

Session 7: Philadelphia: Faithfulness unto Eternal Rewards (Rev. 3:7-13)

INTRODUCTION

We are doing a series and we are going through the seven churches to whom Jesus gave the Word of the Lord in the book of Revelation—in Revelation 2-3. It is a twelve part series. We are on the sixth church, although this is the second week that we are paying attention to the church in Philadelphia because there is so much. Of course that is true in all of these letters, but there is just so much in the letter to the church in Philadelphia.

Revelation 3:7 (paraphrased), “To the angel—the messenger—of the church in Philadelphia write this, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, these things says He who has the key of David, He who opens doors that no one can shut, and shuts doors that no one can open.’” He gives five titles for Himself. Each one of these are significant and applicable to the challenges and the promises that He is going to give in the letter.

He is giving challenges and promises in each of the seven letters. In each of the letters He describes Himself differently. And the truths that He reveals about His heart and ministry towards them will help them walk through the challenges and lay hold of the promises.

HE WHO IS TRUE

One of the five I want to comment on is the one where He calls Himself “He who is true”. There are several dimensions to this attribute of the Lord that He wants us to lay a hold of. One of them is that He is going to give them—particularly in verse 12—promises that are so grand, and so great, that they will seem too good to be true. It is as if He is saying on the front end, “I am the reliable One. I am not exaggerating. I am not over-committing. I am not promising things above My abilities. As a matter of fact, you will not really grasp the fullness of what I am promising you, even now.

This is what He tells them: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev. 3:13). It is as if He says, “What I am going to give you is so great that it will be a challenge to lay hold of. It will take the power of God to see and lay hold of these truths; they are too good to be true.” I love that part of the Lord’s heart. He says, “I am true, I am not exaggerating, I am not over-committing, I am not being enthusiastic. What I am telling you is true. This is who you are to Me. This is what will happen” (v. 7, paraphrased).

VERSES 8-13

Verse 8 (paraphrased): “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door. It is a door that no one can shut. For you have a little strength, you have kept My word, you have not denied My Name.

Verse 9 (paraphrased): “Indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews but in reality they are not, they are liars”—they were physically Jewish but they were not obeying the God of Israel. It is not enough to be physically Jewish. To be a Jew from God’s point of view, you have to obey the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To do this, you have to lay hold of Jesus—“indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, I will make them come and worship before your feet. Your persecutors will actually bow down and worship Jesus, kneeling before you” (v. 9 paraphrased). What an unusual promise. He says, “I will make them to know that I have loved you” (v.9 paraphrased).

Verse 10: “Because you have kept my commandment to persevere”—in obedience—“I will also keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

Verse 11(paraphrased): “Behold, I am coming quickly. Hold fast what you have and see to it that no one takes your crown from you.”

Verse 12: Now He gives four promises here. He has already given four promises, but He gives four more. There are eight promises in this Word of the Lord to the church in Philadelphia. What He is promising them is so extravagant. To the natural mind, it seems like He is over-committing and over-promising, but He is not. He is true. Verse 12 (paraphrased): “He who overcomes, I will make this person, this individual, a pillar in the temple of My God. He shall go out no more. He who overcomes, I will write on him the name of My God—or the name of My Father. I will write on him the name of the city of My God, which is the New Jerusalem.

He almost says this parenthetically, “Oh, by the way, the New Jerusalem is coming down to the earth” (v. 12, paraphrased). This is the first time this revelation has ever been given in the Scriptures. That was a massive statement. He says, “By the way, you are not going away to heaven. Ultimately heaven is coming down to the earth” (v. 12, paraphrased). This has huge implications. He says, “I will write on that person My new name” (v. 12, paraphrased). Verse 13: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

THE PRIMARY MESSAGE

The primary message is that Jesus is making eight promises. He is making eight different promises, and most of them have eternal implications. The primary message is that He wants them to see how their faithfulness now, for a few years—seventy years on the earth—will result in indescribable glory for a 1000 years and then for the eternal age after the 1000 years. This is what He is saying. This is the point of this Word of the Lord, this is the core of it. He wants them to see how a short season of costly obedience will give them an indescribable release of eternal glory that far surpasses anything they will pay in terms of the costliness of their obedience in this age.

THE OFFER OF AN ETERNAL POSITION

Paragraph A. He is offering a position in His eternal government to the church at Philadelphia—to the individuals in the church. And of course by virtue of offering it to them and because it is in the Word of God, we know He is offering it to us. Not a short-term position like we have on the

earth. You may have a role for fifty years on the earth and be over a government. Someone might become a king or a prince when they are twenty and reign for fifty years. It is not a short term role like that. It is a position in God's eternal government forever and ever. This position is related to our obedience to Jesus in this age.

