

Prayer:

The book of Revelation brings the whole of redemptive history to a head. Since Genesis 1, God has been building something and toward something, and in Revelation, we see the completion of the whole thing. Redemptive history involves two major interrelated but distinct programs – namely God’s program with Israel and His program for the church. When God completes His program for the Church, then He will resume and complete His program for Israel. Both of these realities are addressed in the book of Revelation.

Slide # 1 – Inspired Outline

Revelation 1:19 – Inspired Outline

Revelation 1:19 (NKJV)

19 “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

- “have seen” – Past (Vision of Christ) – **Ch. 1**
- **“which are” – Present (Church Age)** – Ch. 2-3
- “after this” – Future (Post-Church Age) – Ch. 4-22
- - Scene in heaven – Ch. 4-5
- - Tribulation – Ch. 6-18
- - Second Coming – Ch. 19
- - Kingdom – Ch. 20
- - Eternal State – Ch. 21-22

In Revelation one Christ is presented in all His glory as the Divine Judge. Judgment begins with the household of God – the church (1 Pet. 4:17). The book then proceeds to **chapters 2-3** where we find Christ gives an **EVALUATION** of 7 local churches. These 7 churches are representative of all local churches down throughout the church age. All local churches and individuals in those churches are exhorted to make proper application of what is being shared with these various individual churches.

All the local churches addressed were in Asia Minor, which is now part of the nation of Turkey.

Slide # 2

Christ’s Message to the Churches

Rev. 2:1-7 – Ephesus: Loveless Orthodoxy
 Rev. 2:8-11 – Smyrna: Persecution & Purity
 Rev. 2:12-17 – Pergamos: Tolerating Sin in the Fellowship
 Rev. 2:18-29 – Thyatira: Tolerating Idolatry in the Fellowship
 Rev. 3:1-6 – Sardis: A Dead Church With a Reputation for Life
 Rev. 3:7-13 - ***Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door***
 Rev. 3:14-22 – Laodicea: The Apostate Church

Slide # 3



The church we are studying today was the church located at Philadelphia.

The word “**Philadelphia**” literally means “brotherly love” (cf. Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:7a,b). **The city** was established in about 150 B.C. by a king who dearly loved his brother - hence the name Philadelphia – **the city of brotherly love**. Today there is still a small city there which is now called **Alasehir**.

A main **highway** that connected the east and the west ran through the city. Furthermore, the Roman post road of the first century, which connected the main points of the empire, passed through Philadelphia, and so the city was called “**The gateway to the East**”.

Related to the city were great **vine growing districts**. The city was known for many false **gods and various temples** and was therefore called “**Little Athens**”, but prominent was the worship of **Dionysus – the god of wine**. The city was also known for its **games and festivals**.

Philadelphia was founded during the Grecian era with the intent of it becoming a “**mission**” city with the goal of disseminating the Greek culture and language to other parts of the kingdom.

A KEY historical factor was that the city was on a fault line and historically was known for **earthquakes** and volcanic activity in the area.

In 17 AD a great earthquake essentially destroyed the city and 10 other cities in the area. Philadelphia was then rebuilt, but many people were afraid to move back into the city and instead lived just outside the city, where the land was rich agriculturally. At the slightest sign of a tremor, people would flee the city.

The city was the smallest of the seven cities in view in relation to the seven churches, and evidently, the church was also quite small. However, a remnant has persisted through the centuries, and even now, a very small remnant of professing Christians is still present.

It is thought that this church (like most churches in Asia Minor) was probably founded in conjunction with the ministry of Paul's third missionary journey (cf. Acts 19:10), which would have been about 40 years earlier.

Revelation 3:7–13 (NKJV)

7 “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”’:

The angel is literally “the messenger,” which we believe refers to the key messenger (pastor-teacher) at the church. This is the message from Christ to this messenger, who in turn would share it with the church.

Christ introduces Himself as “He who is holy, He who is true.” This combo of holy and true is used in reference to God in Revelation 6:10. The word “holy” has two interrelated concepts.

