

PHILADELPHIA

LITTLE CHURCH, BIG OPPORTUNITY



AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA WRITE: THE WORDS OF THE HOLY ONE, THE TRUE ONE, WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, WHO OPENS AND NO ONE WILL SHUT, WHO SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS. I KNOW YOUR WORKS. BEHOLD, I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR, WHICH NO ONE IS ABLE TO SHUT. I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE BUT LITTLE POWER, AND YET YOU HAVE KEPT MY WORD AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME.

(REVELATION 3:7-8 ESV)

OUTLINE: Revelation 3:7-13

1. JESUS CHRIST WANTS THOSE IN THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA TO REALIZE THE HOLY, EXALTED POSITION FROM WHICH HE SPEAKS TO THEM, 3:7.

- (Revelation 3:7 ESV) And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: “The words of **the holy one, the true one**, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.”

A. He is the holy one—as holy God he is above and other than all creation.

We need to remember that God being God is exalted high above and far beyond and is other than creation.

- (Isaiah 57:15 ESV) **For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:** “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”
- (John 6:69 ESV) And we have believed, and have come to know, **that you are the Holy One of God.**

B. He is the true one—he is truth itself.

- (John 14:6 ESV) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, **and the truth**, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

C. He has the key of David—Jesus Christ rules with all authority as Lord and King in the kingdom of God.

- (Matthew 28:18 ESV) And Jesus came and said to them, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”**
- (Colossians 2:9–10 ESV) For in him [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, **who is the head of all rule and authority.**
- (Ephesians 1:20–21 ESV) [Christ is seated] **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.**
- (1 Corinthians 15:27 ESV) For **“God has put all things in subjection under his feet.”** But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

2. FROM HIS EXALTED POSITION JESUS CHRIST SPEAKS WITH POWER AND ASSURANCE AS HE CALLS THEM TO THE OPEN DOOR HE HAS SET BEFORE THEM, 3:8-10.

- (Revelation 3:8 ESV) I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

A. FIRST WORD OF ASSURANCE: Christ knows them.

He knows them because he knows their works and their works give witness to their true faith which gives witness to who they are.

- (1 Thessalonians 1:3 ESV) Remembering before our God and Father **your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- (Revelation 2:19a ESV) I know your [the church in Thyatira] works, your love and faith and service and **patient endurance.**
- [See later in Revelation 3:10 – **patient endurance.**]

B. SECOND WORD OF ASSURANCE: Even though they are small in number Christ had set before them an open door—a divine, irrevocable opportunity— for salvation and service in the kingdom of God.

- (Luke 13:24–25 ESV) **Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.** 25 When once the master of the house has risen and **shut the door**, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, “Lord, open to us,” then he will answer you, **“I do not know where you come from.”**
- (2 Peter 1:11 ESV) **For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**
- (Matthew 23:13 NIV) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! **You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.**
- (1 Corinthians 16:8–9 ESV) But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, 9 for **a wide door for effective work** has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

C. THIRD WORD OF ASSURANCE: Why the open door? Christ explains—they have kept his word and have not denied his name.

EXCURSUS #1:
WHAT IT MEANS TO KEEP THE WORD OF GOD.

An excursus is a detailed discussion of a particular point in a book, usually in an appendix; a digression that contains further exposition of some point or topic; a lengthy, appended exposition of a topic or point, especially to discuss a particular issue.

■ **KEEPING THE WORD OF GOD ... NEW TESTAMENT**

"KEEP" -Greek **τηρέω** [*tay-reh-o*]- means to keep, guard, obey, observe; to conform one's action or practice to; to attend to carefully; to hold fast, keep under guard, keep safe, keep watch over, take to heart.

