

The Letter to Philadelphia. Rev 3:7-13

Starts with a quote from Isaiah 22:20-22. The door is open Jesus can come in as He wants. Compare with Revelation 3:19, in that church the door was shut firm, Jesus was outside in the cold, knocking, wanting to come in. Still on the door theme, Jesus gives encouragement for their works, He has opened the door that won't shut. In the Gospels we read that Jesus is that door. John 10:10:7. In the epistles an open door is used to illustrate an opportunity to evangelise, 1 Corinthians 16:8, 2 Corinthians 2:12 and Colossians 4:3.

The qualities He praises are, they had a little strength, kept His word and, not denying His name. What is Jesus likely to be getting at in keeping His word? Lives in keeping with the Bible. The Bible at this time consisted of the Old Testament and the Gospels, importantly Jesus's teachings. By neglecting the Bible we will struggle to keep His word if we don't know what it is. In what context were they likely to be not denying His name? Fast forward 2,000 years, in the UK, in what context might we deny Jesus's name? Matthew 12:48, John 12:48, 2 Timothy 2:12. In the West these days, being a Christian is generally viewed as your human right but when you do talk about your beliefs in depth and about what God has done for you, what sort of response might you expect? Today it's not cool to believe in creation, Hell, holiness and purity and that sin is bad and not fun. Is there a temptation to keep schtum and say nothing?

In the context of this letter, the persecution is far more overt. Just like the church in Smyrna, they are experiencing physical persecution from sections of the Jewish community that Jesus calls the Synagogue of Satan, run by the likes of Saul of Tarsus. Jesus prophesies that the members of this so called synagogue will worship at the feet of the Philadelphians. Is that right? Worshipping the Philadelphians? I'm assuming He means worshipping God at the feet of the Philadelphians rather than worshipping their feet. Jesus emphasises His love for them because they have persevered in the face of adversity.

Jesus promises He will protect them from the 'hour of trial' that will test the rest of the world. If we assume that this promise isn't exclusive to the Philadelphians but applies to all believers who keep God's word and don't deny Him, what do we take out of this?

It supports the prophecy of rapture pre tribulation, more importantly, God is in total control of all persecution and testing. 1 Corinthians 10:12-14.

The promises to believing Philadelphians and Christians keep coming, thick and fast. Not long and Jesus will come again, stay firm and we will receive a crown. Let's look at 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4. How many different crowns can you spot?

More promises, I will make you into a pillar in the Temple of God and we will never leave that place. We're going to get tattooed with the name of God, the name of the city of God (New Jerusalem) and Jesus's new name. Revelation 14:1 (the remnant of 144k believing Jews), Revelation 22:4 (every one else).

Lessons from the letter to the Philadelphians-

This is a model church, one that all churches should strive to emulate.

What are the attributes of this church that Jesus found important? Patience, big prayers, love lots and wait patiently. 1 Revelation 2:16