He says, "I am going to open a door for you" (v. 8, paraphrased). That door has many different dimensions. We went into this last week so we are not going to today. In this particular letter, this door He is going to open includes that He is going to vindicate them before their enemies.

Number one: He is going to give them grace to walk in victory in the most difficult time in human history, which is the Great Tribulation. Then He is going to give them the power to have authority in His government.

HE WILL WRITE HIS NAME ON US

Then He is going to write His Name on them, which means He is going to bring them into intimacy with His mind and heart. Above everything, this is where this letter crescendos at the highest. This is the ultimate reality. The angels are involved in tasks of great glory, but the angels do not have the name of the Father written on their mind and their heart.

For God to write His Name on our mind and on our heart means that we will have supernatural ability to understand Him. That is what "writing on the mind" means. We will have a supernatural ability to feel the truth of what God feels. That is what it means when God writes His Name upon our heart. It means the ability to understand His mind and to feel His heart forever, to know His mind and to feel His heart, to be in sync with Him with nothing to defile us, nothing to get in the way and nothing to cause it to diminish or end. The only thing that will limit us is our limited capacity. As our capacity increases, our understanding—the writing on the mind—and the feeling of the heart will get stronger and larger as the ages unfold, forever and forever.

By the way, beloved, these truths, these promises, all of them in part, have a small but significant expression in this age— in our life with God—right now. He is not waiting until the resurrection to write His word upon our mind and upon our heart. He is willing and He is desirous to do it now.

HE WILL VINDICATE US

What Jesus is saying here is, "I am going to vindicate you before your enemies" (v. 9, paraphrased). This is the zeal He feels for us. One of the deepest expressions of true love is that the one who loves another, wants them to be vindicated. The Lord really wants us to be vindicated before those who persecute us. He wants to do it and He will do it, just in His timing. If He does it prematurely, instead of enhancing love in our spirit, it diminishes love and enhances pride. If He does it at the right time in the right way, then love and honor grow together. Because often, wherever honor increases, love diminishes in this age. It is as if He says, "It is in My heart to set the record straight because you are that dear to Me."

When somebody is really dear to you, whether it is a husband, a wife, a best friend, a child, a father or a mother—when someone is really dear to you, if you have power, you want to set the record straight when the record is wronged and their hearts have been hurt—when they have been mistreated. Jesus has such a zeal for this. He cares more than you care about the bad deal you are getting. He actually does. This is such a tender promise.

HE WILL KEEP US IN THE HOUR OF TRIAL

Not only that, He not only wants to vindicate us, but it is as if He says, “In the hour of greatest trouble which is coming—the Great Tribulation—I so desire that you stay true to Me in love, that I will help you. I do not want your heart to be opposed to Me in that hour. I will be there to hold your hand and I will give you grace in that hour. Because I want you to love Me with all of your heart” (v. 10, paraphrased). Again, we see His zeal in this statement.

I WILL WRITE MY NAME ON YOU

Then it is as if He says, “When I run My earthly kingdom which will last forever— My empire on the earth—I want you to rule with Me.” And then He goes beyond this and says, “I want you to know what I know and feel what I feel. I am going to write My name upon your heart and upon your mind” (v. 12 paraphrased).

Of course, we see this picture in the book of Exodus. It was by the finger of God that He wrote on the stones. It was by the very finger of God’s fire that He wrote the ten commandments. It is with that same fiery finger that He is going to write upon our mind and upon our heart. This will connect us forever with nothing to diminish it, except for our small capacity which will increase through the ages.

OUR DESTINY IN THE AGE TO COME

What Jesus is doing is that He is inviting His people to the highest expressions of human greatness possible. The highest expressions of pleasure that a human spirit can ever walk in, this is what He is calling them to.

Paragraph C. Jesus is effectively telling John, “Go and write to the church in Philadelphia. I want them to know that if they obey Me, they will rule with Me.” John remembers this. John is in his nineties and he can remember when he was back in his twenties, when the Lord first spoke this to him. In Matthew 19:27-28 Peter said, “Lord, we left everything and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” Jesus says, “You are going to rule with Me forever, that is what you are going to do” (v. 28, paraphrased). I can just imagine John reminiscing with fondness, the emotions he had when he connected with his destiny to rule forever on the earth. As a former fisherman, he is going to be a king in the age to come. He thought, “Wow, this is a real upgrade from what I was thinking. Forever I will rule.”

Beloved, when it connects with us that we have a destiny in the age to come, it changes our emotional chemistry. I just know that when John was receiving this, he was thinking of the twenty year olds in the church of Philadelphia. He was thinking, “This is going to move you. I was your age once, I know how this is going to mark you.” Nothing will mark you more than

understanding the love of God, the majesty of God, and the destiny you have in partnership with Him in the age to come. That marks us like nothing else does.

