

Message To Philadelphia

Rev. 3:7-13

July 15, 2020

V7. "Philadelphia": The name means "city of brotherly love". This distinction comes from the love Attalus II had for his brother Eumense, king of Pergamun. It is 25 miles southeast of Sardis. Philadelphia was founded by the citizens of Pergamos. The community was built in a frontier area as a gateway to the central plain of Asia Minor. Philadelphia's residents kept barbarians out of the region and brought in Greek culture and language. The city was destroyed in A.D. 17 by an earthquake. It was totally rebuilt later. The people were also dispersed by wars. The folks that live there now are a totally different group of people.

As a result of the carnality, division, and worldliness of the Church of Sardis, God rebukes its dead orthodoxy and deals with this remnant and presents next to us the "missionary" Church of the revival of the 19th century. Until the 19th century the blessed hope of the premillennial return of the Lord was seldom stressed. The truth was believed by many of God's faithful remnant, but it was seldom preached and was utterly unknown to the masses of church members. A hundred and fifty years ago the truth of the imminent return of the Lord was revived and as a result the true Christians were inspired and fired-up with their responsibility, and God raised up men full of power and zeal and fire and passion for souls to awaken the dead Church of Sardis to its responsibility. Some of these men were Whitefield, Wesley, Edwards, Moody, Darby, and Spurgeon.

This is a good place to discuss the difference between what is said and what is done. To be a Christian is not merely to belong to a so-called "Christian" Church or observe its rituals and ceremonies. Professing Church people is not Christianity. Membership in the organized Church is not enough. Religion is not enough. You must be a member of the one true Church of Jesus Christ, which is His body. If you have received Christ by faith and have been born again, then you are a member of the true Church and a brother or sister to every other believer in every other church.

Though you reside in Thyatira or Philadelphia or even Laodicea, you can be among that faithful remnant found everywhere and in every age. We must forget the man-made distinctions and accept God's only way of salvation by faith in the Son of God. When we stand before the Almighty Judge of heaven and of earth, we will not be asked what church on earth we belonged to, but the only true question to be asked is "what have you done with Jesus who is called the Christ?"

Not all the members of these local assemblies were members of the one true church but they were found in these assemblies. When God wrote to these churches, He took into account only this remnant of true believers in every church. We must distinguish between the professing church and the true church. The professing Church is the organization; the true Church is the organism among the organization. As the Lord says, "it is not all Israel, that is called Israel", so it is true that it is not all "Christians" which are called Christians. The co-existence in the world and the local churches of the true and false, the professors and the possessors, is taught throughout the Bible. In the company of Israel who went out of Egypt there were a mixed multitude, who looked like and acted like and ate like true Israelites but were not; for they were a mixed multitude who went along only because they saw that God was with His people, but they were not of them. Jesus taught the same truth in His parable of the wheat and tares in Mat. 13. The tares of which we read were so much like the wheat that He forbade the servants to try to separate them, but admonished the laborers to wait until the harvest, when the Lord of the harvest Himself would separate the true from the false.

We have the same truth in Revelation 2 and 3. We are told this book is a prophecy and we have seen that these seven churches give us in that exact order the seven periods of the history of the Church from Pentecost to the "calling away" a.k.a. "The Rapture". In all these periods of Church history there were two kinds of members: true and false. The false, Jesus condemned and judged, and with the true He dealt in mercy, and this true remnant runs like a thread though the entire history of the Church.

"Holy": Denoting in birth, life, death, priestly office. Luke 1:35, Acts 2:27, 3:14, Jesus who is the Christ is "The Holy One".

"True": Meaning genuine. There can only be one truth. "Light": Jn. 1:9; I Jn. 2:8. "Bread": Jn. 6:32. "Vine": Jn. 15:1.

"Key of David": This is the regal claim of Jesus being the ruler of the universe. Isa. 22:22. He has unlimited access. Concerning salvation the statement "Key of David" represents Christ's authority to open the door of invitation into His future Kingdom. After the door is open, no one can close it—salvation is a matter of known possession. Once it is closed, no one can open it—eternal judgment is certain. Once again I bring to your remember how the "foolish virgins" slept away their day of grace. Mat. 25:1-13.

Mat. 28:18-20. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Amen."

V8. "Know thy works": Eph. 2:8-10 "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Saving faith produces Godly Works!!!!

Faith alone saves, but faith that saves is not alone. James 2:18 "shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee me faith by my works."

