Revelation 2:12-17

“Wanted: Bouncers in Pergamos!”

1. **Intro:**
   1.1. Mike Ramsey – Share on “The Next Phase”.

2. **WANTED: BOUNCERS IN PERGAMOS! (12-17)**
   2.1. **INTRO!** (12)
   2.2. Pergamos – “Height or elevation”.
      2.2.1. The city was built on a **cone-shaped hill** (1000’ high).
      2.2.2. 80 miles north of Ephesus. It was the **Political capitol** of Asia.
      2.2.3. They had one of the **largest Libraries** of antiquity w/200,000 books (all manuscripts).
         2.2.3.1. One of the products the city was famous for was its **paper** or **parchment**. Pergamos was the 1st place where **skins** were used for writing on, which replaced the **parchments**.
      2.2.4. The Library was later sent to Egypt as a gift from **Mark Anthony** to **Cleopatra**! {Guess she liked to read? “Here honey the library of congress!”}
   2.3. Sharp 2-edged sword – (preceded by 1:16; & before 2:16)
   2.4. **COMMENDATION!** (13)
   2.5. Satan’s throne is & Satan dwells –
      2.5.1. Mystery cults of Babylon set up their headquarters there.
      2.5.2. **The official Center for Emperor Worship** (started here).
         2.5.2.1. They had their 1st **temple** dedicated to **Augustus Caesar** (reigned when Jesus was born)
      2.5.3. **The Askelpios** center – They had a temple dedicated to **Askelpios** (the god of healing) whose insignia was the entwined serpent on the staff. (still a med. symbol today!)
         2.5.3.1. The Asklepieion was a kind of **Mayo Clinic** of the ancient world.
      2.5.4. The Lord commends the church for its steadfastness in the “**epi-center**” of Satan’s domain!
         2.5.4.1. They remain faithful even on **Satan’s Turf**!
         2.5.4.2. **Note:** The church isn’t told to get out of “Las Vegas; Laughlin; Pechanga!” [C.C.Pechanga hmmm – would we even think of it?]
   2.6. Didn’t deny the faith, even during persecution -
      2.6.1. They held to their faith even when it might have cost them their lives!
      2.6.2. “**Faith**” - Heb.11:32-35a - “**Some By Faith** subdued kingdoms & escaped the edge of the sword.”
2.6.2.1. Heb.11:35b-38 – “Others, Through Faith were tortured & slain w/the sword.”
2.6.2.2. Heb.11:39 - “All these obtained a good testimony through Faith.”

2.7. Antipas My faithful martyr – Show relief.
   2.7.1. Persecution during the time of Domitian.
      2.7.1.1. [he would have been killed in John’s lifetime]
   2.7.2. Some ancient writers tell us he was enclosed in a red-hot brazen ox & thus burned alive w/great pain, yet in steadfastness.
   2.7.3. God knew all about this humble believer who lived & died for Christ.
      2.7.3.1. “He calls his sheep by name”
      2.7.3.2. 2 Tim.2:19, “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His.”

2.8. CONDEMNATION! (14,15)
2.9. Some held bad doctrine – (not even “the churches” stance, yet still effected the body)

2.10. “But...they were too tolerant of false doctrines!”
   2.10.1. They were drifting into Worldliness & Carnality!
   2.10.2. Some resisted the flow, but the majority were being swept out to sea!
   2.10.3. Being willing to die for the faith is no substitute for living the faith!¹

2.11. Doctrine of Balaam – His story is in Numb.22-25
   2.11.1. Moabite King Balak was scared regarding Israel coming up from Egypt, as saw what they did to the Ammorites.
   2.11.2. Invited Balaam(a hireling prophet) to come curse them for him. Tried to no avail. So, “If you can’t curse em, corrupt em!”
   2.11.3. Balaam gave King Balak advice to “made friends w/Israel”!
      2.11.3.1. Israel, instead of instituting “neighborhood watch”, became “good neighbors!”
      2.11.3.2. They wedded the world, to get worldly advantages.
   2.11.4. Satan decides, “If you can’t beat em, join em...so he does!”
   2.11.5. The meat sacrificed to these idols was served at their banquets.
   2.11.6. Often sexual immorality was a part of these banquets.
      2.11.6.1. The issue wasn’t eating the meat, but actually participating in idolatrous feasts & sexual sin.

2.12. Doctrine of Nicolaitans –
   2.12.1. What begins with deeds in one church(Ephesus vs.6), is now a settled doctrine in another!

¹ Warren Wiersbe; Outline of the NT.
2.12.2. This church is now divided into “priests” & “people”.
   2.12.2.1. As Protestants we still deal with this, just without the titles!
   2.12.2.1.1. Many in church still see the pastor is the minister of the church, when we all are supposed to be!

2.12.3. Don’t compromise but resist!
   2.12.3.1. Antipas said, “no compromise”; many in the church said, “let’s take the easy way out.”
   2.12.3.2. Illustration: many years ago we had a church night at Mulligan’s. I watched as little Ali Irwin had 1 foot on the dock & 1 one the boat... & it slooooowly separated, & in she went!
   2.12.3.2.1. Many Christians are trying to live with one foot on the dock & one on the boat.

