

Revelation 3:7-13

Longevity implies stability! How old is your church? WELL 10 yrs old. FBC Justin 125 1st Pres. Denton 160yrs

*The Church at Philadelphia lasted for centuries!

(Ephesus; Smyrna; Pergamum; Thyatira; Sardis and now...)

***Philadelphia**: Youngest of the 7 cities; located on a 800ft hill; panoramic of all the roads; this was a planned city by King Attalus; an outpost/Greek mission to Hellenize conquered barbarian cities of Lydia/Phrygia=**19AD all Gr**. The city = perfectly situated = "Gateway to the East" 25 miles at base of Mt Timolus =volanic region/lush gardens /**vineyards** WINE & sev. earthquakes =a common city; thriving town; trade; education; **a model Greek city** in new territory!

*The perfect place to plant a church....

****There was a church in Philadelphia through the late 1300's** (until overrun Muslim invaders)

Identification: How does Jesus self-identify?

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

-He who is holy, Jesus is attesting again that He is **God!** Only God is holy

-who is true, Jesus is the essence of Truth; He is **Truth!** His Word is truth:-Most real reality/thing! The most genuine, authentic, and indisputable Being in the universe =**Truly God/Truly Man**

-who has the key of David, Jesus is King of Kings; He is **King!**

Key=**Authority & Access** (**Death/hades** =having conquered all sin, all death, & all evil for all time) & the key to the **Davidic Reign** -the Kingdom of God (on earth/i.e. David AND in heaven); Jesus as the righteous King and Judge determines *who* is getting into Heaven =("Lamb's Book of Life" Rev. 13:8; 20:12; 21:27); **Is your name in His Book? Based on Repentance, Saving Faith NOT works...**

-The David Line represents the Throne of Israel which is fulfilled in Jesus who sits on that throne perpetually (as Both a Man and a King). Jesus rules the rule from this throne in Mill. Kingdom:

-Isaiah 9: 7 "Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, to establish and sustain it with justice and righteousness from that time and forevermore". – Ps. 84:3 "David's throne will endure forever" *via* Messiah

-Luke 1:32 The angel Gabriel tells Mary, "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end".

-who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: Jesus as God is in control of all the universe, as Judge and as the Providential Ruler and King. -He is **Sovereign**

-Jesus opens doors of ministry opportunity; **salvation; blessing; help; and spiritual power** – and He opens those 'doors' for His people/Church for His Purposes and only in His timing.

-1 Cor. 16:9 Pauls prays that "a wide door for effective ministry/service has opened to me"

=Jesus is at work to accomplish His will for the Church (**in concert w/their prayer & dependance on the Lord**) to bring about life transformation and His glory in their cultural contexts. **US?**

***What door is the Lord opening in your life for ministry? Obedience? Sacrifice to walk through??**

****What door is the Lord opening here at the WELL for our church to walk through? Vision/sacrif.**

Commendation: (What kind of Church gets affirmed and not rebuked???) Smyrna & Philadelp

This Church is marked by Obedience, Faithfulness, Longevity (legacy of ministry):

=Affirmation & NO rebuke/correction

8 "I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut,

=a **ministry** which is given to them by Jesus for His glory! AND they obey & walk through it! This Church is sensitive the Lord's Voice and leading. They are faithful to hear and follow Him.

Listen to Paul's prayer for open door ministry: - Col. 4:2-4 "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*;³ praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴that I may make it clear in the way that I ought to proclaim it."

-The call to follow Jesus is **NOT** a call to believe an idea/philosophy – a call to hold to a religion... The call to follow is the call to follow a **Person**/a living, dynamic, moving person Who is active and moving toward the **lost**, the least of these, the broken, the hurting, the messy

The call to follow Jesus -*it's a call out of comfort to chaos....(who/what are you following?)*

*The city of Philadelphia's location was ideal to spread the gospel in many regions around them!

because you have a little power, and have followed My word, and have not denied My name.

-The church at Philadelphia has some (power) and influence in that city and in the region because they have not yielded when pushed on; they have not surrendered to the world's influences, or folded under the pressure of the demonic threats by the government or the angry Jewish mob.

-Jesus commends them on their spiritual strength (*you have a little power/have a bit of power*)

Why? The Church of Philadelphia held a High view of **Scripture** (God's Word) -*read it, prayed it, sung it, and preached it* to God's people and the lost in the city without faltering! =**FAITHFUL!!**

⁹Behold, 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.* – Again Jesus calls out the local synagogue, those Jews who were plotting the

destruction of that church. The same type of malicious synagogue was in Smyrna who persecuted the church in that city. Jesus reminds us that just because one calls themselves a Jew, or if they self-identify as Jewish ethnically, racially, religiously, culturally, or nationally...does NOT make them Jews in His eyes!! *The Jewish Jesus, the Lord, King of the Jews gets to decide who is truly Jewish/N*

-Paul says Ro. 2:28 "For he is **not** a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God."