Slide # 4

WHOLLY HOLY

- a. Set apart, completely unique and without comparison.
- b. The perfect standard of purity and right.

Isaiah 40:25 (NKJV)

25 “To whom then will you liken Me, Or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One.

True means genuine, authentic, reliable, and faithful.

This emphasizes the holy and righteous character of Christ (cf. Lk. 1:35).

Being holy and true emphasizes that Christ, as God, is totally reliable and of impeccable character. This is very important because it would seem that this church family was mercilessly being slandered by the Jews, who were evidently claiming that they, as Jews, and not the Christians, were the true people of God, as seen in verse 9.

In response to this, we have this message from the One Who is holy and true. Jesus is our HOLY GOD who is always TRUE to His character and His Word. This statement of saying He is holy and true is tantamount to being a statement of DEITY. Only God is absolutely holy and true!

In addition, Jesus says that He “***has the key of David,***” being the One “***who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.***”

Jesus' connection with David is a Messianic connection. Jesus as the Messiah is often called the “Son of David,” which was a recognition that He was the promised Messiah who would come through the line of David. It was to David, in what is called “The Davidic Covenant,” that God promised an eternal throne and an eternal kingdom, which is ultimately fulfilled in the person of Jesus – the Messiah (2 Sam. 7:12-17). In Revelation He is called “the Root and the Offspring of David” (Rev. 5:5; 22:16).

But note the language here. Jesus says that He has the key of David, involving the authority to open and shut with final authority. Most everyone agrees that this statement related to “the key of David” goes back to Isaiah 22:22.

Slide # 5

Isaiah 22:22 (NKJV)

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.

In the days of King Hezekiah, there was a man named Shebna (cf. 36:3, 11, 22; 37:2; 2 Kg. 18:18; 19:21). He had a high-profile stewardship position as chief administrator of the royal house, being in charge of the royal treasury. But he was wicked and corrupt and was therefore replaced with a godly man named Eliakim. Eliakim would be a “***father***” to Jerusalem, using this position of responsibility for the good of the people (Isa. 22:20-24).

In this context, Isaiah 22:22 is very important in the matter of progressive revelation. Eliakim would have possession of “***the key of the house of David***,” meaning he would have great authority to open and shut, making decisions according to his prerogative related to the Davidic house and kingdom, which no one except the king could override.

Thus, this KEY of David represents AUTHORITY related to the Davidic Covenant and the KINGDOM (cf. Matt. 16:19; 18:18; 28:18; Isa. 9:6-7). It signifies AUTHORITY related to ACCESS!

Possession of the KEY OF DAVID indicates that Jesus is the One Who has ultimate authority related to access to the kingdom and all its treasures. He is the One who ultimately determines who can enter the future Davidic kingdom. He is in charge of all the kingdom realties in keeping with the Davidic Covenant. If He grants you an OPEN DOOR then you have access. If He CLOSES the door, then you are shut out! And He opens and closes with absolute authority.

And note this emphasis comes in relation to Him being both holy and true. Jesus is holy and true and the One Who acts with absolute sovereign authority in relation to the Davidic Covenant – that is, in relation to the kingdom. Jesus holds the KEY to the KINGDOM!

In Revelation 1:18 Christ has the keys of “Hades and of Death”, here in 3:7 He has the KEY to the kingdom.

It is Jesus who holds KEY to all of the kingdom treasures. Jesus is the one with the KEY – the KEY OF DAVID!

This is an Open and Shut case emphasizing Christ’s sovereign power and authority. Jesus, as the Divine Sovereign, rules over all and controls all factors related to the kingdom, and none can resist His will!

The repentant thief on the cross got it. He said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” (Lk. 23:42). He acknowledged that Jesus Lord over the kingdom and it is He Who determines who comes in and who stays out. He opens access and shuts access with absolute sovereign authority!

This would truly have been a great comfort to these Christians who were being slandered as being unworthy of entrance into the kingdom. All is made to depend on Jesus the One with the KEY.

