

Int'l Training for Elders and Responsible Ones

(Fall 2016)

Returning to the Orthodoxy of the Church

Message Seven

The Church in Philadelphia

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:7-13; 1 John 3:14

- Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:
- Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.
- Rev 3:9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, those who call themselves Jews and are not, but lie-behold, I will cause them to come and fall prostrate before your feet and to know that I have loved you.
- Rev 3:10 Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.
- Rev 3:11 I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown.
- Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.
- Rev 3:13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- 1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.

I. As a sign, the church in Philadelphia prefigures the church of brotherly love, the recovery of the proper church life, from the early part of the nineteenth century to the second appearing of the Lord—Rev. 3:7:

- Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:
- A. Just as the reformed church, prefigured by the church in Sardis, was a reaction to the apostate Catholic Church, prefigured by the church in Thyatira, so the church of brotherly love is a reaction to the dead reformed church—v. 1; 2:18.
- Rev 3:1 And to the messenger of the church in Sardis write: These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you are living, and yet you are dead.
- Rev 2:18 And to the messenger of the church in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, He who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like shining bronze:
- B. This reaction will continue as an anti-testimony to both apostate Catholicism and degraded Protestantism until the Lord comes back—3:11.
- 1 John 3:11 For this is the message which you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

II. In Greek Philadelphia means “brotherly love”—v. 7:

Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:

- A. The components of the Greek word Philadelphia mean “to have affection for” and “a brother,” hence, a brotherly affection, a love characterized by delight and pleasure—2 Pet. 1:7.

2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.

- B. In godliness, which is the expression of God, this love needs to be supplied for the brotherhood (1 Pet. 2:17; 3:8; Gal. 6:10), for our testimony to the world (John 13:34-35), and for the bearing of fruit (15:16-17).

1 Pet 2:17 Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

1 Pet 3:8 And finally be all of the same mind, sympathetic, loving the brothers, tenderhearted, humble-minded;

Gal 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.

John 15:17 These things I command you that you may love one another.

- C. The church in Philadelphia prophetically depicts the church of brotherly love, that is, the proper church life—Rev. 3:7:

Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:

1. The church of brotherly love was a reaction to the dead reformed church.

2. The church of brotherly love started in the early part of the nineteenth century, when the brothers were raised up in England to practice the church life outside the system of sects and divisions, and it will continue until the Lord comes back—v. 11.

Rev 3:11 I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown.

- D. “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death”—1 John 3:14:

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.

1. To pass out of death into life is to pass out of the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of death into the source, the essence, the element, and the sphere of life; this took place in us at our regeneration—John 3:3, 5-6; 5:24.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.

2. Love (the love of God) toward the brothers is strong evidence that we have passed out of death into life—1 John 3:14:

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.

a. Faith in the Lord is the way for us to pass out of death into life; love toward the brothers is the evidence that we have passed out of death into life.

b. To have faith is to receive the eternal life (John 3:15); to love is to live by the eternal life that we have received—1 John 5:13; 4:7.

1 John 5:13 I have written these things to you that you may know that you have eternal life, to you who believe into the name of the Son of God.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been begotten of God and knows God.

c. Such unspeakable love can issue only from genuine faith:

1) A person loves for no other reason than the fact that the other person is a brother.

2) There is an unspeakable feeling and taste toward each other; this feeling and taste are a proof that we have passed out of death into life.

3. Not loving the brothers is evidence that one is not living by the essence and element of the divine love and is not remaining in the sphere of that love—3:14b.

1 John 3:14b ...He who does not love abides in death.

4. “In this we know love, that He laid down His life on our behalf, and we ought to lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers”—v. 16:

1 John 3:16 In this we know love, that He laid down His life on our behalf, and we ought to lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers.

a. A love for the brothers is a willingness to lay ourselves aside to serve them—Gal. 5:13.

Gal 5:13 For you were called for freedom, brothers; only do not turn this freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

b. To love the brothers is to be willing to deny oneself for the perfection of others and to have a heart that is willing to lay down one’s own life for his brothers.

III. “These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens”—Rev. 3:7:

Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:

A. To the church of brotherly love, the Lord is the Holy One, the true One, by whom and with whom the recovered church can be holy, separated from the world, and true, faithful, to God.

