

A Letter of Encouragement from Jesus in Philadelphia

Pastor Paul Conway 2023[©]

I. From: To: Subject:

A. From: Jesus

1. **Revelation 1:9**I, **John**, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, **was on the island called Patmos** on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

a. This is all we get. John on Patmos.

B. To: The 7 Churches in Asia

1. **Revelation 1:4** John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

C. Subject

1. **Revelation 1:1** The revelation (**ἀποκάλυψις** *Apocolypse*) of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place.
2. **Revelation 1:3** ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of **this prophecy (Προφητεία. Prophecy)**, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John,

II. JESUS INTRODUCES HIMSELF QUOTING THE OLD TESTAMENT:

A. “And to the **angel [messenger]** 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.

1. Philadelphia has never been excavated, and few statues and inscriptions have been found there.¹
2. **key of David** Dr. David Emanuel “*Every church receiving these letters knew the Old Testament. The idea that the New Testament made the Old Testament irrelevant for us as believers is wrong.*”
3. The whole counsel of God begins with Genesis and ends with Revelation and everything in between fills our life with wisdom, hope insight and guidance.
 - a. **Isaiah 22:20-23** In that day I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and I will clothe him with your robe, and will bind your sash on him, and will commit your authority to his hand. And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And **I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David**. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.
 - b. A time of Tribulation. Assyria would eventually surround Jerusalem
 - c. Eliakim Master of the Palace of King Hezekiah during the time of Isaiah.
 - d. A miracle happened; The Angel of the Lord killed 185,000 in one night (**2 Kings 19:35-37**).
4. The Church of Philadelphia was also surrounded by a dangerous threat
 - a. The city became a Neokropolis, a city with a temple to worship the Emperor of Rome.²
 - b. Martyr’s: **The Martyrdom of Pollycarp 19:1** *So it befel the blessed Pollycarp, who having with those from Philadelphia suffered martyrdom in Smyrna—twelve in all—is especially remembered more than the others by all men, so that he is talked of even by the heathen in every place: for he showed himself not only a notable teacher, but also a distinguished martyr, whose martyrdom all desire to imitate, seeing that it was after the pattern of the Gospel of Christ.*³
5. We are surrounded by a culture that worships the God of this age. He has made the church an enemy that threatens his reign on this world.
6. has the **key of David**, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

III. JESUS HAS OPENED A DOOR FOR YOU NO ONE CAN CLOSE!

A. I know your works, Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut.

1. The LORD wants you to know, HE KNOWS!
 - a. Jesus sees what everyone misses.
 - b. Jesus knows you’re on the edge of a break
 - c. The LORD wants you to know, he knows.

¹ David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1997), 234.

² David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1997), 234.

³ Joseph Barber Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 209.

B. I wonder what open doors surround us?

C. The **“open door”** metaphor in the New Testament sometimes refers to an opportunity to evangelize. Paul wrote to the nearby church at Colosse, “And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message” (Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3).⁴

1. **Colossians 4:3** 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. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.
2. **C.H. Spurgeon:** A man said “I can’t share Christ, I’m not a minister.” Spurgeon asked him “What do you do for work?” the man said “I’m an train engineer”. Spurgeon replied “Is the man who shovels the coal a Christian? Ask him and if not, start with him.”

IV. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

A. In the hour you feel like you have “little Power” keep persevering

1. A Champion is someone that got up just one more time than the other guy who was also in pain.

B. Peter’s Denial of Knowing Jesus to protect himself is an example of denying his name.

C. Verses on not keeping the faith: **Titus 1:6 1 Timothy 5:8**

V. THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

A. **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.**

1. **Ignatius to the Philadelphians: vs 6.** But if any one propound Judaism unto you, hear him not: for it is better to hear Christianity from a man who is circumcised than Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either the one or the other speak not concerning Jesus Christ, I look on them as tombstones and graves of the dead, whereon are inscribed only the names of men⁵
2. **The closed door of fellowship is God’s gateway to the open door of community, “The Church.”**

VI. 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.

A. To Be Kept

- a. **Numbers 6:24 “The Lord Bless you and Keep you.”**
- b. They kept his word and his name. Now he will keep them from the trial to come.
- c. They will not be touched by that which touches others.⁶

VII. I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

A. **1 Corinthians 9:25** Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

1. Apollo and Daphne (The Myth of the Laurel Crown)

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

A. Pillars hold up under massive stress

1. Three to four people could hold arms around big pillars
2. Tacitus *Annals* 2.47 That same year twelve famous cities of Asia fell by an earthquake in the night, so that the destruction was all the more unforeseen and fearful. Nor were there the means of escape usual in such a disaster, by rushing out into the open country, for there people were swallowed up by the yawning earth. Vast mountains, it is said, collapsed; what had been level ground seemed to be raised aloft, and fires blazed out amid the ruin.
3. The capitol of the US Senate was renovated in the mid 1800’s. They had to remove the pillars and make new ones because they were not strong enough for the weight.
4. Biblical Perseverance, “To Overcome” means to bear up under the weight placed upon you.

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

⁴ Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 274–275.

⁵ Joseph Barber Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 154.

⁶ David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol. 52A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1997), 240.