



**Philadelphia
The Revived Missionary Church
Revelation 3:7-13**

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The last two churches we have been to have been a bit of a downer for us. The first church in Thyatira was doing some things right but the false doctrine and the spirit of Jezebel was an overwhelming blot on that church. Then we came to the church in Sardis, where they were working to correct the issues of the previous church and only successfully made things worse by having a spiritually dead church. No kudos for them from the Lord.



Both churches, as we learned, are still around today and both have been promised to have some who escape in the rapture, and others who don't.

Now we come to the next church in the circuit being outlined to John. The church in Philadelphia. This is not the church in Philadelphia PA, but there are some churches there who would meet the standard outlined by the Lord to be included with this church.

This is the model of a church that those who still give primacy to the word today, want to be compared with. The revived missionary church that began to arise in the last part of the 18th century.

As we leave Sardis, we would continue southeast on the main road and remain in the valley we are in. This city was on two major roads and wound up being called the gateway to the east.

It was situated at the eastern end of a broad valley alongside the Cogamis River, tributary of the Hermus. It was on a rising hill that connected the Hermus Valley with Mount Tamolus and was strategically located both militarily and for trade routes. Its volcanic soil was extremely fertile and ideal for growing grapes. (Osborne 2002, 184)

Vulcanism points to it is also being earthquake country and like its neighboring city in Sardis, was also destroyed in the earthquake of 17AD. Per Tacitus, Twelve cities total were destroyed in that quake.

It derived its name from Attalus II, 159–138 B.C., whose truth and loyalty to his brother Eumenes won him the epithet Philadelphus...The intention of its founder was to make it a centre of the Græco-Asiatic civilisation and a means of spreading the Greek language and manners in the eastern parts of Lydia and in Phrygia. It was a missionary city from the beginning, founded to promote a certain unity of spirit, customs, and loyalty within the realm, the apostle of Hellenism in an Oriental land. It was a successful teacher. (Ramsay 1904, 391-392)

Of course, the name deals with brotherly love.

Today, the city of Alasehir sits at the site. As a result, there are few ruins to examine since the city has been continuously lived in.

The earthquakes produced a lot of fear in those who lived there. Per Strabo, in 20 AD many still lived outside of town because of the fear of falling structures even at the time John is writing in 90 AD.

The fear was further enhanced by another earthquake in 60 AD that destroyed Laodicea nearby. This city and church also had to deal with an out of touch emperor, Domitian, the same one who exiled John to Patmos.

In the kind of ill-advised move that the powerful can make, the emperor required grape growing empire-wide to be reduced in half—most likely, it is thought by historians, as a way to force the growing of corn for his armies. This rather foolish law had particularly devastating effect on places like Philadelphia, which were largely dependent on vineyards for their livelihood. It appears to have fostered a strong sense of betrayal among the people, who had always been very pro-emperor. In a variety of ways much of this history makes sense of some of the data in our letter. (Fee 2011, 50-51)

Philadelphia Background

- A missionary city for Hellenism.
- Fear and dread of another disastrous earthquake.
- Citizens lived in the country and refused to live in town because of fear.



- City received a new name, more than once.

Just like in Smyrna, Jesus will have nothing bad to say about this church.

Revelation 3:7–8

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: ‘I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have followed My word, and have not denied My name.’ (NASB 2020)

Jesus continues to point back to chapter 1 and the vision John reported of the glorified Christ. He begins with reminding this church that He is holy.

Jesus is indeed holy, but He is also the one who was especially set apart belonging totally to God. Because He is holy, that means anything He says is holy since He is God and His words must be obeyed. John proved in his gospel that Jesus is God, and now he continues to build on that theme.

Jesus’ identification of Himself as “He who is holy” reveals a direct claim to deity. Christ possesses the holy and sinless nature of God. Because Christ is holy, His church must be holy. (MacArthur 2007, 88)

Who is true. Since Jesus is indeed holy, He is God, then He is also, indeed true. His words are truth. The Greek word that Jesus uses here, ἀληθινός (alēthinos), “pertaining to being in accord with what is true, true...real, genuine, authentic, real.” (Arndt, et al. 2000, 43)

Jesus is holy, it is part of who He is, and He is the real deal, authentic and transparent. What you see is what you get. There is nothing hidden and no false masks at all as it pertain to Jesus.

