

Seven pt6

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Seven / Revelation 3:7–13

I have an electronic lock on my front door. Enter a code and you can get in. Which is awesome except for one problem...if the lock battery goes dead and you don't have a key (story of dead battery)

The letter to Philadelphia is a letter about keys and doors...coming and going. And the Person who owns those doors and opens them.

Jesus introduces Himself in a unique fashion to this church...He reminds them of His nature- holy and true- and then He tells them He has a key.

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

In an ontological sense, **holiness belongs only to God himself**. Hence, once again, the Lord establishes the claim for his own deity.

Furthermore, he also describes himself as **the One who is true. This contrasts with the generally unreliable character of the human family.** The Lord, however, is true both in terms of that which may be known but also in terms of his own witness.

This reference to a “key of David” is a quote from [Isaiah 22:20-22](#). The “key of David” is first and foremost a reference to being able to gain audience with the King. **Jesus is reminding them that He is their way of access to the Father**- which of course is accomplished via His holiness and His bringing them the truth.

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

The phrase “who holds the key of David” is somewhat more enigmatic. However, the expression evidently had definite connection to Isa 22:20–23, where Eliakim as the steward of Hezekiah is said to possess the key of David, which seems to be in the Isaianic passage a reference

to the accessibility to the king and to the king's presence available in and through Eliakim. Of course, other approaches could be made to Hezekiah, but Hezekiah's steward, possessing the key of David, was unquestionably the most favorable venue if one wished to curry the favor of the sovereign

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

This allusion is almost certainly what was in the mind of John when he identified the risen Lord as the One who holds the key of David. **Access to God is ultimately through Jesus alone**

And once Jesus has opened that door no one can shut it...**our salvation is secure.**

And this church, as a result of their salvation, has an opportunity that has been set before them. Look at **verse 8.**

They have an "open door."

Open doors in the NT are opportunities to share the Gospel, for evangelism, for the advance of the Kingdom. And this church- although they are under attack- they have been given an opportunity, a mandate, to walk thru that door.

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

Rather, the One who has the ability to open so that no man can shut and shut so that no man can open looks with favor on them and has placed before the church an open door that no man can shut. The understanding of most commentators has been that the phrase should be interpreted as an open door for missionary expansion

This church may be small in numbers or they may have little influence, but the opportunity for them is one that Jesus has opened for them, because of who they are and how they have faithfully served Him.

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

This open door has been set before the church at Philadelphia because of a specific problem apparently associated with the pressures arising from a particular group. Though the church at Philadelphia had little strength, which is an allusion either to the small number of believers or to the church's limited influence or both, they nevertheless had kept the word of the Lord and had not denied his name

It's where their opposition comes from that I find interesting. And it is where I want to focus- both on the ones who oppose them and what will become of them.

Look at **verse 9**.

Here we have the synagogue of Satan language again, but in this case we get some more info. **This church is opposed by people who claim to represent the Jewish faith, but who are not.** They are fakes.

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

Once again, that particular phrase, coupled with a second mention of those who are a part of the "synagogue of Satan," not real Jews but liars, underscores the probable accuracy of Colin Hemer's thesis regarding the pincer pressures of Judaism and imperial religious fervor existing in Asia Minor. ***Compromise among many believers during the reign of Domitian had been caused by a combination of increased pressure from the state regarding the cult of the emperor, worsening relationships between Jews and Christians (particularly Jewish Christians as found in the curse of the Minim), and burgeoning pressure on the Christians of the late first century (particularly in Asia Minor) to compromise either by denouncing Christ and returning to the synagogue as bona fide Jews or by embracing, at least publicly, the cult of the emperor***

In our day and time, more and more, the people who oppose the mission of the church claim to be Christians. That's frustrating and kind of scary. Why is this happening? Several reasons:

1. We have less and less people who go to church who really know what they are supposed to believe.
2. We have more and more people who connect the "Gospel" to extra things that become hoops to clear.
3. We have a lack of understanding of where the Bible came from and why it holds authority.
4. We have a disconnect between spirituality and Christianity which results in a broken relationship with the church.
5. We have churches that are being revealed to be grifts rather than gifts.

These- and a few other issues- have created our synagogues of Satan and when they are threatened by people who are seeking to please Jesus and not themselves they get rowdy.

But look at what Jesus says one day these people will come to their senses- and repent- either in this life or the next. And they will see the love God has for His people.

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

Concerning these persecutors of believers in Philadelphia, John cites the Lord: "I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you." The question here lies in the time of fulfillment. Should this promise be viewed eschatologically or as a reference to something that was to transpire in the immediate future, which would humble the Jews of the city of Philadelphia before the Christian minority and show God's particular love for them

And for this church, they will receive a really amazing reward (**v10**) they will not have to face the trial that will come upon the earth. And they do not. They pass away before the series of judgments that Jesus speaks about later in this book. Their deaths protect them from the Tribulation to come.

Revelation 6. To Philadelphia (3:7–13)

One may conclude then that a reprieve is being promised to the church at Philadelphia concerning a worldwide judgment of God that will be an “hour of trial,” throughout the earth. Explanations that have sought to localize the extent of this trial and make it applicable only to the Christians in the region of Philadelphia are not attractive in light of the rather clear language of the text. The text speaks of an hour of trial coming on “the whole world,” and the cohesiveness that the text has with the other literature of tribulation throughout Scripture makes a strong case for universal upheaval

So what are we to do in the face of this opposition to going thru the door Jesus has opened? (**v11**)

1. Trust in His coming
2. Stay the course so we will receive the victors crown- don't disqualify ourselves by choosing the easy way
 - a. take advantage of the open door
 - b. rely on God's strength
 - c. be faithful to Jesus

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with the intensity of persecution facing the Philadelphians, the possibility for following the pattern of the Sardian Christians, succumbing to those pressures and hence forfeiting rewards, was real. The purpose of the admonition here is not to lose the reward

And God gives some promises to those who do hold fast

- **they will be pillars** (*I will make him a pillar*)- the essence of the promise seems to reflect certainty and honor for the overcomer

Revelation, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 134.

- **they will have a place of stability with God** (*Never shall he go out of it*- reference to fleeing frequent earthquakes in Philadelphia)- The promise is that the day is coming when there will be stability and permanence for the child of God, and he will never again know the kinds of uncertainties experienced by the Christians in Philadelphia.

Revelation, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 134.

- **they will be marked with God's name** (*write on him the name of my God*)- the ability to name is the ability to exercise authority and claim possession. That seems to be the significance of the names that are promised to the Philadelphian overcomers. They will receive God's name as their possession

Revelation, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 135.

- **They will dwell in God's new city** (*the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem*)- the new Jerusalem as their citizenship

Revelation, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 39, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012), 135.

This church- they have a Rock to stand on and lean against. So do we, but we also have a mission, an open door, and we have to walk thru it to stay true to what Jesus has called us to do.