

v.7-13 X =The Opener | =Most Imp.Job | ~Horizont.  
Magic? EVANG = Commn | Backing: Mt.28 | X Interven  
Act.14:27, 1Cor.16:9 | Sovereignly Act| Neighbors

Acts: Pentec, | APP: U Beleive? | APP: OPEN DOORS  
Philip, Steph | = Chng. View | (DCNotes)  
Persecut. | 2Wards Neighb |

"I've Little Powr" | 2 Attit: 1) Serious 2) Impossbl  
= GOOD! v.8 Criter.: | ILL: Mitch Tch / LIBERATING!

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"Kept Word" = Willing | Philad.~Superstars | ILL:  
G. ~ Want Billy G.; | v.9 Convert Jews | Colesn  
~~Deny Name "= RISKS | APP: G.Can Use U! | Quotes

Transfusion! | APP: U Discrkd? | P.Confident (Jail)  
JC = Sovergn! | X ~Want, Give Dft.: Expected Them  
APP: Lay Hold | Col.4:2-5 G.Opens!! KEY = "Devote.."

U Praying? | v.5 "Advantg" | ILL: Friendly,Help,  
Jas.4:2 = | Business (EFHut) | NORMAL...  
Strnge (Acts) | ~Step By Step | ~Legalistic!

Thus: No Rebuke | Exciting! | APP: Try It! ~ "Sales"  
Chrch = Happy! | Like R HC | IS: G's Will, Power...

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v.10 Exciting! | Mt.24:21 | 7yrs (Dan) Judgement  
"Hour" = WrldW | Extermin! | Jews Again (Zech.12)  
Technical (CR) | Figurativ! | 1,000 yrs, Fulf.O.T.

Fairy Tale? | G.Shouting! | Rev.3:10 ~Trib! | Earth-Air  
Jer.31:35ff | ~ T.V. End! | How? WrldWide? | Mort-Immort  
Act.1:6ff | ~Bettr,Wrse | =Raptr (Stickrs) | 1Cor.15:

Why 1,500 yrs Ago? | So What? | HOLD FAST | Modl Chrch  
Immanent: 1st Evnt | Relax? | =Crowns | Keep Pace!  
X Always Warns... | ~Suffer? | =Rewards | APP: Keep ON

~ Go On Forvr | Etrn.Life Awaits! | Mind-Boggle?  
1 in 4 =Proph | I Believ in Proph. | ~ Avoid, THINK!  
= Major Focus | Your Future: NOW | =Convict RE: WILL

Dust Settls: 2 Quest: | Painfully Simple | SOME: Verge  
1) Receive 2) Obey | Peace v. Complic | of Brkthru  
His first promise to this church: "I am the one who can open doors." He's  
the door-opener.

3 simple questions re: this promise:

## WHAT ARE THE OPEN DOORS?

Something physical? "Open sesame!" No, rather a term they'd be familiar with

Describes a common illustration = opportunity for evangelism

Acts 14:27 Opened for them a "door of faith" = opportunities

1Cor.16:9 "wide door opened...many adversaries" = opportunity to proclaim message of X, plant a church at Ephesus

If we're true believers in X, we believe X is the way, truth and life.

To explain the mssg. of X, we're talking about forgiveness and one of the most important jobs we've got.

X uses his authority "over heaven and earth" to sovereignly provide opportunities

It isn't something occurring as a horizontal thing; not an ad campaign, sociological principles

Rather, X intervening in sovereign ways to bring us in to contact w/ people re: this

Mt.28:18,19 "All authority" heaven and earth; go therefore.

Read through book of Acts with this question in mind: How does God open doors for the proclamation of the gospel? It's amazing how X got involved

from Day of Pentecost onward: 120 believers, speaking in foreign tongues, on day when Jewish pilgrims from all over world were there.

X orchestrated to precipitate an opportunity for Peter to speak, so 3,000 received X.

Not many of us have had experiences like this...

in Acts 8: great persecution arose. We'd think Jesus fell asleep at wheel; Luke says, however, they were "scattered", like the seed in the parable, all over Samaria, etc. Thus, it turned out to advance the gospel among the Samaritans

Later in Acts 8, Philip "happens" to walk up to a chariot who "happens" to be there, reading OT, "happens" Is.53. "happens" to reply "help me..."

probably the one who planted church in North Africa

Stephen: seems cruel to see most gifted, articulate spokesman, advanced over the apostles in his understanding, and was permitted to be stoned to death.

Luke points out Saul, the instigator, became apostle to gentiles.

