

Understanding Revelation Part 7

The Revival Church

Revelation 3:7-13

This city of Philadelphia was located about 28 miles southeast of Sardis.

It was a place noted for agricultural products, but afflicted with earthquakes.

In A.D. 17, while under the reign of Tiberius, it was almost totally destroyed by an earthquake.

Some say that it never attained the eminence of the other churches.

That the church itself was poor and wanting in worldly endowments seems to be indicated by verse 8.

This church and that of Smyrna alone escape criticism from the Lord.

Its name means "brotherly love", as is commonly known due to the city in Pennsylvania that bears the same name.

The same word "Philadelphia" is found in the Scriptures in 5 other verses.

Romans 12:10: *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."*

1 Thessalonians 4:9, Hebrews 13:1, 1 Peter 1:22, and 2 Peter 1:7.

What a beautiful name for the church that was so commended by Christ.

God loves to see His church, His people, loving one another.

God loves unity.

We notice the truth of this in Psalm 133:1, that says, *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*

Then, in John 15:12, Jesus declared, *"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."*

Paul wrote in Philippians 2:2, *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."*

God loves unity among His people.

Children of God have no cause to be against one another.

Jealousy has no place in the church.

Bitterness is a cancer that will not only hurt the church, but will wreck individual lives.

God wants His church to be a church of "brotherly love."

With the beginning of the 19th century, came a change. The Blessed hope of the return of Christ had been neglected, and was utterly unknown by the masses of church members.

But then the truth of the Lord's imminent return was revived.

The Church awoke as well and the Gospel began to be preached unlike it had been since the beginning of the church.

Names like Whitfield, Wesley, and Edwards set the stage for those to come later, like Moody and Spurgeon.

The Deadness of Sardis began to disappear with the solid, doctrinal, Biblical preaching of these men and others.

This age reaches to us today.

It is my belief that we are living in an overlap of the dispensations of Philadelphia and Laodicea. Don will deal with Laodicea in the next section.

As the church at Philadelphia is addressed, we once again see Christ, the Author, describe Himself to His church.

He is holy. Psalms 145:17 says that *"The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works."*

Then we read in Isaiah 6:3, *"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."*

It is interesting to note that the only attribute of God that is ever mentioned in this way is His holiness.

We do not find "love, love, love" or "grace, grace, grace."

Yet we find "holy" listed to the third power.

God's holiness is the essence of His being and character.

His holiness greatly attaches to the next attribute that is named. Jesus is Truth.

In 1 John 5:20, the Apostle John had already wrote, *"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."*

**There is no truth aside from Jesus.

Though many do not believe in absolutes, it matters not.
Absolute truth is Jesus alone.
It is just as **John 1:17** says, "... *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*"

In verse 7, we also see a possession that belongs to Jesus. He owns the keys to the Kingdom.

A key is a symbol of trust, power, right of access, and even ownership.
I would not give a key to my home to someone I did not trust, or that I would not give authority to enter my home.

This key, is the key to the house of David of which was prophesied in Isaiah 22:22, that says,
"*And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*"

The prophecy is further mentioned in Luke 1:32, in the prophecy concerning the Baby Messiah, that would be born.

It was declared of Him, "*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.*"

This is not the only key that Jesus has.

In Revelation 1:18, we find "keys" in the Lord's possession. It says, "*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*"

****The key to Salvation is Christ alone.**

The key to supplication is only through Christ.

The key to real satisfaction is through Christ.

And the keys of deliverance from eternal separation from God belong to one, and that is Jesus!!!!

Many think they have salvation and deliverance due to some human goodness or religious or social affiliations.

If it is not of Christ, it is of no value!!!!

In verse 8, we see the opportunity, an open door before the church.

In the realm of the prophetic application, this could easily represent England and America and the missions endeavors around the world.

Today, we have an open door of freedom.

***Freedom is not the right to do nothing, nor does it mean do as you please.**

Freedom comes with a price and a price is due to keep freedom

With freedom comes responsibility.

*We have an open door before us.

An open door to witness and send the Gospel around the world.

We have neglected our freedoms in America.

We have an open door of evangelism, yet many will say that we should not confront others with the story of Jesus Christ.

Paul was faithful to take these open doors.

In **2 Corinthians 2:12**, he said, "*Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.*"

We have the open doors of world-wide missions.

This door is an open door to the church, and the church of Philadelphia had an open door before them, so what was the church to do?

The church must face the challenge.

In verse eight it says that they had a "little strength."

