

## **Open and Shut**

### ***Revelation 3:7-8***

**Thought for the Day:** If God opens a door of opportunity for ministry, He will supply everything we need to go through that door and successfully accomplish the ministry to which He has called us.

The letter to the church in Philadelphia is a positive, uplifting letter, written to a small yet spiritually healthy church family. Christ loved this church because its members gladly identified themselves as His followers and lived in obedience to His Word. The Lord urged them to take advantage of the open door of opportunity for ministry He was giving to them, to patiently endure, and to look forward to the rich reward that awaited them in heaven.

#### **I. The Greeting (3:7)**

##### **7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:**

- Philadelphia literally means “brotherly love.”
  - “The name of the city... comes from the loyalty which King Attalus of Pergamum... demonstrated to his brother King Eumenes. The original purpose behind this key city was to make it a center for spreading Greek language, culture, and manners throughout the Asian provinces.” (*Hocking, World Leader, p. 87*)
  - The Lord, however, wanted the church in Philadelphia to be a center for spreading the Gospel throughout the Asian provinces.
- Located in a beautiful valley about 28 miles southeast of Sardis.
- Situated in a strategic place on the main trade route from Rome to the cities of the East. It was called “The Gateway to the East.”
- Also known as “Little Athens” because of the many temples in the city dedicated to gods and goddesses, including Artemis and Asklepios.
  - Especially known for its wine production; one of the primary gods of the city was Dionysus, the god of wine.
  - When the true God of the Bible is rejected, we humans replace the worship of God with all kinds of strange and bizarre beliefs and practices.
- The area was especially liable to severe earthquakes for several years. (Note vs. 12)
  - The things of this world are easily shaken, destroyed & taken from us. But our inheritance in heaven is unshakeable, eternal, and can never be taken from us.

##### **The words of the holy one...**

- Jesus Christ is the Holy One. This is equivalent to saying, “I am God.”
- In the Old Testament, God is referred to as the Holy One at least 45 times, especially in the book of Isaiah.
- As God, Jesus Christ is absolutely holy “...in His character, His words, His actions, and His purposes. As the Holy One, He is uniquely set apart from everything else, and nothing can be compared to Him.” (*Wiersbe, Be Victorious, p. 52*)
- If we truly regard Jesus Christ as holy, as His followers, we will be committed to the pursuit of holiness in our own lives. (1 Peter 1:14-16)

### **...the true one...**

- This too is a defining characteristic of God. The only place in Scripture where this title is used.
- Twice in Isaiah 65:16 God is called "the God of truth."
  - He is the true God as opposed to the false gods. Jesus Christ is truly God!
  - "He is... the One who is true—that is, genuine. He is the original, not a copy; the authentic God and not a manufactured one. There were hundreds of false gods and goddesses in those days..., but only Jesus Christ could rightfully claim to be the true God." (*Wiersbe, Be Victorious, p. 52*)
  - This world is full of lies and deception, but in Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible, we find the truth. (John 1:14; 18:37-38; 14:6)
  - Jesus lived the truth; He declared the truth; and He is the truth. Therefore, He is absolutely worthy of our trust.

### **...who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.**

- Cp. Isaiah 22:15-25. Eliakim was given the keys of authority. Vs. 22 – "And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."
- Just as Eliakim was given authority and control over David's house, Christ has been given authority and control over the Church, the house of God. (Matthew 28:18)
- Have we acknowledged and submitted to His authority and control over our lives?

## **II. The Commendation (3:8)**

### **8 I know your works.**

- A simple, summary statement: The implication is that they are good works of which the Lord is well aware.
  - You may have little recognition from men, but the Lord is well aware of your good works and the day is coming when you will be eternally rewarded.

### **Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut.**

- "In the New Testament an 'open door' speaks of opportunity for ministry (Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3). Christ is the Lord of the harvest and the Head of the church, and it is He who determines where and when His people shall serve." (*Wiersbe, Be Victorious, p. 53*) Cp. Acts 16:6-10.
- It is Jesus who opens and closes doors of opportunity as He sees fit. Our job is not to force the doors open but rather, to recognize the open doors of opportunity and be ready to step through, as the Lord leads.
- "Find out where God is at work and join Him there." "Lord, please help me to see where You are working and show me how I can join You there."
- If God has opened the door of opportunity, no one can shut it—you cannot fail. If God has closed the door, no one can open it—you cannot succeed. (Psalm 127:1-2)

### **...I know that you have but little power...**