

The Voice of Truth # 480

Christ's Promises to the Overcomer

With your Bible in hand now, open to the second chapter of Revelation. At the close of each one of these letters that Christ dictated to the seven churches, is a promise to the overcomer. As we did not have time to give much space to these marvelous, gracious promises of Christ to the churches, I want to take them up separately now, and let's look at them, weigh them, and then appropriate them to our own lives. I do not know, my friends, where in God's Word you'll find promises that are more gracious than here. Let's remember, each promise in God's Word is yea in Christ Jesus. They all find their root in Him.

Before we look at the promises, let's first find out what does He mean by "the overcomer". To each one, he says, **to him that overcomes, I will give...** Now those are words directly from the lips of our blessed Lord. I wish we recognized that thing and just take our Bibles and study them. I have referred you several times to 1 John 5:4. Let's read it. **For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.** The overcoming one is the born-again one who is made a new creature in Christ Jesus. His battle is to overcome the satanic world systems. That's what that word, "world", means. The born-again one overcomes the satanic world systems. How? By faith. It is the faith of God's elect. It is the faith of the risen Christ. It is faith that lays hold of the Son of God, not this spurious faith that's spoken of so much today. **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.** Then the Scripture says, **He that endureth to the end shall be saved.** This means the perseverance of the believer. The Christian life is a battle from beginning to end. The perseverance of the saint is the evidence that he is born again. Now to this one who fights through, who conquers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who identifies himself with Christ and God's despised few, and by his grace goes through, to this one Christ makes these promises as recorded at the close of each letter to the churches. They are promises to the individual and not to a group as such. Now many times we think a promise is not for us, because we think of it as being

offered to a group and it's lost in the crowd. Now these promises Christ made to the individual.

The first promise I call your attention to is found in Revelation 2:7. Open your Bible quickly and read it. **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.** This promise was made to the Ephesians who overcame, who conquered. Remember, the believer can only conquer through Christ. This promise contains an allusion to the tree of life in the middle of the Garden of Eden as recorded in Genesis 2. Adam did not have to overcome to eat of this tree, he only had to obey and walk in his innocency. But to the born again one who has fought through all the battlements of hell with the world, the flesh and the devil to get to Christ, it is a most glorious scene, because we have the paradise of God with the tree of life which every overcomer may freely eat. The tree of life here is symbolic of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have eternal life because he is our life. Christ, who is our eternal life, becomes, listen now, the everlasting peace of the overcomer in the paradise of God. The word paradise means a pleasure garden and sums up all the blessedness that we find in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the sum total of all heaven's blessedness. Let me call your attention to this fact. The blessedness spoken of here is eternal. It was two years after God saved me before it dawned upon me that all that I had in Christ, including eternal life, was fixed and eternal. I've spent hours in this garden of blessedness with my risen Lord, and I have feasted upon this tree of life. I've come to this garden alone while the dew was still on the roses. All the fragrance of Calvary and the empty tomb is upon him. I've come and traversed its grounds when the shadows were lightning. I've walked in the midst of the paradise of God in the cool hours of the midnight when forsaken seemingly, by everyone. I've never grown tired of living in this garden, beholding my blessed Lord in all of his beauty and glory. My friend, he's fairer than ten thousand. He's the rose of Sharon. He's the lily of the valley. The pomegranate seems so delicious. I've rested under the apple trees. He's my beloved, and I'm his. And December is as pleasant as May, when my Lord is so near. Oh, how pleasant heaven will be with the tree of life! This garden is a living reality to me, and I believe to every overcomer. Do you know Him? Do you know what it means to eat of the tree of life? May you be led in these paths in the garden of blessedness, with heavenly dew upon your brow. Oh, my friends, how blessed to dwell there, with our blessed Lord.

Now let's turn to the letter he sent to the church at Smyrna and see what promise he holds out to the overcomer. We find it in Revelation 2:11, **He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death**, the one who wins through the shed blood of the Son of God. **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**. Then listen to Hebrews 2:14, **For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage**. Then in the ninth verse he says that he, by the grace of God **shall taste death for every man**. The death he's talking about here is the second death. Christ tasted that second death for every born-again believer, for every overcomer. Now what is that second death? Revelation 20:14, **and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death**. Revelation 21:8, **but the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death**. Revelation 19:20. These both, the beast and the false prophet, **were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone**. The first death, which is the physical death of the body, is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body. The spirit returns to the Lord, and the body to the dust. Ecclesiastes 12:7. The Christians at Smyrna were surrounded by those of the synagogue of Satan on the one hand and the unsaved religionists, and the idol worshipers or the heathens on the other hand. These believers were caught between these two, that is, the upper and nether millstones, which were determined to crush them to death. Christ did not promise them a deliverance in the loss of their character or of their earthly belongings. His one statement to them was, "Get ready to die". This required a death struggle, and seeing him who is invisible, be thou faithful unto death, was his exhortation. The enemy delighted to see them suffer, but he assured them of one thing, get it, I have tasted death for you, I've been through the cauldrons of hell, I came out conqueror, I've conquered death, hell, and the grave, and I can assure you, my children, you'll not be hurt of the second death, which is the lake of fire, which is the everlasting abode for the devil and all those who do not know me. What comfort in those words! What assurance attached to such a promise, not to be hurt of the second death. I never cease to praise the Lord in the midst of suffering, being delivered from plot after plot of the enemy to kill me, that even though he may permit the

