

Philadelphia: The Faithful Church

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[0:00] Revelation 3, 7-13.

Revelation 3, 8-13.

I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and 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 from my God out of heaven in my own new name.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. So I know that you've all heard the saying that there is no such thing as a perfect church, and if there is, don't go there because it won't be perfect anymore.

Because the fact of the matter is that, you know, really there is no perfect church because the church is made up of imperfect people. And so though we are seeking to follow Christ and live by his example, the fact remains that we still battle with the sin nature, and we just aren't perfect, and we won't be in this life.

[1:59] And so there will be problems. We all fall short of God's standard and his perfection and his holiness. And so as a collection of imperfect people, we can't help at times but to act imperfectly.

At the same time, Christians need to be aware that there isn't always a better church either. Many Christians today act like nomads.

They go from one church to another thinking that another church will be better than the church that they're currently at, thinking that the grass is greener. And so they look for a place that they perceive to be better than the church that they are currently going to.

However, they will soon find, I think, that that new church fails to meet all the needs that they think that the new church was going to give to them.

So we have a lot of church hoppers, a lot of church shoppers. And so why do people shop around? Well, maybe they don't like the worship, but they like the preaching. Maybe they like the worship, but they don't like the preaching.

[3:03] Maybe they prefer a church located closer to their home or close. That's a church that's closer to their favorite restaurant so they can get there before everybody else. Maybe they want to go to a church where they perceive that they can make better networking connections.

You know, these are where the important people in my workplace or in my community go to church, and so I want to get to better know them, and so I'm going to go to church there. Sometimes people leave a church for the right reasons, though.

Not always because of selfish reasons or unbiblical reasons. Some people want to grow deeper in their knowledge of God's Word, and they're just not being fed where they're at. So they prioritize the teaching of God's Word, and so they'll leave for that reason.

Some prioritize their children's spiritual growth. I've talked to a lot of families that that's very important to them, and so they're going to look at a church where there's ministries for their children and for their teenagers so that they will grow and mature as a Christian and have a church that comes alongside them and then helping to equip their kids and to train their kids so that responsibility is primarily for the parents.

I think the church has an obligation to come alongside and help as much as they can. The frustration for me these days, though, is people coming to the church with the mentality of a consumer.

[4:23] That drives me crazy. They think primarily, you know, what does this church have to offer me? Instead of thinking, what do I have to offer this church?

Instead of thinking, you know, how can I use my spiritual gifts here? They have more of a mindset of a consumer of, you know, what can I get from this church?

Or what does this church have to give to me? And they're seeking primarily to be served in that case instead of looking to serve others. Our spiritual gifts aren't for ourselves.

They're not for ourselves. They are given to us by the Spirit to be used to serve others. Not given to us to draw attention to ourselves, but used for us to serve others and draw the attention to the Lord. A quote by Sinclair Ferguson, he says, So we should be thankful that our Lord isn't as fickle as people in his church can be.

[5:35] That he doesn't withhold his blessings from us when we're struggling, and he doesn't withhold his blessings from imperfect congregations.

And so here's the main idea for our study tonight is that the church in Philadelphia was not perfect, but they were faithful, and the Lord blesses faithfulness in his church.

The church in Philadelphia was not perfect, but they were faithful, and the Lord blesses faithfulness in his church. So just to give you some context about the church in Philadelphia, Philadelphia is a city in Pennsylvania, and they are home to the Liberty Bell.

Okay, I'm glad you guys laughed because some of you, Oh, okay. Hmm. I have heard of... Yeah, yeah, the city of brotherly love.

That's exactly, and we'll get into that here in a minute. So Philadelphia, the first Philadelphia, the original Philadelphia was located 30 miles south of Sardis.

[6:45] Remember all of these churches are following an ancient postal route, kind of like an upside-down U. And this city was the youngest of the seven.

It was founded nearly 200 years before the birth of Christ, and it was named for Attalus II, who was the king of Pergamum, whose loyalty to his brother and predecessor, King Eumenes, earned him the nickname Philadelphia, which literally means brother lover.

So there you have it. City of brotherly love, brother lover. Philadelphia was rich in agriculture, especially its vineyards, and that was due to the fact that volcano deposits in that area, and it was also referred to as the burned land for that reason also.

