

The Book of Revelation

Study 6

Bill Holdstock

Philadelphia

Verse 1

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things says he that is Holy, He that is true, He that has the key of David, He opens and no man shuts; and shuts and no man opens.

Once again it is made clear Who it is Who sends this letter to the Pastor of the church at Philadelphia, it is He who has the key. Jesus has the keys to everywhere, heaven, earth, life, death and hell and also all our hearts and minds. To have the key denotes authority and power. If someone is given the key to the office or to a house they are trusted to go in and use all that the key unlocks. Jesus said in Revelation chapter one verse 18 "I have the keys of hell and death.

Our opening verse is virtually a quotation of Isaiah 22v22 talking of Eliakim son of Hilkiah who was given the appointment of treasurer from the disgraced Shebna. The verse reads:

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place and he shall be for a glorious throne to His Father's House.

Christ was to be born of the house and lineage of David many hundreds of years earlier it was prophesied that the key to the Kingdom was to be laid on the shoulders of Christ who was to be nailed to the cross at Calvary, the sure and secure place to shed His blood for the remission of sins and to make a way back to God for His people. Note there was only one key, and that key was given to Jesus who was now able, legally to open and shut doors as He will and none shall open or shut them. No man or woman, no church, no denomination, no Minister Pastor or Leader will be able to undo, or reopen the door that Christ has shut. That absolute supremacy of His authority is seen by the assertion that what he opens none shall shut and what He shuts none shall open. He even has the key to the gates of Hell.

He tells the church at Philadelphia that He has set before them an open door which no man can shut. This was a door of present opportunity. He says that they had little strength but they had kept His word and not denied His name. In the time of ultimate testing, in the midst of trying circumstances the door still stands open for witness to the power of the gospel. In God's work, whether as an individual or a church, to have little strength is not an indication of weakness, in the case of the Philadelphia church the numbers may have been small, but it is God's principle that so long as our hearts are right with God it is in our weakness God can be our strength, He looks for humbleness and a prayerful attitude through which He can work His will.

Paul in 2 Cor. 12. 9 puts it like this:

And He said unto me My grace is sufficient for you for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the Power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress for Christ's sake, for when I am weak then I am strong.

The strength of Christ can be released through me, but only when I know I am weak and do not do things for God in my own strength, He is free to work His will channelled through weak but submitted vessels.

Verse 9

Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews and are not, but do lie. Behold I will make them to come and worship before your feet and to know that I have loved you.

This is a great encouragement to those in the Philadelphia church they knew that some in the church at Smyrna had become a sect which professed Judaism but blasphemed God and served Satan. They were called of the synagogue of Satan. The Thyatira Church, where Satan had caused much trouble among the Saints through the teachings of Jezebel. The early Church was being attacked by Satan because they were new in the things of God, Satan thought he could bring the churches down almost before it had been established and ruin the testimony of Christ. But he didn't reckon on God using the weak among us to show forth His strength. Today we have much more revelation from God and know that these Jews and indeed all restored Jews will, one day, in the New Kingdom of God, bow down with the Gentiles to honour the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Every knee will bow before Jesus Christ and worship Him and give Him Honour. These enemies of the early church were told by Jesus that they would worship at the feet of the Christians of the Philadelphian church and thereby they would know that Christ has loved them. It is interesting to know that Jesus is not unmindful of our troubles our struggles and trials and He promises that He will recompense and bring justice in His time.

Verse 10

Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them who dwell upon the earth.

Jesus is encouraging the early church to hold fast and to overcome the trials and temptations that came their way to knock them off course, if Satan can get us to give up or give in he will have won another soul from the arms of the Saviour. But Jesus says He will reward us, the ones who persevere, and the ones who do not give up, the overcomers, with a crown of life and an eternal home with Him. Also we will be saved *from the hour of temptation that will come upon the world, to try them who dwell upon the earth*. The Rapture will take the Church before the Great Tribulation. Therefore the dwellers upon the earth will be those who, because of unbelief are overwhelmed by the terrors and carnage of that hour of trial, no doubt wishing with all that is within them that they had listened more closely to their Christian friends and not mocked and scorned them. But it will be too late God's judgement will be upon them. Those who receive the grace of God and have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and know their sins are forgiven and can look forward to everlasting life.

Verse 11

Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which you have that no man take your crown.

There is no doubt there will be many who will be caught out by this. Those in the time of Noah who ignored his preaching warning them of God's coming judgment, believing that such a thing just could not happen. Still laughing at the building of a very large boat miles away from the sea or a river, these scoffers were suddenly snatched from this earth into a lost eternity. In these last of the last of days the same thing will happen, businesses in our great cities will be in full swing, overcrowded trains will still be hurtling through towns, cities and countryside, crowded offices will be preoccupied with computers and telephones and making money not giving a moment's thought about Jesus, when suddenly He will appear blazing the sky with a brilliant light the likes of which we have never seen before and all in the twinkling of an eye. Christian workmates, bosses, girlfriends, boyfriends, train drivers, taxi and bus drivers, mothers, fathers, children will all be gone. Those left behind will then remember they were once those Christians who spoke of such an event who loved their Lord and they were all laughed at too. Try, if you can, feel their sinking heart, the panic, the cold sweat and no doubt tears when they realise they have been left behind and what their Pastor or Minister said was true after all!

And Jesus said I am coming quickly and if you are not ready no amount of anguish could be more intense than to see your crown of life fade away into the distance only to be given to another. Of course there will also be those who will think up some explanation for the loss of all these millions of people including abduction by aliens! No don't laugh it is serious!

Verse 12

Him who overcomes will I make him a pillar in the Temple of My God and he shall go more out.

There is something grand and magnificent about pillars, not only holding up the roof but holding the whole structure together. We have all seen photographs of ancient ruins many hundreds of years old. We have all noticed that the walls, doors, and roof have all broken, rotted in decay laying around almost lost under grass and bushes. But the pillars? Well they are still standing tall, straight, and upright symbols of strength and lasting stability and permanence. And in our chapter the Lord promises those who overcome the trials and temptations put upon us by our enemy that they shall become not just pillars but Pillars in the Temple of My God serving before the throne of God unceasingly. What a privilege. And not only that!

The Bible says in the next verse that Jesus will *write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from My God and I will write upon him My new Name.*

Here Jesus encourages His church and that person who endures to the end, the one who overcomes, he who has "patience in tribulation" (Rom.12.12) that He will again prove His love towards us by sealing us with His own name, the name of His God our Father, the name of the city of God. We all will have a sense of true belonging and that to the great God of the universe.

Surely you can see how vitally important it is that every born again Christian, particularly as the end times draw to a close should behave and live in such a way that Jesus will have no reason not to take us to be with Him. Jesus himself said "Hold fast that which you have that no man take your crown" the only way man (or woman) can take our crown is if we do not hold fast to the things of God and join man (or woman) again in the ways of Satan, then we forfeit the crown of life we once had. (We dealt with this situation in our study of the Sardis church)

The overcomer gets a further promise that they will be given a special name written on him. Firstly it will be the name of my God, signifying divine ownership. John records that those who become the company of the redeemed are marked with the name of their God. Also he will have the name of God's city called the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from my God. This naming represents the overcomer's authentic citizenship.

As we know those with the name of Christ upon him and the name of the City of God upon him become the Bride of Christ and John was shown this by one of the seven Angels who had vials full of the last plagues, what a wonderful site to see that great city descending from the heavens. Oh, my friends make sure you will be in that vast number of Blood washed, redeemed souls worshiping and honouring our great King.

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Be blessed
Bill@Holdstock

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