enemy to slay me, I am to fear, not him that hath the power to kill the body, but him that can also kill the body and soul and cast them into hell. But above it all, he said, I have tasted death for you. I will deliver thee from the second death. You shall not be hurt of the second death. You know, my friends, that is some promise to the overcomer in these last days in which we live. Although we may have to burn at the stake for our testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will not be hurt of the second death. Christ said, I'll raise you up at the last day, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. I spend much time in thinking about dying, thinking about how Christ went to the cross and there tasted the second death for his children. It doesn't matter how the world treats us. We live with the daily assurance that the second death cannot hurt us. That promise is so real, so gracious, so glorious, I'd like to shout it from the housetop. The overcomer shall not be hurt, Of the second death. We'd like to cry, hallelujah, hallelujah, the Lord God, omnipotent, reigneth. All praise and honor and glory and might and dominion, be unto him that was and is and is to come, who's the first and the last, who was dead, but is alive forevermore, who has the keys of death and hell. He who is our crucified, buried, risen, exalted, reigning Christ. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us in life and in death, for we shall not be hurt of the second death. Isn't that marvelous?

As we continue to look at these promises to the overcomer, they continue to rise with freshness and dripping with honey from the rock of ages. In Revelation 2:17, we find the promise made to the overcomer in the church at Pergamos. Listen to this, my, my, my, listen to this. **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.** Now, you listen. These promises are made to the individual, the one who overcomes, because each individual has to overcome. You know, salvation is a personal matter. It becomes so personal until it seems that you are the only one that Christ died for, the only sinner that God ever dealt with, and you're the only one that you know, the only one that you know anything about, and regardless of anyone else, you have to fight your own battles and persevere to the end. The first promise here is, "to him", now get it now, **to him will I give of the hidden manna.** The word manna means, what is this? The first morning when the Jews awoke and found

this bread from heaven had covered the ground, they were so amazed and astounded, they cried out, Manna! Which means, what is this? There in Psalm 78:25, manna is called angel's food, and in John 6:33, the Lord Jesus calls it the bread of God. In the first place, it is called hidden manna. Now, why? A portion of manna was placed in a container, sealed, and was concealed in the Ark of the Covenant, covered with the mercy feet, and no human eye could behold it, and did not behold it for five hundred years. Therefore, it was hidden from the sight of man. In the next place, Christ said, **I am the bread that came down from heaven.** Christ is the hidden manna, you listen now, hidden from the eyes of the world. He is hidden in the bosom of the Father, and no one can know him except to whom the Holy Spirit reveals him. Christ said here, I will give you the hidden manna. There is a sense in which every born-again believer now feeds upon Christ as the bread of life. But you get this, when we eat the Lord's Supper, that bread symbolizes our Lord in his broken body on the tree, and we are made to partake of his sufferings, and we fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. Bread cannot be made, except the wheat be crushed and baked in the fiery oven. We must be willing to be identified with the sufferings of Christ who went through the fiery judgments of God, and paid our sin debt in full. The writer of the book of Hebrews said, **Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach, for it was he who suffered without the gate.** He therefore becomes our bread of life, and the Holy Spirit leads us to become identified with his sufferings, that we might learn obedience as sons through suffering. It is gracious to feast upon the paschal lamb. The paschal lamb, how was it prepared? That has been made ready through the fires of the oven. So, many think of Christ in this life and will not have him in his sufferings. The bread of life pictures Christ in all of his sufferings. If you are not willing to walk with him in his sufferings, you do not know him, you cannot feast upon him as the bread of life. But I want you to notice this promise is spoken of in the future tense, **I will give him the hidden manna.** You know, my friends, there awaits the overcoming one, a special revelation of Christ in the other world, when we behold him with the nail scars in his hands and his feet, when the struggle is all over, and we rest in the paradise of God with him, won't it be a blessing to sit at his feet and hear him unfold to our hearts and minds the secrets of his life here on earth as he suffered for us, when he shall explain to us the depths of his humiliation, his moral beauties, and the glorious perfections of his life that is hidden from the eyes of his children here on

