

# The Church at Pergamos

## Revelation 2:12-17

### Review

The book of Revelation falls into three categories that are designated in Revelation 1:19: "... the things which thou hast seen [chapter 1], and the things which are [chapters 2--3], and the things which shall be hereafter [chapters 4--22]." We are studying the things that are. John is writing letters to existing churches in +A.D. 95. Each of those historical churches have prophetic implications because each of them represents a type of Christian and a type of church.

In this lesson, we will look at the letter to the church at Pergamos. We began our study with the church at Ephesus. That church represents the believer and church that had left their first love. Then we looked at the church in Smyrna, which represents the type of church and believer that suffers persecution. Now we come to the third church, which was at Pergamos. It represents a third type of believer and church.

The church at Pergamos was the church at Satan's throne. It had married the world. That was the character of the church at Pergamos. It pictures the believer who marries the world--who cavorts in the world and compromises his testimony for Christ by becoming actively involved in Satanic things. That doesn't necessarily indicate demon possession; it can mean doing anything that the world is doing. Everything the world does is guided by the prince of the world, Satan.

Most of the letters have seven parts. The letter to the church at Pergamos has all seven: the correspondent, the city, the church, the commendation, the condemnation, the command, and the counsel. The first part is...

### I. THE CORRESPONDENT (v. 12)

"And to the angel [pastor] of the church in Pergamos write: These things saith He who hath the sharp sword with two edges."

#### A. A Representation of Christ

The author has a sharp sword with two edges. The author is Christ because that is how He is pictured in Revelation 1:16: "... He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword ..." Christ is the author of the letter to Pergamos, as He is of the other letters. John writes it down and delivers it.

#### 1. THE EXAMINATION OF THE SWORD

The sword is the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Word of God is a double-edged sword.

## 2. THE EDGES OF THE SWORD

You say, "Why does the sword have two edges?" The Word of God has two functions. One edge is ...

### a. **The Instrument of Salvation**

The Word of God separates a man from his sin. The power of the Word of God cuts loose the man who is bound by the chains of sin and death. That is why Jesus said, "... I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Mt. 10:34). He came to cut a man off from his family and the sinful world that he lives in (Mt. 10:35). The function of one edge of the Word of God is to cut through sin, condemnation, and the judgment that is pending so a man can experience salvation in Christ.

### b. **The Instrument of Judgment**

The other edge of the sharp, two-edged sword is the edge that will fall in judgment on the unbelieving world. That edge will be used when Christ comes out of heaven on a white horse with a two-edged sword coming out of His mouth (Rev. 19:11, 15). At that time, He will use the edge that metes out judgment.

One edge of the sword separates a man from his sin; the other edge separates him from God for all eternity. One is salvation and one is judgment. As Christ writes to the church at Pergamos, He purposefully says, "I am the One with a sharp two- edged sword."

## **B. A Reminder by Christ**

You say, "Why does He refer to Himself that way?" Pergamos was starting to flirt with the world, so He says, "Remember, I cut you off from the world. I severed you from sin. I am coming in judgment upon sin. Why are you playing with the world again?" The correspondent is seen in terms of judgment and salvation. That introduction of Christ is pertinent to the church in Pergamos. The people needed to be reminded of their salvation. They also needed to be reminded that God would eventually judge the world. Since they had already been cut off from the world with one edge of the sword, they had no business playing around with the world when God would use the other edge to judge the world. So Christ, as the correspondent, divides the believer from sin and the world. The believer has been set apart to God. There is no place in his life for compromise or indulging in anything that Satan propagates in the world.

We have looked at the correspondent; now let's consider ...

## **II. THE CITY (v. 12)**

### **A. Its Foundation**

Today, on the ancient site of Pergamos, about fifteen miles inland from the Aegean Sea, there exists a little village called "Bergama." That is the Turkish version of the word Pergamos. And there is still a small Christian church in that city. Legend has it that Pergamos was founded by a

son of Hercules on a lofty hill in the broad and fertile plain of the Caicus valley. When John wrote the letter to Pergamos in about +A.D. 95, it had already been the capital of Asia Minor for three hundred years.

## **B. Its Religion**

Pergamos was an important religious center because four main temples were found there: the temples to Athena, Asclepius, Dionysus (better known as Bacchus), and Zeus. All four prominent temples were built on a large hill in the city of Pergamos.