It was also an area that was prone to earthquakes, and the earthquake that leveled Sardis in AD 17 also did significant damage to Philadelphia as well.

And so like the other cities that we've talked about, Philadelphia also had a love for Rome. Like Sardis, they also built a temple in honor of Emperor Tiberius, and that was a show by them of thanks for Rome's help in rebuilding their city after the earthquake.

[8:08] However, they took it to the next level. So Sardis built a temple to Tiberius. So did they, but they took it to the next level by changing their name for a few years, calling themselves Neo-Caesarea, which means new city of Caesar.

Today it's the Turkish town of a name that's hard to pronounce. A-L-A-S-E-H-I-R. My guess would be Alas Sayer.

Alas Sayer. I could be wrong. Like the other churches, Scripture doesn't say much about how the church was founded. It was most likely, like the other churches, founded sometime during Paul's ministry in Ephesus.

The church in Philadelphia was around for a long time, tradition tells us. It tells us that some Philadelphian Christians were martyred alongside Polycarp and Smyrna. However, the church eventually did disappear by the 14th century, though that was long after Islam's influence dominated the region.

So there were people, Christians there, who were faithful for a very long time. The first thing that we see here about this faithful church is in verse 7.

[9:20] First, before we look at the church, it's the characteristics of the correspondent. Characteristics of the correspondent, who is Christ.

And so, as he does in all the other messages, he leads off by saying something about himself that is important for that particular church.

And so here he says, So here Jesus introduces himself with a description reflecting his character. And as I said, he's done that in the previous five letters. And in those letters, he provides a description of himself that has to deal with the division that John saw of him.

And so here, this refers to what John saw in chapter 1, verses 12 through 17. Well, actually, that's what Jesus would draw from. But this description of him is unique also in that it's drawn from that

earlier vision, but it was also different because it distinctly had Old Testament features to it.

[10 : 34] So let's break it down. What's happening here? First of all, he says, he describes himself as he who is a holy. And so obviously, that refers to God who alone possesses absolute holiness.

The Old Testament repeatedly describes God as the holy one. God says that he's the holy one.

Isaiah 6.3 declares again, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And again, to say that God is holy is to say that he's utterly separate from sin. Therefore, his character is absolutely unblemished and absolutely flawless.

He is totally perfect. He is the holy one. So the title holy one is also used in the New Testament as a messianic title for Jesus.

In Mark 2.14, remember, a terrified demon screams out to Jesus, What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

[11 : 34] I know who you are, the holy one of God. And then another instance where Jesus, or when the angel came to announce the birth to Mary, the angel described Jesus as being the holy child.

And then in John 6.69, Peter affirmed that there he said, We have believed and have come to know that you are the holy one of God. And then later, he rebuked the unbelieving Jews, Peter did, because they disowned the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted to them instead of Jesus.

Jesus himself identifies himself as he who is holy. And so that can be no less than a direct claim by him to his deity.

He possesses the unaltered, holy essence and sinless nature of God the Father. He is the holy one. He also says of himself here that he is the one who is true.

And that denotes that which is genuine, that which is authentic, that which is real. And so in the midst of falsehood and perversion and error that fills the world, Jesus is the one who is true.

[12 : 54] He also says that he is the one who has the key of David. And so we wonder, well, what does that mean? Well, from Revelation 5, 5 and Revelation 22, 16, we see that David symbolizes the messianic office.

Let me read those verses for you. In chapter 5, verse 5, it says, And one of the elders said to me, Weep no more. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, describing Jesus, the root of David has conquered so that we can open the scroll and its seven seals.

And then Revelation 22, 16, says there, I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.

So that's referring to his messianic roots there. And then a key in Scripture is used symbolically often to represent authority.

Whoever has the keys is in control. And so that's what is being said of our Lord here. Some examples of that. Matthew 16, 19, the Lord says, I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

[14 : 13] So the term key of David also appears in Isaiah 22, 22, where there it refers to Eliakim, the steward of the prime minister to Israel's king.

And because of his office, it was said that he controlled access to the monarch. He had the key of David. Isaiah 22, 22, let me read it for you. And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David.

He shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open. So, as the key holder, or as the holder, I should say, of the key of David, Jesus alone here is expressing the fact that he is sovereignly in control.

He has sovereign authority to determine who enters into his kingdom and who does not. Revelation 1, 18 reveals that Jesus has the keys to death and hell.

Here he is depicted as having the keys to salvation, and to blessing. Finally, Jesus identifies himself as he who opens and no one shuts, and who shuts and no one opens.

[15 : 22] That again describes or stresses his omnipotence. What he does cannot be overturned. Nobody can overrule Christ.

No one has greater power. No one can shut the doors that he has opened, and nobody can open the doors that he has shut. The emphasis is placed on the fact that Christ is sovereign, and he is in complete and total control of his church.

That's what he's stressing here. So those are characteristics of the correspondent. Next we see characteristics of the church. Verses 8 through the beginning of verse 11.

So again, this church, like Smyrna, is one of the only two where there is no words of condemnation from the Lord.

And so finding nothing wrong in their deeds that caused him any concern, the Lord moved to commend the church in Philadelphia for four realities that characterized their congregation.

[16:29] Four realities that characterized their congregation. The first was he said that the church had little power. Now when we first read that, we think that doesn't sound like a positive thing.

That doesn't sound like a word of encouragement. Again, that seems to be a negative statement.

No one in our culture, I think, especially a man, would take it as a compliment if somebody came up and said, hey, you have little power.

That's not a compliment. We wouldn't think. It sounds like weakness to us. But that isn't what Jesus meant by saying they had little power.

From what we can gather about the church is that it was probably a small church, in number at least, and it's very likely and very possible that they were a poor church as far as their economic resources.

Many of them, in fact, probably lived their lives as slaves. And so they were small in number and they were small in resources, at least economically.

[17:34] This being the case, they were a great fit with what Paul tells us about God's design for the church in general. In 1 Corinthians 1, 26 and 29, he says, For consider your calling, brothers.

Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And so this church matched that description.

Though they were small in number and though they were limited in resources, they were not lacking in spiritual power. The implication is that they were true worshippers.

They truly were lovers of Christ. They were in His Word and His Word was abiding in them. And so that further reinforces the next characteristic of this faithful church, which was that the church was obedient in keeping the Lord's Word.

[18:43] He says there, Jesus says, you have kept My Word. So they did not deviate from the pattern of obedience and thus proved the genuineness of their love for Christ.

John 14, 21, Jesus says, whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love Him and manifest Myself to Him.

Explanation, or a characteristic again, a word from our Lord that fits well with this church. Another, John 14, 23-24. Our Lord says, if anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word and My Father will love him and He will come to him and make our home with him.

Whoever does not love Me, he does not keep My words and the Word that you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. And then 1 John 2, 3, and 4. And by this we know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments.

Whoever says, I know Him but does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him but whoever keeps His Word in Him truly, the love of God is perfected. By this, we may know that we are in Him.

[19:56] So their love for the Lord was evident, was proved by their actions, their obedient actions towards Him. So a faithful church is obedient to the Word of God.

Third, we see that the church was loyal to the Lord. Jesus says that you have not denied My name. So we know there's a lot of persecution in this region, a lot of persecution towards these churches and though they were no doubt experiencing pressure from the world to be like them, they remained loyal to the Lord no matter what the cost was and our Lord was pleased by that.

And then fourth, we see that the church endured persecution in verse 10. It says, because you have kept My word about patient endurance. The NIV translates this verse in this way.

It says, you have kept My command to endure patiently. And that's what this church has done. The steadfast endurance that marked Jesus' earthly life is the model for all Christians.

Hebrews 12, 2-4 says there, looking to Christ, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

[21 : 16] Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Him so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

So we see here that through trials and persecution, these faithful believers patiently endured what they were facing while also never wavering one bit in their commitment to Christ.

And so as a result of that, the Holy Spirit was powerfully at work through this church. They obeyed God's word. They were loyal to Christ in the face of persecution.

They endured trials and hostility, proving that they loved Christ. Those were the qualities that united to create their faithfulness.

Why were they faithful? Because of these things. And those remain the qualities every church must cultivate in order to be known as being faithful to the Lord.

