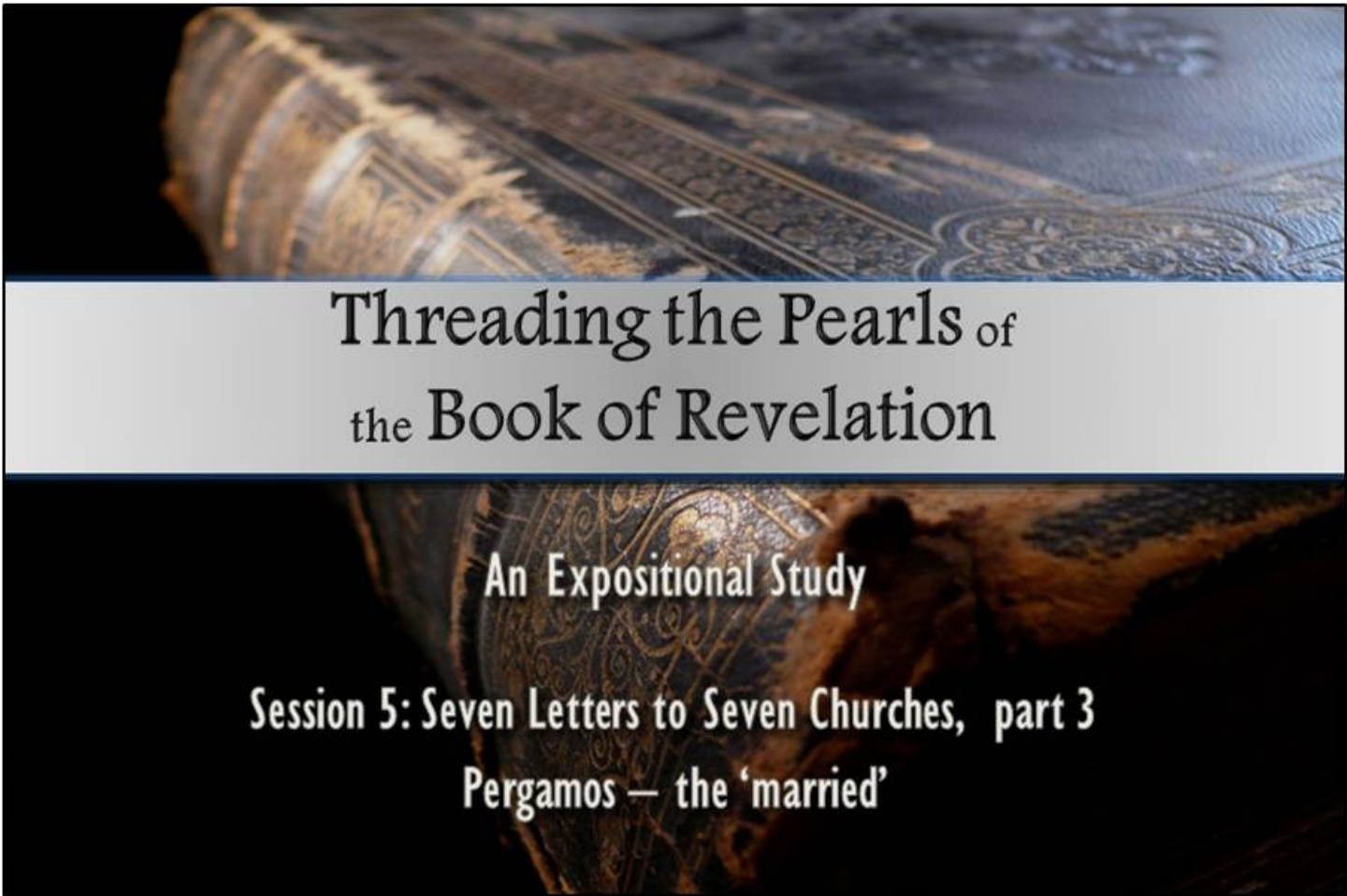




T H R E A D I N G T H E P E A R L S . o r g



## Threading the Pearls of the Book of Revelation

An Expository Study

Session 5: Seven Letters to Seven Churches, part 3  
Pergamos — the 'married'

