

Bible Basics Conference 2018

Philadelphia

Revelation 3:7-13

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Letter

ADDRESS	<i>And to the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write:</i>
PRESENTATION OF CHRIST	<i>These things saith the holy, the true; he that has the key of David, he who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open: (3:7)</i>
COMMENDATION	<i>I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut, because thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. (3:8-10)</i>

Letter (cont.)

JUDGMENT	—
ADMONITION	<i>I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown. (3:11)</i>
PROMISE TO OVERCOMER	<i>He that overcomes, him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more at all out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from my God, and my new name. (3:12)</i>
CALL TO HEAR	<i>He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. (3:13)</i>

Background

- Lost first love
- Alliance with the world
- Roman Catholicism
- Clergy system
- False doctrine
- Hope of the rapture lost
- A great house
- ...

Background (cont.)

- Ch. 3:1-6: Sardis
 - Protestantism following the Reformation
 - especially in the state *'thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead'*
 - nothing to praise
- Same state presented in Matthew 25:1-5:
 - 5 wise virgins (faithful)
 - 5 foolish virgins (mere professors)
 - but all slept
- Then, without any preceding events or activity, the shout:
'Behold, the bridegroom cometh' (v. 6)

Background (cont.)

- Picture of:
 - Lord's work in 1800's
 - without any prelude
 - without any work on man's part to deserve it (again, nothing to praise in Sardis)
 - He opened the door (Rev. 3:8)
 - bringing lost truths of Scripture before faithful men – particularly His coming for His saints (the rapture)
 - and subsequent exercise on part of some believers to be faithful to Lord and His word
- We also see this in Philadelphia

Aspects of Lord's work in 1800's

1824	Rev. Lewis Way, 'The Latter Rain' – restoration of Israel
1827	Rev. Edward Irving translated 'The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty' by Ben Ezra
1826-1830	Prophetic conferences in Albury Park, Surrey
1827/8	Meeting for the breaking of bread in Dublin, Ireland (J N Darby, E Cronin, J G Bellett, F Hutchinson)
1828	J N Darby begins publishing on the church
1831	Meeting for the breaking of bread in Plymouth
1831-1833	Prophetic conferences in Powerscourt, Ireland

Aspects of Lord's work (cont.)

- Dissociation from ecclesiastical systems
- Simplicity of meetings (and meeting rooms)
- Gospel work
- Separation from the world
- Giving of material goods
- Discovery of lost truths (rapture, Christ and the assembly, gathering to the Lord's name, dispensations, etc.)
- Gathered to the Lord's name alone
- Depended upon the gifts He has given to the assembly
- Valued Lord's work*

* JND's 'The Sufferings of Christ' is recommended

Prophetic aspects of the letter

- Name means 'brotherly love'
 - recognition of the love that there should be between all believers
 - because we are all one (John 17)
 - recognition of that truth as well (1 Cor. 12:23; Gal. 3:28)
 - no claim for themselves
- Lord's presentation of Himself:
 - unlike other letters, not as judge
 - but as what He is in Himself: '*holy*' and '*true*' (v. 7)
 - appreciation of Christ
 - genuinely having Him as the gathering-point

Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- No censure
 - have not left their first love
 - have not made an alliance with the world
 - not seeking the world's protection (have much better protector: v. 7)
 - are separate from false systems
 - in some instances at great cost (v. 9; 1 Cor. 16:9)
 - opposition primarily from profession which bears Christ's name (v. 9)
 - note: verse 9 speaks of profession (hence '*synagogue of Satan*' and '*they shall ... do homage before thy feet*')

Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- Only praise
 - for their works (v. 8)
 - for their faithfulness to the word – especially Lord's word (v. 8)
 - for their faithfulness to His name also (v. 8)
 - not seeking prominence for their own name
- As with everything committed to men's hands, there were failings
- But Lord valued:
 - genuineness of heart
 - obedience to His word (consider days of Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra and Nehemiah)

Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- No outward show or prominence
- No commendation from the world
- No public acknowledgement of their works – but the Lord knows them (v. 8)
- Have what is more important:
 - a little power (v. 8)
 - so that Christ may add His strength (2 Cor. 12:9-10)
 - and so that He may be glorified
 - nothing:
 - in which the flesh can glory
 - to attract the flesh

Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- But is only a little power
 - is a day of small things (Zech. 4) – like the days of Ezra, not Pentecost
 - Lord cannot bless as He did at the beginning
- Believers interested in:
 - the Lord's coming (v. 10)
 - and a genuine expectation of it (v. 11)
 - and regular teaching of it

The Lord's coming

- Why is it important?
- Blessing for us:
 - 'ever with the Lord' (1 Thess. 4:17)
 - in His Father's house (John 14:2-3)
- Blessing for the Lord: *'He shall see of the fruit of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied'* (Isa. 53:11; Heb. 12:2)
- So much joy for Him that He is coming quickly (Rev. 22:20)
- What an honour to be part of the bride He is awaiting

Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- Believers also interested in:
 - Old Testament (v. 7)
 - and a right division of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15)
 - prophecy (vv. 10-12)

Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- The door remains open (v. 8)
 - Lord still works in individuals
 - bringing them out of religious systems
 - helping them to see the privilege of gathering to Himself alone
 - Lord will support meetings which seek to come together in accordance with Scripture
- Influence of work in 1800's remains

Presentation of the Lord (v. 7)

- Holy
- True
- Has the key of David (Isa. 22)
- Opens – and no one can shut
- Shuts – and no one can open

Exhortations

- Does our walk demonstrate:
 - meaning of 'Philadelphia'?
 - what was pleasing to the Lord in the 1800's?
- When we speak of gathering to the Lord's name, does our coming together reflect that He is holy and true?
- Do we walk in separation from evil?
 - right path (2 Cor. 6:17; 1 John 2:15)
 - basis for effective service (2 Tim. 2:20-21)

Exhortations (cont.)

- Do we value, and hold fast to, what the Lord has enabled us to enjoy through His grace (v. 11)?
- Greater knowledge brings greater responsibility
 - grounds of gathering
 - appreciation of person of Christ
 - should be more like Him
 - He should be clearly seen in us

Encouragements

- The Lord is the true one:
 - He does not change (Heb. 1:11)
 - He remains faithful (2 Tim. 2:13)
- Again, the door remains open (v. 8)
- Lord comes quickly (v. 11)
- While there may be ostracism and other suffering now (v. 9), consider the crown we will receive at His appearing (vv. 11-12)
 - consider the patience of Christ (2 Thess. 3:5; Rev. 1:9)
 - we are to keep the word of His patience (v. 10)

Encouragements (cont.)

- Is there a need to overcome in Philadelphia? / What would an overcomer do in Philadelphia?
 - *'hold fast ...'*
- Can a believer lose their crown?
 - can lose the reward which would be theirs in particular: *'thy crown'*

Encouragements (cont.)

- Promise to the overcomer (v. 12):*
 - being a witness for the truth here (1 Tim. 3:15 in a practical sense) will lead to God's witness of us in heaven – *'a pillar in the temple of my God'*
 - consider also the two pillars in 1 Kings 7:21
 - Jachin – He will establish us in that day
 - Boaz – we will enjoy all His strength for eternity
 - unlike earthly temple, this place and our position in it shall remain – *'he shall go no more out'*

* As with each letter, the promise to the overcomer is the portion of every believer, but has a special comfort and encouragement for those who overcome in the circumstances described in the letter

Encouragements (cont.)

- Lord's personal approval of each overcomer – '*my*' x 5
- Because He sees:
 - acknowledgement of His God and His rights and counsels
 - appreciation of the assembly, the new Jerusalem
 - love for Him, the one who has been given a new name (Phil. 2:8-11)