

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.

Rev 3:7 ...he that is true...

Rev 3:8 ...thou...hast kept my word...

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

Actual Jewish synagogues were at issue in the seven congregations. But the message our Lord Jesus provided us with has proven useful in dealing with other organizations that are essentially similar, and that present His congregations with similar challenges.

Ussher *Body of Divinity*, 1648

p. 358 What are the marks and infallible notes whereby to discern a true visible Church, with which we may safely join?

First and principally,

-the truth of Doctrine which is professed and the sincere preaching of the Word;

-together with the due administration of the Sacraments, according to the commandment of Christ our Savior, Mat. 28

Secondarily, the right order which is kept; with a sincere and conscionable obedience yielded to the word of God.

Ussher *Body of Divinity* 1648 (cont'd)

p. 358 What say you to the other notes that are commonly given of the Church? Either they are accidental, and in great part separable; or utterly impertinent, and forged for the upholding of the Romish Synagogue.

p. 358 Is not multitude a note?

No: for Christ's flock is a little flock (Luke 12:32); and Antichrist's very great.

Rev. 13:3, 48; 18:3

WCF 25.5 1646

The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but **synagogues of Satan**. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to his will.

1689.26.3 1677/89

The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but **synagogues of Satan**; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

Rev 2 and 3

An essential falsehood:

- false law
- false gospel
- false subject of faith
- false ordinances
- false identity
- false prophecy
- false holiness

You have kept the word of Christ, now hold it fast!

Irish Articles 70

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word & Sacraments...

Trapp:

That is, right worshippers, as the Turks at this day style themselves Mussulmans, that is, the only true believers; Papists, the only Catholics.

Knollys:

These blasphemers said they were Jews, but were not. A Jew is one of Abraham's seed, either after the flesh, and so were they, {Joh 8:31,33} who vainly boasted in a fleshly confidence, and so did these who say they are Jews, or after the spirit, such are the children of promise, {Ro 9:8} even all them that are Christ's, {Ga 3:29} so were not these, though they said so, they did lie, {Re 3:9} though they were Jews outwardly, whose circumcision is outward in the flesh, yet they were not Jews inwardly, whose circumcision is inward, that of the heart in the spirit. {Ro 2:28-29}

Poole:

whether native Jews, glorying in circumcision and the law, and that they were descended from Abraham; or false Christians, who may be here meant (called Jews by a figure; the Jews being once the only church of God).

Gill:

they professed Christianity in words, but in works denied it; they were men of bad principles and practices, and both blasphemed the ways and doctrines of Christ themselves, and caused them to be blasphemed by others also; they were false Christians, nominal professors, and shunned persecution for the Gospel; who were not what they would be thought to be: these were the broachers of heresies in this period of time, in which there was a multitude of them, and which chiefly respected the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person of Christ; and they were introducers of Pagan and Jewish rites into the church, and were men of flagitious lives and conversations, and paved the way for the man of sin

Clarke:

There were persons there who professed Judaism, and had a synagogue in the place, and professed to worship the true God; but they had no genuine

religion, and they served the devil rather than God. They applied a sacred name to an unholy thing; and this is one meaning of the word blasphemy in this book.

Barnes:

though they were of Jewish extraction, and professed to be Jews, they were not true Jews; they indulged in a bitterness of reproach, and a severity of language, which showed that they had not the spirit of the Jewish religion; they had nothing which became those who were under the guidance of the spirit of their own Scriptures. That would have inculcated and fostered a milder temper; and the meaning here is, that although they were of Jewish origin, they were not worthy of the name.

JFB:

Jews by national descent, but not spiritually of “the true circumcision.”

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the

LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Hebrews 8:6-13 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH-- 9 NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS IN THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; BECAUSE THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DISREGARDED THEM, SAYS THE LORD. 10 FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 11 NONE OF THEM SHALL TEACH HIS NEIGHBOR, AND NONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. 12 FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." 13 In that He says, "A NEW COVENANT," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.