

Chapter 3 vs 7: '*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;*'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. 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. ¹⁰ Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. ¹² Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. ¹³ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.'

Of all the seven churches, of all the panoramic history of the Church on Earth, between Pentecost and the Rapture, this is the best time of the Church of which to be part... this is the time to be alive and part of the True Church; this is the pinnacle of the life of the Church on Earth.

But, you ask, wasn't the Church best during the first Century, or, wasn't it best at the Reformation, or, wasn't it best some other time? No! There was never a better time of the Church and there was never a worse time of the Church as we will see in the final letter to Laodicea.

The churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea were prophesied to exist together, now, in the End Times.

Remember: all of these letters are meant for specific churches of John's time but, of far more importance, is the specific time period, in the life of the Church on Earth, to which each one correlates, before Jesus Christ's return for us in the Rapture and then His return to establish His 1000 year Kingdom on Earth.

How is this the best time? First, notice that Jesus' letter to Philadelphia is the only church which receives no condemnation or warning and this has always been meant to represent the True Church of the End Times as well as the specific church of John's time. Notice Jesus' first words: 'he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;'⁸ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.'

We find the 'Key of David' in Isaiah 22:22: of Eliakim, who is, here, a type for the Messiah, he writes: '*And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*'²³ *And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.*'

A 'key' is the symbol of authority and control, allowing the one who controls it to open or shut a given door; the 'Key of David' signifies authority and control of David's city and kingdom. The Messiah is prophesied to receive this: '*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.*' Isa 9:7

'And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: ³ And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Lk 1:31

Jesus, once again, is showing that He, with His Kingdom, is the focus, and fulfillment, of all Prophecy. He is King of kings and Lord of lords before Whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord and Ruler of All.

It is our time, the time of the past two centuries, during which Jesus has given an open door to all the World for the propagation of the Gospel and that open door was, primarily, to Great Britain and America. During this time, countless missionaries have been sent out into all the World and it's during our time (about 200 years)

that communication, travel and the accumulation of knowledge began to open up the entire World to the Gospel.

Daniel was given much prophecy concerning the End Times but what He was given was specifically for the End Times and not for his own time: The angel told Daniel, of the End Times: '*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*' Dan 12:4 (Increased knowledge and travel) This is one of the reasons God allowed so much understanding, knowledge, invention and progress... so that, in these last days, the Gospel really would go out to all the World. He says that we, the Last Days Philadelphian Church, have 'a little strength;' God has used that 'little strength,' through His Holy Spirit, to take the Gospel everywhere before His return for us.

Many of us, of the True Church, have not denied His Name which has led to countless believers being martyred, most often by the followers of false religions.

** False teachers of today love to continually blame 'the church' for the World's ills; the church isn't doing enough good, the church is at fault. That, then, becomes their reason for more and more 'social gospel' efforts. Notice: did Jesus, even once, blame one of these seven churches or the Church, Universal, for poverty, illiteracy, terrorism or evil, in the World, of any kind... ever? Does Paul ever blame the Church for any of the evil of the Roman Government and Empire? No! The Church is never tasked with solving any of the World's problems; our commission is to take the Gospel to the World and make disciples.**

Briefly, those Jesus calls, 'the synagogue of Satan,' will have two fulfillments: first, in this context, it refers to unbelieving Jews who persecuted true believers. Paul writes: '*Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*'³ *³ Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?*' 1 Cor 6:2

Jesus never says something just to hear Himself speak; He never says what He does not mean; He is saying that we, the True Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, will, as we rule and reign with Him forever... we will be those before whom others will bow down as we faithfully rule and reign in His stead, in whatever area of the Earth or the Universe He will have placed under our authority. Some may, in false humility, deny this truth: 'Oh no... I could never allow anyone to bow down to me!'... but the truth is, when we acknowledge, and receive, all that He has already done for us and is planning to do for us throughout Eternity, we do, in fact, glorify Him because forever we will be reminded of His love and sacrifice for us, because of which, we will be in these positions of rulership instead of in the Lake of Fire where we deserve to be, and would be, but for His love, grace and mercy.

