

Revelation 2 (Conrad Bowman) (1-20-08)

It's not often a guy can turn a corner and meet his past face to face. Mr. Gleason here – you guys want to meet Mr. Gleason. He and his wife, Doris – and she passed away several years ago with Alzheimer's – Bill and his wife used to live right behind us, right after we first got married. And she was just a real outgoing person, as was Bill, and I have in my files at home notes that she gave me from Berachah Church, Bob Thieme's original series on Revelation; on the Faith-Rest Life; on What is Spirituality; and about 15-20 booklets on various doctrinal subjects/series that he taught at Berachah, 40-50 years ago ...

Evelyn Wamble. He was a good teacher too.

Conrad Bowman. He was an excellent teacher, and it just turned me on. I had a Baptist background with all of these verses jammed in here, and nowhere to go with them. It was Bob's summer Bible Basics Course that showed me what Systemic Theology could do for you in terms of putting things in their proper place; and on having an overall schematic view of Scripture; so you knew where things (Scripture) went; and to whom they applied as you went through it. And I've never forgotten that. The first files I ever made were on those subjects, and they went into a small file cabinet. That file cabinet now is a five (5) drawer file cabinet, and I've got to take something out every time I want to put something in. It's jammed full. So, let me encourage you. If you have no other system than this, get an A to Z file, and go ahead and get a four (4) drawer file cabinet, when you get one [laughter], because that dude will fill up on you so fast. But it's marvelous to go back and see where you have journeyed. I already know what I'm going to do this afternoon. And that's to go back and get the notebook that I used to take those notes in when I went to those classes in the mid-fifties, and filed those things away. I still have those notebooks, and they never get old.

Lady. Were you living in Houston then, or were you a taper?

Conrad Bowman. No, I was in Houston, and I was a taper. So, when we got ready to come to church, I hauled the tape recorder. Norma had to carry Brenda and the diaper bag, and everything else that went with it. If I wanted to help somebody, it was usually a little old lady who was wrestling with her tape recorder and left Norma, still hauling all that luggage for Brenda.

Gentleman. Who was the lady? The old lady to help your wife?

Conrad Bowman. Oh no. No. It was *any* little old lady that needed help as we came off the parking lot; which she (Norma) reminded me, that obviously put her in the pecking order way down the list. [Laughter].

Now, one more item – this is the requisite apology – I need to apologize to you guys for last week a bit. I went back – John was working on the transcript this week, and so was I. And I had no idea how far a-field I wandered last week. I attribute that to being tired, and too many pain killers. I covered the stuff I wanted to cover, but I just did it in such a weird fashion. So, I apologize to you if you got confused after about the first 20 minutes, because it looked like I was too.

Turn to Revelation, chapter 2, and I want to point out several things that I missed. We started last week in verse 12 with the angel to the church in Pergamum – Pergamos – and we covered a good deal of that, in terms of the teaching of Balaam. And then we got down to the Nicolaitans in verse 15, and we talked about the Nicolaitans quite a bit. And then things went awry before I got to Thyatira, and we then moved on through Thyatira.

In Pergamum, we talked about; actually I just touched on it. I thought we covered much more. Here's what my brain does. I remembered what I had studied on the subject, and if I touch it and go, like a pilot on a touch and go, I hit that without going into the detail I wanted to, but I just raced ahead. There are a few things I want to point out about that passage on the church in Pergamum. Let's go to verse 16. "Repent, therefore," from the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

16. Repent, therefore, or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

17. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna ... Revelation 2:16-17

Now, in so many ways we today in union with Christ, exhibit the character of Christ whenever we allow the Spirit, unquenched and unhindered, to work in our life in order to produce the character of Christ; we begin to see the Lord in His attitudes and in His methods. Now you remember when the Lord Jesus said, "I have food that you know not of." Ok?

I don't live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Father.

