

THE GRACE OF WRATH

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Text

Revelation 3:7-13

Topic

Jesus tells the Philadelphia faithful that He has the key to open the door that no one can shut

Title

"O Key Door-Key"

When our daughter was moving out of our home, I asked her to turn in her house key. It seemed appropriate to me; and by "me," *I mean only me.*

Both she and Pam disagreed with my request. Like Ricky Ricardo, I asked them "splain it to me."

They were more than happy to oblige.

Jesus presented Himself to the church in Philadelphia as "He who has the Key of David."

"David," of course, is King David of Israel. God promised him a descendant who would establish the Kingdom of God and rule it forever.

Jesus' possession of the Key of David is proof that Jesus is the descendant of David who will establish the Kingdom of God and rule over it forever.

The Lord's comments to the faithful believers in Philadelphia assured them of their future entrance into the forever Kingdom. Since Jesus' comments to the churches in the Revelation are to *all* churches for *all* time, He is likewise assuring those of us who are in Christ that we, too, are assured our future entrance into the forever Kingdom.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 No Great Tribulation For You,** and **#2 New Jerusalem Awaits You.**

#1 - No Great Tribulation For You (v7-10)

Monsters Inc is my favorite Pixar film. The explanation of the monster under your bed, or in your closet, is pure genius.

To enter the human world, the monsters had to go through a door. That sequence at the end, the door chase, is classic. You never know where the next door is going to take them.

We know where our "door" is taking us.

Rev 3:7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, '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":

"The angel of the church" is referring to its pastor in his role of delivering God's message to the church.

Even though all seven churches in the Revelation were contemporary, and geographically near one another, Jesus had a separate, unique message for each of them.

We should expect God the Holy Spirit to have a unique message for our church, and for each of us, every time we come together to worship the Lord.

Jesus revealed Himself to Philadelphia as "He who is holy, He who is true."

🔑 "Holy" is a title for the Messiah (e.g., Mark 1:24).

🔑 "True" means *genuine* or *real*.

If you are on [twitter](#) you've noticed famous people use the preface "@TheReal" to designate that it is really them. When I get famous, I'll be @TheRealGenePensiero.

"Holy" and "True" means Jesus is @TheRealMessiah.

"HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS."

In your employment, some of you are Key Holders. You open and shut your place of business.

Jesus is a Key Holder.

🔑 In Matthew 16:19, He tells Peter "And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

🔑 In Revelation 1:18 Jesus said, "I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

🔑 In our verses, He has "the key of David."

🔑 A couple of chapters after Jesus said that He would give the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter, He makes it clear that He will give them to every believer in the Church Age (Matthew 18).

Peter becomes an example for us of a believer using the key to the Kingdom:

🔑 On the Day of Pentecost, he presented the Gospel, and three thousand Jews were saved (Acts 2:41).

🔑 Later in the Book of Acts, Peter and John are instrumental in the conversion of the Samaritans (Acts 8:14).

🔑 Then Peter is the one sent to give the Gospel to the Gentiles as he visits Cornelius (Acts 10).

When a Christian shares the Gospel with nonbelievers, we are using the key in the sense that we have authority on earth to declare that their sins can be forgiven by believing in Jesus. They can be saved; or they will perish.

🔑 The Keys of Hades and Death open two terrible doors to those who die having rejected the Gospel:

🔑 Hades is a temporary holding cell, a place of torment for souls awaiting final judgment.

🔑 "Death" is what the Bible calls the Second Death. It is resurrection to eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire.

🔑 The Key of David looks forward to the future Kingdom on earth. In Second Samuel God said to David, "Thus says the LORD of hosts... I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more... Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His Kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever... And your house and your Kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (Ch 7).

(Theologians call the unconditional promises that God made to him the Davidic Covenant).

By "Kingdom" we mean that Jesus will return in His Second Coming and establish a Kingdom on the earth that lasts one-thousand years. When that Millennial Kingdom ends, Jesus will reign over the new heavens and the new earth forever and ever.

In the five previous letters, Jesus used a description of Himself borrowed from John's vision of the Lord recorded in chapter one. Regarding "keys," in chapter

one Jesus said, "I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (v18). Why, then, does He say He has the Key of David?

