



## **REVELATION CHAPTER 2 LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES AT EPHESUS, SMYRNA, PERGAMUM, AND THYATIRA**

### **SUMMARY OF REVELATION CHAPTER 2**

In Revelation chapter 2 Jesus tells the church at Ephesus they have persevered and endured hardships for His name. Yet Jesus holds this against them: They had forsaken the love they had at first. Jesus says if they do not repent, He will come and remove their lampstand from its place. But they have this in their favor: Ephesus hates the practices of the Nicolaitans, which Jesus also hates.

Jesus tells the church in Smyrna that He knows their afflictions and poverty—yet Jesus tells them they are rich! Jesus tells them not be afraid of what they are about to suffer.

Jesus tells the church in Pergamum He knows where Satan has his throne. Yet they remain true to His name.

There are some there hold the teaching of Balaam, who enticed the Israelites to sin. At Pergamon also those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Jesus says: “Repent!”



**THE GREAT ALTAR OF ZEUS AT PERGAMON**

Jesus tells the church in Thyatira He know their deeds, they have love and faith, service and perseverance, and they are now doing more than at first. But Jesus tells them not to tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. With her teaching she misleads His servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

## **THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS: REVELATION 2:1 TO 2:7**

Ephesus was an ancient Greek city on the coast of Ionia, just one mile from present-day Selçuk in İzmir Province, western Turkey. It was built in the 10th century BC on the site of the former Arzawan capital by Attic and Ionian Greek colonists. During the Classical Greek era it was one of the twelve cities of the Ionian League. The city flourished after it came under the control of the Roman Republic in 129 BC.

The city was famed for the nearby Temple of Artemis (completed around 550 BC), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Ephesus was one of the seven churches of Asia that are cited in the Book of Revelation. Some scholars also believe the Gospel of John may have been written here.

Islam destroyed Ephesus. Ephesus was sacked by the followers of the Islamic Four Horsemen (Revelation chapter 6) in the year 654–655 AD by Islamic caliphs, and later again in 700 and 716 that hastened the decline further. When the Islamic Turks conquered Ephesus in 1090, it was a only small village. The town surrendered, in October 1304, to a Turkish Islamic warlord.

Contrary to the terms of the surrender, the Islamic Turks pillaged the church of Saint John and deported most of the local population. During these events many of the remaining inhabitants were massacred and the city ceased to exist from then onward. Ephesus was completely abandoned by the 15th century. Islam killed the city and the church.



**ANCIENT EPHESUS CITY GATES**

## PAUL ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

On Paul's second mission tour, he visited Ephesus after leaving Corinth, and planted the church there (Acts 18:19-22). Ephesus means "desirable", and in many ways it was a desirable place to live.

### Acts 18:19-22 (NIV)

**They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus. When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.**

On the third preaching journey, Paul spent between two and three years teaching in the city (Acts 19:8-10). Paul spent his time eliminating false doctrines, Blackstone worship and pagan practices. Ephesus derived its greatness from two sources, commercial trade and religion. During the Roman Period it was a center for the mother goddess worship, known to the Greeks as Artemis and to the Romans as Diana. It was during this stay that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians.

### Acts 19:8-10 (NIV)

**Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.**

Diana of the Ephesians (also known as "Artemis of the Ephesians") was a short, squat, repulsive-looking idol covered with many breasts which emphasized fertility. It was believed by the superstitious Ephesians that Artemis fell from heaven, along with the Blackstone (in the Kaaba today).

The temple of Artemis took more than a century to construct. The immoral practices held there made Ephesus a difficult place to preach the Gospel. Nonetheless, Paul's teaching in the school of Tyrannus was so successful that those who practiced magical arts brought their books and burned them (valued at 50,000 pieces of silver in Acts 19:18-20). The sale of Artemis silver shrines began to fall off, and the silversmiths caused uproar (Acts 19:26-41). Paul was nearly killed in the riot. After this was settled Paul left for Macedonia.

Ephesus is also the place where the Apostle John took Mary, the mother of Jesus, there to live (John 19:26-27).



**Revelation 2:1** “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.

**Revelation 2:2** I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.

**Revelation 2:3** You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

*“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.”* Here in Revelation 2:1, John tells us Jesus holds the seven stars in his right hand. John tells us that the Lamb’s seven eyes were the seven Spirits of God in Revelation 5:6 (*“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”*) The seven spirits are before the throne and are also sent out into the world. This is all the information we have from Scripture. We can say this about the seven spirits of God:

- ✓ Revelation 1:4; the seven spirits are before His throne
- ✓ Revelation 3:1; Jesus holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, as having the seven Spirits of God
- ✓ Revelation 4:5; the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne are the seven Spirits of God
- ✓ Revelation 5:6; the Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth

John tells us in Revelation 1:20 the meaning of the seven golden lampstands.

#### **Revelation 1:20 (NIV)**

**The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.**

*“I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.”* Jesus knows all the good and all the evil which his servants and his enemies suffer and do. How dreadful will it one day sound to the wicked, how sweet to the righteous! People today do not think God knows everything. God does know everything. The seven churches must have been astonished to find their several conditions to be so well understood.