The full implication there is that the Lord Jesus Himself is sustained in His life by what the Father says, and the will of the Father. Now, we have talked a lot in other classes about the fact that today, worship of the Father is almost a forgotten subject. There's a huge segment of Christendom that's dedicated to worship of the Spirit; they pray to the Spirit; they depend on *the Spirit* to show up when they gather. They've idolized the Spirit in so many ways, and they also worship the Son. But the Son they worship is the Son *as He walked from His birth to the cross*. And, they are also *attempting to emulate the Son* in His walk to the cross. Now - that is *not* the life of the Lord Jesus that He pours, by means of the Spirit, into us who are joined to Him. The life that He pours into us is the life that He now lives on high, on the Father's throne interceding for us, forever. That is the life that He pours into us now. Why? It is because we have been given the Ministry of Reconciliation as the Gospel, which we bring and announce to a lost world. *Any other content to the Gospel, to a lost man, is almost like throwing kerosene on a fire*. Ok? It just burns up and goes away. (The Ministry of Reconciliation is our Gospel). And, the Ministry of Reconciliation is the total removal of any barrier between man and the Father, and that removal is effected by the work of the Son; that's the Ministry of Reconciliation by definition. Christ has performed all the work and there is nothing left between you and the Father; you can accept the Father's gift of the life of the Son, because it was the Son's contract with the Father that took Him to the cross and wiped that barrier away. . . . there is nothing left between you and the Father; you can accept the Father's gift of the life of the Son, because it was the Son's contract with the Father that took Him to the cross and wiped that barrier away - nothing else. And now that the way is clear, you have been reconciled to the Father. He's not mad at you; He doesn't have anything held against you; He's not looking for a payment from you; everything has been removed, and you can enter into a relationship with the Father by accepting union with His Son as your standing before Him, forever. Now that's a tough sell. That's like Mac Haik giving away his entire inventory, and taking people as they come one at a time and saying, here it is; it's a brand new Chevrolet. It's yours; here are the keys. And you say, how much is it? and he says, it's paid for; it's completely paid for; all you have to do is take it! Well, does it have any gas in it? [Laughter]. Isn't that the truth? That's the job. That is what we're trying to sell, and that's the Gospel of Reconciliation, and the place reconciliation ought to go in your plans. Now when you look at verse 16,

. . . there is nothing left between you and the Father; you can accept the Father's gift of the life of the Son, because it was the Son's contract with the Father that took Him to the cross and wiped that barrier away.

16. Repent, therefore, I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth [not against me].

17. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches To him who overcomes ...

And *overcoming* is really there, it's *overcoming* – first, it's *overcoming* that battle with self. When we were joined to Christ, we're joined to Him in His death to sin in the grave. That's the first overcoming *that counts*.

I will give some of the hidden manna ...

And that's the word from God Himself who says, the food that sustained the Son in His incarnation and on the cross is the same food that I will give to you to sustain you in your life as joined to Him, and that is the Word of God. The Son fed on the Word of the Father; that is what He lived on and that should be our life also.

Don Fruin. Conrad, is that why non-believers can read Scripture but they don't seem to understand it?

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely Don, absolutely. [And the question for the tape is – Don Fruin asked – is that why, or says, isn't that why the unbeliever can read Scripture and not understand it]. That's absolutely correct. Ok? Because the *soulish* man, as Paul said in Hebrews, "the soulish ("natural" KJV) man receives not the things of God and neither can he know them, for there are spiritually discerned," or understood. If you don't have the Spirit within you, teaching you and unfolding this hidden manna; He sets the table, and you eat of what He brings you. Ok? So that's the way this works; the Spirit inside us gives us the same hidden manna that the Son received during His approximately 33 years of ministry, and that is very important for us, because we're feeding on the same thing. You know; now, doesn't that bring a smile to your face, and your soul, to think about that? We tend to think we're sustained by the physical food and physical provisions that He gives us - we're not; we're not; we are sustained by the hidden manna provided by the Father, through the Son, and revealed to us by the Spirit; always! Ok! So that "overcome" verse is overcome yourself, then it turns outwardly to overcoming whatever we're faced with, regardless of what it is.