[22 : 19] So we need to copy off of their example. Third, we see here that faithful churches receive promises from Christ. So when we're faithful, what do we receive from that?

Well, Jesus explains in verses 8 and 9. He says, I know your works. In the beginning of verse 8, Behold, I have set before you an open door which no one is able to shut.

So the first promise that He gives to them is that their salvation was secure in Christ. Their salvation was secure in Christ. This was a promise that no one could shut them out of His kingdom.

That their salvation in the Lord was totally secure. And so I got to thinking, well, what if it isn't? What if it wasn't?

What if that isn't the case for believers? That our salvation isn't secure? Which some people believe that you can lose your salvation. Well, if God does not preserve His people and enable them to preserve to the end, then that would mean that no person's salvation was secure.

[23 : 27] That would mean that any temptation would have the real possibility of drawing us or pulling us off of the narrow path and putting us on the path that leads to destruction.

If a person can lose their salvation, then the question would be, well, how much sin does it take to lose it? And you know how people are. We would want to know because we think, how close can I get? To the line. Without losing my salvation.

But we don't know because the Bible doesn't say that you can lose your salvation. But if that's the case, you know that that's what we would do. But it raises the question, okay, if you can lose your salvation, then what are the sins that you can commit and be okay and what are the ones that are going to take you out of the kingdom of God?

And then the question would be, well, if that's the case, do you have to make a full confession every time you sin? For every sin that you've ever committed, you have to seek forgiveness for that? Because let's be honest, I think we commit sins that we don't even realize sometimes what we're doing until after the fact. And so you can imagine if it's just one sin, which it seemed like would be the case, that could cause you to lose your salvation, then we would be spending all of our time in confession, right?

[24 : 36] I just would knock me out. Just knock me over the head and knock me out so I don't sin anymore. And you know, this is interesting because this is what drove Martin Luther crazy. And not only Martin Luther, but everybody around Martin Luther because he was constantly wanting to confess because it really bothered him.

He'd be up at night, he couldn't sleep, you know, pleading with the Lord, trying to think of all the sins that he'd committed so that he could confess them so there was nothing that was, you know, coming between him and God and ultimately, thankfully, the Lord helped him through that in a very amazing and wonderful way.

Under the crushing weight of persecution that this church felt, knowing that their salvation was safely secure in the hands of Christ, who had given them, that would have given them, I should say, great comfort in knowing that all that they were enduring, that they were safely and securely in the hands of Christ, knowing that to live truly was Christ.

But if they died, it would be greater gain. So, the promise of security. Second, they would be used by him to usher others into the kingdom.

This was the next promise that he makes. He has opened the door not only for them, but for them to be used by him as the Holy Spirit would use their witness to usher others into the kingdom of God. [26:10] And that's something that we should desperately, I think, want as a church to be used by our Lord to share the gospel and to see the Holy Spirit using us and working through us to bring others to faith in Christ.

In the Pauline epistles, an open door was often used as a reference to evangelistic opportunity. Let's look at some of those verses. 2 Corinthians 2.12 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost for a wide door for effective work has been opened to me and there are many adversaries. When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord. Colossians 4.2 and 3. He says there, continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us or open a door to us for the word to declare the mysteries of Christ on account of which I am a prisoner.

So, an open door had been presented to this church to be used by the Lord to witness, to share, and to spread the gospel that others would be brought into the kingdom by their witness and their work, ultimately the Holy Spirit using them to accomplish those things.

[27:30] And what a privilege it is to be used by God. Have you ever been used by the Lord to share the gospel, to lead somebody to Christ? It's a wonderful, wonderful blessing to be able to have that opportunity.

Though it's not, obviously we know, it's not you that saved them to be used by the Lord to communicate His gospel to them and to see them saved. What a tremendous honor the Lord gives us to be able to be used by Him in that.

And then verse 9, we see another promise that they would be honored by those who persecuted them. Read verse 9 again, he says, Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie, behold, I will make them come down and bow before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you.

So as was the case in Smyrna, Christians in Philadelphia faced hostility from unbelieving Jews because they rejected Jesus as the Messiah, they were not at all of the synagogue of God, but the Lord says that they belonged to the synagogue of Satan.

