

EP33 Revelation 2 verses 12-17 (part3)

The Church at Pergamum

Overall Theme: Wait for Me—I Will Satisfy!

Let's pick back up with our passage in *Revelation 2:12-17*

Revelation 2:12-17

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: "The One who is now having the sharp two-edged sword now says this: 'I know where you now dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you now hold fast **My** name and did not choose to deny **My** faith even in the days of Antipas, **My** witness, **My** faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan now dwells. But I now have a few things against you because you now have there some who are now holding the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. So, you also now have some who in the same way are now holding the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I will choose to now come to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. He who is now having an ear, let him hear what the Spirit now says to the churches. To him who is now overcoming, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who is now receiving it.'

As we have discovered in the first 2-podcasts, this letter deals with a lot. It addresses our spiritual battle with the enemy and our emotional and psychological struggle with our suffering. It all centers around our desire and need for relationship—to be that special person to that special person.

It provides for us a glimpse into the battle strategy of the enemy and how if he cannot defeat the bondservants of God with **Battle Plan A**, which usually involves aggression, persecution, and so on, then he implements **Battle Plan B** (the **Balaam** strategy) and attempts to surreptitiously get them to reach for satisfaction at their point of greatest need (which is in relationship) tempting them to take what they need instead of waiting on God to be their only solution to their need.

From the perspective of the **Code**, this is tantamount to eating things sacrificed to idols and engaging in acts of immorality.

We also addressed that the antidote to this **Balaam** strategy is waiting on God to be our source of provision, especially for love and intimacy. This is one of the hardest things there is to do. Loneliness of the soul and the body is beyond terrible. Therefore, it is easy to compromise and to seek our own answer under our own religious guidance, instead of waiting on God to provide the person with whom He wants us to be in relationship (if He even wants us to be with someone).

It seems that when it comes to this issue of the loneliness of the heart, we easily set aside the idea of

being a bondservant doing only what God wants us to do, and we are *easily* tempted to take matters into our own hands and do what we want to do; of course, all in Jesus' name. Sadly, it is far too easy to forget that **Yahweh's** goal for our life is first-and-foremost that we be conformed into the image of the Son, and that like the Son, we boldly declare: "*not as I will, but as You will*."¹

And that is why He calls for us to repent, not as a reaction to our sin, but as a matter of lifestyle. This involves letting **Yahweh** transform how we think about a matter, how we feel about a matter, and ultimately what we believe about it all. After all, **WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT A MATTER DETERMINES HOW WE FEEL ABOUT IT. WHAT WE FEEL ABOUT A MATTER DETERMINES HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT. AND HOW WE THINK ABOUT A MATTER DETERMINES WHAT WE DO WITH IT.**

If deep down inside we do not believe that everything God does is an expression of His great love for us and is therefore good for us, we will likely feel that we are being unfairly treated by God, since He is withholding relationship and companionship from us. This feeling will arise deep from within our reactive brain and not our logical brain. This feeling will drive how we think about our loneliness and the various options in front of us, which might very well include eating the things sacrificed to idols and committing acts of immorality.

The answer is to **agree** with Him, or else we will find that the choices we make are in perfect alignment with our true beliefs and not our stated beliefs. We simply must be **willing** to let Him cause us to come into **agreement** with how He sees and understands the "best pathway" He has laid out for our lives, despite the suffering, the loneliness, the pain, the distress, and the other things that tend to squeeze our souls. There was no other way!

With that, let's pick back up in our text right where we left off

Revelation 2:16

Therefore repent; or else I will choose to now come to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

Jesus Chooses to Come

Jesus then says that if they do not repent, He will choose to **now** come quickly.² On-the-one-hand, this has overtones to His **Second Coming**, as that exact phrasing is used in **Revelation** each time that He talks about His future travel plans. On-the-other-hand, it is a firm promise that He will come in their now and personally invade their time and space in judgment giving them the opportunity to learn why they should repent. In effect, this is the same promise He made to the church at Ephesus when He promised that if they do not repent and do the deeds that they did at first, that He will choose to now come to them in judgment and remove their candlestick.

