

Revelation Chapter 3 Continued

We will begin this study with the church at Philadelphia. Oh, to be like the church at Philadelphia. This church is sometimes thought to be the missionary church. I believe, if we carefully look at this church, we will be able to see a church in our time. The church would be strong and active in the gifts of the Spirit. They would be teaching holiness and righteousness. They would not be tolerant to compromise. They would not be any particular denomination, but rather grounded in Jesus. Taught by the Holy Spirit of God. This church would be promoting Spirit rather than bringing the world into church.

Revelation 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;"

Philadelphia: The Danger of Failing to Advance (1790 to 1900 A.D.). The Missionary Church.

The city of Philadelphia was 25 miles southeast of Sardis on an 800 foot rise. To this church, which Christ says has a little strength, the Lord comes to open an avenue of opportunity that no force in hell can shut. "Possessing the key of David" means that He has the authority to open this supernatural door. The reference to those who "say they are Jews and are not" refers to all who reject Jesus Christ. Romans 2 explains what constitutes a Jew.

Romans 2:28-29 "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:" "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Jesus shows Himself to this church of Philadelphia in the very same way that they worship Him.

(1) He is Holy. Jesus tells us to be Holy even as He is Holy (Lev. 11:44, I Peter 1:15).

(2) He shows Himself as truth. He is the Way, The Truth, and the Life (John 14:6).

Jesus is the one that opens the door to heaven or hell for us. Jesus is the door to heaven. He is the only one who can shut or open either door. He took the keys of hell away from the devil when Jesus went there and preached. Jesus is the final Judge for everyone's resting place.

This church in Philadelphia and its symbolic church today, are not only well aware of who Jesus is, but they are patterning their lives after His. They are the very elect. Full of the Word, so full that it would be terribly difficult to deceive them.

God promises these believers that He will keep them from the hour of temptation which will come upon all the world. Note that the event spoken of:

(1) Is a definite time period - "the hour";

- (2) Is a period of trial;
- (3) Was future from the time of John's writing;
- (4) Was to be worldwide;
- (5) The promise, in Greek, was to "keep thee out of" the hour.

These facts make it evident that the event refers to the Great Tribulation described in (Matt. 24:15-22). These believers at Philadelphia who have only a "little strength" have nevertheless kept God's Word and have not denied His Name. God promises that they will become pillars in the temple of God (Rev. 3:12). This church may have been small in number or in material resources, but God was going to make them strong. They are promised an open door. In Scripture, an open door refers to Christ (John 10:7), an opening to preach the Gospel (Acts 5:19-20), and the rapture of the Church (Rev. 4:1). Each of these may be interpreted as the "open door" promised to this church, even as each can be applied to the Church today.

In these end times, God is opening many tremendous doors of opportunity and there is always an inherent danger of failing to advance at Christ's command. You may feel you have only a little strength, but God can make you a strong and mighty pillar in His Kingdom, a spiritual warrior who is able to walk through every door He opens. Let me ask you: What is holding you back from fulfilling God's call for your life?

- (1) Fear?
- (2) Your finances?
- (3) Your health?
- (4) Your relationships with others?

God has set before you an open door which no man can shut. All the demons in hell cannot shut it. Jesus is the way. All you must do is walk through those doors in the almighty power of God.

Revelation 3:8 "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

Jesus is aware of everything the churches are doing. He has first hand knowledge, because He walks in the church. Jesus is the door and has provided Himself for us to go through to heaven. The door that Jesus opens can only be closed by Him. Jesus cares for His own.

It is very interesting here that He says this church has a little strength. This is very true of all strong believers. In our weakness, Jesus is strong. The strength that sustains us and sees us through is His, not our own. The very good statement Jesus makes about this church is that they have kept His Word.

We too, must be careful to guard the Word of God. The Bible is our instruction book for living. If we change it in any way, the instructions won't work. But, many have watered down the Word until it has been short circuited and lost power. We must not tamper with the power. This church mentioned here might be small in size, but big in love and the Holy Spirit. Again, we see so many denying the name of Jesus. I believe here that the name they are denying is that Jesus was God. We touched on it before, but it is worth mentioning again. Most churches today want to call Jesus: Prophet, Teacher, Healer, Man. Very few realize that He was God manifest in the flesh (God the Son). This is a very important thing, and will be mentioned more as we go.

Revelation 3:9 "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

There is no difference, really, in someone who follows Satan and someone who pretends to be a Christian and is not. Both are lost.

The "synagogue of Satan" is just a place of worship where God is not Lord. A Jewish synagogue could be of Satan if evil prevailed. A body of Christians meeting could also be a synagogue of Satan, if the true Word of God is not taught and received.

There will come a time when the Truth will prevail. The church, which does not compromise and prevails unto the end, shall reign with Christ. Jesus is just encouraging this church that has tried so hard, that there will be a day of reward. Jesus loves the faithful. He has His ear turned to our needs.

Revelation 3:10 "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

This verse presents a promise that Christ will rapture genuine believers out of the world before the Tribulation period begins. The "hour of temptation" is the period of worldwide testing (Greek peirasmos), which has not yet occurred (compare Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 29). Christ promises to keep them "from" (Greek ek, "out of"), the period of the Tribulation. That is, they will not even enter into this period of history. The Tribulation is for the purpose of trying or judging "them that dwell upon the earth", those who are connected to the earth and its system. Believers are not even included in this term (compare Phil. 3:18-20; 1 Peter 2:11; Rev. 6:10; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 17:8).