We live everyday of our life in a world filled with lies and half-truth. The culture would have us believe that there is nothing wrong with this lie here or that one there. All political parties lie to us all of the time. We struggle to find truth, especially during lying/election season.

Jesus, who we are to be like, is truth. This should not surprise us, in His final briefing before going to the cross, Jesus made certain that Thomas should have no doubt at all.

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (ESV)

We are to reflect Him to the world as His imagers. That means that as believers, we should have a reputation for integrity. The culture though mitigates against that as it works to put us into its mold which includes situational ethics rather than Biblical ethics.

This church in Philadelphia is one that has integrity and they have been persecuted for that, but they have persevered though it and continue moving forward with the Lord.

Jesus is holy, He is God and as such, He is truth.

He has the key of David (Administrative responsibility for Judah), who opens doors, and no one will shut and who shuts, and no one opens. To understand this, we need to be conversant with the Old Testament.

This comes to us right from the book of Isaiah.



Isaiah has been instructed by the Lord to go and address Shebna, the steward (Prime Minister) who is in charge of the King's household. Shebna had a rather inflated sense of his own worth and Isaiah has been sent by the Lord to announce judgment on him. Shebna thought he was the force behind King Hezekiah, but he really was not. God was.

After announcing to him that God will depose him, Isaiah further related that Eliakim would be taking over his position. After that announcement he then tells Shebna:

Isaiah 22:22

"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." (ESV)

Jesus is telling us this will no longer be a delegated duty in the coming Kingdom as Jesus states He now has that responsibility. He has complete control of the royal household, hint, that's us.

In view that Jesus is holy, He is God and He is truth, we can be comforted that He is the one who controls the royal household and the access the household has. "It means the undisputed authority to admit or exclude from the New Jerusalem...The language of Isaiah is used to present Christ as the Davidic Messiah with absolute power to control entrance to the heavenly kingdom." (Mounce 1997, 100)

We will see examples of this authority later in Revelation.

This is a church that has nothing bad going on in it. Jesus is beginning His letter to this church with encouragement. Even though this church may seem to be struggling as they minister on behalf of the Lord, Jesus is letting them know He is the one who is in control of and distributing to them all the resources they would ever need.

They need encouragement to continue to persevere and Jesus starts with it at the very beginning of the letter.

Revelation 3:8

"I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have followed My word, and have not denied My name." (NASB 2020)

Nothing new in the beginning of this statement, we already know that as the head of the churches, Jesus is aware of those deeds, and the motivations behind them, being done on His behalf in all the churches. Because of their deeds, he has placed in front of this church, an open door for ministry. They have a door for missionary evangelism that is wide open, Jesus has just said so. And all they must do is by faith, walk through.

1 Corinthians 16:8-9

"But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." (NKJV)

Paul doesn't say what the door is other than there are those not wanting him to do through it. Evangelism, taking new ground away from the enemy tends to do that.

God is in the business of opening and closing doors. Our job, to be so tight with Jesus, that we know when He opens one so we can step through it in faith.

Here at Calvary Chapel, we know we have an open door. God provided a place for us to meet, God has provided our needs, and He is the one who is building His church. Is there opposition? Yes, there really is.



Putting a work for the Lord in Hobe Sound has been and is still being met with opposition from the enemy. Satan likes having a few dead churches here and there, but when you stand one up to take souls away from him and into the Kingdom, he fights. The Lord though has made a way for us and He has opened the door, and we, by faith, just keep walking through doors as He opens them up for us.

When we say yes, that is when He shows up and the miracles start happening.

The Lord is the one who opened up the door for us to meet here in Hobe Sound. He provided a place to for us to meet, and He has also opened the door for Calvary Chapel to multiply the ministry reach via the internet. Last Sunday, we were blessed once again by all who came in person. Online, we have been joined by 191 via You Tube, and 77 via Facebook. In that number are those who are unable to go to church because of physical limitations, as well as those who are curious.

The Lord is the one who does this since we are not in control of it at all. We intend to remain faithful to the word, and He is the one, not Google, providing the search results.

I really cannot explain it. All I can do is point to Jesus.

