

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

Message 16

Words: 6330

Scripture: Revelation

INTRO: We have come to the sixth of the seven churches of Asia as given in Revelation 2-3. It is interesting that this almost entirely directly prophetic book would begin with these seven churches. But if we are right that these churches are also prophetic of the Church age, then it is not surprising. In this church we will learn some interesting things about the time this church pictures as well.

The name, Philadelphia means??? brotherly love. Some of the cities we have studied were over a thousand years old by the time they got this letter 2,000 years ago. Ephesus, for instance, was over a thousand years old when John wrote to the church in this city. It would have been a young city in the days of King Saul and David. But Philadelphia was founded only about 200 years before Christ, and is relatively young compared to some of the others.

This is the second church to which no criticism is leveled. It is true that no Christian or pastor is perfect. But it is possible, not only for a pastor, or an individual Christian, but for a church to live in such a way that the Lord is so pleased with that church that He has no criticism for that church.

One of our folk told me that a certain brother who was living in adultery came to their family gathering. They have all been taught how wrong such a life is. So, because the Scripture says not to company with those who are named Christians who live in such sins, when an appropriate time came they left. Another brother confronted the brother that left and said, "He that is without sin, let him throw the first stone."

I think it is possible that the reason most Christians do not take stands on such matters is because they are not fit by their own lives to do so. We read about those in the previous church, the church of Sardis, in which the majority who attended had either fallen away or had never been Christians at all. And even among them, it says, "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white for they are worthy." And from

Philadelphia we learn that it is possible for the majority of the whole church to live like that. And as Christians, that is the way we ought to live.

We have considered that some of these letters are longer, some shorter. The most words were written to Thyatira, but Philadelphia is second with 244 words. But a large part of what was written to Thyatira was criticism, while there is no criticism addressed to this city.

VI. PHILADELPHIA 1517-1900

A. The Historical Purpose (3:7-13)

1. The counselee (3:7a)

We begin once again with the counselee in verse 7:

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write...

Let me give some of the history of this church, and I take it once again from William Barclay. He writes:

PHILADELPHIA was the youngest of all the seven cities. It was founded by colonists from Pergamum under the reign of Attalus II, who ruled in Pergamum from 159 to 138 BC. Philadelphos is the Greek for one who loves his brother. Such was the love of Attalus for his brother Eumenes that he was called Philadelphos, and it was after him that Philadelphia was named. It was founded for a special purpose. It was situated where the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia met. But it was not as a garrison town that Philadelphia was founded, for there was little danger there. It was founded with the deliberate intention that it might be a means of spreading Greek culture and language to Lydia and Phrygia; and so well did it do its work that by AD 19 the Lydians had forgotten their own language and were all but Greeks.

The archaeologist Sir William Ramsay says of Philadelphia that it was 'the centre for the diffusion of Greek language and Greek letters in a peaceful land and by peaceful means'. That is what the risen Christ means when he speaks of the open door that is set before Philadelphia. Three centuries before, Philadelphia had been given an open door to spread Greek ideas in the lands beyond; and now there has come to it another great missionary opportunity, to carry to those who had yet to hear it the message of the love of Jesus Christ.

Philadelphia had one particular characteristic which has left its mark upon this letter. It was on the edge of a great plain called the Katakekaumenē, which means the Burned Land. The Katakekaumenē was a great volcanic plain bearing the marks of the lava and the ashes of volcanoes then extinct. Such land is fertile; and Philadelphia was the centre of a great grape-growing area and a famous producer of wines. But that situation had its perils, and these perils had left their mark more deeply on Philadelphia than on any other city.

In AD 17, there was a great earthquake which destroyed Sardis and ten other cities. (Let me just point out that Jesus would have been a little over 10 years old at this time. No doubt they will have heard the news of this, because they were part of the Roman world. We continue...) In Philadelphia, the tremors went on for years; Strabo describes it as a 'city full of earthquakes'. It often happens that, when a great earthquake comes, people meet it with courage and self-possession, but the constantly recurring minor shocks drive them to sheer panic. That is what happened in Philadelphia. Strabo describes the scene. Shocks were an everyday occurrence. Gaping cracks appeared in the walls of the houses. First one part of the city was in ruins, then another. Most of the population lived outside the city in huts and were afraid even to go on to the city streets in

case they should be killed by falling masonry. Those who still dared to live in the city were considered mad; they spent their time shoring up the shaking buildings and every now and then fleeing to the open spaces for safety.

