



## Pergamum – Revelation 2:12-17

### *The Compromising Church*

Pastor Adam Hall ☞ Dryden First Baptist Church ☞ Oct 9, 2022

Revelation 2:12-17 ESV

<sup>12</sup> “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

<sup>13</sup> “‘I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. <sup>14</sup> But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup> Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war 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 the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

#### **Introduction and Background**

- when we compromise, we know that nothing good is going to happen

- hear this story about a compromising hunter

*A hunter went out into the forest to shoot a bear. With winter fast approaching he planned to make a warm coat out of the bearskin. Soon he saw a bear coming toward him, he raised his gun and took aim.*

*"Wait," said the bear, "why do you want to shoot me?"*

*The hunter replied: "Because I am cold and I need your bearskin for a fur coat."*

*The bear replied "But I am hungry, so maybe we can reach an agreement."*

*In the end, the hunter was well enveloped with the bear's fur, and the bear had eaten his dinner.*

*The point: Disobedience (even partial) is sin, and we will always lose out when we try to compromise with sin! It will consume us in the end.*

- this is the danger of \_\_\_\_\_
- giving into \_\_\_\_\_ will never lead to any joy or satisfaction
- sin always leads to more \_\_\_\_\_ satisfaction
- in all my years of listening to people tell their stories, I have never heard anyone say they should have sinned \_\_\_\_\_
- but I have heard lots of stories where people \_\_\_\_\_ against God and that led to serious consequences for their life
- I hear lots of stories of people \_\_\_\_\_ they had not compromised and sinned

- the church in Pergamum was \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord because Jesus says this about them

**Revelation 2:13** Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness

- the church at Pergamum was \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus Christ even in spite of martyrdom for some in their midst and serious persecution

- but the \_\_\_\_\_ had compromised their faith in Christ on a few issues namely sexual immorality and food sacrificed to idols

- the Canadian church faces temptations to accommodate our \_\_\_\_\_ just like the Pergamum church on this issue of \_\_\_\_\_ immorality

- there is much \_\_\_\_\_ from our culture to cave into the sexual revolution that is happening in Canada

- if you do not stand up and support certain activist groups, you are called all sorts of unfair \_\_\_\_\_ like xenophobe

