



FAITH PRINCETON SUNDAY SCHOOL

REVELATION 2:12-17 Pergamum

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2026

2026 Faith Sunday School Plan

Date	SS Scripture	SS Lesson
1/4/2026		PRAYER
1/11/2026	REVELATION INTRO	ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
1/18/2026	REVELATION INTRO	ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
1/25/2026	SNOW DATE	
2/1/2026	REVELATION INTRO	ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
2/8/2026	Revelation 1.	Revealing Jesus
2/15/2026	Revelation 2:1-7	Ephesus. Lost First Love
2/22/2026	Revelation 2:8-11	Smyrna. Faithful in Persecution
3/1/2026	Revelation 2:12-17.	Pergamum. Repent from False Teachings
3/8/2026	Revelation 2:18-29.	Thyatira. Don't Tolerate Jezebel
3/15/2026	Revelation 3:1-6.	Sardis. Live up to your Reputation
3/22/2026	Revelation 3:7-13.	Philadelphia. Open Door
3/29/2026	Revelation 3:14-22.	Lukewarm. Closed Door.
4/5/2026	Revelation 4.	Scenes from the Throne
4/12/2026	Revelation 5.	Hear a Lion, See a Lamb
4/19/2026	Revelation 6:1-8.	The Six Seals: Four Horsemen
4/26/2026	Revelation 6:9-17.	The Six Seals: Martyrs and Darkness
5/3/2026	Revelation 7:1-8.	The Seal of the Servants
5/10/2026	Revelation 7:9-17.	Multitudes and Martyrs
5/17/2026	Revelation 8.	Seventh Seal - Silence, Smoke & 4 Trumpets
5/24/2026	Revelation 9:1-12.	Fifth Trumpet. Army of Locusts.
5/31/2026	Revelation 9:13-21.	Sixth Trumpet. Four Angels Released.
6/7/2026	Revelation 10.	Mighty Angel and Small Scroll
6/14/2026	Revelation 11:1-14.	Two Witnesses (second woe)
6/21/2026	Revelation 11:15-19.	Trumpet 7. Worship in Heaven. Wrath has Come.
6/28/2026	Revelation 12.	The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon
7/5/2026	Revelation 13:1-10.	The Two Beasts.
7/12/2026	Revelation 13:11-18.	The Two Beasts. (cont)
7/19/2026	Revelation 14:1-13.	The Lamb, the 144,000 & 3 Angels
7/26/2026	Revelation 14:14-20.	Reaping the Harvest of the Earth
8/2/2026	Revelation 15.	Worship before the Bowl Judgments
8/9/2026	Revelation 16.	Seven Bowls of God's Wrath
8/16/2026	Revelation 17.	Woman and Scarlet Beast (Babylon & nations)
8/23/2026	Revelation 18.	Fall of Babylon
8/30/2026	Revelation 19:1-10.	Hallelujah Chorus
9/6/2026	Revelation 19:11-21.	The Word of God Strikes Down the Enemies
9/13/2026	Revelation 20:1-6.	The Millennial Reign of Christ.
9/20/2026	Revelation 20:7-15.	Final Judgment
9/27/2026	Revelation 21:1-8.	Making Everything New
10/4/2026	Revelation 21:9-27.	The New Jerusalem
10/11/2026	Revelation 22.	River and Trees of Life. Maranatha.
10/18/2026	REVELATION	FINAL THOUGHTS - ALL CLASSES ASSEMBLY
10/25/2026		

DEAR FAMILY OF FAITH,

As we continue our study of the letters to the churches of the Revelation, we arrive next at Pergamum. The church there lived in a very hostile environment (“where Satan has his throne” v. 13) and had already faced deadly persecution. They had remained faithful to the Gospel, but not faithful to a life of purity. Jesus warned them to reject those who embraced heresies which promoted immorality. The only weapon needed to battle such heresies is the sword that proceeds from Jesus’ mouth – the Word of God. Truth always defeats the lies that Satan tries to sell. But God’s people are called to have ears to hear that Truth and overcome the temptations and tricks of impurity.

Here is a little bit of history about Pergamum from *Halley’s Bible Handbook*.

Pergamum (or Pergamos) was the capital of the ancient Greek kingdom of Pergamos, until the last of the Pergamenian kings bequeathed his realm to Rome in 133 B.C. Pergamum became the chief town of the new province of Asia and the site of the first temple of the Caesar-cult, erected to Rome and Augustus in 29 B.C. A second shrine was later dedicated to Emperor Trajan. The worship of Asclepius (or Esculapius), the god of healing, and of Zeus was also prominent. The symbol of Asclepius was two coiled snakes on a staff (which today is still the symbol of the medical arts). Zeus was worshiped as “Zeus the Savior” because of a military victory over the Gauls. It is natural that “Nicolaitanism” should flourish in a place where politics and paganism were so closely allied, and where pressure on Christians to compromise must have been heavy.

Pergamum was an ancient seat of culture and possessed a library that rivaled Alexandria’s. Parchment was invented at and named after Pergamum, to free the library from Egypt’s jealous ban on the export of papyrus.

