

THE WHITE STONE AND THE NEW NAME.

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This subject has been to me the sweetest of soul food. The verse was given me together with a great desire to understand its meaning. I did not find it easy and laid aside the task, asking for other manna, but none was given.

One of the two keys of this treasure-package is found in Gen. 17:1-27, where Abram received a new name. From a study of his experience one learns that God came very near to him at that time and brought Abraham into a sacred, covenant relation to Himself. From this time he was to "walk before" God and "be perfect," (verse one) denoting that a purifying change had taken place in his heart. With this, was the promise that he should be fruitful and a blessing to others. As a visible token of this new-name experience he was given circumcision, the seal of righteousness, Rom. 4:11. Henceforth all the sons of Abraham received this sign of the covenant, together with a new name; as they were presented to the Lord, the eighth day after birth. Notice Christ and John the Baptist as examples.

Sarah was given a new name because she too entered into the same covenant.

The experience of her grandson, Jacob, also gives us light. We see him in lone consecration, and wrestling while others slept. His self-life died hard, but victory came with the dawn. He passed over Penuel limping, in his own weakness, but "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." Hereafter he is called Israel, "a Prince of God," who prevails with God and man.

We now come to the "white stone," and must look for another key, which is found in Rev. 21:19-21. Here the twelve sons of Jacob are found written on the twelve gates of the new Jerusalem; while the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are written on the twelve foundations of the wall of the glorious new Jerusalem. This is the city of purified souls which have been "buried together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Just as in the temple of Solomon, each stone had its special place and was found to fit perfectly. So in God's temple the overcomers are pillars (Rev. 3:12 and 21:12-14) or gates or foundations or some particular part, helping to form the complete structure.

Through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons, heads the twelve tribes of Israel, all the nations of the world are blessed with the opportunity of salvation. Therefore they naturally become the gates that open the way for us Gentiles to come to God. The twelve Apostles of the Lamb, as precious stones, are the foundations of the walls. Every overcomer is one of God's jewels, Mal. 3:17, marked to fill his place in the "holy white city."

When, therefore, we are given the white stone and the new name, we, like Abraham, enter into a new and sacred covenant-relation to God. We are sealed as a member of the Bride of Christ, or as

a precious stone to be builded into the New Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit's coming upon the consecrated soul, baptizes it into the body of Christ. I. Cor. 12:13. Henceforth, we are "members in particular" and "to every one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit with all." That is a supernatural gift or power for each one, which is the Spirit's working through us to bless the church and the world.

The "white stone" is purity, and the new name indicates the sphere of usefulness here, in God's scheme of salvation. Just as the new name of Abraham, Sarah and Israel showed their relation to God's great plan for the salvation of the world.

Another element must be noticed, which is the soul's betrothal. The Holy Spirit comes in and takes possession of the heart in the name of Jesus. He does not speak of Himself, any more than did Eliezer when asking Rebecca to become the wife of his master. Abraham's son, Isaac. Rebecca received the seal of her engagement, a ring of gold. The sanctified soul receives the betrothal taken, "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it." This secrecy of the name signifies, I believe, the sacred relationship of the soul to Jesus.

If we think the soul's first vision of Jesus is better than what follows, we make a great mistake, and lose sight of half our lesson. The "hidden manna" belongs to this experience, calling the betrothed bride to sup with Jesus and "abide" in his presence. In that the manna is hidden, 'tis like the secrecy of the "new name," untellable and must be experienced to be understood.

I would feign dwell upon "this holy and blissful union," of the soul with its Heavenly Bridegroom, for it is the only normal and healthy Christian life. All converts must go on to this life of joy, or draw back where God has "no pleasure in them."

Another precious bit of manna, that has place in this connection, is that He also, the Heavenly Bridegroom, has a secret name, Rev. 19:12. This, doubtless, signifies His supreme sphere in the scheme of salvation. He is "the Stone, elect precious," the "chief corner stone." He and the Bride, both have their part to do and they work together: "The Spirit and Bride say come." In her ears are ringing, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;" while He walks "in the midst of the seven golden candle-sticks," saying, "I am with you always."

Thus, His secret name shows an exchange of love tokens, a double ring service. The joy is not all on one side. He, too, has a share. His Bride pleases him well. He loved her and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her, with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself, a glorious Bride, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she might be holy and without blemish. For this "joy, that was set before Him, He endured the cross," Gethsemane, Calvary and all, that He might win her

whole-hearted devotion and pure love. That we enjoy him is not enough. But that we please Him in all things is the only proper attitude for His Bride.

My Aunt Miriam Thurston once told me how she had been blessed in contemplating this theme. She prayed, "O Lord, if I am a pin in your temple, I shall be satisfied." Then the Spirit brought to her remembrance, 'him that overcometh will make a pillar in the temple of my God,' and she praised the Lord for His wonderful promises.

Notice the rapture experienced by the writer of these visions, John, when he saw this city coming down from God, out of heaven. There, on one of the foundations of the wall was clearly seen his own name. He forgot to "write," as he was instructed, but in his overpowering ecstasy of joy, he fell at the feet of the angel who showed him these things. Shall you, shall I, see our names written on this city of peace and glory? It is the one thing in life worth striving for. To gain the whole world and to loose this, is to have lived in vain. The aim, in life, for some is wealth. Why not then lay up treasure above and "strive to enter" into the city of gold. Others risk all for worldly fame which will not count compared with a name written on the battlements of heaven, and a glorious sphere of usefulness and eternal fellowship with Jesus, and others like Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Paul and a numberless company of the most devoted and self-sacrificing heroes of all ages. They counted not their lives dear to themselves, but "sailed through bloody seas and fought to win the prize."

This leads to the last thought of our lesson fellowship in His suffering. Fellowship of joy and not fellowship of suffering is incomplete. In Rev. 19:7 we read, "The marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready." Then heaven opens and out rides a conquering warrior, "clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, "which speaks of stern wrestlings, the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, and the spear thrust of Calvary.

Who, then, are these, the armies which "followed Him upon white horses," and whence came they? Bless God, these are they, "His wife," of verses 7 and 8, all "clothed in fine linen, clean and white." "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords," is written on His vesture, pointing us to the Resurrection from Joseph's tomb, the last command, and the ascension from Mount Olivet. This name is also on His thigh, reminding us of the defeated Jacob who wrestled at Penuel, and whose weakness contrasts with the omnipotence of our warrior-bridegroom.

Abraham is there among the first: he who offered up his only son, Isaac. They sing of "Moses and the Lamb," the Moses who "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God," and "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Elijah, I think, is with Moses, close up to their leader. 'Tis difficult to imagine a man of sterner stuff than he, who slew 450 prophets of Baal with his own hand. We remember these two associated before, on the "holy mount," talking with the transfigured Christ of the decease He was