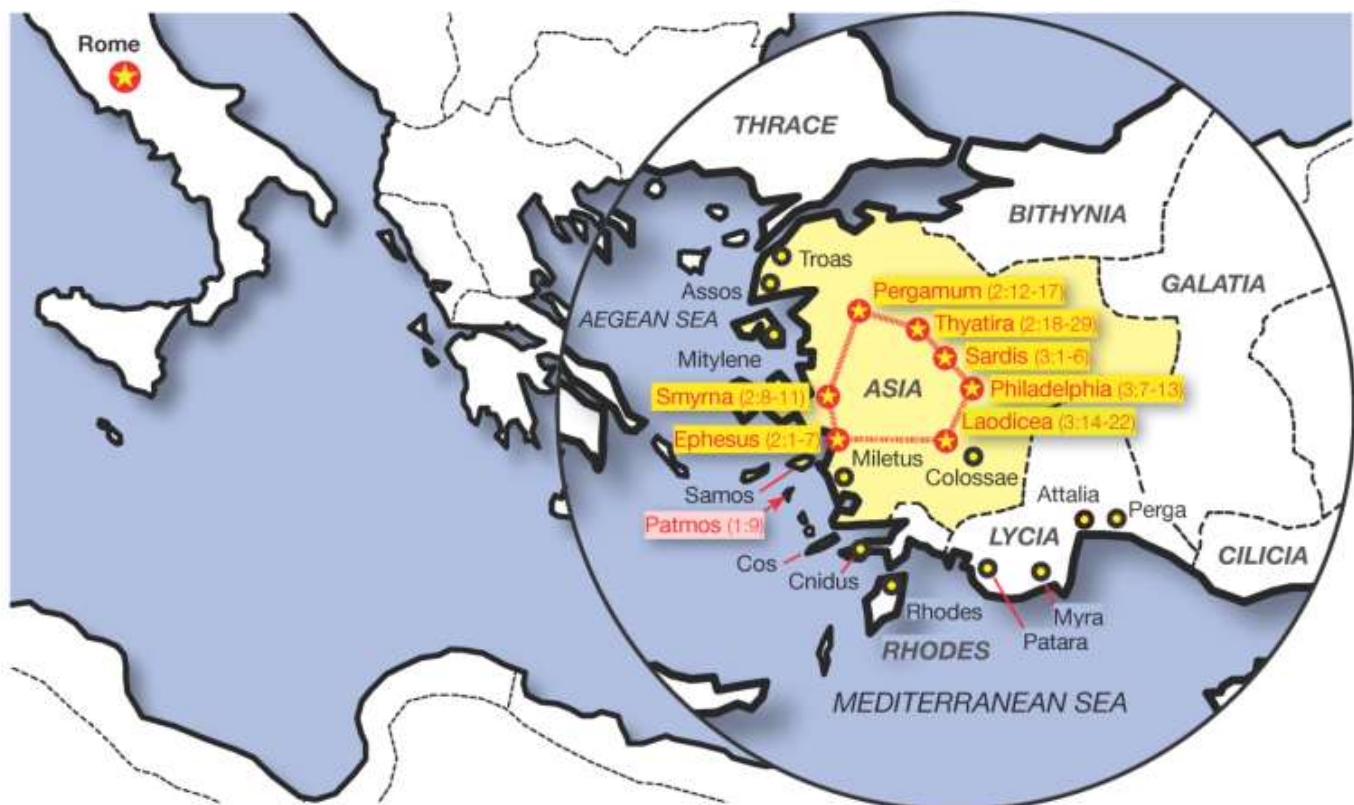
- many Canadian churches have already begun to \_\_\_\_\_ sexual immorality in many forms

- as followers of Jesus, we do not receive our \_\_\_\_\_ from the culture and what it affirms, we take our direction from the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and Jesus Christ Himself

- the city of Pergamum was North of Smyrna but was 30 KMs to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Mediterranean Sea
- the city of \_\_\_\_\_ was a haven for the worship of false gods
- this city boasted numerous shrines to Roman Emperors
- this city also had several temples to \_\_\_\_\_ gods
- there was a temple dedicated to Zeus
- there was a \_\_\_\_\_ dedicated to the healing god called Asklepius
- incidentally, this symbol for Asklepius was a serpent which is the symbol for Satan in Revelation
- many people visited Pergamum for \_\_\_\_\_
- The temple of Asklepius became big \_\_\_\_\_ for those who would promise healing in the name of Asklepius
- because of the heavy presence of the worship of idols and false gods there were many sacrifices of animals \_\_\_\_\_ to those gods
- much of this meat sacrificed to \_\_\_\_\_ was sold in the market place and used for community events
- with such an environment of food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality, no wonder the church at Pergamum \_\_\_\_\_ with the culture in their city

## REVELATION: ROME & THE SEVEN CHURCHES

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## Format

- John writes to 7 churches which are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea
- each address from Jesus Christ to the churches has the same format
  - 1) Church \_\_\_\_\_ is Addressed
  - 2) Christ is Described
  - 3) Christ Commends the Church
  - 4) Christ \_\_\_\_\_ the Church
  - 5) Christ Warns the Church
  - 6) Christ Exhorts the Church
  - 7) Christ Gives \_\_\_\_\_ to the Church

- we will break down the address to the Pergamum church as follows:

- 1) (2:12) Christ Described
- 2) (2:13) Church Commended
- 3) (2:14-16) Church Confronted
- 4) (2:17) Christ Promises

### 1) (2:12) Christ Described

(2:12) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

- when you read Revelation chapters 2-3 you will see that each church has an \_\_\_\_\_
- there are \_\_\_\_\_ churches and there are 7 angels that are connected to the churches
- the angel is the representative for that \_\_\_\_\_ and receives the message for that church

'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.