earth? Somehow or other I believe there will be a great resemblance between the life of the Lord Jesus on earth and the life of the believer. This hidden manna will be given to the overcomer in heaven. That is the reason I have often said, I long to depart and be with Christ. I long to sit at his feet and hear from his own lips the unfolding of the life and the wonderful works of redemption. Oh, if you could only see and get a foretaste of what it means to be associated with Christ here and to walk with him hereafter in the heavenly Jerusalem. The overcomer here, as in the church of Pergamos, has to travel misunderstood, beaten down, cast out as the filth of the street, cried down as the enemy of mankind, suffering, laughed at, belittled, and the only thing that sustains him is Christ, the bread of life. Realizing how he lived a lonely life and trod the pilgrim's pathway misunderstood, then to anticipate being with him in glory and learning all the hidden secrets and beholding the unfolding of his life, his sufferings, his loneliness as our Redeemer, is more than words can express. My friends, isn't that some promise? Oh, how we shout, Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Not only did Christ say that he'd give the hidden manna, but he said, **I'll give to him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives it.** This is a stone of acceptance, a stone of favor, a stone of friendship. A white stone is a stone of acquittal, given to the believer by Christ with a new name written therein, just as the hidden manna and the overcomer, eating of that hidden manna, shows the believer's appreciation of Christ. The white stone, with a new name written in it, known only to the one who receives it, expresses Christ's appreciation to the believer for his having overcome and come out victorious in Christ Jesus his Lord. What a glorious relationship expressed here between the hidden manna and the new stone, signifying the relationship between Christ and the overcomer and their appreciation of each other. You know Christ loves us, And He's always expressing that love, and the believer loves Him, and Christ recognizes that love. There's a mutual bond between the two that can never be broken. I wish I knew how to picture the crucified, buried and risen Christ, until ever one of you would be constrained to fall at his feet and cry, My Lord and my God. Oh, that you could be weaned from the world and the things in the world, and walk in the beauty of holiness with the Lord Jesus Christ looking and hastening unto the coming of our Lord, which is the blessed hope of every born-again believer. Isn't that marvelous? A stone with our name, new name. I don't know what he's going to tell them, what my new name

will be in heaven, but ah, the blessed relationship between Christ and my own heart.

Now let's turn to the promise to the overcomer in the Church of Thyatira, and it reads like this, **and he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my father. And I'll give him the morning star.** We notice here that he that overcomes and he that keeps unto the end my works, my friends, is not enough for us to deny the works of the false prophets, as the few overcomers in the church at Thyatira denied the works of Jezebel. It is not enough to stand up and deny false doctrine. That's the negative side of our lives and our testimonies. But Christ said here, He that keeps unto the end, "My works", He that keeps unto the end "My works", Christ said, is crowned with victory. We must persevere in the path of faithfulness unto Christ to the end. The end spoken here is the death of the believer, or the second coming of Christ. A woman lay in the hospital at Baton Rouge the other day, smoking a cigarette, and she said, My pastor told me it was a sin, and I know it's a sin, but you know, we all sin, and this is just another little sin added to the other sins, so it makes no difference. That attitude is not the attitude of a born-again believer or an overcomer. There is no battle there. There is no perseverance there. Therefore, she will not be in the ranks with the overcomers when Christ comes to make up his jewels. The works of the believer are holy, which stand in opposition to the works of the unbeliever. which are unholy or ungodly. Now, to the overcomer here, we are given authority over the nations. Let me point this out to you. Through these 19 centuries, it's been the ambition of the papal or other religious leaders to gain literal authority and rule over the nations, which they'll never accomplish except in a brief reign under the authority of Satan after Christ takes his people out of the world. This is set forth in the 13th and 17th chapters of Revelation. This promise is to be taken literally. Christ said, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. That doesn't mean preaching the gospel. The overcomer with Christ will rule the angry and rebellious nations with a rod of iron. They shall break their pride, and humble them in the dust like breaking a vessel to pieces. Paul said in the 6th chapter of Corinthians, **Shall not the saints judge the world?** Didn't Christ say, **The meek shall inherit the earth?** Didn't Christ also say, **I'll make you ruler**

over ten cities? Our rule over the nations will be coextensive with the rule of Christ. We are now in the days of our humiliation with Christ and suffering with him, despised with him. From the reading of the 2nd Psalm, we find that the authority over the nations will be given to Christ alone, and the same rule in this promise is assured to the overcomer who perseveres to the end. My friend, we have everything in the world to look forward to. Our suffering here is only for a few days, and the toils of the road will seem nothing when we get to the end of the way. The same words that the Father uses in promising to Christ the Son of God, to rule over the nations, as found in Psalms 2:89, are spoken here to the born-again believer. And then he says again, in closing, then to the overcomer, he said, **I'll give him the morning star.** The morning star is the eastern star that points to the soon dawn of the day. This means that Christ gives us a personal interest in himself. The Son of Righteousness in Malachi 4:2 expresses the character of Christ to Israel, but as the bright and morning star, He appears to His children personally and individually before the sun rises.