Trials, tribulations, and temptations come to all. It seems the group here mentioned, have been tested and found to stand in their temptation. There is a time of testing, and a time of victory, or defeat. Jesus was tempted forty days and nights and came out victorious. When trials come, we can do one of two things. We can stand against the temptation and experience victory, or we can take the easy way out and succumb to temptation and fall to defeat. If you are a Christian and if the temptation wins, then you will go through this particular temptation over and over until you stand against it and Overcome it.

It appears that this group mentioned here has stood against these temptations, so their promise from Jesus is that they will not be required to go through the great temptation. There is a time specified of God when the temptations, tribulations, and trials will be so great that it will be next to impossible to stand. An hour with God can be any specific time. God's time and our time is not the same. This hour mentioned here certainly does not mean sixty minutes, but a period of time, the Tribulation. There will be seven years of tribulation at the end of the Gentile age. The last three and a half years of this will actually be the wrath of God. God has promised the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ that we will be saved from the wrath to come.

I believe this is the case here. Temptation here, I believe, is the same as tribulation. (Revelation 7:9 and 7:13-14), tells of the Christians who are saved from the unbearable temptation at the end of three and a half years of tribulation.

Revelation 7:9 "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"

Revelation 7:13-14 "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, what are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?" "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

You see, these are believers in Jesus the Christ (the saved), who have been brought out (saved in), great tribulation.

Matthew 24 describes the severity of this great tribulation.

Matthew 24:21-22 "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

This is the hour of temptation, I believe, this Scripture (in Revelation 3:10), is speaking of. The believers in Jesus will be taken out just before this begins.

Verses 11-13: "I Come quickly": The time of the deliverance mentioned (in verse 10), is here identified with the return of Christ for His church (the Rapture). The "temple", may relate either to the millennial kingdom or to the New Jerusalem. The genuine believer will be given a place of service and honor before God. The threefold reference to the "name", gives a guarantee of eternal security in Christ. The "name of my God", shows ownership. The "name of the city", shows heavenly citizenship. And "my new name", indicates co-heirship with Christ.

Revelation 3:11 "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

“I come quickly”: This isn’t the threatening temporal judgment described (in verse 3; 2:5, 16), nor the final judgment (of chapter 19), it is a hopeful event. Christ will return to take His church out of the hour of trial (see note on 2 Thess. 2:1).

This statement (in verse 11), is just verifying what we said above, that there is a test time for the believers. We will be required to stand; and when we do, then we will be raptured and saved from the horrors.

Revelation 3:12 "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, [which is] new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and [I will write upon him] my new name."

Again we see here that there is something that we must overcome. A person many times is spoken of as a pillar of the community, or a pillar of the church, which just means, that they are strong and are holding up the church. These people would be like founding fathers, high in principles. They would be the ones who would see to it that the church stays on solid ground.

This writing of the name of God just means that we are sealed into His kingdom.

If we were to read very much about this city, we would find that sometimes it is spoken of as a bride. The believers in Jesus are the bride of Christ. This name of the city being on the believers just indicates that we are the bride of Christ.

This new name of Jesus that is written upon us is showing that we are Jesus' possession. We are His; we have been bought and paid for with His blood.

When it says we shall no more go out, it means that our eternal home is here with Jesus.

(Verse 12), is saying that we, the believers, have put our trust and faith in Jesus and endured hardship. We then have an eternity of nothing but pure joy in this New Jerusalem with Jesus. Once we have passed from death into life through accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are sealed by Jesus Himself. We belong to Him. No one can snatch us back away from Him. Jesus has the keys. Look to Him and no other. He is salvation.

Revelation 3:13 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Once again, we are told to hear what the Spirit said to the churches by Jesus Himself who spoke these words as all of these messages to these churches are printed in red. He reminds us once again here to open the ears of our understanding to His teachings.

Revelation Chapter 3 Continued Questions

1. This church at Philadelphia is sometimes thought to be what church?
2. Besides being strong in the Word, what attributes would this church possess?
3. What two things would they teach?
4. How would they feel about compromise?
5. What four things does Jesus call Himself to the church at Philadelphia?
6. Why?
7. Who is the only one who sends us to heaven or hell, besides our own decisions?
8. What has Jesus set before them?
9. What nice things did Jesus say about the Philadelphia church?
10. What does Jesus mean when He says they have a little strength?
11. Name four things most churches call Jesus instead of God.
12. Those who say they are Jews, and are not, will be called what group?
13. What will happen to them?
14. What do Satan worshippers and pretending Christians have in common?
15. For how many years will the Christians rule over those who reject Jesus here on the earth?
16. Why will Jesus keep the Christians from the hour of temptation?
17. Why is this hour coming?
18. When temptation comes, what two things can happen?
19. What does this hour mean?
20. Who are this great multitude dressed in white who stand before the throne?
21. What made them white?
22. In Matthew 24:21-22, what is described?
23. Why will we be tried?
24. "To Him that overcometh will I make a _____ in the temple of God."
25. What does this pillar mean?

26. What will Jesus write on the believers?
27. What does the writing of the name mean?
28. Who are the bride of Christ?
29. What does it mean "we shall no more go out"?
30. What ears are we to open?
31. Tell what you think is the main theme of this lesson.