

EP45 Revelation 3 verses 7-13 P3

The Church at Philadelphia

Overall Theme: Hold on & Seek Refuge

Revelation 3:7-13

And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who is now having the key of David, who is now opening, and no one will shut, and who now is shutting, and no one now opens, says this. 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you now have a little power, and have kept My word, and have chosen to not have denied My name. 'Behold, I now give those of the synagogue of Satan, who are now saying that they are now Jews and now are not, but now choose to lie — I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you. 'Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which shall now and continually choose to now come upon the whole world, to test those who are now dwelling on the earth. 'I choose to now come quickly; now hold fast what you now have, so that no one will take your crown. 'He who is now overcoming, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which is now coming down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. 'He who is now having an ear, is commanded to hear what the Spirit now says to the churches.'

In our last podcast, we discussed those who are of the Synagogue of Satan who believe they now belong to God, who believe they are people of faith, but are not. They are liars, for they deny the name of Yahweh. They may offer up their praise and worship, but they do not know Him by name, by the **Hayah**. They do not know **Yahweh** as their **I AM**.

Jesus will humiliate those who belong to the synagogue of Satan, even though they drape themselves in the clothing, appearance, and authority of God. They have chosen to now be liars and to misrepresent **Yahweh**. They will not acknowledge Jesus as their **I AM**. Accordingly, they will bow before the feet of **Yahweh's** bondservants, and will learn that the Father loves those who love His Son.

In contrast, He promises His bondservants that He will keep them from the “*hour of testing, that hour which shall now and continually choose to now come upon the whole world, to test those who are now dwelling on the earth.*” Being rendered in the present tense, this is not a promise relating to the **End Times** tribulation, but it is a commitment that Jesus will watch over and guard His bondservants from a time of testing, in the **now**, that is targeted at those who are now dwelling on the earth—those who have not chosen to make their abode, or their residency, in heaven.

Those in His household, the Called of God, will be tested such that they will have the opportunity to **NOT** deny His name or to choose to deny His name. It's their choice. Either way, they will be choosing their eternal destiny and will be identified either as those whose permanent abode is now with Christ or with those who are now dwelling on the earth.

Keep in mind, there is a fundamental difference between a person who lives for God and the person who has God living in and through them. Hence the message of Jude and Revelation targets those within the visible church with a message which separates those who stand only on the goodness of God (those who are protected from this hour of testing) and those who are trying extremely hard to be good for God (those who will be tested to see whether they will DENY His name).

Their hour of testing solidifies their choice to put their faith in what is false, because they did not love the truth. The result will be that all who continually do not believe the truth, but continually take pleasure in wickedness, might be judged.

With that short review, let's pick up with Jesus' promise that He **now** choose to come quickly.

I Now Come

Revelation 3:11-12

I **choose** to **now** come quickly; **now** hold fast what you **now** have, so that no one will take your crown.

Jesus wants them to know that this promise to keep or watch over them is not some far out distant promise. He knows that they have little strength, He knows that they are barely holding on, so He promises that He chooses to now come quickly.

Hold Fast

Accordingly, He exhorts them, literally commands them, to now hold fast to what they now have.¹ He wants them to use the little bit of strength which they have left to hold on because He chooses to now come quickly. He will be there for them; they just need to keep on holding on.

For those who have gone through an extensive time of suffering or persecution that is seemingly endless (enduring those continual aftershocks or tremors), it is hard not to be overcome with weariness or succumb to the pressure to deny His name by taking matters into our own hands. After all, it is a living terror to never know when the next wave of persecution (the next shaking) would hit or when the next event that just exacerbates the suffering will fall upon you.

Besides, one never knows when Jesus is going to show up and put an end to it all, or if at all. It is a very hard way to live, especially when those who have made the decision to now be dwelling in the world seem to do just fine and, from all appearances, do not have to go through any of the intense shakings.

