

The First-Century Church
"The Church in Pergamos"

Introduction:

1. The New Testament contains information that was written "about" as well as "to" various congregations in the first century.
2. By "rightly dividing" this information we can know the Lord's will for His church today.
3. This lesson is a study of the message that the Lord sent to the church in Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17).

Discussion:

- I. (vs.12) THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS MESSAGE
 - A. (vs.12a) This message was addressed to *"the angel [messenger] of the church in Pergamos."*
 - B. (vs.12b) Although John recorded this message, it was spoken by the Lord who described Himself as *"he which hath the sharp sword with two edges"* (1:16; Hebrews 4:12).
- II. (vs.13a) THE LORD KNEW THIS CHURCH'S SITUATION
 - A. He knew:
 1. this church's *"works"*
 2. where this church was located -- *"Satan's seat."*
 - B. Jesus was able to empathize with this congregation because He had some dealings with Satan (Mark 1:13).
 - C. Jesus also showed by His example how Satan can be overcome (Psalm 119:11).
- III. (vs.13b) THE LORD COMMENDED THIS CHURCH
 - A. This church "held fast" the Lord's name.
 - B. This church had not denied its faith in the Lord.
 - C. This church had remained true to the Lord, even when Antipas was killed as a martyr.
- IV. (vs.14-15) THE LORD REBUKED THIS CHURCH
 - A. (vs.14a) The Lord held a few things against this congregation.
 - B. (vs.14b) For one thing, some of the members held to the doctrine of Balaam.
 1. Balaam taught Balak how to cause the Israelites to stumble.
 2. The details of what happened are revealed in the book of Numbers.
 - a. (Numbers 25:1-3) The Israelites got involved with the women of Moab, and they worshipped the gods of the Moabites.
 - b. (Numbers 25:9) God punished the Israelites by killing many of them.
 - c. According to Numbers 31:16, Balaam was responsible for what happened by informing Balak how to cause the Israelites to stumble.
 3. Unfortunately, some people in this congregation were teaching the same doctrine that Balaam taught -- they were teaching Christians to worship idols and commit fornication.
 - C. (vs.15) For another thing, some of the members of the church in Pergamos held to the teaching of the Nicolaitanes.
 1. These people believed that Christians did not have to remain morally pure.
 2. The Lord feels very strongly about this doctrine -- He hates it (2:6).
 - D. It does not appear that everyone in the congregation practiced these sins, but the Lord rebuked the entire church for allowing these things to be taught and practiced.
- V. (vs.16-17) THE LORD EXHORTED THIS CHURCH TO REPENT
 - A. To repent, this congregation would have to get rid of these false doctrines and deal with those who were teaching them.
 - B. In exhorting this congregation to repent,:
 1. the Lord threatened it if it failed to repent (vs.16)
 2. the Lord promised to bless those who overcame (vs.17b).

Conclusion:

1. The Lord wants us to hear His message to the congregation in Pergamos (vs.17a).
2. We learn from it that the Lord requires His church to be scripturally sound and morally pure.