

Revelation 3:7-13 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

In Philadelphia, there were men claiming to be holy and true, when they were neither.

Rev 3:9a them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie

Those men meeting in the synagogue claimed to be the holy people of God, saying they were Jews, and acting like they could open the door to people to be saved, or could shut it against them. But they were speaking falsely, because they were not really holy unto God, but actually devoted to Satan, even if they didn't realize it, and they did not actually have such power to keep people out or let them in.

Our Lord Jesus had explained this to them.

John 8:31-45 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

The apostle Paul wrote about this.

Romans 9:6-8 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Romans 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

So, those men were in Philadelphia, as also in many other places.

-They claimed to be holy unto the Lord, but they were actually devoted to Satan.

-They claimed to be the true Jews, but they were not truly Jews.

They also claimed to be the ones who could say who was admitted into the people of God, and who was not.

-but actually they themselves had not entered, and tried to stop others entering; the Jewish teachers of the law were as Jesus had said

Luke 11:52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

-some came down from Jerusalem to try to do this

-Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

-Acts 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

So, those men were in Philadelphia, as also in many other places.

-claimed to be holy unto the Lord, but they were actually devoted to Satan.

-claimed to be the true Jews, but they were not truly Jews.

-claimed to have the key to open the door to the household of God, or to close it.

To His precious congregation there, our Lord Jesus identified Himself as:

-He that is holy

-He that is true

-He that hath the key

Barnes: The meaning is, that, though they were of Jewish extraction, and boasted much of being Jews, yet they were really under the influence of Satan, and their assemblages deserved to be called his synagogue. It is a false profession altogether.

Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Acts 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

Acts 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

Acts 14:5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,

Acts 14:19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

Acts 17:5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

Acts 18:12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

Acts 23:12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

This troubled the congregation there.

They were small, because many people were drawn off by the false church.

They were threatened with violence.

The weak among them were made to doubt.

The situation was similar to something in Israel's history, as recorded in the Old Testament scriptures.

Isaiah 22:15-22 Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say, 16 What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock? 17 Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee. 18 He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house. 19 And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down. 20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: 21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants

of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. 22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

JRY (from study on Rev 1:1)

There are churches that are very small and weak, while other groups that call themselves churches are very large and powerful. They need to hear these prophecies right away, so they can be reminded that the worldly power of those other groups does not mean they are faithful churches, and the small size of the church does not mean it is not faithful, so they can keep being patient, keep believing His word.

he that is holy

JFB: separate from evil and perfectly hating it

he that is true

JFB: VERY God, as distinguished from the false gods and from all those who say that they are what they are not; real, genuine. Furthermore, He perfectly realizes all that is involved in the names, God, Light, Bread, the Vine; as distinguished from all typical, partial, and imperfect realizations of the idea.

he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth

I know thy works...thou has a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