And it is important to note that Jesus is not making a promise to stop their persecution from those who say they are Jews and are now not, nor is He promising to end their suffering. That is not what He said. The imagery is clear, the shocks of persecution will keep coming at various levels of intensity, as there are those from the synagogue of Satan who want to steal away their crowns of victory, but they are commanded to use their remaining strength to hold on.

¹ "hold fast" is rendered in the *present active imperative*, and "what you have" is rendered in the *present active indicative*

The promise that Jesus made is that He will now come and protect them from the “*hour of testing*” that will come upon others, a time which will determine their eternal destiny. In other words, He will now come and protect or guard over the choice they have made to live as a Chosen one, a bondservant of Jesus Christ.

The Crown

Even though He comes to protect them from the “*hour of testing*,” they need to hold fast so that no one will take their crown. Remember, **faith is a now thing**. The referenced crown is a “*stephanos*” – essentially a wreath. This was given out in public games to the winners of contests, to those who overcame the competition and prevailed. This crown was a symbol of great honor, much like the gold medals that are given to Olympic athletes who win their sporting event. It is an enduring symbol of victory.

It seems that the enemy, those from the synagogue of Satan, relished in victory, in taking the crowns away from those who thought they fought and thought they had won, but who did not realize that the contest is never over until it is over.

In other words, far too many people think that because they have gone through some troubles and prevailed that they are now victors. But the attacks, like aftershocks, will keep coming, for in this world we now have tribulation, as anyone who desires to live godly in Jesus Christ will suffer persecution.² It is a guaranteed aspect of living in faith.³

Thus, we must continue to hold on with strength to what we now have so we are never caught off guard and are never defeated by the enemies lies and deceptions which are all aimed at tempting us to deny the name of **Yahweh**. This is likely the reason why Jesus gave such a stern warning when He said, “*Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will choose to rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will choose to now and continually be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has been enduring to the end who will be saved.*”⁴

The one who endures persecution and suffering that is even now happening and will continue to happen to the end, the one who holds to Jesus’ word of perseverance, will receive the *stephanos* (the crown) of victory.

The Secret to Holding On

Of course, the secret to enduring and holding on to the crown of victory is to enter through the open door and seek and find provision from the Father. Under His wings, we can find safety and security and will find the strength to hold on to the victory.

Psalms 91

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High **will find rest** in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about **Yahweh**: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. For he

² **John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12**

³ Note: “will have tribulation” is rendered in the *present active indicative* and “will suffer persecution” is rendered in the *future passive indicative*

⁴ **Matthew 10:21-22**

will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. *His faithful promises are your armor and protection.* Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday. Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you. Just open your eyes and see how the wicked are punished.

If you make Yahweh your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone. You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet!

Yahweh says, **"I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honor them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation."**

Both demons and evil men want to see us fail, they want us to quit, they want to prove that God does not work, and they want us to be just like them: hopeless, consumed with failure and disappointment, with nothing but ourselves with which to cling. Like an invading force that wears us out, they want us to become so weak that they can easily breach our walls and come into our castle and steal our crowns. They want to adorn themselves with the crowns that were once ours.

But we must **not** give them the pleasure. Jesus will rescue those who love Him, He will protect those who trust in His name, **Yahweh**. To them the door is open and when they call on Him, He will answer, and He will be with them in trouble. He will rescue and honor them. Paul knew this to be true when he wrote:

2 Timothy 4:7-8

I have chosen to fight the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is **now** laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have been loving His appearing.

The Promises

A Pillar

Revelation 3:12

He who is now overcoming, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out from it anymore...

The beautiful promises of God are always made to the one who is now overcoming (now and

continually)—to the one who is now believing.⁵ And that is why we must be vigilant and “keep” watch, stay focused, and never give up.

This imagery of a pillar in the temple of My God is far greater than it might seem. I have included a picture of the pillars to a church in ancient Philadelphia. These pillars are massive, and they have weathered every storm, every quake that has attempted to topple them, and they still proudly stand. In like fashion, we shall be stable and secure in the temple of our Father despite the storms we have endured.

