

Christ's Last Word to His Church SERIES: Philadelphia: Meet the True One, the Key of David Possessor, & the One Who Opens Doors Revelation 3:7-13

When Jesus Christ introduces Himself in Revelation 3:7 to those precious and faithful saints, He makes one of the greatest promises ever made. They, like us, lived in an uncertain world, and more than to any other church, Jesus explains His power in a way we all can grasp and hold onto today.

We each need to hear, and understand, and hold onto by faith:

The Most Amazing Promise

In a world of uncertainties, lurking disasters, constant unknowns, and endless potential dangers—Jesus Christ told these believers so much like us: here is truth you can hold tightly.

Jesus re-introduces Himself, and the promise was in His identity as The Christ. It's holding on by faith, to who Jesus really is, that changes everything. They needed a reminder of just Who they were listening to. Jesus Christ tells them that He holds the key to everything.

Nothing that ***Jesus Christ opens*** can be closed; and when ***He shuts*** the door to anything—that door can never be opened.

That concept is powerful to think about, depending on which side of the door you are on. Christ's words are either *amazingly encouraging*: that the door of blessing, ministry, or hope will never be shut; or very *soberingly horrible*, that the door of life, forgiveness, security, and hope can slam shut to you, and it can never be re-opened.

Now, join me as we listen to Christ's His voice in Rev. 3:7-13:

Revelation 3:7-13 (NKJV) “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”: 8 “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. 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 out of

heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. 13 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Getting to Know The Real Jesus Christ

Jesus never introduces Himself to these seven churches just by His Name, He always adds a definition of His Character, and a description of Himself. But, up until this sixth church, those descriptions and definitions parallel what was already stated in Revelation 1.

But not to this faithful church at Philadelphia, Jesus Christ introduces Himself by using a string of four Hebrew descriptions of God. These words define the real Jesus Christ. These truths are what the believers of this church were to grasp onto, and hold tightly by faith.

Jesus said in His earthly ministry that the truth makes us free. If we meditate upon what Christ revealed of His True Identity, our lives can be forever changed. Note these four again with me in v.7:

Revelation 3:7 (NKJV) “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says: 1). He who is **holy**; 2). He who is **true**; 3). “He who **has the key of David**; 4). He who **opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens**”:

For a moment we need to focus upon each of these four descriptive titles Christ Jesus takes, and see the implications of each. First:

Jesus Christ is The Holy God

When He said I am Holy, Jesus was identifying Himself to the saints at Philadelphia as the Holy and Just One, that can't tolerate sin.

Look on to v. 8. Jesus Christ who is Omniscient, remember His eyes of blazing fire (Rev. 1:14) that can penetrate anything, seeing clearly everything says these words, “I know your works”.

Yet, when Christ's inspection of their fellowship is completed and written up in this report, His inspection produces **no** rebukes, **no** warnings, and **no** condemnation: they become a very compelling model for us, given by Jesus Christ Himself to us, **of what it takes to please God as a local church**.

Now back to the second descriptive title in v. 7. Jesus writes: ‘These things says: 1). He who is **holy**; 2). He who is **true**:

Jesus Christ Is Truth

God is often described as holy and true, so Jesus Christ takes this reflection of God's eternal character and introduces Himself to the saints as Philadelphia. He says the Holy and True One is speaking to you. The word is **alethinos** which speaks of being real, genuine, as opposed to being fake or counterfeit.

The combination of God as holy/righteous and true in v. 7 is a pattern we see throughout Revelation.

Revelation 6:10 (NKJV) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, **holy and true**, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

Revelation 15:3 (NKJV) They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! **Just and true are Your ways**, O King of the saints!”

Revelation 16:7 (NKJV) And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, **true and righteous** are Your judgments.”

Revelation 19:2 (NKJV) For **true and righteous** are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.”

Again, look back at our text in Rev. 3:7. The Holy One is speaking, and He is also the True One. This Holy and True One who speaks the truth, and sees everything, and demands holiness and separation from sin has visited them, watched them, analyzed them, and presents His findings in v. 8, and has nothing to rebuke them for.

What an Incredible Church

They were not perfect, they were not sinless, they were not given something different than every other church: **they were just faithful to that Word that had received**. They obeyed what the Lord told them: Confess and forsake sin when it comes, no matter how often.