## **C. Its Education**

There was also a large university in Pergamos with a library of two hundred thousand volumes. You say, "I know of bigger libraries than that." But not at that time in history. They didn't even have a printing press!

## **D. Its Business**

The main business in the city of Pergamos was the manufacture of papyrus paper and parchment.

Pergamos was important because it was a center of worship of those four key gods, and for being the capital city. Now let's look at ...

## **III. THE CHURCH (v. 12)**

How did the church at Pergamos begin? We don't know. We also don't know who started it. But we can conjecture that Paul or one of his disciples probably did. That is a sensible conjecture since it was located in the area around Ephesus.

### **A. Dwelling in Satan's Territory**

In the midst of Pergamos, which was completely adverse to all Christian testimony or anything that was godly, was situated the little church that Christ addressed this letter to. It is described in Revelation 2:13: "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is ...." The church was right in the middle of Satan's territory. Somebody says, "I thought Satan's throne was in hell." It isn't. Satan is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). His throne is here, not in hell. The whole world lies in the arms of the wicked one (1 Jn. 5:19). This is his world; his throne is here. And it was once centered in the city of Pergamos.

### **B. Destroying the Church's Testimony**

Unfortunately, some of the people in the church at Pergamos began to court the world. They became a victim of Satan. That is the smartest thing that Satan could have ever done. Persecution doesn't destroy the church; it makes it grow. The church is destroyed when its members compromise with the world. They suck the lifeblood out of the church and eliminate any distinction that it had in the world.

## 1. ULTIMATE APOSTASY

Compromise is the first step to apostasy. Every apostate church in existence today didn't start out apostate; it started the process by compromising. It usually starts with watering down some truth for the sake of worldly indulgence. That is the beginning of the fatal steps towards destruction. Compromise with Satan and the world is the beginning of the destruction of Christian testimony. And that was beginning to happen in Pergamos.

## 2. AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

The nation of Israel is a good example of the result of compromise. When they entered the land of Canaan, God said, "Destroy all the pagans there." Israel was to bring divine judgment. God knew that Israel would be hurt if those pagans weren't eliminated. But Israel didn't eliminate them. As a result, Israel began to intermarry with the Gentiles (Jud. 3:6). An unholy alliance was made with the world. Israel's next step was to abandon God. That was the beginning of the disasters that followed Israel from that time on.

## 3. AN UNACCEPTABLE AFFECTION

You only have so much affection. It can't be split between God and the world. John said, "... If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 Jn. 2:15). You only have so much love to give, and it can't be split. Israel tried and fell. Pergamos tried and fell into sinfulness. You cannot court the world and love Christ; the church cannot marry the world and survive. That is compromise, and God hates it. That was the problem of the church at Pergamos. It is a graphic illustration of the disaster that follows the Christian who marries the world.

For the most part, the church of today compromises with Satan. God hates compromise because it is a mockery to Him when a Christian joins himself with Satan and the world. The church in Pergamos lived in the center of pagan, Satanic worship, and some of its members were part of it. That was the problem.

But at the same time, there is ...

## IV. THE COMMENDATION (v. 13)

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is; and thou holdest fast My name, and thou hast not denied My faith, even in those days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."

### A. The Experience of Christ

Two times Christ says that Satan dwells where the church at Pergamos was. Christ knew that they were right in the middle of Satanic activity. Christ looked at that church and its problems and said, "I know." You say, "How does He know?" Christ was there. For forty days He hungered, and then Satan tempted Him (Mt. 4:2-4). He knew what it was like to be in head to

head conflict with Satan. Jesus didn't use the Greek word gin<sup>o</sup>sk<sup>o</sup> (which means, "to know by observation") for "know." Rather, He used oida, which means, "to know by experience."

## **B. The Experience of the Church**

### 1. THEIR POSITION

Satanic power was being manifested in the evil religious character of Pergamos. It put the church in a treacherous position. And of course Satan would want to destroy that church. Wherever God sows good seed, Satan wants to sow bad seed. He is the absolute enemy of the church. The little body of believers at Pergamos were face to face with the Enemy in his own territory. It wasn't easy for them. They were fighting the lion in the lion's den. But they stood true. Christ says that they kept His name and didn't deny the faith. They hung on, even when Antipas (perhaps a member of their church) became a faithful martyr.