*“You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.”* The church at Ephesus had to deal with false teachers, and the persecution coming from Jews and pagans. At this time they had also dealt with the second wave of persecution coming from the Roman emperor Domitian.

**Revelation 2:4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.**

**Revelation 2:5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.**

*“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.”* The most important love is to love God. This is in the Shema in Deuteronomy chapter 4:

**Deuteronomy 4:9 (NIV)**

**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.**

Satan and Baal, the dragon and the beast, want for themselves this first love that only belongs to the true God. The false prophet Mohammad gave the Islamic Shahada (*“There is no God but Allah, and Mohammad is his messenger”*). This is the dragon and beast’s counterfeit copy of the Shema. It is the mark of the beast. The similar language about “hand and forehead” is in Revelation 13. It is a spiritual mark, a statement of faith to a false God.

**Revelation 13:16-17 (NIV)**

**It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.**

*“Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”* The greatness which Ephesus once held needs to be restored through repentance and prayer. *“If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”* The Ephesians had a rich history, but it was not enough. If they do not repent, Jesus will take the church away from them. Jesus did take their church away from them. Of the seven churches, six were destroyed by Islam. The church at Ephesus was one of the first destroyed by the followers of Mohammad. Only one Revelation church, the church at Philadelphia, did not fall to Islam during their ongoing tribulation. The church at Philadelphia was given protection (“an open door”) by Jesus in Revelation 3:8-10. The words of Jesus are always true!

**Revelation 3:8 (NIV)**

**I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.**

**Revelation 3:10 (NIV)**

**Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.**

**Revelation 2:6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

**Revelation 2:7 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.**

*“But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”* Jesus criticizes the Nicolaitans twice in the letters to the seven churches. Here to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:6, and in Revelation 2:15-16 to the church at Pergamon. Pergamon and Ephesus both had Nicolaitans. Pergamon and Ephesus both worshipped a stone from heaven. The Nicolaitans are a forerunner of Islam.

**Revelation 2:15-16 (NIV)**

**Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**

### **WHY DOES JESUS HATE THE PRACTICES OF THE NICOLAITANS?**

The Greek word for Nicolaitans is composed of two words meaning **"subduing"** and **"the people"**. "Islam" in Arabic means **"submission of the people"** to Allah. It is possible the Nicolaitans taught that the people should worship the Blackstone (and demonic spirits) at the temple of Artemis and be subdued by it or in submission to it. Since Satan's throne was in Pergamum, the people were in submission to Satan.

We do not know a lot about the Nicolaitans. But Jesus hated what they did. Jesus seldom used the word "hate." Whatever the Nicolaitans did must really offend the true God. From the first and second commandments we know the false worship of idols angers the true God. The Nicolaitans were mentioned in Revelation twice--in the letters to the churches at Ephesus and at Pergamum.

The only other thing that Pergamum and Ephesus had in common was they both worshipped a Blackstone meteorite that fell from the heaven. They both associated this Blackstone with the female goddess Artemis and Cybele. We also know Satan's throne was at Pergamum at the time when Revelation was written.

Some commentators believe the Nicolaitans encouraged each other to commit sexual immorality and to eat things offered to idols. Whichever theory is true, it is certain that the deeds of the Nicolaitans were an abomination to Christ. They, like the Gnostics and other false teachers, abused the doctrine of grace and tried to introduce Satanic false doctrine in its place (2 Peter 2:15, 19; Jude 1:4).

Later in Revelation Chapter 13, we will see that Jesus repeatedly warns us to avoid the image and mark of widespread false worship that will occur sometime in the future from time of the Revelation to John, well after 95 AD. Jesus warns us eight times to avoid this mark, and another eight times to avoid this image. There is a strong connection between all three warnings--the Blackstone. In stark contrast to the Blackstone of false doctrine--Jesus gives the Whitestone of truth (Rev 2:17).

## THE “IMAGE WHICH FELL DOWN FROM HEAVEN” AT EPHESUS

In the Book of Acts, we find a detailed description of a hostile Ephesus crowd surrounding the Apostles. The pagan crowd worshipped the female goddess Artemis and her "sacred" meteorite stone. (*“and of the image, which fell from heaven”*)

### Acts 19:23-41 (NASB)

**23** About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way. **24** For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; **25** these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, “Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. **26** You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.

**27** Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence.”

**28** When they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” **29** The city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia. **30** And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him. **31** Also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater.

**32** So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion and the majority did not know for what reason they had come together. **33** Some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly. **34** But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

**35** After quieting the crowd, the town clerk said, “Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of **the temple of the great Artemis and of the image which fell down from heaven?** **36** So, since these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and to do nothing rash. **37** For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. **38** So then, if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a complaint against any man, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available; let them bring charges against one another. **39** But if you want anything beyond this, it shall be settled in the lawful assembly. **40** For indeed we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today’s events, since there is no real cause for it, and in this connection we will be unable to account for this disorderly gathering.” **41** After saying this he dismissed the assembly.