- Jesus is described as having a two-edged \_\_\_\_\_

- the book of Hebrews helps us define what this sword is all about

**Hebrews 4:12** For the Word of God is living and active, \_\_\_\_\_ than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and the gospel is this two-edged sword that speaks to us, \_\_\_\_\_ us right to the very core of our existence
- for instance when you hear the word of God, and are convicted of your sin, this is the work of the two-edged sword of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God
- when you hear the \_\_\_\_\_ and realize that you cannot do anything to save yourself it is all about Jesus Christ, this is the work of the two-edged sword
- when you hear the Word of God and you realize that only \_\_\_\_\_ saves you, you leave your sin and \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ alone, this is the work of the two-edged sword
- in Revelation, Jesus is mentioned several times in connection with a \_\_\_\_\_

- in Revelation 1, out of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus comes a sharp two-edged sword
- this means that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the words of God

**Revelation 1:16** In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

- in Revelation 19 the sword of Christ reveals that He is a sovereign \_\_\_\_\_ over all the nations
- the Word of God \_\_\_\_\_ that we are sinners and then Jesus with this sword executes punishment upon those who have rejected God's grace and are committed to their sin against God

**Revelation 19:15** From his mouth comes a sharp \_\_\_\_\_ with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a \_\_\_\_\_ of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

**Revelation 19:21** And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the \_\_\_\_\_ of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

- I know many people will be uncomfortable with the description of Jesus as \_\_\_\_\_ and executioner, but you cannot cherry pick; you cannot only embrace the things you \_\_\_\_\_ about Jesus and then reject the things you do \_\_\_\_\_ like about Jesus in the Bible

- an example of this cherry picking -- is people \_\_\_\_\_ Matthew 19:14 when Jesus said , "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

- but they do \_\_\_\_\_ like Jesus as a holy, just, sovereign Saviour who \_\_\_\_\_ punishment on wickedness at His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming

- yes, Jesus at His \_\_\_\_\_ coming said this:

**John 3:17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be \_\_\_\_\_ through him.

- Jesus will come again and give people what they have longed for or \_\_\_\_\_
- if people \_\_\_\_\_ Christ and His heaven they will graciously receive this amazing blessing from the Lord
- and if people desire to reject Christ, He will give them what they \_\_\_\_\_, an eternity away from His pleasing presence

## 2) (2:13) Church Commended

**(2:13)** I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is.....where Satan dwells.

- Jesus says a \_\_\_\_\_ time in Revelation 2, "I know"
- Jesus said this to the church at Ephesus and the church at \_\_\_\_\_

- Jesus knows about these churches because He is the sovereign Lord who \_\_\_\_\_ among His church
- Jesus Christ promised that He would be \_\_\_\_\_ the church and we see that He fulfills His promise to the 7 churches
- Jesus is with them and He \_\_\_\_\_ what is going on
  
- Jesus knows the location of the Pergamum church and He also knows that \_\_\_\_\_ dwells in this city as well
- Pergamum is described as a \_\_\_\_\_ where “Satan dwells”, this is not really a good catch phrase for the \_\_\_\_\_
- “\_\_\_\_\_ dwells here” does not work that well on a flyer promoting tourism and the local economy
- but this was the environment that the Pergamum church had to \_\_\_\_\_ for Jesus Christ
  
- some biblical interpreters think that Satan dwelling in Pergamum means that Jesus knows that the false god Asklepius has a \_\_\_\_\_ there
- other \_\_\_\_\_ interpreters think that Satan dwelling in Pergamum means that Jesus knows that the city of Pergamum was an arm of the Roman government which carried out Satan’s \_\_\_\_\_
- other biblical interpreters think that Satan dwelling in Pergamum means that Jesus knows that the city was just consumed with pagan worship and \_\_\_\_\_ gods
  
- probably all of these are true, the \_\_\_\_\_ god Asklepius, the Roman government and other false gods worshipped in Pergamum were all an extension of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Satan
- the city of Pergamum had many people under the influence of \_\_\_\_\_ and demonic powers
  
