

# The Open Door

## Revelation 3:7-13

<sup>7</sup>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;

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>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.

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

<sup>12</sup>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.

<sup>13</sup>He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

## Review from Philadelphia part 1: type vs. antitype, shadow vs. fulfillment

When Revelation 3:7-8 refers to the key of David and the open door, it is a direct reference to a prophecy in the Book of Isaiah. Last service, we looked at how this prophecy played out, and how powerful Israel's deliverance from Sennacherib's armies proved to be. Consider: that Old Testament Bible story foreshadowed a future victory of God over the powers of darkness. The shadow was powerful, so how much more powerful will the ultimate fulfillment prove to be!

### EVIL & LIVE illustration

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Now we will specifically dwell on the OPEN DOOR that no man can shut. **First of all I want to dwell on the open door as signifying the tremendous missionary effort of that age.** Paul called a new missionary endeavor for the Lord an open door.

*II Corinthians 2:12,*

*"Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's Gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord."*

**So we can see by the comparison of Scriptures that this open door signified the greatest spreading of the Gospel that the world has ever seen.**

I want you to see something here. God works in threes, doesn't He? It was in the third or Pergamean Age that the church was married to the state. The deeds of the Nicolaitanes had become the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. That age was the OPEN DOOR for the false vine. Once it was backed up by the power of the state it became actually a world system even though it bore the name, Christian. Thus it spread like wildfire. **But now, three ages later, after a long and hard struggle of faith, here comes the OPEN DOOR to the truth. The Word of the Lord now has its day.** Of course the fifth age had set the stage for this mighty move, as that age gave us exploration, colonization, the printing of books, etc.

The Reformation during the 16<sup>th</sup> century *did* shake Satan's kingdom, and Satan did as much as he could to dull its effects by leavening the movements with the spirit of Nicolaitanism. He's not about to let the Word of God run free without a fight!

## Attempts of Satan to keep the door closed during the Philadelphian Age

**In the introduction to this church age, the emphasis on the door is unmistakable. (A very different door image is also painfully clear in Laodicea!)**

**Revelation 3:7-13**

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<sup>8</sup>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.

This repetition suggests there were serious attempts to shut the door! The Philadelphian Age witnesses effective proclaimers not only of the Gospel but also of poisonous philosophies!

Consider some of the philosophical movements of the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries:

- Rationalism: reason is the supreme source and test of knowledge (supplanting divine revelation)
- Naturalism & Materialism: there is nothing beyond the material world; there is nothing that is not made of matter or a result of matter interacting with matter; the world is governed only by natural forces, and natural laws; we only know what we can physically measure; there is nothing beyond the material world.
- Darwinism brought man down from his exalted place in Creation as the only creature made in God's image.
- Marxism brought the Millenium down to earth, with his vision of socialist revolution that would usher in utopian communism.
- Romanticism and Transcendentalism (Rousseau, Emerson & Thoreau): we only know what we can feel! They give very nice sounding explanations the foreshadow the relativism that is prevalent today
- Freudianism removed any possibility of human motivations being anything noble ... it all goes back to sex.
- And this is to say nothing of the whole movements within churches to tear away at the inspiration of scripture or to promote a social gospel instead of a Gospel of transformation by repentance and regeneration!

The Philadelphian Age is considered the greatest missionary age the world ever enjoyed. Led by John Wesley and his friend George Whitefield, revivals spread all over England, as well as throughout the thirteen colonies. Furthermore, both England and the United States sent missionaries all over the world, translating scriptures and doing trailblazing work in very difficult places. **That the Liberty Bell has come to symbolize the American Revolution instead of the guillotine which symbolized the French Revolution is thanks to the influence of the Wesleyan revivals that swept England and the thirteen colonies.**

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309-2 "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word and not denied My Name." Now we have already mentioned how the strength was returning. It was. The power of the inquisition had waned. People had left their home lands and demanded a freedom of worship. The yoke of the hierarchy was being broken. The governments were finding it wise not to champion one segment against another. In fact, well meaning but poorly led people were willing to wage war to defend their religious rights. **Perhaps the greatest show of strength of religion in this age was the fact, that though France fell in revolution, the great Wesleyan revival kept the revolution away from Great Britain and saved her to be an instrument in the hand of God for many glorious years.**

309-3 **The preaching of the Word was never greater. As Satan raised up his hordes of free thinkers, as the originators of communism rose up, as liberal theologians spread their filthy wares, God raised up mighty warriors of faith, and the greatest works of Christian literature and teaching and preaching came from this era.** Never has its preachers and teachers been matched and never will they be. The Spurgeons, Parkers, McClarens, the Edwards, Bunyans, Meullers, Brainards, Barnes, Bishops, all came from this era. They preached, taught and wrote the Word. They glorified His Name.

