

Revelation 3:7-13

Sunday, August 16, 2020

7a "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,"

Here we have the recipients of the letter, the Christians in Philadelphia, which includes the church-leadership as well as the fellowship.

I. The Christians

A. To the angel = Leadership (Pastor)

Messenger(s), pastors, teachers, distributors of the message.

B. Of the church in Philadelphia = Fellowship

You didn't know the Lord sent a letter to a city in the US, huh? A congregation in our nation. (just kidding)

No, the Philadelphia THEN and THERE in Asia Minor, was a minor city in that it was the youngest of all the cities and relatively small.

Although it was a gateway to Rome, it was so plagued by earthquakes and seismic activity, many, many aftershocks, that some chose to leave, and others were scarred scared.

But those who chose to stay in spite of the challenges of the church were special.

The name Philadelphia comes to us from the Greek words *phileo* which means love; and *adelphos* which means brother; together it obviously carries the concept of brotherly love.

History tells us that the city of Philadelphia was founded in 189 B.C. by a man named Eumanes II. When he died, he was succeeded by his younger brother Attalus II, who missed his brother and loved his brother so much that he named buildings after him, and minted coins bearing his brother's image, and talked about his brother constantly. Consequently, the people of the town began to call this place Phila-delphia, or the city of brotherly love.

How appropriate this is, considering the health and holiness of this church, a church that Jesus commends in so many ways, because a strong church will have strong and fervent love for the Lord and the brethren.

John 13:35, (NKJV) "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

1 Peter 1:22 (NKJV) "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart."

So right off the bat the Lord speaks to us - because we're going to have different views, on many different things, but let's make sure we love one another, like this, in order to be strong as a church, and pleasing to God.

To the Christians in Philadelphia, from

II. The Christ

7b "These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

A. He who is holy

3 things in this verse, the first 2 have to do with morality, the 3rd with ministry.

He is holy and true

The Greek word translated "holy" (*hagios*) literally means to be set apart, in our case and context, set apart for God.

For God it's not just a description of *how* He is, it's also a description of *who* He is. It's one of the most common titles of the LORD, found 57 times in the OT, predominantly in reference to God the Son, the Holy One.

He is without sin, pure, without spot or blemish of any kind; perfect in all He is, and in all His ways, He is holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:3)

B. He who is true

The Greek word translated "true" (*alethinos*) means that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name in every respect. The opposite of fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated, or pretended.

1 John 5:20 calls Him the true God; He is the true King, the true Lord, the true Friend, the true Head of the church.

He not only **speaks** the absolute and impeccable truth (John 1:17), He IS the absolute and impeccable truth. (Revelation 3:14; 19:11)

John 14:6 (NKJV) "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

(morality/ministry – nature/nurture)

C. He who has the key of David

And with that key He opens doors that no one shuts and shuts doors that no one opens.

Within the pages of the Bible, and sometimes in life, keys are indicative of an aspect of authority. The keys of David are the keys of the King.

Some people have a key to the city – the Lord Jesus has the keys of the Kingdom.

There's no doubt that this is a reference, an allusion, not illusion but allusion, pointing to Isaiah 22:22.

And there the background was the days of Hezekiah, King of Judah, who had a man on his staff named Shebna. He dishonestly used the power of his position to enrich himself. He was a crooked courtier, a selfish scam artist. So, the Lord pronounced judgment on Shebna, declaring that he would be sent to die in Babylon and that a godly man named Eliakim would take his place.

We read in **Isaiah 22:22 (NKJV)** "The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open."

Shebna is a picture of the antichrist.

Eliakim is a picture of Jesus Christ.

The antichrist will do all he can to oppose God's people for his own selfish ends, but the sovereign God will have His way, and especially in the last day, which is where we are now, He has the keys to the Kingdom.

Hopefully we can talk more about this, but let me just say, in light of this passage that the Governor doesn't have the keys to open doors, God does.

The Judges of our land don't hold the keys to close doors spiritually, Jesus does, who along with His Father and the Holy Spirit, are the **only** members of the **Supreme** Court.

Even if the day came when buildings were closed - I have no doubt that God would open greater doors, because He has the keys to those opportunities.

We've said all along that the church is not a building, so God might take us out of the box for here and there, it's completely up to Him.

We'll just keep teaching the Word and preaching the Gospel, and the only time we'll ever stop is if we die, it's as simple as that, the doors that Jesus is speaking of are doors that go infinitely beyond any building any man can build.

Blessed is the one who sees...Jesus with the keys.

III. Comments

⁸ "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name."

Jesus knew their works...so He set before them an open door...

A. Opportunities

With the keys of sovereignty and authority, the Lord Jesus opens doors of ministry opportunity.

1 Corinthians 16:8-9 (NKJV) "⁸ But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. ⁹ For a great and effective door has opened to me, and *there are* many adversaries."

Colossians 4:3 (NKJV) "...meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains."