Unfortunately, the **Codex** does not contain a subsequent report on whether they repented, but today that specific location is just ruins. It lies near a city called Bergama, in the Izmir Province of Turkey. It is

¹ **Luke 22:42**

² "I will come" is rendered in the *present middle indicative*

likely that they didn't repent, and He did come and, as promised, went to war resulting in inevitable ruin. In fact, this outcome might be an allusion as to what all the apostates will have to look forward to when He comes in their now.

War

"... and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth." Jesus warned that if they do not make this lifestyle change (which again, can only come when our mind is renewed through our choosing to now be believing the truth), Jesus will make war and fight against them with the sword of His mouth.

This is a promise rendered in the **future** tense, and being in the *indicative*, we know that He was firm in this promise; it is a statement of fact.

Now, given that He says, *"I now choose to come,"* with the *"sword of My mouth,"* this is likely a double entendre addressing both His judgment on Pergamum and well as the judgment to come on the world, where He is imaged at His **Second Coming** as a rider on a white horse with a double-edged sword coming from His mouth.³

The imagery is clear, **Yahweh** who spoke life into creation can go to war and with just a word bring about judgment and death. This may come through many agencies: angels, governments, bad people, etc., but it comes from the word of truth which He spoke that set everything into motion such that His will is done in earth as it is in heaven.

For an example, we can look at the judgment which **Yahweh** spoke in His High Assembly over the life of King Ahab. In this event, the angels (the bad angels or demons) were employed by God to carry out King Ahab's execution.⁴ When God speaks judgment, even death, it happens; it is all just a matter of time.

What did that look like in Pergamum? We do not know, but again, we can probably look to the end of the story to shed light on this part of the story. If they do not repent, if they do not come into **agreement** with how He sees things, then He will choose to go to war, regardless of the consequences, because they have chosen to be His enemy—they have chosen to give themselves to demons who pose as gods and to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality. And with a spoken word (the sword of His mouth), He will employ angels, demons, and others to carry out His battleplans. That is a terrifying but incredibly gracious thought.

Ears to Hear

Revelation 2:17

He who is now having an ear, they are commanded to hear what the Spirit now says to the churches. To him who is now overcoming, to him I will give some of the manna I have been hiding, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name which I have been writing on the stone which no one knows but he who is now receiving it.⁵

³ See **Revelation 19:16**

⁴ **1 Kings 22:19-23; 2 Chronicles 18:18-22**

⁵ "has an ear" is rendered in the *present active participle*; "says" is rendered in the *present active indicative*;

The only ones who can truly hear or understand what the Spirit now says are those who are now having their ears tuned to the Spirit of God. If that is not you, if you are instead abiding in the realm of Christian delusion, the words and sentences may make sense and you may understand the Greek, but the depth and power of the words of the Spirit will be lost on you.

And since this is a command, it is intended to evoke a response: we are to hear what the Spirit now says to the churches (plural). In other words, this is not just a command for those in Pergamum, but for all **Yahweh's** churches.

To Be Overcoming

These promises of hidden manna and a white stone are for those who are now overcoming. In context, it would imply that these gifts are waiting for those who are now **agreeing** with **Yahweh's** perspective of the paths He has laid down for their lives. In other words, those who are now having victory over the **apostasy of Balaam** (evidenced by their not eating meat sacrificed to idols and not committing acts of immorality) and the **apostasy of Cain** (evidenced in their refusal to follow the deeds of the Nicolaitans).

Jesus promises that, if we let Him, if we are **willing**, He will lead us in triumph in all things.⁶ In this case, it is possible to look to Jesus and to no one else to satisfy that deep longing in our soul to be wanted, needed, loved, cared for, and to be that “special” person for that “special person.” Remember, He is a jealous God whose name is Jealous (**Yahweh Qanna**) and He (the God of all creation) wants all of us all the time.

