

Rev08 – Pillars and Doors Revelation 3:7-13

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Open your Bibles. Title of the message today, “Pillars and Doors.” I love this message and this title. This was a difficult message for God to birth in me and to press through me. We are going to Revelation 3:7-13. The church of Philadelphia.

Twenty eight miles southeast of Sardis, where we looked at the church last message, was Philadelphia, the next stop on the circular route of the letter carrier for Jesus. Who dictated his letters to John and then the “pony express” took them around to these seven churches.

There was a king named Attalus Philadelphus, and there was a city that became named after him, Philadelphia. And six times in the New Testament prior to this time this word that we get Philadelphia from is used. Every time it’s used, it’s used to convey some type of brotherly love. Just like the city of the same name in our country.

Philadelphia is one of only two churches, listen carefully please, that receive no rebuke from the Lord. One of two churches that receive no rebuke from the Lord, and the only other church which received no rebuke was Smyrna which was being crushed under persecution and suffering. And so we can say that Philadelphia is the only church that wasn’t undergoing extreme persecution that receives no rebuke from the Lord. One hundred percent commendation, praise and approval from the Lord Jesus Christ for this church in Philadelphia.

Wouldn’t it be a good idea for us to ask why? Listen, we need to know why. We need to know why Jesus Christ had only approval and commendation for this church. We need to know why. It needs to be really clear, so I am just going to tell you up front. Here’s something I learned from God, that when he wants to make something clear, he just says it clearly.

I’m going to tell you right up front the church at Philadelphia had been built on two pillars. On two massive pillars of faith. It is critical that we grasp firmly those two pillars of faith. Because, number one, we must build our church on the same two pillars that Philadelphia was built on. Why? Because it is the only church of the seven that received nothing but commendation and approval from the Lord. And so if we’re going to say, “Hey, how should we build our church?” Somebody should say “Let’s build it like Philadelphia. Let’s have our church be like theirs.”

Number two, you must build your own life on these same two pillars. So I’m just going to give them to you right up front and then I am going to ask you to see them as we go through the church of Philadelphia.

Here are the two pillars that caused Philadelphia to receive no rebuke from the Lord.

#1) **They kept his Word.** It means that they guarded it, they protected it, they held fast to

his Word

#2) **They did not deny his name.** You know if you've heard me talk much, the name means who a person is Biblically. The full character and nature of a person.

So the two pillars that this church was built on that got them one hundred percent approval from the Lord Jesus Christ were:

#1) **They kept his Word.** They held fast to his Word.

#2) **They kept his name.** His character and his nature, they guarded it and protected it and they clung to his word and his name.

Those are the pillars. And I believe personally, that it is because of these two pillars in the church of Philadelphia that it was the last of the seven churches to fall to the Muslim sword when the Turks came in and invaded this area which is now Turkey in about the 1300's A.D. Twelve hundred years, this church stood while all the other churches disappeared. Because this church had foundational pillars that ran deep. And they clung to them. And they would not deny the pillars of faith that they were built on.

#1) **They kept his Word.**

#2) **They kept his name.** They would not deny his name, his character or his nature.

Let's pray. *Heavenly father, show us Lord that you desire us to be like this. Show us Lord that you gave us Philadelphia for a purpose; Lord that you wrote this letter for us that we can put this letter with the other six letters and we can see what we don't want to be and we can see what we do want to be. And we pray Lord that you would drive it home and that we would commit to it Lord. That it would change us. That we would make a covenant with you to always keep your Word and to never deny your name. Show us Lord the pillars of the church of Philadelphia and make them, we pray, the pillars of our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Revelation 3:7 (esv)