***The Word for the age is God's Antidote against the spirit of the age.***

**Isaiah 59:19-21 (note the application to family in v.21!)**

<sup>19</sup>So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood [of isms!], the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

<sup>20</sup>And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

<sup>21</sup>As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

## What a tragedy to see Nicolaitanism paralyze nation-stirring revivals!

### What has become of the Methodist denominations today?

From Elizabeth Russell, "Emergency Exit," in *World Magazine*, Nov 16, 2023.

The UMC has warred internally over doctrinal issues since its 1968 inception. Delegates first debated homosexuality in 1972. They amended the denomination's Book of Discipline that year to contain this statement: "The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homo-sexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching."

The Book of Discipline has kept, and even strengthened, that orthodox statement on human sexuality ever since. But the UMC rarely enforces any of its doctrinal statements; in fact, its leaders often encourage flagrant -disregard. Because the denomination's accountability structures are regional, a few liberal bishops in high positions pave the way for others beneath them. Two top bishops are currently involved in openly gay relationships. Denial of Scripture, references to God as female or some vague animistic force, and -celebration of transgenderism and homosexuality are common.

### A social gospel replaced the true Gospel of repentance and the Holy Ghost

Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps* (the source of the more recently WWJD stories, films, etc) was published in 1896 and reflects the emphasis of liberals to make the gospel predominantly a *social gospel* that helped people in need, instead of a call to repentance and the Holy Ghost.

(Illustration: my experience with community service at Wittenberg, contrasting with Stephen's NT community service in the Book of Acts)

### The coins of ancient Philadelphia also foreshadow the established churches' focus on social gospel.

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The mintage of the coins [of ancient Philadelphia] suggests the deity of the city to be Bacchus. Now Bacchus is the same as Ninus or Nimrod. He is the 'lamented one', though most of us think of him in terms of revelry and drunkenness.

What illumination this brings to our minds. Here is a coin with the god on one side and the priestess or prophetess on the other. Now flip a coin. Does it matter which way it comes down? No sir, it is still the same coin. That is the Romish religion of Jesus and Mary.

But we are not thinking of Rome only. No, there is not only the great harlot. Certainly not; for she, by her fornications has become a mother. Her daughters now are coins of the same mintage. There on one side of the coin they have drawn up a worship of Jesus and on the other side they have their priestess or prophetess also and she writes her creeds and dogmas and tenets and sells them to the people for salvation insisting that she and she alone has the true light.

**How remarkable is the fact that this age is characterized by the coin. For the mother and daughters are all buying their way to heaven. Money and not blood is the purchase price. Money and not Spirit is the power that moves them ahead. The god of this world (mammon) hath blinded their eyes.**

But their dealings in death will end soon, for this is the age that the Spirit cries, "Behold I come quickly". Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!

A.W. Tozer accurately diagnosed the problem of the established churches, "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been

withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference.”

Similarly, Watchman Nee is said to have observed of the American church that it was amazing how much they accomplished without the power of the Holy Ghost!

The open door is the way of escape from the cycle of Nicolaitanism, which Christ opened as Philadelphia faded into Laodicea.

The open door refers not only to the missionary nature of this age, but also more especially to a door Christ opens up between the sixth and seventh ages.

As time is winding down, God provides an emergency exit from the cage of denomination. He provides an open door so believers wouldn't have to get trapped in the denominations that arose after the Wesleyan revivals.

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107 Now, now, watch the--the time coming now, after the great missionary move that swept across the nations of brotherly love, to take what they had. Nothing against it, of literature and whatevermore, into the different parts of the world. Now, the church denomination had gone back to education, works again (See?), gone back.

After the great denomination had been set up, Jesus set an open door. After the Wesleyan age had come in, and the Methodist church had been established in the earth, taken roots, growing, making a great church which it is today, one of the greatest among the Protestant churches, and that time, the thing that took place then was Jesus set an open door for the church before they entered into the Laodicean age.

What is the door? Jesus said He is the Door, as opposed to any denomination.