THE OPEN DISPLAY OF GOD’S PLEASURE OVER US

Paragraph D. This is one of my favorite passages and I want it to be one of your favorite ones too—John 14:21-23. You really want this to be one of your favorite passages. Jesus says, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, this is the one who really loves Me. The one who loves Me will be loved by My Father. My Father will openly display His pleasure about that relationship” (v. 21, paraphrased). Look what He is saying, “I will manifest Myself to that person” (v. 21, paraphrased). In verse 23 (paraphrased) He repeats it: “We will come to that person, We will make Our abode—We will make Our home—with that person forever.”

It is as if Jesus is saying, “If you will love Me, you do not know where this is going. You do not know what it will do in Our hearts. If you return the love We have for you, We will openly reveal the zeal We have for you—openly, for all to see” (Jn. 14:21, paraphrased). Of course He does that now, He displays His zeal for us in this age. We feel it in our hearts and we can see it somewhat in our circumstances, but this is a promise with eternal implications. Jesus is saying, “Love Me and the Father with all of your heart, show it by obedience and you will position yourself before Us, where We can openly display Our enthusiasm for you without contradicting Ourselves” (v. 21, paraphrased).

The Lord cannot honor and magnify that which is in disagreement with Him. He effectively says, “You come into unity with Me and I will openly show, not only to your own heart, but also to the nations, how I truly feel about you. I will manifest Myself to you” (v. 21, paraphrased).

Do not limit that promise to your seventy years on the earth. You will be drinking from that promise a million years from now. It will still mean a lot to you. We will be talking to Jesus and He will say, “Do you like how I am manifesting My zeal for you?” Yes, we will have a resurrected body and glorious garments, we will be ruling with Him and we will have the name of God on our hearts. What a glorious reality!

“Lord, how much better can it get?”

It is as if He says, “Wait until the next billion years. It will go beyond what you have known so far.”

WE WILL COME TO YOU

I love that phrase in verse 23 (paraphrased): “We will come to you.” Well, we know He comes to us now by the Holy Spirit. It certainly means that, but do not limit it to that. Because Jesus knew—Revelation 3:12—that the New Jerusalem is going to come to the earth. It is as if He says, “We are going to come to you, city, throne, and everything”.

He means much more than an anointed quiet time. When I first read that verse, when I was about twenty years old, this became one of my favorite verses. That was about thirty years ago. I have

loved this verse for many, many years. I would think, “Come to me Lord”, meaning, “I want to feel Your presence when I am reading the Bible. Help me in my struggle with sin.” I can imagine the Lord smiling, “I will come to you that way, but that is not anywhere close to what I have committed to do for you. I will come to you with My throne, and city, and host of angels. We are all coming to you in the perfect fullness of time, and We will make Our home with you on the earth forever.”

THE KEY OF DAVID

Paragraph E. The basis of this prophecy is found in Isaiah 22. It is important to know that Jesus is quoting Isaiah 22. John knew it and the leaders of the Philadelphia church knew it, because it is a very important passage.

In this passage, what happens is that Shebna—one of king Hezekiah’s top leaders, one of his top cabinet leaders, like a secretary of state type of person—was proud. The spirit of the Lord spoke to Isaiah and said, “Because of his pride, I will replace him with Eliakim. I will replace him” (Is 22:15-22, paraphrased). Shebna had the key of David which means the ability to spend, use, and draw on the royal treasury of David, the king of Israel. He had the key to release the army. He could release finances. He could set people into places of authority. Shebna had all this ability, but because of his pride, it was given to Eliakim. Eliakim received the key of David.

Jesus is saying, “All of God’s resources have been given to Me. I have that role and I am going to share that key with you. You are going to be in the Eliakim position with Me. I am going to give you authority to operate in My kingdom forever” (Rev. 3:7, paraphrased).

However, there is one important—small, but important—detail. What the key of David meant to Eliakim is the ability to use the resources of the government and the army. Look at Isaiah 22:25. It indicates clearly that this was a temporary promotion for Eliakim. In other words, it would not last permanently. It was only a temporary place of honor.

The reason I say this is because in a few moments, when Jesus is quoting this passage to John to give to the church of Philadelphia, He says, “I am going to make you a pillar in the temple and you will never lose your position. (Rev. 3:12, paraphrased). It is as if He is saying, “You will not be like Eliakim. It will not be a temporary position. I am quoting Isaiah 22, but there is one difference. When I share the key of David with you, it will be an eternal exaltation, not a temporary one like Eliakim had.”