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

Jesus begins by identifying himself in a way that the church needs to hear, like he has done with every church. And he says the holy and the true, or the genuine one who has the Key of David. An interesting reference there from the Lord. In Isaiah 22 there is a prophecy about the unlimited treasure of King David that was held in the first temple, in Solomon's Temple. And it was the Key of David that opened this unlimited treasure. And in Isaiah 22:22 Isaiah prophesies that a man named Eliakim was going to be given this key and only he had the treasury of David. It was called the Key of David. It says in Isaiah 22 what he opens is opens and what he shuts is shut. It's one man. Here's why the reference. Because Jesus Christ *is* that king, if you will, who has the key to the unlimited

treasure of God in the temple. But is one king, it is one key and only he opens and only he shuts and it's up to him. And that's what the prophecy in Isaiah 22 says. It's up to him when he opens up the treasure door and it's up to him when he shuts the treasure door. And so that is why we see a connection, why Jesus says "***I am the holy and the true one, the one with the key of David***" because he opens what he opens and he shuts what he shuts and no one else chooses when or what door the king opens. Amen!

Now you've heard me talk a little bit about pillars, the two pillars, and you've heard me make at least a reference to a door. And here's what we are going to do. We are going to compare pillars and doors. We've seen the two pillars that this faithful church held fast to the Word of God and it held fast to the name, the character and the nature of Jesus Christ.

Now this phrase "an open door" we are going to compare to the pillars. This phrase "an open door" is used a lot in the New Testament, primarily in the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul.

Let me give you some references. Let's go to John 10 first, the Good Shepherd Chapter. In John 10:9 Jesus himself says ***I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved.***

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In Acts 14:27 Paul and Barnabus told the church in Antioch how God "***had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles***"

1 Corinthians 16:9 Paul says he has to stay in Ephesus because "***a wide door for effective work has opened to me***"

So there is a door of faith in Acts 14, a door of effective work in 1 Corinthians 16.

In 2 Corinthians 2:12 Paul explains how "***a door was opened for me to preach the gospel in Troas***"

And in Colossians 4:3 Paul says "***pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word***"

Do you see how the door is used as ministry opportunity? It's an opportunity for the gospel to go out. It's an opportunity for kingdom work. It's an opportunity to do what Jesus has called us to do. These doors are opportunities created by the Lord for the gospel, for kingdom work and especially for salvation.

It is Jesus Christ alone, the sovereign king of heaven who opens these doors. He is the only one. He is the only one that opens true doors for the gospel, for the ministry work, for the kingdom work. Listen, we may like it, we may not like it. Most of us would not like it because have a God complex and we want to make the decisions that only God gets to make. Most of us would say "If it's all the same to you Lord, I prefer to open my own doors." And Jesus says "No, I'm the sovereign God of heaven. I'm the sovereign King. You don't get to open your own doors. I have the key. I open what I want to open;

I shut what I want to shut. And we say “Yes Lord!” because that is what you say to your Lord. “Yes Lord.” If you say “No,” you have the right to say no, just don’t call him Lord. Just say no.

Alright. So pillars are what we are built on. They are the foundation structures of who we are. Doors are opened or shut by the Lord in varying ways, in varying times and varying places, and varying ministries because it’s up to him. That’s why he is the Lord. Understand? Pillars are absolute. Doors are variable according to the will of Jesus.

Let’s begin his analysis for the church in Philadelphia. Revelation 3:8.

Revelation 3:8 (esv)

8 “ *I know your works.* (but then abruptly) *Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut . . .*****

Jesus starts like he does every letter, “*I know...*” But then Jesus stops abruptly and he says right up front, like he can’t wait to get to it. ***Behold*** (LOOK), ***I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut***

This is really interesting because Jesus is supposed (to be in line with all seven letters) he is supposed to be giving the church his analysis of the state of the church. And he begins it like he begins every other church. But it’s like he is so excited he can’t wait to tell them. Can you see Jesus excited? He says, ***“I know your works... Behold I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut . . .”***

So far he has told them look, I am the Holy One. I am the true one. I am the one with the key of David to the treasury of God. And then he begins to describe the condition of the church, but he can’t wait. It’s like he can’t stop himself. And then it’s like he is supposed to be describing their condition, and he gets back to it. So he is going to pick it back up. That’s called a parenthetical statement. He is going to pick it back up in Revelation 3:8, in the second half.