Our goal, to keep going through those doors He's opening for us. Yes, we do see issues from time to time with the way we are treated. Calvary Chapel is currently not permitted to advertise on Facebook or Google. But the Lord is the one who continues to make a way and to provide for us. Pray for us as we would like to further expand ministry here in Hobe Sound. We would love to have a building for Sunday, the Midweek Bible Study, as well as to enable us to do other ministries as well. We would love to expand from podcasting to radio as He leads. We are also praying for a low power FM station so we can have solid teaching available because we want to make disciples.

We have also had a small door open to us of food donations which we have now been able to bless others with by helping to feed them.

We want to be able to see those open doors and then have the faith to walk through them. Jesus is letting this church know that the open door they have walked through, He will keep open for them.

This is a picture of the missionary church and when we think of that, we think in terms of some of our local body, going out to reach others. But there are also now those who are coming into our nation as missionaries as well.

By the way, yes, we would love to also be involved in doing short term mission trips. We also want to remain faithful to Him and His people which means, we also love and support the people of Israel. We do indeed take the words of Genesis 12:3 seriously.

Everyday Jesus opens up doors for us, and He also closes them as well. Having a door closed on you is tough but necessary.

In my life, I have experienced having a door closed, I really liked doing Christian radio in Austin TX, but the Lord closed that door and wanted me in Florida.

There were things I needed to learn and because I am incredibly stubborn, even though I was praying and asking for direction and guidance from the Lord, He had to do it by having my day job position be eliminated pretty much forcing the issue. And He has done that with me twice.

He has done this, in order to make me ready and willing to do what I said I would do, more than once. Is it scary, yes.



What doors are being opened and closed for you today?

Jesus is the one who, as we will see later in this letter, not only opens the door but supplies the power and the outcomes.

Oh, and yes, the enemy will attack us to try and take us down since he prefers for us not to go through any door at all.

Our job, to remain faithful in the midst of whatever is going on and ask Him to open up the next door. Remember though, the enemy can also impersonate and make something look very attractive like an open door from the Lord, when it really isn't.

When the door opens, and it is in response to prayer and it is clear, start walking, look to Him. Asking Him for confirmation is ok. Gideon did it, twice, and the Lord still used him.

But Ken, I am now too old for that kind of thing. The Lord would ask this, "How big is your God?"

Does God only open doors for those who are young? No. He opens doors all the time and age is not the issue, the issue is are you being faithful and available, and see that door open in front of you. Age really has nothing to do with it. There was some guy named Abraham who argued with God about being too old, and that did not stop God from using him. Moses and Aaron were called and began their ministry as octogenarians.

Exodus 7:6-7

"Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh." (NKJV)

There was a young man who was a servant of Moses who was not commissioned into ministry (per Josephus) until he was 85 years old, Joshua. Named a combat commander at 85 years of age and then leading troops all over Israel well into his 90's. Wow.

Then there is Abraham, he was 75 when God called him to go to Canaan. Abraham was a wee bit stubborn and finally fully surrendered.

Genesis 17:1

"When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless," (ESV)

About the commands.

- Walk before me.
 - Behave or walk with your face turned towards me.
 - The implication is this is to be a lifestyle.
- ...and be blameless.
 - Be perfect without any blemish, without any imperfection, complete, sound .
 - Again, a lifestyle.

As you study the life of Abraham, you discover that he considered himself to be...

- Too old
- Too disobedient
- Passed over
- On the shelf
- In time out



But at 99, now God can use him because...he is no longer in the way.

Now he can walk on through the door he was invited to go through 24 years earlier.

Revelation 3:8–9

“I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have followed My word, and have not denied My name. Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.” (NASB 2020)

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have living inside of the us, the God of the universe in the person of the Holy Spirit. He tells us, we have a little power. The word translated power in the Greek is δύναμιν (dunamin).

When Alfred Nobel invented a method to make mining easier, he took the word and named his new invention, dynamite. A little power indeed. This is not a large church, but they are making a massive impact because they have an open door which Jesus promises to keep open for them.

In the face of persecution, most likely from the local synagogue as some who were attending there became believers and were then excommunicated, this church has continued to follow His word and have not denied Jesus.

The pressure of the culture imposed from Rome would be to conform and place a pinch of incense on the altar of Caesar and then say Caesar is Lord. The pressure from the synagogue is on those Jewish believers in the body and it comes with a loss of everything to include business and family as they are excommunicated for Jesus. Yet this small group of believers has remained faithful.

