

## **The Faithful Church – Keep on Keeping On (The Missionary Church 1730's-1960's)**

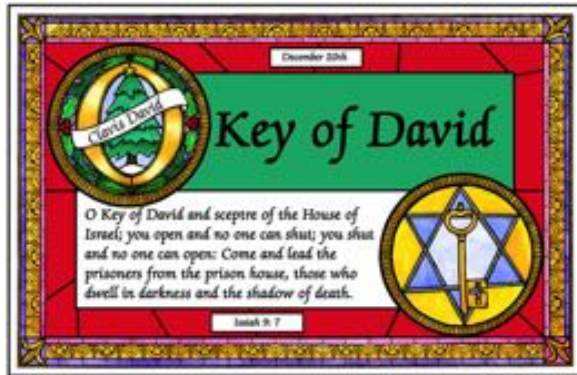
<sup>7</sup> "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": <sup>8</sup> "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' (Revelation 3:7-13, NKJV).

Philadelphia means the City of Brotherly Love, and that is EXACTLY what a church body looks like when it is pleasing to Jesus. When we love God with all of our hearts, minds, and strength, and when we are loving our neighbors as ourself, we are the "pillars in the temple of God." That's big! That's wonderful. That's the BIG IDEA today. Let's get into the text.

### Verse 7

To the pastor of the Church in Philadelphia, the one who is holy and true has a word. Jesus is the One who is holy. Remember that "holy" means "set apart." "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;" (Hebrews 7:26, NASB). And Jesus Himself told us that He is truth, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14:6b-c, KJV). As we become more like Jesus, we too become holy in our living, and we become the messengers of truth in a dying world. We are to always speak the

truth, but to do so in love. The phrase the “key of David” speaks to the authority of Jesus Christ. A person who has keys has the authority to go into a place. The City of David is at the southern foot of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Jesus will one day rest, rule, and reign over the nations of the earth from the throne in Jerusalem. It is He who has the authority to go in and claim that place. He is the Holy One promised to sit on the throne



of David. This “Davidic Covenant” is found in 2 Samuel chapter 7 and is also summarized in 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 and 2 Chronicles 6:16. God promised David that the Messiah would come from the Tribe of Judah (not the Tribe of Levi) from the line of King David himself, and that the Messiah would establish a kingdom forever and ever. It is Jesus who opens the doors to everlasting life through Himself and no one can shut that door.

#### Verse 8

Jesus says that He has seen their works. The works that He has seen are: (1) that they have a little strength (but enough), because (2) they have kept His Word, and (3) they have not denied His name. This reminds us that it is not in our own strength that we are able to be obedient to His Word. It’s almost like the weaker we realize that we are, the stronger in the Lord we become. Our only real power comes from the Lord. *“<sup>4</sup> You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, **because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**” (1 John 4:4, NKJV).* It is easy for us to mistakenly believe that staying faithful requires us to be super strong. It just requires that we be truly faithful. We do need to be strong, but it is not strength within ourselves that enables us to be faithful; it is that strength of the Holy Spirit that is within us. Scripture tells us that it is by HIS MIGHT, by HIS STRENGTH, and by HIS SPIRIT that we are empowered. The Prophet Zehariah tells us, *“<sup>6</sup> So he answered and said to me: “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.” (Zechariah 4:6, NKJV).*

A few weeks ago, Pastor Daniel Day warned us of being too tolerant of anything that gets between us and God. In the hostile environment in which we find ourselves today, it is easy to “deny His name.” And that can mean by just being real quiet and not letting anyone know that you are a Christian. I don’t think this means just denying that we know Who Christ is, but it means being silent about the entire character of God. This is not a call to being obnoxious, but rather to being truthful. In the Bible, a name contains the essence of a person. For example, “Daniel” means “God is my judge.” “Jesus” means

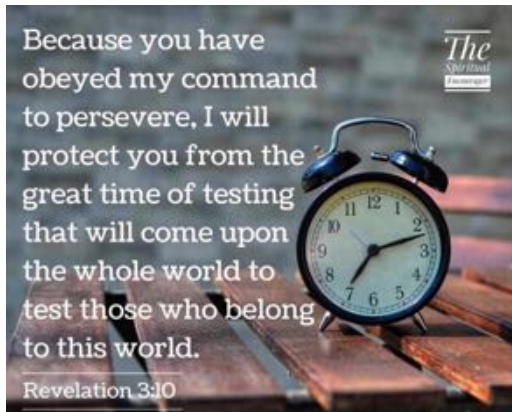
"God saves." Jesus is telling the Church in Philadelphia that He has seen that they have remained faithful to declare the character and the work of God. They have refused to participate in and to tolerate evil. They have stayed true to the whole character of God, and they have been faithful to proclaim it. Recently a couple in the church have been embroidering shirts for Pastor Larry and me. I love these shirts for many reasons, but my favorite reason is that it puts RIGHT OUT THERE who I am and what is important to me when I come into contact with others.

#### Verse 9

Jesus promises eventual justice. He mentions the "synagogue of Satan." This means the "assembly" of those who might appear religious or good, but are in opposition to the things of God. All those who have participated in the persecution of true believers will be brought to justice. He says that those wrongdoers will be brought to worship at the feet of those whom they have persecuted. This isn't telling the Church that they will be worshipped, but that they will be watching as others are brought to bending their knee to Jesus. We do know that in the end *"every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord"* (see *Philippians 2:10-11*).