Here’s what I want you to know about this half. It’s because of what we are about to read that Jesus is opening the door. *It’s because of what we are about to read that Jesus is opening the door.* What we are about to read are the pillars of the church, and I want you to see the cause and effect in the church of Philadelphia.

Revelation 3:8(b) (esv)

8 . . . *I know that you have but little power (strength), and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.*

Praise the Lord for those with little strength. Do you know that God does not want, not only does he not need, he does not want you to come to the table with all your power and all your strength to accomplish his will in your own way. He just doesn’t need it. But when he looks at you and says “here’s a man or a woman that I want to use” the very first

thing he does is remove your own power. The very first thing he does. I think it's A.W. Tozer who wrote that great poem... *when God wants to will a man, to skill a man, to drill a man... Watch his methods, watch his ways, how he ruthlessly perfects whom royally elects...* And the poem goes on to talk about God crushing a man or woman that he wants to use. It's not that God doesn't need your power; he doesn't want your power. He doesn't want it. He has this thing about glory – he wants it all for himself. And he is not being egotistical, he is God. So He wants the glory, so he makes sure you have very little of your own strength when you come to the table. That is actually a compliment, ***“you have but little power.”***

2 Corinthians 12:9 Jesus himself says to Paul ***“... My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*** And then Paul responds kind of like Peter did when Jesus is washing his feet and Peter says “No! Don't wash my feet!” and Jesus says ***“If I don't wash your feet you have no part of me,”*** and Peter says “Wash my whole body then!” So Paul says the same thing in 2 Corinthians 12:9, he says you know I've beseeched the Lord three times for this thorn in the flesh and Jesus says ***“... My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*** And then Paul says ***“... Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”***

Guys, we are earthen vessels. Only the life of Christ in us enables us to have the power of God in us. But still, we hold this power in earthen vessels so that the glory goes to him, not to us. And so Jesus says you have but little power, it's a compliment. And then he says two great words that I love a lot- AND YET. *And yet.* And yet with your little power ***you have kept my word and you have not denied my name.*** Those are the pillars. Those are the pillars of the church that got one hundred percent commendation from the Lord. You have kept my Word, you've guarded it. You have clung to it. You have made it your life. And you have kept my name, the character and nature of who I am. You've not denied my name. You've kept it, you've clung to it, and you've guarded it. It is your life. Jesus says these two things are what you have done right. You've kept my Word, you've kept my name.

Guys, I want you to know that these are the immovable pillars of the church. They are the unshakable pillars of the church. They are mandatory for the existence of a Christ filled church; that we keep his Word and that we keep his name. And it's because of these pillars that the Lord opens doors. So, our responsibility is to hold fast to the pillars and then watch for Jesus to open the doors.

The difference is the pillars are immovable. Unshakable. They are our foundation. The doors swing open and closed at the will of Jesus Christ. He decides what doors to open and what doors close. Our job is to cling to the pillars that build the church.

How many of you know that when a church does it right, and maybe especially when they do it right, they still have enemies? If the enemy is not giving you any trouble, be worried.

Revelation 3:9. Jesus says,

Revelation 3:9 (esv)

9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

This is in response to the second half of verse 8 about the pillars of keeping the Word and keeping his name.

Every ministry that receives a commendation from the Lord receives an attack from the enemy. *Every ministry that receives a commendation from the Lord receives an attack from the enemy.* From personal experience most of the attacks in the church in this culture come from those who claim they are working on God's behalf. Just like the synagogue of Satan here. They say they are Jews, they say they are God worshipers but they are not.