EIGHT DIFFERENT PROMISES

Roman numeral II: The promises for the overcomer. There are eight different promises. Verse 8: “I have set before you an open door.” Verse 9: “I will make those in the synagogue of Satan worship before your feet and I will let them know that I have loved you.” He is going to vindicate you openly in the age to come.

Verse 10 (paraphrased): “Because you have kept My command to persevere in obedience, I will keep you from the hour of trial.” In other words, “I will help you and I will keep you from

stumbling and being disqualified in the greatest time of testing ever to come to the human race. I will keep you, I will hold your hand. You will not stumble and be disqualified if you will cry out to Me.”

Verse 12 (paraphrased): “I will make you a pillar in the temple. You shall go out no more.” That does not mean they are confined to the premises for billions of years. It means that they will never lose their position in God’s government. They will not be like Eliakim. There will never be a loss. You will never have somebody take your position from you. You will not be like Shebna losing it to Eliakim and then Eliakim losing that position to another as indicated in Isaiah 22. It is as if Jesus is saying, “I give you the Isaiah 22 promise, I will give you the authority of My kingdom, but you will not have the down side of it. I will not ever take it from you.”

Then He goes on and says, “I will write the name of My God on you. I will write the name of the New Jerusalem on you, and I will write My new name upon you” (v. 12 paraphrased)—three names: the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem and Jesus’ new name.

JESUS WANTS TO GIVE IT TO US NOW

Beloved, again, I look at Revelation 3:12 not as something I am waiting for. Of course I am waiting for it for fuller dimensions, but we know that if it is on His heart to give it to us forever, it is on His heart to give it to us now. He did not reveal it to John so that we would just wait patiently. He revealed this to John to let us know that it is in His heart to be this close to us if we want Him to be. I do not want to just understand Him, I want to feel what He feels.

First of all, I want to feel what He feels about me. There is nothing more glorious than to feel enjoyed and loved by God. Many believers technically believe that God loves them, but they do not feel the strength of it in their spirits. They struggle with condemnation, they struggle with spiritual boredom which is very common in the body of Christ—spiritual boredom. They cannot feel the truth of what they know in their mind to be true. When the Lord writes His name upon us, we begin to feel the truths which we know.

I HAVE SET BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR

Promise number one: “I have set before you an open door that no one can shut” (v. 8). The Lord is telling the ones who will obey Him—He says, “I am going to open a door” (v. 8, paraphrased). As we saw last week, there are seven or eight dimensions to this open door. Just to summarize it: these dimensions have implications in this age, but the ultimate thing He is saying is, “I am going to open a door for you to My government forever, if you will obey Me. Your life will have a significance, an honor, and an importance beyond anything you can ever touch in this age. I am going to open a door to My government. I am going to bring you into the family business. I am going to have you be part of the leadership of the empire forever, if you want it” (v. 8, paraphrased).

The guy says, “Well I did not come from that kind of family. I do not have the best education. I do not have the best advantages to get ahead in life.”

The Lord says, “I, Myself, will open a door for you that will last forever” (v.8, paraphrased).

“Well, I am waiting for a guy to open the door so I can get into the right university. And now that I am through the university, I need a door to open so I can meet the right guy to get the right connection. And then it will all start to happen in ministry or it will happen in business.”

The Lord says, “I will personally open a door and I have the key of David in My hand. I have the power to follow through on this” (v.8, paraphrased).

It is not just that He is going to open a door of opportunity for our function and honor. He is going to open the door of His own heart. He is going to open a door that the angels do not get to have opened for them. The angels are involved in the empire, but they cannot connect with His heart before God as a Father and before Jesus as the Bridegroom. They stand at a distance as servants. We come near to the open heart of God. Of course, we have the open door to the kingdom and the open door to His heart. That is the ultimate of what Jesus is promising us.

HE WILL MAKE OUR ENEMIES WORSHIP AT OUR FEET

Promise number two: “I will make them”—these people that are hostile to you, because you are taking a stand for righteousness—“I will make them come and worship before your feet” (v. 9). This is an odd promise, but it is only odd if it is new to you. When I first read this I thought, “What? What can this mean?” I will tell you what it means. It means, “I will make them come and worship before your feet” (v.9). It means exactly what it says.

We think, “That cannot be.”

It is as if the Lord says, “Do you have any idea how much I feel for you? Do you have any idea how much I understand the mistreatment which you are receiving. That is not OK with Me at all.”

You are saying, “You are kidding. Really? Really?”

He effectively says, “This is not OK with Me.”

