

Brotherly Love & John Wesley



William Marrion Branham

Introduction

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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;

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.

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.

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.

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

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.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Philadelphia

Philadelphia was seventy-five miles southeast of Sardis. It was the second largest city in Lydia. It was built upon several hills in a famous wine-growing district. Its coins bore the head of Bacchus and the figure of a Baccante (priestess of Bacchus). The population of the city included Jews, Christians of Jewish origin, and converts from heathenism. The city suffered frequent earthquakes, yet its duration was the longest of the seven cities of Revelation. In fact the city still exists under the Turkish name of Alasehir, or City of God.

The mintage of the coins 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!

The Age

The Philadelphia Church Age lasted from 1750 to about 1906. This age, due to the meaning of the name of the city, has been called The Age of Brotherly Love, as Philadelphia means, "love of brethren".

The Messenger

The messenger to this age was without doubt John Wesley. John Wesley was born at Epworth, June 17, 1703 and was one of nineteen children born to Samuel and Susanna Wesley. His father was a chaplain in the Church of England; but it is more than likely that the religious turn of John's mind was based more upon his mother's exemplary life than upon his father's theology. John was a brilliant scholar. It was while he was at Orford that he and Charles became part of a group who were spiritually exercised to worship on the basis of experientially living the truth rather than making doctrine their standard. They drew up a spiritual guide of works, such as giving to the poor, visiting the sick and the imprisoned. For this they were called Methodists, and other derisive titles. Now John was sufficiently imbued by his vision of the need of religion for the peoples of the world that he went to America (Georgia) as a missionary amongst the Indians. On his way there he found that many of the ship's passengers were Moravians. He was deeply impressed by their meekness, peace, and courage in all circumstances. His labors in Georgia in spite of self denials and hard work was a failure. He returned to England crying, "I went to America to convert the Indians but oh! who shall convert me?"

Back in London he again met the Moravians. It was Peter Boehler who showed him the way of salvation. He was truly born again much to the dismay and evident anger of his brother, Charles, who could not understand how such a spiritual man as John should say he was not formerly right with God. It was, however, not long after that Charles, too, was saved by grace.

Wesley now began to preach the Gospel in those pulpits in London to which he formerly had access; but soon they turned him out. It was at this time that his old friend, George Whitefield, stood him in good stead for he invited John to come and help him preach in the fields where thousands were listening to the Word. Wesley at first was incredulous that he should preach in the open instead of a building, but when he saw the throngs and saw the working of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit he turned wholeheartedly to such preaching.

The work soon took on such proportions that he began sending out numerous laymen to preach the Word. This seemed like a parallel to Pentecost where the Spirit raised up men with power to preach and teach the Word almost overnight.

There was violent opposition to his work but God was with him. The workings of the Spirit were mightily manifested and often such a spirit of conviction took hold of the people as to take away their strength and they would fall to the ground crying in great distress over their sins.

Wesley was a remarkably strong man. He says of himself that he could not remember to have felt lowness of spirits for even a quarter hour since he was born. He slept no more than six hours a day; arose in time to start preaching at five practically every day of his ministry; preached up to four times on a single day so that in a year he would average over 800 sermons.

He traveled multiple thousands of miles as did his circuit riders who carried the Gospel near and far. In fact Wesley traveled 4500 miles per year by horse.

He was a believer in the power of God and he prayed for the sick with great faith and wonderful results.

Many of his meetings saw the manifestation of Spiritual gifts.

Wesley was not in favor of organization. His associates did have a "United Society" who were, "a company of men having the form, and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the Word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation." The only condition of those entering was they should be of those, "who had a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." As time went on they worked out a strict set of rules to be used in self discipline for the good of their souls. Wesley recognized that after his death the movement could be organized and the Spirit of God leave them to dead form. He once remarked that he did not fear that the name of Methodist would leave the earth but that the Spirit might take His flight.

During his lifetime he could have acquired vast wealth; but he did not. His favorite saying on the subject of money was, "Get all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." How strange it would be for Wesley to come back and see the denomination that bears the name of Methodist today. They are rich—vastly rich. But the life and power of John Wesley is missing.

It should also be mentioned that Wesley never did desire to build a work upon a denominational or sectarian basis. Though he was an Arminian in his beliefs, he did not want to separate himself from brethren on the grounds of doctrine. He was a good candidate for James: He based his eternal

life on faith and works, or the living of the life, rather than simply accepting a creed or a doctrinal statement.

