

# REVELATION 3: 7 - 13

## PHILADELPHIA: OPEN DOORS

Open your Bibles to Revelation 3: 7 - 13 and in so doing, you open to the sixth of seven letters our Lord Jesus wrote to seven literal, historic churches. Each church was given a powerful message from Christ.....each letter closes (2: 7, 11, 17, 29; 3: 6, 13, 22) with an application to all "who have ears."

Now, just before we plunge into this letter, ask yourself: Why did Christ not admonish this church for any error? This is the second church that is so blessed! Philadelphia and Smyrna were uncondemned for the seven churches! The reason is:

- ✓ Smyrna was purified by obediently suffering persecution.
- ✓ Philadelphia was purified by obediently fulfilling God's commission.
- ✓ One church was suffering, one church was servicing.
- ✓ One church was standing alone, another was speaking out.

Are we standing up and speaking for Jesus ? Let me share the life story of one who was speaking for Jesus:

### FLIGHT 961

It was a typical flight. One that occurs thousands of times every day around the world. Ethiopian Air Flight 961 took off November 23rd, 1996 from Addis Ababa. Onboard were 163 passengers and 12 crew members. Among those flying that Saturday were Mr. & Mrs. Andy Meakins. Andy was an elder at the International Evangelical Church of Addis. That large bible believing church was pastored by a dear friend of mine up until last year. In less than two hours more than 120 people died, including five from Andy's church. Andy never survived the crash.

Somewhere near Kenya the hijack began. An unidentified number of men declared themselves escaped convicts taking the flight to Australia. Then things turned horrible. Brandishing an ax and a supposed bomb they stormed the flight deck. After savagely beating the copilot and throwing him down they proceeded to order the plane to turn eastward. In spite of the nearly empty fuel tank they forced the pilot to continue.

With dangerously low supplies the pilot tried to plead for a refueling stop to no avail. After trying to hug the coast, the hijackers threatened to blow up the plane and so the pilot tried to make it to the Indian Ocean Island of Comoros. When it became evident they would not make it, Captain Leul Abate<sup>1</sup> announced to the cabin passengers, "Listen, guys, we're all dead people, there is no argument now." People began to scream one witness said, others began to pray.

The crash is now well known as the film of a Japanese honeymooning couple caught the descent, dip of a wing, the flip the crash and the disintegration of the 767 over the water. What they never said on the news was contained in a fax to us this week. It was the inside the cabin account of Andy Meakins wife who did survive the crash. This is what she told her church . . .

As soon as the captain told us we were going to crash I heard the distinct snap of my husbands seat belt. He was up and out of his chair. Going down the aisle row by row he earnestly shared the gospel of Christ with any who would listen. Before the sickening screech of twisting metal and the 110 mph crash of our plane into the water Andy had signaled me that 20 passengers had trusted in Jesus for their salvation. Andy never made it back to the safety of his seat belt. But, he took twenty souls with him to Paradise.

You see there was a safe spot in that plane. A shelter where no twisted wreckage could permanently harm. A haven that no crushing impact could erase. Andy knew and shared the Divine Directions. "God's directions are the only way to make it to happiness now and forever!!" He knew how to escape the plane before it was too late for eternity. Do you know those directions? Are you following them? Are you sharing them with those who God has placed around you?

## PART ONE MEET THE ASSEMBLY

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<sup>1</sup> USA Today, 11/29/96.

- ✓ ITS NAME: PHILADELPHIA which literally means “brotherly love”. Was thirty miles southeast of Sardis on the road to Laodicea. This is seventh time this word Philadelphia is used in the New Testament.
- ✓ Hebrews 13:1 says let Philadelphia continue “brotherly love” what a name. What a church that must have been and if we let it continue, what a church for God’s glory!
- ✓ ITS CLIMATE: The most striking historical note on this city was the very frequent tremors and earthquakes that were characteristic of this area....This city had been destroyed by quakes several times. Fissures, ground cracks, volcanic activity in thermal pools, hot mud and regular tremors were common. In fact, at times the population would go out of the city and live in tents to be safe from shocks, after shocks and bigger quakes...Thus, that explains Christ’s words in verse 12 “not go out anymore’. They were so used to leaving town in haste for safety...no more. Christ gives enduring safety.

