

UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY
The Book of Revelation
Pastor Jim Otte
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Session 8: Revelation 3:7-4:11

⁷ “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

- a. **“Philadelphia”** – Founded in 150 B.C. by King Attalus Phila, to be a missionary city of Greek culture and the Greek language. It became a center for the growing of grape vines and wineries. It was also subject to frequent earthquakes. The church was located in this prosperous environment, but it was very missionary minded.
- b. **“who holds the key of David”** – Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise to David in **2 Samuel 7:11-13**. *“The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son.*
- c. **“I have placed before you an open door”** – Jesus is aware of how small they are, or feel, but He places a missionary task before them – as in an “open door.”
 - a. **1 Corinthians 16:9**. *because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.*
- d. **“you have kept My word and have not denied My name”**
- e. **“who claim to be Jews...fall down at your feet”** – One aspect of their missionary activity will be to reach out to those who “claim to be Jews,” perhaps in name only – or who celebrate the festivals & rituals – but have no true allegiance to Judaism. It appears they will be converted

- f. **“I will also keep you from the hour of trial”** – In times of persecution, believers are “kept” spiritually in the arms of Jesus, even though they may experience physical and temporal distress.
- b. **Matthew 24:9-13.** *Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.*

¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹² The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. ¹³ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- a. **“coming soon.”** – “soon” is a relative term, given the fact that we are now 2000+ years since Jesus uttered these words to John. His point? “Live each day in the Word, as if it was your last day.”
- b. **“Hold on to what you have”** – guard the faith you have in Jesus – as it is linked to your eternity (crown of life).
- c. **“I will make a pillar in the temple of My God”** – the custom in the city of Philadelphia, was to recognize outstanding citizens, by erecting an inscribed pillar in their honor – in a temple.
- d. **“the city...the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven”** – a new designation for the Christian Church, as the New Israel.
- e. **“I will write on them...the name of my God and the... My new name”** – greater than their own names inscribed, Jesus promises to inscribe on the pillars of faith: God’s name (as belonging to Him); the Christian Church’s name; and Jesus’ name (a Trinitarian blessing!)
 - a. When someone is baptized, the Trinitarian blessing is given: “I baptize you **in(to)** the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

¹⁴ “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. ¹⁵ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷ You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. ¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

- a. **“Laodicea”** – located 35 miles south of Philadelphia, the city was founded by Antiochus of Syria, and named after his wife – Laodice. It was a great center of

banking and finance, with a renown medical center. It was also known for its manufacturing of exquisite clothing. It boasted a large Jewish population. Surrounded by all the wealth, science, and considerable affluence of the city, the church had become self-satisfied, no longer focused on evangelism or discipleship.

- b. **“you are neither cold nor hot...you are lukewarm”** – the church had become indecisive in its commitment to the true gospel; perhaps attempting to play both sides of the spiritual coin – faithful to God/tolerant of idolatry.
- a. **1 Kings 18:20-21.** *So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel. ²¹ Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.” But the people said nothing.*
- i. **“waver”** – seen a lack of commitment (“fish or cut bait!”)
- ii. **“But the people said nothing.”** – the fear of offending King Ahab, or perhaps of incurring his wrath, the silent majority waited to see who would prevail.
- c. **“spit you out of My mouth”** – Jesus is administering the Law here!
- d. **“You say, ‘I am rich...and do not need a thing...But you do not realize”**
Luke 16:13-15. ¹³ *“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”*
¹⁴ *The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ¹⁵ He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.*
- e. **“buy from Me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich”** – code for faith, which is tested and strong, ensuring a spiritually “rich” relationships.
- a. **1 Peter 1:7.** *These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*
- f. **“so you can cover your shameful nakedness”** – God’s covering (O.T. forgiveness) truly covers the nakedness created by SIN. Faith takes hold of the promise of forgiveness, as opposed to man’s futile attempts to cover his own nakedness with “fig leaves.”
- g. **“salve to put on your eyes so you can see.”** – “put on” (literally: “to anoint”). As, by nature, you are born spiritually blind, the gospel heals the blindness and eases the pain of spiritual fear.
- a. **Isaiah 42:16.** *I will lead the **blind** by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.*

19 Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

a. **“rebuke and discipline”** –

a. **Proverbs 3:12.** *because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*

b. **Hebrews 12:4-13.** *In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,*

*“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,*

*6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”^[a]*

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? 8 If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! 10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 “Make level paths for your feet,”^[b] so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

c. **1 Kings 18:37.** *Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”*

b. **“I stand at the door and knock”** – Jesus is always seeking a relationship!

c. **“hear...open...I will come in”** – “hearing” the gospel precedes the “opening” of the door (the heart). Eating with you is a high form of the fellowship of faith!

21 To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

a. **“I will give the right to sit with Me”** – Jesus offers the closest relationship of trust and faith (to sit at king’s right was his most trusted advisor).