Though they claimed they were Jews, that claim was a lie. Racially, culturally, ceremonially, they were Jews, but Paul defines a true Jew in Romans 2, 28 and 29, for he says there, For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical, but a Jew is one inwardly and circumcision is a matter of the heart by the Spirit, not by the letter.

[29:03] His praise is not from man, but from God. So Christ promised that some of the very same Jews in Philadelphia who were persecuting these Christians would come down and bow at their feet and know that God loved them.

Bowing at someone's feet depicts total defeat and total submission. And so what Jesus is saying here is that the enemies of the church in Philadelphia would be totally vanquished, they would be humbled, and they would be defeated.

The Philadelphian church's faithfulness would be rewarded by the salvation of some of the very Jews who were persecuting them. I think this is what is happening. There's Jews who are persecuting them, and the Lord is going to use them to share the gospel and save some of these people who are persecuting him, very much like the Apostle Paul, who was persecuting the church as a Jew, and he was saved, and he became a mighty weapon in the hands of the Holy Spirit. So they will recognize that there is no other name by which they can be saved, and they will put their trust in Christ alone, this being a foretaste of the day, described Romans 11, 26, when all Israel will be saved, the Apostle Paul writes.

And then we see, fourthly, that they would be spared from the hour of trial. Another promise. Verse 10, Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the world to try those who dwell on the earth.

[30:41] Because the believers in Philadelphia have successfully passed so many tests, so many trials, Jesus promised to spare them from the ultimate test.

I don't know if they did this when you all were in high school and college, but you know those students who did so well in class that they didn't even have to take the final because it was not going to affect their grade?

Did they do that when you guys were in high school too? Did they? That was never me, by the way. I was just like, man, you don't even have to take this final because you are going to get an A no matter what?

So, Philadelphia church was like those kids in classes who got straight A's and they were spared from the big test because they passed all the others. This promise also extends to all other faithful churches and believers.

This verse promises that the church will be delivered from the great tribulation. Thus, I believe, it supports a pre-tribulational rapture. When we were...

[31:51] Amen! There's some... Anybody say nay? Okay. We can talk about it later. But you know, it was funny. We were helping Evelyn and Dennis get all their stuff off the ground and I was the first one there and I'm so glad that so many other people...

That's awesome that so many other people came and I know it was during a time when a lot of you work but that was wonderful to have so many helpers but at first it was just us two and I was like, there's no way that me and you are going to get all this accomplished and he was feeling the same way.

I didn't say that but you know, we were both thanking it and his word to me was I hope the rapture comes right now and I was like, I'm with you brother but you know, that's usually...

We do. It's usually in times of you know, I wish... I don't want to have to deal with this. Lord, come now. Just come right this very moment. That day will come, thankfully.

The rapture is the subject of three, at least three passages in the New Testament. I want to read those to you. John 14, 4. The Lord says, Let not your hearts be troubled.

[33:00] Believe in God. Believe also in me and my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also and you know the way to where I am going.

Another, 1 Corinthians 15, 51 through 54. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised imperishable and we shall be changed.

For this perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

And then 1 Thessalonians 4, 13 through 17. But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord that we who are alive, who are left, until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

[34:24] For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

And so none of these, why I believe a pre-tribulational rapture is that none of these scriptures speak of any kind of judgment, but rather of the church being taken up by Christ into heaven.

There are three views of the timing of the rapture in relation to the tribulation. The tribulation being that seven year period that proceeds the Lord's return to judge sinners with death and hell, and then to establish his millennial kingdom on earth, which some people disagree about that as well.

Some believe in a post-tribulational rapture that the church will endure the tribulation and then at the end of that will be raptured from the world immediately upon the Lord's return.

Others believe in a mid-tribulational rapture that the Lord will in the middle of the tribulation rapture his church before the fullness of God's wrath is poured out during that final three and a half years of the tribulation.

[35:51] Then others, as I've expressed, view a pre-tribulational rapture. In this view, Christ's words in verse 10 are a promise that he will rescue his whole church from the hour of testing.

That's what I believe is the case and let me tell you, I certainly hope so. Oh man, I hope so. We do not want to be here in what's going to go down during that seven years and part of, another reason why I believe in the pre-tribulational rapture is I don't think the world, I know that the world doesn't

appreciate the church in the world.