- we can say with confidence that any culture that promotes \_\_\_\_\_ immorality and a rejection of Jesus is clearly \_\_\_\_\_ Satanic influence

**Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you,**

- in spite of the serious Satanic influence of Pergamum and the serious persecution that the Pergamum church would have experienced, they are \_\_\_\_\_ because they had been obedient to Jesus Christ in two areas:
  
- a) They held fast to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ
- the phrase “held fast” means that these believers were \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ
- this phrase “held fast” also means that they \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ and were in union with Christ

- this church was \_\_\_\_\_ by the grace of Christ and of course this church was \_\_\_\_\_ by Jesus Christ
- but these Christians held fast and \_\_\_\_\_ committed to Jesus Christ in spite of all the horrible sin and persecution that they would have seen in this city
- the Pergamum church was not wishy \_\_\_\_\_ and they were not Christians that ran hot and \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus Christ
- they loved the Lord, they were joyful that they were \_\_\_\_\_ by the grace of Christ and consistently and unapologetically \_\_\_\_\_ their lives for Jesus Christ
- we have all met people who \_\_\_\_\_ their opinions about topics constantly, they are “hot and cold” and they are “yes and no” in a matter of days
- we have also seen people show outward excitement about the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ only to see them very disinterested in the Lord years later
- this was not the Pergamum church, they were committed to Jesus Christ and His \_\_\_\_\_ news

b) They did not \_\_\_\_\_ their faith in Christ

- the word “deny” means to \_\_\_\_\_ or disown
- they did not \_\_\_\_\_ their faith or reject the Lord Jesus, even though a church member named Antipas was executed for Jesus Christ
- maybe this church knew about Jesus’ \_\_\_\_\_ about denying Him found in the gospels **Matthew 10:33** but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

- let us be reminded of the wonderful \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus Christ has given us and be encouraged

- \_\_\_\_\_ saves people who are sinners by going to the cross and bearing the punishment for their sins on the Cross
- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ away our sin so we are pure and blameless before the Father
- therefore, let us be strong in the Lord just like Antipas, and let us be \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord

### 3) (2:14-16) Church Confronted

(2:14-15) But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

- in spite of the faithfulness of the church at Pergamum the Lord had some things \_\_\_\_\_ them
- \_\_\_\_\_ the church they had people who held to the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans

#### a) Teaching of Balaam

- Balaam was a famous \_\_\_\_\_ in Numbers 22-25
- although he appears to be a person who is just seeking to do the will of the Lord, when you look at the whole context of the \_\_\_\_\_ story, you see that he was a prophet for gain and a prophet who promoted sexual \_\_\_\_\_
- Balaam encouraged the Israelites to get involved in sexual immorality and \_\_\_\_\_ worship in Numbers 25

**Numbers 25:1-3** While Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. <sup>2</sup> These \_\_\_\_\_ the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. <sup>3</sup> So Israel yoked himself to Baal of Peor. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

- Balaam is mentioned later on in Numbers as giving sinful \_\_\_\_\_ that caused Israel to sin
- Numbers 31:16** Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the LORD.

- the \_\_\_\_\_ of Balaam was a promotion of sexual immorality and idol worship
- although our \_\_\_\_\_ culture is very casual with their sexuality we see a warning from the Lord that we must pursue the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_ sexual immorality
- although there are many idols that are worshipped from coast to coast in Canada we must never worship the \_\_\_\_\_ things but worship Christ alone

#### b) Teaching of the Nicolaitans

- Bible scholars think that the teachings of the Nicolaitans were very \_\_\_\_\_ to the teachings of Balaam
- this means that they were embracing sexual immorality and idol \_\_\_\_\_

**(2:16)** Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

- because the church of Pergamum has tolerated the teachings of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, Jesus calls them to \_\_\_\_\_

- the word "repent" means that you change your \_\_\_\_\_ about sin
- the person outside of Jesus Christ lives for sin and \_\_\_\_\_ , but when Jesus Christ saves you, your mind is \_\_\_\_\_ and you hate sin
- repentance means that you have a sorrow for your sin, \_\_\_\_\_ of your sin, hatred of your sin and then you \_\_\_\_\_ away from your sin

