

Revelation 3:7-13 — The Church of Philadelphia

As we continue through the seven churches, we now come to our 6th church, the church of **Philadelphia**.

Ephesus left its first love, and **Smyrna** suffered faithfully.

Pergamos compromised, **Thyatira** tolerated corruption.

Sardis had a name, a reputation, but was spiritually dead.

Philadelphia stands in contrast to the previous churches.

Like **Smyrna**, **Philadelphia** receives no rebuke from the Lord.

Philadelphia means "**brotherly love**." It was the youngest of the 7 cities mentioned in the letters. A.K.A. "**little Athens**."

(David Hocking) **Philadelphia** was built to spread Greek culture throughout the region.

(William Barclay) **Philadelphia** was the gateway between continents—Europe to the West, Asia to the East.

It also sat in an area known for frequent earthquakes.

Against this backdrop, **Jesus** gives promises of stability, security, and opportunity.

Let's pray,

Revelation 3:7-13 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, '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": 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.

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. **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. **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." '

Philadelphia teaches us that Christ is not looking for a church that appears strong before men.

He is looking for a church that is **faithful** to Him. Let us dig in.

Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, '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":'

"To the angel," the messenger, the pastor, **Jesus** identifies Himself as "He who is holy."

Holiness belongs to God alone. Speaking of **Isaiah's** vision of the Lord.

Isaiah 6:3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

"He who is true." Everything about Him is absolutely trustworthy and authentic, speaking of His being.

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

Jesus then declares that He possesses **"He who has the Key of David."**

This takes us back to **Isaiah's** Messianic prophecy.

Isaiah 22:22 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.

This passage points us forward to His future reign upon **David's** throne.

The angel **Gabriel** said of **Jesus**.

Luke 1:32-33 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

The key speaks of authority.

Signifying that **Jesus** alone determines entrance into His kingdom. Admittance or Exclusion.

"He who opens," **Jesus** alone opens doors that no man can shut.

John 10:9 **I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

Jesus alone opens doors that no one can close, as verse 8 describes,

Revelation 3:8 "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."

"I know." He knows their faithfulness, He knows their weakness, He knows their endurance.

Jesus says, "I have set before you an open door."

Throughout Scripture, an open door often speaks of opportunity for ministry.

1 Corinthians 16:9 For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

Colossians 4:3 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,

Notice that **Jesus** opened **the door**; the church did not open it.

This city was designed to spread Hellenism, Greek culture.

Jesus used this opportunity to spread His Gospel through His Church by His workmanship "**beforehand**" **Ephesians 2:10**.

Philadelphia had "**a little strength**." This was not a criticism; This word could mean small, meaning few in numbers.

Pointing to their dependence upon God, He works through our weakness. Acknowledging that is key to success spiritually.

2 Corinthians 12:9 A. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Jesus then commends them for two things: "**Have kept My Word,**" "**have not denied My Name.**"

**John 14:23 A. Jesus answered and said to him,
"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word."**

**Matthew 10:32 Therefore whoever confesses Me
before men, him I will also confess before My
Father who is in heaven.**

Philadelphia was faithful to **Christ** and faithful to **Scripture**, verse 9.

Revelation 3:9 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.

"The synagogue of Satan." As with **Smyrna**, opposition came from unbelieving **Jews** who rejected their **Messiah**.

Jesus is speaking of those who opposed **Christ** and **persecuted** His followers.

The **Lord** promises future vindication in **Zechariah**,
Zechariah 8:23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." ' "

Isaiah 60:14 Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending to you, And all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet.

God knows how to vindicate His people; we need to remain faithful and allow God to do the rest! Verse 10.

Revelation 3:10 "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."

Jesus says, **"You have kept My command to persevere,"**

This command is found in the Gospels,

Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Matthew 24:13-14 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Also found in **Mark 13:13** and **Luke 21:19**; remember, He is speaking to the Church.

In verse 10, notice carefully what **Jesus** says, He says, **"I also will keep you from the hour of trial."**

The trial **"shall come upon the whole world."** This is not a local event. **Jesus** described it this way:

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The purpose of this testing is directed toward **"those who dwell on the earth,"** the inhabitants of the earth.

Used **9 times** in **Revelation** to identify 'Unbelievers.'

Isaiah 26:21 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.

Believers belong and will be elsewhere during this time: They will be ***in Heaven*** with Him.

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus, speaking of believers,
**John 17:16 They are not of the world,
 just as I am not of the world.**

This promise harmonizes with other passages.
**1 Thessalonians 1:10 and to wait for
 His Son from heaven, whom He
 raised from the dead, even Jesus
 who delivers us from the wrath to
 come.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not
 appoint us to wrath, but to obtain
 salvation through our Lord Jesus
 Christ.**

The faithful church is "looking for
Christ," not the Tribulation, verse 11.

**Revelation 3:11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast
 what you have, that no one may take your crown."**

Jesus directs **Philadelphia's** attention to **His** return.

The expectation of **Christ's** coming should produce faithfulness.
**Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious
 appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**

The command is simple: "**Hold fast.**" Keep His Word, do not
 deny His Name.

The "**crown**" speaks of reward and victory.
**James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures
 temptation; for when he has been approved, he will
 receive the crown of life which the Lord has
 promised to those who love Him. Verse 12.**

Revelation 3:12 "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."

Earthquakes frequently shook this city, buildings collapsed, and citizens fled; yet **the pillars** often remained standing.

A '**pillars**' strength is in its foundation, **Jesus** is our **foundation**.
1 Corinthians 3:11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

In verse 12, Jesus says, "**he shall go out no more.**" What a promise!

Philadelphians would flee the city due to earthquakes.

No more **fear**, no more **uncertainty**, no more **separation**, no more **leaving**.

Revelation 21:3 "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people."

Jesus then speaks of three names: the **name of God**, the name of the **New Jerusalem**, and **His new name**.

The **New Jerusalem** is our eternal home.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

John 14:2-3 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. Verse 13.

Revelation 3:13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

This letter was written to **Philadelphia**, but the message is for all churches; the Spirit still speaks, but are we listening?

OVERVIEW

Historically

Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, was established to spread Greek culture throughout the surrounding regions.

Philadelphia receives no rebuke from Christ.

Geographically

Philadelphia sat in a region known for frequent earthquakes, and the people often fled the city for safety.

Christ's promise concerning **pillars** and permanent security brings stability.

Spiritually

Philadelphia teaches us that faithfulness matters more than strength; the church had little strength, but great faithfulness.

Jesus Revealed

Jesus reveals Himself as the **Holy One, the True One**, and **the One** who holds **the Key of David**.

He possesses all authority over His church, His kingdom, and the future.

Personally

Philadelphia asks us whether we are keeping His Word and confessing His Name.

Faithfulness is more important than popularity.

Collectively as the Body

As the church, we are called to walk through the doors Christ opens.

We are not dependent upon our strength; we are dependent upon His.

Doctrinally

Philadelphia teaches Christ's sovereignty, the authority of Scripture.

Teaches us **perseverance**, the promise of **reward**, and the church's **deliverance** from the coming hour of **worldwide trial**.

A resulting **Judgment** from **God** on a **Christ-rejecting** world.

Prophetically

Many see **Philadelphia** as representing the faithful **missionary church**.

Its promise of being kept from the hour of trial points forward to the future **removal** of the church before the **Tribulation period**.

The church is looking for Christ's return.

In Closing

Philadelphia reminds us that God is not looking for greatness in the eyes of the world.

He is looking for faithfulness.

Remember the Promise to the Overcomer:

The overcomer will become a pillar in the presence of God.

Permanent fellowship with **Jesus** Christ is forever.