John Wesley died at the age of 88 having served God as few men would dare to even think they might.

The Message

Revelation 3:7,

"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;"

Oh, how beautiful are those words. How majestic is even the sound of them. How thrilling to think that all those attributes can be applied to one person. Who would dare to say such things about himself but Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory? I believe the key to interpreting exactly what each of these wonderfully descriptive phrases means is found in verse 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."

I say this verse is the key because it deals with the Jews who have always called themselves the children of God to the exclusion of everyone else. They crucified and killed the Lord Jesus Christ. Their terrible deed brought their own blood upon their own heads for centuries. All because they refused Jesus as their Messiah, Which indeed He was. To them He was not the Coming One, or the Son of David; to them He was Beelzebub, or some unrighteous one fit only for destruction. But not so. He was indeed Emmanuel, God manifest in the flesh. He is indeed, Messiah. Surely, He was

exactly as He now sets Himself forth to be. There He is, THE SAME JESUS—Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever. That Holy One in the midst of the lampstands is the very same Jesus Who walked the shores of Galilee, Who healed the sick, Who raised the dead, and Who in spite of irrefutable proof was crucified and killed. But He arose again, and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The Jews did not call Him holy then. They do not call Him holy now. But He is the HOLY ONE.

Psalms 16:10;

"For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine HOLY ONE to see corruption."

They sought their righteousness after the law and failed miserably, for by the law can no flesh be justified. By the law can no man be made holy. Holiness is of the Lord.

I Corinthians 1:30,

"But of HIM are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

II Corinthians 5:21,b,

"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

It was Christ or perish, and they perished for they refused Him.

And men of that age as even today were making the same mistake. As the Jews took refuge in the synagogue form of worship, so in the Philadelphian Age they were taking refuge in the church. It is not joining a church that counts. The life is not in the church. The life is in Christ. "This is the record that God hath given us eternal life and

this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Man is made holy by the Spirit. It is the Spirit of Holiness that raised Jesus from the dead that in-dwells us and makes us holy with His holiness.

There He stands, the HOLY ONE. And we will stand with Him clothed in His righteousness, holy with His holiness.

Now this age is the sixth age. In the eyes of God, time is drawing to a close. He will soon be coming back. Soon the cry will go forth as He comes,

*"And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still:
and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still:
and he that is holy, let him be holy still."*

Revelation 22:11b

Oh, I am so glad that my holiness is not of myself. I am glad that I am in Christ, with all His wonderful attributes of righteousness imputed, yea imparted unto me. Blessed be God forever!

"These things saith He That is true." Now this word, 'true', is a very wonderful word. It does not mean true in just the sense that it is opposite to false. It expresses the Perfect Realization of an idea as contrasted with its Partial Realization.

For example we recall that Jesus said in John 6:32,

*"Moses gave you not that bread from heaven;
but my Father giveth you the true bread from
heaven."*

John 15:1,

"I am the true vine."

Hebrews 9:24,

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

I John 2:8,

"Because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth."

Since this word, indeed, expresses Perfect Realization as against the idea of Partial Realization as illustrated in these verses, we can now understand as never before Antitype contrasted with type, and substance with shadow. Take the example now of manna from heaven. God sent down angel bread from heaven for Israel. But that bread did not satisfy. It was only good for a day. Those who ate it were hungry again the next day. If it was left around it became contaminated. But Jesus is the TRUE bread from heaven, whereof manna was just a type. And if any man eats of that BREAD that came from heaven he will never hunger again. He does not need to come back and eat again. The moment he partook, he had eternal life. Here indeed was REALITY. No need any longer for a shadow. No need for a partial salvation. Here is the WHOLE of it. Just like Jesus isn't a part of God; He IS God.

No one could deny that Israel had light. They were the only people who had light as a nation. It was as when Egypt was so dark that one could feel it. But in the homes of the Israelites there was light. But now true light is come. The light of the world is Jesus. Moses and the prophets brought the light by means of the Scripture relative to the Messiah. Thus Israel had light. But now the Fulfillment of the light has come, and what was but glowing Word has now broken forth in the Brightness of God manifested amongst His people. As the pillar of fire gave light at night, and that was wonderful, now light and life were manifested in the fullness of the

Godhead bodily.