These terrible days in Philadelphia were never wholly forgotten, and people in the city were always waiting subconsciously for the ominous tremors of the ground, ready to flee for their lives to the open spaces. People in Philadelphia knew very well what security lay in a promise that 'they would go out no more'. But there is more of Philadelphia's history than that in this letter. When this earthquake devastated it, Tiberius was as generous to Philadelphia as he had been to Sardis. In gratitude, it changed its name to Neocaesarea - the New City of Caesar. In the time of Vespasian, Philadelphia was to change its name, again out of gratitude, to Flavia, for Flavius was the emperor's family name. It is true that neither of these new names lasted and 'Philadelphia' was restored. But the people of Philadelphia knew what it was to receive 'a new name'.

Of all the cities, Philadelphia receives the greatest praise - and it was to show that it deserved it. Later on, it became a very great city. When the Turks and Muslims flooded across Asia Minor, and every other town had fallen, Philadelphia stood firm. For centuries, it was a free Greek Christian city amid people from a very different culture. It was the last bastion of Asian Christianity. It was not until midway through the fourteenth century that it fell; and to this day there is a Christian bishop

Barclay, William. *The Revelation of John*, Volume One: 1 (pp. 136-138). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

Kistemaker notes that Ramsey characterizes this city like this: "First, it was the missionary city; secondly, its people lived always in dread

of disaster, 'the day of trial', many of its people went out of the city to dwell; fourthly it took a new name from the Imperial god" (156-157).

Well, from that history we learn some interesting things about the time of the church age that this church pictures, and we will look at that later.

2. The counselor (3:7b)

We come now then to the counselor. Here is how the Lord Jesus is described to this church:

... '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":...

We have the Lord here first described as, "He who is holy." Turn to Isaiah 6. I was a preacher for a long time before I learned how important it is to know God as He is described in Scripture. And to know Him, one must come to see oneself as a sinner in every way and in desperate need of cleansing by the blood of the Lord. And then the more one truly gets to know God, the more one will clean up his own life. And one of the very important attributes of God is holiness. We'll read Isaiah 6:1-5:

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

4 *And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.*

5 *So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."*

When Isaiah got a glimpse of God in heaven, one thing immediately happened to him. He realized he was a man of unclean lips. When a person gets to know God, one gets to see oneself as more sinful than one ever thought. Simon Peter and some others were fishing one night. And they came back in the morning empty handed. When Jesus saw their boats He got into one and taught the people and then He said to Peter, "Go out and catch some fish." And Peter said, "Master, we have toiled all night when the best time for fishing is and we caught nothing. Nevertheless, because it is you, we'll go fish." And now they caught two boat loads of fish. Listen to what the Scripture says, "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

And why did the Lord describe Himself to the church of Philadelphia as holy? I think it is to identify Himself with them. They were holy. And that which is holy receives opposition which can cause the Christian to want to give up. In the midst of such opposition they have to dig in and press on. You can tell from the text that they got opposition. Why does God get so much opposition in the world? Because He is holy. Almost the entire world of mankind hates God! Why? He is holy! The Jews had a saying that if God lived on earth, people would break His windows. Holiness arouses opposition. So I believe God identifies with these believers because they are holy.

Now Christians are called saints. Saints means holy ones. Now we quite easily call someone a

Christian. But would we as easily call them a holy one? May I ask you, would you call yourself a holy one? That is what saint means. If we called Christians holy ones, that means those who are separated from sin, would we call all those holy ones whom we now call Christians? To us, the word Christian has lost most of the meaning of holiness. It is the constant comfort of many Christians that 'everybody is a sinner'. If that is a comfort to you, you need to check and see if you are truly born again. When one of our folk took a stand regarding another man who is living in sin he was told, "He who is without sin, let him throw the first stone." If we cannot take a stand against sin in a godly way, we must ask where we are.

The second description of the Lord is that He is true. Today we hear much about 'fake news'. Fake news is news that is not true. The word *true* is an adjective. The adjective *true* is related to the noun *truth*, like the adjective *watery* is related to *water*. So if one is true, one must live by the truth. An English word that suggests itself to me for being true is the word 'integrity'. Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary says of integrity, 1. Uprightness of character. 2. The condition or quality of being unimpaired or sound. 3. The state of being complete, or undivided. Another word that suggests itself to me is genuine.

Jesus Christ is true. He is genuine. He was a man of integrity. Let me give an example you will understand. When a member in a church is dissatisfied, and he seeks to gather people to his view without being open and upfront with the Church, that speaks of character that is not true. For a Christian to be true is a very important issue. And the Lord could identify Himself to this church as being true, to encourage them to continue to be true, just as they were being true.

The church of Philadelphia was a true Church. Verse 10 says they have kept His command to endure, or His word of endurance or patience. They had endured. All holy people will have to suffer things and thus will need to endure.

