

Chapter 1

Philadelphia: Promised Deliverance 3:7–13

Rev. 3:7-13. "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, "These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": 8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which

shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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 I will write on him My new name. 13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'

1.1 Address opening the letter 3:7a

Revelation 3:7a

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write. . .

1. **Philadelphia:** The city's name was chosen in recognition of the loyalty of Alltalus II to his brother Eumenes II. It was a city in the path of a major trade and communication route in the Roman Empire. It had suffered major loss due to a great earthquake in AD 19 and the people lived with great fear. Their religion was typical Graeco-Asian in nature. This is not a very wealthy city.
2. **Philadelphia - Biblical references:**

Rom 12:10. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another

1 Thes 4:9. But concerning brotherly love . . . for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another

Heb 13:1. Let brotherly love continue

1 Pet 1:22. Since you have purified your souls . . . in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart

2 Pet 1:7. to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love

Rev 1:11. ... What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus ... to Philadelphia ...

1.2 Attributes of the speaker 3:7b

Revelation 3:7b

... These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens

1. **The holy one** *ho hagios*: Some times refers to the Father Is 40:25, Rev 4:8, 6:20, but often it is the title for Messiah especially in NT Ps 16:10, Mk 1:24, Lk 1:35, Jh 6:69, Act 4:27, 30, 1Jh 2:20). He has set apart or exclusively belong to God.
2. **The true one** *ho alethinos*: Christ is genuine, He is real, He is the embodiment of perfection, and contrast the false Jh 1:9; 4:37; 7:28; 8:16; 1Jh 5:20). Christ is true to His word and can be trusted to keep His promises. His reliability derives from His being the genuine Messiah who can be relied upon. The only hope to the persecuted church is that her Messiah is true and genuine one. Hence, he can be trusted.
3. **Possess the key of David**: Eliakim fulfilled as a **type**

Is 22:20-22. Then it shall be in that day, That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah; 21 I will clothe him with your robe And strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility

into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem And to the house of Judah. 22
The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut;
And he shall shut, and no one shall open

He has access to the treasury of David. Nevertheless, Jesus fulfilled in the full sense

Rev 5:5. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals

Rev 22:16. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star

It means that Jesus is the authentic Messiah who controls the entrance to the Messianic kingdom

Rev 1:18. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death

Matt 28:18. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth

Heb 3:5-6. Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant ... 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house ...

This assertion is significant in the context of local Jews who were not accepting Jesus as their Messiah. This letter is considered by the scholars as the most distinctly eschatological of the seven epistles. This is very clear and strong message to the Jews.

4. **Who opens and no one shuts:** Jesus alone has the power to admit into or exclude from His kingdom. He also shared this to some extent with His church

Is 22:22. The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open

1.3 Knowledge about the people of the Church 3:8)

Revelation 3:8

I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

1. **I know:** Jesus is omniscient and knows every situation in Philadelphia.
2. **See/Behold:** The words following are parenthetical words of encouragement to unique to this church. They are not a command but as a promise.
3. **Set before you an open door:** Open door is explained three ways in NT:

(a) Jesus is the one who gives salvation

Jh 10:7. Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep

This is not the sense here since the church is already saved.

(b) Jesus gives ministry opportunities

1 Cor 16:9. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries

2 Cor 2:12. Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord

Col 4:3. meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains

This also may not be sense here since it can hardly be an encouragement to a small and persecuted church.

- (c) Jesus promises a sure entrance to the Messianic kingdom, which Jews were longing, is now promised to this church. This goes along with the thoughts in V7 and V9

Rev 5:5. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals

Lk 1:32. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David

Ezk 37:24. David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them

Hos 3:5. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days

4. **No one will shut:** goes along with the above, that no one can restrict their entry to Messianic kingdom, especially in the context of Jewish opposition in V9.
5. **You have little power:** not in a negative sense, but acknowledges the fact that the church has limited influence because of its numerical smallness.

6. **Kept My word and not denied My name:** the construct suggests a specific historical trial faced by the people. Apparently Jews might have created some situation to compromise their faith, but the church has survived the crisis without faltering even though they were few in number.

1.4 State of the Church 3:9-10

Revelation 3:9

Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie, indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

1. **Behold I will make those:** It is not explicitly mentioned what the Lord will make. This verse points to what the Lord is going to do with the enemies of the church, especially the Jews. Hence, the idea from the whole verse is that Lord is giving some of the members of the synagogue as their converts.
2. **Synagogue of Satan:** They are professing Jews and cannot be the real ones since they rejected the Messiah as well as those believed in Him. Their claim that they are the real Jew is denied by Jesus.
3. **Behold I will make them . . . :** This points to a future repentance of Israel resulting in respectful treatment of the church. This is an apparent reversal of the OT promises (Isa 45:14; 49:23; 60:14; Ezk 36:23; 37:28; Zech

8:20-23). However, it also points who gets the respect depends on how one is related to Messiah. Israel will respect the church once they repent and be blessed after the establishment of the kingdom.