REVELATION 2:12 — 2:17

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I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.  
And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith...  
<sup>14</sup>"But I have a few things against you, because you have there  
those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put  
*a stumbling block* before the children of Israel, to eat things  
sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

[REV 2:13-14]



## REVELATION 2

**12 And to the angel of the church of Pergamos write: These things, saith he, that hath the sharp two edged sword:**

**To the angel of the church**

ACTS 18:5-6, When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. <sup>6</sup>But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on *I will go to the Gentiles*";

1COR 1:21, since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God *through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*

**Pergamos**<sup>†</sup> – “marriage”<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>†</sup> NOTE — Πέργη = Perge, perg'-ay, Strong# 4011: Perga = "earthy".

πύργος = Purgos, poor'-gos, Strong# 4444: 1. a tower; 2. a fortified structure rising to a considerable height, to repel a hostile attack or to enable a watchman to see in every direction.

<sup>\*</sup> NOTE — πέρασ = Peras, per'-as, Strong# 4009: 1. *extremity*, bound, end; 1a. of a portion of space; boundary; frontier; the ends of the earth; the remotest lands...

γαμέω = Gameo, gam-eh'-o, Strong# 1060: 1. to lead in *marriage*, take to wife; 1a. to get married, to marry; 1b. to give one's self in marriage; 2. to give a daughter in marriage.

NEH 13:27, shall we also be disobedient and do all this great evil to transgress against our God, and *marry strange women*?

**These are the words**

JOHN 5:46-47, if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup>"But if you do not believe his writings, *how will you believe My words?*"

**Sharp, double-edged sword**

ISA 49:2, He made *my mouth like a sharp sword*; in the shadow of his hand he hid me;

JER 12:12, Upon all the bare heights in the desert destroyers have come, for *the sword of the LORD devours from one end of the land to the other*; no flesh has peace;

1CHR 21:16, David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand *a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem.*

## CONSIDER THIS —

MATH 22:2, The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage\* [γάμους] for his son.

<sup>\*</sup> NOTE: γάμος = Gamos (gam'-os); Greek Noun Masculine, Strong#1062: 1. a wedding or marriage festival, a wedding banquet, a wedding feast; 2. marriage, matrimony.

Might Pergamos be a play on the Greek words for Extreme (per) and Marriage (gamos)?



## REVELATION 2

**13 I know where thou dwellest, where the seat of Satan is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith. Even in those days when Antipas was my faithful witness, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.**

**I know where you live**

2COR 12:6-7, ...lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, *a messenger of Satan to buffet me*, lest I be exalted above measure.

**Satan has his throne**

PSM 94:20-21, Shall *the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law*, Have fellowship with You? <sup>21</sup>They gather together against the life of the righteous, And condemn innocent blood; 1COR 5:1-5, It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! <sup>2</sup>And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you... <sup>4</sup>In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>5</sup>*deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

**Remain true to my name**

2COR 11:3, I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from *a sincere and pure devotion to Christ*;

1JON 3:23-24, this is His commandment: that *we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ* and love one another, as He gave us commandment. <sup>24</sup>Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

**You did not renounce your faith**

2TIM 2:16-18, shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. <sup>17</sup>And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, <sup>18</sup>who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and *they overthrow the faith of some*.

**Your faith in me**

PHM 1:4-6, I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, <sup>5</sup>hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, <sup>6</sup>that the *sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus*.

**In the days of Antipas**

PSM 7:1-2, O Lord my God, in You I put my trust; Save me from all those who persecute me; And deliver me, <sup>2</sup>Lest they tear me like a lion, *Rending me in pieces*, while there is none to deliver;

PSM 119:161-162, Princes *persecute me without a cause*, But my heart stands in awe of Your word. <sup>162</sup>I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure;

ACTS 22:4-5, *I persecuted this Way to the death*, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women... <sup>5</sup>I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

## CONSIDER THIS —

Jesus says in REV 2:13, 'I know where you live'. This may be said concerning all of us. Since, ACTS 17:26-27, He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their *preappointed times and the boundaries* of their dwellings, <sup>27</sup>so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

**My faithful witness**

ACTS 22:12-15, ...<sup>13</sup>Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that same hour I looked up at him. <sup>14</sup>"Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. <sup>15</sup>For *you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard*;

ACTS 22:19-21, ...Then He said to me, 'Depart, for *I will send you far from here to the Gentiles*'".

