

What Does Your Name Mean?

Jay Abshier December, 2011

I'm not sure this is really a devotion as much as it is just thoughts about an obscure scripture. Whenever the subject of the end times is discussed, it is hard not to think about Judgment Day. While, as Christians, we have nothing to fear, I still picture myself laying prostrate on the ground quivering in fear.

While none of us know what will really happen on Judgment Day, Rev 2:17 may provide a glimpse of what it might be like for Christians. Jesus said "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it." NIV

The Ryrie Study Bible says that the hidden manna probably refers to Jesus as being our sole and sufficient source of life.

Both the Ryrie Study Bible and NIV Study Notes say that the white stone probably refers to trials of that time period where the jurors are given a white stone and a black stone. When it comes time to determine the guilt or innocence of the person on trial one of the stones is thrown at the accused person's feet – black for guilty and white for innocent. It's an illustration that Jesus is the only one who gets to vote and his vote is innocent.

But, what's this new name that is written on the stone? Several individuals in the Bible received new names when something of spiritual significance occurred – Sarai to Sarah, Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, and Simon to Peter. I'm also reminded of some cultures that give children new names when they reach adulthood – names that describe their character, personality – who they are.

And, what does "known only to him who receives it" mean? I can't imagine Jesus whispering to us "Your new name is ****, but don't tell anyone!". The word in the original language that was translated to "known" could just as easily have been translated to "understand" or "understood". So, maybe everyone will hear and recognize our new name – maybe even use it, but it is a name that can only be *understood* by the person to whom it is given.

So maybe the new name describes who we are in Christ. All else is forgotten. So maybe in heaven every time Jesus calls your name He will be affirming who you are as an individual and as a Christian.