All the things that the church does, you imagine when the church is gone, and yeah, there'll be a remnant here, but when the church is gone, and then again, the wrath of God is poured out, it's going to be terrible, absolutely terrible.

So I hope we're out of here, I really do. Another point here, the pivotal phrase in the Greek is *tereo ek*, which is keep from, and so pre-tribulationists see this as a promise that God will spare the church, keep the church from His wrath, and that He will, again, bring them into His kingdom, thus keeping them from all that's going to go down during that time period.

Next, we see Christ's command to the faithful church in verse 11, second portion of that. He says, hold fast what you have so that no one may seize your crown.

[37 : 34] Because of the Lord's imminent return for His church, believers are commanded to hold fast to what they have. So the members of the Philadelphian church had been faithful, they had been loyal to Christ, and so He commanded them to remain so.

Stay faithful, stay loyal. It is true that believers are eternally secure because of the power of God, yet the means by which He secures them is by providing believers with a faith that perseveres, a persevering faith.

Colossians 1, 22 and 23. He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.

If, indeed, you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation, under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Christ's promise to the one who faithfully perseveres is that no one will seize their crown.

Revelation 2, 10 defines the crown as being the crown of life, the crown of reward for those who faithfully endure to the end and have eternal life.

[38 : 54] life or endure to the end of this world and are brought into the kingdom of God. So He is the one who perseveres or who makes sure that we persevere and it's the one who continues faithfully because they have the indwelling Holy Spirit who will persevere to the end.

fifth, Christ's counsel to the faithful church. His counsel to the faithful church verses 12 and 13.

He says, the one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it. I will write on him the name of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven and my own new name.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches. So some more promises here for this faithful church. The first is that Christ will make him or them a pillar in the temple of God and that they will not go out from it.

So what does this mean? Well, we think of what does a pillar do? A pillar stabilizes. It's stable. It's permanent. It's immovable. Pillars can also represent honor.

[40 : 12] Back in this time, in many pagan temples, they would often carve different images and things in there in honor of particular deities. So a pillar is stable.

It's permanent. It does not move. And it is sometimes an object of honor. The promise then of Christ is that he will make believers have an eternal place of honor in the eternal city, the temple of God, which is the new Jerusalem.

The promise to people who were used to having to flee, this is awesome because they were used to having to flee their city because of earthquakes and because of aftershocks, you know. And so the promise here, we think of people who have had their houses flooded repeatedly and having to move.

And you guys know I hate moving. That's one of the things I hate, I really hate. And so I hate moving. And so to me, I think, oh, I don't have to move.

I'm here. I'm not going anywhere. That's a, I like that. I like that. Especially because I don't want to leave heaven. Christ's second promise is to the one who overcomes is that he will write on him the name of God.

[41 : 30] That depicts ownership. Think of kids who you have something that you really like and you want to go take it to your friend's house, but you don't want your friend to, you know, take it from you, so you write your name on it, right?

And so that depicts ownership. And so that's what God's doing here. This is what this means is that we will be, have his name written on us signifying that he owns us, that we belong to him.

It also speaks of intimate personal relationship with him. Next, Christ promises to write on believers the name of God. I already covered that.

Christians have eternal citizenship in heaven's capital city, the New Jerusalem, which is described in Revelations 21. And finally, Christ promises believers his new name.

Christ's name represents the fullness of his person. And so in heaven, believers will see him as he is. And whatever we may have known of him will pale in the reality in which we will then have when we see him.

[42 : 42] And we know him. But then we will know him fully. The new name by which he will be privileged to, by which we, I should say, will be privileged to call him will reflect that glorious revelation of his person.

And then there's an exhortation that closes all of the other letters. The Lord says, He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

churches. This letter declares that churches that remain faithful to the Lord will be blessed by him. He will bless them with an open door for evangelism, with eternal salvation, and knowing that they're eternally saved and secure, and all the other kingdom blessings that go along with that, and also this promise that we will be delivered from that great time of testing, from that great tribulation on the earth.

He will ultimately bring all those who persevere through him to heaven where he then will reveal himself to us fully. The promise of such rich blessings should motivate our church to follow the example of the church in Philadelphia.

Thank you.