

REV. 3:7-12
PHILADELPHIAN CHURCH

INTRO

1. Contrast to Laodicea: no rebuke & all commendation/promises
2. Let's examine the 2 great promises & their application to us

OPEN DOORS (read vs 7-9): JC presents Himself as the One with authority to open doors; has opened a door for them

1. what are open doors?
 - a. common NT term for evangelistic opportunities (see Acts 14:27; I Cor 16:9)
 - b. also fits the Philadelphian church: occupied strategic position on trade route to west of mideast & gateway to high country of Asia Minor
2. Jesus won authority over the earth by virtue of His death & resurrection. Because of this, He is able to sovereignly create opportunities for our witness.
 - a. Matt 28:18,19 - note that the command of vs 19 is based on the promise of vs 18
 - b. can be traced thru Acts: Pentecost; persecution ("scattered"); Ethiopian Eunuch; Stephen w/ Paul
 - c. brings us into contact w/ open people; ripens people; creates situations conducive to evangelism
3. For whom does JC do this? (we think only the super-gifted, visible types)
 - a. for all Xians who are like the Philadelphians (vs 9a):
 - recognize that they have but "little power" & so need to depend on His power
 - * the problem w/ many Xians concerning evangelism is not that they see it as too difficult, but that they don't see it as difficult enough to depend only on God's power to do it
 - simple willingness to follow Him in faith & confess Him before men
 - * willing to talk openly about the fact that you are a Xian, committed to Christ, etc. (Difficult to not do if indeed JC is #1 in your life)

> You don't need to be super-gifted, famous, etc - if you are dependent & obedient, JC will provide you w/ ample open doors; This is how the church has always grown best: as a grass-roots movement from neighbor to neighbor, friend to friend, employee to employee, etc

3. So What? read Col 4:2-5

a. vs 3: Do you pray for opportunities to witness?

- or do you let your situation dictate to you the possibilities?

- practical exercise of faith is to believe this, pray for open doors, & start looking!! (Paul in prison; Beth H in neighborhood; people at work)

> maybe the reason we have no open doors is embarrassingly simple (Jas 4:2)!!

b. vs 5: Do you take advantage of the opportunities God provides?

- not pushing, forcing - business term meaning shrewdly, wisely capitalizing on every opportunity for profit in an appropriate way (GIVE EXAMPLES: friendly conversation; helping w/ yard work & other good deeds; sharing Christ's role in your life; explaining how He has solved similar problems; exposing to Xian friends; answering questions about God; inviting to Bible study, etc - whatever is appropriate/wise

> When we do these 2 things, God opens doors & uses us far beyond our expectations (KORNFELD)!!

KEPT FROM THE HOUR OF TESTING (vs 10,11)

1. What is "the hour of testing"?

a. vs 10: world-wide & for those who have rejected Christ (see 13:8; 17:8)

b. refers to the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:21,22) which will be a time of judgement on the ungodly & a time of refining for Israel.

2. What is the promise?

a. preservation from that entire period of time; seems to indicate that the church will be physically absent from this event

b. how? thru what we call the "rapture": Jesus catching believers up in the air to meet Him (I Thes 4), giving them immortal, glorified bodies (I Cor 15)

>> this is consistent w/ other passages which seem to indicate that the church will not be present for this closing period of human history - though people still can & do come to Christ

>> the rapture is seen as the imminent hope of the Xian: no preceding predicted event must take place before it can happen. Therefore, it can be promised for the Philadelphian church as well as for all Xians - including us!!

3. So what?

a. might expect the conclusion to be: "Relax - kick back..."

b. But instead, JC says (vs 11): "Keep going, don't let down your pace, keep sprinting to the finish line!!" Why?

- Because that's why we're left on earth at all: to be His witnesses (allude to Acts 1:5-8)

- Because we will never have the opportunity to influence people's eternal destinies again (Matt 25; Rev 20)

- Because there will be eternal reward for being effective witnesses for JC here on earth (vs 11b)

> I really believe that (elaborate as per Harry/Cell) - do you??