

Wednesday Evening Bible Study
The Book of Revelation
3: 7-13

- As we continue our study of the book of Revelation, we come know to the 6th church, of the 7 churches of Asia, the church of Philadelphia
- This church is also known by the name, “**the faithful church**”
- David Jeremiah says, “This church had right doctrine and right living going hand in hand. Where doctrine is present, without love, it is legalism; where love is present without doctrine, it is humanism”
- As I have done each night of this series, let me remind you of a few general truths we need to keep in mind as we examine these 7 churches of Asia

1) Remember The Pattern Of These Letters . . .

- a) As we have examined these churches we have noted that each church is commended by Jesus, for doing certain things right, and then each church is condemned by Jesus, for failing to do certain other things.
- b) However, there are 2 churches that are NOT condemned at all and they are the church at Smyrna (the persecuted church) and the church at Philadelphia (the faithful church)

2) Remember The Purpose Of These Letters . . .

- a) And each of these churches also reveals, in part, the actions and attitudes our church must repress if we are to become a total and complete church for the glory of God.

3) Remember The Timeline Of These Letters . . .

- a) Each of these 7 churches was a real/literal place in the day of John (AD 90)
- b) But each of these churches also represent a specific time period in the history of the church
- c) That is, the problems of these individual churches are representative of the problems the majority of churches faced in a specific era church history
- d) Here’s the outline, as given by Clarence Larkin in his book, “Dispensational Truth”
 - i) The church at Ephesus (loveless church) AD 70-170
 - ii) The church at Smyrna (persecuted church) AD 170-312
 - iii) The church at Pergamus (compromising church) AD 312-606
 - iv) The church at Thyatira (corrupt church) AD 606-1520
 - v) The church at Sardis (dead church) AD 1520-1750
 - vi) The church at Philadelphia (faithful church) AD 1750-1900**
 - vii) The church at Laodicea (lukewarm church) AD 1900-Second Coming**
- e) Granted, not EVERY church in each of these periods had all these problems, but the vast majority did
- f) TRANS: Now, let’s look more closely at the church in Philadelphia and be reminded of the positive actions and attitudes the people of this church possessed, actions/attitudes we must strive to express today!

4) The Church of Philadelphia

a) Notice v. 7, “who” is saying these things to John . . . JESUS

- 1) “He who is holy and true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.”
- 2) This is a description of Jesus! Each of these phrases are quotes from scripture.

- 3) People often ask if there is a “code” within the book of Revelation, and the answer is yes.
 - 4) The code, in my opinion, is the truths/principles found in other scriptures.
 - 5) The reason so many people struggle with Revelation is that do not know/understand the remainder of the Bible
 - 6) Each of these statements contains a little “foreshadowing” of what is to come later
 - 7) “He who is holy” Acts 3:14
 - 8) “He who is true” I John 5:20
 - 9) “He who has the key of David” Isaiah 9:7, 22:22
 - 10) The Jews knew that the Messiah would come from the family of David and they also knew that the Messiah would reign as David did, and even greater!
 - 11) “He who opens and no one shuts” Matthew 16:19
 - 12) Jesus is the one who opens the hearts of men/women to receive the gospel.
 - 13) We should NEVER try to force, or pry, open the door of someone’s heart in an effort to shove the gospel in there
 - 14) Kind of like when you try to give a kid some cough medicine, prying their lips apart and their mouth open only encourages them to bite down, hold the syrup, and spit it back out!
 - 15) You and I have no power/authority in opening someone’s heart, BUT when the door is open we have a divine responsibility to share the gospel!
 - 16) David Jeremiah says, “. . . it is God, the Holy Spirit, who prepares the hearts of men to receive the Good News – not our plans, tracts, crusades, or feeble witnessing. Sometimes we defeat our personal witness by plunging unceremoniously through a closed door.”
 - 17) “He who shuts and no one opens” Job 12:14
 - 18) When a person’s life comes to an end, the door of opportunity for them to respond to the gospel is over. The door is shut, and shall never be open again.
 - 19) This should motivate us to share the gospel with those whom God gives us opportunity TODAY, for we have no guarantee of an opportunity tomorrow!
- b) In v. 8, Jesus begins to describe the church at Philadelphia**
- 1) “I know your works (He says this to EACH of the 7 churches). See I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;”
 - 2) This “door” is a reference to the hearts of men, women, boys, and girls!
 - 3) Jesus is telling the church that He has prepare the hearts of man to be sensitive to the preaching of the gospel.
 - 4) Not only that, God has opened the “door” for missionaries to go around the world and share the good news of the gospel to all who will hear!
 - 5) Remember, the church of Philadelphia represents the church from 1750-1900, the era of missionary zeal and evangelism, the likes of which had not been known since the days of the Apostles
 - 6) This was the era when much of India, China, and Africa received the Gospel!
 - 7) This was the era of great revivals and spiritual awakening!
 - 8) But how about YOU? Do you possess the evangelistic fervor and fire of our forefathers?
 - 9) **ILL-The story is told of a man who came to Charles Haddon Spurgeon and said, “Mr. Spurgeon, I have it in my soul to win people to Christ. What shall I do?”**

Spurgeon replied, “What is your job? What do you work at?” The man said, “I drive an engine. I’m an engineer on the railroad.” Spurgeon asked, “Is your fireman a Christian?” The man said, “I don’t know” Spurgeon said, “Go back and find out and start with him.”