To the Philadelphian saints He said, I see all as the Holy and True God and conclude that there is nothing I need to rebuke. That offers the amazing truth for us that it is possible, within the Scriptural truths we have been given, to please God in our daily lives to this extent: that there is nothing He needs to rebuke or condemn us for.

Though all of us are weak, frail, and very aware of our fallen humanity, yet Jesus shows us that we can live this pleasing life in His Holy sight.

As we go through life the way the Scriptures tell us: we sin, we repent, we seek His cleansing and experience His forgiveness. In all of that, faithfully living and walking the pathway He left for us, Jesus Christ the God of Truth and Holiness finds lives He can commend.

That is amazing. That is thrilling. That is what the saints at Philadelphia heard. That is what each of us should desire to be by His grace each day.

Now look back at v. 7 for the third description Jesus Christ speaks by way of introducing Himself. He says ‘These things says: 1). He who is **holy**; 2). He who is **true**; 3). “He who **has the key of David**.

Jesus Christ Is Holding the Key

It is possible that, to many of us, this Old Testament description of a “key of David” from Isaiah 22:22 seems remote. It seems mysterious, or even makes us wonder why that would even be important. But it held a vast trove of truth to them.

The Isaiah passage Jesus is quoting from, uses the phrase “key of David” in the context of Shebna, who was the steward of the king of Judah. This position of steward, was one who served the king as one: who **dispensed the king's wealth**, who **allowed entrance to the king's presence**, and who **displayed the king's power**. The steward was often second in power to the king, much like a prime minister.

The steward of the king held the key to the dispensing of the kings wealth, presence, and power: and that is what the promised, anointed, Messiah the Christ was coming to do for God the Father.

In God's Word, David is much more than just the shepherd-boy, giant-killer, and Psalm-writer as we see him across the pages of Scripture. In those 141 chapters of the Bible that contain inspired insights about David we find that David also symbolized the office of the coming Messiah.

So the key of David signified the stewardship of the coming Messiah, who would not be like merely earthly kings, but would dispense the treasures, power, and presence of the King of the Universe.

Jesus the Messiah Opens the Power, Riches, & Presence of God

The Anointed One of God, the Messiah was promised to come as a descendent of David, who holding the rights and power of the Messiah in that key of David (listen to this similar description): would **dispense God's treasures**, who would **open God's Presence**, and who would **display God's power** as the second person of the Trinity.

When Jesus opens a door of blessing it can't be shut. When Jesus opens a door of ministry, it can't be shut. Jesus Christ is the One to stay in touch with if you want to see things happen.

This key opens the door to salvation; this key gives entrance to God's Kingdom; and only Jesus Christ has this key, and He alone can open God's Treasures to us.

Look over to Revelation 5. Here in the scene of the Throne Room of the Universe, in the midst of the endless waves of worship rising before the Almighty, look at v. 5. Here is something we sometimes could miss.

Revelation 5:5 (NKJV) But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, **the Root of David**, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

Now, turn onward to the ending chapter, Revelation 22:

Revelation 22:16 (NKJV) “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. **I am the Root and the Offspring of David**, the Bright and Morning Star.”

The Bible ends with Jesus Christ our Messiah saying that He is the Root (the source of David's very

existence as Creator), and the Offspring of David (as the virgin born, son of David born to be God in human flesh).

The plan God designed for salvation is amazing, consistent, and powerful. Jesus Christ has the key to: endless and eternal salvation, rich blessings from God's treasure house, and to unstoppable ministry.

Part of the incredible sweep that the Gospel made across the Roman World may be tied to their acute awareness that what Jesus Christ opened could not be closed, and that His key opened the longed for abundant life that never ends. So we see that:

Jesus Christ: The Only Door to Life Eternal

Back to our text in Rev. 3:7, where Jesus says I have the “key of David”. In God's Word whenever we see key we see a symbol of authority. Another way to say “authority” is to call it “control”. The key is the authority or control over something.

As Messiah Jesus Christ is the only One who can dispense the treasures or riches of God. This is Jesus telling this dear church, that pleased Him so, that He had the keys to access the treasures of God, and the authority to dispense them into their life and their church.

Another facet of this key is that Jesus Christ alone can grant access to God. He holds the keys to Hell and Death (Rev. 1:18) and here in 3:7 the keys to Life and Heaven.