There were these very zealous, religious Jews in Philadelphia. They were kicking the other Jews, who were calling on the name of Jesus, out of the synagogue. They were excommunicating them out of the synagogue and making things miserable for them in the city, in business, in social network type things, as well as in their membership of the synagogue. So they were kicked out of the community, out of the religious and no doubt the economic community which these religious Jews were greatly influencing. They were evil, they hated God, but they claimed to love Him. It is not so significant that they were Jewish or not Jewish. It is only significant to this group here, because it was fellow Jews which they were excommunicating out of the synagogue.

Let's take it up a notch in a more historical, global dimension. To anyone who is standing against the righteous—those who love God—the Lord is saying, “I am taking note. I am making a record. I care! I care about it! You do not have to care about it, because I care about it.”

GOD WILL SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT BECAUSE HE CARES

When David knew that God cared about what Saul was doing, then David did not have to take matters into his own hands. To the degree in which I understand that God cares when I get a bad deal, I do not have to care about it. I do not have to carry it, if I know that He is carrying it. If I do not know this truth and I get energized, I have to set the record straight, and make everything work right according to what I perceive to be right.

We are not going to go through them, but there are a number of passages, where it says that the people who persecuted the righteous—literally the actual people who persecuted them— will see each other again—actual people. They will be before the throne of God one day, because every knee will bow—Philippians 2—and every tongue will confess. God is going to make these people who persecuted them bow before Jesus, right in front of the ones they persecuted for loving Jesus. It is as if the Lord says, “I want you not only to bow before Me as Lord, but I want you to understand that My favor was on the one who offered you grace. I want you to know how I feel about that one whom you resisted.”

You say, “Maybe our hearts will get all puffed up in pride.” I think when all the information is on the table on that day, we will be so grateful. We will not be thinking, “So there” to the person who persecuted us. I think the believer will be saying, “Why do You care so much? Why do You have so much zeal for me?” This is what the Lord is saying to them, He says, “I care, I note what is going on. I am going to set the record straight. Not because you need to have it straight, but, as the One who loves you, I want to set the record straight because I care” (v. 9, paraphrased). A very common expression of love is that you really want the one you love vindicated. The Lord feels that way about you. It is more than the fact that these unbelievers will bow before Jesus in front of the ones they persecuted. They are going to bow before Jesus somewhere, but the Lord says, “I want you to bow before the ones who offered you grace” (v. 9, paraphrased).

I WILL MAKE YOUR ENEMIES KNOW THAT I LOVED YOU

Promise number three: the Lord takes it up a notch. He says, “I am going to actually let these unbelievers know” (v. 9, paraphrased)—we are talking about the last day, we are talking about before the throne of God, we are talking about on the judgment day, in the scenario of God's judgment of them.

There are several different stages to God's judgment. I do not want to go into that now, but He is saying, “I am going to cause the people who resisted you, to know how dear you were to Me. In that day I am going to let them know that when they were against you, I was for you and you were moving My heart. Even though the multitudes might have been angry at you, you were moving My heart all along” (v. 9, paraphrased).

There is something about the lovesick God who just wants others to know how He feels. This is a very common thing when somebody is in love. They just want the world to know the truth of how they feel. God is like that. When you understand it from that point of view, it is not such an odd promise. It is a very reasonable promise if your image of God is a lovesick God. If your image of God is a God who just declares what is right and what is wrong in kind of a cold, formal religious tone, then this will throw you off.

This promise makes sense when you see a tender Father, when you see a passionate Bridegroom who cares about you, and when you know that your name is on His heart. He not only feels that way about you, but it is a fact that He cares this much about the very movements of your heart and what you are going through in this age. And in the age to come, there will be discussion and there will be an honoring of what we went through in this age.

MATURE IN OBEDIENCE

Promise number four: He says, “I will make this person, the one who overcomes” (v. 12, paraphrased)—by the way, the overcomer is the person who matures in their obedience in a sustained way. That is what an overcomer is: the one who sustains mature obedience. You say, “I am not there yet. I cannot sustain obedience yet. I have not attained to it yet.” You press in and you get a hold of obedience in every area of your life and you stay with it. Let the days and the months and the years unfold and you stay with it. You say, “How will I know if I am doing it?” I don’t know if I am and I don’t know if you are. All I know is that I am going as hard and as focused after the heart of God as I know how to. I do not know where I am at on the scale. I am not concerned with measuring where I am at. I am concerned with giving all of my heart and loving Him with all of my strength. I focus on giving all, not measuring how far my maturity has grown.

I WILL MAKE HIM A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE

He says in promise number four, “That overcomer, I will make him a pillar in My temple” (v. 12, paraphrased). A pillar in the temple is a position of honor and it is a position of authority. A pillar speaks of stability. It speaks of firmness. A pillar speaks of beauty and permanence. A pillar in a building bears the weight of the building. A pillar in a building beautifies the building.