Manna & the Stone

The imagery of the manna and the white stone speak a message in **Code** regarding the stumbling block of Balaam's teaching and that of the Nicolaitans—specifically regarding the lust of the eyes and the lust of the *flesh*—the desire for what this life has to offer us in relationship, love, intimacy, sexuality, and so on and our temptation to take it.

Manna.

This reference to manna is a throwback to the food of angels, literal bread from heaven, which God provided to the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land.⁷ This manna was intended to be their provision for the entire journey, it is what God knew they needed, both practically and spiritually.

Practical and Spiritual Manna.

The manna provided everything they needed physically to survive the journey to the Promised Land, where they would then get to eat from fields and vines that they did not have to plant. But until that time of delight in the land flowing with milk and honey, He had prescribed for them a heavenly food that they did not have to seek or hunt; it came to them. Yes, their food came to them each morning with the

“overcomes” is rendered in the *present active participle*; “give” is rendered in the *future active indicative*; “hidden” is rendered in the *perfect passive participle*; “written” is rendered in the *perfect passive participle*; “receives” is rendered in the *present active participle*

⁶ **2 Corinthians 2:14**

⁷ **Exodus 16; Psalm 78:24-25**

morning dew. All they had to do was collect it and prepare it.

God made mealtime quite simple for them, but quickly they started complaining and **WANTED MORE**, they wanted meat, they wanted vegetables, and were dissatisfied with the food of the angels. So, they demanded more; and let us just say, that did not go well for them.⁸

Little did they know that this miraculous provision was purposed to humble their hearts so they would come to know that both their exodus from Egypt and their ultimate success in the Promised Land was not accomplished through their own strength nor due to their own actions, or their worthiness, but it was all a work of God who was confirming the covenant He had sworn to their fathers.⁹ He wanted them to understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of God.¹⁰

With that imagery in mind, we can be confident that if God leads us through extended times where we may have the basics, but we **DO NOT** have what we want, what we think we need, or even what we believe we have been promised, He is testing our hearts to see if we will choose to live in the humility of grace, of 100% dependence upon Him, or whether we will succumb to the lusts of the *eyes* and the lust of the *flesh* and take, or demand, what we **NOW** want!

For the Israelites, succumbing to this temptation over-and-over again always resulted in a lot of people dying. Truly, *“the wages of sin is death,”* and *“the mind now set on the flesh is death.”*¹¹

When we are hurting, we are tempted to minimize the fact that Jesus is the living manna, the one who satisfies our deepest longings. The whole notion becomes a cute metaphor that we tend to easily dismiss.¹² It is just too hard to now and continually believe that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness when we are hurting, when we are lonely, when we are heartbroken and torn apart inside, when we are horny, and when everyone else (fellow Christians) are getting and taking what they want: a girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, wife, companionship, children, jobs, education, sex, etc. It is extremely hard to not just give in and be like the rest. It is just a short step to “satisfaction.”

But temporary satisfaction always rots in our being, just like the manna would rot when they tried to keep it for more than a day.¹³

God knows that what we need most is to be dependent upon Him 100% of the time, that is to be our moment-by-moment reality, for only then are we ever truly safe and secure. **Learning to wait on God to provide and learning to be satisfied with what God has provided, is critical to surviving the appointed times of loneliness and pain.** He knows that in every area where we are not found to be dependent upon Him, the enemy has a stronghold in our life and can hurt us, deceive us, condemn us, and position us for judgment before the heavenly court. Such areas are points of vulnerability with the enemy.

Jesus, however, wants us to be safe and to be found in Him. Therefore, as **Yahweh Mekoddishkem**

⁸ **Numbers 11:1-9**

⁹ See **Deuteronomy 8:16-20**

¹⁰ **Deuteronomy 8:3**

¹¹ **Romans 6:23, 8:6**

¹² **John 6:26-51**

¹³ **Deuteronomy 16:20**

and **Yahweh Qanna**,¹⁴ He will do whatever it takes to make us His own precious possession, His own special treasure and loved one. After all, He is jealous of everything we give to another lover.