So first off, this was an assembly with a great name “brotherly love” and a terrible location, earthquake alley. And a precious promise live out my love in you and someday you’ll be safe with me forever!!!

PART TWO  
MEET THE AUTHOR  
JESUS CHRIST  
Revelation 3:7b

‘These things says:

- ✓ He who is holy,
- ✓ He who is true,
- ✓ “He who has the key of David,
- ✓ He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”:

FIRST, JESUS IS HOLY. Jesus Christ wants us to remember that He as God the son is “Holy”. Let me help you see this attribute HOLY.

- ✓ Leviticus 11:44 - I am holy says the Lord God.
- ✓ Isaiah 57:15 - God alone is holy says the Lord God. God alone is holy > Jesus Christ is our Holy God, the Son.

SECONDLY, JESUS IS THE TRUTH. “He who is true.”

- ✓ John 17:3 “This is life eternal that they may know thee. The only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Here Jesus claims oneness with the Father.
- ✓ Look at 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is

true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life..

John is particularly fond of that word true. Paul describes the end of the age as a time of lawlessness and deception. Jesus Christ is here declared to be holy and true. When lawlessness surrounds, he who is holy keeps them -- when deception abounds there is one who is truth .

- ✓ Note this word in verse 7 is very specific. In Greek there are two words for true. Alethes - Alethinos
- 1. Alethes= True statement only as opposed to a false statement.
- 2. Hitler led Germany is true, but the truth is He led them in error. That's the idea of alethinos. The second Greek word used here in verse 7, Jesus Christ is truth, not just true as opposed to false, but genuine truth. When you confront Jesus Christ face to face, you are face to face with truth itself. Not merely true statements....as John MacArthur said "there is no substitute for God, and Jesus Christ is the Genuine reality of God".

THIRDLY, JESUS HAS THE KEY. Quickly note the last attribute of the author who has "the key of David."

The only other place this statement is found in the Word of God is Isaiah 22. Hezekiah is the King and the Assyrian armies are on their way. The city of Jerusalem is weak and its walls are broken down. The people have not even looked to their Maker and so God says He will find a faithful servant through whom He will work. One unfaithful steward Shebna is targeted as having an unrepentant heart and is judged. Then a faithful one Eliakim is entrusted with the royal authority of God. Jesus is the faithful Son of God who has entrusted to Him:

- ✓ John 5:24-29 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.<sup>25</sup> "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.<sup>26</sup> "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,<sup>27</sup> "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.<sup>28</sup> "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice<sup>29</sup> "and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

- ✓ Revelation 1:18 "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

PART THREE  
THE APPROVAL

Revelation 3:8-10

8 "I know your works.

See, I have set before you an open door,  
and no one can shut it;  
for you have a little strength,  
have kept My word,  
and have not denied My name.

9 "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan,  
who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—  
indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet,  
and to know that I have loved you.

10 "Because you have kept My command to persevere,  
I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the  
whole world,  
to test those who dwell on the earth.

1. I am intimately acquainted with your deeds and they are pleasing. "I know your deeds". This is HOLINESS!
2. I have given you great opportunities which you have taken and fulfilled. "I have put before you an open door which no one can shut." This is DISCIPLE MAKING and EVANGELISM.
3. I know you are weak and leaning on my power. "Because you have a little power". This is DEPENDENCE.
4. I know you are devoting your self to my Word. "And have kept my Word." This is OBEDIENCE.
5. I know you love me so much you magnify my name unashamedly. "And have not denied my name". This is COMMITMENT.

So what did Jesus approve in their lives? It is all in verse 8:

- ✓ HOLINESS!
- ✓ DISCIPLE MAKING and EVANGELISM.
- ✓ DEPENDENCE.
- ✓ OBEDIENCE.
- ✓ COMMITMENT.

If that is what Jesus likes in someone, shouldn't we be seeking those pursuits in place of others that crowd out Jesus ?

