

Session Thirteen:

Revelation 3:7-13 The Church Of Philadelphia

I) History Of Philadelphia

- A) The city of Philadelphia is situated about 30 miles East, South East of Sardis and it's now called by the name Alasehir. The word Philadelphia literally means brotherly love and it's made up from two Greek words. This city was name Philadelphia because of Eumenes II great love for his brother.
- B) The city of Philadelphia suffered a major earthquake alongside Sardis in 17 A.D. that nearly devastated the city. And because of the volcanic activity in the area, it created a really rich fertile soil for things to be grown in.
- C) Philadelphia was well known as the gateway to the East. In fact, some have said that this city was actually built as a pagan missionary for all those people traveling through. It was a large crossroads where several major thorough ways connected. Because of the large amount of temples Philadelphia was actually called "little Athens."
- D) Because of the fertile soil the area was well known for its vineyards and wineries. Supposedly there was even an edict against the vineyards by Domitian around 92 A.D. This city exported spirits of two kinds.

II) Jesus' Address To The Church Of Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)

- A) **Revelation 3:7** *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, these things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens."*
 - 1) For the sixth and second to the last time Jesus **Addresses** this portion of the letter to the leadership of the Church in Philadelphia.
 - 2) As Jesus finishes His Address He then reveals to the Church some specific **Attributes** of Himself that are unique to their current situation.
 - 3) The specific Attributes that Jesus gives the Church of Philadelphia are *"...these things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens."*
 - 1. He who is holy = Jesus is letting them know that He is the holy One of God, or the one who was set apart to be faithful to His Father. This facet is to strengthen this Church in their costly commitment to remain set apart for Him.
 - 2. He who is true = Jesus is revealing His unchanging, eternal nature to this body of believers. His promise's in **Revelation 3:10,12** are going to seem too good to be true and He needs them to trust Him fully.
 - (a) **Revelation 19:11** *"...And He who sat on Him was called faithful and true..."*

3. He who has the key of David (Rev 1:18) = Jesus is directly quoting **Isaiah 22:22** which speaks directly of the key of David. Through this facet (the One who holds the key of David) He's strengthening the Church that not only are the promises big, and His word true, but He also possess the ability to deliver on the promise given.
 - (a) **Isaiah 22:15-25** speaks about the key of David being taken from Shebna and given to Eliakim empowering him to have access to the royal treasuries of the nation.
 - (b) Jesus is letting them know that not only does He permanently have the key of David as the greater David, but He will share it with them.
 - (i) **Revelation 22:16** *"...I am the Root and the Offspring of David..."*
4. He who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens = Though this ministry is having the door of fellowship closed to them by their fellow countrymen and other gentiles, Jesus is making it clear that He alone opens and shuts doors.
 - (a) He opens doors of ministry, opportunity and influence. And instead of focusing on closed doors we must refocus our sight on Him who opens and closes doors.
 - (b) And though many nations are closing their doors to the Gospel we shouldn't focus our attention on the closed doors as much as the God who opens closed doors.
- 4) **Revelation 3:8** *"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My Word, and have not denied My name."*
 1. After Jesus reveals His various Attributes to them, He then shares with them His **Approval** of those things that they were doing.
 2. Jesus' Approval of them and their situation must have encouraged them in the same way it encouraged the Church of Smyrna (**Revelation 2:8-11**). Sometimes knowing that Jesus is in the midst of your struggle is enough, even if the circumstance doesn't immediately turn around.
 3. Just hearing the God Man say *"...I know...I see, I'm here, I'm not removed...I'm fully engaged with your struggle and I am helping you and am committed to helping you..."*
 4. The open door that Jesus has set before them seems to be two-fold if not even more multifaceted than just two parts.
 - (a) It's an open door of missions, ministry and opportunity = Even though they were being removed from their place of worship, Jesus is promising them influence as they share Him with others in their city and beyond.
 - (b) It's an open door of intimacy to His heart = There's a privileged place of intimacy that the saints on earth share with Jesus that no angelic beings experience.
 - (c) Those around His throne work as servants, but the saints He considers more than servants, but friends.