Israel used to take the red heifer and sacrifice her upon the altar for the remission of sins. For a year the sins of the guilty one was covered. But that covering could not take away the desire for sin. It was not a perfect offering. It was a shadow until the real came along. So each year the man would sacrifice and each year come back because he still had the same desire to sin. The life of the animal atoned for his sin, but being animal blood that was shed and animal life that was given it could not come back upon the man. If it had come back, it still would not have availed. But when Christ the perfect substitute was given, and His blood was shed, then the life that was in Christ came back upon the repentant sinner and that life being the perfect life of Christ, sinless and righteous, then the guilty one could go free for he had no desire to sin. The life of Jesus had come back upon him.

That is what is meant in Romans 8:2,

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

But the Jews back there in the time of Jesus did not want to accept that sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats made nothing perfect. It was once God's ordained method. But now Christ having appeared in the flesh, and by the shedding of His own blood has put away sin and by that offering of Himself has made us perfect. The Jews would not take that. But what about that Philadelphian Age, and, yes, the other ages, too? Did they really accept this reality in Christ? No sir. Even though Luther brought the truth of justification, the Romish Church, and its eastern counterpart, the Orthodox Church, still clung to works.

Now works are fine, but they don't save you. They don't make you perfect. It is Christ or perish. And it is not even

Christ AND works. It is Christ alone. This age began the years of Arminianism that does not believe in Christ as the REALITY. It does not sing of "Nothing but the Blood," for it sings of "Nothing but the blood AND my own conduct". Now I believe in good conduct. If you are saved you will do righteously. We have already gone over that. But let me tell you now, salvation is NOT Jesus PLUS. It is Jesus ALONE. SALVATION IS OF THE LORD. From start to finish it is all GOD. Let His life be in me. Let it be His blood that cleanses me. Let it be His Spirit that fills me. Let it be His Word in my heart and mouth. Let it be His stripes that heal me. Let it be Jesus, and Jesus Alone. Not by works of righteousness which I have done. No sir. Christ is my life. Amen.

I feel I could just go on and on about these truths, but I will give you one more thought. It is about that wonderful hymn that A. B. Simpson wrote.

 "Once it was the blessing,
 Now it is the Lord.
 Once it was the feeling,
 Now it is His Word.
 Once His Gift I wanted,
 Now the Giver own.
 Once I sought for healing,
 Now Himself Alone.
 All in All forever,
 Jesus will I sing.
 Everything in Jesus,
 And Jesus everything."

There isn't anything in this life, satisfying as it may be, as good and as fine as it may be, but you will find the sum total of all perfection in Christ. Everything fades into insignificance beside Him.

"He That hath the key of David." This beautiful phrase follows and comes out of the preceding phrase, "He that is true".—Christ, the Perfect Realization, contrasted with Partial

Realization. Here it is. Moses was a prophet of God, but Jesus (like unto Moses) was THE Prophet of God. David (a man after God's own heart) was king of Israel, but Jesus is the Greater David, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, God very God. Now David was born of the tribe of Judah out of whom no priests came, yet he ate of the shewbread reserved for priests. He was the great warrior overcoming the enemy, establishing the people; as king he sat on the throne. He was a prophet. He was a wonderful type of Christ.

Now it says in Isaiah 22:22,

"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open."

The Spirit uses this Old Testament reference concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and His ministry in the church. What the key of David signified at that time is mere shadow, which is now fulfilled in Jesus standing in the midst of the lampstands. It has to do with our Lord AFTER His resurrection and not His earthly pilgrimage. But what does this key signify? The answer lies in the POSITION of the key. It is NOT in His hand. It is not worn around His neck. It is not placed in the hands of other men, or the verse could not be saying that HE ALONE HAS THE USE OF THAT KEY—FOR HE ALONE OPENS AND SHUTS, AND NO MAN has that right but Jesus Himself. Isn't that right? But where is the key? IT IS ON HIS SHOULDER. But what does SHOULDER have to do with it?

Read Isaiah 9:6,

"And the government shall be upon His shoulder."

