

## Checkin' Out My Walk

### #39 - Promise To Those Who Overcome - Pergamos

I KNOW YOUR WORKS - Our Works are emphasized in Revelation 2 & 3.

Note: I believe each promise is to those who overcome the specific problem Jesus points out in each letter. He gives a different solution for each problem.

There are different promises for each specific problem.

I believe the promises in Revelation 2 & 3 are millennial in scope.

The blessings of His future Kingdom are assured to those who overcome.

Consider: The rewards to those who overcome graduate from church to church.

Rewards begin with the right to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God and escalate to the right to sit with Christ on His throne.

This seems to indicate a progression of spiritual growth and maturity.

Consider: Each individual is to hear what the Spirit says to all the churches.

The POWER to overcome each problem is provided to me as I abide in Jesus Christ.

Victory for overcoming is through Jesus Christ; not in our own strength.

Belief: Justified believers will be given positions in His coming Kingdom with regard to their spiritual maturity. To be revealed at Judgment Seat Of Christ

Rev. 2:12-17 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, - The Compromising Church

'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: <sup>13</sup> "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne *is*. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. <sup>17</sup> "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*."

Note: By repeating "I will give," there is an emphasis on the grace of the Savior and the second gift is highlighted as distinct from the first. Though rewards are promised for faithfulness, they are still a matter of the grace of God for it is by His grace and strength that we experience the capacity for faithfulness.

I KNOW THY WORKS! Commends; Presents the Problem; Solution; Ear to Hear; Promise

Christ's Commendation: The believers in Pergamos lived in a difficult place, surrounded by pagan influences, yet they held fast to Christ's name, did not deny Him during difficult times, held fast against temptation to compromise. The courage of their faith is evident.

Christ's Concerns: [Church During Time Of Constantine- Drive The World Into The Church]

Note: It wasn't a question of their denying the Lord's name or of denying the faith. They experienced great pressure to compromise. It was a question of being soft and tolerant to error. They were guilty of religious and moral compromise.

Compromise: blending qualities of two different things; a concession of your principles.

Compromise is PLANNED FAILURE.

1. You have allowed the evil doctrine of Balaam [monetary gain by compromise -selling himself and his message for money] to come in. His motto: If you can't curse them, corrupt them! You are putting stumbling blocks before my people. Balaam taught Balak how to circumvent God's commands by seduction and allow the Israelites to fulfill the lust of the flesh and marry pagan wives.

Applied to Pergamos, this doctrine taught it is permissible to mix Christianity and paganism. Do Not tolerate anyone who leads people away from God and the truth of His Word.

Note: Where one sin is allowed to thrive, another is not far behind.

2. You have allowed the doctrine of the Nicolaitans [corruption of delegated authority], which I hate. They taught grace gives us a license to sin.

Consider: God gives us promises and assurances so we will not despair, but He gives us warnings that we might not presume!

Note: A True Christian Desires To Be FREE From Sin; Not To Sin Freely!

3. You are not keeping out false teachings. A little leaven will eventually leaven the whole lump. Have you heard: "Sure, I'm a Christian but everyone else is doing it and says it is ok. I don't want to lose my friendships."

4. Jesus comes with the sharp sword of separation to cut these apart. There is to be NO mixing of believers with any "-ism" or cult that perpetuates this sin.

Note: Both of these teachings dilute the Word of God to the extent that many are giving in to the world's standards. As soon as we allow ourselves to compromise for the sake of unity and peace, it will lead down a slippery slope into sin and the rejection of God's Word.

A.W. Tozer: Christianity has been watered down until the solution is so weak that if it were poison it would not hurt anyone, and if it were medicine it would not cure anyone!

Christ's Advice:

1. REPENT or I will come to you quickly. I will fight against them with the sword of My Mouth. Your mind MUST be changed from an attitude of compromise to one of insistence on doctrinal and moral purity. Don't tolerate sin by bowing to the pressure to be open-minded!

Note: LIVE DIFFERENTLY! Worldly thinking must be dealt with positively and quickly or it eats into our lives individually. Like cancer, worldliness eats deeply into our viewpoint of life. Turn away from the world and back to the separated life to pursue holiness and godliness.

The Issue: Three things marked the heresy at Pergamos: idolatry, immorality and infidelity. Either we repent of our compromise, acknowledge its presence and evil and commit to moving in a godly direction, or we face divine discipline.