At a reception a man told Abraham Lincoln that people were saying:
"The welfare of the nation depended on God and Abraham Lincoln."
 Lincoln responded: ***"They are half right."***

All depends on Jesus! It doesn't matter what anyone else says. Jesus alone has the KEY OF DAVID. He alone opens and shuts with absolute sovereign authority!

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."

To each of the churches, Jesus begins by saying, ***"I know"***. His omniscience shines through. Nothing escapes His knowing. Jesus knew their works – what they were doing! He knew all about it and we need to know that He knows. In this case what He knew was pleasing to Him.

Upon saying, ***"I know your works"*** before even saying what those works were, He interjects, ***"See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it."***

Some have thought that this OPEN DOOR relates to service and that is a possibility because Paul often speaks of an open door in relationship to ministry/evangelism (cf. Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3).

However, there is nothing in the surrounding context that really emphasizes increased opportunity for service. Rather, in the immediate context, this idea of OPENING and SHUTTING is inherently connected to THE KEY OF DAVID.

So, upon further study, I think Jesus is assuring them of access to the kingdom, of which He is in charge. Jesus has the KEY, and He has opened the door to the kingdom treasures for them. And no matter what anyone says, they cannot shut it – they cannot keep them out of the kingdom. Furthermore, this makes sense in light of verse 9, which shows that wicked Jews were slandering them terribly – probably saying they had no part in the kingdom.

Jesus, in effect, says He has set before them an open door in connection with them bearing the fruits of true converts. He describes them as having ***"a little strength"***, having ***"kept My Word,"*** and ***"have not denied My name."***

“Little strength” is stated in conjunction with commending them, so this does not seem to be a censure or a criticism, but rather a fact of reality.

“Little power” must refer to the church’s limited influence because of its numerical smallness. – **Robert Thomas**

Even though they were a relatively “little church” they were faithful. Christ said, you “**have kept My word, and have not denied My name.**” They had been faithful to the gospel (Christ’s Word) and the Person of Christ (Christ’s Name). They held fast to the truth that Jesus is the Messiah – the God-Man Who is the Savior of all who believe in Him.

This may explain the emphasis in the introduction on the DEITY of Christ – that He is the divine sovereign One who is Holy and True. The Jews denied the Deity of Christ and that He was the Messiah. But this church was holding fast to the reality that Jesus is God!

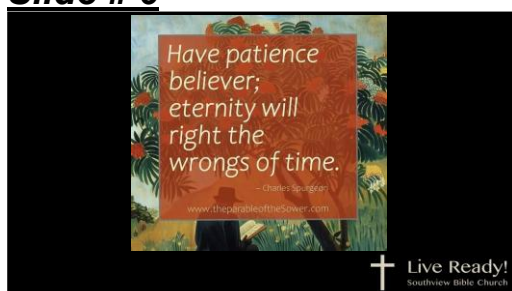
Evidently, there had been community pressure to deny Christ’s name, and in close context, probably by the Jewish community in particular. But they held fast to the truth of Who Jesus is as Lord and Savior.

The phrase, “**have not denied My name**” transitions into verse 9. This would seem to indicate that verse 9 sheds more light on those who were pressuring the Christians to deny Christ. Seemingly, it was these wicked Jews. To this Christ says...

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.

Talk about vindication! Christ is saying that in the end, He is going to vindicate these Christians before these unbelieving Jews. By the way in the end Christ is going to straighten everything out. The wrongs are going to be made right. Christ is going to vindicate His people, big time.

Slide # 6



Christ refers to these unbelieving Jews as “***the synagogue of Satan***”. They say they are Jews, that is claiming they belong to God as His special chosen people. But Jesus said they “lie”. They don’t really know God at all, even though they claim they to (cf. Rom. 2:28-29).

This is similar to John 8 where certain Jews boasted that Abraham was their father.

But Jesus told them that if Abraham was their father, then they would do the works of Abraham, but here they were wanting to kill Him. Jesus went on to bluntly tell them: “You are of your father the devil”, who is “a liar and the father of it.” (see John 8:31-44, cf. Rev. 2:9).