2.12.4. “While the Christian must live in the world, he should not let the world live in him!”
   2.12.4.1. “We are to be like the fish that live in salt water...yet...don’t...taste...salty!” 😊

2.13. REPENT! (16)
2.14. Repent – His constant charge and command to His own is “Repent!”
   2.14.1. “Change or I will come to you and I will remove your lampstand”.

2.15. Antipas felt the sword of Rome, but the church at Pergamos would feel the sword of Christ if they did not repent!

2.16. A little girl said to her mother, “I know why flowers grow;...they want to get out of the dirt!”
   2.16.1. Q: Do you want to get out of the dirt? - “Repent, is the wake up call to the church!”
   2.16.2. What drives the plant up?...the power of the Sun.
   2.16.2.1. Many plants like the sunflower follow the sun East to West.
   2.16.2.2. We also must follow the Son, growing away from the earth & unto heaven!

2.17. “The influence of a Holy Life is often the greatest contribution we can make to the salvation of men.”

2.18. PROMISE! (17)
   2.19.1. Jesus is the real manna for Christians to live on.

2.20. A White Stone – is ambiguous! (just like it was to you when you walked in & received yours) - This may stand for many things. - A white stone had many meanings in ancient society!
2.20.1. [1] Rabbinic legend – that precious stones fell from heaven along with the manna. 

2.20.2. Followers of Christ – This would represent the precious gifts of God to His people.

2.20.3. [2] Ancient Law courts – white & black stones were used for registering the verdict of Juries. {black for condemnation; white for acquittal}

2.20.4. Followers of Christ – are acquitted in the sight of God because of the work of Christ.

2.20.5. [3] The Thracians & Scythians kept an urn in their house & each day they threw either a white stone in for a Happy day, or a black stone for ever Unhappy day; at the end of their lives the stones were counted to distinguish whether they had a wretched or a Happy life!

2.20.6. Followers of Christ – we can have the joy that no man can take from us (Jn.16:22)

2.20.7. [4] Wear an amulet or charm (lucky jewelry: a piece of jewelry worn to provide protection against evil, injury, disease, or bad luck)

2.20.7.1. A very common custom in the ancient world.

2.20.7.2. On the pebble was a sacred name; to know a god’s name was to have certain power over him, to be able to summon him to one’s aid in time of difficulty & to have mastery over demons.

2.20.7.3. It was also known to be doubly effective if no one else knew the name inscribed on it!

2.20.8. Followers of Christ – maybe he will place around your neck, not a good luck charm, but maybe a small stone that would represent more of what a “promise ring on a chain” represents in our culture. With a special name of Himself on it...just for you! (explain His Names/titles thru Scripture are to reveal more of himself to us)

2.20.9. [5] Friendship – when 2 people, seeking to seal a friendship, broke a stone into 2 & each retained a half, which gave access to each others home.

2.20.10. Followers of Christ – here is guaranteed access to His home & promise of His friendship!

2.20.11. [6] Admission to a feast – if there was an expensive & restricted feast often they would use a white stone for admission...much like an exclusive club today.

2.20.12. Followers of Christ – here is your ticket to His feast.

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2 William Barclay; Rev.2:12-17.
3 Willmington’s Bible Handbook.
2.21. *Pull out your stone!* [there was no polished white stones in our whole valley today!]

2.21.1. [7] Victory - In Rome a great Gladiator was the admired hero of all.
2.21.1.1. Often a gladiator had to fight on until he was killed in combat.
2.21.1.2. But if he had a specially illustrious career, when he grew old, he was allowed to retire in honor.
2.21.1.3. Such men were given a **white stone** w/the letters *SP* on it.
   2.21.1.3.1. *SP* stands for the Latin *Spectatus* which means a man whose *valor* has been proved beyond a doubt.
2.21.1.4. “**Tried, tested, proved; esteemed!**” (Latin dictionary)
2.21.1.5. **Followers of Christ** – one day saint you WILL receive a stone. Maybe it will say, “**tried, tested, proved, & esteemed**”?
   2.21.1.5.1. Maybe, “**SP**” *Spectatus*?

2.21.2. The best I could do was “**Tope**” but your Messiah will provide you with “**White**” representing your *quauntum leap in purity*!

2.22. A New name –

2.22.1. **New** (καινός *keenos*)— “not only in point of **time** but also in point of **quality**; nothing like it has ever been made before!” (Barclay)
   2.22.1.1. Also: **new Jerusalem** (3:12); **new song** (5:9); **new heavens & new earth** (21:1); God makes all things new (21:5).
2.22.2. You are special! – you will be identified with Yeshua as you have won the Victory!

2.23. **End**: Last picture, I took on a spiritual day at the beach in Oceanside.

2.23.1. The constant drip on the “river rock” knocks off the edges & makes it smooth.