- (i) **John 15:15** *"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."*
- (d) The Church of Laodicea was called upon God to open up their doors to Him, and we know that door isn't primarily speaking about salvation, but about intimacy with His Church.
 - (i) **Revelation 3:20** *"Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me."*
- 5. **Revelation 3:9** *"Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."*
 - (a) The Church of Smyrna and the Church of Philadelphia, were in similar situations with their fellow countrymen and they are also the only two of the seven Churches who receive no **Accusation** from Jesus.
 - (b) Without an Accusation He is now going to give them the **Assurance** of promise and rewards towards them for their continued faithfulness to Him in the midst of pressure.
 - (c) He starts by saying *"...I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews but are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."*
 - (i) In Philadelphia the Christians weren't only suffering from those worshipping pagan gods but also from Jews who troubled the others Jews for their commitment to Jesus.
 - (ii) The idea that Jesus is declaring to them is that there will come a day when those who are naturally Jewish outwardly, but not inwardly (in Christ) will come and worship Christ before them, understanding that Jesus loves the Church as well as them.
 - (iii) Right now for orthodox Jews, not secular Jews, but devout Jews who don't love Jesus, His name, His Church and the New Testament is a stumbling block to them, but it won't be this way forever.
 1. **Romans 11:11-16** Speaks of the Gentile role, through the body of Christ to provoke Israel to jealousy.
 - (iv) Jesus is also declaring His zeal to vindicate those whom He loves.
- B) **Revelation 3:10** *"Because you have kept My command to preserve, 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."*

- 1) This passage which is a part of Jesus' continued **Assurance** to the Church of Philadelphia that He will walk with them through both the present trouble in their city and the great trouble at the end of this age.
 - 2) Many Christians see this phrase as a mention of the Rapture but this isn't at all what Jesus is saying.
 - 3) The word Keep that is used here is Strong's Greek word #5083 and it means to set a watch, to guard from loss or injury, keeping the eye upon and it's opposed to the Strong's Greek word #5442 which means to escape.
 - 4) The other primary time that this word *keep* is used is in John **17:15,18** which says *"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one...As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."*
 - 5) Jesus' intentions aren't to take them out of the present trouble or the great trouble at the end of this age, but His commitment is to keep them through the midst of it.
- C) He strengthens this truth when He breaks into a short piece of **Advice** for them in **Revelation 3:11** by saying *"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."*
1. His promise to come to them quickly wasn't of calamity to them, but of comfort for them. He was assuring them that He was coming to help them, so they should hold on in the meantime until He gets there. Making sure that they don't lose those things which they have worked for.
 2. This wasn't the same for all the seven Churches. His coming to some was a warning of judgment, not an encouragement of comfort.
 3. We must understand that though He is offering them a crown, it's not automatic. It's contingent upon them overcoming and not giving up or losing heart in the process.
 4. There's much sadness with people who pass away having very little possessions in this age, but how sad for the person who hasn't stored up any treasures in the age which is yet to come.
- D) **Revelation 3:12** *"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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. And I will write on him My new name."*
- 1) Jesus continues with more **Assurance** of eternal reward. History tells us that the ruler of Philadelphia would enshrine outstanding locals by placing their names on pillars that were placed in various spots around town.
 - 2) Jesus is calling the Church to sow their treasure into the age which is yet to come. And though their names didn't make it onto an earthly pillar, if they overcome, He will place their names on an eternal pillar.

- 3) The Holy Spirit would say “Let go of the earthly pillars, clothe yourself like a servant, lay your earthly robes aside, gird yourself with a towel and wash the feet of the lowly.”
 - 4) To man who can't stop chasing fame in this age, the Holy Spirit would say “set your eyes on that which is eternal, that which will never fade away and disappear.”
- E) “...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. And I will write on him My new name.”
- 1) Jesus' gives the Assurance of three more rewards;
 1. I will write on him the name of My God = This is speaking about possession and position.
 - (a) **(Possession)** Aaron, the high priest, wore on his forehead a golden plate with the engraving “HOLY TO THE LORD” (Ex. 28:36-38). This spoke of God's people as God's possession. They belonged and do belong to the Lord.
 - (i) **Revelation 13:16** “He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their FOREHEADS...”
 - (ii) **Revelation 22:4** “They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their FOREHEADS.”
 - (b) **(Position)** This means that we are recipients of His desire, His authority and the revelation of Him.
 - (i) **Hebrews 10:16** “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.”
 2. 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 = This is speaking about our unusual place of authority in the city. Some are given a key, or called a father of a city, but Jesus has given us access to His Father's city.
 - (a) This is the first clear statement about the eternal city, heaven coming to earth in the Bible.
 3. And I will write on Him My new name = This is speaking about intimacy with Jesus in way that we can only peer into in this age.
 - (a) **Revelation 19:12** “His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.”
- F) **Revelation 3:13** “He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches.”
- 1) For the second to the last time, Jesus closes this letter with the earnest **Appeal** that they would hear what Holy Spirit is saying to them. Because if they lock in, eternity will look totally different for them.