



LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES



July 30th 2017 — Part 13
“The Letter to the Church of Philadelphia”

The City of Philadelphia

- The city was originally part of the Lydian empire and received its name (meaning “brotherly love”) from the king of Pergamum who had the city built for his brother. Two unique things about the city are important in light of Jesus’ letter:

(1) The city’s location:

(2) The multiple names given to the city:

The Vision of Christ

Rev. 3:7—“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.’

This description is intended to remind the churches that Jesus is _____.

His _____ → “the holy one, the true one”

- This recalls the messianic title used of Jesus in the Gospels, “The Holy One of God” (Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34, John 6:69)

His _____ → “who has the key of David”

- This passage contains an allusion to Isa. 22:20-22, a prophecy concerning Eliakim, the chief official of the king of Judah.

Isa. 22:20-22—²⁰ In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, ²¹ and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

²² And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

As Messiah, Jesus is the steward of the household of God (Eph. 2:19). He alone is the one who either grants _____ to the Kingdom of God or who closes its gates.

Jesus’ Knowledge of His Church

Rev. 3:8—“I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

“an open door” — There are two ways to understand this:

(1) They have been given an opportunity to engage in successful _____

(2) They have been guaranteed access by Christ into His _____

Their Faithfulness

- They have maintained faithful witness to Jesus even in the midst of persecution at the hand of Jews within the city.

Rev. 3:9—Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

- These Jews had declared Jesus to be a false messiah and the believers in Philadelphia to be heretics. They believed that because of their ethnicity alone they would be granted access to the Kingdom of the Messiah which was not true (Matt. 3:9).

As Messiah, Jesus is the one who alone determines who enters into His Kingdom. If these Jews persisted in their unbelief then they would be made to _____ before Christ and His people upon His return (Phil. 2:9-11)

His Encouragement & Exhortation

Rev. 3:10-11—¹⁰ Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

- The church has endured faithfully in the midst of persecution and therefore the Lord seeks to encourage them.

“the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world” →

- Jesus’ promise is that the true church will be kept from the judgments of God which will be further described in the coming chapters (6-19) because the Lord will come for them before these judgments begin (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

The “earth-dwellers” (Rev. 6:10, 8:13, 11:10, 13:14, 17:2,8) →

“soon”—**ταχύς** (*tachys*)—It can refer to a brief period of time, however it can also refer to the manner in which something is done (ie. “quickly”).

Christians must hold fast to the _____ and the _____ of Christ’s return!

The Promise & Prophetic Call

Rev. 3:12-13—¹² The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and 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 from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

The Imagery

1. _____ →

“in the temple of my God”

“never shall he go out of it”

Christians will have full access to God and will _____ in His _____ for throughout all eternity!

2. _____ →

“the name of my God”

“the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem”

“my own new name.”

Christians can be assured that Jesus has graciously _____ Himself with us so that we might be citizens of His Kingdom for all eternity!

Questions for Reflection

What other “kingdoms” that seek to counterfeit the Kingdom of God are prevalent in the surrounding culture?

Which of these “kingdoms” am I most enticed by? Which of these do I sense as the greatest threat to the church?