A pillar in a building, more times than not, is not just functional—bearing weight—it is not just beautiful—adorning the building—often times, pillars in stately buildings have symbolic meaning. They bear the name of a great person or they commemorate a great event. They have a significant role as well in terms of the history of a person or a group of people. That is what a pillar does. It is like a trophy. So, it is beautiful, it is functional, and it is meaningful in terms of its significance—what it speaks to.

He says, “I am going to make you a pillar. You will bear weight in My kingdom. You will have real authority in My eternal kingdom. You will beautify My kingdom. The very fact that I make you a pillar, means that there will be a remembrance of your costly devotion to Me through the years” (v. 12, paraphrased).

MILLIONS WILL BE PILLARS

In Galatians 2:9 James, Peter and John were called pillars in the church of Jerusalem. It exemplifies this truth. They were load-bearing, responsible leaders in the church at Jerusalem.

God is going to have multitudes like that. I think it will be millions, but millions is a very small percentage of billions. The number is large— millions—but I believe the percentage will be small. Everybody is a part of God’s eternal temple, but only a few, a small percentage—I think it will be millions, but of course I am guessing, I do not know the number—I think that millions will have crowns and millions will be pillars. They will be in positions of authority. I would assume that being a pillar in God’s eternal kingdom and having a crown will run parallel in meaning with one another. I expect that it will be millions, but I still expect the percentage to be very small. I have no way of knowing the number or percentage, of course. I know it is for those who overcome. The Lord is offering this to them.

THESE PROMISES ARE NOT AUTOMATIC

He is offering this promise to those who are already believers, but who do not yet have the fulfilment of this promise. He is offering a real promise to born again believers who do not yet have it. These are promises that are not guaranteed to every believer. When you read commentaries on this, many of them reduce the promises in the seven letters in the book of Revelation to the common experience which everybody has the day they are saved. They reduce these promises to just the general entrance into eternal life. They reduce them to just symbolic pictures, but Jesus was not giving us symbolic pictures of what everybody has already. He was giving offers of real rewards to those who really fulfilled the conditions for overcoming. These promises are real.

I feel sorry for the theologians who reduce these promises to that which they have already, and they are not interested in pursuing them because they are already theirs. They think that the promises are automatically theirs. This is not what Jesus is offering. These are not empty promises which do not really matter if you fulfil the conditions or not, because they are guaranteed. No, these are real promises with real conditions. I am really focused on experiencing them in my life when I step across that line in the age to come. I am going for these promises. I want to encourage you to lock into them, make sense of them—understand them.

PILLARS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Number two under E: In the ancient world, it was very common, if a man, a woman, or an army served a city or nation in a special way, that a pillar would be build to honor them—a monument or a statue. It is the same thing we see in the modern world. That is what the Lord is saying. These are not only load-bearing, functioning pillars; they are also commemorating pillars—pillars of remembrance. These pillars are also honoring people’s devotion from the past.

Most of your devotion from the past is done in secret. Matthew 6:18 (paraphrased): “If you do it in secret, I will make it known publicly.” We might think that if we give in secret, pray in secret, fast in secret, and bless in secret, we might think that the Lord will reward us in this age.

We say, “Lord, I have been praying in secret and fasting in secret, I do not see the open display.”

The Lord says, “Just wait. The display will be beyond anything you can imagine.” Of course the Lord does reward us in this age for what we do in secret, but the fullness does not happen until the age to come.

THE PILLARS IN THE TEMPLE

Paragraph I: The pillars in the Old Testament temple and tabernacle. I have a little study here, where I give different times in the Old Testament or different functions of pillars in Moses’ tabernacle and Solomon’s temple, but we will not go through it. These pillars are not insignificant or inconsequential. They are in place to give us insight into the eternal pillars in the eternal temple, which is the whole New Jerusalem.

That is why the New Jerusalem does not have a temple because the New Jerusalem *is* the temple. It does not have a special section which is the temple. The entire city is the temple. That is why it looks like a contradiction. Jesus is promising a place in the temple. Later He says, “There is no temple anymore.” You think, “Huh, what?” Because right now, there is a temple in heaven, but when the New Jerusalem comes to the earth, the whole city is the temple of God. There is not a special section of the city that has a temple in it. This is talking about the whole government of the city.

You can read this on your own, but here is the point of it: there is much diversity in the type of pillars in the temple or the tabernacle. They are different in size. They are different in function. They are different in glory. They are different in beauty. They are different in placement. There were pillars before the Holy of Holies and there were pillars for just the common person to walk by and see. What the Lord is saying in all of this is, “The pillars in My earthly temple and tabernacle are reflecting a diversity. I will have many kinds of pillars in My eternal temple, just like I did in My earthly one.”