Jesus says "Don't worry about these folks. Don't worry about them. In time I'm going to make them acknowledge (that's a gentle way of saying 'make them bow') that I love you." Isn't that a great vindication of us before our enemies? Isn't that a great prayer for those that speak evil of you? Isn't it a great prayer to say "Lord, please make sure they know that you love me?" That is a great prayer for those who would cause you conflict or consternation, who would claim things about you that aren't true.

Listen, there are those that the enemy will stir up to use against you. When that happens, if you will hold on to the faithful pillars of the church of Philadelphia, keeping his Word and keeping his name, then Jesus will eventually cause them to acknowledge that he loves you. And there is no greater vindication, at least in my own life, for someone to know, "You know what? Turns out Jesus loves that guy after all! Who would have thought?" I love that part. That might be kind of a personal message to me.

Listen, our job is to cling to the pillars. Our job is to drive the pillars of the faithful church deep into our church and into our lives; so that we will keep God's Word and that we will guard it. That it will be the bread of life and that we'll keep his name, his character and his nature in our intimate relationship with him. And he will work the rest out.

Now here's some really good news for all who associated with this church by faith.

Revelation 3:10 (esv)

10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

The word “word” used here, the context is more “*my commendation, my commandment, my encouragement.*”

The “Hour of Trial” is a period of great tribulation, of trial, that comes upon the whole earth to try those who are literally “earth dwellers.” Jesus is talking about the Great Tribulation. That is the hour that is going to try the whole world and will try all the “earth dwellers.” Here’s the deal. My prayer for you is you are not an earth dweller. That you are a citizen of heaven from where we watch for our soon and expectant return of our king. We’re citizens of heaven, we’re not earth dwellers. And I pray that you put your full faith and your trust in Jesus Christ, that you’ve been born again and that you’ve been taken out of being an earth dweller and put into the family of God so that you are a citizen of heaven, so that you avoid the hour of trial that is coming upon this whole world. Amen!

The word “*from*” there can be translated “*out of.*” If you have any Revelation experience you’ve heard people say that. The word can be just as correctly translated “out of.” ***I will keep you out of the hour of trial.*** If you don’t know, I will tell you, when we do get to the rapture in Chapter 4 where we get to it, and where we believe it takes place, then I’ll explain it to you. This is a reference to the rapture. We do believe in pre-tribulation rapture. We believe that we are going to be “caught up,” RAPTURO is the Latin; we’ll be caught up with Christ in the air. And we believe that is going to happen prior to or at the beginning of the great tribulation. There are other people who also get to go to heaven who don’t agree with us. The important thing is they do get to go to heaven. But some of them think that we will be around for half of the tribulation. Some of them think we will be around for all of the tribulation which is some kind of a wild u-turn deal, because if we get raptured at the end of the tribulation, the Millennium starts then and we are like, whoosh, and right back on the earth. I don’t really understand that, but we will get to it in Chapter 4.

For now, here’s the point. Jesus says those who are faithful, those who are clinging to my Word and my name they will be kept from the hour of trial that is to come upon the whole world and will try these earth dwellers. The context is: be part of the faithful. *Be part of the faithful.* That you will be kept from this hour of tribulation. Amen.

In verse 11, to me it seems like Jesus is staying with this same context of a pre-tribulation rapture discussion.

Revelation 3:11 (esv)

11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown
(your Victor's Crown).

This word "soon" means "*swiftly, or suddenly*" not necessarily quickly. Not even if your version says quickly, it doesn't mean what we think is quickly – like in the next six seconds. It means "When I come, it will be swift. It will be immediate. Sudden."

This word "seize" can mean "*by force, or by deception.*" Hold to the Word of God, hold fast to the name of Christ that no one may seize your crown. This is the victor's crown, STEPHANOS, the wreath that the athletes get. Don't let anybody seize it from you, either by force or by deception. How many of you know that if your crown is a reward for your faithful keeping of the Word and the name of Christ that you can be deceived out of that crown. That the enemy can seize that crown. Don't let it happen. Jesus says "***Hold fast what you have. Let no one seize your victor's crown.***"

Revelation 3:12 says,

Revelation 3:12 (esv)

12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, . . .