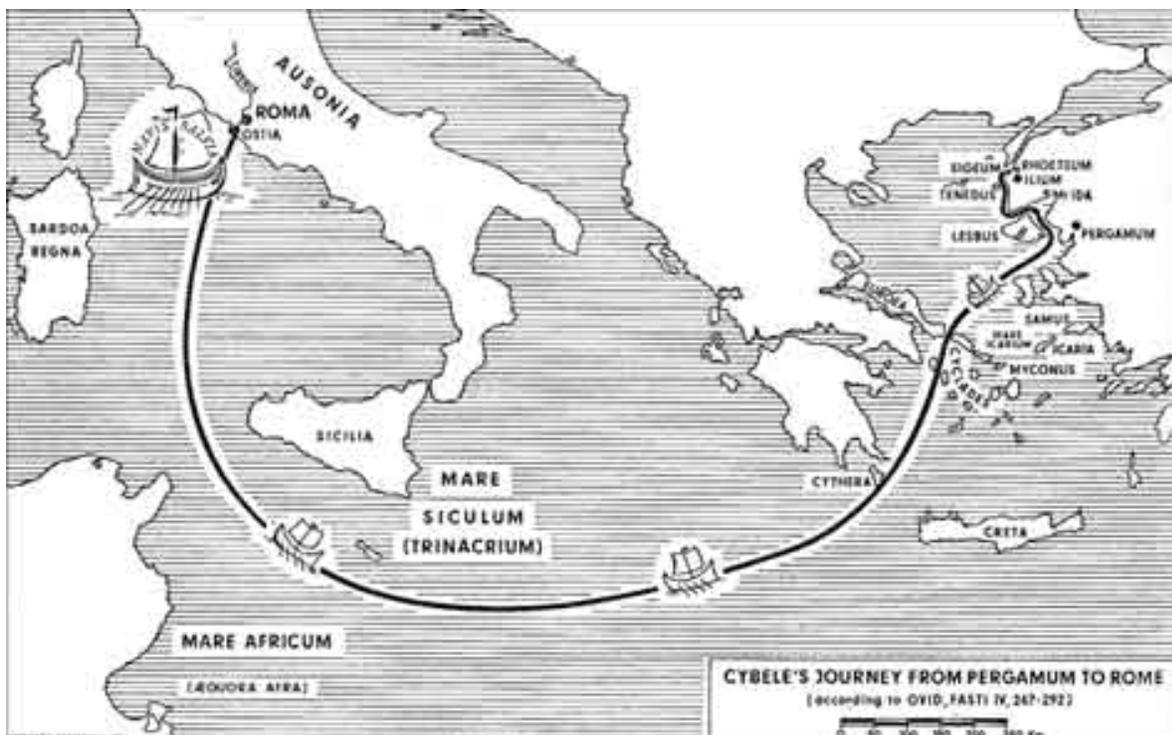
## PERGAMUM WORSHIPPED CYBELE--THE BLACKSTONE METEORITE FROM HEAVEN

Cybele (the “Artemis” at Ephesus) was the mythological ancient Mother of the Gods, a primal nature goddess worshipped with immoral sexual rites in the mountains of central and western Turkey where the seven churches of Revelation were located. The Greeks identified her with their own mother of the gods--the Titaness Rhea. The most sacred manifestation of Cybele worship was a Blackstone meteorite that was said “to have been a stone from heaven.”

When Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon in 539 BC, he forced the pagan Babylonian priesthood to flee westward — to Pergamum in present day Turkey. In 204 BC, the king of Pergamum sent the great mother goddess Cybele--in the shape of a meteoric Blackstone--from Pergamum to Rome.

In 204 BC Rome determined that it must possess this physical manifestation of the goddess, a black meteorite. The origins of the worship of the Roman Great Mother (“Magnus Mater”) are ascribed to a crisis in war time. During Hannibal’s (the people of Carthage worshipped Baal) invasion of Italy in 218 BC, the Romans followed a Sibylline prophecy that the enemy could be expelled and conquered if the “Idaeian Mother” were brought to Rome, together with her sacred symbol, a black stone reputed to have fallen from the heavens.

The Romans imported the goddess meteorite Blackstone from Asia Minor, where she was worshipped under the names of both Cybele and the Great Mother (the Greek word for “great” is Megale; hence the “Megalesian” games in her honor).



**SEA ROUTE OF THE BLACKSTONE FROM PERGAMUM TO ROME IN 204 BC**

When the ship carrying the Blackstone approached the mouth of the Tiber, Publius Cornelius Scipio sailed out, as required, to the offshore waters to receive the goddess from her priests, and he brought her in to the shore where the leading matrons of Rome were waiting to receive the goddess.

Passing the Blackstone hand to hand in unbroken succession, the women sent the sacred Blackstone on its way to Rome. Incense-burners were placed at the doorways of homes all along the route, and when the stone passed, they lit incense and prayed that the goddess would enter Rome willingly and look upon them favorably. The matrons brought her to the Temple of Victory on the Palatine on April 12, her holy day, and a crowd of people brought the goddess gifts; a banquet for the gods was held.

