

(P) Sat, Nov - Oct. 10, 71 P.M. WXRI

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

Rev. 3:7-13

INTRODUCTION:

Historians tell us that this city, Philadelphia, was the last surviving city of these spoken of in the book of Revelation until they submitted to the Turks, and it is perhaps one of the names which have been perserved in these modern times. In America we have the well known city founded by William Penn.

Philadelphia signifies (brotherly love) And evidentially points to the (characteristics) featured in the work of God in the churches. We are satisfied that this church had a unique character, and was pronounced and set apart.

Now <sup>There</sup> are those who interpret this church as sounding the midnight cry for a certain period in history of spiritual reformation. In Philadelphia the true saints are caught up into the air to meet Christ. Now (brotherly love) intimates an (exclusive) company. Divine love in all of its aspects is a holy love. For God is love. Brotherly love, therefore, must partake of the character of its source - which is God himself. Now this church is presented here without too much fault. Of course, we are persuaded that the entire professed church was in good spiritual condition. There were probably a few weak ones.

I want to divide this study into three statements.

1. David 's Keys - V. 7.
2. Doers of the Word - V. 8-10.
3. Description of the Victorious - V. 11-13.

Now keep in mind that this church was about 28 miles south east of Sardis. It was founded in 140 BC. by Attalus II. Whose other name was Philadelphia - the king of Pergamos. The city was named Philadelphia after him. It is an interesting thing as you follow through - how much in it reflects the history and the situation of the city of Philadelphia.

I. David's Keys - V. (7.)

The letter begins with a message to the angel of the church and the circumstances here are noted as Christ presents himself - as he does at other times. He assumes a moral attitude toward the church. And the message here comes first from the one who is holy. Second, the one who is true. And third, the one who holds the key of David and is the door keeper.

As being (holy and true), he is the embodiment of all of this. Hosea 11:9 - Isaiah 6:3. And we discover here that he is described as the holy one - absoluteness in himself. This identifies Christ as God.

He that is true, not only as a truthseeker or speaker, but he is the truth itself. He in whom have the highest and perfect realization - this again identifies Christ.

He that hath the (key of David) that is, the key of the divine kingdom - to open or to shut beyond all other power - to reverse it. Hence, Christ declares that he has the key - that he will do the opening and the shutting. And this is what he is going to do in Philadelphia.

To understand this we have to turn back to Isaiah 22:22 Where it says, and the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open

and none shall shut - and shall shut and none shall open. This has reference to the servant Eliakim. He robed him with strength and committed the government into his hand. And he was to have that power in Jerusalem - over all of the inhabitants. Now to get a picture of this - we note that this church was a mountain church on a vulcanic mountain range. And Gibbons history tells of the faith of this church - but it is amazing how Philadelphia alone was preserved. He says, it was saved (by prophesy or courage.) As he speaks about the other Greek colonies and churches being destroyed.

Now there are three kind of keys mentioned in the New Testament. The keys of the kingdom. The right conferred by Christ upon his apostles, and the churches.

The keys of death and Christ's power over the grave which was exhibited in his bodily resurrection.

The keys of David, which is Christ, to unlock the door of opportunity before a church. Philadelphia, small and isolated, was honored by Christ, with special privileges and opportunities. The access to the knowledge of the Scriptures, growth in grace, all of these were privileges. A field of missionary service at home and abroad lay open to these saints. And he says that the door in Philadelphia stands ajar - and no man can shut it. He opens the doors to his churches. The door of utterance to his ministers. The door of entrances - he opens the heart door - and he shuts the door when he pleases. For example you remember the door was shut against the foolish virgins who slept away their day of grace. To open the door - it is because he has the keys to it. The key of David. You will remember that this is often compared to the closing era - the church of the missionaries, the church of the evangelists, Bible society, soul winners, world wide preaching. And this could well illustrate this day of the open door. It might cause us deep concern to consider now that

the doors may be closing in some parts of the world in regard to missionary endeavor.

But the words of (Shabna is deposed) - is taken out of his job, and the treasurer of the royal house of David, which he had used to immortalize himself. Isa. 22:16. And this (new man, Eliakim) is to be the administrator now. He is to have the authority. And this denotes undisputed right to enter and to exercise all needful authority. And he who opens this door, and no one can shut, and what he shuts - no one can open. It is a door of service and testimony that is opened or closed. I Cor. 16:9. He has the key and he will not pass it on to another. Hence when he opens or closes a door - who can shut or open.

