"PHILADELPHIA: THE FAITHFUL CHURCH"

Revelation 3:7-13

3-20-2022

INTRODUCTION: Verse 7

***The Lord's blessing is upon those who are faithful!**

Verses 8 - 12 illustrate how Christ blesses a faithful church. Four blessings:

I. He <u>ENTRUSTS</u> the faithful with <u>SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITY</u> (v. 8)

The Lord opens doors:

A. For those who are <u>unable</u> to do so for themselves (v. 8a)

The Lord opens doors:

B. For those who are <u>obedient</u> to His Word (v. 8b)

The Lord opens doors:

C. For those who <u>refuse to deny</u> His Name (v. 8c)

II. He <u>EXALTS</u> the faithful with <u>EVENTUAL HONOR</u> (v. 9)

III. He <u>PROTECTS</u> the faithful from <u>FUTURE TRIBULATION</u> (v. 10)

IV. He <u>REWARDS</u> the faithful with <u>ETERNAL PRIVILEGE</u> (v. 11-12)

A. Eternal Privilege #1 - A <u>Crown</u> (v. 11)

B. Eternal Privilege #2 - A <u>Pillar</u> (v. 12a)

C. Eternal Privilege #3 - A <u>Name</u> (v. 12b)

CONCLUSION: Verse 13

"PHILADELPHIA: THE FAITHFUL CHURCH"

Revelation 3:7-13

3-20-2022

INTRODUCTION: Verse 7

***The Lord's blessing is upon those who are faithful!**

Verses 8 - 12 illustrate how Christ blesses a faithful church. Four blessings:

I. He _____ the faithful with _____ (v. 8)

The Lord opens doors:

A. For those who are _____ to do so for themselves (v. 8a)

The Lord opens doors:

B. For those who are _____ to His Word (v. 8b)

The Lord opens doors:

C. For those who _____ His Name (v. 8c)

II. He _____ the faithful with _____ (v. 9)

III. He _____ the faithful from _____ (v. 10)

IV. He _____ the faithful with _____ (v. 11-12)

A. Eternal Privilege #1 - A _____ (v. 11)

B. Eternal Privilege #2 - A _____ (v. 12a)

C. Eternal Privilege #3 - A _____ (v. 12b)

CONCLUSION: Verse 13

"PHILADELPHIA: THE FAITHFUL CHURCH"

Revelation 3:7-13

3-20-2022

INTRODUCTION: Verse 7

The need for faithfulness today among God's people.

Christ's description of Himself is an encouragement toward faithfulness.

V. 7

"Philadelphia" = Name means "the city of brotherly love"

"He that is holy" =

Holiness is an attribute of Jesus' essence. He does not merely possess holiness - He is holiness.

He did not obtain holiness (like we did) - He is holiness.

He is independently holy! (unlike us who depend upon God to make us holy)

Our Savior is set apart from everything that is not holy and pure.

Christ's glorified description in Rev. 1:14 revealed the blazing whiteness of His holiness.

Christ's unique attribute of holiness reveals Him to be none other than almighty God!

Rev. 15:4a - "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for thou only art holy"

--Jesus is so holy that Isaiah was silenced in shame when he saw Him (cp. Is. 6:1-5; with Jn. 12:41).

--Jesus is so holy that John fell down before him like a dead man after he saw Christ's brilliant glory (Rev. 1:17).

--Jesus is so holy that the unclean earth flees away from His presence when He finally judges the unbelieving dead (Rev. 20:1ff; cp. with Jn. 5:22).

When the disciples looked into the face of Christ, they were staring into the eyes of holiness.

Jesus was the fulfillment of the O.T. high priests and sacrifices, which had to be without spot or blemish.

The martyrs cry out in heaven to the one who is "holy and true" (Rev. 6:10).

Jesus not only tells the truth; He is truth (Jn. 14:6).

