

Rev 3:7-13 (NIV)

- 1) Here we have the second letter that has no ***condemnation*** – the other being to Smyrna.
- 2) The church here kept Christ’s word and they did not deny his name.
- 3) He begins with two descriptions of himself
 - i) Holy and true, who holds the key of David which symbolizes the messianic office.
 - ii) The key symbolizes authority – he who holds the key has control.
- b) The second identification is “what He opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.”
 - i) This stresses Christ’s omnipotence – what he does cannot be overturned or undone.
- 4) The Christians in Philadelphia faced hostility from unbelieving Jews to which, Christ promises “I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.”
 - a) Bowing at someone’s feet depicts total defeat and submission.
- 5) The next promise to the Philadelphia church in vs 10 says:

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, ***I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.*** 11 I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”
- 6) There are at least two ways one may look at this promise.
- 7) In either case, we need to take a first look at some words that are major sticking points in any study of Revelation.
- 8) These are – ***Rapture and Tribulation and the millennium or 1000-year reign.***
- 9) First, let’s finish this letter to the church at Philadelphia and we will come back to this verse and those definition in a moment.
- 10) The letter ends with these other promises:

12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him 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 him my new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- 11) A pillar represents stability, permanence, and immovability.
- 12) They can also represent honor; in pagan temples they were often carved in such a way as to honor a particular deity.

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- 13) The promise Christ makes to believers is that they will have an eternal place of honor in the temple of God (heaven).
- 14) The second promise is that Jesus will write on him the name of His God.
- 15) That depicts ownership, signifying that all true Christians belong to God.
- 16) Third, Christ promises to write on believers the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.
- 17) Christians have eternal citizenship in heaven's capital city, the new Jerusalem, described at length in Rev 21.
- 18) That is yet another promise of security, safety, and glory.
- 19) MacArthur says of the last promise –
- “Finally, Christ promises believers His new name. Christ's name represents the fullness of His person. In heaven, believers will "see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2), and whatever we may have known of Him will pale in the reality in which we will then see Him. The new name by which we will be privileged to call Him will reflect that glorious revelation of His person.”

20) Now, to a brief (hopefully) discussion (introduction)_to – ***Rapture and Tribulation and the millennium or 1000-year reign.***

21) Let's begin with ***RAPTURE.***

22) First, to be clear, the word rapture is not found in scripture.

23) It is a term that has been applied to the second coming and the events that will take place.

24) To be specific, the “rapture” is the term that has been applied to how Christians who are living and dead will be taken to heaven.

25) Here are scriptures that mention what has commonly been called the “rapture”:

1 Cor 15:51-55 (NIV)

1 Thess 4:13-18 (NIV)

John 14:1-4 (NIV)

26) Obviously, these are references to the second coming.

27) These also give a description of how we Christians – living and dead – will depart the earth.

28) Note, none of them says anything about those who are not Christian.

29) As we continue thru our study, we will see references to the second coming and we will see were some of the confusion regarding these three topics we are about to discuss comes from.

30) The primary second coming reference is in chapter Revelation 19:11-16.

31) There are also references in 20:4-6; 21:1-7; 22:6-21.

32) So we do not get derailed in this discussion, we will not read these or discuss them until we come to them in our study.

33) Next the **“Tribulation”**

34) There are several aspects of the “hour of trial” or “Tribulation”

- a) **First**, it is a future event or series of events if you will.
- b) **Second**, the tribulation or test as it is referred to here in the letter to Philadelphia is for a definite, limited time.
 - i) Jesus described it as the hour of testing – not literal but simply meaning for a period of time.
- c) **Third**, it is a test or trial that will expose people for what they really are.
- d) **Fourth**, the tribulation is worldwide in scope since it will come upon the whole world.
- e) **Finally**, and most significantly, its purpose is to test “those who dwell on the earth.”
 - i) That phrase and the phrase “inhabitants of the earth” used many other places in Revelation is a technical term in the book of Revelation. (cf. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8,12,14; 14:6; 17:2,8).
 - ii) The phrase is generally understood to refer to unbelievers
- f) Unbelievers will either pass the test by repenting, or fail it by refusing to repent.
 - i) Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-10,14; 14:4; and 17:14 describe those who repent during the Tribulation and are saved, thus passing the test.
 - ii) Rev 6:15-17; 9:20; 16:11; and 19:17-18 describe those who refuse to repent, thus failing the test, and are damned.

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35) Going back to our verse in the letter to Philadelphia

“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.”

36) Some believe that the verse refers to times of great distress in general, the church's suffering through the ages.

37) Others interpret **“keep from”** here to mean that the church will go through the time of tribulation and that God will keep them strong during it, providing spiritual protection from the forces of evil.

38) The other way of looking at this promise is that it means there will be a future time of great tribulation from which true believers will be spared.

39) This is a key verse for those who subscribe to the pre-Tribulation-Rapture theory (WE WILL TALK MORE ABOUT THIS IN A MOMENT)

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- a) In that, believers will be kept from the hour of trial because they will not be on the earth during that time of great tribulation.
 - b) Looking back to our verses explaining the “rapture.” ***To reiterate***, nothing is said about the fate of those who are not Christians – only living and diseased Christians.
 - c) This can mean that those who are living and not Christian at the time will begin living in the tribulation that the Church will not.
- 40) As we unfold the seals, trumpets, and bowls, we will be talking more about the Tribulation.