The last account of the Blackstone meteorite's physical appearance was written over 500 years after it had been moved to Rome. Arnobius of Sicca (who died in around 330 AD), was an early Christian writer who spoke out against Pagans, recorded seeing the stone in his work, *Against the Pagans--Adversus Nationes*. Where the Blackstone meteorite went after the early 4th century AD is not known until a Blackstone meteorite was placed by Mohammad in the Kaaba in Mecca around 610 AD.

### **MOHAMMAD PLACED THE BLACKSTONE IN THE KAABA—THE STONE FROM HEAVEN**

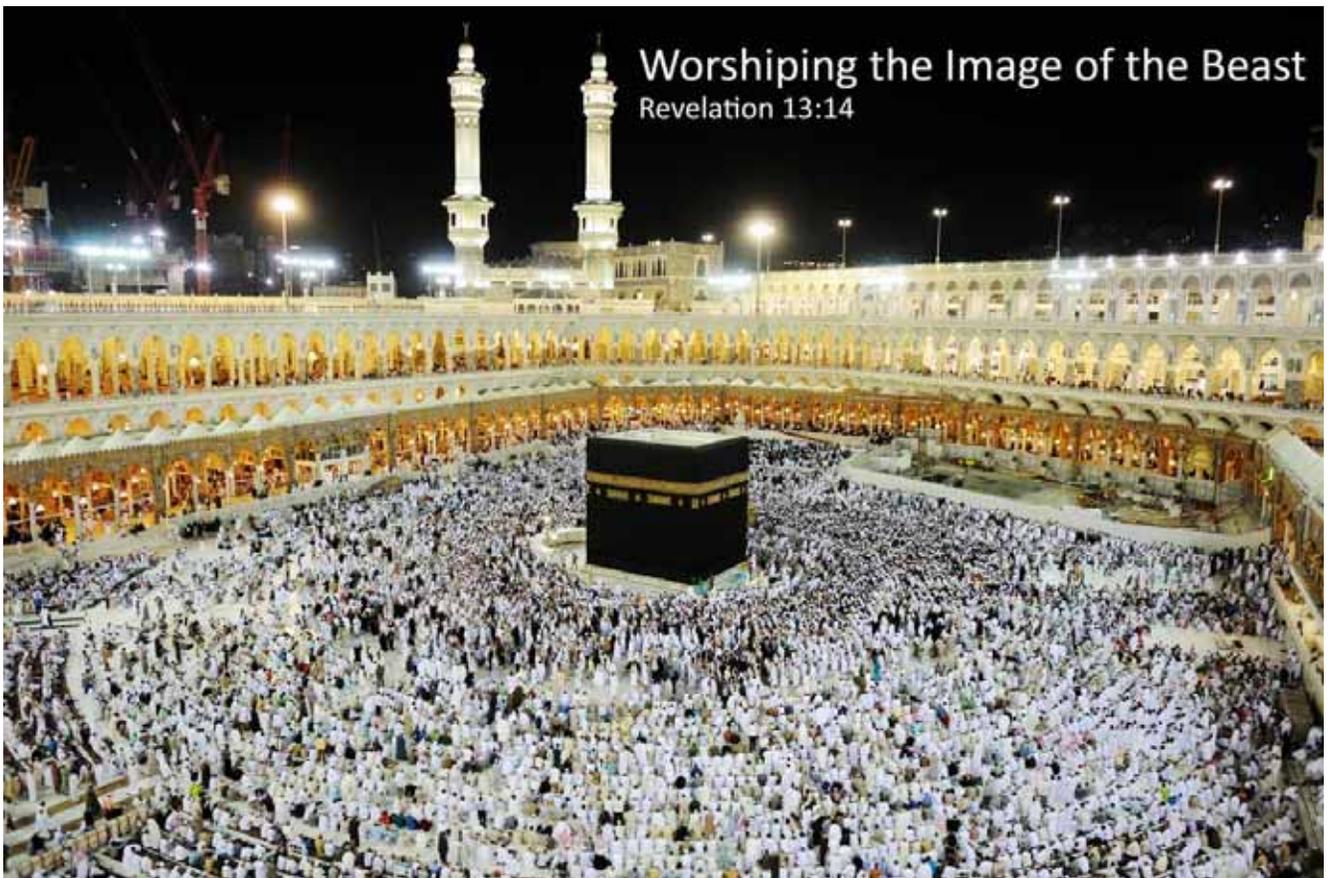
The Blackstone is a meteorite set into the eastern corner of the Kaaba, the House located in the center of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Mohammad came to Mecca after a fire damaged the Kaaba. The citizens couldn't agree on where to place the Blackstone and decided to ask the next person to walk through the city gates to make the decision. That person turned out to be Mohammad who set the Blackstone into the center of the Kaaba, where it is worshipped by tens of millions of Muslims to this day. It is the *"image of the beast"* that Jesus warns us about.