- 10) How about the people you work with, live near, and socialize with?
- 11) Do all of them know Christ? Do any of them know Christ?
- 12) “Why” has the church at Philadelphia been given this divine opportunity?
- 13) See v. 8, “for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name”
- 14) The first reason is self-explanatory: OBEDIENCE is key!
- 15) How can you obey that which you do not believe? You can’t
- 16) But how can you obey that which you do not know? You can’t
- 17) Therefore, to obey requires that you believe the Bible, and study the Bible
- 18) But what is meant by “and have not denied My name”?
- 19) This goes deeper than guarding what you say, but encompasses what you do, and even the attitudes and prejudices you hold towards others.
- 20) Do you do, think, and even perceive others as Jesus does? To blatantly do, think, and perceive others as the world does is to deny Christ’s name

c) v. 9, “who” are, “those of the synagogue of Satan”?

- 1) This is the same name given those in 2:9 Smyrna who persecuted the Christians
- 2) There were those in that day that claimed to be faithful to God, but who persecuted
- 3) Christians because the Romans persecuted Christians
- 4) Simply, these Jews were trying to be politically and socially correct!
- 5) Do you know of any “Christians” who do the same today? Jesus says that they are not true Christians, but of the church of Satan!
- 6) Let us ensure that we NEVER join this church! Let us commit to uphold the practices and principles of Philadelphia in our church so that we too can be partakers of the promises made in v. 10-12

d) v. 10, there’s a great promise made to those in Philadelphia concerning the last days

- 1) “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”
- 2) This means that God has a plan to deliver those who hold to these same convictions from the Great Tribulation that the rest of the world will have to endure
- 3) The “hour of trial” is the Great Tribulation, which is described from Rev. 4 to Rev. 20
- 4) Notice Jesus says that He will keep us “from the hour of trial” not just “through the hour of trial”
- 5) That gives us additional assurance of the rapture, the removal of the church, BEFORE the Great Tribulation begins (hence the idea of a pre-tribulational rapture)

e) v. 11, In my mind this tells me that there will be an effort to take the crown from those

- 1) who are trying to “keep My word, and not deny My name”
- 2) So, “hold fast” for “Behold I am coming quickly!”
- 3) Already, our society is full of those who deny the authority of the scriptures
- 4) We have main stream denominations who refuse to “keep My word” and they accept abortion as simply a choice, homosexuality as simply a lifestyle, gambling as simply entertainment, pornography as simply free expression

f) v. 12 contains precious promises for those who overcome . . .

- 1) "I will make him a pillar of the temple of My God"
- 2) In Philadelphia it was the custom of the people to recognize the great leaders, benefactors, and philanthropists of the city to place a pillar in one of their temples with the person's name inscribed upon it
- 3) This would be a perpetual memorial to the great things they had done
- 4) But a greater honor is in store for those of the church of Philadelphia because they shall be pillars of the temple of the Most High God!
- 5) "he shall go out no more"
- 6) In the Garden of Eden, God had to "drive" Adam and Eve out for their sin
- 7) In the OT temple, the Priests were "driven" out by death.
- 8) But in the "New Jerusalem" there'll be no sin and no death to ever drive us out of God's presence ever again!
- 9) "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 from My God."
- 10) When Philadelphia was destroyed in 17 AD by an earthquake, the city was rebuilt and
- 11) given a "new name" . . . "Neo-Caesarea – the new city of Caesar" in honor of Tiberius, the emperor of Rome at that time
- 12) The "New Jerusalem" will also have a "new name" and this "new name" shall also be upon you and me
- 13) W.A. Criswell says, "I know some of His old names: . . . Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Jesus – for He shall save His people from their sins, . . . the name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow . . . True, Faithful, Word of God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."
- 14) I cannot say that I know exactly "what" the "new name" will be, but I know it will only add to the blessed names He already possesses
- 15) I wonder, "Do you know Jesus by His 'old names'?"
- 16) Do your friends and family know Him by His "old names"?
- 17) If they do not know Him here, they will not know Him there! It was this truth that moved the people of Philadelphia to introduce others to Jesus.
- 18) Philadelphia was the city of "brotherly love" because the people in the church there loved Jesus first and foremost. And their love for Jesus moved them to love their brother.
- 19) Do YOU have this kind of love for Jesus, and your fellowman. Until each of us do, this church will never become the complete and total church that God intends for us to be!