These Jews prided themselves on being Jewish – the chosen people. The kingdom belonged to them and not to dirty Gentiles. For John, in his writings people who claim to be God’s people but are not are LIARS.

Slide # 7

1 John 2:4 (NKJV)

4 He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, **is a liar**, and the truth is not in him.

Revelation 21:8 (NKJV)

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and **all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

The legitimate object of worship in the Bible is always God/Christ. In the end, Christ says He will make them come and worship Him as the true Messiah, but they will do it right in the presence of these Christians, proving to their faces that Jesus loves them. This is total vindication for the Christian. This is similar to Philippians 2:10-11, where in the end every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. But here the emphasis is on doing it before the feet of the Christians. These unbelievers, in the end, will be totally humbled before the Christians.

The rebellious Jews said, “You Christians are excluded from the kingdom, it is for us Jews. You Christians believe in Jesus as the Messiah, you are dead wrong.” But Jesus says, “I am holy and true, I have the KEY of David, I determine who goes into the kingdom, and in the end I am going to vindicate you Christians before your enemies.”

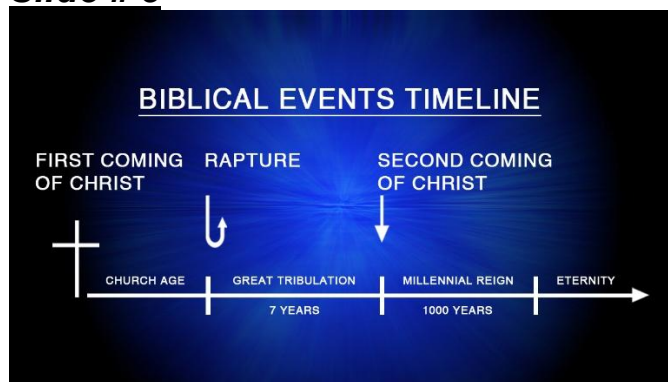
[This] simply says that the Jews will acknowledge their mistake in denying Christians a place in the kingdom. – **Robert Thomas**

Jesus now extends a further promise to those who genuinely belong to Him in the church age.

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.

Verses 10-11 have been called the greatest text we have in the NT on the reality of the rapture. As I will show, there are FIVE poignant points in the text that argue for that being the case.

Slide # 8



Clearly, the NT teaches the reality of a coming Rapture as seen in 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

Slide # 9

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (NKJV)

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead **in Christ** will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air**. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

This is an “in Christ” event meaning it is a CHURCH event. It is an “in the air” event and not one in which Christ comes to the earth. This is the Rapture of the Church which is the next major event on God’s prophetic calendar, but we don’t know when it will happen as it will come unexpectedly as a thief in the night. The Rapture will then be followed by the 70th week of Daniel which is a 7 year period of Tribulation which while targeting the Jews has worldwide implications (cf. Dan. 9:24-27; Jer. 30:7).

We believe the text of Revelation 3:10-11 has in view the coming rapture of the church. The text, taken plainly for what it says, leads to that conclusion.

However, before we get to that, let us consider for a moment who is promised to be taken in the Rapture. Christ's introductory remark is telling on what is the NATURE of a true saving faith.

Christ says, "***Because you have kept my commandment to persevere.***" That is an important, but often overlooked qualifier!

It seems to me that "Easy Believism" completely ignores texts like this. They want to say a totally faithless faith is okay. Zane Hodges went so far as to say a dead faith is a saving faith. Yes, all the truly saved will go in the Rapture. But the mark of the truly saved is that they persevere in the faith.

They are those who, as a rule, keep Christ's Word and do not deny His name. Yes, they may stumble (as did Peter), but the overall story of their lives is one of perseverance as was ongoing testimony of Peter.

True faith perseveres. Now we are not saved by persevering, but if we are saved, we will persevere. Perseverance is the fruit of true faith!