To that man I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone ...

Now I mentioned that in Pergamum the physical structure of the ground there meant that the stratum of white stone was constantly working its way to the top. And it was always present near the surface and they made gravestones out of that. Now the "white stone" – what does the term "white" bring to your mind? Purity!

Conrad Bowman. Purity; that's one thing; what else? White robes of righteousness - pure and righteous. That's the white stone, and He's going to give that to us. Now the stone that He gives us means that we now possess righteousness. The righteousness that we possess came to us by means of our union with Christ. We have His righteousness on us. That's what; that's what this white stone signifies. In Corinthians it says,

He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us in order that we might be made to be the righteousness of God in Him. (2nd Corinthians 5:21).

Now that verse states the case for union. First, because we are in Him and; second, for the fact that through that union we've been given this cloak of righteousness. Otherwise, when the Father looked at us, He would see us for the sinful creatures we are, rather than as the righteous beings that we are in Christ. So I want to make sure that you understand and can associate the "white" in this verse with the reception of "righteousness" on your part. Because when the Father looks at you, He sees His Son. That's why He calls you 'son' and 'daughter,' because that's what He sees when He looks at you. Clothed in the character and righteousness of Christ, you and I stand before the Father. And,

I have a new name written on the stone, which no man can know but he who receives it.

What's the name of the Lord forever? What do you think it is? What is the Lord Jesus' name forever? Ok? He was God the Son in the beginning, and when the Father spoke and the Son stood aside from Him, and became, not God the Son, but the Son of God, *the spoken will of the Father*. And then the Father assigned to the Son a task that He faced, and it was the incarnation. He was to become the Kinsman Redeemer of Israel, the Savior of the world. But before that, it was God the Son, the Son of God, now He was known as the Only Begotten Son of

God, because the Father called Him by *the name associated with His becoming a man*. So, He became the Only Begotten Son of God. Then, in His incarnation, He was given a human name of Jesus. And He carried the name of Jesus until Jesus of Nazareth was crucified on the cross and when on into the grave and was resurrected by the Father, who cloaked Him in righteousness again, because He *had been made to be sin*. You remember? And then when He ascended to heaven, what did the Father call him; the name that lives forever? He spoke it in the Old Testament, He said, when Moses said, who am I going to tell Pharaoh who sent me?

Lady. "I am."

Conrad Bowman. The only way we know. It's the verb of absolute being. "I am," is who sent me. When Christ assumes the name that's above every name in heaven, I'm convinced from my studies, F.W. Grant agrees with me, that "I am" is His name forever. Forever! And none but believers in union with Him can know that experientially.

Evelyn Wamble. So that's what that verse means.

Conrad Bowman. I think so. I think so. You can get in a fight with everybody I know through all eternity except F.W. Grant if you mention that, because I haven't had a chance to research the rest, but when I got to him and found somebody who agreed with me on it, I stopped. [Laughter].

John Young. When you hit oil, quit drilling.

Conrad Bowman. That's right!

Mary Ann Jacobsen. I've heard you talk a lot about the God – man... [inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. Regardless of whether you're referring to Him as God or man, and "Lord" incorporates both of those thoughts, that is His name. He is the great, "I am" forever. Ok - now, nobody's ever used that term relative to man, have they?

Lady. Oh no.

Conrad Bowman. But our Savior, our Savior, takes that on and He became the great "I am," when the Father raised Him and restored Him to His glory. And that's the glory that you and I share. Now, just let me recall this one thing, and

don't let me wander past this; but if you remember, Adam and Eve in the garden were created as a single being wrapped in the same glory that God was wrapped in; and that was the shining brilliant appearance of glory within the sphere of man. They were wrapped in that light. And then when they sinned, that light went away; and for the first time, they could see the bodies in which they were encased. That's how they knew they were uncovered, or naked ('necked'), a good Southern term, in Genesis. That's how they knew they were uncovered; because, for the first time, they did not see in themselves the reflected glory of God. They saw the bodies that they occupied, and they no longer reflected God's glory. They had become sinful. And so to cover that nakedness, they went and got fig leaves . . . Now, that's all I'm going to say about that! You have to go back to Genesis for that. I don't want to take off here, Ok?