--Seeing Christ was seeing Truth:

Jn. 1:14 - "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

--Listening to Christ was hearing Truth:

Jn. 8:32 - "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

As Pilate scornfully asked Christ, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38), he did not realize that he was standing in the presence of the One who was truth.

There is nothing false in Jesus. He is genuine through and through. He is one who can be trusted because He is true!

"Key" - depicts authority or complete control.

Cp. Rev. 1:18 - Christ has full authority over death and hell.

"The key of David" - the authority to unlock the promised future kingdom.

"As authority was given to God's servant Eliakim, over David's house (Is. 22:22), so now Christ in His own right has authority to open and to shut (J.B. Smith, p. 86).

Whatever Jesus does, man cannot undo.

When He opens doors, no one can close them.

When He closes (locks) doors, no one can open them.

***The Lord's blessing is upon those who are faithful!**

Verses 8 - 12 illustrate how Christ blesses a faithful church. Four blessings:

I. He ENTRUSTS the faithful with SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITY (v. 8)

NOTE: The One with the keys (v. 7) can open doors!

An "open door" speaks of opportunity, spiritual opportunity for preaching the gospel.

The Lord opened the door for Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:27 - "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.").

The Lord closed the door at Asia (Acts 16:6 - "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia...")

The Lord opened the door at Ephesis (I Cor. 16:8-9 - "But I will tarry at Ephesus...For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries").

There may be adversaries, but the door stays open until Christ closes it!

A door was opened to Paul at Troas (II Cor. 2:12 - "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord").

When Paul was imprisoned, he requested prayer that God would open more doors to evangelize (Col. 4:3 - "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds").

The door has been open in the USA for over 200 years. Today, opportunity still awaits you to share the gospel. If we do not take advantage, the Lord may have to close it!

"Behold" - an attention-grabbing word; "it means "see for yourself" (middle voice). Our problem often is not open doors, but that we don't see the open doors!

The Lord opens doors:

A. For those who are <u>unable</u> to do so for themselves (v. 8a)

"For" = because. Jesus now gives the reason why He is opening the door for them.

"Little strength" = little power or ability.

For the faithful servants of Christ who may have little human ability, little physical strength - Christ opens doors!

Those Christians who don't have much in terms of resources, influence, etc., usually depend upon Christ more than a church that is self-sufficient (contrast the suffering Smyrna church which Jesus commended with the self-sufficient, fat and sassy Laodicea church which Jesus condemned).

Even though we may at times feel weak, if Jesus gives us an open door, then He will also give us the strength to walk through it!

Martin Luther said it this way: "Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing" (cited in Wiersbe, p. 578).

***The Lord opens doors*:**

B. For those who are <u>obedient</u> to His Word (v. 8b)

"Thou hast kept My Word" - does <u>not</u> mean that everyone in this church owned a Bible.

The word "kept" refers to keeping watch over something; to <u>preserve</u> something.

NOTE: They did not preserve the Word by storing Bibles away somewhere, where dust could not come in contact with it.

They stored the word away in their hearts and preserved the true purpose of the Word: namely, to change lives.

The best way to preserve God's Word is to make it a vital part of your life.

Therefore, the word "kept" refers to how they paid attention to the Word they heard. They obeyed it and in doing so preserved its true meaning for the generations that followed in their steps.

"If ye love Me keep my commandments (Jn. 14:15).

Cp. Mt. 23:13; Mt. 28:20 - "teaching them to <u>observe</u>..."

The Lord opens doors:

C. For those who <u>refuse to deny</u> His Name (v. 8c)

"Hast not denied My name" - There were some distinct occasions in the past when, being put to the test, they did not deny the name of Jesus.

"Deny" - to say "<u>No</u>" To say "I don't know or believe Him"

ILLUS: Peter's denial (Mt. 26:69-75)

Many contemporary Christians in the USA, who are not threatened for their faith and do not with their mouth deny Christ, but do so by their lives (actions).

Cp. Paul's rebuke to the Cretians - Titus 1:16 - "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good word reprobate."

Insincerity of heart is also a denial of Christ
(Mt. 15:8).

