

“The Church in Philadelphia”

Revelation 3:7-13

Introduction: As we come to the sixth church in the church age, we understand their nature by their name. Philadelphia, according to Strong’s, means “brotherly love”. They were a church that allowed the love of God the Father (I John 4:19- “*We love him, because he first loved us*”), God the Son (John 13:34- “*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*”), and God the Spirit (Romans 5:5- “*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*”) to radiate through their lives. As a result, God set before them an open door that no man could shut. The Lord helped them reach sinners by the multitudes because they displayed the love of God and utilized this important resource to reach the world. Let us look at this church and learn the vital lessons for reaching the field for our Father.

1. The Announcement v. 7- “*And to the angel...*”
 - a. A Divine Announcement Revelation 1:11- “*I am Alpha and Omega*”
 - b. A Direct Announcement- “*to the angel*”
2. The Angel v. 7- “*the angel of*”
 - a. The Meaning of an Angel
 - (1) “angel” (Strong’s)- “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, a messenger from God”
 - (2) “angel” (Webster’s)- “A minister of the gospel, who is an ambassador of God. Literally, a messenger; one employed to communicate news or information from one person to another at a distance.”
 - b. The Message of an Angel- “*write*” Revelation 1:11- “*write in a book*”
3. The Assembly v. 7- “*the church in Philadelphia write*”
 - a. The Explanation of Philadelphia
 - (1) “The city of Philadelphia itself, known in modern times as Alasehir, is located in Lydia some twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis and was named after a king of Pergamos, Attalus Philadelphus, who built the city.” (Walvoord)
 - (2) “Philadelphia was situated in a strategic place on the main route of the Imperial Post from Rome to the East, and thus was called ‘the gateway to the East’.” (Wiersbe)
 - (3) “It was also called ‘little Athens’ because of the many temples in the city. The church was certainly located in a place of tremendous opportunity.” (Wiersbe)
 - b. The Era of Philadelphia- A.D. 1700-1900

Body: The Philadelphia church age is known as one of the greatest movements of evangelism and missions ever in history. It was during this era that George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards saw the first great awakening. Great preachers like Shubal Stearns, Jabez Swan, Samuel Harris, and others saw God do a work that no man could stop. The

Lord utilized their love to thrust His church further west into America, and beyond. Notice some of the great attributes of such a great church age as Philadelphia.

I. The Overseer of the Church v. 7- *“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth”*

A. His Attribute- *“he that is holy”*

1. II Corinthians 5:21- *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin...”*
2. I Peter 2:22- *“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”*
3. I John 3:5- *“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin”*
4. Hebrews 4:15- *“...but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”*
5. Hebrews 7:26- *“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens”*

B. His Authenticity- *“he that is true”* John 15:1

1. “True means that He is the original, not a copy; authentic and not manufactured.” (Simpson)
2. “There is a difference between ‘holy’ and ‘true’. Holy means He is right in His character. True means He is right in His conduct.” (Simpson)

C. His Authority- *“he that hath the key of David”* Matthew 16:18-19

1. The Key of Resurrection Revelation 1:18
2. The Key of Royalty Revelation 3:7
 - a. “Here the allusion seems to be to Isaiah 22:22 where, speaking of Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, it is recorded that ‘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’.” (Walvoord)
 - b. “Eliakim had the key to all the treasures of the king, and when he opened the door it was opened, and when he closed the door it was closed. Christ, the antitype of Eliakim, has the key to truth and holiness as well as to opportunity, service, and testimony.” (Walvoord)

D. His Ability- *“he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth”*

II. The Occupation of the Church vs. 8-11- *“I know thy works...”*

A. Their Door v. 8- *“behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it”*

1. The Setting of the Door- *“behold, I have set before thee an open door”*
 - a. “In the New Testament, an ‘open door’ speaks of opportunity for ministry.” (Wiersbe)

- b. “Christ is the Lord of the harvest and the Head of the church, and it is He who determines where and when His people shall serve.” (Wiersbe)
 - c. Acts 14:27, I Corinthians 16:9, II Corinthians 2:12, Colossians 4:3
 - 2. The Shutting of the Door- *“and no man can shut it”*
- B. Their Diligence v. 8- *“for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name”*
 - 1. Concerning their Capacity of Strength- *“for thou hast a little strength”* Revelation 3:2
 - 2. Concerning their Consecration in the Scriptures- *“and hast kept my word”*
 - 3. Concerning their Conversation about their Saviour- *“and hast not denied my name”*
- C. Their Deceivers v. 9- *“them of the synagogue of Satan”*
 - 1. They have a False Witness v. 9- *“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie”* Romans 2:28-29
 - a. “Four of the seven churches—Satan was found in them.” (Simpson)
 - b. “There’s going to be impostors, liars in every church who will ridicule, lie, make fun, seek to do you harm.” (Simpson)
 - c. “How were these Jews opposing the church at Philadelphia? For one thing, by excluding Jewish believers from the synagogue. Another weapon was probably false accusation, for this is the way the unbelieving Jews often attacked Paul.” (Wiersbe)
 - 2. They will have a Forced Worship v. 9- *“behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee”* Genesis 42:6, Isaiah 60:14, Philippians 2:9-11
- D. Their Dedication v. 10- *“Because thou hast kept....”*
 - 1. The Endurance of their Testimony- *“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience”*
 - 2. The Escape from Temptation- *“I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation”*
 - 3. The Extent of the Temptation- *“which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth”*
- E. Their Duty v. 11- *“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”*
 - 1. Need to Look- *“Behold, I come quickly”*
 - 2. Not to Lose- *“hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”*
 - a. The Crown of the Prevailer I Corinthians 9:25-27
 - b. The Crown of the Prudent I Thessalonians 2:19-20
 - c. The Crown of the Prepared II Timothy 4:8
 - d. The Crown of the Pastor I Peter 5:2-4

e. The Crown of the Persecuted Revelation 2:10, James 1:2-3

III. The Overcoming of the Church v. 12- *“Him that overcometh...”*

A. The Position of the Overcomer- *“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God”* Galatians 2:9

1. “It’s not my job to make myself a Christian, that’s God’s job.” (Simpson)
2. “A pillar supports, rather than being supported. There are two classes in every church, those who lift and those who lean.” (Simpson)
3. “The symbolism in this verse would be especially meaningful to people who lived in constant danger of earthquakes: the stability of the pillar, no need to go out or to flee, a heavenly city that nothing could destroy.” (Wiersbe)
4. “Ancient cities often honored great leaders by erecting pillars with their names inscribed on them. God’s pillars are not made of stone, because there is no temple in the heavenly city. His pillars are faithful people who bear His name for His glory.” (Wiersbe)

B. The Presence of the Overcomer- *“and he shall go no more out”*

C. The Penning of the Overcomer- *“and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name”*

1. The Name of the Creator- *“and I will write upon him the name of my God”*
2. The Name of the City- *“and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God”*
3. The Name of the Christ- *“and I will write upon him my new name”*

IV. The Obligation of the Church v. 13- *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

A. The Prerequisites of Hearing- *“He that hath an ear”* Matthew 13:9

B. The Purpose of Hearing- *“let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* Matthew 11:15

Conclusion: It is a blessing to know that the church revived from the Sardis state to the Philadelphian era. Many souls were saved and churches planted because a righteous remnant heeded the warning of the Lord and strengthened the things that remained. Therefore, the Philadelphians had a little strength to accomplish great works for God. They went to their power, and then the Lord thrust them beyond their power. Certainly, it is imperative for us to maintain this type of assembly if we are to continue the great work of God.