Pillars from the Philadelphia church



In **Hebrews and Haggai**, the Spirit speaks of a coming shaking, and the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.⁶ Those who are now overcoming, however, will remain stable and strong, unassailable by any threat of damage or destruction.

“And he shall not go out from it (the temple of God) anymore.” Due to the earthquakes and the paranoia of being crushed when a shaking would occur, people would flee the buildings looking for safety from the falling stones. But in the temple of the Father, we will never have to flee for our safety, we will never have to run for cover, as He is our cover, our refuge, our place of safety and we will stand strong just like those pillars of Philadelphia.

The Names

Revelation 3:12

... and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which is now coming down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

⁵ Rendered in the *present active participle*

⁶ **Hebrews 12:27-29; Haggai 2:6-7, 21-22**

Once again, we have a play on the history of Philadelphia with the various name changes it received: Philadelphia to Neocesaría to Flavia and back to Philadelphia. Correlating to the city's name changes, those who are now overcoming will be marked with, and identified by, three unique names. The name of the Father, the name of the new Jerusalem (which is a picture of the collective Bride of Christ),⁷ and Jesus' new name. And with 3 being **Code** for perfection, these names will perfectly describe our eternity.

Being marked with a name implies ownership, belonging, and permanence. It is like when a woman takes on her husband's last name in marriage, or when children take on the last name of parents who adopt them. For all eternity, the bondservants of Jesus Christ will be conspicuously marked as belonging to the Father, as a resident of the new city comprised of those who are even now choosing to be faithful, and as belonging to Jesus (we are His bride). And His new name will be written on them for all to see.⁸

This is a great honor. The Father is showing to all His creation that He is proud of those who are now found to be believing; that they are the image, glory, and beauty of God; and that they are stable because they have a Father, a husband, and are part of a great new unshakable city, whose temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.⁹ Perhaps this idea of these names draws from a passage in *Isaiah*,

Isaiah 56:1-5

This is what **Yahweh** says: "Be just and fair to all. Do what is right and good, for I am coming soon to rescue you and to display my righteousness among you. Blessed are all those who are careful to do this. Blessed are those who honor my Sabbath days of rest and keep themselves from doing wrong. Don't let foreigners who commit themselves to **Yahweh** say, '**Yahweh** will never let me be part of his people.' And don't let the eunuchs say, 'I'm a dried-up tree with no children and no future.' For this is what **Yahweh** says: I will bless those eunuchs who keep my Sabbath days holy and who choose to do what pleases me and commit their lives to me. I will give them—within the walls of my house—a memorial and a name far greater than sons and daughters could give. For the name I give them is an everlasting one. It will never disappear!

We need to take note of the fact that the new Jerusalem **is now coming**.¹⁰ In a sense, the city, the collective bride of Christ, is even now descending out of heaven. The picture seems to communicate that we should have our eyes fixed on this activity, this descending city. It should be part of our longing and our hope, our reason to keep holding to what we have, to keep His word and to keep His name. After all He chooses to now come quickly.

This image of the new Jerusalem communicates residency, belonging, familiarity, connection, importance, centrality, and something different from the past; it is new. Thus, although this journey can often leave us feeling alone, weak, and divided from many, we are really part of a greater community of

⁷ See *Revelation 21*

⁸ *Revelation 22:4*

⁹ *Revelation 21:22*

¹⁰ "comes" is rendered in the *present active participle*

people who are now coming and who long to be united with us.

It is all reminiscent of that beautiful passage in *Hebrews 12:18-24*.

Hebrews 12:18-24

For you have not come **now** caused to be touching and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who had been hearing begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear that which is **now** commanding, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED." And so terrible was that **now** seeing, Moses said, "I AM **NOW** FULL OF FEAR and trembling." **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who have been enrolling in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous who have been perfecting, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which is now speaking better than the blood of Abel.**

This is a fabulous promise made to those who are now overcoming.