Halley, Henry H.. *Halley's Bible Handbook with the New International Version*---Deluxe Edition: (p. 844). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

REVELATION 2

Observation Worksheet

Chapter Theme _____

Message to Pergamum

12 ““And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

13 ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. 15 So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

16 Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.’

Enduring Word Commentary: **Revelation 2:12-17 Letter to PERGAMUM** **David Guzik**

Study Guide for Revelation 2

Jesus' Letters to the Churches (Continued)

Jesus' letter to the church at Pergamos.

1. ([Revelation 2:12a](#)) The character of the city of Pergamos.

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,

- a. **Pergamos:** This was the political capital of the Roman Province of Asia the Less. When John wrote, Pergamos had been the capital city of the region for more than three hundred years. The city was a noted center for culture and education, having one of the great libraries of the ancient world, with more than 200,000 volumes.
- b. **Pergamos:** This was also an extremely religious city. It had temples to the Greek and Roman gods Dionysus, Athena, Demeter, and Zeus. It also had three temples dedicated to the worship of the Roman Emperor.
- i. Some 50 years before Smyrna won the honor of building the first temple to Tiberius, the city of Pergamos won the right to build the first temple to worship Caesar Augustus in the province of Asia.
- c. **Pergamos:** This city was especially known as a center for the worship of the deity known as Asclepius. Represented by a serpent, Asclepius was the god of healing and knowledge. There was a medical school at his temple in Pergamos. Because of the famous temple to the Roman god of healing, sick and diseased people from all over the Roman Empire flocked to Pergamos for relief.
- i. “Sufferers were allowed to spend the night in the darkness of the temple. In the temple there were tame snakes. In the night the sufferer might be touched by one of these tame and harmless snakes as it glided over the ground on which he lay. The touch of the snake was held to be the touch of the god himself, and the touch was held to bring health and healing.” (Barclay)

2. ([Revelation 2:12b](#)) Jesus describes Himself to the church at Pergamos.

‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:

a. **He who has the sharp two-edged sword:** In [Revelation 1:16](#), John observed of Jesus *out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword*. Now, Jesus “showed” this **two-edged sword** to the Christians in Pergamos.

i. The description of the sword in [Revelation 1:18](#) helps us to associate it with the *mouth* of Jesus. Jesus will confront this church with His word, and they will feel the **sharp** edges.

b. **Sharp two-edged sword:** This reminds us of the passage in [Hebrews 4:12](#): *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. Jesus would use this **sharp two-edged sword** to make some separation among the Christians in Pergamos.

3. ([Revelation 2:13](#)) What Jesus knows about the church at Pergamos.

“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 even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

- a. **I know your works:** Jesus said this to each church. It is true of each one of us. He knows our **works**, even if there isn’t much to know.
- b. **And where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is:** In many ways, Pergamos was a stronghold of Satanic power.
- i. There are many different opinions as to why Pergamos was such a stronghold of Satanic power. Some believe it is because Pergamos was a center of pagan religion, especially of “*Asclepius Soter*” or “*Asclepius Savior*.” Some believe it was because Pergamos had a huge throne-like altar dedicated to the Roman god Zeus. Some believe it was because Pergamos was a center for the ancient Babylonian priesthood, but this is tough to prove conclusively. Others believe it was because Pergamos was the political center of the worship-demanding Roman government.
- c. **And you hold fast to My name:** Despite the fact they lived in such a difficult city, the Christians of Pergamos held fast to their faith in Jesus (**hold fast to My name... did not deny My faith**).
- i. **Did not deny My faith:** Jesus praised the Christians of Pergamos because they did not deny *His* faith. It is always important to make sure that the faith we hold on to is the faith that belongs to Jesus.
- d. **Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you:** One specific man among the Christians of Pergamos received a precious title (**faithful martyr**). This same title

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was held by Jesus also ([Revelation 1:5](#)). **Antipas** was a man who followed Jesus, who was like Jesus.

i. **Antipas** is one of the great almost-anonymous heroes of the Bible. History tells us nothing about him except for here. “It is much no ecclesiastical history makes mention of this martyr Antipas, which argues him to have been a person but of obscure note in the world; but Christ seeth and taketh notice of those little ones who belong to him, though the world overlooks them.” (Poole)

ii. **Antipas** lived **where Satan’s throne** was. Yet he stood against the attacks and the evil around him. He fulfilled the meaning of his name, because **Antipas** means “Against All.”

iii. **Martyr** is the ancient Greek word *martus*. “*Martus* is a most interesting and suggestive word. In classical Greek *martus* never means a *martyr* in our sense of the term. It always means a *witness*. A *martus* was one who said: ‘This is true, and I know it.’ It is not until New Testament times that *martus* ever means *martyr*.” (Barclay)

4. ([Revelation 2:14-15](#)) What Jesus has *against* the Christians in Pergamos.

