



Part 7: Philadelphia-A Warning To Remain Faithful

Revelation 3:7-13

#1 - Jesus' Description, Revelation 3:7

Jesus, in this opening verse in His message to the church at Philadelphia, describes Himself in three ways:

* **He is holy.**

The holiness of Christ is a frequent truth in Scripture (1 Peter 1:15):

This is tantamount to declaring that He is God, which, of course, He is. Jesus Christ is holy in His character, His words, His actions, and His purposes. As the Holy One, He is uniquely set apart from everything else, and nothing can be compared to Him.

* **He is true.**

As the One who is true, Christ is the Author of truth in contrast to all error or false doctrine. In the midst of so much that is false and perverted, Jesus Christ stands alone as the One who is completely true. This aspect of the person of Christ, linked with His holiness earlier in the verse, brings out the great truth that right doctrine and right living go together. There can be no holiness without truth.

* **He has the key of David.**

Christ is also presented as the One who has the key of David, the One that opens in such a way that no man can shut, and the One who shuts so that no man can open.

This phrase, “who has the key of David,” is particularly intriguing.

There is both the idea of a lock and key, which this verse and the following verse explore, that makes passage through a doorway either possible or impossible. It is quite obvious that Jesus is impressing the reader that He holds the key which indicates His authority and sovereignty.

But, there is also this curious addition that it is the key of “David.” Just two verses later, in verse 9, Jesus rebukes those of Jewish birth, but not of the spiritual family of Abraham, who oppose these Christians. Often in the gospels, we see Jesus portrayed as the heir of David—the one who has the right to sit on David’s throne. Also, there is the allusion here of a story in ancient days, recorded for us in Isaiah 22:22, speaking of Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, where it is recorded that “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.” Eliakim had the key to all the treasures of the king, and when he opened the door it was opened, and when he closed the door it was closed. Christ, a type of Eliakim, has the key to truth and holiness as well as to opportunity, service, and testimony. To the church at Philadelphia surrounded by heathen people and wickedness, Christ gives assurance that He has power to open and close according to His sovereign will.

#2 - Jesus’ Approval, Revelation 3:8-9

- To the church at Ephesus - “I know your deeds”
- To the church at Smyrna - “I know your tribulation”
- To the church at Pergamum - “I know where you dwell”
- To the church at Thyatira - “I know your deeds”
- To the church at Sardis - “I know your deeds”

And, once again, Jesus reminds these Christians, “I know your deeds.” We must never forget that God keeps a watchful eye over His children. For some of these believers, that’s a foreboding truth. For the believers in Philadelphia, it is a comforting truth.

So, what is the word of approval or commendation that Jesus has for this church? It is an open door of ministry.

In the New Testament, an “open door” speaks of opportunity for ministry (Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3).

#3 - Jesus’ Promise, Revelation 3:10-12

The Savior gave three wonderful and encouraging promises to this church:

First, He would take care of their enemies (Rev. 3:9). One day, these people would have to acknowledge that the Christians were right! (see Isa. 60:14; Phil. 2:10–11) If we take care of God’s work, He will take care of our battles.

Second, He would keep them from Tribulation (Rev. 3:10). This is surely a reference to the time of Tribulation that John described in Revelation 6–19, “the time of Jacob’s trouble.”

The third promise to the Philadelphians is that God would honor them (Rev. 3:12). Christ

promised, I am coming soon, a concept repeated often in the Book of Revelation. The thought is not simply that of coming soon but coming suddenly or quickly (cf. 1:1; 2:16). They were exhorted in the light of His coming to continue to hold on to what they have. I entitled this message—A Warning To Remain Faithful. Like the believers in Philadelphia, we must not only start well in the faith, we must end well. Jesus, like a cheerleader, encourages them from the sidelines to hold on their faith in Him; don't give up! BE AN OVERCOMER.

#4 - Jesus' Exhortation, Revelation 3:13