

Revelation 3:7-13 - Church at Philadelphia

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COURSE COMMENTARY



3:7 - Philadelphia - introduction

Architrave Fragment at Philadelphia



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- 1) Named after its builder, Attalus Philadelphus (died 138 B.C.).
- 2) Twenty-seven miles E.S.E. from Sardis.
- 3) Suffered frequent earthquakes.

3:7 - Philadelphia - titles

- **He who is holy**
This title is applied to YHWH in the Old Testament ([Isa. 6:3](#); [Isa. 40:25](#); [Isa. 43:25](#)). Once again we see the divinity of Jesus (and the reality of the Trinity). He is the promised "Holy One" that would not see corruption ([Ps. 16:10](#)), but would be raised from the dead! Even the demons recognized Who He was ([Mark 1:24](#)).
- **He who is True**
God cannot lie ([Num. 23:19](#); [Rom. 3:4](#); [Heb. 6:18](#); [Tit. 1:2](#)). He tells the Laodicean church that His witness is faithful and true ([Rev. 3:14](#)) which is also His title ([Rev. 19:11](#)).

- **key of David, opens, shuts**
The *key* represents governmental authority ([Isa. 9:6-7](#); [Luke 1:32](#)). Eliakim had the key of David on his shoulder ([Isa. 22:20-23](#)). After the door to the kingdom is shut, no one will be able to open it ([Mat. 25:10](#); [Luke 13:25](#)).

3:8 - Philadelphia - commendation

- **an open door**
"an open door" is a *door having been opened* (perfect tense) -- the door has already been opened.
1) May be a door for evangelization ([Luke 24:45](#); [Acts 14:27](#); [Acts 16:14](#); [1Cor. 16:9](#); [2Cor. 2:12](#); [Col. 4:3](#)).
2) Context--key of David, synagogue of Satan--suggests it provides entrance to the messianic kingdom ([Mat. 25:10](#); [Luke 13:25](#)).
3) Typological hint of "open door" involved with the Rapture ([Rev. 4:1](#)).
- **a little strength**
Given the commendation given to this church, and no criticism, this probably refers to their small *numerical* strength. Even if not, Jesus was holding the door open so their ministry would be effective.
- **kept My word and have not denied My name**
They had **preserved its meaning** and **applied it to their lives**. They had not denied His name by the words or deeds. In the Tribulation, many will deny His name and take the name of another ([John 5:43](#); [Rev. 13:17](#); [14:11](#)).

3:9 - Philadelphia - promises

- **synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not**
See lesson discussing [Revelation 2:9](#).
- **worship before your feet**
In the local context, perhaps some from this synagogue would become converts of the Philadelphian church. An intentional allusion and reversal from the messianic age ([Isa. 45:15](#); [Isa. 49:22-23](#); [Isa. 60:14-16](#)). In our age, it is the church which is to make the Jews jealous ([Rom. 10:19-21](#)). This verse is not about **Jews** vs. **Gentiles**. It is contrasting **unbelieving** national Israel with **faithful** Jews and Gentiles (the church).
- **keep you from**
Does *keep you from* denote "kept through" or "kept out of"? Noah's family was kept *through* the flood ([Gen. 7:13](#)). Enoch was *kept out of* the flood ([Gen. 5:24](#)).
- **the hour of trial**
The promise is not to be kept from the **trial** but from the **hour**. Multitudes of the faithful who are on earth during that period suffer *violent death* and are not kept safe ([Dan. 7:21, 25](#); [Rev. 7:9-16](#); [12:11](#); [13:7](#); [20:4](#)).
- **the whole world**
"World" is *oikoume'nes* which can mean the "known world" ([Luke 2:1](#); [Acts 11:28](#); etc.). But it can also mean the entire globe ([Mat. 14:14](#); [Luke 4:5](#); [Acts 17:31](#); etc.). Therefore, it is not a *technical term* and its meaning is determined by the context.

- **to test those who dwell on the earth**

The "earth dwellers" is a technical phrase in the Book of Revelation. It denotes a **moral category** rather than a **geographical location**. These are the ones who steadfastly reject God in the time of the end.

3:11 - Philadelphia - exhortation

- **I am coming quickly... hold fast**

Deliverance is associated with His coming for the church. There are no preconditions for His arrival--it could have happened in John's day ([John 21:23](#)). See the previous lesson where we discussed **imminency**.

- **I will make him a pillar in the temple**

May allude to the two pillars in Solomon's Temple (*Jachin* - "he shall establish," and *Boaz* - "in it is strength"). Believers who are indwelt with the Holy Spirit are the Temple of God ([1Cor. 6:19](#); [2Cor. 6:16](#); [Eph. 2:21](#); [1Pe. 2:5](#)). There is no temple in the New Jerusalem ([Rev. 21:22](#)) --or perhaps all of it may be considered a "temple" -- or this may allude to the Millennial Temple.

- **he shall go out no more**

The ultimate promise of fellowship with God! The restoration of what Adam enjoyed before the Fall ([Gen. 3:24](#)) -- the goal of all redemptive history:

1) the tabernacle ([Ex. 25:9](#)).

2) the temple ([1K. 8:10-11](#)).

3) The indwelling Holy Spirit ([John 14:18](#)).

4) Jesus rules from Jerusalem in the Millennium ([Isa. 2:3](#)).

5) Full restoration in the eternal state ([Rev. 21:3](#)).

- **name of God, New Jerusalem, Jesus' new name**

Names indicate *character* and *possession*. The overcomer belongs to the Father and to Jesus, his citizenship is in the New Jerusalem.

For additional information on this topic, see the [commentary](#).