Slide # 10

Hebrews 10:38–39 (NKJV)

38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

39 But **we are not of those who draw back** to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

1 John 2:19 (NKJV)

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for **if they had been of us, they would have continued** with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

The promise of verse 10 is to those who persevere. These are Christ's words! Because they have kept His command to preserve Christ says, "***also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.***"

There are four exegetical reasons in this verse that indicate true believers will be kept from the coming Tribulation Period

- 1) First, the phrase “**keep you from**”. The word translated “**from**” is the Greek preposition “ek” which means “out of” or “out from”. If Christ intended to say “keep through” He would have used a completely different preposition (namely dia) which means through. But He didn’t! He used the word “ek” meaning “out from”.
- 2) The promise is not only to keep them from trial, but from “the hour of the trial.” This is a promise to keep them from the PERIOD in which this will happen. He is not merely going to isolate them but completely remove them FROM the entire TIME PERIOD.

As a secondary line of argument, but powerful. Note that the word “church” or “churches” is found 19 times in the first three chapters of Revelation, but then it is not found mentioned a single time in connection with the Tribulation Period dealt with in Revelation 6-18. The church is not represented there. However, it is prominent in chapters 2-3. How is this? My argument is that chapters 2-3 deal with the Church Age, but then the Church is raptured before the Tribulation Period. That is the most logical explanation.

This is consistent with other texts such as 1 Thess. 1:10, and 5:9.

Slide # 11

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (NKJV)

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus **who delivers us from the wrath to come.**

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

9 For God did **not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation** [deliverance] through our Lord Jesus Christ,

- 3) This trial will come upon the whole world. Quite literally, this says, “the whole inhabited earth.” Prophetically, looking forward from the time of Christ, there is only ONE time in all the Bible that a trial will come upon the whole world simultaneously. Yes, there have always been trials in various places, but never a total worldwide phenomenon such as described in the judgment passages of Scripture.

This has the whole world in view at the same time, which corresponds exactly to what is presented in Revelation 6-18.

- 4) The language of “to test those who dwell on the earth” is telling. The language of earth dwellers is found 10 times in the book of Revelation, and it is a technical term that refers to unbelievers (cf. Rev. 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 12, 14; 14:6; 17:2,8).

The word “dwell” (Gk. katoikeo) is a strong word that means to settle down, which is completely contrary to the pilgrim calling of true believers (Phil. 3:18-20; 1 Pet. 2:11). This targets UNBELIEVERS and not the church.

The trials of this period are designed to test the wicked, either to lead them to repentance or to punish them for failing to repent (cf. 9:20; 11:13; 16:11). – **Robert Thomas**

In addition to these four exegetical reasons that argue this is talking about the rapture is a fifth reason as seen in the next verse.

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

- 5) In reference to being kept from the hour of trial which is going to come upon the entire world of earth dwellers, is the statement that Christ is coming quickly (cf. Rev. 22:7, 12, 20). This shows that being kept from this hour and His coming coincide. It fits that Christ is coming to remove them from their HOUR of trial via the event we know as the rapture.

The most natural meaning of this promise [v. 10] is that believers will not be on earth when the hour of trial takes place. This conclusion is bolstered by [verse 11], where Jesus says, “I am coming quickly.” The inference is that He will deliver His people from the time of worldwide testing by His coming for them. – **Mark Hitchcock**

Slide # 12

Rev. 3:10-11

Arguments for a Pretribulation Rapture

- 1) Be kept from “out of” versus “through” the hour of trial.
- 2) Promise to be kept from “the hour of trial,” meaning the PERIOD itself.
- 3) This trial will come upon the WHOLE WORLD.
- 4) The purpose is to TEST the earth dwellers (unsaved) of the world.
- 5) Connected to this being “kept from” is Christ’s coming.

When Christ says He is “coming quickly,” the word quickly is sometimes translated as “soon”. Prophetically speaking, time is short. Prophetically speaking, we live at the time of the end where the coming of the Lord is imminent, which will usher in the last days’ consummation of all things prophetic (cf. Rom. 6:20).