### 2. THEIR PROMISE

It is hard to be a Christian. You may say, "How can I be a good Christian where I work?" God says, "I know where you work, but have no fear." You say, "I get persecuted there." Good. That means you might be saying something right. Christ gave the church a tremendous promise in Matthew 16:18: "... I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." There is no fear. If we are Christ's, even the gates of hell can't defeat us. The little body of believers in the middle of Satanic Pergamos was in an uncompromising war with Satan, except for a few members.

### 3. THEIR PERSEVERANCE

You say, "How did they do in the battle?" I think they did well enough for Christ to say, "You have held fast to My name." They weren't denying Jesus. I'm sure they were told many times to deny Christ, but they didn't; they held on. They never denied the faith. They were to be commended because they hung on while living in the middle of Satan's world.

What is "Satan's Throne"?

Christ says very specifically that the city of Pergamos is Satan's throne. Why that city? The term could refer to three things:

#### 1. THE WORSHIP OF THE EMPEROR

Emperor worship was at a high point in Pergamos. There were many idols of the Caesars that were a Satanic counterfeit for true worship. Christ might have been referring to that.

#### 2. THE ALTAR TO ZEUS

This altar was one of the largest and most famous wonders of the ancient world. It was built on the side of a hill and protruded about forty feet over the edge. It looked like a giant throne.

Perhaps Christ called it Satan's throne because it looked like a throne and the worship of Zeus was Satanic.

But I think that there is an even better possibility:

### 3. THE TEMPLE OF ASCLEPIUS

Asclepius was the god of medicine. There was a gigantic temple in Pergamos devoted to this god. He was represented by a snake. There were many snakes crawling inside the temple. Whenever someone had a disease, he would lay on the floor of the temple. Every time he was touched by a snake, that was supposed to be the healing touch of the god Asclepius. Throughout the year, the temple floor was full of people. Attached to the temple was a medical school. The representation of Asclepius as a snake may well have been what Christ was referring to when He said that Pergamos was Satan's throne. The Bible does refer to the devil as a serpent (Gen. 3:1, cf. Rev.12:1).

#### Holding Fast to the Name of Christ

The church at Pergamos was right in the middle of pagan worship and Satan's throne. But it held on to the name of Jesus Christ. It blesses my heart to know that some of those people were being threatened with their very life. Even Antipas gave up his life to hold on to the name of Jesus Christ (Rev. 2:13). The easy thing to do in that situation is to deny Christ's name.

You say, "I would never deny His name!" I wonder if that's true. I've said that to myself, but sometimes when I have a perfect opportunity to tell people how much I love Christ, I clam up! In my heart and mind I know what I've done: I've denied Jesus Christ the expression He wanted through me. Antipas lost his life because he held on to the name of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful Christian he must have been!

It is not easy to be like Antipas today. We live in hell's capital. Wherever you happen to live, Satan is at work. It is not easy to hold on to the name of Jesus Christ--to exalt His name, to never deny Him or the faith and love that you have for Him. It is easy to cheapen Jesus Christ by compromising with the world. It is easy to say, "Everybody does it. I don't want to be an oddball. People will think I'm weird if I don't." For the sake of protecting our ego and popularity, we sacrifice the name of Christ and compromise with Satan. That is blasphemous to Jesus Christ!

But the believers at Pergamos held fast to Christ's name. They were courageous. It even cost one of them his life. But most Christians don't know anything about that. Some of us aren't even willing to sacrifice our popularity or the friends that we think we need so much, so we compromise instead. Antipas wouldn't compromise even though it cost him his life. Somewhere our sense of values has been twisted. Antipas would die rather than compromise with the world, but most of the time we will readily compromise rather than change the simplest pattern of our life. Pergamos stood true with no compromise.

There were some exceptions to the perseverance of the believers in Pergamos, and that brings us to...

## V. THE CONDEMNATION (vv. 14-15)

There were two false doctrines present in the church at Pergamos. The church is always a mixture of good and evil; it is never pure. There will be those who hold to the faith and hold fast to the name of Christ, and there will be those who play with the world. That was true in Pergamos.

### A. The People (v. 14a)

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them ..."

Perhaps there were only a few people involved. And notice that Christ is not even attached to them. He is saying to the believers, "You're doing well by holding to My name, but you have them ...."