HAVE A VISION TO BE A PILLAR

Of course, my favorite pillar—number three under I—is the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. It was a moving pillar. It was a pillar of fire which moved through the wilderness. The Lord undoubtedly wants to show something about this type of pillar in the age to come. I do not know what, but I like the idea. That is my favorite one, the one that moves with the fire of God. I say, “Oh, I like that pillar.” I say, “Lord, I want to be a pillar in Your temple.”

I want to ask you how many of you have actually said this sentence once in your life? I am guessing it is probably less than one percent in the body of Christ that has actually said the sentence, “Give me grace to be a pillar in Your temple in the eternal city.” It is one of the greatest promises, but probably almost nobody thinks about it. I would like you to put this on your prayer list officially, as of today: “I want to be a pillar in Your temple and I want Your name written on me.” Yes, I know what I am after.

“Hi Billy, what do you want to be when you grow up?”

“A pillar in the temple with God’s name. That is what I want to be. I might be a lawyer or doctor between now and then, but I know what I am after. I want to be a pillar. That is what I want to be when I grow up. I want to be a pillar in the temple with God’s name written on it by the fire of God’s finger—forever. That is what I want. I do not mind doing a whole lot or a little down here. Whatever the Lord wants, as long as I end up there as a pillar, I have made it.”

I want to encourage you to have a vision. It is Jesus who is offering this. This is an open door to be a pillar with the very name of God written on it. Because the pillars in the ancient world, like today, they had names written on them. They were memorial pillars. They were not just functional pillars, they were pillars of honor.

I want you to consider saying, “Lord, I have never gone there. I just want to kind of love You.”

It is as if the Lord says, “Do you want anything else?”

“I want to kind of love You, camping on the edge of glory. That would be good enough.”

The Lord effectively says, “I have a big city and I am looking for leaders in My government who will be near Me.”

“Oh, whatever.”

“Are you sure that is all you want?”

Beloved, get some holy vision and holy ambition for your life. I am serious. When I grow up, I want to be a pillar in the temple of God with His name on me and I hope that is what you want. If you do not, I am still going for it unashamedly because it is the voice of Jesus who offered this to His church. If it is good enough for Him, it is good enough for me to go after it. Throw away all of your religious pride and false humility and go after what God says is important.

I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD

Promise number five: “I will write on him the name of My God” (v. 12). When God writes the name of God on you—you know it takes God to know the heart of God—when God writes the name of God on you, He writes it—Hebrews 10:16—on the mind and on the heart. He writes it on the mind and we have living understanding.

Beloved, when God talks to us about God in this age, our mind and our understanding expand. Did you know that a billion years from now, you will still be learning new things which fascinate you now. A billion years later, you will still have a greater capacity and a continual fascination in your understanding. I love my mind to be fascinated with truth, I love it.

There is nothing more pleasurable than when God reveals God to the human spirit. The greatest pleasure the human make-up can experience is when God reveals God to the human spirit. It

exhilarates us with a cleanness and a power that penetrates our being. The fruit of it lasts forever. There is nothing in the human make up that exhilarates us as much as when God reveals God to the human spirit. Beloved, you will be exhilarated a billion years from now and continue to be exhilarated. Not only will your mind be expanded, to the point where you say, “Oh, my”, but I mean millions of years from now you will be saying, “Oh, God, amazing!” We will be buzzing around the eternal city talking and sharing, saying, “I learned this.”

How is it possible that billions of us are fascinated day by day and we do not exhaust the knowledge of God? We do not exhaust the gold mine, the treasure of His being, the treasure of His heart. We will not exhaust it. It is not enough for Him to write His name on my heart. I want to feel the power of what excites my spirit. What a glorious reality.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OVERCOMING

Promise number six: The name of the city. We will come to an end in just a moment here. The name of the city, what does this mean? God is going to write the name of the New Jerusalem on us if we overcome.

He is not talking about entrance into the city. Every born again believer has entrance into the city. The thief on the cross ends up in the city as well as the overcomer in the churches of Revelation, who just overcame doubt and unbelief and said “yes” to Jesus. And there is that overcomer in 1 John 5:4. If you overcome, even with just your faith, you are in the city. There is a general overcoming which you receive the day you are born again.

Then there is a very specific and particular overcoming. That is in context to the mandates that the Holy Spirit gives you in a personal way. We overcome sin and unbelief in the general sense when we receive Jesus—1 John 5:4 (paraphrased). Then we have a ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, eighty year journey, where we overcome by obeying the specific and particular mandates and challenges of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

What the Lord tells you and what He tells somebody else is different. You only get evaluated by what He tells *you*. There is a specific and a particular overcoming related to our personal mandate and there is a general overcoming by just accepting the faith in a general way. They are very different. Many theologians will merge them together.