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. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

a. **I have a few things against you:** The Christians in Pergamos were rightly praised for holding fast to the name of Jesus and keeping his faith. At the same time, their difficult environment did not excuse the **few things** Jesus had **against** them.

b. **You have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam:** Balaam was a prototype of all corrupt teachers. According to [Numbers 22-24](#) and [31](#), Balaam combined the sins of immorality and idolatry to please Balak, the king of Moab, because he could not curse Israel directly.

i. When Balaam counseled Balak, he **taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel**. The **stumbling block** was connected with idolatry (**to eat things sacrificed to idols**) and **sexual immorality**. If the church in Pergamos had those who did **hold the doctrine of Balaam**, it showed they had tendencies towards both idolatry and immorality.

ii. Sexual immorality marked the whole culture of the ancient Roman Empire. It was simply taken for granted, and the person who lived by Biblical standards of purity was considered strange. To paraphrase the Roman statesman Cicero, cited in Barclay: “If there is anyone who thinks that young men should not be allowed the love of many women,

he is extremely severe. I am not able to deny the principle he stands on. But he contradicts, not only with the freedom our age allows, but also with the customs and allowances of our ancestors. When indeed was this not done? When did anyone find fault with it? When was such permission denied? When was it that what is now allowed was not allowed?” To keep from **sexual immorality** in that culture, you really had to swim against the current.

c. **You also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans:** In [Revelation 2:6](#), Jesus praised the Ephesian Christians because they hated *the deeds of the Nicolaitans*. But the **Nicolaitans** also had their **doctrine**, and some among the Christians of Pergamos held **the doctrine of the Nicolaitans**.

i. What is the **doctrine of the Nicolaitans**? The title *Nicolaitans* has the idea of a proud authority and a hierarchical separatism. The name *Nikao-laos* literally means “to conquer the people.” According to ancient commentators, the **Nicolaitans** also approved of immorality.

d. **You have those there... you also have those:** The rebuke was not only against those who **hold the doctrines of Balaam** and **those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans**. The rebuke was also against those who allowed them to continue (**you have there those... you have those**).

i. The Christians of Pergamos were like the Christians of Corinth as Paul wrote to them in [1 Corinthians 5:1-9](#). They were too tolerant and accepting of false doctrines and immoral living, and Jesus had to rebuke them. Satan couldn’t accomplish much by persecution, because many did *hold fast*, like Antipas. So Satan tried to accomplish his goals by using deception. The strategy was first *violence*, then *alliance*.

ii. A difficult environment never justifies compromise. It is easy for a church in such difficulty to justify this compromise in the name of “we need all the help we can get” — but no church needs that kind of help.

5. ([Revelation 2:16](#)) What Jesus wants the church at Pergamos to do.

Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

a. **Repent:** The simple word **repent** stands out. Five of the seven churches are commanded to repent. **Repent** is a command that applies to Christians, not only to those who first come to Jesus.

b. **Or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth:** Unless they do **repent**, the Christians of Pergamos would face the Jesus who has

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the two-edged sword. Judgment will begin at the house of God ([1 Peter 4:17](#)).

i. **The sword of My mouth:** When Jesus came **against** the Christians of Pergamos, He will confront them with His Word.

6. ([Revelation 2:17a](#)) A general exhortation to all who will hear.

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

a. **He who has an ear:** The danger of false teaching and immoral conduct still faces the church today. So does the danger of *allowing* false teaching and immorality, as was the problem with the Christians in Pergamos.

7. ([Revelation 2:17b](#)) The promise of a reward.

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

a. **To him who overcomes:** The one who overcomes this spirit of accommodation to false teaching and living will receive **hidden manna**. This is God’s perfect provision, the true bread from heaven ([John 6:41](#)).

b. **And I will give him a white stone:** In the ancient world, the use of a **white stone** had many associations. A **white stone** could be a ticket to a banquet, a sign of friendship, evidence of having been counted, or as a sign of acquittal in a court of law. Jesus may have any one of these meanings in mind, but at the very least we know that it has the assurance of blessing.

i. Adam Clarke wrote: “Others suppose there is an allusion here to conquerors in the public games, who were not only conducted with great pomp into the city to which they belonged, but had a *white stone* given to them, with *their name inscribed on it*; which badge entitled them, during their whole life, to be maintained at the public expense... These were called *tesserae* among the Romans, and of these there were several kinds.” Clarke then gives examples of the different kinds: “*Tesserae convivales*, which answered exactly to our *cards of invitation*, or tickets of admission to a public feast or banquet; when the person invited produced his *tessera* he was admitted... But the most remarkable of these instruments were the *Tesserae hospitales*, which were given as badges of *friendship* and *alliance*, and on which some device was engraved, as a testimony that a contract of friendship had been made between the parties.”

c. **And on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it:** What is the meaning of

this **new**, secret **name** promised to **him who overcomes**? Is it God’s name, or is it the believer’s name? This is probably the believer’s new name, and the name itself is probably more important than the stone itself.

i. One idea behind this new, secret name is that it shows what an intimate relationship we have with God. When a couple is close, they often have “pet names” for each other. This is probably the same idea.

ii. Another idea associated with the new name is simply the assurance it gives of our heavenly destination. Your name is there, waiting for you. It is as if your “reservation” in heaven is made.