Now to him who overcomes, to him I'll give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no man knows but the one who receives it. And to the angel to the church in Thyatira...

Now we move from Pergamos – by the way, do you have any questions or comments about the church in Pergamum that we haven't covered, like last week and this week? Ok? Gotcha - You rustled paper and I thought I saw something.

And to the angel to the church in Thyatira write:

Now His name is the Son of God. And that recitation about the changes in names will give you an idea of the standing He takes in order to make this pronouncement. He is the Son of God. That is the name given to Him when the Father spoke His will and everything He spoke took shape. And what it took shape as, was the Son of God. So the Son of God is the embodiment of every word the Father has ever spoken; of every thought the Father had, and that is the character and eternal position of the Son, to express the Father. "No man has seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has perfectly revealed [declared] Him" (John 1:18). And that's in thought, and in body, and in deed. Now, so the Son of God, and that's the very embodiment of the word of the Father.

[The Son of God], who has eyes like a flame of fire ...

And you remember I used the term last week, "fuller's fire." And you know what fuller's fire is? No? In the printing plant that I used to work, where we

actually used lead type, they had a cauldron in the corner. And all that scrap lead, whether it was used type, or whether it was raw lead or whatever, you threw over into that cauldron, fired it up, and that lead would melt down. And when the lead would melt down, you'd see that silvery molten lead, and on the top, would be floating around this dross. Scrap material. Any impurities that were in that lead at the temperature that the lead melted, it would just float to the top. And it could be pieces of iron, or whatever, but it floated to the top. And, you'd just scoop that off until you had all the dross out and leave nothing but lead behind. And then you'd pour the lead out, and pour it out, appropriately, into pigs of lead, about this long [Conrad illustrated about 24 inches] and weighed about 25 pounds. Now, the same thing is true of gold, or of silver, or of most any metal that we know – heavy metal. You take them to their melting point and they'll melt and anything that's not that metal comes to the top, and it's drawn off. Now, when it starts describing eyes of fire – flames of fire – it's talking about a fuller's fire. The eyes of the Lord – the Son of God – burns out impurities, by congealing the pure, and leaving the dross outside of it; and that reinforces that principal again; that whenever the Son comes in judgment, He removes the sinful, and leaves – He *removes the sinful* and leaves the pure behind. Now that is very important. He did it in the garden, He did it to the Law, He did it on the cross. Ok? When He comes at the Rapture, the reason you know this is true is that when He comes at the Rapture it's not in judgment, because He *removes the good*, to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. He leaves the sinful behind because that's not a judgment that He's coming in, it's a rescue. At the end of the Tribulation Period, when Jesus comes in judgment on those who are rising against Israel, He comes in judgment and He takes all those who are in rebellion out of the world, and He leaves Israel behind and believers behind. Ok? They are the remnant at the end of the Tribulation Period. We'll get to that in detail much later; but, I just want to touch on it now so you have a note in *your* "notes."

And to the angel to the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a [fuller's] flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, He says this:

"Burnished bronze" is bronze that has been subjected to the fire of trial and tribulation. Burnished bronze is bronze that's been burned. It has had fire applied to it. Now that is important because describes the feet of the Son of God, which were tested by the fire of the cross and by the very fire of sin itself, which tested those feet. They did not destroy the feet, but they polished them very good because the Son took on Him every sin that was ever committed. And the Father judged that sin when He judged His Son. So the sin has a result in it, and it's that

old burnished bronze look. And if you look around your house, you probably can find that. It's not that fresh polished brass. It's old. Its age is old, and it's burned by your sin and mine. Ok. And the price was paid and the results were there for us to see. The Son shows the marks of the cross in His very being. Now, that He

has eyes like a flame of fire, and feet like burnished bronze...