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111 The reason I'm saying this this way, so you can see what I mean by the lapover. See? It's from the missionary age of the door. But, you see, He'd--He had told them He had the key of David and so forth. But here He said He had set before the church now, after that age of missioning, and Whitfield, and--and all those others, and Finney, and Sankey, and Moody on down (Moody being one of the last), come down to now He set a open door before the church. Oh, here's where you have to watch now. It's just in between the Philadelphian and the Laodicean age, lapover.

112 Jesus is the Door. Now, if you'll turn with me to John 10:17... Let's back this up now and be sure that many of you would believe. And then somebody would say, "Well, I--I never... He just said that." I'd like just to read it: John the 10th chapter and the 17th verse: John 10:17. All right, we read these Words. I beg your pardon, John 10:7, not 17. Then said Jesus unto them... Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheepfold.

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125 "I am the Door to the sheepfold." What is that Door that was set now? Let's go back in our minds. And from that great missionary age of the Methodists, that swept through the country with the message of sanctification, Luther through justification; Wesley come along with the message of sanctification. And at the end of the Methodist age, the end, when it took roots and begin to come a great organization... And when any church...

Now, listen, that's strong. But I want someone to show me anywhere through the gleanings of history. Any church that God ever raised up, come up the Pentecostal way without any organization; and as soon as it organized, it died and never raised again. Oh, the membership went on, but they never had a revival. Luther's revival never raised, and neither did Methodist revival ever raise; and neither will the Pentecostal revival ever raise. No, sir. They organized it, which God said in the church ages He hates that thing, the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

Now, remember, we're not talking against anybody. The good people is scattered. God's sheep is in all them places out there. That is true. That's right. Methodists, Baptists, whatever they are, they're God's people if they are borned again of the Spirit of God, they're God's people; but the organizations has cramped them down. And packed letter from Methodist to Baptist to Campbellite, and so forth, till they--they wore their letters out just packing them from place to place.

128 All right, how the Lord said now in the end of that age, "I am the Door to the sheepfold." Now, what door was opened about Jesus, just between these two ages? 1906, about when the Methodist age and--and--and Dwight Moody and them faded from the

scene, there come forth a break forth of the people receiving the Holy Ghost, speaking with tongues and things come back into the church. That's about right in about 1906, along in there.

All right, what took place then? After that begin to come along, the first thing you know, they organized the old General Council which went in, now called the Assemblies of God (See?), out of that church that was lapped over. **And what taken place then? He set an open door, an open door.**

**Christ Himself is the open door; not just Christ, but the revelation of *Who* Christ, as Simon Peter personally received in Matthew 16. And this door of revelation opened *between* the Philadelphian and Laodicean ages.**

**Matthew 16:15-19**

<sup>15</sup>He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

<sup>16</sup>And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

<sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>18</sup>And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

<sup>19</sup>And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

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141 **Now, we find out that in this great revelation that God gave here to the church in this last days, that God sent and reveals Himself the open Door *between* the two ages. It wasn't in the--the Laodicean age; neither was it in this other age, the Philadelphian age; but it was in between, the lapover,** 'cause the... I'll prove it in just a little farther down, and you'll get it. You see? We'll make it rich, so sure that you can't keep from seeing it, if you just want to see it. See? All right.

Now, the revelation of Himself is where He's built His church. How many knows that to be true now? He built His church upon the revelation of Himself.

143 All right. Now, what did He say? "*No man can shut it.*"

*I know Thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door,...*

**What is the open door? The revelation of the supreme Deity of Jesus Christ. What did He say to His first church back here, back in this age?** He said, "I am He that was, which is, and shall come. I am the First and the Last. I am the Almighty." He said it three different times, made Himself Deity to this first church here; before He went into the last church age, He said, "I've set before you an open door." If you want to see the revelation, here it is, where He'd build His church. And the only way He could take His church, is back to the revelation of what He is. Truly.

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God gives us exceeding great and precious promises. He has promised to fulfill them. He will. **But from the time we pray until the time we get the answer we must learn to receive patience into our souls for only in patience do we possess life.** May God help us to learn this lesson even as we know the people of this sixth age learned patience. We read the history of the lives of these great Christians; what a contrast we see between their lives and ours for they were so patient and quiet, and today we are all but overcome in over-impatience and haste.

He goes on to say to them, "Because you have taken my Word and lived it and thereby become patient, **I will keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.**" Now here again we see **the overlapping of the two ages;** for this promise has to do with the end of the Gentile period which culminates in the Great Tribulation.