Therefore, we conclude that David's keys were very important. As God today opens mission opportunity of service for you.

## II. Doers of the Word - V. (8-10)

Now the book of (James 1:22) - he speaks about being doers of the word. And not hearers only. Or else we would be deceiving our own self.

V. (8) - He says first, I know what you are doing.

Second, no, I have opened a door for you.

Third, I know your strength is little but you have obeyed my word.

Fourth, I know that you have not denied my name.

V. (9) - Fifth, I know you have complications with Satan's synagogue.

Sixth, V. (10) - you have kept my word patiently.

Seventh, I will keep you safe in testing times.

Now let us analyze what we have covered here. (First, V. (8)) he says I know what you are doing. I know that you are doers of the word. The emphasis here is on I. The clear implication is that some human activity was at work here (to silence) these people. Though (men) were trying to surpress them and break them down from proclaiming what they held and believed - the mighty Jesus was with them. He was on their side.

He said I know that you have little strength - there was much weakness. And looking objectively - you would have thought they would have accomplished very little. Yet, in all of their weakness and insignificance - they had been faithful. They had kept his word and had not denied His name.

The word (patience) here is a word that has special reference. (Christ) had patience in his forbearance with the wicked. In his restraint of sending judgement upon their miss deeds. He kept silent for a time. But there will come a time when he will no longer be silent - but he will come against them in judgement.

The keeping of this word of Christ is patience in keeping the entire Gospel. His present waiting and forbearance with the wicked til the day of a judgement.

And such a keeping of the word of Christ's patience had been in evidence

by these people - they kept it - his patience, bearing, and forebearing and holding fast.

They were weak and despised as they were. The door would be kept open for them. Now men might try to shut it - but they never would succeed in so doing because Christ was giving them his pledge. He tells them that he holds the keys, has set an open door before them, with which no power of man would be able to close. The time was coming when these suppressors would come to them in deep humiliation and even worship at their feet. And they would confess that they were the true heirs of God and had followed God's will. These despisers in Philadelphia would be compelled to humble themselves before these poor saints and to confess them after all - to be the true servants of God. As indicated in V. 9 - the members of the synagogue of Satan will fall at your feet. And they are going to learn that I loved you. This is going to be such honor - bestowed upon this church which was small in number, but was genuine in its life. They kept Christ's word and did not deny his name. They were devoted and faithfully employed. Hence, the greatest reward may not be to the largest churches. But may be to the smallest church which have made the best use of their strength. His highest commendation upon this little small mountain church which did the most with the little that it had. This principle should govern us today in the appraisal of our churches. Many times the larger church gets too much of the praise. The small church receives too little.

*Carried away with spirituals -*

The Lord's favor upon these faithful will convince their foes. He says the opposition will be effectually overcome and humble. That the synagogue of Satan will yet recognize the church. He is here discussing the hostility of the hypocritical pretenders. And this is what every church has to put up with.

Now this should give us encouragement to know that the Lord is pleased

to give spiritual power to those that he can depend upon as individuals as well as a co-operative group -- and yet the fact is there was not much to show - but there was just a little bit of power. But the (thing) about it was that these people had kept his word and they had not forsaken his name. To keep the word of Christ at all cost may involve giving up something in social and civic distinction. But it is no small matter for Christians to stand aside. To reject every association - even if some good men or some learned men are upholding it. Elijah in his day, Paul in his day, were distinguished witnesses and God always has a company. And let us not overlook, as did Elijah the 7,000 who had not bowed their knee to Baal.

Now the (value) of what a person is has its source in the name. And the name of Christ is an important name.

Now the (synagogue of Satan) - we meet with the same party here as at Smyrna. The character of the opposition may not be the same in both churches - for the tactics of Satan may vary. But in (both) the opposition is termed the synagogue of Satan. Make no mistake Satan's company consolidates. And so it was against Philadelphia. They are referred to as of Jewish nationality. But just as the (Jews) claim to be God's people on earth and that to the exclusion of all others - so this traditional, this succession had come down and it is gathered under Satan. There are those who pretend to be the church - who pretend to be the people of God. He says this is false - this is a lie. That our souls and consciences have been blunted to the state of things around us. And here was a huge system that seemed to be popular. And there group increasing - and they were professing to be the church. But he terms them as the synagogue of Satan.