**THE FALSE PROPHET MOHAMMAD PLACES THE BLACKSTONE IN THE KAABA**



**EPHESUS TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS ANCIENT RUINS**



## THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA: REVELATION 2:8 TO 2:11

Smyrna was a Greek city founded in antiquity located at a central and strategic point on the Aegean coast of Anatolia (Western Turkey). Since 1930, the modern city located there has been known in English as İzmir, in Turkey, the Turkish rendering of the same name. Due to its advantageous port conditions, its ease of defense and its good inland connections, Smyrna rose to prominence.

Polycarp, the disciple of John, was martyred in Smyrna and then followed by Irenaeus. Of note, Polycarp met many people who saw the risen Christ. Irenaeus wrote: *“Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp.”*

Smyrna was taken over by Islam—the false teaching of the Four Horsemen. The Islamic Seljuk commander Tzachas seized Smyrna in 1084 AD. The city was several times ravaged by the Turks. In 1402 AD, Tamerlane stormed the town and massacred almost all the inhabitants. The Mongol conquest was only temporary, but Smyrna was recovered by the Islamic Turks after which it became Ottoman, when the Ottomans took over the lands of Aydın after 1425 AD. Some Greek influence persisted and for a time it was the “Smyrna of the infidels.” Today it is 99% Islamic.



**ANCIENT SMYRNA RUINS TODAY**

**Revelation 2:8** To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.

**Revelation 2:9** I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

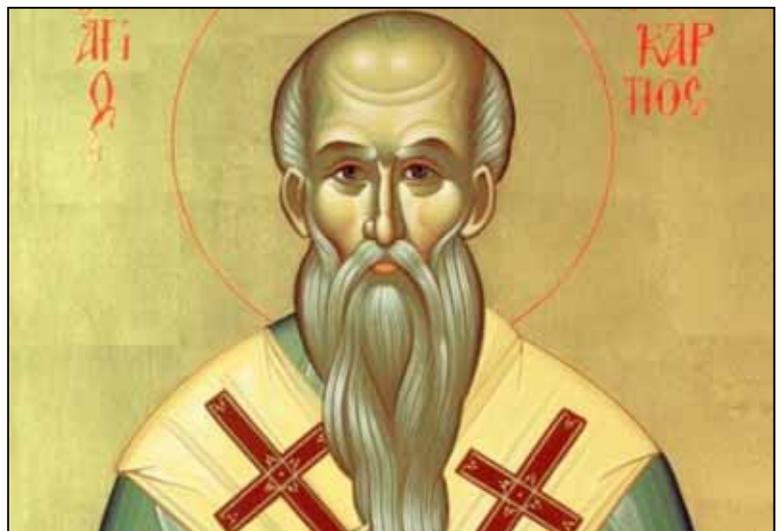
**Revelation 2:10** Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.

**Revelation 2:11** Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

*“To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.”* The church at Smyrna faced great tribulation. In his letter to Smyrna, Jesus speaking to them under their great tribulation and persecution, gives a description of himself proper to provide hope and comfort. Jesus himself was dead, and now is alive forevermore, and those that believe in him, because he lives, shall live also!

Polycarp (69-156 AD) was a disciple of John and the bishop of Smyrna. Polycarp was martyred at Smyrna in 156 AD. A disciple of Polycarp was Irenaeus. In his book, *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus testifies that Polycarp told him that he (Polycarp) had spoken to people who saw the risen Christ.

*“Polycarp was not only instructed by the Apostles, and conversed with many who had seen the risen Lord.”*



**POLYCARP THE BISHOP OF SMYRNA**

*“I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”* The persecutors of the church of Smyrna are Jews in name, but in reality working for Satan as opponents and not worshippers of the Messiah. Jesus gives similar language about *“those who say they are Jews but are not”* to the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:9. It would include all who claim to be following God, but are not.

**Revelation 3:9 (NIV)**

**I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.**

*“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.”* In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus tells us his yoke is easy. Yet in John 16:33, Jesus also said that his followers must expect tribulation. Following Jesus is easy, but the world will hate you.

**Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)**

**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”**

**John 16:33 (ESV)**

**I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”**



**PASTOR ANDREW BRUNSON WAS IMPRISONED IN SMYRNA**

Some 1,925 years after Jesus gave this prophecy about time in prison in Smyrna, Pastor Andrew Brunson was held in a prison in Smyrna (Izmir today) for nearly a year. He had a small church in Smyrna, and Satan sought to crush it. The “crown of life” is the reward to those that are faithful to Christ until they see death.

*“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.”* Every true Christian, especially those killed as a martyr, need to have any fear anything beyond the first bodily human death. The second death of condemnation in the eternal lake of fire for the spirit, the soul, has no impact at all on the faithful, no matter how they and their brothers may suffer from the terrors of Rome or Mohammad.

