

05/04/25

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REVELATION

Philadelphia – The Faithful Church

Revelation 3:07-13

Rev 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”: 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.” ’

I. Judgment

- a. Have you ever misjudged a person?
 - i. First impressions were totally off
 - ii. One of the first times a met my wife I thought there was a strong possibility that she was in a street gang – I was wrong
 1. We make assumptions based on limited information that can often be wrong
 - iii. That’s why no one likes being judged – people don’t know our circumstances, they don’t know what we have been through or where we have come from
 1. Often times people are making assumptions based on the limited information they have
- b. Christ’s message to church in Philadelphia begins with this statement ***‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true***
 - i. There is one who knows all things – and His judgements are always right true
 - ii. Judgement is inescapable in the book of Revelation – that makes people very uncomfortable
 - iii. Judgement is coming from the one true God who is holy
 1. Set apart – other than – many ways no like us
 2. We were created in the image of God – in some ways God has graciously shared the qualities of His nature with us – these are what we call God’s communicable attributes
 - a. The ability to love selflessly, show kindness – generosity – compassion and forgiveness, the qualities of being truthful and wise, to be peacemakers

3. There are many ways we are not like Him – His incommunicable attributes – characteristics that belong to Him and Him alone
 - a. Self-existence – He is not created – not dependent on anything or anyone to exist – with no beginning or end
 - b. He is unchanging
 - c. Omnipresent – all places at all times
 - d. Omniscient – knows all things – past, present, and future
 - e. Omnipotent – all-powerful, He do anything that is consistent with His nature
 - f. Sovereign – supreme authority over all creation and history
- c. When God judges, His judgements are right and true
 - i. He is not working off of assumptions based on limited information – He knows everything – including the motives of our hearts
 - ii. Interesting that God’s judgement in Revelation begins first in the house of God – “say to the seven churches”
 1. ***1 Pet 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?***
 - iii. Judgement centers on this one command of Jesus – ***Matt 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.***
 1. You are the lampstands and I am in your midst – I see your works – you may appear alive but you are dead – you stand against evil but you don’t love for your brother – you persevere in the face of persecution but sin in secret – you minister to those in need, yet you preach a false gospel
 - a. In all these ways you hinder the message of the gospel – you distort the truth
 - b. ***Rev 2: 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.***
 2. To carry the name of Christ and not look like Him is confusing to an unbelieving world

II. The Key of David

- a. Philadelphia – The city was founded around 189 B.C. by King Eumenes II, who named it after his brother, Attalus II Philadelphus. (Brotherly Love)
 - i. Located on a major imperial road that was part of the Roman postal and trade system – it connected western Asia Minor with the eastern regions - It served as a main highway junction that facilitated commerce and communication
 1. As Leon Morris points out - center of missionary activity for the Hellenistic way of life – used for spreading Greek language and culture further inland
 - ii. Became known as the gateway or the door to the east
- b. ***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”***
 - i. Key of David – ***Isa 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.***

1. A door to where? *Rev 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.*
 2. Permanent residence – child of God, citizen of Kingdom of God, because we bare the new name of Christ (bought by the new covenant in Christ’s blood)
- ii. *John 10: 7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*
1. *John 14: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”*
 2. One door salvation, one door to citizenship, that is through Christ alone – He alone holds the keys – every other door is shut
 - a. The question isn’t why is there only one door, the question is why is there a door at all considering all that we have done

III. The Door Set Before You

- a. *8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;*
- i. Safe to assume the church in Philadelphia had already walked through this door – what does Jesus mean when He says “See, I have set before you an open door”
 1. *Acts 14: 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” 23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. 24 And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. 27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.*
 2. *1 Cor 16: 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.*
 3. *2 Cor 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord,*
 - ii. The church in Philadelphia was a door to The Door
 1. Everyone who walked through their doors were pointed to the Door – the Door to salvation, the Door to citizenship
 2. Philadelphia was an open door that people passed through on the way to Christ

3. Shouldn't that be the desire of every church? Open doors that point the Door
4. That is the purpose of the church – Each time Jesus corrected one of the churches, He was exposing a mindset or action that served as a stumbling block to people entering the Kingdom
 - a. The severity of this offense cannot be understated – literally doing the exact opposite of what the church was created to do
- b. Matthew 23 Jesus rebukes the hypocrisy of the religious leaders (people who were supposed to be pointing people to God)
 - i. Placed heavy burdens on others but were unwilling to help, love being honored for their right living desiring the best seats at feasts
 - ii. More concerned about looking righteous than being righteous, cleaned the outside of the cup but on the inside were full of greed and self-indulgence
 - iii. Emphasized the letter of the law but neglected the most important parts of the law like justice, mercy, and faithfulness
 - iv. They loved the title of Rabbi and Father but rejected humility and servanthood
 1. ***Matt 23:13 CSB “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you don’t go in, and you don’t allow those entering to go in.,***
 2. ***15 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to make one convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as you are!***
 3. We are all capable of carrying the name of Christ and at the same time communicating a confusing message about Christ
- c. ***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.***
 - i. Possible that through the ministry of the church of Philadelphia – many Jewish men and women were saved
 - ii. Ultimately every knee will bow before the feet of the church – not because of us but because of the head of church

IV. How Do We Remain Open?

- a. ***you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name***
 - i. Not about size or resources – it is about faithfulness
 1. Kept My word (not just heard it), not denied My name (action)
 - ii. Follow the one who is holy and true
 - iii. Psalm 23 – picture of the life that makes the name of Jesus known
 1. ***Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.***
 2. Holy and true – trustworthy – do we follow His lead or do we carry the name of Christ but refuse to follow?