Rather than focus on which key he pulls from His key back, the important thing is to see that **Jesus is the Key Holder.**

He has the power and authority to save you, then to consign you to Hades and Death or to welcome you into the Kingdom.

Rev 3:8 "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.

They had commendable "works," so "little strength" cannot be referring to spiritual strength. It most likely refers to their small size in comparison to the other churches.

I have no problems with mega churches. The church started as a mega church. In the Book of Acts, "three thousand souls" were added on the first day. Not long after at least another five thousand were saved - and that number might not include biological women.

Truth is, the majority of churches *are* mini-churches. In the US, that means under 100 saints.

It's more important that a church have a testimony of how the Holy Spirit led them to be established. After that it's up to the Lord how *little* or *large* it will be.

Among their "works," Jesus said they had "kept [His] word, and [had] not denied [His] name." There was some pressure to deny the Lord. They were enabled to instead [keep] His word."

The "Key of David" has entirely to do with the future Kingdom of God:

🔑 In v7 the topic was the future Kingdom.

🔗 In v9, where we will read, "worship before your feet," we will see it refers to the future Kingdom.

🔗 v12 is entirely about our life in the future Kingdom.

The "door" that this key "OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS" is our guaranteed entrance to the Kingdom of God.

@TheRealMessiah was guaranteeing Philadelphia's finest that He would open the door for them to the Kingdom. They could therefore have assurance of their salvation.

Rev 3:9 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.

They *were* Jews, physically. They were "not" Jews because of their unbelief.

Satan had taken over their synagogue. They were especially called-out by Jesus for lying - probably lying to the authorities about the Christians.

Churches can be the Church of Satan.

I just read about a self-described "progressive Christian" church in Nashville that declared the Bible is not the Word of God.

They say it is "a living and dynamic" "multi-vocal library of texts" that is "a product of community" as "a human response to God." *Huh??*

The article said, "Though receiving pushback from Christians, they did receive applause for their criticism of Scripture from popular atheist commentators." Expect a lot more of this apostasy nonsense as, tragically, churches rush to seem woke.

Jesus said, "I will make them come and worship before your feet..." We can rule-out that Jews, or anyone for that matter, will "worship" us. In terms of the

future Kingdom on earth, we know that every knee shall bow to Jesus. When the people of the earth worship Him in the Kingdom, *we will be present as He is worshipped.*

"I will make them... know that I have loved you." It won't be hard for people to see that the Lord loved the church. We will return with Him having been resurrected or raptured. Every eye will see us, too. We will have glorified physical bodies that are similar to our Lord's resurrection body. We will be holy and unblemished. We will be perfect. Transformed by His love.

Rev 3:10 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.

The Philadelphians were promised 100% they would be "[kept] from the hour of trial." The "hour of trial" is the seven-year Great Tribulation that will be meticulously described in chapters 6-19.

There is no Great Tribulation for the church.

1. First, the words "keep you *from*" literally translate to "keep you *out of*."
2. Second, the church will be kept out of *the entire period of time* - **not** somehow be kept safe *through* it.
3. Third, when Jesus said they "kept [His] command to **persevere**," He wasn't exhorting them to persevere *during* the Great Tribulation. It is past tense. They had *already* persevered in their walk and work and witness, and they would be delivered *from* the Great Tribulation entirely.

Since the church is not going to be on the earth during the Great Tribulation, it presupposes that the Lord will return to resurrect the dead in Christ, and to rapture living believers, *before* the Great Tribulation.

The Great Tribulation will "test those who dwell on the earth."

“Those who dwell on the earth are nonbelievers. In Revelation 17:8 you read, **“those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life...”**”

God gives them opportunity to repent. It's why we call this series in the Revelation, *The Grace of Wrath*. God will be pouring out His wrath, yet still offering salvation by grace to sinners. In His wrath God remembers mercy and calls out, through many means, to every human being on the planet, urging them to repent and receive the forgiveness of their sins, and eternal life.

The Great Tribulation is *not* to *prove* or *purify* the church. Jesus does that a different way:

Eph 5:25 ...Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
Eph 5:26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,
Eph 5:27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Jesus is *not* going to purify His church by leaving us on the earth to suffer the wrath of God.