At the very end of the Book of Revelation Jesus says the very same thing: “Surely I am coming quickly [or soon].” Immediately, John’s response was, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20) John, most certainly wanted Jesus to come SOON, versus merely coming in a rapid manner.

So I believe the sense here is that the coming of Christ for the Church is imminent. It could happen at any time. The church began suddenly and signlessly and it will be completed in the same fashion. It is SOON in that it is next on God’s prophetic calendar in which a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day (2 Pet. 3:8).

The coming of the Lord for the church is ever imminent, and that is why we are constantly to “live ready”.

In view of His imminent coming, Christ says to the church, “***Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.***” This is Christ’s way of saying “LIVE READY!”

As believers, we cannot lose our salvation, but we can lose our crown – we can lose our eternal rewards (cf. 1 Cor. 3:15).

Slide # 13

Colossians 2:8 (NKJV)

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

2 John 8 (NKJV)

8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

Note, Jesus specifically says, “***that no one take your crown.***” The devil always has his crown robbers around trying to get God’s people off track. In Ephesians 4, Paul talks about those who practice trickery, cunning craftiness, and deceitful plotting take advantage of gullible Christians who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).

You like pod casts – watch out! There is every crazy thing imaginable out there. They sound good, but often they are rife with false doctrine. Just because something sounds intriguing does not necessarily make it good. Solid Bible teaching is “boring” to some people – watch out the devil loves to tickle ears with all kinds of novel and exciting things.

I read an article in World Magazine this week in which the writer shared that he started consuming a lot of “new media” content that wasn’t overtly Christian but was friendly toward the faith. He says he discovered Jordan Peterson, who was intriguing. He writes: *“The only problem? Peterson was a secular prophet, intentionally dodgy on the question of God. He and others in his wake were culturally Christian but avoided the reality of the risen Christ.”* Multitudes get into all kinds of information that rattle on endlessly about moralistic values, culture, economics, politics, and even religion, which often really serve as a distraction. Somebody always has the juicy inside information on everything. And so many of God’s people feast on all kinds of things other than what really matters. Our friend ended the article by saying, “My devotion to Jesus took a blow as a result. [The devil] would be proud. But I’m on to him now.”

Be warned, be wise! Hold fast what you have that no one take your crown!

Christ gives a warning that even committed people who have earned a crown of reward can be wrongly influenced. As Paul says, “let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. 10:12). We are all vulnerable. We are not safe till we are home! At the very end of his second letter Peter warns, “beware lest you also fall from own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked” (2 Pet. 3:17).

It is not only important that we start well, but also that we finish well (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

Sometimes people say Why is the church in Philadelphia singled out in terms of the Rapture. Really, they weren’t. In truth, the last four churches addressed are exhorted in terms of the imminent coming of Christ (cf. 2:25; 3:3; 3:10-11; 3:21). In truth, when the Lord returns at the rapture, there will be Thyatira-like churches, there will be Sardis-like churches, there will be Philadelphia-like churches, and there will be Laodicea-like churches. All these churches receive the same essential warning and exhortation concerning the imminent coming of Christ. And the consistent message: **Is LIVE READY!**

But then Christ makes yet another promise that further encourages the faithful to press on for the Lord.

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.

Overcomes (consistent with 1 John 5:4-5) refers to true believers who perseveringly hold onto the truth of Christ. To overcomers Christ promises four things.

Slide # 14

- 1) To be a pillar in the temple of God.
- 2) To write on him the name of God.
- 3) To write on him the city of God.
- 4) To write on him Christ's new name.

Being a PILLAR in the temple of God speaks of stability and prominence. Philadelphia had many temples, and the pillars were the most stable and prominent features. In the frequent earthquakes that they experienced, the buildings would often crumble and fall while the pillars remained standing.

Being a pillar in God's temple speaks of stability – they will never be shaken in the presence of God. They will go out no more. Never again will they need to run in fear, as they did when leaving the city of Philadelphia, when they felt tremors. There is a PERMANENCE emphasized in relation to God's presence. These pillars will stand in God's presence when everything else has fallen.

