

Session 7 Jesus' Message to the Church of Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13)

I. PRIMARY MESSAGE: FAITHFULNESS TO JESUS NOW RESULTS IN ETERNAL HONOR

- A. The church of Philadelphia faithfully obeyed God's Word even amidst great difficulty. Jesus gave this church no rebuke but affirmation only as He did the church at Smyrna.

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...’* ⁸*“I know your works. I have set before you an open door...[you] have kept My word and have not denied My name. ⁹Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan...to know that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world...¹¹Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. ¹²He 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 New Jerusalem...”* (Rev. 3:7-12)

- B. Jesus presented Himself in a way that emphasizes His care for His people and how He intervenes to open and shut doors to help those who are persecuted and in difficulty to fulfill His will.

⁷*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... (Rev. 3:7)*

1. ***He who is holy***: Jesus, as God, is holy as in transcendent or infinitely superior to all. Thus, He is worth whatever it costs to love and obey Him. Jesus, as a man, is holy as in fully set apart to God. He understands what it means to walk out costly commitments (Heb. 4:15).
2. ***He who is true***: He is reliable to keep all His promises including the extravagant ones in 3:12.
3. ***He has the key of David***: Jesus is the ultimate son of David who has authority over all the promises that the Father gave to David, including those fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.
4. This passage draws on Isaiah's prophecy to Shebna about being removed from his leadership position in Hezekiah's government and being replaced by Eliakim (Isa. 22:15-25). The Lord promoted Eliakim by giving him “the key to the house of David” so he could open and shut the doors of the royal resources to release God's will in the kingdom of Israel (Isa. 22:22).
²²*The key of the house of David I will lay on his [Eliakim's] shoulder, so he shall open, and no one shall shut, and he shall shut, and no one shall open...will be removed... (Isa. 22:22)*
5. ***He opens and no one shuts***: Jesus opens doors that one man or demon can shut. Jesus alone has the keys of the kingdom with authority to open any door (Mt. 16:19).
6. ***He who shuts and no one opens***: The enemy seeks to shut doors of opportunity and to open doors of hostility against God's people to hinder His purposes in their life. Saul sought to kill David but could not stop God's will in David's life (1 Sam. 24:2; 26:2). Neither men, nor demons, nor the Antichrist has the power to shut the doors that Jesus opens. Jesus shuts doors in His love for us until their proper time. Paul sought to preach in Asia but was forbidden by the Spirit (Acts 16:6-7) who shut the doors to Asia yet opened them in Macedonia.

- C. Jesus gave them an open door of opportunity to participate in the kingdom in this age and in the age to come (3:8). This was an encouragement to those excommunicated from their synagogue (3:9).

⁸“...***See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it...***” (Rev. 3:8)

1. Jesus opens the doors in the Spirit that release more revelation of God's heart (Mt. 11:27).

²⁷***Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.*** (Mt. 11:27)

2. Jesus will open heaven and release angels to ascend and descend.

⁵¹***You shall see heaven open and the angels...ascending and descending...*** (Jn. 1:51)

3. Jesus opens doors of ministry to us in this age (Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:8-9; 2 Cor. 2:12).

³***Praying for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak...*** (Col 4:3)

4. Jesus opens prison doors as He did for Peter (Acts 12:7-10) and Paul (Acts 16:27).

5. Jesus opens the “scroll” of God's end-time purposes that are in the Father's hand.

⁵***The Lion of the tribe of Judah... has prevailed to open the scroll...*** (Rev. 5:5)

6. Jesus has the keys to call the New Jerusalem down to the earth (Rev. 3:12).

7. Jesus opens doors of government in the age to come to any whom He chooses (Mt. 19:28).

²⁸***Jesus said, “...in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*** (Mt. 19:28)

8. Jesus will open the bottomless pit to shut Satan in prison for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3).

9. Jesus has the keys over Hades and Death (the demonic realm and eternal judgment).

¹⁸***I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*** (Rev. 1:18)

10. Jesus has great authority, yet He will not open the door of our heart but waits for us to open it.

²⁰***I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*** (Rev. 3:20)

II. AFFIRMED FOR FAITHFULNESS WITHOUT ANY CORRECTION

- A. Jesus affirmed their faithfulness to obey His leadership and perseverance in their assignment even in the face of obstacles, setbacks, and persecutions.

⁸***I know your works...have kept My word...***¹⁰***You have kept My command to persevere...*** (Rev. 3:8, 10)

- B. The synagogue of Satan speaks of a place where Satan was active in persecuting those proclaiming the gospel. Jesus told some Pharisees who claimed to be descendants of Abraham that they were of their father the devil (Jn. 8:41-47). They considered that Jesus' miracles were done by the devil.