Some believe that they were small in number, while others say this had to do with their political and social influence.

Compared to the other areas, they were not as big or glamorous.

They may not have had ample financial supply, or strength in numbers, but they had strength in God.

In spite of everything, they were faithful!

They kept His Word, in a time when others had not.

***Keeping the words of the Lord proves our possession of salvation.**

In John 14:23-24, Jesus said, "*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*"

They not only declared their love for Christ, they demonstrated it by their lives.

In the face of adversity, they did not deny Him as others had.

***A bogus believer has no problem denying the Lord when things become inconvenient to live the Christian life.**

Jesus warned of this in the Gospel of Luke, and John mentions this in 1 John. **Luke 12:9**, says, *“But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”*

This is not one who has been saved, but one who has denied the Lord’s grace, as well as His person.

Then in **1 John 2:22**, the apostle wrote, *“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”*

That is strong words, but anyone who denies Jesus is who He is, God has called that person a liar. I did not call them a liar, the Almighty God has declared it.

And a person that denies the Lord does not know God.

The **23rd verse** goes on to say, *“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.”*

This church was genuine, they had not denied the Lord.

Jesus begins to identify the imposters in an even greater way.

He now begins to speak of some that would divide the church.

These imposters were **Jews that stood against Christianity.**

Some infiltrated the church and caused problems, but the church was not the problem.

The term also here may mean all false and hypocritical professors, who would make themselves the church, the only church of God, but are far enough from it, hating, maligning, and opposing those who would keep the gospel.

In **Jude verse 4**, a warning is given *“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

These were against the church and what it was doing, but the day will come that they will yield. They will bow, or acquiesce to the church.

Some believe that this means that the house of Israel that rejected the Gospel will bow before the church.

Others believe this is a reference to Messianic Jews who will trust Christ as their Savior, rejecting those who refuse to see Jesus as the Messiah.

*Either way, the church will still be standing when the smoke of time clears.

Jesus loves His church, therefore, the church will always be loved.

The rejecters of the Truth will know that He has loved a Gentile church!

I love the security of Romans 8:35, the question is asked, *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”* And then the great answer is given in verses 37 - 39: *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

To this the church must resound a glorious “hallelujah!”

We are His, and belong to Him forever.

We may be of little strength, but when Christ possesses us, we will stand for Him, and live with Him as eternity rolls.

In verse 10, we find an irrefutable promise to this church.

It is a promise to those that have not only heard the Gospel, but have received it.

They have “kept” the word of His patience.

The word “kept” means that they had given attention to, observed, guarded or taken care of His words.

“The hour of my patience” refers to the patience of Christ, in the midst of all his outward meanness and humiliation that He faced for sin.

They gave attention to the patient and silent Lamb.

They had given attention to redemption’s plan, they belonged to the Lord, so attention would be given to them.

In verses 11-12, we find a promise to the overcomer. This speaks of those that are possessors of victory.

We have and do overcome by the blood of Jesus.

We are more than conquerors through Him.

In speaking to the saved, the warning is given, not to be concerned about losing salvation, but losing rewards.

For the faithful, a picture of being a pillar in the house of God is painted.

Imagine as the faithful saints have an eternal heavenly status for earthly faithfulness.

A pillar is something that supports something.

It can also be a part of architecture that adds beauty.

These pillars were to be in the temple of God - the new Jerusalem!

How do we become those pillars? We must be pillars in the church.

There are those who LIFT and those who LEAN.

The lifters are the Pillars. Prayer, service, attitude, unity, support, loving one another, tithing, giving, witnessing, and anything else you can find to do to lift the church will bring an eternal reward of being a pillar!

*Do we hold up the church through the power of God or would it fall if it depended on you?

*Are you a lifter or a leaner?

I believe that there is nothing like serving the Lord.

There is no greater calling to be a minister of the Gospel.

All are called to ministers, and everyone is called to be those that lift up the work of God.

A brilliant young man with a magnetic personality went out to the mission field. His salary was minute.

A large commercial firm was so eager to obtain his services that they offered him ten times his salary, but he refused.

They offered to make it even larger if he would accept.

They asked him if the money was not enough, and told him that if he would leave the mission field and come to work at their company, they would pay his price.

He responded, "Oh, the salary is big enough," he told them, "but the job isn't!"

We should desire to be faithful lifters to the work of God.

These pillars are those that have been purchased by God. (Point to people of the congregation)

They will be positioned by God.

And God will put His name, that is He will engrave His name on them forever.

The saved will be identified with the Almighty forever!