They did not move to a new method of church growth by watering down the gospel, or by making the gospel more culturally acceptable. They did not let Jezebel in the door at all and dead religion simply does not work for them.

This is a group of believers who believe what David wrote.

Psalms 34:4–9

“I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!” (ESV)

They are fully in, and Jesus knows it and is fully in with them as well.

Here is the really exciting part of that. Remember that synagogue that has been giving them a hard time? They believe they are the ones with a corner on God. But Jesus calls them “the synagogue of Satan.”

They believe they are truly followers of the Lord and have the answer, but Jesus tells this church, not really. Jesus calls them liars. In fact, some of them who are actively involved in this, will find out the truth of who Messiah is and will become believers as well. This is important for us even today, to realize.

There are progressive worldly churches all over the place these days. Some are in the camp of Jezebel, others are into dead religion, and there are way too many who have moved to Laodicea. We will talk more about that next time.



I have been involved in churches who were deep into fighting the spirit of Jezebel. This is something every church today needs to be aware of and prepared for. This scheme of Satan shows up “in the massive increase of pornography and sexual temptation. We see it in the militant spirit of abortion, which ties in with pagan idolatry. We see it in the rise of radical feminism, which is dead set against all male authority. We see it in the new fascination with sorcery and witchcraft. And we see it in the attempt to silence prophetic voices in the land. Her schemes may look a little different, but Jezebel has the same mission: to transform the spiritual fabric of the nation and turn us away from God.” (Brown 2019, 12)

We talked about the Zombie church last time. I have also been in a few of those. Dead religion starts off innocently as a list of dos and don'ts to help you be more like Jesus.

That list may simply be suggestions, but eventually it turns into doctrine. The opposite of that is what we will discuss when we get to Laodicea and the church of 21st Century Western Culture. What's in it for me. All of these are an ongoing fight today in every church.

If that church has fully moved to Thyatira, Sardis, or Laodicea, then, as they persecute the believers in Philadelphia, they too would fall under the monicker, “the Synagogue (Church) of Satan”. If a church has thrown Jesus out, then who is left? We see multitudes today, coming out of and being saved from those backgrounds today.

Jesus is not condemning all Jews here either, just those who are involved in persecuting the church here in Philadelphia. Some of them are still part of the remnant and will be saved.

Because of their faithfulness in the face of persecution and sticking with the great commission no matter what, Jesus has a promise.

He promises to evacuate this church from the planet before the Tribulation begins.

Revelation 3:10–11

“Because you have kept My word of perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of the testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who live on the earth. I am coming quickly; hold firmly to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.” (NASB 2020)

Underline this as this is straight from Jesus, for this church, because of their perseverance and faithfulness, they will be kept from the Tribulation. Jesus is personally telling them He intends to come and get them before it starts. We call this the rapture of the church.

Jesus promised this and John remembers it.

John 14:1–3

“Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.” (NLT)

Jesus promises to remove His followers once everything is ready. Now, here in Revelation, He reminds this church and promises them that perseverance in the face of persecution pays. Being faithful to Jesus no matter what has a bonus plan that is out of this world.

The one that we are faithfully serving, personally promises that He will keep us from the Tribulation. He is coming to take us home to be with Him. “The only legitimate conclusion from this verse, therefore, is that genuine believers will be delivered from this coming hour of judgment of the earth by Christ Himself, as He returns to take them by resurrection and rapture to be with Him, in fulfillment of His age-long promise



(John 14:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 15:51–53; Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; etc.).” (Morris 1983)

He is coming to snatch us away. This is the next thing on the prophetic clock and when this event takes place, then everything begins to roll downhill. The Tribulation is for those who “live on the earth.” It is exclusively for earth dwellers, for those who claim this as their home. This will show up nine more times in this book.

This is not our home. WE are not earth dwellers. We are members of the royal family, and He is busy preparing a place for us to be with Him.

Jesus says, “I am coming quickly” and this church was persevering and waiting patiently for that day.

The Lord’s coming for them is compared to an imminent event, one which will come suddenly without announcement. In view of this expectation, they are to hold fast to their testimony for Christ in order to receive their reward at His coming. The expression “quickly” is to be understood as something which is sudden and unexpected, not necessarily immediate. (Walvoord 2008, 87)

Indeed, the rapture of the church is imminent. Jesus is coming for us soon, even today.