Phil and I were talking about this because he has some tapes of Brian Meyer when Brian taught through this. Brian could teach for three weeks just on burnished bronze. He could unfold the fuller meaning of that. I don't want to do that. I don't want to belabor this thing; this whole study is dragging enough because of my limitations; so I won't do that. But, if you have access to those tapes, or you want access to them, and would like to hear that passage in detail, it's absolutely worth it. It's a marvelous study that he did. How long did it take him to get through that, Phil?

Phil Richman. Four weeks. Burnished bronze. Well, "burnished bronze" was one week, and "eyes of fire" was another week.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. But it took him four weeks to get through that verse.

Phil Richman. Yeah. Through Thyatira; four weeks; four fifty minute sessions.

Conrad Bowman. It's marvelous. Marvelous.

Phil Richman. And it is abbreviated, I think.

Conrad Bowman. I think it was too. I think it was too.

I know your deeds ...

Here's the Son of God who says,

19. I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and your deeds of late are greater than at first.

Where could He find something to argue about with this church? When He says, I know your deeds, He's talking about, I know them intimately. It's not casual. I know them intimately.

And I know your love and faith and service and perseverance ...

Man, here is a pastor who had a congregation under him that exhibited love, faith, service and perseverance; he'd be on his knees every night thanking the Father for bringing those to him. So you wonder; what is it that the Lord would find in Thyatira that He wasn't happy about? But there it is; that fulcrum word, "But."

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

Now, what this says is, you have to be very careful Church, because the enemy, as we've referred to him before, he has those who follow his doctrines, his constant opposition to anything that comes from the Word of the Father. The enemy is out there working on it. John and I will sit down over a cup of coffee and it happens every time we get together. You don't have to look far to find the devil. I mean he's sitting – when John and I are together, he's sitting right next to both of us. Right?

John Young. Right.

We don't have to look any further than John, and John doesn't have to look any further than me to find him. We're right there, in the humanity that our brain expresses. Now here it's talking about the Church,

I know your deeds, I know your love, I know your faith, I know your service, I know your perseverance [Your stick-too-it-tiveness], and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.

So you're multiplying those deeds, you're working harder, and faster, and harder, and faster. Now, this can characterize your life, or it can characterize the life of your church. It can do both. You can be so busy at work that you forget your primary responsibility who sits over there [Conrad pointing to Norma, his wife]. If I dedicate myself, first, to my work – label that ministry, it sounds better – to my work, then I will begin to ignore her, and that's not right. My first responsibility as a man, because I chose her . . . I think I chose . . . she says she chose [giggles] – well, we got married in any case [more giggles] a long time ago. Hmmm. So, see – you ladies all know, you have your ways, you have your ways.

But, engaging in marriage resets your priorities as a man. From now on, my first responsibility is to her and my family. And that's true of any man who takes a wife. Your first responsibility is to your spouse. That's a two-way street. I cannot engage in marriage and then say, 'but honey, I'm doing this, this is the Lord's business I'm doing.' That won't work. You remember, He – Jesus un-nailed the Jew who wanted to do that. They had a rule which said, you could take your money and set it aside and dedicate it to the church or to the synagogue, and if your family came up and had a need and presented that to you and said, I really, I'm in trouble. I have a need. You could say, I'm sorry, but I can't help you.

Gentleman. What was that called?

Conrad Bowman. Corban. C-O-R-B-A-N. You'd say, I'm sorry, I can't help you because all this that I have is Corban (Mark 7:6-13); it is dedicated to God's work through the synagogue. Now, that same thing can be true of us. It doesn't have to be just right here at the church. It can be anything else that we've designated; that we say, no, this comes before; this is something I've already dedicated. I can't do it; I've signed a pledge card for this, you know. You can't use a pledge card as a substitute. You had an order of priorities, and now your first priority is your family. You have a responsibility for that, and God knows that. Ok? So He provides for you to take care of that. Now, that's subtle, but it's true.