In Revelation 21-22, we find in the New Jerusalem (the eternal dwelling place of the saints) that there is no temple, but rather that "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." (Rev. 21:22). The temple housed the most intimate presence of God. This is where the believer will be located, and being there, they will be in a position of absolute immovable stability (cf. Heb. 12:27-28).

This New Jerusalem is a specially prepared place for God's people. It truly is our eternal home. Our citizenship is there forever (Phil. 3:20-21).

In conjunction with the new heaven and the new earth, a New Jerusalem will ascend out of heaven, emphasizing it is from God.

This will be the headquarters of the universe where we will live in eternal intimacy with God.

It's like Christ is going to "tattoo" these people in a spiritualized sort of way. He is going to write on them the name of His God. This is the idea of intimate identification. These are forever marked as God's people!

And he is going to write on them the city of God, the New Jerusalem. Thus, they will be forever identified with the eternal city, the glorious holy city, the golden city, the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God (cf. Heb. 11:10).

And finally Christ says, "I will write on him My new name." No one knows what this name is (cf. Rev. 2:17). When Christ comes, it says this in Rev. 19:12.

Slide # 15

Revelation 19:12 (NKJV)

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. **He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.**

Perhaps it is this name that will be written on the overcomers. Perhaps this reflects the idea that when we see Him we shall be like Him (1 Jn. 3:2). We will share so intimately and deeply with Christ that He will share with us the deepest and most intimate realities of His character with us. These things are really beyond us at this point, but our appetite is whetted.

All four of these realities promised overcomers have the idea of FOREVER intimate IDENTIFICATION with God the Father and Jesus! It identifies the overcomer with the intimate presence of God (the temple which is He Himself), with the name of God – that is the PERSON of God, with the city of God, the New Jerusalem, and with the new and deepest revelation of Christ.

The great thing about heaven will be God Himself – will be Jesus Himself. Yes, the place will be glorious, but three out of the four things here put the emphasis on identifying with God Himself.

It is interesting how worldly people all want to claim to go to heaven in the end. They want nothing to do with God while they are here on earth, and then they are going to go to heaven?

For what? Heaven is all about God. And for the overcomer so is this earth! Overcomers live for God, not perfectly, but that is the trajectory of their life as a rule.

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

Christ encourages the faithful with the truth that it is He (the One Who is holy and true) Who holds the KEY OF DAVID – which it the KEY to the kingdom. And He is sovereign over destinies! For the faithful Jesus promises open vindication before our enemies. He promises the true believers in the Church who persevere that they will be KEPT from the hour of trial that will come to test all the earth dwellers on the earth. We will be kept from it either by way of death or rapture, whatever comes first. And He promises an intimacy of identification with God that we can’t begin to fathom.

Thus, Jesus holds out tremendous promises that should motivate us to faithfulness. And yet He also warns, “Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

"On a commuter flight from Portland, Maine to Boston in 1987, the pilot heard an unusual noise near the rear of the plane. Henry Dempsey turned the controls over to the co-pilot and went back to check it out.

As he reached the tail section, the plane hit an air pocket, and Dempsey was tossed against the rear door. He quickly discovered the source of the mysterious noise. The rear door had been improperly latched prior to take-off, and it flew open. Dempsey was instantly sucked out of the tiny jet.

The co-pilot saw the red light that indicated an open door. He radioed the nearest airport requesting permission for an emergency landing. He reported that the pilot had fallen out of the plane and wanted a helicopter to search the area. After the plane landed, the ground crew found Dempsey holding on to the outdoor ladder of the aircraft.

Somehow he had caught the ladder and held on for ten minutes as the plane flew 200 mph at an altitude of 4,000 feet, and then, when landing, he kept his head from hitting the runway, which was only 12 inches away. According to the news reports, it took airport personnel several minutes to pry Dempsey's fingers free from the ladder."

You may get tired... You might feel all manner of worldly pressures... You might want to let up... but have you considered the consequences of not HOLDING FAST!

Jesus is coming – HOLD FAST!

Jesus is coming – LIVE READY!