

The First-Century Church
"The Church in Philadelphia"

Introduction:

1. The New Testament contains information (positive and negative) that was written "about" as well as "to" various congregations in the first century.
2. By "rightly dividing" this information we can know the Lord's will for His church today.
3. This lesson is a study of the message that the Lord sent to the church in Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13).

Discussion:

- I. (vs.7) THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS MESSAGE
 - A. This message was sent to *"the angel [messenger] of the church in Philadelphia."*
 - B. Although John recorded this message, it was actually spoken by the Lord who described Himself as:
 1. *"He that is holy"* (Hebrews 7:26)
 2. *"He that is true"* (John 14:6)
 3. *"He that hath the key of David"*
 - a. (Luke 1:30-33) Gabriel said that Jesus would rule on David's throne over His kingdom.
 - b. Note that Jesus "has" the key of David -- He is presently ruling on David's throne.
 4. *"He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."*
 - a. This has reference to opening and shutting a door.
 - b. The Scriptures often use the term *"door"* when referring to an opportunity to serve the Lord (Acts 14:27; 2 Corinthians 2:12).
 - c. The Lord described Himself as the giver and taker of opportunity.
- II. (vs.8) THE LORD HAD BLESSED THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA
 - A. He set *"an open door"* before this church that no one could shut.
 1. Keep in mind that the Lord is the giver and taker of opportunity (vs.7).
 2. He blessed this church with an opportunity to serve Him, probably through evangelism.
 - B. The Lord blessed the church in Philadelphia with this opportunity because:
 1. it had *"a little strength"*
 - a. The Lord was not rebuking this church for being weak.
 - b. He was commending it for using the strength it had to serve Him faithfully.
 2. it had kept His Word (John 8:31-32)
 3. it had not denied His name.
 - C. The Lord was able to say these things because He knew this church's *"works"* (vs.8a).
- III. (vs.9-10) THE LORD PROMISED TO BLESS THIS CHURCH IN 2 ADDITIONAL WAYS
 - A. (vs.9) He would make the Jews who were persecuting the Christians in Philadelphia to show reverence to them.
 - B. (vs.10) He would deliver this church from a great trial that would come upon the whole world, and He would do this because it had kept His Word.
- IV. (vs.11-12) THE LORD EXHORTED THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO HIM
 - A. (vs.11) He exhorted this church to hold fast what it had so it would not lose its *"crown"* [reward].
 - B. (vs.12) Those who overcame would be permanent fixtures in His kingdom.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord wants us to hear this message (vs.13).
2. We must understand that the Lord is still the giver and taker of opportunity.
3. In order to receive opportunities from Him, we must possess the same characteristics as the church in Philadelphia.
 - a. We must be strong (Ephesians 6:10, 12).
 - b. We must keep the Lord's Word (John 14:21, 23-24).
 - c. We must not deny the Lord's name (Matthew 10:32-33).