Jesus begins by giving commendation, approval, praise even we could say to the two pillars in this church. The holding fast to the Word and the holding fast or keeping or not denying the name of Christ.

How many of you just want to put your roots down and be a strong part of the eternal temple of God? Amen! A pillar in the temple of God. Listen the whole city of the New Jerusalem which we'll get to in Chapter 21, the New Jerusalem is the temple. It's the temple. There is no need of the sun or the moon there because the Lamb is its light. It's the temple of the eternal God. And Jesus says those of you who hold on to the pillars of the church of Philadelphia will be made pillars. Will be made a strong part, a permanent part of the temple for eternity. That's pretty motivating.

How do I do that? How do we do that as a church? Listen. This isn't rocket science. Hold fast to the Word. Hold fast. Keep it. Guard it. Make it your daily bread. Consume it. And hold fast to the name of Christ. His character and his nature. Who he is and who he is in your life. That's what the church in Philadelphia did and this is why Jesus says "Those of you who conquer, who hold these pillars I will make a pillar in the eternal temple of my God."

So, when I say to you that our number one job, our number one priority is to hold fast to the Word of God and to hold fast to the name of Jesus, do you see where I get it? I'm not coming up with this stuff myself. Okay? I have just enough logic to say okay if this is the

only church that got one hundred percent commendation from Jesus Christ I want to be like them. Alright? That is the simple math. I just said “Lord, this is how we want to be” and as the Lord just pressed this through me. My wife sacrificed a lot as I went through this; the Lord just hammered me with this. I was reminded, encouraged, exhorted by the Lord that my number one job, my personal job is to instill these pillars in this church. My number one job is to instill the pillars of the Word of God and the name of Christ in this church and in our lives individually. That’s my job. That’s my focus. And I want you to know that is what I am going to be accountable to Jesus Christ for. That’s it. It is not an easy thing to consider for a pastor. But at least I know my job. My job is to drive the pillars of the Word of God and the name of Jesus Christ so deep into this church and so deep into your lives that you will not be shaken. You will not be moved, you will not be deceived.

Not only will Jesus make us a pillar, but Revelation 3:12 continues,

Revelation 3:12 (esv)

12 . . . 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 from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

That’s a lot of names. What Jesus is saying is “You will have my name as your identification.” If you had a parent who is a “somebody,” who holds a position, a high and respected position and is well known, when someone who knows that parent finds out your name they’ll say, “Oh, are you the son or daughter of so and so?” And when you say “yes” they see your parent in you. The principle is true. Listen, when all of creation sees us, they’ll say, “Wait a minute, that’s the name of God. That’s the name of the New Jerusalem. That’s Jesus’ own name. That one belongs to God!” Amen! To me that is a triple play guarantee. That is a triple guarantee that my identification with God is secure if I have put my full faith and trust in him. If I belong to him. If my name is in the book of life. Then I am guaranteed of this identification with the most high God for all eternity. That is a big deal!

In the prophetic history timeline of the seven churches, the church of Philadelphia reflects the great missionary explosion. There was this incredible time worldwide that really started with the first great awakening which began in the 1730’s. And this time period blew right through the second great awakening which is very interesting. If you study the two great awakenings, the first great awakening was all Calvinist and the second great awakening was basically Arminianists. If you know what those words mean, it’s very interesting to compare those two.

But the point here is that during the time of the two great awakenings from the mid 1700’s into the early 1900’s this world changed for Jesus Christ. It is absolutely, never been reproduced either before or after that 150 or so year period that included what we

call the great awakenings. Out of this time period we got Hudson Taylor, John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, D.L. Moody, Whitfield and dozens more great scholars. They all came out of this time period. And guys, thousands upon thousands of missionary agencies sprung up during the 1800's and the gospel literally engulfed the world. So much so that many thought that Jesus Christ must return because the missions work was so open and so active and so on fire that people thought everyone on the globe must have already heard the gospel. That's what the feeling was in the 1800's during this – it was way more than a revival – expansion, as it is called. I call it the explosion.