"Set before thee an open door": This is the free access spiritually to the knowledge of God He has directed to give us. Deut. 29:29. This is the period when the Gospel spread and grew thru faithful missionary work. Jesus is saying this opportunity is before the faithful who He expects to redeem this and us it for witnessing and for proclaiming the Word of God. J Vernon McGee started his radio program "Thru the Bible" on this premise that God had provided a means for him to get the Word out. Many of us are utilizing live-streaming to advance the knowledge of Jesus as proclaimed in the book dedicated to "revealing" Him of which Revelation is the climax which ties all the other 65 books together.

"Little Strength": From the Greek word "dunamin" from which we get the word dynamite. This is speaking of power in the Spirit. God is not impressed with numbers and man-made groups proclaiming strength from that. This is referring to true spiritual health and not a "sugar high". There has been far too many times of people "blowing in", "blowing up", and "blowing away." We can be effective for God when we depend on nothing but the Holy Spirit. This is operating under "true grace". This is believing in "justification by grace" and nothing added or taken away from that. Following what is "right" in the sight of God and resisting that which is not.

"Kept my Word": We are in the age when right is called wrong and wrong is declared right. Jesus's being the only name by which mankind can be saved, His blood, His cross, the inspiration of the Holy Bible, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, and His coming again are being denied on every hand. This is being done not only outside of churches but in a large sense within the walls of the "lukewarm" assemblies of today which are dead to true faith.

"Not denied my name": They did not compromise. They were steadfast in declaring Jesus to be the God-man and His substitutionary death for sinners. Throughout the history of the Church believers have been pressured to renounce Jesus as the Christ and replace Him with some other lesser god.

V9. "I will make": Jesus has the power to perform His work to arrange these matters so this will occur.

“Synagogue of Satan”: This is referring to those who were still worshiping in the Synagogues as before. They were in total denial of Jesus being their Messiah. They were deceived. The Jews, which had been saved, had left the observance of the Law and the synagogues.

“Say they are Jews, and are not”: Again denoting being under the influence of Satan. These are the legalists which have plagued the work of Jesus in every age.

“But do lie”: Deceived and willing to promote the falsehood of their actions.

“Make them”: Every knee shall bow before Jesus. We are being taught here that Jesus will make all the enemies of His Bride to bow before them.

V10. “Kept the word of my patience”: II Thess. 3:5 “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

James 1:3-4 “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

“Keep them from the hour of temptation”: I Thess. 4:13-18 Rd.

Heb. 6:12 “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Here is a definite promise that the Bride of Christ will escape the Great Tribulation.

“Shall come upon all the world”: This is meaning worldwide. This is the Great Tribulation period of seven years. It is the 70th week of Daniel which will be the time of “Jacobs Trouble”. We will examine it from Rev. 6-18.

“To try them”: The true character of those left behind will be brought to light during this period.

Again the true believers are not anticipating the Great Tribulation with all its judgment. Jn. 5:24. The Church is looking for Him to come for them and deliver them out of this period.

V11. "Behold": This is an exhortation used to direct the mind to the expressing command. It is meant to excite attention.

"I come quickly": This is not necessary meaning soon but rather the idea of suddenness. It is an air of expectation.

"Hold fast which thou hast": This is referring to true belief and practice. It is to finish well. We are to use what we have been given to live for Christ.

Christians have differing gifts, abilities, experience, and maturity. God doesn't expect us all to be the same, but He does expect us to persevere in using our assets for Him. This church is commended for their effort to obey and encouraged to hold tightly to whatever strength they have. If we use what we have to live for Christ God will commend us also.

"No man take thy crown": Rewards that are given to faithful followers. II Tim. 4:8 "a crown of righteousness". We may, by negligence or unfaithfulness in duty, be deprived of the glory which we have obtained if we had been faithful to Jesus.

V12 "Him that overcometh": This indicates some will not. Our salvation, which is from and of God, is a present continuous process. I Jn. 5:1-5.

"A pillar in the temple of my God": This is referring to the faithful and how they will be honored.

"Shall go out no more": If we reach heaven our happiness will be secure forever.

"Name of my God": This is speaking of being known and recognized as belonging to God.

"Name of city of my God": Belonging to that city. This is enjoying the rights and immunities of such a citizen.

“New Jerusalem”: This is the dwelling place of the righteous in the Eternal State. Everything will be new, pure, and secure.

“Cometh down out of heaven from God”: New heaven and New Earth.

“Will write upon him my new name”: A name for Himself that He will have us know in our new personal relationship we will have with Him.

V13. “Spirt saith”: Only the faithful will hear. The Spirit is saying is this message that Christ recognizes and rewards true fidelity to Him in this fallen world.