**Put to death in your city**

2COR 1:8-10, ...we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup>Yes, *we had the sentence of death in ourselves*, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup>who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us;

2COR 4:11-12, we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup>So then *death is working in us*, but life in you.

**Where Satan lives**

JAM 3:11-16, Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. <sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup>This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.





## REVELATION 2

**14 But I have against thee a few things: because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balack to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat, and to commit fornication:**

**I have a few things against you**

LUKE 17:3, Take heed to yourselves. *If your brother sins against you, rebuke him*; and if he repents, forgive him.

**People... who hold to the teaching**

2COR 11:4, if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, *you put up with it readily enough*; MATH 15:8-11, "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. <sup>9</sup>And *in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*" <sup>10</sup>When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand: <sup>11</sup>"Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

**Teaching of Balaam**

2PET 2:15-22, They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; <sup>16</sup>but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. <sup>17</sup>These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. <sup>18</sup>For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, *they allure through the lusts of the flesh*, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. <sup>19</sup>While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. <sup>20</sup>For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the

latter end is worse for them than the beginning. <sup>21</sup>For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. <sup>22</sup>But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire";

JUDE 1:11-13, Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run *greedily in the error of Balaam for profit*, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. <sup>12</sup>These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; <sup>13</sup>raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

**Stumbling block**

\* NOTE — Term not found in NIV (substituted with the phrase, "to sin");

ISA 57:13-14, ...he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land, And shall inherit My holy mountain." <sup>14</sup>And one shall say, "Heap it up! Heap it up! Prepare the way, *Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people*";

EZE 33:31, So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but *their hearts pursue their own gain*.

## CONSIDER THIS —

The more we know of the enticement of Balaam upon the Israelites, the more this idea of the church's corruption by 'marrying' the world's ways will become. NUM 25:1-3, Israel remained in Shittim, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. <sup>2</sup>They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. <sup>3</sup>So *Israel was joined to Baal* of Peor...

**Taught Balak to entice the Israelites**

NUM 25:1, While Israel was staying in Shittim, the *men began to indulge in sexual immorality* with Moabite women;

NUM 31:16, 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;

MIC 6:5, O My people, *remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled*, And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, From Acacia Grove to Gilgal, That you may know the righteousness of the Lord".

**Food sacrificed to idols**

1COR 8:4-13, concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. <sup>5</sup>For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), <sup>6</sup>yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. <sup>7</sup>However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. <sup>8</sup>But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. <sup>9</sup>But *beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block* to those who are weak. <sup>10</sup>For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? <sup>11</sup>And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? <sup>12</sup>But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

**Committing sexual immorality**

1COR 5:1, 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;

1COR 10:21, You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and *the cup of demons*. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.





## REVELATION 2

**15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaites.**

**16 In like manner do penance: if not, I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**

**Those who hold to the teaching**

MARK 7:6-9, He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. <sup>7</sup>And in vain they worship Me, *Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*' <sup>8</sup>"For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." <sup>9</sup>He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

**Nicolaitans**

2COR 11:19-20 [NIV], You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! <sup>20</sup>In fact, you even put up with anyone *who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you* or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face;

MARK 10:42-43, Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their great ones exercise authority over them.* <sup>43</sup>"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant.

**Repent**

2COR 7:9-10, I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but *that your sorrow led to repentance.* For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. <sup>10</sup>For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

**Otherwise**

2COR 12:20-21, ...lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; <sup>21</sup>lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for *many who have sinned before and have not repented* of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

**I will come soon**

2COR 13:2, *On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others;*

HEB 10:36-39, ..."For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. <sup>38</sup>Now the just shall live by faith; But *if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.*" <sup>39</sup>But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

## CONSIDER THIS —

We are engaged to marry the Son!