This one guy says, “Man, when I hear this stuff it puts pressure on me.” That is the point. Destiny is always pressure upon the one who says yes to it. We do not walk into destiny accidentally or effortlessly. There is a pressure when our heart connects with destiny. Of course there is a pressure. We are dealing with God.

“Well, I am an American. I do not like pressure. I thought grace meant no pressure.”

“Who told you that?”

“That one book I read.”

“Well throw the book away and start reading the Bible. I am serious and I mean that. What is wrong with feeling pressure?”

“Well, it feels bad.”

“Well, that is what is going to make you change. So, change. We are dealing with God and eternity. Be miserable for a while. Go after this thing. Forget the American dream and get the kingdom dream forever and ever. Be a pillar in the temple.”

I WILL WRITE ON HIM THE NAME OF THE CITY

Anyway, the name of the city is not the entrance into the city. Everybody who is born again has entrance into the city. He is telling the obedient church of Philadelphia—it is as if He says, “I am offering you something, but there is a condition. It is not yours right now.” This is talking about the name of the city, about having authority in the city, but there is even more to it. Comprehending the city is a vast subject—it is.

I am going to go to Jerusalem in a couple weeks. Some guy is going to show me around. He comprehends it. He is a professional. He is a tour guide. He is going to take a couple hours and show me things. He understands it. He will have feeling and passion and connectedness because that is what he does.

The Lord is going give us the name of the city. He is going to write it on our heart. He is not going to just give us the understanding of the history and the details, but we will feel the truth of what that city is about, in a very deep way. He will write the name of the city upon our hearts.

There are guys throughout history, they get the key to a city. Or they are called the father of a city. They are people who have a special connection to a particular city because they are unusually devoted to that city or they have done some great thing for that city. And the city has responded to them in a special way. They have an unusual understanding and affection for that city. Add 1000 levels to that. That is what He is talking about. He is going to put the name of the city on your mind and heart. You will understand it. You will move with authority in that city.

MY NEW NAME

Then—number seven—He says, “I will write upon him My new name.” This is Jesus speaking. This is interesting. “I will write upon him My new name.” Jesus has a new role because His name is not just His personality. It is His function. It is His role as well.

When Jesus comes down to the earth as a human King of Kings, as the son of David relating to us on the earth, those who are in government with Him will have different dynamics with Him. You will relate to Him in a way you are not relating to Him now. There are facets of Jesus and His function of which He effectually says, “Not yet. Wait until the two realms come together—heaven and earth. Wait until the New Jerusalem descends, then you will begin to operate in that,

but you cannot talk about it now.” It is the fullness of who He is—fully God and fully man—with a fully joined partner who in voluntary love said “yes!”.

And that is not enough yet, but in the fullness of time when the two realms have come together on the earth, then Jesus has a function and a role and He relates in the reality of all those things having come together. He is fully God and fully man and you are fully loving Him in voluntary partnership and the fullness of time has come, the two realms have come together—heaven and earth. Now you are talking to Him and things are different than they are right now. It is as if He says, “I will talk to you about all that kind of stuff. You will know Me as a governmental person. You will know My heart in a way you cannot know it right now.”

It is interesting that knowing the Father, and the city coming down, are mentioned first before Jesus’ new name. Because this new dimension of relationship with Jesus is the outflow of us obeying Him, of being pillars, of knowing the Father, and seeing the Father and the New Jerusalem coming to the earth. It is after all of this that the new name of Jesus becomes apparent. I want to be a part of this. I want to talk to Him. I want to worship Him. I want to love Jesus in the fullness of these new dimensions of what God releases to Him as the fullness of time unfolds.

I WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL

Promise number eight: “I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world” (Rev. 3:10). What Jesus is promising—paragraph N—is to keep us spiritually vibrant and protected from sin and to keep us from the judgment of God in the most intense and the most significant hour of human history—the Great Tribulation.

Roman Numeral III: I want to catch your imagination. You can read these pages. I want to convince you to read them. It is about this idea that He is going to keep us from the hour of trial.

Paragraph A: This is the most debated verse in the Scriptures about the timing of the rapture. There are two main interpretations through history on this passage. The two main interpretations are, that we are being kept from the hour of trial in the sense of being preserved in the midst of it, kept from stumbling, kept from being disqualified, kept from being defiled in it—which I believe is the true meaning of it. The other interpretation is that we are being removed and taken out of the scene on the earth. I am convinced that what the Scriptures talk about and what Jesus is talking about, is that He will keep us from disqualification and defilement and from injuring our testimony in the most significant hour of history. He is saying, “I will be there to hold your hand. I will keep you in that hour” (v. 10, paraphrased). Let’s stand.