## **THE CHURCH AT PERGAMON: REVELATION 2:8 TO 2:11**

Pergamon was a rich and powerful ancient Greek city in Aeolis. It is located about 16 miles from the modern coastline of the Aegean Sea on a promontory on the north side of the river Caicus by the modern city of Bergama, Turkey. During the Hellenistic period, it became the capital of the Kingdom of Pergamon under the Attalid dynasty in 281–133 BC, who transformed it into one of the major cultural centers of the Greek world. Pergamon was the northernmost of the seven churches of Asia cited in the New Testament Book of Revelation.

The Four Horsemen of Revelation (Mohammad, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman) brought Islam to the city. In AD 663 AD, Pergamon was captured by raiding Islamic Arabs for the first time. Many battles were fought here for control over the next several centuries.

Pergamon was sacked again by the armies of the Islamic al-Malik. It was again rebuilt and refortified after the Arabs abandoned their Siege of Constantinople in 717–718 AD. It suffered from the attacks of the Islamic Seljuks on western Anatolia after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 AD, and after attacks in 1109 and in 1113, the city was largely destroyed. With the expansion of the Anatolian Islamic armies, Pergamon was absorbed into the Islamic orbit shortly after 1300 AD, and then conquered by the Islamic Ottomans. It has been in Islamic hands ever since.



**ANCIENT PERGAMON ACROPOLIS**

**Revelation 2:12** “To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.

**Revelation 2:13** I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.

*“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.”* Jesus carries a double edged sword with the truth that comes from his mouth. One side of the sword is truth for those that believe in Jesus. On the second side we see its impact on the unbelieving (and the beast Baal and the false prophet Mohammad) in Revelation 19:20-21.

**Revelation 19:20-21 (NIV)**

**But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.**

*“I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.”*

Jesus tells each of the seven churches he knows their works. The power of God is beyond human understanding. We cannot imagine that all our actions, thoughts and words are recorded, but Revelation 20:12-15 tells us these are all recorded in the books.

**Revelation 20:12-15 (NIV)**

**And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.**

Pergamon was a place of special wickedness, as if Satan dwelt there. Satan is, as it were, enthroned there. The influence of Satan in producing all Christian persecution is what is particularly alluded to, as is apparent from the reference which is immediately made to the case of Antipas, the "faithful martyr." Pergamon also worshipped Zeus with a large altar (the Greek god equivalent to Baal) and a black stone that *“fell from heaven.”* Yet most of the believers in the church at Pergamon remained faithful by the words of their mouth and by their actions by not renouncing their faith in Jesus Christ. The martyr Antipas is not known in the Christian world, other than in this Revelation passage, but Jesus has not forgotten him.

**Revelation 2:14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.**

**Revelation 2:15 Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.**

**Revelation 2:16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.**

**Revelation 2:17 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.**

*“Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.”* The teaching of Balaam was how Balak learned to bring Israelites into sin, and brought upon them divine judgment. The Israelites eventually ended up worshipping Baal again. Though he first followed God’s word, later Balaam did not. Balaam was then killed by Moses. Baal is the beast released from the Abyss in Revelation 17:8.

Balak, king of Moab, when the children of Israel approached his borders, felt that he could not prevail successfully against so great a host, for his people were dispirited and demoralized at their numbers as we learn in Numbers 22:2-4. Then he asked Balaam for help to place a curse on them.

#### **Numbers 22:2-4 (NIV)**

**Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites. The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, “This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.”**

Balaam professed to be a prophet of the Lord, and it was obviously proper that he should inquire of the Lord whether he should comply with this request. He did so, and was forbidden to go. Balaam first followed God’s word and did not curse Israel.

#### **Numbers 22:12 (NIV)**

**But God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.”**

#### **Numbers 24:2-4 (NIV)**

**When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him and he spoke his message: “The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor, the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly, the prophecy of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened.”**

But later, through Balaam's teaching, the Israelites began to worship Baal again. God is greatly angered by worship to a fallen angel rather than the true God.

