
GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2019 – DEAR CHURCH,
WEEK 7 – FEBRUARY 24, 2019 - REVELATION 3:7-13

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) Christians sometimes pray for God to open or close doors in certain situations. Share an experience where you prayed for God to open, or close, a door.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

Central Turkey was well known for its earthquakes. A massive earthquake in 17 AD severely damaged the cities that are mentioned in the letters of Revelation. Most of the city of Philadelphia was destroyed and the Roman government had to intercede with financial help to rebuild the city. Following the earthquake of 17 AD it was known as Neocaesarea in appreciation for the imperial help received for rebuilding. And later, under Vespasian (A.D. 69–79), the name Flavia appeared on its coins. Today, it is called Alashehir.

The first followers of Jesus understood themselves to be the true Temple, the place where God had made his home. There was no longer a need for a literal, physical temple because God now resided in them. Early leaders in the church were called pillars in Galatians 2:9. Now the Christians, in Philadelphia, are given the promise of standing like pillars.

The reference to holding the key is found in Isaiah 22:22. Jesus is the one who holds the key and he has opened a door in front of the believers and is encouraging them to go through the open door. This thought has been interpreted in two different ways.

The first idea revolves around evangelism. Believers in Philadelphia have the opportunity to take the message of Jesus to places that have not yet heard the “Good News”. The apostle Paul uses similar language in 1 Corinthians 16:9, 2 Corinthians 2:12 and Colossians 4:3.

The second understanding is that Jesus is opening the door to the heavenly kingdom. In verse 8, Jesus reminds the Christians that he has placed before them an open door, into the eternal kingdom, that no one can shut.



In the end, believers will be seen as God's people. They will be citizens of a new city, where heaven and earth meet. There will be no fear of literal earthquakes, that have previously destroyed the pillars of temples. There is a sense of permanence, which would have been encouraging.

The threefold description in verse 12 shows that the faithful belong to God, hold citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and are, in a special way, related to Christ.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read Revelation 3:7-13

⁷ *"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹ I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹² The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. ¹³ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

- 2) Verse 7 says, "the door has been opened before them, which no one can close". Do you believe that God has ever opened a door for you? How did that happen? How did you feel?
- 3) The Synagogue of Satan refers to false Jews or false Christians. How do we spot false prophets in today's world, and how do we interact with them? How do you spot and avoid false teachings?
- 4) Today there are people who claim to be Christians but when their lives are observed they do not seem to be fully devoted disciples of Jesus. How are we to interact and respond to people like that?
- 5) The city of Philadelphia had experienced a devastating earthquake, which had revealed the unreliability of earthly structures. God was encouraging them to stay strong and be a pillar. Share a time when you have experienced something that was difficult or devastating for you and how God played a role in that.
- 6) Jesus says that he is coming soon in verse 11. How do you reconcile that Jesus says he is coming soon and yet it has been almost 2000 years since he said that?
- 7) In verse 12, Jesus makes several promises including "I will write upon them my new name". What does it mean to you to have God write His name upon you?

BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) Jesus concludes each letter with "He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" What do you think the Spirit might be saying to LJPC?