

Revelation 3:7-9

7 “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.

Verse 7-8a

7 “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.

- Jesus alone has the authority to open and shut doors-no one can resist what he determines.
- So what is this open door? There are many thoughts on this but I want to discuss the 2 answers I believe make the most sense and line up scripturally.

1. The door is Christ.

In John 10:9 it says, “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.”

- The word gate here is translated to mean the same as the word door in Revelation 3:8. This means that one must enter heaven only through Jesus. This truth is also supported in John 14:6 where Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
- The important thing to understand is that there is an open door to God in Jesus Christ and no man can shut that door! He is the door of salvation and he is the door of access to the mercies and graces of the Father.

- Even if you are imprisoned for your faith and locked behind metal doors, the door to God is wide open through Jesus Christ. The church may lose its possessions but the door to God is still open and provides access to the riches of heaven which include; peace, comfort, strength, grace, mercy and many others, but most importantly we have God’s presence.
- These Jews in Philadelphia could not get to heaven their way and neither can we. When Jesus died and rose again for the cleansing of our sins he shut the door to the Old Testament rituals and ceremonies.
- Please understand that this does not mean we cannot learn from the Old Testament and that it is outdated. No, Christ is pictured throughout all of scripture and all scripture is, *“God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”* (2 Timothy 3:16)
- What this statement means is that once Christ died for our sins, there was no need for blood sacrifices anymore because Jesus had provided the one and only acceptable sacrifice once and for all.

2. The open door symbolizes the opportunities for service that Christ has opened up for the church of Philadelphia.

- There are several passages in the Bible where the word “door” is used to speak of opportunities to spread the gospel.

2 Corinthians 2:12-13

¹² Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, ¹³ I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

Colossians 4:2-3

² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

- This makes sense with what we have said about the church at Philadelphia, the location of the city and church where 3 countries came together providing a large opportunity for the gospel of Christ to be shared amongst these 3 people groups.

- This church was strategically placed in this location by God. God had given them this great opportunity and no one could shut the door. This is a great reminder for us that when God is moving he cannot be stopped.
- But why did God place before this little church this open door of opportunity? It was because the need was so great! There were many people in these countries that needed to hear the gospel and be saved from their sin.
- Jesus tells us in verse 8 why he chose the church at Philadelphia when he said, *“I know your deeds.”*
- Jesus knew everything about this church; how they lived out their faith and Jesus was pleased. In the letter there is no call for the church to repent. There is no condemnation, there is only commendation as Jesus says I am going to open a door of even greater opportunities of service for you.
- This is a key principle we see in the scriptures. That when we are faithful in serving God with what he has given us, he'll give us more and greater opportunities to serve him.
- However, the opposite of that is also true. When we are not faithful in opportunities we currently have he will not give us more.

Luke 16:10

¹⁰ “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”

- We also see this principle in Matthew 25:14-30 which is the parable of the talents. Remember in this story that two of the men who received bags of gold from their master increased what was given to them and one did not. The master was pleased with the two men who had increased what was given to them but to the one who did nothing the master called him lazy and wicked. He said he could not be trusted with more.

Luke 12:48

⁴⁸ But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

- This principle applies to churches as well as individuals. God gives us as individuals opportunities and he expects us to be faithful.
- The question is for us, What do we do when God opens a door of opportunity for each of us? We should walk through it in obedience and faithfulness!
- Jesus says to them in verse 8, *“I know that you have little strength yet-”*
- This is not a criticism but is actually a reason for praise. This was not a big impressive church, it didn't have large numbers or impressive buildings, but the very fact that it had little physical strength was what helped them depend on the power of God to be effective in their ministry.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

²⁶ Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

2 Corinthians 12:9

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

- It's not wealth, size, abilities, or programs that grow the church. It is the Lord and his great power! It's not that those things are bad either, it's just that we cannot rely on them or trust in them. Jesus is our power to accomplish the tasks he has for us and he can use these things with his power if we submit all of it to his plans and his purposes.
- That acknowledgement of the church of Philadelphia's relationship to God may come in some form in their immediate future or in God's future plan. We must do our best to remember that God is in control and seek to trust him with the outcome of our obedience towards him. Just like the church of Philadelphia.

Revelation 3:9

„I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.

- The Jews- because of their rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah they were not true Jews. Racially, culturally and ceremonially they may have been Jews but those outward things are not what makes a true Jew. It's the acceptance of their Messiah and a transformation in the heart that makes a true Jew.
- These Jews, who were Jew in name only, had not accepted Jesus as their Messiah. These Jews were hindering the work of the church in Philadelphia. They were obviously very critical of the Christians at Philadelphia, accusing them of false teaching and not knowing God.
- But God gives the church encouragement when he says to them in verse 9, *“I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.”*
- God is in charge and one day all who stand against him will be forced to acknowledge the truth! In Isaiah 45:23 and again in Philippians 2:10-11 the scriptures speak of this truth that, *“one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”*
- You see, when we face opposition as Christians, we don't have to worry about getting even or even proving to the opposition that we are right because God will handle it.