Philadelphia was a church that did not bring reproach upon the name of Christ.

They did not profane His holy name (Ezek. 36).

II. He EXALTS the faithful with EVENTUAL HONOR (v. 9)

NOTE: All lying (falsehood) is against the One who is true (v. 7).

These "Jews" were probably Jews physically but not spiritually. (cp. Rom. 2:28 - 29. V. 29 - "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.").

The same people who persecuted the righteous (Mt. 23:30-36), who persecuted the early church (Acts 7; 8:1; 17:5 etc.), who persecuted the church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:9), also persecuted the church at Philadelphia.
NOTE: The connection between persecution and purity. The only churches that Jesus did not have to rebuke are the churches that faced brutal opposition for their faith: Smyrna and Philadelphia.

"Worship" - means to fall down in front of; to prostrate one's self before; to welcome someone with humble respect and reverence.

The honor of the persecuted may not be now, but it will be!

One day in Heaven, those "Jews" who persecuted the believers at Philadelphia will be resurrected at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20) and will be escorted over to those they opposed.

At this time (before being cast into the Lake of Fire), they will "acknowledge their error and at the same time testify to the faithfulness of those whom they persecuted" (J.B. Smith, p. 87).

III. He PROTECTS the faithful from FUTURE TRIBULATION (v. 10)

Evidently, life had become pressure-filled for the Philadelphia church (opposition from the Pseudo-Jews, etc.). Through it all, they remained patient.

"The word of My patience" = a reference to how they with enduring patience upheld and obeyed God's Word as the Apostle John did (Rev. 1:9). Because they had preserved or guarded ("Kept") such words in their hearts, Jesus promises to preserve or guard ("Keep") them from the coming trials of the Tribulation.

The way in which Jesus uses the word “kept” in the first part of the verse is exactly how He uses the word in the second half of the verse. This verse does not support the position of pretribulationalism.

Rev. 3:10 οτι **ετηρησας** τον λογον της υπομονης μου καγω σε τηρησω εκ της ωρας του πειρασμου της μελλουσης ερχεσθαι επι της οικουμενης ολης πειρασαι τους κατοικουντας επι της γης

"From" (ek) = When used with “tereo” the phrase means to guard from. It does not mean spacial removal from but protection through.

Compare John 17:15 “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.“

Joh 17:15 ουκ ερωτω ινα αρης αυτους εκ του κοσμου αλλ ινα **τηρησης αυτους εκ** του πονηρου

Yes, before the fire from Heaven falls, we (like Lot) will be removed, but this verses is not teaching God’s removal of His children before the time of tribulation, but rather His protection of them during that time.

(SEE II Pet. 2:4-9. V. 9 - "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished").
"Temptations" = singular (temptation) (cp. Rev. 3:10)
"Temptation" - a word that always refers to a solicitation to do evil.

The hour of temptation refers to the time when Satan severely tempts the world to deny God to follow the Beast (Anti-Christ).

"Temptation" is connected with the ideas of tribulation or persecution (cp. Lk. 8:13 with Mt. 13:21, Mk. 4:17).

The word "Hour" ( ) according to our usual usage refers to a lit. period of 60 minutes. However, the word is also used of the time of a specific occurrence.

John said that we are living in the last time (hour) (I Jn. 2:18), which refers to the final time period from Pentecost to Rapture.

The "Hour of temptation" refers to a specific time period (not necessarily 60

minutes or 24 hours) when God wraps up the age we are now living in.

Although Mystery Babylon will be destroyed in exactly one hour (Rev. 18:10, 17, 19), the time of testing that comes upon the whole world will last for several years and particularly a large part of the last 3 1-2 years when Satan is unleashed with full fury, knowing that his time is short (Rev. 12:12).

However, the Lord Jesus said that those days of tribulation will be "cut short" (amputated) for the elect's sake. It will evidently be the rapture that cuts those days short.