### B. The Problems (vv. 14b-15)

"... that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."

There were two problems in the church at Pergamos: the teaching of Balaam and Nicolas. You say, "What did they teach?"

#### 1. THE TEACHING OF BALAAM

Verse 14 says, "... the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel ...." That is nothing new. It was occurring in the church at Pergamos and it is still occurring in the church today. It all began with Israel in Numbers 22--25.

##### a. In Israel

##### 1) The Prevention of Cursing

You say, "What is the doctrine of Balaam? What did Balaam teach Balak to do to make Israel stumble?" Balak didn't like Israel. He was the king of the Moabites (who were pagans), and he wanted to eliminate Israel because they were a threat to him. Balaam was a prophet, but he was a prophet for hire. He would prophesy for whoever paid him the highest price. Balak said, "I'm going to give you a lot of sheep, and I want you to curse Israel." But Balaam said, "I could never curse Israel." Balak eventually bought him off. Three times Balaam tried to curse Israel, and each time God stopped him (Num. 23:1--24:10). On one occasion God even stopped him through his donkey (Num. 22:22-31). God stopped Balaam every time he tried to curse Israel.

##### 2) The Plot of Corruption

Finally Balaam said, "I've got to do something to Israel. If I can't curse them, I'll corrupt them." So he taught Balak to set up a stumbling block (Rev. 2:14). What was Balaam's plan? He said to Balak, "Send your Moabite women to intermarry with the Israelites" (Num. 24:10--25:18). The Moabites worshiped all kinds of idols. Their worship was nothing but an orgy. Revelation 2:14 says that they ate things sacrificed to idols. They had gigantic feasts that would last many days. They would sacrifice an animal by first pulling a few hairs out of its forehead, throwing them in the fire, and eating the rest of the animal. Balaam knew that if he could get Israel to fellowship with godless people, they would be dragged into idolatry and fornication.

Balaam's plot was simple: Get the people of God to marry pagans. Israel did, and it was a disaster. Tragedy began in Israel when they intermarried.

## b. In Pergamos

Dr. Walvoord, the president of Dallas Theological Seminary, in commenting on Revelation 2:14 says, "The doctrine of Balaam therefore was the teaching that the people of God should intermarry with the heathen and compromise in the matter of idolatrous worship.... Undoubtedly intermarriage with the heathen and spiritual compromise were real issues in Pergamos ..." (The Revelation of Jesus Christ [Chicago: Moody Press, 1966], p. 68). Christians in the church at Pergamos were intermarrying with unbelievers. Christ hated that because it brought Him into union with Satan--and that's blasphemy!

### 1) Separation from the World

Christ's absolute condemnation of such a union in Israel or in Pergamos is clear testimony to the fact that Christians must, at all costs, remain pure and separated from the world. That is so clear. Paul reiterates the same point in 2 Corinthians 6:14-17: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial [Satan]? Or what part hath he that believeth with an [unbeliever]? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? ... Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ...." A disaster was occurring in the church of Pergamos: Believers were intermarrying with unbelievers, and the testimony of the church was being destroyed.

### 2) Fellowship with the World

Somebody might say, "How could the church and the world ever fall in love? They are so different. How could a believer ever fall for an unbeliever?" Those are good questions. Let's look at a couple of passages.

#### a) Things the World Hates

(1) JOHN 15:19 -- "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." It is only natural that the world and the believer have no relationship because the world hates the believer.

(2) JOHN 17:14-16 -- "I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

Twice Jesus says that the world hates the believer because the believer is not of the world. The world does not want to come into union with Christ. Satan does not want to ally himself with Christ.

## b) Things the World Loves

It is only logical to assume that the world could never bring itself to love the believer or the church unless they became like the world. Then there would be an attraction. It is natural for an unbeliever not to desire to be united with the believer unless the latter has been so tainted by the world, that he becomes attractive to the unbeliever. That is exactly what James meant when he said, "... know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Js. 4:4). If you are a friend of the world (and therefore an enemy of God), what must you be to intermarry with the world? Certainly more than just a friend!

The church at Pergamos had allowed intermarriage with the world. Consequently, their testimony was destroyed. The doctrine of Balaam is the problem of intermarriage. It was a problem in the church at Pergamos, and it is still a problem in the church today as people court the world. All of those things cause people to view Satan and Christ as the same. But God wants His church to be pure (Eph. 5:27).