It was the open door to the gospel, listen carefully, during a time when the church like no other time in history, listen carefully, was holding fast to the Word of God and was holding fast to the name of Jesus Christ. If you will look doctrinally at the church from 1750 to 1920's you will see the most dedicated church to the Word of God in the name of Christ that has ever existed since Christ walked on the earth. Check it out. It's incredible to read about.

And coincidentally, during the time when the pillars of faith were the strongest in the church, Jesus was opening the greatest doors of ministry for the church. Do you see the connection? Please see the connection. When the church was holding fast to the pillars of the Word of God and the name of Christ, Jesus was opening the door. He was unlocking the unlimited treasure of God, and the gospel was engulfing the world. And again, history proves that God is right, again.

I want you to know it's still true today, that if we will drive those pillars down in our church and in our lives, and if we will hold fast to the Word and hold fast to the name, Jesus will open the doors, when he chooses. And he will do the work that he chooses to do. That's his job. Our job is to drive the pillars down and to hold fast to them.

Here's the promises and assurances that Jesus gives the faithful church.

- 1) An **Open Door**, which no one is able to shut
- 2) Our **enemies** bow to the fact that Jesus **LOVES US**
- 3) He will **Keep us FROM** the **Time of Tribulation** on the Earth
- 4) He will **make us a PILLAR** in the Temple of God
- 5) HE will write the **NAME** of **God**, and **New Jerusalem**, and will write **His own Name** for us, on us For Eternity

Verse 13,

Revelation 3:13 (esv)

13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

What the Spirit is saying to this church is, drive the pillars deep and keep fast the Word of God and the name of Jesus Christ and allow Jesus to open the doors. That's the word.

So let me just sum it up. This is the church you want to be associated with spiritually. This is the one. I mean, I don't know if you've done this or not, but every church I say "Lord, how much of me is in that church? How much of this church is in that church? What's the mirror? When I get to this church I say Lord please open my heart and let me see myself in this church. Let me see the church that you've given me responsibility for, let me see this church, here, associated with the church in Philadelphia. All the warnings, all the judgments that has come to all the other churches, none are here, and we have to know it is because they held fast to the Word of God and they held fast to the name of Christ.

We can do that! *We can do that!* We can make a commitment to that. We can see this in the Word and say "You know what God? That sounds right. I need to hold fast to your Word and I need to hold fast to your name. And I need to trust you to open the doors for me. And whatever you want to do in my life, you're the key holder, you open the door. My only job is to agree with you in commitment that I will hold fast to your Word in my life and I will hold fast to your name in my life, and that I will allow you to open and shut doors . Whatever you want. After all, you are Lord."

We can do that. We can do that right now.

Let's pray. *Lord Jesus, make us see. Give us ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, to this church, to the called out ones, to us personally. And right now Lord make it clear in our minds what you are calling us to and give us the faith Lord to choose you. To choose these pillars in our lives.*

I just want to give you a second right now. You decide if these are the pillars of faith you want in your life, and if so, then tell God. Tell him.

Lord these are the pillars that I want in my life. Lord I commit to you to hold fast to your Word, to cling to it for my daily bread, my daily sustenance Lord. To hear from you in it. To interact with you in it. To make it my life. And Jesus I commit to you right now to not deny your name, to not turn from your character and your nature. To not serve myself but to serve you. To be a bond slave to you. To reflect your nature, to manifest your nature. I commit to you right now to keep your name. To guard, to protect, to keep you in my life.

And if you've never asked Jesus into your life just tell him,

Lord, come into my life. Lord. Come into my life. Give me your power to keep your Word and to cling to your name. Please fill me with your Spirit because I can't do it on my own. Make me faithful like the church in Philadelphia I pray, in Jesus' name, amen.