

## Bread-Stone-Name • Revelation 2:17

### Read v. 17 • Jewel & Setting

1. Imagine a beautiful diamond. It's a large, brilliant jewel; fit for a queen as a mark of her royalty.
2. It needs a **setting**, something to hold it—like a ring; a necklace or crown.
3. And a jewel of this quality **deserves** a masterpiece of elegance.
4. This verse and its promise is a glorious, gorgeous jewel from Jesus.
5. It **deserves** a masterpiece of elegant eloquence in the way of a sermon.
6. How I wish a Charles Spurgeon were here today to do that for us; or an Alistair Begg.

### Background / Context

1. This is the final line of the letter Jesus sent the Church at Pergamos, we looked at last week.
2. To appreciate what Jesus says here we need to recap what we saw last week.
3. Pergamos was the Roman capital of the region and a center of Caesar-worship.
  - a. In a season of fierce persecution not long before, their pastor Antipas, had been executed.
  - b. And while Jesus commends their past loyalty,
  - c. He warns them about their accommodation of false teachers who've introduced some dangerous ideas
    - 1) That it was okay to eat food sacrificed to idols and to engage in sexual immorality.
    - 2) Bottom line: These false teachers advocated moral & spiritual compromise w/the world.
    - 3) So much so, they even wanted to make the Church **look & sound** like pagan religion.
    - 4) Their slogan was, "You gotta' go along to get along."
4. Jesus calls the pastor and people of the church at Pergamos to tell these compromisers to repent or be gone.
5. Then makes this promise . . . [v17]

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

### Those With Ears

1. All 7 of the letters Jesus sent to the churches of Asia Minor end this way—with a call to hear what the Spirit is saying & a glorious promise to those who **heed** that message.
2. Though we've seen this before it bears repeating, since Jesus Himself repeats it, 7 times!
  - a. While each of these messages spoke to specific issues in the church it was addressed to,
  - b. All of them are for all of us.
  - c. We'll find **each** of these letters relevant at different places in our lives as we follow Jesus.
  - d. Smyrna's message may be what you need right now, but a year ago it was Ephesus. Next month it maybe what Jesus says to Sardis that nails you.
  - e. What's true of us **individually**, is also true for us **collectively** as a fellowship.
  - f. CCO also goes through seasons of spiritual growth & challenge.
    - 1) It happens often that many of us go thru a similar trial or challenge at the same time.
    - 2) There's an epidemic of marital problems. A season of difficult parenting.
    - 3) Economic hardship. Major physical problems. Whatever.
  - g. What's amazing is how often when these season of collective trial come we **just happen to be** studying a passage in God's Word that speaks to THAT very thing.
  - h. This has happened way too often to be coincidence.
  - i. I know from the report of many of you that in just the 3 letters we've looked at so far, God has spoken to you to bring both correction and comfort.
3. Let's keep our ears open to what the Spirit has to say to us today & in the weeks to come.
4. The promises Jesus gives at the end of each letter are to those **who overcome**.
5. Overcomers are those who follow Jesus faithful to the end.
  - a. In John 16:33 Jesus said  
These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
  - b. Then in 1 John 5:4-5, John writes  
Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6. Keeping to the context of each of the promises to these 7 churches, the Overcomers are those who **heed** the warnings & make corrections Jesus calls for.
7. A special reward is promised to them.
8. And note that **every one** of them will be bestowed when we arrive in the glory of Heaven.
  - a. None of these promises are fulfilled in this life.
  - b. Only the next.
9. There's an important lesson there for us as followers of Jesus.
  - a. My precious brothers & sisters, never forget that this world is not our home.
  - b. Our home is heaven & we're all to be a little homesick.
  - c. Yes, God's creation is amazing & there are plenty of things we can enjoy & take pleasure in.
  - d. God even **wants** us to; as a kind of down-payment on the glory that awaits us in Heaven.
  - e. But we must never forget that while the EARTH is good & to be enjoyed;
  - f. The WORLD of human society is corrupt, evil, & in rebellion against God.
  - g. It will be till King Jesus comes and sets things right.
  - h. So – this world is not our home; heaven is.
  - i. And Jesus wants to renew our longing for it, so He gives these promises.
  - j. He says in effect, “Hang on to Me to the end, & when you step into glory, I'll load you up w/rewards.”

10. Here's 2 of them You'll eat Hidden Manna, & get a New Name on a White Stone.

#### Hidden Manna

1. Since Jesus doesn't **explain** either of these, we glean their meaning by discovering what they meant to the people who originally heard them.
2. Manna was the food God miraculously provided the people of Israel for the 40 years they journeyed to the Promise Land.
  - a. Exo.16:31 says it tasted like wafers made w/honey – **Baklava!**
  - b. And it was super-nutritious because it sustained them in excellent health for 4 decades!
  - c. Psa 78 called it “angel's food.” Angel food Wonder bread.
3. In John 6, Jesus said some highly provocative things to the crowd He'd just miraculously fed with a few loaves & fish.
  - a. He made a direct connection between the meal they'd just eaten and their ancestors who'd enjoyed the manna in the wilderness.
  - b. He said that whereas their ancestors had eaten manna but gotten hungry again
  - c. Anyone who came & partook of Him, would be **forever satisfied**.
  - d. He was the REAL manna the stuff they'd eaten in the wilderness only pointed to.
4. Jesus gathers all this up into a single glorious promise for the overcomes at Pergamos.
  - a. You see, Exo 16 tells us a pot of the ancient manna had been collected & kept as a memorial to God's provision.
  - b. But Jewish tradition said when the prophet Jeremiah was told by God the temple was going to be destroyed by the Babylonians, he moved the ark of the covenant and several other pieces of sacred service to a place of hiding, including the pot of manna.
  - c. 1<sup>st</sup> C Jews believed one of the ways the Messiah would prove who He was, was by finding this hidden manna & feeding them from it.
5. In John 6, as Jesus spoke to the crowds, He claimed to BE that hidden manna.
  - a. And indeed, all who come to Jesus to partake of Him, realize He's the only One who satisfies.
  - b. He is true Bread who nourishes our souls to eternal life.
6. But right now, we do not see Him. // We have His Word, but do not hear His voice.
7. The glorious promise Jesus gives here is that when we arrive in Heaven, we'll be so close to Him as He is in glory that all we've every longed for, everything we've aspired to, will be completely satiated.
8. Jesus' promise of hidden manna stands in contrast to the idol-meat the Christians at Pergamos were being seduced to eat.
  - a. The false teachers advocated compromise with the world; saying it was okay to eat food that had been sacrificed to an idol.
  - b. Jesus calls them to reject this compromise and remain true to Him.

