

# The Book of Revelation

Lesson Nine

Revelation 3:7-13

## LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

- I. Salutation Revelation 3:7 a
- A. Philadelphia is mentioned in Scripture only here and in Revelation 1:11.
  - B. The city was known for its fertile soil and lush vineyards.
    - 1. Naturally, it was a producer of much wine.
    - 2. Thus, the primary deity of Philadelphia was Dionysius (or, Bacchus), the god of wine.
- II. Description of Jesus Revelation 3:7 b
- A. Jesus is called the One who is “holy.”
  - B. Jesus is called the One who is “true.”
    - 1. Jesus is the perfect realization of what man had only known partially.
    - 2. See John 6:31-32; Psalm 80:8; and John 15:1 – the true bread and vine.
  - C. Jesus is called the One who has the “key of David.”
    - 1. It was prophesied that the Messiah would have the key of the house of David (Isaiah 22:22).
    - 2. David had authority as King of Israel; Jesus has supreme authority over spiritual Israel as King of kings.
  - D. Jesus is called the One who opens and closes with authority.
    - 1. Only Jesus has the right to open or shut matters of faith and doctrine.
    - 2. The apostles of Christ legislated with the authority of Christ (Matthew 16:19).
    - 3. The New Testament is the record of what Christ has opened and shut.
- III. Commendation Revelation 3:8-10
- A. The church at Philadelphia was commended for their works.
  - B. The church at Philadelphia was commended for seizing opportunities.
    - 1. Jesus had placed before them an open door of opportunity.
    - 2. Just as the city was an open door to the rest of the world for spreading Greek and Roman ideals and culture, so it would be for the spreading of the Gospel of Christ.
    - 3. The Philadelphians took advantage of this opportunity although they had only a “little strength.”
    - 4. As with matters of faith, when Jesus opens a door of opportunity through His providence, no man can close it (cf. Daniel 4:17).
  - C. The church at Philadelphia was commended for keeping God’s Word.
  - D. The church at Philadelphia was commended for not denying the Lord.
    - 1. To deny the Lord is to confess Him not (cf. Romans 10:9-10).
    - 2. To deny the Lord is to claim Him not (cf. Luke 22:57).
    - 3. To deny the Lord is to commend Him not (cf. Matthew 10:32-33).
  - E. As part of His commendation of them, the Lord also assures them of victory.
    - 1. Over their enemies, the Jews (Judaizers), the church would be victorious.

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- a. They would not worship Christians or the church literally but would bow to the cause they had rejected.
  - b. Indeed, all will one day bow before the Lord.
  2. Over their persecution, the church would be victorious.
    - a. While persecution of the church would be severe, Philadelphia would be kept from enduring such horrible suffering.
    - b. Interestingly, during the persecution of Emperor Trajan, he would not venture into the city of Philadelphia.
    - c. Trajan had an “unnatural fear of earthquakes and would not go near the city himself nor permit his troops to go.”
  - F. Their victory was based upon their faithfulness – keeping the Word of God in endurance.
- IV. Condemnation
- A. There was no condemnation of the church at Philadelphia!
  - B. What if the Lord wrote a letter to us?
- V. Warnings
- A. Because there was no condemnation, there was no need of warning.
  - B. If we are serving the Lord faithfully, there is nothing to fear!
- VI. Exhortations Revelation 3:11
- A. Jesus exhorted them by the fact that He will come quickly.
    1. This does not mean that His final coming would be immediate.
    2. Instead, it means that the persecution of the Philadelphians would not last long.
    3. He would come in judgment of their enemies and deliverance of His church.
  - B. Jesus exhorted them to hold fast to what they have.
  - C. Jesus exhorted them by the promise of a crown of life (cf. 2:10).
- VII. Blessings Revelation 3:12-13
- A. Those who overcome will be made pillars in God’s temple.
    1. In the temple of Dionysius, it was common for the name of a citizen who had performed some heroic or noble deed to be inscribed upon one of the columns.
    2. But Jesus says that the faithful are the pillars in God’s temple.
    3. On them – members of the Lord’s church – are inscribed the names of God, New Jerusalem, and the new name.
      - a. The church is made up of men and women who magnify God’s name to the world.
      - b. They do not seek to glorify their own names.
  - B. Those who overcome will not leave God’s temple.
    1. When we get to Heaven, we will never have to leave!
    2. We will never have to fear separation from God, even for a second!
  - C. Those who overcome will be given a new name.