B. To the church of brotherly love, the Lord is also the One who has the key of David, the key of the kingdom, with authority to open and shut—v. 7; Isa. 22:22:

Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:
Isa 22:22 And I will set the key of the house of David upon his shoulder—/ When he opens, no one will shut; / When he shuts, no one will open.

1. This is the key of the treasury of the house of God, which is typified by the house of David, for the building up of the kingdom of God—39:2; 2 Sam. 7:16:

Isa 39:2 And Hezekiah was glad for them and showed them his treasury, the silver and the gold, and the spices and the fine oil, and his whole armory and everything which was found among his treasures; there was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

2 Sam 7:16 And your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before you; your throne will be established forever.

a. The church is both God's house and God's kingdom—1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17.

1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

b. The key of David is for the keeping of all the treasures of the house of God, which are all the riches of Christ for our enjoyment—Eph. 3:8.

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

2. The key of David opens the whole universe for God—Isa. 22:22; Rev. 3:7:

Isa 22:22 And I will set the key of the house of David upon his shoulder—/ When he opens, no one will shut; / When he shuts, no one will open.

Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:

a. As the greater David, Christ has built up the house of God, the real temple, and He has set up the kingdom of God, the dominion in which He exercises full authority to represent God; therefore, He holds the key of David—Matt. 1:1; 12:3-8; 16:18-19.

Matt 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Matt 12:3 But He said to them, Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, and those who were with him;

Matt 12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and they ate the bread of the Presence, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, except for the priests only?

Matt 12:5 Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?

Matt 12:6 But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.

- Matt 12:7 But if you knew what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the guiltless.
- Matt 12:8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

b. The fact that Christ has the key of David signifies that He is the center of God's economy; He is the One who expresses God and represents Him, the One who holds the key to open everything in God's dominion—Col. 1:15-18.

- Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
- Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.
- Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
- Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

IV. "I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name"—Rev. 3:8:

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

A. As the One who has the key of David and who opens and no one can shut, the Lord has given the recovered church "an opened door which no one can shut":

1. Through the years the Lord's recovery has experienced the Lord as such a One.
2. Since the recovery of the proper church life began in the early part of the nineteenth century, a door has always been opened wide to the Lord's recovery.
3. Although many opposers have risen up against the Lord's recovery and have tried to shut the door, Christ is the One who has the key of David, and what He opens, no one can shut.

B. One outstanding feature of the church in Philadelphia is that she keeps the Lord's word—v. 8:

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

1. According to history, no other Christians have kept the Lord's word as strictly as the church in Philadelphia.
2. The church in Philadelphia, the recovered church, does not care for tradition; she cares for the word of God—cf. Matt. 15:6b.

Matt 15:6b ...and you have deprived the word of God of its authority because of your tradition.

C. The church in Philadelphia keeps the Lord's word with the little power that she has—Rev. 3:8:

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

1. We should not regard the church in Philadelphia as being strong, powerful, and prevailing; the Lord said that she had “a little power.”
2. What pleases the Lord is not that we are strong but that we use our little power to do the best we can.
3. Although the amount of grace we have received may be limited in its capacity, as long as we use it, spending it to do as much as we can to keep the Lord’s word, He will be pleased—Rom. 12:6; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.

Rom 12:6 And having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

1 Pet 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.

D. In Revelation 3:8 the Lord says that the church in Philadelphia has not denied His name:

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

1. The Lord’s word is His expression, and the Lord’s name is the Lord Himself.
2. The recovered church not only has returned in a full way to the Lord’s word but also has abandoned all names other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The recovered church belongs to the Lord absolutely, having nothing to do with any denominations (any names).

E. The deviation from the word to heresies and the exaltation of so many names other than that of Christ are the most striking signs of degraded Christianity—2:14-15, 20.

Rev 2:14 But I have a few things against you, that you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat idol sacrifices and to commit fornication.

Rev 2:15 In the same way you also have some who hold in like manner the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Rev 2:20 But I have something against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, she who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and leads My slaves astray to commit fornication and to eat idol sacrifices.

F. The return to the pure word from all heresies and traditions and the exaltation of the Lord’s name by abandoning every other name are the most inspiring testimony in the recovered church—3:8.

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.