⁹***I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not...*** (Rev 3:9)

III. EXHORTATION TO RESPOND (WITH A WARNING)

- A. Jesus warned them not to allow anyone to influence them in a way that leads them to embrace lies about Him or a lifestyle that resists His leadership. A believer can lose rewards that they could have received in the age to come (1 Cor. 3:15; 2 Jn. 8).

¹¹*I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. (Rev. 3:11)*

¹⁵*If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved... (1 Cor. 3:15)*

⁸*Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for...that you may be rewarded fully. (2 Jn. 8)*

- B. ***Hold fast what you have:*** We must hold on to the same measure of obedience that we walk in when we are closest to God's heart and most radical in our responses to Him.

IV. SEVEN PROMISES TO OVERCOMES IN PHILADELPHIA (3:9-12)

- A. ***Promise #1—I will make them to know that I have loved you*** (3:9): Jesus will manifest His zeal for the faithful by vindicating them before those who persecuted them. On the last day, the persecutors of the believers at Philadelphia will worship Jesus at the feet of those they once persecuted. At that time, the wicked will bow to Jesus in the presence of His people (Isa. 45:14; 49:23; 60:14).

⁹*I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not...indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet and to know that I have loved you. (Rev. 3:9)*

- B. ***Promise #2—I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God:*** This speaks of those who will receive a place of honor and authority in Jesus' millennial kingdom. Pillars functioned to beautify a building while bearing its weight and recalling the noble deeds of the people associated with it.

¹²*...I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. (Rev. 3:12)*

⁹*When James, Cephas [Peter], and John, who seemed to be pillars... (Gal. 2:9)*

1. Pillars were built in the ancient world to honor people. Jacob set a pillar on Rachel's grave (Gen. 35:20). In the ancient world, when one served their city in special way, a pillar was built in their honor with their name written on it and placed in one of their pagan temples.
2. The pillars in God's earthly temple and tabernacle give us insight into this promise. The 12 sons of Jacob and the 12 apostles will have their names written in the New Jerusalem.

¹²*She [New Jerusalem]...with twelve gates...and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of...Israel...¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:12-14)*

3. There were 60 pillars in the tabernacle of Moses (Ex.27:10). Solomon had names written on the two large bronze pillars in the porch of the temple (1 Kgs. 7:13-22; 2 Chron. 3:17). He named one pillar *Jachin* (stability), and the other *Boaz* (strength).

- C. ***Promise #3—He shall go out no more:*** Jesus promised them that they would never be removed from their place of honor in their specific role in the "temple ministry" in the age to come.

- D. **Promise #4—I will write on him the name of My God:** To have the name of God on us means that we are recipients of His desire, authority, partnership, and revelation of His heart and beauty.

¹²“...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...I will write on him My new name.” (Rev. 3:12)

1. God promised to write His Word on our heart and mind (2 Cor 3:3) even as He wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18).

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them... I will put My laws [Word] into their hearts [emotions] and in their minds [understanding] I will write them...” (Heb. 10:16)

2. **Heart:** to empower our emotions until we feel the power of His Word with holy desires.
3. **Mind:** to release the spirit of revelation and living understanding to our mind.

- E. **Promise #5—I will write on him the name of the New Jerusalem:** This promise includes authority in the New Jerusalem and ability to comprehend it.

- F. **Promise #6—I will write on him My new name:** This promise includes receiving increased revelation of Jesus' name and nature as the God-Man as seen in Revelation 19:12.

V. GRACE TO WALK IN VICTORY IN THE MOST DIFFICULT TIME (3:10)

- A. **Promise #7—I will keep you from the hour of trial:** Jesus promises to keep His people spiritually vibrant and protected from sin as well as from God's judgment in the end times. A partial application of the “hour of trial” spoke of a specific period in the first century in which persecution by the Roman Empire increased greatly in the known world. Prophetically this also refers to the Great Tribulation (Dan. 12:1; Mt. 24:21) which will affect all who “dwell on the whole earth.”

¹⁰Because 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. (Rev. 3:10)

- B. Two common interpretations of “being kept” are in being “*preserved in the midst of the trial*” or in being “*removed from the scene of the trial*.” One is a “spiritual keeping” that enables God's people to be victorious. The other is a “physical keeping” that takes them away from physical danger.

- C. In John 17:15, Jesus did not pray that believers be removed from the scene but “*kept*” or *preserved in victory in the midst* of trouble by being enabled to stand strong before Satan's attack. Jesus specifically asked that His disciples *not* be taken or removed from the world but to stand strong.

¹⁵I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. (Jn. 17:15)

⁵Kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5)

- D. All the saints in the Tribulation will not be exempt from all physical harm as many will be martyred. (Rev. 6:9-11; 7:9; 13:7). Yet, all the saints will be kept from God's wrath (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9).