Until the time of the wedding, how should we, the church, conduct ourselves?

EPH 5:25-27, ...Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup>that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup>that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

**To you**

EZE 18:29-32, the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair? <sup>30</sup>"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "*Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.*" <sup>31</sup>"Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup>"For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!"

**I... will fight against them**

EZE 33:27-29, 'Thus says the Lord God: "As I live, surely those who are in the ruins shall fall by the sword, and the one who is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who are in the strongholds and caves shall die of the pestilence. <sup>28</sup>"For I will make the land most desolate, her arrogant strength shall cease, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that no one will pass through. <sup>29</sup>"Then *they shall know that I am the Lord*, when I have made the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed".

**Sword of my mouth**

HEB 4:12-13, 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. <sup>13</sup>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;

LUKE 2:33-35, Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. <sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup>"(yes, *a sword will pierce through your own soul also*), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed".







## REVELATION 2

**17 He, that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches: To him that overcometh, I will give the hidden manna, and will give him a white counter, and in the counter, a new name written, which no man knoweth, but he that receiveth it.**

**He who has an ear**

MATH 13:47-48, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, <sup>48</sup>which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and *gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.*

**Let him hear... the Spirit**

1COR 1:9-10, ...I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that *you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

**To him who overcomes**

1JON 2:13, I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because *you have overcome the wicked one.* I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.

**The hidden manna**

JOHN 6:48-51, I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. <sup>51</sup>*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".

**A white stone**

1COR 4:4, ...do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then *each one will receive his commendation from God.*

**Name written on [the stone]**

EXO 28:9-11, Then you shall take two onyx stones and *engrave on them the names* of the sons of Israel: <sup>10</sup>six of their names on one stone, and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth...

**A new name written**

2TIM 2:19, God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let *every one who names the name of the Lord* depart from unrighteousness";  
HEB 2:11-13, For both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one, for which cause he [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them brothers, <sup>12</sup>saying, "*I will declare your name to my brothers,* In the midst of the congregation will I sing your praise"...

**Name... known only to him**

EXO 33:14-17, He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ...for *you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name*";  
ECC 6:10, Whatever one is, *he has been named already,* For it is known that he is man...

**Him who receives [a new name]**

JOHN 16:24, Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and *you will receive,* that your joy may be full;  
MARK 9:37, Whoever receives one of these little children in My name *receives Me;* and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me".

## CONSIDER THIS —

There is more to a name than perhaps we realize (see EXO 20:7). After all, we represent Christ when we are called CHRIST-ian. We are His ambassadors to this world:

2COR 3:3, *you are an epistle of Christ,* ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.



## GROUP DISCUSSION

Read REV 2:14, I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to *put a stumbling block* before the children of Israel...

- ⊕ **1a. List potential stumbling blocks that a believer may put before another, causing them (to sin) to stumble in their walk with the Lord.**

- ⊕ **1b. How might even Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny cause a person to stumble in understanding the Gospel of Christ?**

Read JAM 4:4, Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that *friendship with the world is enmity with God*? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

- ⊕ **2a. What does friendship with the world look like?**

- ⊕ **2b. How has the church adopted the world's ways, and is thus 'married to' the world?**

Read 2COR 11:2, I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have *betrothed you to one husband*, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

- ⊕ **3a. Who is the church engaged to marry? How can we 'make ourselves ready' to be His wife?**

(see REV 19:7-9, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and *His wife has made herself ready*." <sup>8</sup>And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. <sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'")

Read ROM 7:3-4, So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. <sup>4</sup>Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that *you may be married to another- to Him who was raised from the dead*, that we should bear fruit to God.

Thus, the church is betrothed (engaged to marry) the Son of God. Seeking after another husband (the world) would then be committing 'spiritual adultery' against the Lord.

- ⊕ **3b. How might we *avoid* being enticed away from our fiancé (our husband to be) Jesus Christ?**

(see also ROM 12:1-2)

NEXT SESSION —