Thus, Luke's showing God's supernatural involvement w/ man, opportunities for man

Do we believe that in more than an academic sense? What would happen to our perspective re: neighborhoods, schooling, etc?

Is this passage only for the Billy Grahams? No! for all believers who have the attitudes in v.8:

"...can shut because:" have a little power

passage not translated as well as it should be: see NIV? "but a little power"

ie., not how powerful they are, but they realize they have but little power

This qualifies them: they realize they're completely inadequate for the task.

There's 2 things we need to have: 1) taking evangelism seriously, or 2) not understanding that it's impossible for ourselves (not that it's just hard).

Attitude #2: They kept his word: i.e, willing to do what he wants them to do.

Attitude #3: "...not deny my name..." they were willing to talk openly about the fact they were committed to X.

Thus: these people aren't "superstars", famous for their exploits.

Rather, people whose names we don't know.

None of these people became famous in early church history: they simply had a willingness to follow X.

He opened up for them incredible strategic opportunities: they were on major trade routes, had opportunities thusly to spread the word across the whole empire via the travellers.

Apparently, from this text, able to convert the strongest opponents: Jews.

Quote from Chuck Colson: about a Jewish doctor in a siberian prison camp.

He somehow came across a committed Xian, who knew he had "but little power"... and because of his commitment, the doctor became a Xian.

He started doing foolish things: signing health orders which were lies re: the prisoners, which opened him up to persecution; turning in orderlies who were stealing food from the malnourished; he did these things, knowing they would result in his death, because of his commitment to X.

His name was Boris Kornfeld: "not an especially brave man..."

Alexander Scholzeneitzen got converted by this guy. Became one the most powerful spokesmen for X in this generation.

This Boris was only obedient, in a seemingly hopeless situation, resulting in a "spiritual transfusion..." pumping his spiritual life into Alexander, from there into millions

J.C. is sovereign over history

X works through, and sometimes supercedes, the choices of man, to accomplish his purposes

May we begin to believe, lay hold of, the reality of X's sovereignty, and His ability to provide opportunities for us...

If we believe He has the authority to open doors, certain things will follow from that.

See Col.4:2-5 "devote yourselves to prayer..." God will open up a door, he believed **even though in prison!** What would your attitude be like in prison?

"And you too conduct..." He assumes they'd be praying for the same things themselves.

APP: I wonder how many of us here tonight would say "I don't see any opportunity for evangelism...all the doors are closed."

A simple question for you: are you praying consistently for open doors? Sometimes the answer to our spiritual problems are embarrassingly simple

"You don't have because you don't ask"

J.C. is committed to spreading this message.

He wants the credit for it when it happens; he waits until we ask, because our faith in him gets built up, and he gets glorified, which is right.

Are you consistently asking for opportunities, or are you letting your situation dictate it to you?

ie., are you looking around "atheistically?"

v.5 take advantage of the opportunity he does provide: if you pray for the open doors, He'll do it, and it may mean strange things happening in your life, like persecution. That's what happened in Jerusalem church

Are you willing to take advantage of those opportunities?

He uses a business term: "buying up the time." which is a marketing term.

ILL: E.F. Hutton is paid to "buy up the time." They know there's opportunities for money, and they're on the alert for them.

Paul takes this word right out of the stock market, and says "this is the way you ought to be..."

Some are saying "give me a step-by-step thing here" and I can't! RATHER than a catalogue of details, the scriptures are giving us principles:

Use your god-given wisdom, be ready to pray

It may mean having a friendly conversation w/ your neighbor while praying for them; helping them shovel their walks, etc.

It may mean that, in an open way (not obnoxious), sharing w'er a Xian.

It only takes 2-3 mintues for me, since I work as a pastor (also poses problems, w/ the stereotypes)

One of the most important things we can do is be normal, helathy, and still interested in X.

ie., sharing what X's done, sharing the Bible w/ them ,answering a question about god, asking them a question about it

this passage says: If we're wise, and buy up opportunities, we'll see , like the early church, a grassroots evangelism: the most effective kind

This is Pauls' challenge for us: to be His whitnesses.

If you're into X, you're into reaching others for X.

If you're here tonight and don't know X, you're lost, need abundant life.

Continuing Notes from Gary's tape:

GOSP: It was no coincidence you came into contact w/ whoever invited you here: X was involved in that, and it's evidence he loves you, wants a relationship

Xians: when we adpt this same attitude towards reaching wthe world, that's when things get excited

- > if you're not into this burden, I know you're life is unfulfilling; I don't have to wonder
- > that's why X left us here: why didn't he take us to heaven?

