

## I. THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA

Ancient Philadelphia was on the site of modern day Alashehir at the juncture of several trade routes. The imperial route from Rome passed through Philadelphia thus, giving it the name "the gateway to the East" making it an important and prosperous financial city. Volcanic activity and earthquakes were prevalent in the area.

## II. JESUS' REVELATION OF HIMSELF

- A. ***He who is holy, He who is true*** – as a man, Jesus was holy or set apart fully to seek and obey the Father. Thus, He understands what it means to walk out costly commitments among sinful people on earth. Jesus is reliable and genuine in His promises.
- B. ***He has the key of David*** – being the ultimate King in David's lineage who has authority over all promises that God gave David and all the nations in the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus opens up the door to positions in the eternal kingdom. Jesus chooses who receives what positions of authority in the age to come with the key of David.

Jesus shuts doors until their proper time. Paul sought to preach in Asia and Bithynia, but was forbidden by the Spirit (Acts 16:6-10). He shut the doors to Asia and Bithynia, but opened them in Macedonia. Paul promised to come to Corinth if the Lord would permit it (1 Cor. 16:5-7; cf. Col. 4:3).

*Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.<sup>7</sup> After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.<sup>8</sup> So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.<sup>9</sup> And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."<sup>10</sup> Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them (Acts 16:6-10).*

- C. Jesus has such great authority yet He waits for us to open our heart. This is the one door Jesus will not open unless we open it with Him (Rev. 3:20).
- <sup>20</sup> ***I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Rev. 3:20)***

## III. AFFIRMATION FOR PERSEVERANCE

- A. ***You have kept My word*** – this is the greatest affirmation that we can receive (Jn. 14:21-23). Jesus now promises to openly reveal His love to them. He gives an extreme example of Jesus' extravagant commitment to openly reveal His love for the faithful in Rev. 3:12. The church was faithful in persecution.

*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. (Jn. 14:21)*

- B. *See, I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it – there are several applications to this as Jesus offers us positions of honor in the Millennium. He also offers to open doors of opportunity and ministry now as well as doors in the spirit that give us access to the revelation of God’s heart.*
- C. The believers at Philadelphia had persevered when things looked weak. We are not called to be “successful,” we are called to be faithful. Every person, every church or ministry, every nation, will have different amount of resources and talents that have been entrusted to them. Will they be faithful with what they have? E.g. parable of the talents (Matt.25).

**You can’t always dictate your circumstances, but you can control how you carry your heart in every situation.**

*Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (NIV 1 Thes. 5:18)*

#### **IV. CORRECTION FOR COMPROMISE – NONE**

It is noteworthy that the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia were the only ones in Rev. 2-3 that received no correction and were also the only ones afflicted by a “synagogue of Satan”. The pressure of a demonically energized congregation of people who attacked them created the opportunity for them to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

#### **V. EXHORTATION TO RESPOND (WITH A WARNING)**

- A. Jesus comes to His Church to evaluate it in specific prophetic seasons. They must hold on to the same measure of obedience that they were currently walking in or had walked in previously (Matt. 24:13)
- But he who endures to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13).*
- B. *That no one may take your crown* – to lose eternal reward that they potentially could have gained. We let people take our crown by yielding to their unbiblical exhortations about compromise (2 John 8; 1 Cor. 3:15)

#### **VI. PROMISE FOR OVERCOMERS: FIVE PROMISES**

- A. *I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you* – The Father will reveal to the nations the fact that He loves His people. These unbelieving Jews will actually witness the love of Jesus towards these people on the last day. False Jews along with the unbelieving Gentiles will pay homage before true believers in the Millennial kingdom (Isa. 45:14; 49:23; 60:14; Zech. 8:20-23). They will bow their knee to Jesus in the presence of the people they persecuted in the first century.

<sup>14</sup> *The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at...your feet; and they shall call you *The City of the Lord.* (Isa. 60:14)*

<sup>23</sup> *I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.* (Jn. 17:23)

B. *The synagogue of Satan* – where Satan moved in unusual power. Many physical descendants of Abraham claimed to be Jews but were not because in rejecting Jesus, they were of their father the Devil (John 8:41-47). Two references to a “synagogue of Satan” were in context to the two Churches without any correction (Smyrna and Philadelphia). The synagogue of Satan is where the Jews denied Jesus’ divinity and resurrection and persecuted those who believed in Him. They considered that His miracles were done by the devil. This was “the blasphemy” of the Spirit.

C. *I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth* – this is to be kept or spiritually protected from evil in the End-Times. This was a period of time in the first century, a “down payment” of the Great Tribulation.

D. The two main interpretations of being kept are in being “preserved in the midst of” or being “removed from the scene”. In other words, a “spiritual keeping” by enabling us to be faithful in our obedience or a “physical keeping” by taking us away from physical danger. We are not afraid of physical death because it holds no eternal significance to us.

<sup>15</sup> *I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.* (Jn. 17:15)

<sup>13</sup> *Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day...16 taking the shield of faith...able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.* (Eph. 6:13-16)

E. *I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more* – to be a pillar is a position of honor and authority in the Millennial Kingdom. Pillars stood for stability and brought beauty. All believers are part of God’s spiritual temple (Eph. 2:21-22), but some will be pillars who hold a position of authority, responsibility and honor in the Millennium. Jesus promised them that they would never be removed from their place of honor. In Isa. 22:15-25, Eliakim was fastened like a peg in a firm place (v. 23) to bear the weight of his father's house (v. 24) yet in time his position would come to an end (v. 25).

<sup>9</sup> *When James, Cephas (Peter), and John, who seemed to be pillars...* (Gal. 2:9)

F. *I will write on him the name of My God* – to have the name of God on us means that we are recipients of His desire, authority, and partnership and revelation of His heart and beauty.

G. *I will write on him the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God* – authority in the City and the ability to comprehend it

H. *I will write on him My new name* – revelation of Jesus’ heart and beauty.