The Solution: The Christian needs to live in the Word, the two-edged sword, which penetrates and transforms us by the renewing of the mind with the mind of Christ (Rom. 12:1-2)

I Cor. 2:16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?"

But we have the mind of Christ [to be guided by His thoughts & purposes].

This includes keeping our focus on eternal treasures.

The alternative is divine discipline on the basis of that same Word, which, if neglected, results in our discipline according to the warnings and principles of Scripture.

Promise to HIM WHO OVERCOMES: Only the one who overcomes has been promised that he will be allowed to partake of the "hidden manna" and will be given a "white stone" with a "new name" in the stone, which no man will know other than the one receiving it.

God's Challenge: Overcome by faith in the Savior's victory and provision.

God's Method: Continue an ACTIVE faith by living in the Word and feeding on Jesus Christ.

This causes us to overcome and leads us into the abundance and sufficiency of Christ's life with great reward now and in the future.

Belief: (1) All three promises concern the believer's victorious reign with Christ, consistent with the promises bestowed on the other six churches of Revelation 2-3.

(2) The promises of reward to the churches revolve on intimacy with our Lord. The greatest satisfaction a living creature can have now and in eternity is the intimacy with the living God.

A. I will give some of the HIDDEN MANNA to eat.

Note: "Manna" is found in the Old and New Testaments, but the "*hidden manna*" is found only in the third overcomer's promise in the book of Revelation.

1. The Israelites were provided manna during their pilgrim journey between Egypt and Canaan in place of the leeks, melons, garlic, and onions of their old life in Egypt, an apt picture for the world system. The manna, "food from heaven," stood for God's faithfulness to the Israelites to provide for and sustain them.

2. Christians have been provided Manna during their pilgrim journey here on the earth to a heavenly land, wherein we will realize an inheritance.

3. Any teaching concerning the future "*hidden manna*" must be drawn from past and present appearances of the manna as a provision for God's people.

4. The fact that the future provision for those who overcome is presently "*hidden*" may be an allusion to the manna that was kept "*before the Lord*" in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle. This manna was placed in a "*golden pot*" within the Ark of the Covenant, *hidden* from the people but *visible* to God [Exodus 16:14-35; Hebrews 9:2-4]

5. The manna given to the Israelites during the wilderness journey was a provision for their physical needs. It was a special food, prepared by God, containing everything necessary for the sustenance and well-being of the physical body. It was provided fresh day-by-day, and the Israelites were to gather and eat the manna after the fashion in which it was given.

No supplementary food was provided or required.

6. The "mannā" the Israelites were given in the wilderness typified *Christ*, "the living bread that came down from heaven".

John 6:48-51 the Lord spoke of Himself as the true bread from heaven that gives eternal life in contrast with the manna in the Old Testament.

"Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died" (John 6:49).

While the manna sustained their physical life for a time, it was only a picture of the one who would come and who would give life and life abundant (John 10:10).

7. This "living bread" is the provision Christians have been given for their wilderness journey. Christians "eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood" (John 6:48-54) through the assimilation of the Word of God. This Word is a special food, prepared by God, containing everything necessary for the sustenance and well-being of your growth and your soul.

James 1:21b receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

8. The Spirit of God will render this food fresh day-by-day. Christians are to partake of the living Word through the written Word.

No supplementary food has been provided; nor is any required.

9. The "mannā" upon which Christians presently feed has been given to properly prepare and equip them for the wilderness or pilgrim journey.

10. The "hidden mannā" must be a parallel provision for *things beyond the wilderness journey*. Those who overcome will be allowed to partake of the hidden manna to properly prepare and equip them as they rule and reign in the kingdom.

11. The provision is "mannā" now and "hidden manna" *yet future*, both given to equip Christians during particular periods for particular areas of service.

My Belief: The "hidden mannā" and the "tree of life" [promise to Ephesus] are both set forth as provisions to properly equip Christians as they rule and reign with Christ in His Kingdom. Partaking of the "tree of life" will provide an intimate fellowship. Christ imparts special wisdom and knowledge necessary to judge in equity, justice, and righteousness. It can be safely assumed that partaking of the hidden manna will apparently constitute God's provision to properly prepare overcoming Christians for this 1000 year period.

B. I Will Give Him A White Stone

Note: This is the most difficult reward to interpret of all the rewards mentioned in Rev. 2 & 3 because of the various uses of white stones and because no other passage tells us anything about white stones. Commentators agree on 3 possibilities.