2 Corinthians 2:12 (NKJV) "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord."

Why?

1. You have little strength

The Greek word translated "little" (*mikros*) actually highlights how weak they are in and of themselves, this is their acknowledged weakness, forcing them to function by the power of God.

2 Corinthians 12:10 (NKJV) "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

(Gideon) How can I be used to save the people, my clan is the weakest, and I'm the least of my father's house? But you know what the Lord said to him? "Go in this might of yours and you shall save Israel."

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) "So he answered and said to me: 'This *is* the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts.'"

Psalms 20:7 (NKJV) "Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."

2. You have kept my word

Obedience does open door.

Bible loving, learning, and living churches will always have – open doors according to God's will!

Keeping His Word is in reference to obedience to and reverence for the Word of God, because we love the God of the Word.

Many so called churches today are not really teaching the Word; and so I pray that the people of God would open their eyes, and listen intently with the ears of their heart, is that pastor teaching this Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, or is he only sharing his hobby horse, what He thinks is important or relevant, when Paul the Apostle said he had not neglected to declare the full

counsel of God, because he knew that it's ALL profitable and applicable.

Don't let go of the Bible; you don't have to defend it, just let the lion out of the cage.

Don't let go of the Bible; 'cuz King Jesus rules His church by the scepter of His Word.

Don't let go of the bible, keep God's word, hold tight to the Sword of the Spirit! I always think of Eleazar the son of Dodo on this (elaborate) (Eleazar – God has helped; Dodo – his beloved)

2 Samuel 23:9–10 (NKJV) “⁹ And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. ¹⁰ He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.”

3. You have not denied my Name

The precious Name of Jesus, the Name above all names (Philippians 2:9-11)

Not ashamed!

Acts 4:12 (NKJV) “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:17–18 (NKJV) “¹⁷ But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this

name.”¹⁸ So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.”

II. Comments A. Opportunities

B. Opposition

⁹ Indeed I will make *those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

There were some there in the city of Philadelphia, who, in all reality, were of the Synagogue of Satan.

It's interesting how the only 2 churches of the 7 which are right on, here in Revelation 2 & 3 are the firm church of Smyrna, and the faithful church of Philadelphia, and both, according to Jesus, are dealing somehow, with the Synagogue of Satan, because the enemy hates godly churches.

2 Timothy 3:12, “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

If we take the words “Synagogue of Satan” at face value, this sounds like nominal Jews who no doubt persecuted Christians – not even bearing the fruit of Judaism.

Ignatius later debated some hostile Jews during his visit to Philadelphia.

These people would one day be humbled, and bow down before Christ, in the presence of the church of Philadelphia and faithful believers over the years.

It may be on the Philippians 2:9-11 day.

Isaiah 60:14 (NKJV) "Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you the City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

It's interesting the issue at hand, there at the end of v. 9...and on that day they will know, "...that I have loved you."

The enemy attacks that truth doesn't he?

A. Opportunities B. Opposition

C. Open Door

¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

The hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world is the Tribulation Period (Revelation 6-19).

Revelation 14:7 (NKJV) "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come..."

The final week of the 70 weeks of Daniel. When all hell break loose on earth, the whole world, the rise of the Antichrist, cataclysmic and catastrophic events, such as earthquakes, meteor showers, showers of hailstones, war, pestilence, famine, death, and demons unparalleled in human history.

The church of Philadelphia was a literal church back then, but it's also representative of the remnant in the church today – we are not appointed to wrath (1 Thessalonians

1:10; 3:3; 5:10). And yet that's THEE word describing this period (WRATH) (Revelation 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10; 15:1; 16:1, 19; 19:15).

Genesis 5:24 (NKJV) "And Enoch walked with God; and he *was not*, for God took him."

Hebrews 11:5 (NKJV) "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, *'and was not found, because God had taken him'*; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Isaiah 26:20–21 (NKJV) ²⁰ Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. ²¹ For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain."

"Because you have kept my command to persevere..." – in the NT this is the characteristic of one who is not swerved from his or her deliberate purpose and loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.

(It was through steadfast endurance that the snails made it to the ark)

D. Overcome

¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. ¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on

him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. ¹³ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

(Quickly = suddenly)

(Hold tight/Overcome)

(John 16:33; Revelation 12:10-11)

(Earthquakes in Philadelphia – made it small, but also weeded out)

Casting Crowns **(Revelation 4:10) (2 John 1:8)**

Or the crowns might be people (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)
(people you've shared with, prayed for, reached out to)

Permanent pillars (Galatians 2:9)

John MacArthur, "A **pillar** represents stability, permanence, and immovability. Pillars can also represent honor; in pagan temples they were often carved in such a way as to honor a particular deity. The marvelous promise Christ makes to believers is that they will have an eternal place of honor **in the temple of God** (heaven)."

New names (God, the city of God, Jesus' new name)
(ownership, citizenship, relationship)