The Wisdom of Love.

Sticking with the storyline of our desperation for relationships, intimacy, sexuality, etc., if we compromise and take what we need from that special person to be that special person, we eat from the cuisine of idolatry—things sacrificed to idols, which Paul says are just demons in disguise.¹⁵ Yes, we are engaging in intimacy with the demonic.

But think about God's wisdom in this regard. If we start a relationship that is based on "taking"—filling our need—it will be awfully hard for that relationship to ever satisfy our soul, because, as with Balaam's greed, our need is insatiable. And this is the reason why so many relationships are not healthy, and people are just getting by. Their relationships have been founded on "taking."

Yet, when our need is satisfied in Jesus, then we can enter relationships of all kinds to give and love with His beautiful *agape* love. Then, and only then, will our relationships reflect the character and nature of our God. This is wisdom at its finest!

Does Manna Satisfy?

As Jesus said, "*man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*"¹⁶ Thus, God uses manna to teach us how to be satisfied in Him—with His provision. It is also a means by which He teaches us the abject worthlessness, emptiness, and ultimate futility of seeking satisfaction elsewhere.

The idols of this world and the idols of our heart cannot satisfy. They do however lie, and they do make grand promises of what we will get, or what we will be, if we just take a small bite. But they cannot fulfill the deep longing in our soul. That longing was designed by God for God, and only He has the power and the ability to meet our needs be it mental, emotional, psychological, or practical. But we must be trained, we must learn, we must gain His wisdom, and piece-by-piece let go of our greedy and selfish demands to have things done our way—to get what we want when we want it.

He wants us to let Him transform our mind such that we come into **agreement** with Him on these matters and thereby live in repentance.

Psalm 107:9

For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Isaiah 58:11

And **Yahweh** will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.

¹⁴ **Yahweh** who makes us holy or sets us apart for Him; **Yahweh** who is jealous.

¹⁵ **1 Corinthians 10:20-22**

¹⁶ **Matthew 4:4**

Jeremiah 31:25

For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.

Isaiah 55:1-3

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live.

Hidden Manna.

Jesus states that He has been hiding this manna.¹⁷ Why is that?

First, this is an allusion to the manna that was hidden within a jar in the Ark of the Covenant. Its purpose was so that even after the Israelites entered the Promised Land and no more manna was provided, they had a constant reminder that **Yahweh** is their provision, and He is the one who satisfies and fulfills every promise, it is just a matter of time.¹⁸

And, of course, this is a message given in **Code**, for the Ark of the Covenant was also known as the **throne of Yahweh**. It was symbolic for God's presence on the earth; it was called by the Name, the very name of **Yahweh Sabaoth** (the Lord of Hosts) who is enthroned above the Cherubim which sat on the mercy seat of the Ark.¹⁹

The secret message is that even though they live where Satan resides and has established his evil throne, **Yahweh's** throne is far superior, for His throne is above all other thrones. He sits far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come (including Satan).²⁰

And instead of going to the dark temples of idolatry deep within our souls to join the lying spirits in their sacred feasts, we can eat every day of the manna that He has been hiding for us. And since it is rendered as a *participle* (hiding), **Yahweh** continually provides this manna.

Jesus is the true manna from heaven which gives life to our souls. He is the bread of life and no one who comes to Him to eat will ever be hungry.²¹ He satisfies, for He is our "**I AM.**"

I Have Been Hiding

Second, because He has been hiding it, this requires us to seek it out if we are going to eat. This manna is something to be found each-and-every day. And He often has been hiding it in places that are different

¹⁷ "hidden manna" is rendered in the *perfect passive participle*

¹⁸ **Exodus 16:32; Hebrews 9:4**

¹⁹ **2 Samuel 6:2; Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 37:16**

²⁰ **Ephesians 1:21**

²¹ **John 6:35**

from where we have found it in the past.