3 Uses Of White Stones

1. During the days when Revelation was written, and days prior to that time, giving one a white stone meant: A white stone was put in a vessel by a judge to vote for acquittal for a person on trial. The person charged with an offense had been acquitted and declared as justified.

Note: Since our works alone will be reviewed at the Judgment Seat of Christ, approval shown by the white stone must emanate out of a judgment of works.

Justification on the basis of Christ's finished work at Calvary cannot be in view here.

Overcomers and non-overcomers alike would receive such a stone if that were the case.

A white stone will be given to every Christian whose works endure the fire, revealing approval on the basis of that coming under judgment — *works emanating out of faithfulness*.

2. A white stone was also given to the victor in a contest or battle, which is exactly what is in view through overcoming. It would be much like a 'well done' for service rendered.

Christians are presently in a battle, a warfare, against "*principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world* ['age'], *against spiritual wickedness in high places* ['against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenlies']" (Eph. 6:12).

Satan and his angels use the world and the flesh in their never-ceasing efforts to bring about YOUR defeat. It is the victor — the one overcoming the world, the flesh, and the devil — that the promised white stone will be given.

3. Another custom in John's day: Special stones were given which entitled the bearer to special hospitality and friendship.

An interesting historical note: When a victor won in the games, whatever great games were being held, it was not uncommon for the victor to be given as part of his prize a white stone.

The white stone was his admission pass into the festival that was held following the games for all the victors. Could it be that he who overcomes will receive the admission ticket to the marriage feast that inaugurates the Millennial Kingdom?

The white stone clearly symbolized special blessing and privilege that will be given to those believers who overcome the problems that were presented to the church of Pergamos.

### C. A New Name On The Stone

"A new name which no one knows ..." The Lord promises us a special name.

Biblically, a new name usually indicates a significant change of relationship with God.

Recall: Abram's name was changed to Abraham to portray the fact that he was to become the father of a multitude. Jacob, which means supplanter, was changed to Israel, the one over whom God would henceforth rule. Simon became Peter the little rock.

The overcomer is promised a new name which may show something of what God has accomplished in his or her life through a walk of faith and faithfulness.

The custom of giving a new name to mark a new status was known in the heathen world as well. The name of the first of the Roman Emperors was Octavius, but when he became the first of the Emperors he was given the name Augustus.

This very name marked his new status; he was now unique and superhuman and more than man. John's readers would definitely understand the significance of a new name since only recently the title of the Roman emperor had been changed.

The gift of this new name marks the overcomer's entrance to a new and higher stage of responsibility symbolizing new and greater authority.

With the preceding in mind, understanding the white stone, along with the new name in the stone, can possibly best be seen in Joseph's exaltation by the Pharaoh of Egypt.

Joseph, because of his faithfulness to God, was, through divine providence, brought into a position of such favor with Pharaoh that he found himself exalted to the throne.

Pharaoh took his own ring and "*put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.*" He then positioned him as "*ruler over all the land of Egypt,*" and bestowed upon him a new name — "*Zaphnath-paaneah*" (Genesis 41:39-45).

The white stone will identify the overcomer as the one shown justified, victorious in conquest, and elevated to noble rank. As Joseph in the type, he will be placed in the position of a ruler and be given a new name. Joseph was placed over all Egypt, and the overcoming Christian will be placed over all the earth ("Egypt" is always a type of the world in Scripture).

He will then be given "a new name . . . that no one knows except him who receives it."

Regardless of the exact meaning concerning the "hidden manna" and "the white stone with a new name," one thing is certain. The promises revolve around the Lord Jesus Christ and they are well worth the wait. We cannot grasp the fullness of these promises yet.

When overcoming Christians go forth to rule with Christ in the kingdom, everything will be in a state of readiness. I believe through the provision of the tree of life, the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name, overcomers will be properly equipped for every facet of life in the kingdom as they rule the nations with Christ.

They will be given wisdom and knowledge to rule in equity, justice, and righteousness.

They will be provided with the necessary sustenance (physical and/or spiritual) to equip them for the position they are to hold. They will be given white stones showing their victory in this life and their abundant entrance to His Millennial Kingdom and the Marriage Feast.

The One with whom they are to rule as co-heirs will know them by a new name.

Through God's provision, *a perfect rule* will issue forth when man is once again brought back into the position for which he was originally created.

Jesus warned: Holding fast to Him would not be easy, but it would be well worth it.

Heb. 10:23 Let us seize *and* hold tightly the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is reliable *and* trustworthy *and* faithful [to His word].