Third, the Lord is described as, "...he who has the key of David..." Now in the letters to all the other churches, when the Lord is described at the beginning of the letter there is some reference back to chapter one. But the only thing in the description here that harks back to chapter one, if in fact it does, it is the word 'key'. Only here it is in the singular, and there it is in the plural. Here it is the key of David, and there it is the keys of hades and of death, Revelation 1:18.

So what is significant about keys? We have a company here that sells homes. They sometimes talk about turning over the key. By doing so, the other party now qualifies or has the full right to that home. In our passage it speaks of Christ having the key of David. This is quite clearly a reference to Isaiah 22:22. Turn to Isaiah 22.

In the context of this passage Sennacharib, the Assyrian, was already marching against Jerusalem. Israel should have been in deep mourning and weeping and fasting. So look at verses 12:13-22:

12 And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts Called for weeping and for mourning, For baldness and for girding with sackcloth.

13 But instead, joy and gladness, Slaying oxen and killing sheep, Eating meat and drinking wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

Their leader was Shebna, not a holy and true man by any means. So we go to verse 15:

15 Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "Go, proceed to this steward, To Shebna, who is over the house, and say:

16 'What have you here, and whom have you here, That you have hewn a sepulcher here, As he who hews himself a sepulcher on high, Who carves a tomb for himself in a rock?

17 Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently, O mighty man, And will surely seize you.

18 He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball Into a large country; There you shall die, and there your glorious chariots Shall be the shame of your master's house.

19 So I will drive you out of your office, And from your position he will pull you down.

20 'Then it shall be in that day, That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah;

21 I will clothe him with your robe And strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem And to the house of Judah.

22 The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.

The passage in our text in Revelation, no doubt refers back to this passage. Strauss says, "The significance of the key of David is clear. It is the rule over David's house. The promises that Christ will someday sit on the throne of David and rule over Israel once more is very clear from Scripture" (Is. 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33 if needed here). And so, the key of David, as I see it, is the key to the millennium.

But what does the key of David have to do with the Church, the time in which Philadelphia was a faithful testimony to the Lord? Turn to Matthew 16. You see, the kingdom is ruled by Christ from a throne in heaven today. In Matthew 16, Jesus asked the disciples who people said that He was, and then He asked, "But who do you say that I am?" We begin in verse 16:

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Christ has the keys to the various offices of the kingdom that is now in progress, and which is soon to come to a close. And the Lord has given to the Church certain keys, and when He opens a door for a church, nobody shuts it. If He closes one, nobody opens it. He is the Lord of the Church in this time period, and the Lord of this interim kingdom.

So that then is the description given of the Lord to the church of Philadelphia. We go now to the commendation of the Lord to this church.

3. The commendation (3:8-10)

The commendation is given in verses 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.*

We begin with verse 8, "I know your works." This is the sixth church we are looking at, and it is the sixth time we meet these words. We get some idea of how important works are. We said that true Christians are saints. They are holy ones. How many that name the name of Christ do not live holy lives? Are they then truly Christians? And what do we have to go by to determine if someone is a Christian? We have two things to go by: a person's words and a person's works. It is much easier to have the right words than the right works. We have mentioned in an earlier message from the sheep and goat judgment of Matthew 25 that it sounds like people go to heaven or hell on the basis of what they do. But that is not so. They go to heaven or hell on the basis of what they are; sheep or goats. And sheep and goats do what they do because of what they are. Good works do not bring about salvation, but true salvation must produce good works. Verse 8:

8 *"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it;*

Now the Lord begins like this, "Behold", or "See". J.B. Smith says that because it is in the middle voice it means, "See for yourself..." or "See or look for your own interest or benefit."

And what were they to see? That the Lord had set before them an open door.

Once more the historical situation of this church helps us understand this saying. Sir William Ramsey says, "The situation of the city fully explains this saying. Philadelphia lay at the upper extremity of a long valley, which opens back from the sea. After passing Philadelphia the road along this valley ascends to the Phrygian land and the great Central Plateau, the main mass of Asia to the norther-eastern parts of Asia Minor and the East in general, the one rival to the great route connecting Ephesus with the East, and the greatest Asian trade-route of Mediaeval times...Philadelphia, therefore, was the keeper of the gateway to the plateau" (Quoted from Walvoord pg. 85).

As the city Philadelphia was the keeper of the gateway to the plateau, so this church was the gateway to a vast number of lost mankind. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 16:9, *For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.* Whenever the Lord gives you the privilege of an open door, immediately there are many adversaries.