4. **I have loved you:** Today the false Jews are mocking the church when the church claims that they are the object of God's love. But in the fullness of time Israel will acknowledge the church.

Revelation 3:10

Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

1. **Persevere** *hypomone*: means the endurance that is required from the disciple. The Lord Himself set an example

2 Thes 3:5. Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ

Heb 12:3. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls

2. **I also will keep *tereso*:** These words shows the watchful care of Jesus over the church. The promise to the church is some mode of complete preservation and protection during this crisis hour.
3. **the hour of trial:** Two options are possible during the tribulation which will happen immediately before the return of the Lord. They are:
 - (a) The church will be preserved while present during the period.

Proof:

Here, Christ does not ask for believers to be take out of the world, but to be kept away from the presence of the evil one.

John 17:15. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one

Critique: This cannot be due to:

- i. This cannot be due to:
- ii. there it is preservation from the evil, but here it is from the tribulation
- iii. there the disciples are already in the midst of the evil, but here, the church is not in the midst of the tribulation

- iv. there the spiritual realm is in view, but here it is the world system is in view.
 - v. saints in the tribulation period will face persecution including martyrdom (Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-14) which contradicts the promise.
- (b) The church will be preserved by means of the removal from the scene of the suffering. The reasons supporting this are

Proof

- i. context suggests it is a promise rather than a threat. Hence, it makes sense only if church is not on the earth when the Lord is pouring out His wrath and intense persecution by the Anti Christ on humanity.
- ii. the hour of trial indicates and focus on a period of time from which they are preserved. This we understand as the great tribulation prophesied by Jesus

Mat24:21. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be
- iii. similar construct is seen in

Jh 12:27. "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour

Here, the prayer of Jesus was not for a grace to go through it. Instead the prayer was for an altogether avoidance.

- iv. the most natural meaning of keeping from the hour is not preserving through it but keep away safely.

Note: that this does not refer directly to rapture, but it guarantees protection from the great tribulation which we understand as church is removed from the scene.

- 4. [The whole inhabited earth](#): This denotes not merely the people in the locality. The whole mankind will see the day of the Lord.

[Dan 12:1](#). At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book

[Joel 2:31](#). The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD

Mk 13:19. For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be

2 Thes 2:3-12. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God ... 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders ... 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie

Rev 7:14. ... So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"

Rev 14:7. [another angel] saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come

1.5 Promise of the Lords return 3:11

Revelation 3:11

Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

1. **I am coming quickly:** deliverance of the faithful will happen with His coming and it is quickly indicate the imminent return of the Lord. It serves as warning to the unfaithful to repent and encouragement to the faithful. A quick coming implies it cannot be referring to Rev 19:11-21 where several events should takes place.
2. **Hold fast what you have:** the expected response of the faithful till the short period before His coming. What the church has is precious treasure.
3. **No one may take your crown:** thief will not take the crown for himself, but to deny the privilege of the faithful. Crown is given to the victor and holding fast to what is already have is a secure way of preserving the crown.

1.6 Command to hear and obey 3:13

Revelation 3:13

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

1. **He who has ear let him hear:** an individual call of Jesus (Mat 11:15, 13:9, 13:43, Mark 9:4, 23, Lk 8:8, 14:35). Note Jesus is the only one in the Scripture to use this invitation and reserves it for special occasions.
2. **Spirit says:** Christ is the speaker and the Holy Spirit is the one inspires the spirit of the apostle who is the mouth piece of Christ, whose words goes to the churches.

1.7 Promise to the overcomer 3:12

Revelation 3:12

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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 I will write on him My new name.

1. **He who overcomes:** the promises draws heavily on the eternal and absolutely assured blessing draws from (Rev 21-22) and includes an open recognition of them as the people of God. This overcomer is the one who keeps on holding fast.
2. **Pillar in the temple of God:** This is a figurative language since there is no temple in the new Jerusalem. They will be permanent, like a pillar in the Temple, and will stand when all else has fallen. This indicates the permanent stature of the overcomer.

Rev 21:22. But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple

3. **My God:** This word is used four times in this verse indicating a strong relation He has with God.
4. **He shall go out no more:** again the permanence of the relation with Christ and that this relation is inseparable.
5. **I will write on:** three fold writing indicates absolute assurance of eternal life.
6. **Name of My God:** belong to God and having the divine power.
7. **Name of the city of My God:** permanent citizenship in the new Jerusalem

Rev 21:2-10. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband ... and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God

8. **My new name:** full revelation of His character for we now know only in part and will have full assurance of who Christ is.

End of Document 2026-10-17