But what does this mean? The answer is this. The

phrase, "government upon His shoulder" comes from the wedding ceremony of the East. When the bride has been committed to the groom she takes off her veil and places it over the groom's shoulders, signifying that not only is she under his dominion—that she has transferred her rights to him—that he is the head—but also that he bears the responsibility and the care and that HE AND HE ALONE—NO ONE ELSE—NO OTHER MAN—NO OTHER POWER—HAS ANY RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITY. And that, beloved, is the KEY of David. God being Sovereign, He foreknew by Divine decree exactly who would be in His bride. He chose her. She did not choose Him. He called her. She did not come on her own. He died for her. He washed her in His own blood. He paid the price for her. She belongs to Him and to Him alone. She is wholly committed to Him and He accepts the obligation. He is her head, for Christ is the head of His church. As Sarah called Abraham, Lord, even so the bride is happy that He is her Lord. He speaks and she obeys for that is her delight.

But have men heeded this truth? Have they esteemed His Person Who alone has the full sovereign authority over His church? I say, "NO". For in every age the church has been governed by a hierarchy—a priesthood—an apostolic succession—closing the door of mercy and grace to whom it will, and instead of assuming the love and responsibility of the church it has with mercenary lust preyed upon her and destroyed her. The clergy lived in luxury while the poor church fed on the husks of abuse. And not one age did any different. Each bound itself to organization and put the government upon men and committed the church to that government. Dare let the people rise up, and they were brutally suppressed or cast out. Every denomination has the same spirit. Every denomination swears that it has the key to the government of the church. Every denomination claims that it opens the door. But that is not true. It is Jesus and Jesus, alone. He sets the members in the Body. He endows

them with their ministries. He puts the gifts at her disposal. He cares for her and guides her. She is His sole property and He has no other one but her.

What a far cry from reality is this church age in which we live. And one day soon these men that even now purport to speak for the church will be rising up in the ecumenical move to place a living antichrist at the head of their organization which deposes the Lord and we will find Him (Christ) outside the church saying,

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Revelation 3:20.

But let me say this. Our Lord is not defeated. Men claim to open the door to God and shut that door, but they are liars. All that the Father has given Him will come to Him, and he that cometh to Him in no wise will be cast out; He will lose NONE of them. John 6:37-39. And when that last elected member to the body of Christ comes in, then will our Lord appear.

The key of David. Was not David the king of Israel—all Israel? And is not Jesus the Son of David according to the fact that He will sit upon the throne of David in the millennium and reign and rule over His heritage? Surely. So the key of David signifies that it is Jesus Who will bring in the millennium. He Who has the keys to death and hell will raise up His own that they may share in His reign of righteousness upon the earth.

How wonderful that our Lord has all the answers. Truly in Him are all the promises of God fulfilled. Truly by being IN Him we are heirs to what He has purchased for us.

Yes, there He stands, the Lord of Glory. Once as the

Father, He was surrounded by the angels, the archangels, the cherubims, and seraphims and the whole host of heaven, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts". Such was His holiness that no man could approach unto Him. But now we see Him in the church, sharing His own holiness with us, until in Him we have become the very righteousness of God. Yes, and there He stands, "Jesus, Perfect Everything,"—Lily of the Valley, the Bright and Morning Star, the Fairest of Ten Thousand, Alpha and Omega, Root and Offspring of David, Father, Son and Holy Ghost—the All and in All.

Isaiah 9:6,

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

In Him is perfect fulfillment. Though once we esteemed Him not, now we love Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In the midst of the church He stands, and we will sing His praise, for He the Mighty Conqueror is head over the church which is His bride. He bought that bride. He owns her. She is His and His alone and He cares for her. He is our king and we are His kingdom, His eternal possession.

Now you will recall that at the beginning of verse 7, I said that verse 9 would help us to understand it. I hope you saw what I meant. Jesus set Himself forth as He That is holy, true, (or the only reality) the One with the key of David, the One Who opened and shut. And that is exactly true. Those phrases describe Him perfectly. But the Jews in His day refused Him and all He was. They rejected their Saviour and all He meant to them. And the nominal Christian has now done the same. They have done what the Jews did exactly. The Jews crucified Him and then turned on the true believer.

The nominal Christian has crucified Him afresh and turned on the true church to destroy it. But God is true, and He Who is above all will yet return, and when He does He will show Who the only Potentate is. And as He proves Himself to the world, and all the world bows at His feet, at that time all the world will bow at the feet of the saints, proving that they were right in their stand with Him. Blessed be God forever!