Do not forget that these people had kept the word of my patience. Now this does not necessarily refer to the past. It refers to the present attitude of

our Lord. He waits to establish his kingdom and these saints had kept his testimony. They had kept it in the midst of content of a proud generation and they had kept it in the hour of tribulation and because of that - he says - I will also keep you, in your time of trial or temptations.

Remember Lot and Noah were preserved through the respective tribulation of their day. Abraham was kept from the seasons of trials which fell upon other people.

In V. 10 - this means the experience as under the plagues of Egypt in the days of Moses and also the period in Jerusalem when it came to its final desolation. The hour of trial, or temptation - it may have been brief - but it was great. And the whole earth was to mourn and have troubles - and these things plagued and troubled them. He begins to tell them that he is going to keep them safe during this testing time.

One of the most remarkable things about these doers of the word - he had set an open door - and Christ is the door personally. John 10 - he said I am the door. By me if any man enter in - he shall be saved. And shall go in and out and find pasture. Like a care for sheep - finding water, pasture, and grass.

Now I have noted for you this beautiful passage - the key to it - is a quotation from Isaiah 22:22 - when the steward of king Hezekiah - the noble had been trusted and given the key to the palace. No one could approve the king accept through Eliakim - so it is with us, in Christ, there is an open door to God in our Saviour. And (no man can shut it) No man - even if in prison, we would still have access to God. In illness, in death, in youth, in age, in trouble, in sorrow - Christ is an open door to God.

Now these doers of the word have an open door for testimony. They could witness and win souls. And any man can do this anywhere he is. A man moved by the spirit of God, went to Charles Hadden Spurgeon, and said Mr. Spurgeon - I've had it in my soul to win Christ. The preacher asked him - what is your job. The man replied, I drive an engine. I am an engineer on the railroad. The preacher said, is your fireman a Christian. He replied, I don't know. Go back and find out, and start with him.

The open door is all around us. The Philadelphian Church is your friend a Christian - invite him, ask him. After calling him by name in private prayer.

How many ministers has God given to us, with the opportunity - there is a place here for children, a place over there for young people, and place and opportunity for little babies, and several missions for adults. There are many areas of great opportunity to serve God. I've set before thee an open door.

The Philadelphia church describes them - an unlimited opportunity that God gives his people - the great missionary age of his church. Now we may be getting close to the end of this age because some doors are beginning to close. You can not go to Russia or China and preach the Gospel openly. And I understand there are areas in Indian and some sections of Africa that have been closed to missionaries. Some have sought entrance - but have been denied. But the heart of the people of the earth are open.

In (1792) William Carey went before his Baptist brethren and plead the world wide call of missions. The moderator of the association said, sit down, young man, and sit down. When God wants to convert the heathen - he will do it without your help or mine. " But the Lord said, I will make them to come and worship before my feet. And to know that I have loved thee.

Our Baptist people today look back in amazement at that moderator in England who should ask a preacher of the Gospel - whose heart was burning with the salvation of the lost world. When Carey went to India - the East India company didn't like his presence in the part of India governed by England, and he was forced to leave. And 18 miles up the Ganges River in the Danish Colony of Serampore - there he built his schools and his college and set about the preaching of the Gospel of the everlasting son of God. Today, there wouldn't be a business man in all this earth, that would say it would be the finest thing that could happen for a nation and its commercial life - but to evangelize the tribes of the nations.

Now the same thing happened in 1813 when Judson was on his way because of the East India company - not wanted. He then went down to Rangoon in Burma for 6 years laboring without a convert. But God was with him in that terrible war of 1824 and 1826 between England and the people of Burma - Judson was placed in prison. It was vile. He was sick and had a fever, and was suffering from the heat of the jungles. He was almost destroyed by the terrible treatment of the keepers. But he was fed, nourished, and kept alive by his faithful wife Ann Hasseltine. Now we do not have time to recount other stories of such heroes of the cross. But these people saw a great open door before them. And because they were doers of the word, Jesus promised that he would keep them in the hour of trial. The trial that is coming down upon the world. Because they have

been doers and kept his word - he will keep them in the hour of trial in their life.

*Lake Michigan - Evanston - Ned Spencer Vol. life saving crew. passenger steamer, floundered - He saw a woman on some wreckage - official swim - many water brought to safety. Saw more victims - Brought 17 - collapsed. Examination - child "would do my best" - Bro. tried quit, if I could have saved one more! can you say I have been a doer of the word?*

III. Description of the Victorious - V. 11-13.

Now we've said that David's keys have opened the door. And that these doers of the word had been faithful in their work. Now will there be any rewards for them. Just what has he promised for these people.