“No Great Tribulation for you!”

#2 - New Jerusalem Awaits You (v11-13)

Have you seen somewhere online, *Hilarious Misspelled Tattoos*? There are several examples of where they were going for *No Regrets*, but the finished tattoo reads, *No Regerts*. Then there are these:

- You Only Life Once
- Never Don't Give Up
- It's Get Better
- No Pen, No Gain

- Thunder Only Happens When Its Raisin

An honorable mention goes to one full back piece, that gets three points of the compass wrong.

I mention tattoos because there is a chance you might be inked in Heaven. (Hold that thought).

Rev 3:11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

"Quickly" doesn't mean soon. It's that word from which we get our word *tachometer*. When you put the pedal to the metal in your car, the tach redlines all at once.

Jesus is coming "quickly," and *before* the Great Tribulation. It is the Doctrine of Imminence.

The Bible mentions different "crowns" as potential rewards for believers. For example, every believer gets the crown of life as a result of salvation; but only those who die for Jesus get the martyr's crown.

Coupled with His command to "hold fast," I think Jesus meant to motivate us to go for it serving Him now so that we can earn even more crowns, even more rewards.

The word translated "hold fast" means *to seize*. Remember the popularity of the phrase, *Carpe diem*, "Seize the day?" "Crown" in Latin is *corona*. "Seize the crown" would be, *Carpe corona*. Alas, thanks to the corona virus, another great slogan bites the dust.

"That no one may take your crown" can't mean your crown can be stolen. It's in Heaven, where we are told no thief can enter in and steal.

Let's say God has a work for you, but you refuse to perform it. God will raise up someone else to do it. They will take the crown you could have received.

Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on 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 *I will write on him My new name.*

Are you an overcomer? If you are a believer, you are. The apostle John wrote elsewhere, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (First John 5:4-5).

**It is the Christian who overcomes,
not the overcomer who becomes a Christian**

Jesus promised them, and us, that we all are going to be "pillars" in Heaven. You're familiar with calling someone a "pillar in the community." Every one of us will be "pillars" in the community of saints.

"He shall go out no more." One of the songs we sing, *Golden City*, captures the sense of this:

*Soon your trials will be over
Offered up by mercy's hand
A better view than where you're standing
A doorway to another land
We will meet in the Golden City in the New Jerusalem
All our pain and all our tears will be no more*

Rev 3:12 ... I will write on 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 I will write on him My new name.

We will see the New Jerusalem at the end of the Revelation. It isn't Jerusalem, in the Middle East, rebuilt. It is a city being built, that comes down out of Heaven and is in orbit above the earth.

It's the brilliant, pearl-gated jeweled city whose streets are made of gold, where our mansions are being prepared for us by Jesus.

If you have a problem now with tattoos, you're really gonna have trouble in Heaven. *Jesus is going to ink you.* You're going to get at least three lettering tattoos:

1. "The Name of My God."
2. "The name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem."
3. "My [*i.e.*, Jesus'] new name."

I'm having some fun with this idea of being tattooed. But there are other passages in which believers are said to be marked:

📖 In Ezekiel 9:4 we read, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

📖 In Revelation 7:3-4 we read, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed...

You won't have any regrets. You might want to think about fonts and colors.

Rev 3:13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

This is the common closing to these letters. We should always approach God's Word expecting Him to speak to us through it.

The United States is the one country in the world that has historically been the place everyone wants to live.

"A shining city on a hill." Ronald Reagan loved the phrase. He used it over and over again to describe his vision for America.

No one talks about living the French dream, or the Cuban dream. It's the American dream that motivates people to risk everything to get here.

Taking nothing away from the Great Communicator, or from the American dream...

Achieving the American dream can make the future Kingdom of God seem less urgent to us.

Those more in need... Who are oppressed... Persecuted... You who are weary... Weak... Grieving... Sick... Dying. The Kingdom of God is their city.

We are not home. We therefore ought to be constantly homesick. It is the sick who appreciate the physician. And that includes being homesick.

A.W. Tozer said it better: "In nature, everything moves towards the direction of its hungers. In the spiritual world it is not otherwise. We gravitate toward our inward longing, provided of course that those longings are strong enough."