

Revelation 3v7-13: Letter to the Church at Philadelphia

V7: The Recipient Church (Philadelphia) is Identified

In the prophetic aspect of Church history, Philadelphia would represent the recovered Church, a period about 150-200 years ago when there was a definite movement of the Spirit of God, a recovery of scriptural truth and a period of worldwide evangelism.

Philadelphia means '*brotherly love*', literally '*love of the womb*' (see also Rom 12v10, 1st Thess 4v9, Heb 13v1, 1st Peter 1v22, 2nd Peter 1v7 2x). It is an expression of the very reality of our new birth; "**We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren**" (1st John 3v14).

This assembly lived up to its name; it was marked by warmth & loving affection for one another, as well as for the Lord. We should all aspire to being Philadelphian believers, in showing love for our brethren and steadfast faithfulness & loyalty to the Lord, keeping His Word, not denying His Name and holding fast to that which He has given to us.

V7: The Lord is Introduced

The Lord emphasises His essential moral character, "**He that is holy, He that is true**", which makes demands upon us to display corresponding moral character. Bearing testimony for Christ involves more than just being positionally correct; there needs to also be moral purity (see 1st Peter 1v15-16).

Christ is utterly "**holy**", pre-incarnate (Isaiah 6v3), in His birth (Luke 1v35), in His public service (Luke 4v34), in His death (Acts 3v14), in His resurrection (Psalm 16v10) and in His ascension back to God's holy throne (1st John 2v20).

He was "**true**" to all that He Himself is & all that His Name implies, the true One compared with all the types & shadows of the OT, "**the true Light**" (John 1v9), "**the true bread**" (John 6v32) and "**the true vine**" (John 15v1).

He has "**the key of David**", quoting Isaiah 22v22, indicating He is the Keeper of the divine treasure house. All the treasures of God's house are in the hand of the risen Lord Jesus, for Him to use for His Father's glory & for the blessing of His people.

He "**openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth**"; two different aspects of His irresistible sovereignty (see Acts 14v27, Acts 16v6-7, 1st Cor 16v8-9, 2nd Cor 2v12, Col 4v3).

V8: The Condition is Observed - No Censure is Given

The Lord had opened a door to this assembly, to move in service for Him. Also, an open door of blessing & promise that the Lord would bring to them (v9-12), and no man could prevent this.

They had only "**a little strength** (power)", in contrast to the great strength & power of Pentecostal times (see Acts 4v33). This is the reality of our day, i.e. last day conditions.

In such days, with the little strength we have, we can seek to move where He opens doors of opportunity, be faithful to God & the Lord, keep faithful & obedient to the truth of His word and not deny His Name or the truth of His Person.

V9: Their Vindication is Assured

Their greatest opposition was religious, **“them of the synagogue (a gathering together) of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie”**, i.e. Satanically designed & directed opposition to the true spiritual worship that the Father seeks today.

The Lord assures them of a day of vindication before those who oppose, when the Church is reigning with Christ in manifested glory (see Col 3v4), and displayed as those **“that I have loved”** (see John 17v22-23). Such future vindication will more than make up for any present reproach.

V10: Their Deliverance is Assured

The Lord will keep them **“from (out of) the hour of temptation”**; i.e. the pre-tribulation rapture of the Church, kept altogether away from that unprecedented worldwide period of wrath that will come upon earth dwellers, **“to try them that dwell upon the earth”**.

Meantime, we wait patiently for His coming, keeping the word of His patience (see also 1st Thess 1v10, 1st Thess 5v9).

V11: The Counsel is Imparted

The Lord assures them of the imminence of His coming again, **“Behold, I come quickly”** (see also 3x in ch22v7,12,20). Based upon 2nd Peter 3v8, He has only been gone for the equivalent of 2 days, and we surely believe He won't be gone for a 3rd day.

Until He comes, our obligation is to **“hold that fast which thou hast”**; i.e. to persevere in faithfulness, preserve the testimony and not give up the truth that has been given to us.

This is in view of future reward at the Judgment Seat, **“that no man take thy crown”**, a victor's crown for those who do hold fast & continue faithfully.

V12: The Promise is Given

The Church in relation to the future millennial reign of Christ & the eternal state.

To those with **“little strength”**, the Lord promises He will make them **“a pillar (strong & secure) in the temple of My God”**, never having to leave that place of honour & absolute security.

The overcomers will have 3 wonderful names inscribed upon them by the Lord:

1. **“the name of My God”**, as those who belong to Him, who are part of His divine workmanship of new creation (Eph 2v10).
2. **“the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem”** (see also Rev 21v2), i.e. eternal stability & security & citizenship in the heavenly city.
3. **“My new name”** (see also Rev 19v12, 22v4); the name is not revealed, but eternity will be occupied with fresh revelations of Christ & His glories.

These various promises denote inseparable & eternal union with God & with Christ.

V13: The Challenge is Made

For the 6th time, an appeal to the open ear; does the Spirit yet have our ear?