V. 11 - He says I come quickly. Hold on to what you have - let no man take your crown. In other words, you continue watching and you continue your prayer--and I am going to come quickly. Three times he repeats this in the last chapter of the book.

Now we have adjusted our idea of reckoning and measuring time - but we do not know about this according to the Lord's clock. We are ignorant in this thing. That one day is with the Lord a thousand years. And a thousand years as one day. 2 Peter 3:8. Now that is about two days - thus measured - the period between the two advents. His first and his second coming.

As Luke 21:34-36, there shall be two in one bed - one shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken-the other left. Two shall be in the field, one shall be taken and the other left. When this is to be - Paul says, the true and watching believers which are alive and remain shall be caught up and meet the Lord in the air. Now these people yet despised - poor, weak, were instructed to hold fast to what they had. That no man take thy crown. Now this is no mere figure of speech but it in the truest sense - here is the promise of inheriting the kingdom. Wearing a crown and being with Christ forever and ever. Now John had a vision of this whole thing and this is not just poetry - this is truth. This is not just a picture of show - but this is what Christ says - it will not be hold. Behold, I come quickly. I am going to reward you.

Now, we should note that there are going to be some people in the world who would like to prevent us from attaining this crown. There are some people who will want to have you be unfaithful. But Jesus said, I open the door of opportunity. You have entered that door - you have worked well. Now keep up the fight - and you shall have your crown.

V. 12 - He gives further description, of these victorious doers of the word.

First, he is going to make you a pillar.

Second, he is going to write upon you the name of my God and the name of the new Jerusalem, the city of God.

Third, my new name.

To him that is victorious - he says I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. What a magnificent emagery. It is beyond anything that we can enter into. They were holding and tightening up their grip on Christ's work. The weakness of earth, he says, is going to be exchanged now for the stability of Heaven. Because I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.

Now John says that in the new Jerusalem, in the heavens above, he saw no temple but the Lord God and the lamb are the temple therein. How can we enter into such a picture. In Heaven and in the new Jerusalem - there is no moveable temple. Like the one built by Moses in the wilderness - or the one that was built by Solomon - but the Lord God and the lamb are the temple.

When he says we are to be a pillar in the temple of God, he is saying that in Heaven God's people have an eternity with God himself.

What is a pillar - it is for strength, for adornment, for beauty. It may be for commemoration. It may be for example, that the church is called the pillar, and the ground the truth. Peter, John, and James were the pillars in the church. In Gal. 2 - they were called the pillars of the church. So God chooses us in eternity to be an adornment, a commemoration to his grace and his

love. His mercy never forgot - man was created in his own image and his own likeness.

We are to be pillars - and we shall go no more out. In the course of the priest's death - they took him away. Even our first parents were driven out to water the ground with their tears and their sweat. And to be buried beneath the sod. But in the new Jerusalem, there is no more going out.

Now the pillar is a most imposing and useful part of a great building. And only the wealth of the kings in those ancient days could provide pillars in the temples of their gods. They were masterpieces of human skill and genius. And they were reputed everywhere. Gal. 2:29, James, Peter, and John - were called pillars in the Jerusalem church.

The pillar of truth is used in Tim. 3:15. This is an expression of the highest honor that might be placed upon one. So man was originally made to be an expression of the image of God. Now what he lost in sin, he is going to recover in the highest form by redemption when he is placed in Heaven as a pillar in the temple.

The next thing, he is going to write upon them the name of God - my God. The name of that God is already put upon us in holy baptism. But it is not so engraved upon us that it may not be rubbed off. Now the high priest, under the law, wore a plate of Gold on his forehead, on which was inscribed "holiness unto the Lord". It proclaimed dignity and sacredness - the same was to be always upon his forehead. That they might be accepted unto the Lord. They were not ashamed of God. And therefore, God will not be ashamed of those in the new Jerusalem. And he is going to write the name of the new Jerusalem upon him. That is, the new Jerusalem, the city of God coming down out of Heaven, from God

Now an organization of man. But from the city of God - the children  
of the resurrection. Abraham looked forward to this city. And John visualizes  
this city. The name of the city is going to be engraven upon these victorious  
saints.

*I wish I knew what that was going to be!*

And last I will write my new name. That is, they are going to bear the  
name of Christ now forever, the name of Jesus. *Isa. 9:6 - (old names).*

*Evidently something wonderful,*

*Belong completely to God.*