

A graphic featuring a large, gnarled tree trunk in the center, with two glowing circular openings. The word "GENESIS" is written in small, gold, all-caps letters above the left opening, and "REVELATION" is written in small, gold, all-caps letters above the right opening. The word "BOOKENDS" is written in large, white, serif, all-caps letters across the top of the tree trunk.

# BOOKENDS

## LETTER TO A FAVORED CHURCH

*REVELATION 3:7-13*

### SYNOPSIS

In a world of instability and rejection, the Philadelphian Christians were reminded that true security rests not in shifting circumstances but in the immutable character of Christ. His holiness, truth, and authority form the bedrock of our faith. This security manifests outwardly through allegiance to Christ, openness to God's work, humility, devotion to His Word, and spiritual endurance. Ultimately, Christ's eternal promises—being pillars in His temple, permanence in His kingdom, and bearing His name—assure believers that nothing can overthrow the foundation laid in Him. Our hope is anchored not in life's shifting sands, but in Christ alone.

### SERMON OUTLINE

- 1. The Source of Our Security:** The Character of Christ: Christ's holiness, truth, and authority provide stability for believers. Like Chicago's bedrock beneath shifting soil, His character supports our faith amid life's uncertainties, betrayal, and fear, offering unshakeable security for our souls.
- 2. The Signs of Our Security:** Evidence of security in Christ appears through allegiance to Him, open doors for His work, genuine humility, devotion to Scripture, and spiritual endurance. These outward fruits demonstrate that our lives are truly built upon Christ's immovable foundation.
- 3. The Strength of Our Security:** The Eternal Promises of God: Christ assures permanence, stability, and belonging through His promises. Believers become pillars in God's temple, eternally secure in His kingdom, marked with His name, and protected in every trial by His unwavering love.

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## LOOKING AT THE TEXT

*These text-based questions are only guides for you, and you do not need to use them. The goal is to get your group studying the text before reflecting on the sermon. Some groups will do this quite naturally by just observing what they see in the text. Others may need a few guiding questions like the ones below.*

1. In verse 7, Jesus describes Himself as “the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.” What do these descriptions reveal about who Jesus is and the authority He possesses?
2. Discover all the “I will” statements in this passage. What significance do these hold?
3. How does this letter compare, on a surface level, to the other letters in chapters 2 and 3 that we have studied?
4. In verse 8, Jesus says, “I know your works...you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” What do these statements tell us about the condition and faithfulness of the church in Philadelphia?
5. Look carefully at verses 10 through 12. What specific promises does Jesus make to those who “conquer,” and what images or pictures does He use to describe their future with Him?

## GROUP REFLECTION & APPLICATION

1. In the sermon we discussed how the Philadelphia Christians had been exiled from the safety of their community in the local synagogue. Have you ever experienced a loss of community like this, in some degree? What was that experience like? And what idols did that experience expose in your life?
2. We discussed three aspects of Christ’s character from this text (his holiness, his truth, and his authority). These were discussed as the source of our security. Discuss the implications
3. We discussed five fruits that are evidences of the Christian faith. While these will look different in each Christian’s life, they are held in degree by every Christian: allegiance, open doors, spiritual humility, and spiritual endurance. Which of these fruits do you see clearly in your life? Which do you see less clearly?
4. We discussed holding fast to Christ in the midst of a shifting shaky world. Can you share a personal example of holding fast to Him? What was that experience like? How did he meet you in that season?

5. Are there areas in your life where you may be building on “shifting sand” instead of Christ’s bedrock? What will it look like to realign your foundation?