## 2. THE DOCTRINE OF NICOLAS

The Nicolaitans were a group of heretics who sprung out of the teaching of a man named Nicolas. Some of his statements had been perverted and turned into immorality. They were a very immoral group. Some of them were present in the church at Pergamos.

We have looked at the correspondent, the city, the church, the commendation, and then the condemnation. Next I want you to notice ...

### **VI. THE COMMAND (v. 16)**

#### **A. The Request for Repentance (v. 16a)**

"Repent ..."

Repent from what? The church at Pergamos needed to repent from involving themselves with the world. They needed to repent from compromise, from flirting with the world, and seeking to be entertained by what it offers. You say, "What if I don't?"

#### **B. The Result of No Repentance (v. 16b)**

"... or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

## 1. FIGHTING IMPURITY THROUGH JUDGMENT

### a. Against Believers

Do you know what happens to the believer or the church that courts the world? Unless there is repentance, Jesus Christ will fight against them with His Word. That is serious! That should show you what God thinks of compromise and marrying the world. Christ has called out a peculiar people separated to Him. When they begin to mingle with the world and confuse that separation, He says, "If they don't repent, I'm going to fight against them with the sword in My mouth, which is My Word." God judges the believer who is married to the world.

Examine your life in all honesty. If you are courting the world in some way, you had better think twice about it or Christ will fight against you. You say, "Why would He fight against me?" Because He loves you and wants to drive you back to the place of purity in your life. Until you are there, you're no use to Him or the church. Many churches struggle today because Jesus Christ is fighting them. I thank God that He's keeping many people away from them.

### b. Against Unbelievers

Notice Christ says that He will fight against "them". Christians must be able to identify the unbelievers in the church. Commenting on verse 15 Lehman Strauss says, "If we fail to exclude unbelievers from the fellowship of the body, we are in error. By allowing them to be a part--they are imagining they are in a place of safety and security, while they are really in a place of death." In the fellowship of the body of Jesus Christ, there is no place for an unbeliever because we don't want him to think that he is okay.

You say, "You are being exclusive." Not at all. I don't want to give anybody a false sense of security until they have come to know Jesus Christ. Some people think that because they have been in the church for so many years, they are automatically a Christian. That is a tragedy. Some people have become so calloused to Christ because some church has accepted them without Him. Consequently, they never meet Him.

That case has been reversed. Some people have come into the church and God has overruled. Sometimes a believer has married an unbeliever and eventually the partner comes to Christ. But that is an exhibition of the grace of God. It doesn't make the choice right. The same thing happens with every sin you commit: God forgives every sin and exhibits grace in every case, but that doesn't make the sin right.

## 2. MAINTAINING PURITY THROUGH LOVE

Christ says, "Repent. If there is sin in the church, eliminate it. If there is someone in the church who is courting the world, deal with him." God wants to maintain the purity of the church. He doesn't want to keep everybody out; He wants to keep them in. But nobody will ever know what

the church is unless it's pure. We aren't trying to hide love; we're trying to give love. We are trying to be honest. True love won't accept people like they are and not care whether they know Christ. That's not love. True love says, "You can't belong to this fellowship unless you know Jesus Christ." That is the purity of the church and the honesty that Christ demands. You can never destroy error by compromising with Satan. Do what's right and God will take care of the problems.

Christ says, "Repent, or else I will fight against you with the sword of My mouth." If you are courting the world in some area of your life, repent unless you want Christ to struggle against you. And when you see someone in the church who doesn't know Jesus Christ, don't give him a sense of security until he does. That's why we believe that the body of Christ is a closed fellowship to those who love Jesus Christ. But the beauty of that fellowship is that it is not exclusive: Anyone who wants to can love Jesus Christ. You don't have to do anything to gain salvation except fall in love with Jesus Christ, and invite Him to be your Savior. But until you know Christ, you have no part in the fellowship.

Finally, let's look at...

## **VII. THE COUNSEL (v. 17)**

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh [the one who believes in Jesus (1 John 5:5)] 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 except he that receiveth it."

Jesus says, "If you don't know Me, believe in Me and move into the fellowship. There are two things I have promised for you who know Me and overcomes the world, sin, and Satan." What are those two things?