- in the first sermon that Jesus preached, He said " \_\_\_\_\_ and believe"

**Mark 1:15** and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and \_\_\_\_\_ in the gospel."

- Jesus confronts this church saying that if they do not \_\_\_\_\_ and change their ways, He will use the \_\_\_\_\_ of His mouth to execute punishment upon them

#### 4) (2:17) Christ Promises

(2:17) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

- we are to listen and \_\_\_\_\_ what the Spirit of God is saying to the churches

- Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ two things to those who have been victorious

- those who are faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ will \_\_\_\_\_ from Christ a) the hidden manna and b) a white stone

a) the hidden manna

- \_\_\_\_\_ was given to the wandering nation of Israel by God

- God provided a \_\_\_\_\_ -like food that fell from the sky each morning for the people to gather for that day's supply of nourishment

- Jesus also spoke about Himself as being the bread from \_\_\_\_\_ in John 6

**John 6:33** For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

- Jesus gives these Christians hidden manna which means they are given the \_\_\_\_\_ that comes from Jesus

b) a white stone

- there are many views on what this \_\_\_\_\_ could mean

- the stone represents the \_\_\_\_\_ of the believer who has been saved by grace and will experience \_\_\_\_\_ life

- the white represents purity and indicates a \_\_\_\_\_ has occurred for the believer

- the new name on the stone indicates that the believer has a new identity in \_\_\_\_\_ Christ

- to make things simple this stone reveals that you have been \_\_\_\_\_ by grace and will experience eternal \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ

## Application

### 1) See the Beauty of Christ

- in this passage addressed to the church at Pergamum, we see the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ again

- Jesus Christ has a \_\_\_\_\_ -edged sword

- if the church does not \_\_\_\_\_ because they have compromised in the area of sexual immorality and idol worship, the Lord Jesus will use this sword to execute \_\_\_\_\_ upon them

- the beauty of Christ is seen in that Jesus is a \_\_\_\_\_ Lord who is Holy and will judge disobedience

- many people \_\_\_\_\_ with this Jesus because they have cherry picked the parts of Jesus in the gospels that they like

- for instance, many people advocate that Jesus was a \_\_\_\_\_ because of the feeding of the 5000

- but after that story in Matthew 14:13-21, Jesus walks on water and this reveals that Jesus is sovereign over creation and is a \_\_\_\_\_ and sovereign Lord

- people sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ on the things that they like that Jesus did and disregard the things that they cannot believe that Jesus did

- a Jesus that has been cherry picked out of the Bible is not the \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus

- the Jesus who has the two-edged \_\_\_\_\_ is the same Jesus that fed the 5000

- Jesus is gracious and \_\_\_\_\_ but He is also a Holy God who punishes sin

- Jesus bears the punishment for sin on the Cross so that those who are saved by grace can be free of sin's consequences, mainly God's \_\_\_\_\_ at sin

- but Jesus when He comes again will punish those who have \_\_\_\_\_ His grace

- today, where do you \_\_\_\_\_ ?

- Has Jesus bore your wrath or will you bear the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ with His two-edged sword?

- if you are \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ and do not have this hidden manna or white stone, today is the day to get right with the Lord

- Jesus promised us this in John \_\_\_\_

**John 6:35** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall \_\_\_\_\_ thirst.

- \_\_\_\_\_ in the person and work of Jesus Christ
- come to Jesus in faith and have confidence in His work done on the \_\_\_\_\_ for you
- Jesus promises ultimate satisfaction and \_\_\_\_\_ life

## **2) No Compromise Christianity**

- the church at Pergamum had been \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord Jesus but the Lord had some things against them
- they had compromised in the areas of food sacrificed to idols and sexual \_\_\_\_\_

- the Canadian culture gives us many opportunities to \_\_\_\_\_ in idolatry and sexual immorality