This imagery speaks to the intimacy, communion, fellowship, and oneness that we get to experience with God every single day when we seek Him out with our entire heart, mind, soul, and strength and let Him cause us to become **willing** hold to **His** Name and live in **His** faith. After all, He promises that if we seek Him, we will find Him when we search for Him with all our heart (and with all our soul).²²

White Stone.

“To him who is now overcoming, to him ... I will give him a white stone, and a new name which I have been writing on the stone which no one knows but he who is now receiving it.”

There have been many speculations about the white stone. But the explanation that resonates best with the entire narrative is connected to the way Roman officials would, at special occasions or just to be gracious, give out stones with something written on them which mapped to a gift that would be given to the one who bore the stone.

Of course, the bearer of the stone felt special and chosen to have received the stone, as they knew it would lead to something special. No one else knew what was written on that stone, only the bearer of the stone. They would arrive at a special gathering and map the symbol on the stone with the symbol by the specific gift, and then they would go home with that gift. They had to search it out, but it was worth it. For that event, they were chosen, they were special, and everyone knew it.

JESUS IS ADDRESSING THAT DEEP NEED WITHIN OUR BEING TO BE SPECIAL, TO BE THE ONE, TO BE UNIQUE, HONORED, AND CHOSEN BEFORE OTHERS.

A New Name

Jesus promises to give the one who is now overcoming a white stone with a mark, a new name, that He has been writing on it, and no one knows the name except the one who is now receiving the stone. It is as if Jesus is saying that, as our lover, He has given us each a special nickname, a term of endearment, something that is unique and to be shared just between Him and me – between Him and you.

Biblically, names are important as they are inextricably linked with a person’s character and nature. Maybe these new names reveal who we will be known as throughout eternity—something unique and cute about how Jesus sees each of us. Do you remember how He called John and his brother Andrew the “*sons of thunder*”? And even “*Peter*” was a nickname (which meant a piece of rock) as the apostle’s true name was Simon. Jesus loves names, after all, He has so many, and He too is getting another name.²³

According to the **Code**, the stone being “white” speaks of purity and righteousness. And both “written” and “knows” are rendered in the *perfect* tense. This means that Jesus decided on this name a while back and our new name has stuck, it is our nickname, but He has kept it secret. And with “written” being a *participle*, He is always writing our name, just like someone does who has fallen in love, they just love to

²² See **Deuteronomy 4:29; Jeremiah 29:13; Isaiah 55:6**

²³ **Revelation 19:12**

scribble down the name of the one they love and adore. And because the stone is white, our new name is written on His righteousness, the most amazing gift He has given to us.

Now Receiving It

Keep in mind, this is **NOT** a promise for the *future*, for it is rendered in the *present active participle* (“*he who is now receiving it*”). Jesus has chosen our new name. As we let Him transform us into His image, I can only imagine that we begin to live out this new name and it begins to identify who we are and how we are seen in the spiritual realms. It is how we are now receiving it.

By the way, this is a fulfillment of promise in the **Codex** which says that **Yahweh’s** servants will be called by a new name, which the mouth of **Yahweh** will designate.²⁴ You see, He fulfills every promise He makes, it is always just a matter of time.

**WE ARE SPECIAL, CHOSEN, WANTED, LOVED, AND ADORED BY JESUS.
HE HAS GIVEN EACH OF US OUR VERY OWN NEW NAME WHICH IS SHARED
EXCLUSIVELY WITH HIM—A NAME THAT IS ESTABLISHED UPON HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND NOT OUR OWN!**

This promise of the living manna and the white stone with our new name is intended to be a powerful promise directed at the core of our soul and our identity. This promise assures us that to Jesus we are like no other, we are special and of His utmost desire. And this promise gives us another reason to now and continually be found in **His** name, in **His** faith, even if one day that means we must be **His** martyr—His witness to this dark idolatrous world.

²⁴ **Isaiah 62:2, 65:15**