Because of the Love of the Lord and His Word, and because of this church's ministry to the city, faithfully loving their community and living out God's Word faithfully -*even in the face of persecution and hatred* – Jesus prophesies that these violent Jews will eventually come to apologize to the church, seeing the error of their way, and **being saved**. Can God use faithfulness even under persecution to bring conviction on people? -Ro. 12:20 "*But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.*" -The faithful believer/church will demonstrate grace under pressure/persecution which God can use to bring real conviction to that persecutor & to their shame, softening hearts...

In the first century in this shame/honor culture – bowing/kneeling was a sign of defeat & submission. =Love wins!!!! Some of these Jews will be saved bc of the witness of the persecuted church!! **Perhaps this is the open door Jesus is referring to** – God will allow a season of persecution (suffering) that will result in the church's sanctification and the community's salvation!!! God never wastes our pain!

¹⁰ Because you have kept My word of perseverance [instruction to not give up when it's hard], I also will keep you from the hour of the testing [temptation], that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world [-*oikoumene* lit. on the whole inhabited earth]/upon ALL mankind. -

*In recorded history what cataclysm, what global catastrophe has impacted the whole world? -Flood of Genesis ch. 6; 1300's Bubonic Plague/Black Death 200m died; 1918 Spanish Flu 50m died; 2020 COVID 7m died; **Jesus emphasizes that there will be a global judgment (not on Ch.)

-Jesus is pronouncing a blessing upon *this* church (and *all* of the Church who like them remain faithful to Jesus, His Word, and His ministry to the lost world), and He gives another prophecy that His judgment is coming and is sure: "An hour of testing" = a season of divine wrath/judgmt (The divine test is of either repentance to Jesus or rejection of Jesus)-when pressed what choose?

to test those who live on the earth. -This is a worldwide test, a testing that may have taken place throughout different centuries through the plague or war, whatever global catastrophe?? BUT -I believe He is prophetically referring to the last **7 year tribulation** in the end times....Rev. 8-19

(That Jesus promises to spare the **true**/remnant Church from divine wrath (**Rapture??**) =though the institutional church, the unsaved religious, the unrepentant, & the wicked will be judged by J

-In Christ's judgment through the 7 seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Thunder, & 7 Bowl judgments =**divine wrath** poured out upon the whole world. No one escapes the effects of God's global judgment which is to push ALL of mankind to repent and be saved!!! Yet, many/most will reject!

¹¹ I am coming quickly; hold firmly to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

Jesus promises these overcomers, these faithful disciples who endure to the end of their life... a crown of righteousness 2 Tim. 4:8 "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing". Jesus reminds the church to remain faithful to the end:

Five different crowns mentioned in New Testament for those faithful disciples who endure:

1. 1 Corinthians 9:25 refers to a **crown of incorruption**. Paul described this as a special crown given to believers who practiced *physical self-governance* and therefore ran a successful race in Those who practiced self-discipline and refused to let the flesh hinder their race of faith can look forward to receiving this precious reward.
2. 1 Thessalonians 2:19 refers to the **crown of rejoicing**. Theologians often refer to this as the *soul-winner's crown*, as it is a crown given to those who brought others to Jesus. Oh, think of the joy those who have brought others to Christ will experience when they receive a *crown of rejoicing* or a *soul-winner's crown*.
3. 2 Timothy 4:8 refers to the **crown of righteousness**. This crown is specially designated for those who longed for Jesus' appearing and lived holy lives in anticipation of His return. This is the crown that Paul referred to when he wrote about his own death and the crown that Jesus would give to him.
4. 1 Peter 5:4 refers to the **crown of glory**. This is often called the *pastor's crown* because it is a special reward that will be given to shepherds who faithfully pastored and taught God's people. You would do well to read First Peter 5:4 and to personally see this special crown that will be given to faithful pastors.

5. James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10 refer to the ***crown of life***. This crown is often referred to as the *martyr's crown* because it is given to those who suffered for their faith, those who died for Christ, or those who were committed to finishing their race of faith regardless of the difficulties they encountered in this life.

Athletes who prepared, trained, and won their competitions were highly regarded. Likewise, Christ will give *special honor* to those who victoriously ran their race of faith to its conclusion. On that day in our future, Jesus Christ will stand, step forward to us as we bow before Him, and place one of these respective crowns on our brows if He has found us faithful to the task that was assigned to us

*** Notice just how detailed God rewards those who are faithful in His Church:

12 The one who overcomes (endures/perseveres), ***I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore;*** We get to be with Christ and be with Him in heaven for all time; we get to be in His presence and worship Him as HE ***is*** the Temple in Heaven. We are with Him forever. This IS eternal salvation, eternal glorification, eternal JOY in His presence!

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. This is an energized intimacy that we will have with God in Heaven; we are a marked people (branded with God's Name on us); we will inhabit the city of God the New Jerusalem and we get Jesus' NEW Name inscribed on us...We are HIS!!!!

13 The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Application

-We, as Believers are called to follow Jesus; Discipleship is followship. (who are you following?)

-Jesus Rewards those who are faithful and who press into faithful discipleship as a lifestyle

-Jesus never wastes our pain and He will use it to bless/serve others IF we let Him. God purposes through our suffering, pain, and loss for His glory.