- i. **Keeping the words/commands in Revelation ...**
 - (Revelation 1:3b ESV) Blessed are those who hear, **and who keep what is written in it**, for the time is near.
 - See also Revelation 12:17, 14:12, 22:9.
- ii. **Keeping Christ's word testifies to our salvation ...**
 - (John 8:51 ESV) Truly, truly, I say to you, **if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.**
- iii. **Keeping his word testifies to our love for Christ ...**
 - (John 14:23-24b ESV) Jesus answered him, **"if anyone loves me, he will keep my word**, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.**
 - (John 15:10a ESV) **If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.**
- iv. **Keeping Christ's word identifies us as those who have been given by the Father to Christ ...**
 - (John 17:6 ESV) I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. **Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.**
- v. **Keeping Christ's word testifies to God's work of love in our lives ...**
 - (1 John 2:3-5a ESV) **And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.** Whoever says "I know him" but **does not keep his commandments is a liar**, and the truth is not in him, 5 **but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.**
 - (1 John 5:3 ESV) **For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.** And his commandments are not burdensome.
- vi. **Christ commissioned his apostles to teach his**

converts to keep all he had commanded them ...

- (Matthew 28:20 ESV) Teaching them to **observe** [**τηρέω**] all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
- vii. **The Pharisees rejected the commandment of God in order to keep their tradition ...**
 - (Mark 7:9 ESV) And he said to them, **"You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish [**τηρέω**] your tradition!"**

■ **KEEPING THE WORD OF GOD ... OLD TESTAMENT**

"KEEP" -Hebrew **šâmar** [or shawmar]- means to keep; to hedge about, i.e. to guard; generally, to protect, attend to, be circumspect; to observe, preserve; have charge of; to keep watch; to preserve; to be on one's guard, take heed, take care.

- i. **We are not to add to or take away from but to keep God's word ...**
 - (Deuteronomy 4:2 ESV) You shall **not add to the word** that I command you, **nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments** of the LORD your God that I command you.
 - (Deuteronomy 17:19 ESV) And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, **that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law** and these statutes, and doing them.
- ii. **Keeping God's word brings joy and abundance ...**
 - (Psalm 119:17-18 ESV) Deal bountifully with your servant, **that I may live and keep your word.** 18 Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.
 - (Psalm 119:57 ESV) The LORD is my portion; **I promise to keep your words.**
- iii. **Keeping God's word directs our life ...**
 - (Psalm 119:67 ESV) Before I was afflicted I went astray, **but now I keep your word.**
 - (Psalm 119:101-104 ESV) **I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.** 102 I do not turn aside from your rules, for you have taught me. 103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! 104 **Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.**
 - (Proverbs 4:4 ESV) He taught me and said to me, **"Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live."**

EXCURSUS #2:
WHAT IT MEANS TO NOT DENY CHRIST'S NAME.

To not deny Christ's name means to acknowledge and confess everything the Bible reveals to us as to who he is; the nature of his character, his attributes, his work, his position and place in eternity, creation, salvation and in all things to come.

- (Matthew 10:32–33 ESV) So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 **but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.**
- (1 John 2:22–23 ESV) **Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?** This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. 23 **No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.**
- (Acts 3:13–14 ESV) The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, **whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate,** when he had decided to release him. 14 **But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you.**
- (Hebrews 1:3a ESV) **He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.**

D. FOURTH WORD OF ASSURANCE: *Christ assures them of future vindication before the religious liars who persecuted them.*

THE RELIGIOUS LIARS WHO SAY THEY ARE JEWS BUT ARE NOT persecuted those whom Christ dearly loved by using their power, influence and position in the community. But they, and all false believers, will one day come to learn who Christ truly loves.

- (Revelation 3:9 ESV) Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan **who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie**—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.
- (Luke 13:25–27 ESV) When once the master of the house has risen **and shut the**

door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, “Lord, open to us,” then he will answer you, **“I do not know where you come from.”** 26 Then you will begin to say, “We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.” But he will say, **“I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!”**

E. FIFTH WORD OF ASSURANCE: *Christ promised them deliverance from a future hour of trial.*

- (Revelation 3:10 ESV) **Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world,** to try those who dwell on the earth.

ὕπομονή [hypomonē] cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy; patient continuance; patient waiting; the characteristic of a person who is not swayed from his deliberate purpose and his love and faith to God by trials and sufferings.

- (Isaiah 66:1a, 2 ESV) **Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool** ... All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. **But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”**

3. JESUS CHRIST FINISHES BY SPEAKING OF HIS SOON RETURN AND BLESSING THOSE WHO HOLD FAST, 3:11-12.

- (Revelation 3:11–12 ESV) I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. 12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and 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 from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.

(REVELATION 3:13 ESV)