Let me remind you of the history of Philadelphia we read earlier. Barclay says of Philadelphia:

It was founded for a special purpose. It was situated where the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia met. But it was not as a garrison town that Philadelphia was founded, for there was little danger there. It was founded with the deliberate intention that it might be a means of spreading Greek culture and language to Lydia and Phrygia; and so well did it do its work that by AD 19 the Lydians had forgotten their own language and were all but Greeks.

Most writers make reference to evangelism when they speak of the open door. As Philadelphia was

an open door to spread Greek culture, the Lord made it an open door to spread the Gospel. But as Paul said earlier, there are many adversaries. Though Greek culture is not named here as in opposition to Christianity, it is hard to see how Greek culture would have enjoyed having its sins pointed out. But one of the adversaries they faced that is pointed out was the adversary Paul faced all over Asia. These were the Jews and we will see this later.

But I want to recommend that God cannot set an open door before just any group of Christians. These Christians have to live in such a way as to be entrusted with an open door.

We go on then in verse 8:

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..."

The word 'little' is stressed here in the original according to Kistemaker. And he recommends that their strength is little because they are so few among so many. I read a saying years ago that went like this: It is not the size of the dog in the fight that counts, but the size of the fight in the dog. Take Paul, for instance. His name, Paul, means 'little one.' Never has another missionary accomplished what he accomplished.

One day Elijah got to feeling horribly alone. He said in 1 Kings 19:10, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

He bemoaned how little was left of the flock of God. "Lord, now I am all alone, and they want to kill me yet too!" So let me read verses 11-12:

11 Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;

12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

Now Philadelphia is the most positive church of all seven and one of the only two that receives no criticism, yet the Lord says, "You have a little strength." Yet it is amazing what God can do with a little strength. One day when Jesus was teaching a large group of people had gathered it was getting on towards evening. And Jesus said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough bread that everybody can eat?" And Philip said, "Well, about nine months wages would not be enough to feed all these." And Andrew was close by and he said, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" Well, as we so often sing, little is much when God is in it.

The Lord said to Zachariah, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts (Zach. 4:6). In verse 10 the Lord said, "For who has despised the day of small things?" Well, a still small voice is not much. Five barley loaves and two small fish is not much when it comes to a group that has 5,000 men plus women and children. A small group of believers in a city like Philadelphia is not much, unless.. the Lord is in it. So the Lord says, "You have a little strength."

Let me read all of verse 8 now:

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.

The Lord commends them because they have kept His Word. Now what a huge thing is this? In the midst of a city that is rapidly spreading Greek culture all over the world, they were keeping His Word. You see, the Lord said, "I know your works." And what did He see? They kept His word. And what is significant about that? Well, it is without question, that if they opened their mouth in witness, as by all appearance they did, they received opposition. How much pressure must there not have been to fit into Greek culture, and that culture had all kinds of immorality in it. But they wouldn't have it. They kept His word.

Let me remind you of something. It is most likely that most of what they had for Scripture was the OT. They might have had a Gospel or two or a few of Paul's letters, we don't know. The last of the NT books had just been written, but nobody yet agreed as to which books belonged in the NT. I think it is hardly likely that any of the members had a copy of the OT, never mind a book of the NT.

At this very time, this letter to Philadelphia is just going to them. And probably not too long from then, these seven churches passed their letter on to the other churches. But what they heard and learned of God's word they kept. It is without question that much of this caused great difficulties, and yet they kept His Word.

And not only that. They had not denied the Lord's name. Had they, like others, been asked to call Caesar Lord? Do you remember back in Ephesus where Polycarp died. Even the police captain did not want to see him die. And he pleaded with the elderly pastor, *'What harm is it to say: "Caesar is Lord" and to offer sacrifice and be saved?'* But Polycarp insisted that for him, only Jesus Christ is Lord.

One of our folk shared the other day of a certain business man that he dealt with came to town. And the man said, "I just came from such and such a place and the person there said you are in a cult." And this business man said, "I told this person, 'Well, he is my good friend'." That does one's heart good. So how does the Lord feel when we keep His Word and we don't deny His name? Well, we learn here how He feels.

Now let me ask you, isn't it wonderful that our government does not seek to coerce us to do things like that? Well, let me read to you from a CBC article dated January 18, 2018. The title is, "The Liberals have applied an ideological purity test to their applications for summer job grants". It is written by David Millard Haskell. I'll read the first part:

Thousands of years ago, before Christians could practice their faith legally, they often faced persecution from the Roman government. If captured, however, a suspected Christian could avoid punishment by performing a simple sacrifice dedicated to the emperor. (We have read about that in the days of Polycarp.)

To stay on the authority's good side, some Christians crossed their fingers (a concealed symbol of their true allegiance to Jesus) and complied with the government's request. They rationalized that a coerced physical action didn't compromise their true belief.