Since the church is the body, of which Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), the bride, of which He is the Bridegroom (1 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23), the object of His love (Eph. 5:25), the branch of which He is the Root and Stem (John 15:5), the building, of which He is the Foundation and Cornerstone (1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19–22), there exists between the believer and the Lord a union and a unity. The believer is no longer separated from Him, but brought into the closest oneness with Him. If the church is in the seventieth week, she is subjected to the wrath, judgment, and indignation which characterizes the period, and because of her oneness with Christ, He, likewise, would be subjected to that same visitation. This is impossible according to 1 John 4:17, for He can not be brought into judgment again. Inasmuch as the church has been perfected and delivered from all judgment (Rom. 8:1; John 5:24; 1 John 4:17), if she is subjected to judgment again the promises of God would be of none effect and the death of Christ would be ineffectual. Who would dare to assert that the death of Christ could fail to accomplish its purpose? While the members may be experimentally imperfect and need experimental cleansing, yet the church, which is His body, has a perfect standing in Christ and could not need such cleansing. The nature of the testing in the seventieth week, as stated in Revelation 3:10, is not to bring the individual to cleansing, but to reveal the degradation and need of the unregenerate heart. The nature of the church prevents such a testing. (Pentecost 1958, 200)

1 Thessalonians 4:15–17

“For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” (ESV)
And I can’t wait.

Revelation 3:12–13

“The one who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; 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 out of heaven from My God, and My new name. The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (NASB 2020)



Remember, this was a city familiar with earthquakes. One of the first things to fall over are usually unsupported pillars. Most of the temples in town most likely collapsed as the pillars fell over and then all of the weight on top crashed down.

The overcomer in this church is one who has held fast, remained faithful exercising what little power they have as they go about the Master's business. Being a pillar does not mean we hold busy holding up a building somewhere. A pillar represents permanence and stability. Many times, they were carved and set up to honor someone. "The marvelous promise Christ makes to believers is that they will have an eternal place of honor in the temple of God." (MacArthur 2007, 95)

He says we will never go out from it, meaning there will never be an end to our joy and delight from being in the presence of the Lord. This is serious security, no more earthquakes, but secure with the Lord.

For those who overcome, there should be no question about who it is we belong to. I remember as a kid, the first time I got something new, I would look for a place to write my name on it. It might be in the shoe or in the hat, but I wanted to make sure it didn't get legs and walk off. It was my "mark" of ownership.

Jesus intends to do the same.

Revelation 3:12b

"...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 out of heaven from My God, and My new name." (NASB 2020)

This is absolute assurance to the overcomer, of eternal life. "The threefold occurrence of onoma ("name") is impressive and amounts to a threefold assurance of his identity with God. To have "the name of My God" was equivalent to belonging to God, being endowed with divine power (Moffatt)." (Thomas 1992, 293)

Then there the name of the city of My God. That means citizenship and all the rights that go with it in the New Jerusalem. The overcomer belongs to God, is endowed with His power and is a citizen of the New Jerusalem. This is pretty nice.

One more name, the new name of Jesus. This means a full revelation to the overcomer of who Jesus is, knowing and understanding His character fully.

Jesus closes with an invitation to the other churches to listen and pay attention to what it is the Spirit is saying here.

This is a picture of many churches today. This is the true church, the church that is following Jesus. Have you noticed that with each church age things seemed to get worse and worse? If you study the Kings of Judah, you also see the same progression coming to King Manasseh who was serious bad news. He did repent, but what he did and sponsored was why exile took place. But there was one last revival before the last series of bad kings. There was King Josiah. He is a type of this church.

After seeing the apostolic church spin down over the years to a dead religious husk, we have a last gasp revived church trying to finish out the Great Commission.

It is the true church that is raptured. The true church is all over the place. There are some who reside in the Zombie Church, there are quite a few who hang out in the Catholic Church. Then there are those churches, who we will talk about next time, that there may not be anyone saved in them at all. Finally, there are the few churches today that are remaining true to what it is the Lord has called us to do. We



have a little power, we rely on the Holy Spirit to help us serve, and we have an open door for ministry to which we are remaining faithful.

We do this, because Jesus is coming to take us away any minute. Are you ready?

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC’s of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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