Please, DO NOT Go Out from the Temple

The "hour" of testing is here; it has arrived. God has sent forth the delusion, just like He warned.¹¹ Do we comprehend the implication of this scary truth? Have we succumbed to this temptation, even in the smallest of ways? To the extent that any form of law is still rooted in our lives (the law, your law, my law, someone else's law) we have been inculcated by this delusion. If we live with all the "should haves", "could haves", "would haves", and "the next time we will", cloaked in shame and a fervent desire to do things better for God and for others, we have been seduced by the delusion, and like Moses should cry out, "I am now full of fear and trembling." There is no stability and no safety in this way of living.

Consider that the image of those going in-and-out of the temple, because of the ongoing tremors, is captured by those who rely **in part** on the grace of God (what He gives them and does through them), but also **in part** on what they can do for God, thereby **denying His name**. A little leaven leavens the whole lump, it is just a matter of time.¹²

As a result, every time they go out of the temple (a picture of a person who relies on themselves for protection, security, strength, provision, wisdom, help, etc.) they are exposed to those who want to steal their crown of victory—those who exist outside of the temple where the demonic forces and those who belong to the synagogue of Satan dwell.

These liars will shake and toss around believers as they attempt to wrestle away their crown from them, and they will not stop until those believers who are going in-and-out are weakened beyond the point of exhaustion, until they have used up even the little bit of strength they had. And these liars will continue to attack until these believers either give up and become one of those who are now dwelling on

¹¹ **2 Thessalonians 2:11-14**

¹² See **1 Corinthians 5:6-7; Galatians 5:2-10**

the earth, or until they choose to now be abiding always in the temple of God, never again leaving. The shaking, however, will continue until they decide.

And those who have chosen to be found in the temple of God, will be found to be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in **the work of the Lord**, confident that their toil is not in vain in the Lord.¹³ The shakings and tremors of this life will no longer worry them or cause them to flee for shelter. The Father is and will always be their strong, stable, and secure source of help. And in His temple, they **will do His work**, not their work.

Ears to Hear

Revelation 3:13

He who is **now having** an ear, is **commanded** to hear what the Spirit **now** says to the churches.

It should not be too difficult to understand that if we are running in-and-out of the temple, it will be hard to discern what the Spirit now says to us. His message will get distorted, comingled with other messages, and often diluted beyond the point of recognition.

Therefore, if we are to now be having ears to hear, we must first decide to be **willing** to let the Spirit cause us to be those who are now abiding in the temple. We must realize that running out of the temple to take care of ourselves, even in the smallest of ways, will subject ourselves to the powerful delusion of personal goodness and personal lordship (one who can control the outcomes of their own life). And if we stay too long outside of the temple, we just might be overcome by the delusion. We just might also be overcome by those who want to hurt us and want to take away our victory. It is simply not safe to be going in-and-out of the temple.

Second, we must be willing to admit that by running back-and-forth, we are in fact denying His name **Yahweh**, the **Hayah**, the **I AM**, and in so doing we also deny that our only hope is in **grace**, in what He does for us, in us, and through us—His work!

Third, we must be **willing** to let the Spirit deal with any imbedded trust issues we have with **Yahweh** being our **I AM**. Of course, none of us like the shakings, the tremors, or the earthquakes of our life, all of it is scary and sometimes even terrifying; and it is all most definitely exhausting. And for most of us, these times of instability have caused us to doubt and to not be secure in the belief that **Yahweh** is adequately caring for us, or that He will come to our rescue.

But **Yahweh** is our **Adonai God Almighty**. He is in control; thus, throughout everything in which He takes us, we are safe if we hide in Him, if we remain in the temple. He just uses the shakings to show us what is not stable in our lives, what does not derive from Him, and to teach us why we tend to run out of the temple looking for more. This gives us the opportunity to invite Him to remove it all, so that we will be like those unmovable pillars of Philadelphia that will be able to stand against any storm.

This is how we come to now be having ears to hear what the Spirit now says to the churches.

¹³ **1 Corinthians 15:58**