This is how I imagine it: those who rejected and persecuted us (the True Church) will, at the Final Judgment, be forced to bow down before the Lord Jesus Christ, but also before the ones they persecuted. Or... it may be that those who persecuted and rejected us and our message of the Gospel, will, upon seeing the World-wide upheaval of the Rapture, suddenly believe and turn to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance; when they bow before Him, it may also be that they choose to bow before the ones who had given them the Gospel so clearly and accurately so that they then knew what to believe even though they would have to still endure the horrors of the Tribulation, either being martyred or able to 'hide out' for seven years. Think about it... if that were you, when you finally knew you'd been given Eternal Life... wouldn't you be so overcome with gratitude, to the one who gave you the message of Eternal Life, that you might fall down, bowing to that one? Surely, if that were to happen to any of us, especially then, when we will no longer battle a sin-nature, we would immediately turn that worship, thanksgiving and praise to the One Who really deserves it: Jesus Christ.

This also has a fulfillment for believing Jews who were persecuted by both unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. Speaking of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom: '*The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee; The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*'¹⁵ *Whereas thou has been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal Excellency, a joy of many generations.*' Isaiah 60:14

We, the True Church, are the Bride and Body of the Lord Jesus Christ; we will rule and reign with Him forever; we are the Heavenly people of God. Israel, the Earthly people of God, have been given glorious promises in His Earthly Kingdom: '*And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath;*' Deut 28:13

We know this letter to the church in Philadelphia portrays the very last days of the Church, on Earth, because of His wonderful promise: 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. This is an obvious reference to the Rapture and to the very last day of the Church on Earth. Never before has there been a terrible time of trial for the entire World, all together. This last generation has seen two World Wars but even then, many places in the World were spared the horrors of those European and S.E. Asian wars. He is now referring to the terrible time which will, in fact, engulf the entire World; no place on Earth will be spared; no one, that is, except the True Church: she (we) will be spared; He has promised to take us away from the Earth. When He says, 'I will keep thee *from* the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world,' the Greek word which the Holy Spirit inspired John to use, to convey the reality that we will be 'gone,' is the word, EK. Ek does not mean that He will keep us safe *during* the Tribulation, or that He will protect us *through* the Tribulation... the proper translation of that Greek word into English, as seen in a concordance is: *'out of, away from; it denotes exit or emission out of, as separation from something with which there has been close connection; of any kind of separation or dissolution of connection with a thing or person; by severing their connection with; to be so lifted up as to dissolve present relations to the Earth; taken out of the spere of Earthly action.'*

That little Greek word, ek, gives us one of our most sure proofs of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God... He says exactly what He means and He always means what He says. Anyone who ignores what He has said and attempts to portray Him as saying what He has not, will be in for a terrible surprise when he/she stands before the Judge of the Universe.

'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.'

Hold fast to your true understanding of the soon coming Rapture of the Church. What crown is Jesus referring to, here? What crown would be at risk if we deny His soon coming for His Bride? Paul wrote to Timothy: *'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, **but unto all them also that love his appearing.**'* 2 Tim 4:6

Paul told Timothy that it is the Crown of Righteousness which will be given to all who have 'loved His appearing.' He means it is waiting for all who have believed Jesus when He said, *'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'* John 14:2

This Last Days Church is found, sometimes, as a group, like we have here, but more often, these Philadelphians are like sheep scattered among groups of goats. These are the genuine believers who are surrounded by 'churched' unbelievers. We've heard the term 'un-churched' many times as if sitting in a church pew equates to salvation.

Remember, after we finish the next, final letter, we will go back and look at the various promises Jesus made to 'him that overcometh.'

'And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; ¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of

my mouth. ¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ¹⁸I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ¹⁹As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. ²⁰Behold, 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. ²¹To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. ²²He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.' Rev 3:14

This is the 'other church' of the Last Days.