

Message to the church at Philadelphia

Rev. 3:7-13

The message to the church at Philadelphia is found in Revelation 3:7-13. To them, Jesus presents himself as “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens” (3:7), signifying that only He has absolute authority to open and shut, and determine who shall enter in, or be shut out.

At the outset Jesus says: “I know.” He always knows what each church and individual Christians are thinking, saying, feeling, and doing. He lets the Christians at Philadelphia know (3:7) that He is aware of their works. He tells them of “an open door.” “Open door” means great opportunities; generally for preaching the gospel. It probably means here, a way opened to convert the Gentiles and of being spiritually useful.

Jesus knows all about the church at Philadelphia. He notes that they have

- Little strength;
- Kept His word;
- Not denied His name.

Although they have “little strength” they have remained faithful to the doctrine of Christ and have not denied His name. [*Very little political authority or influence. The little strength may refer either to the smallness of the numbers, or to the littleness of their grace - Clarke.*]

The Lord promises to deal appropriately with “those of the synagogue of Satan.” These are Jews who constantly hindered the first century Christians. He says that He will “make them come and worship before your feet, and know that I have loved you” (3:9). Implying that some of these Jews would become Christians and esteem the brethren at Sardis and acknowledge them for who they are – the beloved of the Lord.

So our Lord assures them that because they have kept His command to persevere, He will sustain them during the trial “which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one

may take your crown” (3:10, 11). The crown refers to their reward received from the Lord for being faithful.

Jesus concludes His message to the church at Philadelphia with this promise: "**He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And 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**" (Rev 3:12). A pillar is a permanent structure that supports the building. Here it implies strength, permanence and honour. These beloved of the Lord shall always remain in a place of honour, bearing God's name and the name of the Lamb.

Lesson: Tried and faithful Christians are assured of a new name and a place of permanence and honour in heaven.

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