THE 2ND GREAT PROMISE TO PHIL: V.10

"keep you from hour of testing" = quite a promise!

- > What's the hour? Not just any period of time, rather "that hour that's about to come upon the whole world." = worldwide hour of testing
  - purpose of this time = to test those who dwell upon the earth
  - NASB cross-reference to "those that dwell " is used throughout Rev., to refer to non-Xians; see 13:8 "all that dwell..."
  - \* people who never will be Xians
  - \* 17:8 "name not written..."
- > a specific period of worldwide testing: a judgemental time for those who've reject X and the whitness
  - believers in Philad. would know about
  - X talked about in Mt.24:21,22 "great tribulation"
    - \* a time so bad, the entire human race would exterminate itself unless he returned
    - \* a passage unintelligable until 40 yrs ago; seemed "figurative"
    - \* we now know man has that capacity:
  - the "great trib" = 7 yrs (Dan.9:27) = time of judgement
    - \* God returns to dealing w/ Jews, a time of "refining"

- \* see Zech.12:10 "look upon me whom they have pierced..." Incredible! predicted 400 yrs BC!
- \* remember Mt.23: "your house is left desolate until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord"
- \* he will stop mankind from exterminating himself, rescue the jews, 1,000 yr reign, fulfill all fantastic promises made to OT

> to some, this sounds like a fairy tale; Bible says it's true

- God goes to great lengths to tell us how literally this is true: "if stars go away, then I won't keep this promise" Jer.31; another passage says "if I don't keep the promise I made to Noah, you'll know I won't keep this promise either"
- many times, these predictions are side-by-side with already-fulfilled predictions re: 1st coming
- \* as if God were shouting to us, "As I've done it first time, so I will 2nd time"

> the world's not going to end the way TV says; maybe hard for us to believe!

- we may say "man's going to solve his problems"; or "we're going to go up in a big cinder"
- neither way: Christ will return, he'll sit up a kingdom, raise people from dead, all call them to account
- you don't have to believe it; yet God declares it's true; it doesn't matter what you believe
- he invites you to investigate the evidence, make a decision about what you're going to do about his work, etc

> This passage, in Rev.3:10 has a fantastic promise for church-age believers

- not just that they'll be kept from the testing, but from the our of testing: ie., the whole period of this
- \* it's difficult to see how we could be preserved from such a worldwide thing without being taken away
- this passage is promising we won't have to go through the tribulation

> this is called the rapture:

- not like the stupid bumper stickers: not a very good way to get introduced to biblical theology "in case of rapture this car is unmanned"

- Christ declares:
  - \* earth - air (1Thes.4)
  - NOTE: verbe "caught up" = latin word "rapture"
  - \* mortals (millenial k.) - immortals (1Cor.15:... moment, twinkling of an eye)
- > why is he promising this to a church 1,500 yrs ago?
  - the rapture is an "immanent" event: bible gives us no preceding event that has to take place before this
  - this is the initial event of all the trib events; since it's the first event, it's immanent
    - \* that's why X warns them here, and does so in other passages
- > v.11 conclusion: So What?
  - You would think Christ would be saying "so kick back and enjoy..."
    - \* unfortunately, many Xians respond this way
  - many are concerned at what time the rapture is going to take place: before, middle, end of the tribulation. WHY?
    - \* "Whew!" I won't have to suffer!
    - \* that's not promised in scripture: all who desire to live godly will be persecuted
- > Christ's application of it is: "therefore hold fast to what you have..."
  - see how different from our own thinking his is?
    - \* "Since I'm coming quickly...keep up the pace..."
- [we're a model church, also! He's saying, Keep up the pace! Get it on! Maybe we feel exhausted, like it's never going to end. He says no, it'll end soon, immanently...]
- this was a model church
- the "crown" wasn't their salvation, but their reward
- how many of us ponder these predictive prophecies?
  - \* 1 out of every 4 are re: prophecy. Does that give you an idea of how important this focus is in scripture?



\* he's trying to remind us this world isn't going to go on; that eternal life awaits us.

Your future is being decided in this life: you can accrue eternal reward.

We're determining the eternal fates of others.

For most of us, it seems so mind-boggling, so impractical, you don't want to think about it.

He wants us to think about it, though, not avoid it.

Thinking about eternity: drives deep into your heart the conviction that certain things matter: like people, not things; God's will, not mine; these convictions are built via this method.

When the dust settles: what'll matter are answers to 2 questions: 1) did you receive? 2) what did you do for him?

Sometimes painfully simple! I always want to make it more complicated than that...

Things'll fall into place when you're focused on these; and become hopelessly confusing when I take my focus off them.