**Number 25:1-3 (NIV)**

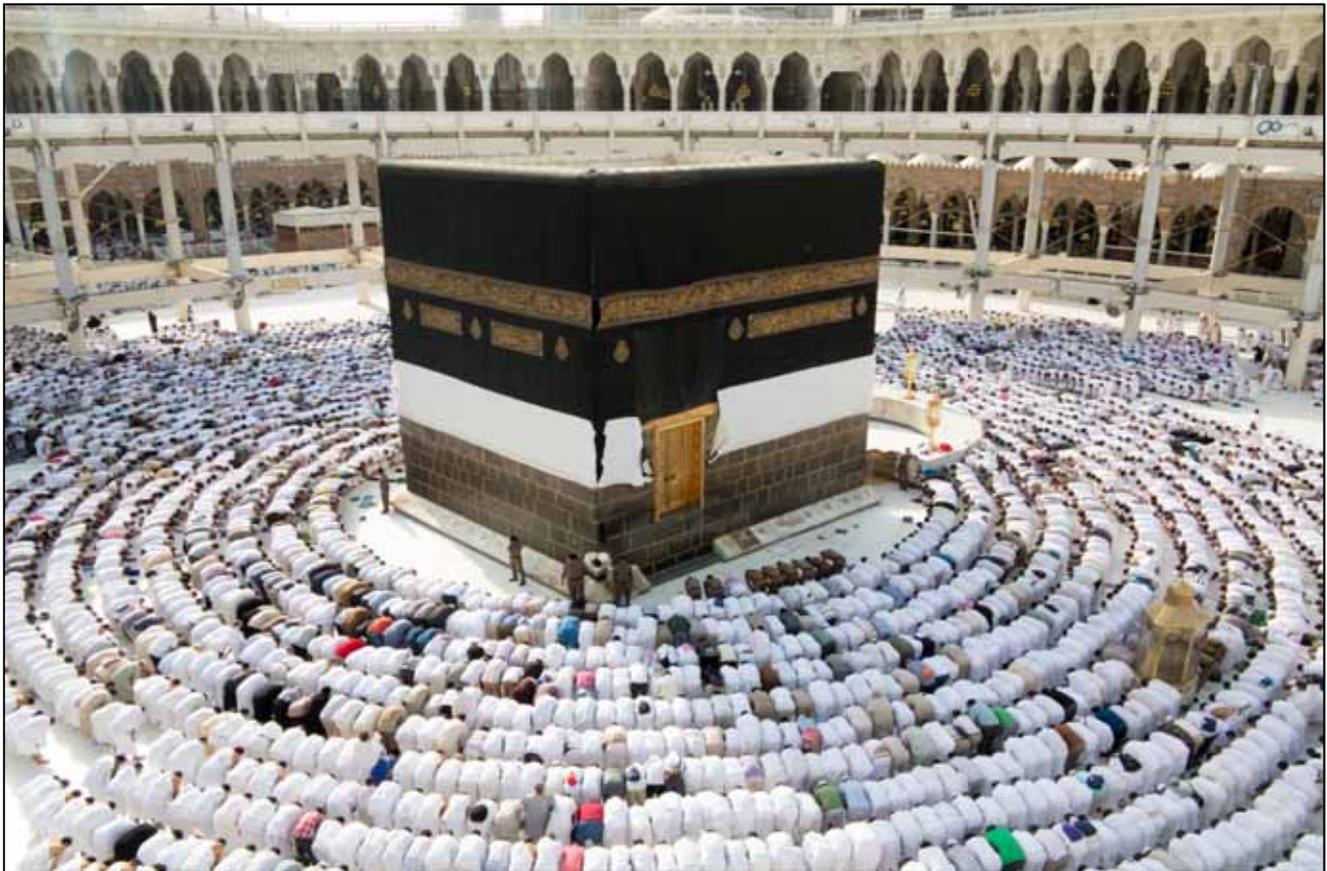
**While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods. So Israel yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor. And the Lord's anger burned against them.**

Balaam was killed by the soldiers commanded by Moses.

**Numbers 31:7-8 (NIV)**

**They fought against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses, and killed every man. Among their victims were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.**

“Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.” The Nicolaitans were previously discussed on the church at Ephesus. Both Pergamon and Ephesus were connected to the false god Artemis (Cybele), and both worshiped a black stone that “fell from heaven.” They are connected to the worship of Baal. The Blackstone today is in the Kaaba in the great city of Mecca.



**WORSHIPPING BAAL THE BEAST AND THE BLACKSTONE IN THE KAABA**



### **THE BLACKSTONE OF THE KAABA ARE THESE MODERN DAY “NICOLAITANS”?**

*“Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”* The word of God coming from the mouth of Jesus is the great weapon that Christ fights against and defeats all anti-Christian Satanic powers.

*“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.”* **Note that Jesus gives the white stone of truth.** This is the complete opposite of the black stone of the Nicolaitans, of Pergamon, of Cybele, the Blackstone of the Kaaba. The Blackstone is not truth—it is a lie from Satan. Jesus gave a warning about Islam with the Book of Revelation. Jesus knew one third of the world would pray to the Blackstone in the Kaaba.

Manna, though it fell in the wilderness, came from heaven, and it is the heavenly food that is suggested by the symbol. Those that are faithful to Jesus are given a new name—they are a new creature as Paul told us in 2 Corinthians 5:17-19.

#### **2 Corinthians 5:17-19 (NIV)**

**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.**

## **THE CHURCH AT THYATIRA: REVELATION 2:18 TO 2:29**

Thyatira was the name of an ancient Greek city in Asia Minor, now the modern Turkish city of Akhisar ("white castle"). The name is probably Lydian. It lies in the far west of Turkey, south of Istanbul and almost due east of Athens. It is about 50 miles from the Aegean Sea.

In the book of Acts, Lydia was a wealthy benefactress and convert to Christianity. A seller of purple cloth, Lydia's original home was the city of Thyatira. The ancient coins of Thyatira show a multitude of guilds including linen weavers, bronze workers, potters, and bakers. Thyatira was the only city of the Seven Churches built on flat ground without natural defenses, making it vulnerable to attack.

