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### The Philadelphian Church

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## THE PHILADELPHIAN CHURCH

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION  
REVELATION 3:7-9  
NUMBER 6

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REVELATION 3:7-9 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

This is the 6th Church--Philadelphia. There were several Philadelphias in the ancient world. Alexander the Great founded eighteen cities and named all of them Alexandria. Only one has survived down to our time, and that one is Alexandria in Egypt. It became the second city of the Roman Empire.

This is the message to the Pastor, the messenger of the church in Philadelphia. Philadelphia was 28 miles south of Sardis. In 17 A.D. a terrible earthquake destroyed Philadelphia but Tiberias quickly rebuilt it. Tiberias had a favorite type of wine that came from Philadelphia. Tiberias wanted to keep the wine flowing from Philadelphia so he rebuilt the wineries as he rebuilt the city. Here was a very strong church the strongest in the ancient world. This church held out against the Turks and it lasted until 1,379 A.D. when the Turks broke into the city and destroyed that great church. It was the last of the seven churches to be destroyed, lasting until the 14th Century. They discovered a famous church pillar that could withstand earthquake and this is one of the reasons the church building survived so long.

Now we have a description of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of the church and each individual is to glorify Christ. The church collectively is to glorify Christ. Now we have a threefold description of Christ. Christ having the key of David means that Christ in his humanity was in the lineage of David and he will fulfill the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant is stated in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 and Psalm 89:20-37. This covenant states that David will have a son who will reign forever and that son is Jesus Christ.

The phrase "He that is holy" refers to the fact that Christ has all the ten essence qualities of God. "He is true" means that Christ is revealed by true doctrine. The Bible is the only way we can know God accurately. The uniqueness of Christ is that he is the living word, he is both human and divine. Then we have the importance of Scripture, and this refers to the perfect written word.

REVELATION 3:8 "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Now we have the appraisal of the church in Philadelphia. "I know" is from the Greek word "Oida" and it means Christ knows from experience. He knows all the facts. Christ knows the production of the church in Philadelphia and he knows the production of all the churches. "I have set" is a perfect tense and means Christ has set this door open in the past and it will continue to be open. This door did stay open for over a thousand years, down until 1,378 A.D. This is the church that had an open door for witnessing. This is probably a record for a church in all the earth. This church had a purity of doctrine and was true to the Word of God. The word "I have set" really means "I have given" and it refers to the grace of God. All opportunities of the local church are because of the grace of God. The chance a church has to preach and teach and serve is not because of merit but because of the grace of God. This church survived so long because of their purity of doctrine

This church was true to the operating assets given them of God. So many churches in the world have turned into political parties, social action centers, human betterment agencies, and everything else under the sun except the one thing the Lord meant for the church to be. "A door open" is not the result of the work of the people in Philadelphia but it was the work of God. We need to remember that every open door of service is a gift from God. We do not make our witnessing opportunities, God does. God does the main work and we just fit into his plan. In the missionary journeys of Paul it was not what Paul did but the real important thing was what God did and Paul just happened to be the instrument God used. God's people going on positive volition is the work of God. He turns people on, not man. So if you are fortunate enough to be saved, remember, it is the work of God and not because you are such a great person. A good illustration of this truth was the work of Jonah and the conversion of multitudes in the city of Nineveh.

So please remember, God is the one who gives the open door. This one thing I know-- you and I can't push the door open and we better not try. God must open the door and then we can enter. Many missionaries have gone to places where people had positive volition toward God and after hearing the message of the missionary, they would say, "We have been waiting for you for all of our lives". When the church in Antioch sent out those first missionaries God opened certain doors and God closed others. No one can earn or deserve an open door. A door is opened and a door stays open because of the grace of God.

#### There are four doors in Revelation

1. The door of service.  
REVELATION 3:8 "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."
2. The door of salvation.  
REVELATION 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
3. The door of the rapture of the church.  
REVELATION 4:1 "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."
4. A door of the Second Advent of Christ.  
REVELATION 19:11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."

