

66-02-01-The Eternal Memorial
 graveside memorial, death, tombstones, Heaven
 Rev 2:17

The intent of tombstones are fulfilled only by heavenly memorials.

INTRODUCTION:

–**HOM.idea.** *What do I mean?* Well, we write names on tombstones, but that idea comes from God– **Rev2:17** (NIV), *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. 2 thoughts about this verse.... The 1st is:*

I. The Grave isn't a Final Resting Place (It's a Farewell Place!)

- A. [**Cemeteries** are like airports or railway stations.] Those to whom we are bidding a last farewell have taken a *final, one-way trip*.
- B. Graves end our common earthly journeys, but for travelers leaving this *earthly life*, the grave in a departure point, not an end-point.

TRANS: We bid them farewell, but are they traveling well?– **v.17a** “*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.*” The story of how well they overcame is the basis of their dining well on God's “the hidden manna.” In _____'s case, I think she/he's feasting very well!
 The 2nd thought I have about **Rev2:17** is this:

II. We Write Names for a Time (God Writes New Ones Forever!)

- A. Life is like sand trickling in an hourglass. (That *sand* wore away from *rock* that once seemed as solid as these gravestones.)
- B. We want memorials to last, but they're only *temporary*. God has a permanent plan– **v.17b**, “*I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.*” (Why so private? [**God is a romantic:** He gives intimate names to His loved ones, as we sometimes do.]

CONCLUSION: The intent of tombstones are fulfilled only by

heavenly memorials– **Rev2:17** (NIV), *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. Anne Bradstreet alluded to this verse in her poem, [“Contemplations”]:* O Time the fatal wrack of mortal things, / That draws oblivious

curtains over kings, / Their sumptuous monuments, men know them not, / Their names without a record are forgot, / Their parts, their ports, their pomp's all laid in th' dust / Nor wit nor gold, nor buildings scape times rust; / But he whose name is graved in the white stone / Shall last and shine when all of these are gone.

–These *promising words* must be claimed *by faith*. Jesus said, “Follow Me.” _____ chose to do that, and **now she's followed Him all the way to Heaven.** As we leave this graveside and return to life's hustle and bustle, let's also, on a day by day basis, follow the risen Christ, who said, “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says...*”

Scripture: (Before we move into the Committal) **1 Corinthians 15:51-58** (NIV) ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed–⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Committal: It's now *our solemn duty* to commit the bodily remains of _____, to the elements from which they came: *earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.* **But** it's *our inspiring privilege* to commend **her/his** soul to God, Who allowed **her/him** to share this earthly sojourn with us. We do this *with confident hope* in the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ, with firm faith in His restoration of our physical bodies through resurrection, and with joyous expectation of eternal life with all God's people in His everlasting kingdom.

All who know it can join me in **the Lord's Prayer:** “Our Father...”

Benediction: And now... the LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen. (This concludes our service.)