I know your deeds, and your love, and faith, and service, and perseverance ...

All those things are good.

But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel ...

This is from Matthew 13.

Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess ...

And you know, Jezebel was a, Jezebel was a Biblical Old Testament character, and she had – she called herself a prophetess,

and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray ...

Now, this began to happen at the end of the 19th century and it is still with us today, and that was airways full of people proclaiming *themselves* to be the

gateway to knowledge of what's coming next.¹ And it's both men and women. But right here we're looking at Jezebel, who set herself up as a leader and teacher of the Son of God's bondservants. And that's people who have taken the name of Christ, set themselves aside as His believers, and they're over here listening to this prophetess who's going to tell them about things to come, and they're drifting slowly away. John Young says, you've got your boat about two points off the wind, and here that's not much here; but you go out here a mile, and it's quite a distance. You go five miles, and you won't even be able to see what you were next to over here, because you've drifted this much. Now what that says to me, just like a sounding bell, CONTENT IS EVERYTHING. CONTENT IS EVERYTHING.² You need to pay attention to what you're learning. You need to double check me, or Phil, or whoever. You need to make sure that you understand what they're teaching – personally understand it. From the Spirit Who is within you, Who reveals all things to you. And Jezebel has set herself up as a prophetess,

and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that [to the end that] they commit acts of immorality [and that's sexual immorality – is implied in the text] and they eat things sacrificed to idols.

This is just bad, because taking in the food that had been offered to idols means that you give position and place to the idol. You cannot snuggle up to an idol and say that you're doing that in order to win the idolaters. It doesn't work that way. Ok.

John?

John Young. There is, I take it, a distinction in that – eating things sacrificed to idols, I believe it's in 1st Corinthians where Paul says, that's Ok at the feast unless someone – it's going to bother someone. So there's a distinction. Can you comment on that?

¹ This is when the "Word of Knowledge" movement became popular and stories of God's visitations with certain preachers who would proclaim, "thus saith the Lord" regarding things prophetic in the lives of people who followed them.

² If we were sailing I would say, 'keep it close to the wind' because if you let it fall off just a couple of points here, you will miss your mark by a great distance out there. It's the same with doctrine – let it get loose here (a good NASCAR term) in the turn and you will lose speed on the straight-a-way!

Conrad Bowman. Yes, sure, yes. In the passage in Corinthians, the verse that precedes that, is,

If an unbeliever bids you to a feast, [and the next phrase is] and you are disposed to go ...

That means you have a reason to go there; you have a reason to be there. Let's say the unbeliever that invites you to the feast is a – it's a company function and it's pretty much required; or, an unbeliever bids you to a feast, and you want to go because you feel like you have an opportunity to win this person to Christ somehow. That's a stretch, but it can happen. Then you go, but you go knowing that there's a risk involved because they may serve things offered to idols there, and if they do, how you are going to test it is this: if the unbeliever serves you and says, I know you're a Christian and this *has* been offered to idols, then it's a point with them. Don't eat that, not for your sake, but for their sake. If somebody just serves it to you and makes no point about it, then it's of no consequence, because you know that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. So, you're free to eat it. It depends on what the issue is, doesn't it?

Now, we started slowly, and the time is gone. Let me use this to encourage you when you come in the class, there's a time when we need to kind of quieten down and get started, and that's hard to do because you haven't seen one another for a week.

Phil?

Phil Richman. Beautiful job. Thank you so much. We're grateful for Conrad, and – has everybody signed?

John Young. I think one or two came in after that.

Phil Richman. John, would you like to close us in prayer?

John Young. Sure. "Father, thank you for this class, and Conrad, and Phil, and all who devote their time in Your Word; and lead us to a better understanding and a more full understanding of Your message, of Your Word, and let our lives manifest that. In Jesus' name, Amen."