#### Look at several principles regarding the open door of service.

1. The open door of service has many adversaries.  
1 CORINTHIANS 16:9 "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."
2. The open door can be closed by worry. Only God can open a door but any cluck can close it. Worry and mental attitude sins are among the worst things in the world. You can't worry and live by faith at the same time. Tell God all about your problems and then wait upon him to act.
3. A door can be opened often by prayer--The Lord commanded us to pray for open doors. But when we pray the door open, it is the work of God's grace and not the work of personal merit.  
"No man can shut it" refers to the fact that adversaries, even the Devil, cannot close a door when God has opened it.

Here are three ways to open doors so far as humans are concerned.

1. "Thou hast a little strength" it means no human strength. It really means that these people in Philadelphia were not depending on their strength but they were depending on God's. "Little strength" humanly speaking means great strength from God. Energy of the flesh is no good, but if God is in it then it is glorious. Little strength means operation grace.
2. How did these people in Philadelphia get that way? The answer--"Thou hast kept my word". They learned and applied Bible doctrine.
3. Thou hast not denied my name. In other words, they were a witnessing church. There are three ways to use an open door--
  - a. By the filling of the Holy Spirit
  - b. By the utilization of doctrine
  - c. By witnessing

REVELATION 3:9 "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." This is quite a verse. It involves something of the past and something of the future. "I will make" is literally "I will give" them of the synagogue of Satan. These are the religious Jews. The religious Jews magnified ritual above reality. These religious Jews were constantly in opposition to Christ. The religious Jews were the ones who killed Christ. In Acts 13:33 we have the story of how religious Jews opposed Paul. All through his ministry religious Jews fought Paul. These were the Jews who were always trying to be saved by works. Religious Judaism is of Satan. "Which say they are Jews and are not" refers to the fact that they said they were Jews but a true Jew is one who believes in Jesus Christ. They were racial and religious Jews but they were not regenerated Jews. Abraham was the first Jew and he was regenerated. The Jewish race was built on the principle of regeneration. But the Jews drifted away from this and finally they came to rest under two curses. They were under the curse of the old sin nature and they were under the fifth cycle of discipline from God. Once a Jew is converted he is, technically speaking, no longer a Jew but is a member of the body of Christ. So when the Jew is converted, he is removed from a double curse. The fifth cycle of discipline is lifted from him and he is also dead to the old sin nature. So these Jews in Philadelphia called themselves Jews but they were not true Jews. They had not claimed their rightful spiritual heritage. The spiritual heritage of the Jew was salvation but they rejected it. They read the Old Testament scriptures but when Christ appeared they rejected him. The Jews went on negative signals as far as Christ was concerned and they adopted a form of ritual and feasts and sacrifices and holy days. They distorted spiritual religion into a system of works. So these Jews in Philadelphia were racial Jews but not regenerated Jews. When you reject Christ you set up a system so religion can move in and take over.

So these Jews in Philadelphia kept on lying and before it is all over, they will have to come and fall at the feet of those they have persecuted. Religion always emphasizes human works and this always turns into pride. Humility is a mental word and refers to a relaxed mental attitude.

So these Jews substituted this for a filling of the Spirit and this is no substitute. This must have been a great church in Philadelphia for the Lord says, "Know that I have loved thee". This is one of the greatest things God has ever said about his people or about any church. When we enter into union with Christ then he loves us with an infinite love and we are in union with Christ. Here is the great dividing wall between religion and Christianity. Religion is man trying to reach God. Christianity is God reaching down for man. God loves unlovely man, and that is grace and there is no way you can break that love. The basis of divine love is not what we do, but what Christ did on the cross for us. This means "I have once and for all loved you". Millions of years before we were ever born God loved us. We can totally fail and he still loves us. And he always loves us with a perfect love. His plan is perfect and he does all the work, and he provides all the love.