- although you will not find many people in Canada sacrificing animals to gods you will be tempted to find delight in or ultimate joy in \_\_\_\_\_ things and not the Lord who made us

- sexual immorality is any sexual activity \_\_\_\_\_ God's design for marriage, which is one man and one woman till death do them part

- society promotes safe sex but as you can see from this passage the only safe sex is sex between one man and one woman in \_\_\_\_\_

- we all \_\_\_\_\_ with sin, that is a given, but all we are called to \_\_\_\_\_ and change our mind with regards to sin

- we heard what compromising did for the \_\_\_\_\_ hunter, he met his demise

- that is what sin will do to us

- John Owen famously wrote, "be killing sin, or sin will be \_\_\_\_\_ you."

- let us, because of God's grace, put to \_\_\_\_\_ sin, repent and seek the power of the Holy Spirit to fight sin in order to live a holy life committed to the Lord

- hear what Paul said to the people of the city of Athens about the judgment of God and God's command to \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 17:30-31** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,<sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Coming UP - updated

Oct 16 Revelation 2:18-29 - Thyatira

Oct 23 Revelation 3:1-6 - Sardis

Oct 30 Guest Speaker

Nov 6 Revelation 3:7-13 - Philadelphia

Nov 13 Revelation 3:14-22 - Laodicea

# Looking at the White Stone from a Different Angle (Revelation 2:17)

June 2, 2020 by [Kenneth Yates](#) <https://faithalone.org/blog/looking-at-the-white-stone-from-a-different-angle-revelation-217/>

In Rev 2:17 Jesus promises to give to the overcoming believers at Pergamos a white stone. This is clearly a reward for faithfulness. It is a reward that will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ, when the Lord rewards believers for their obedience.

I have often wondered what this reward will mean for the believer. I have heard different suggestions. Will it mean that the faithful believer will have a ticket to go to certain events? Will it mean he will have a place of honor in certain places? Will it be like a medal given to a hero on the battlefield which others will see and recognize that he was a faithful disciple?

As I have thought about this white stone, I have always looked at it as something that will give special privileges to the person who has it. My guess is that it is correct to see it that way.

However, just this week a friend of mine made me look at it in a different way as well. My friend was a gemologist during his working years. He owned a jewelry store. He said that when he sees the words “white stone” he thinks of a pure diamond. A diamond has a numerical rating from 0 to 10. The less color it has in it, the closer it has to a rating of zero. A zero is a perfect diamond with no color. It is a white diamond. As I understand it, a perfect zero does not exist.

Years ago, he wanted to give his wife a special gift. He wanted to find a diamond as close to a zero as he could find. He found one with a rating of .3. It was a special gem and one that was very expensive.

He gave it to his wife on that special occasion. Being married to my friend for many years, she knew the special character of that gem. She knew that her husband had gone out of his way to give her this stone. She knew he wanted to give her something very special.

I don’t think I need to tell any reader of this blog that this was a special piece of jewelry to this woman. Sure, it was beautiful. Sure, it was not like any other piece of jewelry she had. Sure, it was expensive.

But there was something else about that gem. She knew that her husband had great joy in giving it to her. Every time she wore it, she was reminded of how he loved her. She knew that it had come from her husband who wanted to honor her.

In other words, this gem was valuable to her because of the one who gave it to her. It was valuable to her because it showed what he thought of her. He found her worthy of this gem.

Don’t you think that it will be like that with those who receive this white stone at the Judgment Seat of Christ? John tells us that the stone will have a new name on it. The believers who receive it will know that the Lord thought they were worthy of it. They will know that He received great joy in giving it to them. The fact that it came from Him will make it of infinite value.

I usually don’t look at rewards that way. The white stone will come from Him! I don’t know what having that white stone will do for the believer in the kingdom. But I am sure that for those who have it, the fact that the King gave it to them will make it the greatest accessory of their wardrobe.

Ken Yates (ThM, PhD, Dallas Theological Seminary) is the Editor of the *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* and GES’s East Coast and International speaker. His latest book is [Hebrews: Partners with Christ](#).