

Bible Basics Conference 2023

# 'The Temple of My God'

Revelation 3:12

**Mark Grasso**

# Letter to assembly in Philadelphia

<b>ADDRESS</b>	<i>And to the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write:</i>
<b>PRESENTATION OF CHRIST</b>	<i>These things saith the holy, the true; he that has the key of David, he who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open: (3:7)</i>
<b>COMMENDATION</b>	<i>I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut, because thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. (3:8-10)</i>

# Letter (cont.)

<b>JUDGMENT</b>	—
<b>ADMONITION</b>	<i>I come quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown. (3:11)</i>
<b>PROMISE TO OVERCOMER</b>	<i>He that overcomes, him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more at all out; and I will write upon 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 my new name. (3:12)</i>
<b>CALL TO HEAR</b>	<i>He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. (3:13)</i>

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- Overcomers are believers who have purified themselves by separating from vessels to dishonour (2 Tim. 2:20-21; session 6)

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- Overcomers are believers who have purified themselves by separating from vessels to dishonour (2 Tim. 2:20-21; session 6)

## **4. Promises to overcomers:**

- Will be true for every believer
- Made known to overcomers for their encouragement

# Prophetic background

- Revelation 3:1-6: Sardis
  - Protestantism following the Reformation
  - in particular: *'thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead'*
  - nothing which Lord can praise
- Matthew 25:1-5:
  - 5 wise virgins (faithful)
  - 5 foolish virgins (mere professors)
  - but all slept



# Moral background

- 2 Timothy 2: the great house (session 6)
  - vessels to honour
  - vessels to dishonour

# Prophetic application

- Picture of:
  - Lord's work in 1800's
  - He opened the door (Rev. 3:8)
  - Brought lost truths of Scripture before faithful men – particularly His coming for His saints (the rapture)
  - Subsequent exercise on part of some believers to be faithful to the Lord and His Word, including in connection with meetings
- Specific work has finished, but features of Philadelphia remain

# Some prophetic aspects

- Lord's presentation of Himself:
  - unlike other letters, not as judge
  - but as what He is in Himself: '*holy*' and '*true*' (v. 7)
- Believers represented by Philadelphia:
  - appreciation of Christ
  - genuinely have Him as the gathering-point
  - also consistent with these two features ('*holy*' and '*true*'):
    - holiness / separation: '*come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord ... and I will receive you*' (2 Cor. 6:17)
    - truth: God's Word is truth (John 17:17), and sets out the ground of coming together

# Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- No censure
  - have not left their first love
  - have not made an alliance with the world
  - are not seeking the world's protection (have much better protector: v. 7)
  - are separate from false systems
    - in some instances at great cost (v. 9; 1 Cor. 16:9)
    - opposition primarily from profession ('*of Satan*') which bears Christ's name ('*synagogue*', '*say that they are Jews*')
  - do not seek prominence

# Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- Only praise
  - for their works (v. 8)
  - for their faithfulness to the Word – especially Lord's Word (v. 8)
  - and their faithfulness to His name (v. 8)
- Note the unique praise in verse 9: *'I have loved thee'*

# Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- No outward show or prominence
- No commendation from the world
- No public acknowledgement of their works – but the Lord knows them (v. 8)
- Have what is more important:
  - a little power (v. 8)
  - so that Christ may add His strength (2 Cor. 12:9-10)
  - and He may be glorified
  - nothing:
    - in which the flesh can glory
    - to attract the flesh

# Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- Only a little power
  - today is a day of small things (Zech. 4) – like the days of Ezra, not Pentecost
  - Lord cannot bless as He did at the beginning
- But Lord valued:
  - genuineness of heart (like widow in Mark 12:42-44)
  - obedience to His Word (consider days of Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra and Nehemiah)

# Prophetic aspects (cont.)

- Features can be enjoyed today:
  - obedience to Lord's Word
  - separation from vessels to dishonour – even if little recognition by (or even ridicule from) the Christian profession
  - effective service as a result of being separate – even if small in the eyes of the world
  - seeking things above, not earthly things (Col. 3:1-4)
  - waiting for God's Son from the heavens (1 Thess. 1:10)
  - having the same patience as Christ (2 Thess. 3:5; Rev. 1:9)
  - encouraged by future reward (Rev. 22:12) not present glory



# Admonition

- Is there a need to overcome in Philadelphia? / What would an overcomer do in Philadelphia?
  - *'hold fast ...'*

# Encouragements

- Again, promises to overcomers:
  - Will be true for every believer
  - Made known to overcomers for their encouragement

# Encouragements (cont.)

- Promise to overcomer part 1: *'a pillar in the temple of my God'*
  - in Scripture, pillars:
    - provide support
    - are also for display (e.g. Gen. 28:18; 1 Ki. 7:21)
  - being a witness for the truth here (1 Tim. 3:15 in a practical sense) will lead to:
    - us being a support of God's future temple – where excellencies of God Himself will be displayed perfectly
    - God's witness of us in heaven

# Encouragements (cont.)

- note the honour of the place where there will be this display:
  - the temple:
    - God's own house, in perfection in heaven
    - place of splendour where all activity in heaven (worship) will be centred for eternity (Ps. 96:9)
  - revered by the Lord Jesus Himself: *'the temple of my God'*

# Encouragements (cont.)

- consider the two pillars in Solomon's temple (1 Ki. 7:21):
  - Jachin – He will establish us in that day
  - Boaz – we will enjoy His strength for eternity
- unlike earthly temple, this place and our position in it shall remain – *'he shall go no more out'*

# Encouragements (cont.)

- Promise to overcomer part 2: *'write upon him the name of my God'*
  - Identification with God Himself
  - And by the one who knows and respects God the most: the Lord Jesus Christ

# Encouragements (cont.)

- Promise to overcomer part 3: *'write upon him ... the name of the city of my God'*
  - See next session

# Encouragements (cont.)

- Promise to overcomer part 4: *'write upon him ... my new name'*
  - Christ will associate us with Himself, and with His glory (Col. 3:4; 2 Thess. 1:10)
  - His new name is 'Jesus', but as a man:
    - in resurrection (Acts 1:11)
    - in glory (Phil. 2:10)
    - made Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36)
    - who will rule the universe (Heb. 2:5-9)



# Encouragements (cont.)

- *'I come quickly'* (Rev. 3:11)

# Exhortations

- *'Who has despised the day of small things?'* (Zech. 4:10)
- *'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'* (Rev. 3:13)
- *'Hold fast'* (Rev. 3:11)