## Philadelphia fades in Laodicea, the age of the quick work.

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THE AGE OF THE OPEN DOOR

*"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." (Revelation 3:8)*

The first phrase of this verse, "I know thy works," is analyzed in the rest of the verse, for their works had to do with 'the open door,' 'little strength,' 'the Word and the Name.'

298-3 In order to understand the wealth of meaning involved in "behold I set before you an open door, and no man can shut it," we must now recall what has been said about each age running over into another age. **There is an overlapping, a melting or fading into, rather than an abrupt end and a clear cut start. This age particularly flows into the next age. And not only does this age overflow into the last age, but the last age is in many respects simply a carrying on of the sixth age. The seventh age (a very short age) gathers up into itself for one quick work, all the evil of every age, and yet all the reality of Pentecost.** Once the Philadelphian Age has about run its course, the Laodicean Age quickly comes in, bringing both the tares and the wheat to harvest,

*"First bind the tares to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."*

*Matthew 13:30.*

Remember, please, that the Sardisean Age started the reformation that must still go on until the grain that was planted at Pentecost goes through the full cycle of planting, watering, nourishing, etc., until it comes right back to original seed. While this is going on, the tares that were sown will have to go through their cycle and be harvested also. That is exactly what we see happening. If you can just think of the seasons, you can get a very good picture of this. The plant that you see growing in full strength in summer suddenly appears to be going to seed. You can't tell exactly when summer became autumn--it just faded into it. That is how the ages are, and especially these last two.

298-4 It is to this age that Jesus says, 'I come QUICKLY' verse 11. That makes the last age a very short one. Laodicea is the age of the quick work. It is cut short.

As we read Revelation 3:8-11, there are multiple references that nearly give us the sense that the sixth age is the last age. It's not, but these two ages are linked in a special way.

- Thou hast little strength, like the runner at the end of the race
  - Note also the contrast with Sardis: though Sardis had a name they lived yet were dead, Philadelphia hasn't denied the word or God's name.
- There is a reference in verse ten to ultimate vindication, the false vine would worship at the feet of the true vine
- There is reference to the race of endurance the Bride has run, and Christ promises to keep her from the "hour of temptation that would come over all the earth." The Bride will be preserved from the Tribulation.
- Behold, I come quickly!

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256 Now, this great temptation, the hour of temptation that shall come to try the whole world, goes into the tribulation (Just in a few minutes we'll see it.), goes on into the tribulation, and the tribulation did not come in the days of Wesley. So what age are we in? What's this Door set before? It's between the Wesley and the--where the church is headed right now, and already into, the Laodicean age. But this little place right in here, that's been the last thirty-five, forty years, has been an open door setting right before the people to come in, and God will take the remnant and seal it off. And they'll go on into a lukewarm, and He'll spurt them out of His mouth. The work will be cut short, up goes the church, and here comes the antichrist moving in for destruction. Just perfect, fits with the whole Bible right on around.

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He goes on to say to them, "Because you have taken my Word and lived it and thereby become patient, I will keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Now here again we see the overlapping of the two ages; for this promise has to do with the end of the Gentile period which culminates in the Great Tribulation.

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"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This verse is not a declaration that the true church will go into and through the tribulation. If it meant that it would have said that. But it said, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation." This temptation is exactly like the temptation in Eden.

It will be a very inviting proposition held up in direct opposition to God's commanded Word, and yet from the standpoint of human reasoning it will be so very right, so enlightening and life-giving as to fool the world.

Only the very elect will not be fooled. The temptation will come as follows. The ecumenical move that has started on what seems such a beautiful and blessed principle (fulfilling Christ's prayer that we all might be one) becomes so strong politically that she bears pressure upon the government to cause all to join with her either directly or through adherence to principles enacted into law so that no people will be recognized as actual churches unless under direct or indirect domination of this council. Little groups will lose charters, privileges, etc., until they lose all property and spiritual rights with the people. For example, right now unless the local ministerial association approves in many, if not most cities, one cannot rent a building for religious services. To become chaplains in the armed services, hospitals, etc., it is now almost mandatory to be recognized as acceptable to the trinitarian ecumenical groups. As this pressure increases, and it will, it will be harder to resist, for to resist is to lose privilege. And so many will be tempted to go along, for they will feel it is better to serve God publicly in the framework of this organization than not to serve God at all publicly. But they err. To believe the devil's lie is to serve Satan, even though you may want to call him Jehovah. But the elect will not be deceived.