### **A. The Promise of Hidden Manna**

The overcomer gets to eat hidden manna. You say, "What's that?" In the Old Testament, the Israelites were fed with manna from heaven (Ex. 16:15). In the church we are fed with hidden manna. You say, "What is it?" It is the spiritual sustenance that Christ gives us every moment of every day. The world doesn't know anything about it. Hidden manna is the refreshing food of fellowship with Jesus Christ. It is hidden from the eyes of the world, but we enjoy it.

### **B. The Promise of a White Stone**

Jesus says, "If you receive Me, I'll not only give you spiritual food for sustenance, but I'll also give you a white stone with a name on it known only by the one who receives it." You say, "What is that white stone?" It is probably a diamond. I believe that the name on it is the name of the individual who receives it. I believe that God has a white stone with my name on it. If you know Christ, He has one with your name on it. You say, "What does that mean?" A white stone was used to indicate that someone was accepted or favored. When somebody wanted to show someone else how highly favored he was, he would give him a diamond. When we come into a

relationship with Jesus Christ, we are highly favored by Him. He promises to give us a beautiful diamond with our name carved on it. That's our inheritance.

The hidden manna takes care of us for today, and the white stone is our promise for the future. For the man who puts his faith in Christ, there is sustenance for today and the promise of an eternal heritage. The white stone with his name written on it symbolizes that eternal life.

In John's letter to the church at Pergamos, we have seen the importance of not marrying or compromising with the world. We have also seen the importance of repenting so Christ won't fight against you. Finally, we have seen the importance of meeting Jesus Christ and receiving two things that He promised to give the church at Pergamos: hidden manna (spiritual sustenance), and a white stone (the promise of an eternal heritage).

### **Focusing on the Facts**

1. What was the character of the church at Pergamos?
2. Who is the correspondent to the church at Pergamos? How is He pictured? (see Rev. 2:12)
3. What does the sword in Revelation 2:12 represent? Why does it have two edges? Explain. (see Heb. 4:12)
4. What did the church at Pergamos needed to be reminded of by Christ?
5. Where is Satan's throne located? Explain. (see Rev. 2:13)
6. What is the most effective way that Satan can destroy the church? What is the first step towards apostasy?
7. What was the beginning of the eventual destruction of the nation of Israel? (see Jud. 3:6)
8. Why was the church at Pergamos in such a treacherous position? How did the people respond? (see Rev. 2:13)
9. What does "Satan's throne" refer to? Explain. (see Rev. 2:13)
10. What were the two problems faced by the church at Pergamos? (see Rev. 2:14-15)
11. What did Balak hire Balaam to do? What did Balaam eventually teach Balak to do to Israel? What was the result? (see Num. 22--25)
12. What is the doctrine of Balaam? How did it affect the church at Pergamos?
13. Why does the world hate Christians? (see Jn. 15:19)
14. What is the only way that the world could ever bring itself to love Christians?

15. What did Christ want the church at Pergamos to repent from?
16. What would Christ do if the church didn't repent? (see Rev. 2:16)
17. Why do unbelievers need to be excluded from the fellowship of the body? Why does that reveal true love?
18. What does Jesus Christ promise to give to the one who overcomes? Explain. (see Rev. 2:17)

### **Pondering the Principles**

1. Have you ever compromised your Christian testimony in the world? Have you ever watered down a biblical truth in order to allow yourself some worldly indulgence? Give some examples. Read James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15. What does God say about those who ally themselves with the world? Read Romans 5:1-11. What are some of the characteristics of the relationship God began with you as a result of your salvation? As a result, do you desire to be a friend or an enemy of God? What worldly ties do you have to give up in order to be what God wants you to be?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-17. Are you thinking about entering into an unequally-yoked relationship? Perhaps you are considering a marriage with an unbeliever, a business partnership with an unbeliever, or having an unbeliever as a roommate. What does God think of such relationships? What is the danger of those kinds of relationships? What decision does God clearly want any Christian to make when it comes to allying himself with an unbeliever? What is your decision?
3. If you have been flirting with the world, what does Jesus Christ want you to do according to Revelation 2:16? If you don't, what will He do? What is your only logical option? Make the commitment to follow that option. Confess your sin to God. Tell Him that you long to fellowship with Him, and not with the world.