After the partition of the Roman Empire in 395 AD, and the Four Horsemen of Islam coming to demonic power in the 7th century, raids by Islamic Arabs resulted in great loss of land for Byzantium and the region of Thyatira witnessed many battles between Byzantine and Arab forces. In the 12th century, a large-scale inflow of Islamic Turkish tribes came to the area. Thyatira swayed back and forth between Byzantine and Islamic Turkish rulers during the next two centuries.

In the 14th century, Islamic Turks regained all Western Anatolian lands and Thyatira went under Islamic Turkish rule in 1307. In August 1922, because of the capture of the city by the Islamic Turkish nationalist army, the last remaining local Christian "Greeks" were killed. Since then, there has been no Christian community in Thyatira. The city is 100% Islamic today.



**ANCIENT THYATIRA RUINS TODAY**

**Revelation 2:18** To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

**Revelation 2:19** I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

*“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.”* John is given an image of the immense power of God.

*“I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.”* Here we see the love of Christ. Jesus Christ, in this letter, gives praise before he assigns any blame. If Christ wrote this letter to us today, how many of us could say we are doing more now than we did at first? Yet Jesus knows our works.

**Revelation 2:20** Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

**Revelation 2:21** I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.

**Revelation 2:22** So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

**Revelation 2:23** I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

*“Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.”* This is very similar to the actions of the Nicolaitans at the church of Ephesus and Pergamon. It is possible the woman Jezebel was promoting Baal worship as well. The Jezebel of 1 Kings 16:31 worshipped Baal. Worshipping Baal the beast and praying to the image (the Kaaba in Mecca) will bring on the full wrath of God.

**1 Kings 16:31 (NIV)**

**He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him**

**Revelation 14:11-12 (NIV)**

**“And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.”** This calls for patient endurance on the part of the people of God who keep his commands and remain faithful to Jesus.

*"I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling."* It is really not sexual immorality. It is worse than that. It is worship to a false God. Jesus has given her time to repent, but she has not. Her time is coming to an end. The idolatry and sin had been of long standing, but Jesus now resolved to tolerate is no longer. The action of God is that sufficient time is given for repentance, and that punishment is delayed after crime is committed.

*"So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways."* Jezebel's punishment is distinct from theirs; she is to be cast into a bed, and her children to be killed; while those who make themselves partakers of her sin by tolerating her false worship, are to receive great tribulation. This is very similar to the sores coming on those that take the mark (recite the Islamic Shahada), and worship the beast and his Kaaba image in Revelation 16:2.

### **Revelation 16:2 (NIV)**

**The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.**

*"I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds."* Not her physical children. The children of her false worship. This is to be understood of her followers. The so-called prophetess led the way in looseness of spiritual morals, under the deception of some deeper divine knowledge. She had her associates and their disciples; the evil and the evil consequences would grow and death, especially spiritual death, is their penalty.

**Revelation 2:24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you,**

**Revelation 2:25 except to hold on to what you have until I come.'**

**Revelation 2:26 To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—**

**Revelation 2:27 that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father.**

**Revelation 2:28 I will also give that one the morning star.**

**Revelation 2:29 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

*"Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you."* The heretics condemned in the preceding verses were most likely a sect known as the Gnostics. Later the area around Thyatira would be overrun by the followers of Mohammad and his false doctrine of Jesus Christ.

## **SATAN'S SO-CALLED DEEP SECRETS**

*“And have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets.”* In the Qur’an, the dragon and beast, Satan and Baal (“we”) give a false story about Jesus. This is another form of Satan’s so-called deep secrets.

### **SATAN AND BAAL (“WE”) SENT THE FALSE PROPHET MOHAMMAD**

Qur’an 21:107 And We have sent you, [O Mohammad], as a mercy to the worlds.

### **SATAN AND BAAL (“OUR WORD”) GAVE A FALSE GOSPEL TO MOHAMMAD**

Qur’an 37:171 Our Word has already gone forth to Our servants, the messengers [Mohammad]

### **SATAN AND BAAL (“WE”) HAVE A PLAN TO SEND ALL HUMANS TO HELL**

Qur’an 19:70-71 And then We shall know well all those most worthy to be cast in Hell. There is not one of you but shall pass by Hell. This is a decree which your Lord will fulfill.

*“To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations— that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’—just as I have received authority from my Father.”* On the Day of Judgment, the believing saints that finish the good race shall sit with Christ, and judge and condemn the world severely; and then they shall be broken in pieces. This is a fulfillment of Psalm 2:8-9.

#### **Psalm 2:8-9 (NIV)**

**“Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”**

*“I will also give that one the morning star.”* The promise given from God of the coming day, both for the waiting witnesses, and for the ungodly, who loved darkness because their deeds were evil. This is a fulfillment of Daniel 12:2-4. Jesus also tells us he is the bright Morning Star in revelation 22:11.

#### **Daniel 12:2-4 (NIV)**

**Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.**

#### **Revelation 22:16 (NIV)**

**“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”**

*“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* Listen to what Jesus told the churches. It applies to all believes still today.