Mt 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

The specific reference is not to general temptation but to a specific time - the Time of Jacob's Trouble; and to a universal time - because it involves "them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 12:12; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2, 8).

Upon the heels of the Lord's promise of deliverance (v. 10) is the promise of His coming (v. 11). This proves:

1. Although John originally wrote to seven literal churches in his day, the message applies to faithful churches still existing immediately before the Tribulation and His second coming

   NOTE: Similar implications of the Lord's return:

   --To Ephesus - "I will come unto thee quickly" (Rev. 2:5)

   --To Pergamum - "I will come unto thee quickly" (2:16).

   --To Thyatira - "Hold fast till I come" (2:25).

   --To Sardis - "I will come on thee as a thief" (3:3).

2) God's faithful people will endure tribulation, but will be brought spiritually safely through it prior to the rapture.

IV. He REWARDS the faithful with ETERNAL PRIVILEGE (v. 11-12)

A. Eternal Privilege #1 - A <u>Crown</u> (v. 11)

"Hold fast" - to grasp onto something; not to let go.

Jesus' exhortation is to cling on the "the faith of our fathers"; don't let go of your confidence; don't give up your convictions; don't loosen up on your moral and spiritual purity!

"No man" - lit. <u>no one</u> (whether man or Satan)

"Crown" - not a royal crown (diadema) but a victor's crown (sephanos); a <u>reward</u> (cp. I Cor. 3:14) for being faithful and finishing your course.

The reference to some "man" taking your crown does not mean he takes it for himself; rather, he keeps you from getting it.

Some people (being tools of Satan) live to keep others from getting crowns. They themselves are not getting any, so they are out trying to throw devilish rocks in the path of those running in the race of God so that no one else is rewarded.

B. Eternal Privilege #2 - A <u>Pillar</u> (v. 12a)

"Pillar" = conveys the idea of stability and permanence (Rienecker, p. 821).

ILLUS: how pillars are often the only remains of ancient architecture.

(cp. the Church as "the pillar and ground of the truth" - I Tim. 3:15)

Cp. Gal. 2:9, where Peter, James, and John are called pillars because of their stability in the faith.

The following clause supports the idea of permanence (". . . and he shall go no more out").

The faithful will have the privilege of being permanently close to the LORD!

Who is the faithful? Answer: "The overcomer"

Who is the overcomer? Answer: The true Christian.

The "Temple" is a reference to the LORD, because in the New Jerusalem there is no temple (Rev. 21:22 - "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.").

The point is: We will permanently be where Jesus is throughout eternity!

Permanence:

"When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,

We've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun"

C. Eternal Privilege #3 - A <u>Name</u> (v. 12b)

"The name of my God" - the name of the Father will be permanently inscribed (most likely on the forehead like that of the faithful 144,000 - Rev. 14:1)

(Contrast this name with the number representing the name of the Anti-christ - Rev. 13:16-18).

<u>Not</u> a reference to the Millennium, but to the eternal state, which comes after the 1,000 year kingdom.

The New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1ff) comes after the 1,000 year kingdom and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:1-15).

"To a city (Philadelphia) that had experienced devastating earthquakes which causes people to flee into the countryside and to establish temporary dwellings there, the promise of permanence within the New Jerusalem would have a special meaning" (Rienecker, citing Mounce, p. 821).

"The name of the city" - What is the name?

Ezek. 48:35 ("It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there") gives the answer - "The LORD (Yahweh) is there!"

SEE Rev. 21:2-3.

"My new name" = In addition to Jesus writing His Father's name on you, He will write His own name. Why? Because "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30).

Jesus' name will be a name that is above all names (Phil. 2:9).

Jesus is "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."

"He is King of kings and Lord of lords."

CONCLUSION: Verse 13

Four blessings on a faithful church:

1. Christ entrusts the faithful with spiritual opportunity

2. Christ exalts the faithful with eventual honor

3. Christ removes the faithful from future judgment

4. Christ rewards the faithful with eternal privilege

ILLUS. of faithfulness