For a moment look back at John 10, as 60 years before, the Apostle John had heard Jesus actually using this key, offering this greatest of treasures in John 10.

John 10:7-10 (NKJV) Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

He alone is the way to eternal life. No one can come to the Father except through Him, and He alone can draw them (John 6). His sovereignty is seen in this key of David He holds.

In John 10 Jesus Christ is the Door; in John 11 He is Resurrection and Life; and in John 14 He is the Way.

Jesus is Holy God, Jesus is the Truth, and Jesus has the Key to life the way God designed it to be. Only Jesus Christ unlocks life that is abundant. Follow Him and even loss we suffer becomes eternal gain.

Now, look back one more time to v. 7 as we see the fourth and final element: Revelation 3:7 (NKJV)
“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says: 1). He who is **holy**; 2). He who is **true**; 3). “He who **has the key of David**; 4). He who **opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens**”:

Jesus Christ Is Unstoppable

Here is an amazing expression. What Jesus Christ opens can't be shut; and what Jesus Christ shuts, can't be opened. To say it in our world it would be that: ***when Jesus does something that's it.*** It can't be stopped, thwarted, overturned, ruined, destroyed, or ended.

Jesus told Peter that as Christ's Church goes forward into the world of darkness, that even the gates of Hell (Matthew 16:18) would not be able to hold back the forward push of His Church. Christ's Gospel is unstoppable, where ever God opens the doors.

This open and no one close concept shows up all the way through Christ's words in the Gospel by John when he captures the "nevers" of Jesus Christ.

If you have never marked these in your Bible, today would be a great time to do so. They are like a string of priceless pearls that we treasure more the older we get. This is the message that Christ's church is to proclaim, and watch Him use unstoppably for His glory. Turn back with me to the first one in the string of Christ's "nevers", John chapter 4.

1. **Never Thirst:** John 4:14 (NKJV) but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him **will never thirst.** But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."
2. **Never Hunger:** John 6:35 (NKJV) And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me **shall never hunger**, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.
3. **Never Walk in Darkness:** John 8:12 (NKJV) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall **not walk in darkness**, but have the light of life."
4. **Never See Death:** John 8:51 (NKJV) Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall **never see death.**"
5. **Never Taste Death:** John 8:52 (NKJV) Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall **never taste death.**'"
6. **Never Perish:** John 10:28 (NKJV) And I give them eternal life, and they **shall never perish**; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.
7. **Never Die:** John 11:26 (NKJV) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

So finally, Jesus Christ is Unstoppable. What did this four-part introduction mean to them? That is the issue, because that is where we can get the application for our lives today.

Hold Onto the True Jesus Christ Today

1. **Hold onto the Truth that Jesus Christ is Holy:** He was separate from sin, He came to destroy the power of sin, and with His all-seeing eyes He was looking for un-confessed, un-

forsaken, held-onto, secret sin. The application to them: ***Jesus Christ expects His born-again children to confess and forsake sin.*** Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV) He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

2. ***Hold onto the Truth that Jesus Christ is True:*** Jesus Christ sees, knows, and speaks truth. He always tells the truth. So when He speaks it is to be believed and held onto. Jesus Christ says, I know your works, and truthfully say: there is nothing to condemn. Like the woman taken in adultery in John 8, when Jesus forgives all who repent, he says I do not condemn you. The application to them: ***Jesus Christ found that they lived lives individually and as a church that pleased Him.***
 - 2 Corinthians 5:9 (NKJV) Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to **be well pleasing to Him.**
 - Colossians 1:10 (NKJV) that you may walk worthy of the Lord, **fully pleasing Him,** being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
 - Hebrews 13:21 (NKJV) make you complete in every good work to do His will, **working in you what is well pleasing in His sight,** through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.
 - 1 John 3:22 (NKJV) And whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.**

3. ***Hold onto the Truth that Jesus Christ is Un-stoppable, He has the Key of David, what He opens stays open, what He shuts stays shut.***

Jesus opens life, real life, eternal life, fully-satisfied life, and when He opens that life to you, nothing can separate that life from you or me.

What a Savior, what a Promise, and what a Church.

May we see, know, hold onto, and follow this Holy, True, Key-Holding, Opener of Abundant Life Today!