Most early Christians disagreed with that position. They felt "truth" had "set them free." They would not betray the truth.

Today Christians in Canada, especially those ascribing to a more traditional faith, are being asked to cross their fingers and comply with a government decree. In this contemporary case,

though, it's a bit of money – not their lives – hanging in the balance.

The article then goes on like this:

It sounds innocuous enough: Trudeau's Liberals have made changes to the youth summer jobs program, which provides grant money to various employers to hire students. The changes, announced in December, got little media attention until now.

Under the new rules, applicants must agree – by marking a box on an electronic form – that they respect charter rights, including "women's rights and women's reproductive rights." The office of the employment minister has said without the confirmation, an organization will not receive funding.

So under such a test you just cross your fingers, I mean, you just say, Caesar is Lord, I mean you just check a box, and all is well, right? You haven't done anything wrong. You just checked a box. It won't do anything, right?

We come now to verse 9. It says:

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.

Once more, as in Smyrna, persecution came from professing believers. It is also interesting, as one commentary pointed out, that these are the only two churches to whom no criticism is given. That raises a question for me. Is religious persecution harder to withstand than secular persecution?

You see, for Judaism Christianity presented a huge problem. These Christians, like Paul, believed in the same Scriptures they did, but they believed Jesus was the long promised

Messiah. And what would unbelieving Jews do with these Christians? Well, Christ ascended around 30 AD. Forty years later the temple was destroyed and it caused a huge upheaval among the Jews.

And now that the temple was gone, the synagogue became their religious center. And into the synagogue came Christians. These Christians claimed to believe in the Jewish Bible but they also believed Jesus was the Messiah. What do you do with them? Well, in 90 AD the Jews met to discuss various issues related to the Bible and what to do with Christians in the synagogue.

Well, here was their solution for Christians:
For the apostates let there be no hope. And let the arrogant government be speedily uprooted in our days. Let the nozerim (Christians) and the minim (heretics) be destroyed in a moment. And let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be inscribed together with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant" (bracketed words are mine).

Well, that council happened just a few years before the letters to these seven churches were written. And the question is this: those synagogues that adopted this point from the council of Jamnia, are they the synagogue of Satan? In Acts 25 the Jewish High Priest came before Felix to judge Paul and the Jews said of Paul: "For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." That would be like calling him a cult in our day. And it came, not from the worldly people but from those professing faith in the God of the Bible.

Notice now as I read this verse a little further:

9 *"Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie..*

I mentioned remnant theology in the last message. You see, the Jews referred to here were Jews by physical birth, but not by spiritual birth. They were, according to the Lord, liars.

We notice further now:

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.*

John McArthur believes that this would happen in Philadelphia. I think this may speak futuristically. The day will come when the Jews will bow before the feet of the Church. It is a sign that says, "You were right and we were wrong."

I am wondering if we are not seeing this promise being fulfilled today. Last week, the vice president of the United States who has no qualms saying publically that he is a Christian, was speaking in the Knesset, the government building in Israel. As an outspoken Christian his speech had numerous OT prophecies in it, and the Jews in the government responded with gusto. For the Arabs, it was a dreadful time. Could we be seeing this promise being fulfilled? For some years many Jews have begun to recognize premillennial Christians because it is these that stand with them. Most others are anti-Semitic.

But it seems to me that those who come and worship before the feet of the true believers are not converted Jews. They are still of those who say they are Jews but are not. Notice what it says, *"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**..* The pronoun *them* refers back to those who say they are Jews but are not. Whether in fulfillment of this prophecy or not, I see that happening more and more as time goes on today.

CONCL: Well, we conclude with not quite finishing the commendation to this church. We looked at the city, Philadelphia, and learned that it was a relatively young city in comparison to the rest. Among the first Greek words I learned was *adelphos*. It means brother. And if you add *phileo*, the family or friendship kind of love to it you have brotherly love, and that is *Philadelphia*.

The description of the writer was that He was holy and true. You have separation from sin, and integrity, or trueness of character. And last, He was the one who has the key of David. I think the main emphasis in the context is that He has the key to the millennial reign. He has full right to that time. And when He opens that door, no one will shut it. And when He closes it, it will never be opened again.

Now this church was commended by the Lord. I think by setting an open door before them He gave them the opportunity to reach out with the Gospel. For God to open that door, the time has to be right and the ones to go out with the Gospel have to live so as to qualify to enter that door, and the time was right and the church at Philadelphia qualified. Though it appears they did not have many people, those few people had strength. They had kept His Word and had not denied His name. They had not crossed their fingers.