Jesus calls out Jews who are not really Jews. He is speaking of those who get wrapped up in all the legalism that is injected into true faith but forget the overriding principle of our faith. Moses spoke that overriding principle and it was repeated by Jesus. IT'S THE BIG IDEA OF LIVING OUT OUR FAITH. When the lawyer tried to play "gotcha" with Jesus, he asked Him to state the greatest commandment. *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Matthew 22:37-39, KJV).*

Jesus is saying that true Jews (those who really understand the commandments of God) understand that it is all about love. It is LOVE - *agape* love, *chesed* love - that is what God requires of true followers. It is getting beyond self and loving others in the way that God loves each of us - with an unselfish love.



## Verse 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. (Revelation 3:10, NKJV).*

This is such an interesting verse. Jesus says that He has commanded us to “persevere.” That word means “to continue in a course of action even in the face of difficulty or with little or no prospect of success.”<sup>1</sup> Remember our verse for the year in 2020? *“What time I am afraid; I will trust in Thee.” (Psalm 56:3, KJV).* Jesus is saying that this perseverance comes with a great reward.

I may be mistaken, but I think this is one of those allusions to faithful believers being spared the Tribulation. This is the rapture in which all believers will be taken out of the earth prior to the Tribulation. I think the “hour of trial” is the seven year tribulation period. Jesus is specific that it is an hour (merely meaning a time period) of trial that will COME UPON THE WHOLE EARTH. He is telling the Church that there is a reward for persevering in the faith. We will be spared from that ultimate time of trial that will come on the earth.

As I’ve said before and now reiterate, the purpose of the Tribulation is judgment (in the sense of being declared guilty and receiving punishment) on the unbelieving peoples of the earth. God has never put his faithful people under judgment. Yes, we go through times of trouble and persecution, but we are not recipients of the judgment of God in that we are not declared guilty and sentenced to punishment. Jesus says that this will be to test (Greek means to put through a trial).

## Verse 11

I think Jesus is telling the church here: “Don’t give up. Never surrender. Keep on keeping on. There is a reward that awaits faithful living. You’re almost there. I’m coming again.” It is easy for us to grow despaired and feel like it’s just not worth it to keep on. Life gets tough! Sometimes we wonder how we can take any more. But brothers and sisters, this difficulty is just for a moment. Our present suffering is but for a moment. *“<sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things*

<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.google.com/search?q=meaning+of+persevere&oq=meaning+of+persevere&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i10i512l9.4513j1j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

*which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18, NKJV).*

I want to tell you today that if you sometimes wonder if it is all worth it, just KNOW THAT IT IS. We are just looking at and living through the things that are temporary. **Surrender is not an option for the faithful follower of Jesus Christ.** We have troubles and trials on this earth but we are to stay faithful and keep following. We're in this thing too deep now to turn back, and when you feel like giving up just go back and review in your mind the faithfulness of God. He is faithful. He is good. At one point, scripture tells us that many disciples fell away from following Jesus. They just couldn't take it any more. Scripture tells us:

*<sup>66</sup> From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. <sup>67</sup> Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"<sup>68</sup> But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup> Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:66-69, NKJV).*

We too have come to know that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, so HOLD FAST! Never give up! Never surrender!

Verse 12

*Let's look again at verse twelve. <sup>12</sup> 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**. (Revelation 3:12, NKJV).*

In this verse Jesus is telling us that we will be made part and parcel of God's holy temple. It reminds me of Peter's declaration about believers being living stones. *<sup>5</sup> you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5, NKJV).*

We will have written on us the "Name of God," the "name of the City of God," and Jesus' "new name." This Church in Philadelphia has been linked to the era called the Missionary Church. From the 18th century on up through the middle of the 20th century, there were many great missionary movements and revivals. This went on in England and it went on in America. This is the era in which Korea was Christianized. This is the era when the gospel went out to all the earth.



Many of us who are in our 60's to 90's remember this era. There was great focus on missions and making sure that all the people of the earth heard the gospel and were giving opportunity to accept or reject it. It seems impossible to imagine now, but I remember going to the Astrodome as a little boy and hearing Pastor Billy Graham proclaiming the gospel. I remember my parents invited every unsaved person on our block to go with us. I remember 70,000 people hearing the gospel and thousands of people responding. That was an era of the Missionary Church. If the Historic-Prophetic interpretation of these seven churches is accurate, then we are now in the age of the Church of Laodicea. And what does that mean. It means that when the era of the Apostate Church comes to an end, JESUS WILL COME AGAIN!

This past week at our revival, Brother Kevin Broyhill encouraged us to "keep on keeping on." I want to repeat that this morning. Jesus tells us clearly *"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. <sup>11</sup> Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."* (Revelation 3:10-11, NKJV).

Coming again, Coming again,  
May be morning, may be noon,  
May be evening and may be soon!  
Coming again, Coming again;  
O what a wonderful day it will be -  
Jesus is coming again!

HANG ON CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA! HANG ON UNION GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH OF WHITEHALL! JESUS IS COMING AGAIN! And that's a promise!

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at [uniongrove362@gmail.com](mailto:uniongrove362@gmail.com) or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Neese- Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.

*Ephesus*: The church of the first century was generally praiseworthy but it had already left its first love.

*Smyrna*: From the first to the fourth century, the church suffered persecution under the Roman emperors.

*Pergamos*: During the fourth and fifth centuries, Christianity was recognized as an official religion through Constantine's patronage.

*Thyatira*: From the sixth to the fifteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church largely held sway in Western Christendom until rocked by the Reformation. In the East, the Orthodox Church ruled.

*Sardis*: The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the Post-Reformation period. The light of the Reformation soon became dim.

*Philadelphia*: During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were mighty revivals and great missionary movements.

*Laodicea*: The church of the last days is pictured as lukewarm and apostate. It is the church of liberalism and ecumenism.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 2355). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.