And what was the result? Listen to v. 9-10:

- ✓ v. 9 VICTORY OVER GOD'S ENEMIES (the gates of Hell will not withstand the attack). "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.
- ✓ v. 10 DELIVERANCE FROM THE TRIBULATION. "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

PART FOUR: NO ADMONITION!  
Like Smyrna there is no criticism of laxity  
or disobedience!

PART FIVE  
THE APPEAL  
Revelation 3:11  
"Behold, I am coming quickly!  
Hold fast what you have,  
that no one may take your crown.

Just as critical and vital these words must have been two thousand years ago, so we need to listen today. Jesus gives three appeals:

1. BE WATCHFUL- NO QUITTING ALLOWED!: "Behold, I am coming quickly!" 2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. This is a call to finish the race to the end, not walking the last lap!
2. BE DILIGENT- NO COASTING ALLOWED!: " Hold fast what you have". 2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. This is a call to life long spiritual growth, no coasting allowed!
3. BE CAUTIOUS – NO SELF INDULGING ALLOWED! : "that no one may take your crown" How? By being disqualified! 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.<sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. This is a call to self discipline as a fruit of God's Spirit no laxity and self indulgence.

God always counts how we finish not how we start!

## PART SIX

### THE ASSURANCE

TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE AN INESCAPABLE DESTINATION with these wonderful promises:

Revelation 3:12

"He who overcomes,

1. I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, SECURITY
  2. and he shall go out no more. STABILITY
  3. And I will write on him the name of My God ETERNITY
  4. and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. PURITY
  5. And I will write on him My new name. INTIMACY
- ✓ To the earthquake wary citizens of Philadelphia, weak and insecure at time - PERMANENCE: WE ARE PILLARS, BECAUSE WE ARE SECURE: John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 "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 to Myself; that where I am, [there] you may be also. (NKJV)
  - ✓ Lost your treasures on earth to disasters, lost your loves ones to death, lost your dreams to unexpected changes? I'll give you the best. There is nothing better than – stability
  - ✓ INTIMACY: WE ARE GIVEN A NAME, BECAUSE WE ARE A LOVE GIFT FROM THE FATHER TO THE SON! John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (KJV)
  - ✓ ADOPTED: Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together. (KJV)
  - ✓ CONFESSED: Revelation 3:5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. What an unbelievable promise! Jesus with His nail scarred hands outstretched, welcomes us through the door of death, walks with us through the dark valley and welcomes us to Glory. But not as the fluttering host that slips away, no, He walks by us down the golden streets. He leads us up the broad main street of River of the water of life all around us the saints of all the ages look on in wonder as again Jesus leads one of His precious blood bought

brothers and sisters, up to meet their Father in Heaven. And then, on the Throne in blazing light, with a river of fire flowing out before Him, and billions of angels standing around Him the Ancient of Days looks upon His Beloved Son walking toward Him. And there holding the hand of Jesus we hear Him call us by our new name, the one He gave us, our name. And standing there before the throne, God will hear Jesus present us by name as His beloved and precious one.

- ✓ CLOTHED: Then what indescribable joy to hear our Father say, "Bring the best robe and put it on him." Think of it, a robe of white, bright as the day, pure as the light! When the Lord Jesus was transfigured on the mount, something happened not only to His countenance, something happened also to His clothes. His raiment became white as the light. What a reward for faithfulness, to have a robe like that draped around the shoulders and to be invited to walk the shining ways of glory in light transfigured clothes. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Are you listening this morning? Revelation 3:13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' Do you have ears? Are you saved and listening?

- ✓ A cold wave cooled the loving passion of the Ephesians: watch out, don't catch cold.
- ✓ Tribulation and poverty tempted and tried to discourage the Smyrnians: watch out, don't be discouraged.
- ✓ False doctrine and impurity tripped up some at Pergamos: watch out for imitations and immorality.
- ✓ False teachers and wickedness killed the Thyatirans: watch out for truth and purity.
- ✓ Lifelessness and no pulse robbed the Sardians of the Name: watch out and be sure you are clothed with Christ.

Remember, born again believers overcome, listen and are crowned!