- c. If they do, He'll throw them a feast in glory.
- 9. Now, we need to pause there for a moment of **personal reflection**.
  - a. There are two kinds of people: The NOW folk and the THEN peeps.  
Those who always & only live for this moment,  
And those who save it for later.
  - b. Everyone in this room is prone to one or the other.
  - c. Wisdom lies in knowing **when** to save and **when** to use some of what's saved now.
  - d. The problem is that many Christians struggle because they are so NOW oriented, they end up constantly compromised by sin.
    - 1) They want to feel good **now**.
    - 2) They want pleasure **right this instant**.
    - 3) They demand to be totally satisfied **NOW**!
    - 4) So they give in to temptations that promises all that
    - 5) Only to find that they were lied to & cheated.
- 10. Jesus says, "Trust Me. All you're longing for is in Me."
  - a. "I'm in Heaven, and when you're finally gathered here with me, all you've wanted will be realized."
  - b. This is not to say the Spirit doesn't give us foretastes of glory NOW; He most certainly does!
  - c. But it's all just a foretaste; an appetizer that makes us even more hungry for the main meal.

#### White Stone & New Name

- 1. Then Jesus promised the overcomer –  
And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.
- 2. White stones were used in the 1<sup>st</sup> C for several things.
  - a. If you held a party, guests were admitted to it because you'd given them a white stone with a word or emblem written on it.
    - 1) It was a ticket that gave access to a feast.
    - 2) So Jesus may be saying those who overcome will have access into glory.
  - b. But most likely, this white stone stands in **contrast** to the black stones that were cast against their pastor Antipas, who'd been martyred.
    - 1) Court cases were decided by jurors throwing either a white or black stone into a bowl.
    - 2) Black stones meant guilty, White meant innocent.
    - 3) When Antipas was tried by the court at Pergamos, they'd found him guilty and condemned him to death.
    - 4) Jesus says He'll give a white stone to the overcomers for they've been forgiven all their sins.
- 3. That forgiveness grants them a brand new start as a new person, w/a **new name**.
- 4. Often in the Bible, people get new names to significant a major change in their lives.
  - a. Abram Abraham; Sarai Sarah; Jacob Israel; Simon Peter
  - b. You see, while for us names are just labels we give people because we like the way they sound,
  - c. In the ancient world, names carried much more significance.
    - 1) They were **descriptions**; 1 word summaries of a parent's hopes & dreams for that child.
    - 2) Sometimes parent **delayed** giving a child an official name until they could see what the child was going to be like. Their name was a **description** of their personality.
  - d. If someone was adopted, their new parents gave them a new name, marking their new identity.
- 5. And whenever God re-names someone; it's always a blessing.  
So Abram goes from Father to Exalted Father.  
Saria goes from Contentious to Princess.  
Jacob from Dirty, Sneaky, Thief to Governed by God.  
Simon from Shifty to Rocky.  
And you go from \_\_\_\_\_ to Well, no one is going to know that new name but You and Jesus.
- 6. Jesus will hand us a white stone which grants us access to Heaven because we've been forgiven all that would keep us out.
- 7. That forgiveness means we get a new start as new people.
- 2 Cor 5:17 • If anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have

become new.

8. As we look at that white stone we'll see a name inscribed there: Your Real Name!
  - a. Not the label you've been stuck with for years; not the one your folks picked or is on your birth certificate.
  - b. They picked that name because they thought it sounded good.
  - c. Or they borrowed money from an uncle to buy a car and giving you his name was their way to say thanks. So they called you Elmer or Ole.
9. Listen: Get this—That's **not** your name. // My name isn't Lance.
  - a. It's how you know me, but it's not my name.
  - b. I don't even know my name yet – but I will.
  - c. I will look at that white stone and see my name and realize THAT'S who I am.
  - d. Who I REALLY am. Because that's what God calls me.
  - e. It's the perfect description of who & what I am.
  - f. Of everything my heart has ever aspired to; every longing my soul has even known.
10. You know what you REALLY want? The desire and longing that lies at the very center of your innermost being?
11. It's this: To be known; really KNOWN – down to your most intimate self >> and to be loved right there.
  - a. Not to be rejected & cast off because of what's known about you – but LOVED THERE!
12. THAT is what this white stone & new name mean.
  - a. It's God's way of forever proving to us He knows us all the way - & loves & accepts us.
  - b. And that's why that name is known by no one else.
  - c. It can't be – because no one else can know & love you like that. Only God.
13. I'm called "pastor" by those who know me least.
  - a. I'm "Lance" to my friends.
  - b. My kids call me "Dad."
  - c. A mother called me "son."
  - d. But my wife has terms of endearment for me I can't repeat in public.
  - e. They're shared only between us; when no one else can hear.
14. This is the intimacy promised to those who overcome.
  - a. The Bridegroom will speak to His Bride.
  - b. He has a tender name for her not even the angels know.