

HWMR: LOVING THE LORD AND LOVING ONE ANOTHER FOR THE ORGANIC BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST, (Week 8)

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:7-22

TAKING THE GOD-ORDAINED PATHWAY FOR THE CHURCH—THE WAY OF PHILADELPHIA—ACCORDING TO THE LORD’S UP-TO-DATE AND ULTIMATE RECOVERY TO BRING US INTO A NEW REVIVAL TO TURN THE AGE

Revelation 3:7	And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:
Revelation 3:8	And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:
Revelation 3:9	Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, those who call themselves Jews and are not, but lie — behold, I will cause them to come and fall prostrate before your feet and to know that I have loved you.
Revelation 3:10	Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth.
Revelation 3:11	I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown.
Revelation 3:12	He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.
Revelation 3:13	He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
Revelation 3:14	And to the messenger of the church in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God:
Revelation 3:15	I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.
Revelation 3:16	So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew you out of My mouth.
Revelation 3:17	Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,
Revelation 3:18	I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
Revelation 3:19	As many as I love I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore and repent.
Revelation 3:20	Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.
Revelation 3:21	He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.
Revelation 3:22	He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

Day 1

- 2 Peter 1:12* - Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.
- Revelation 2:7* - He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

- I. We need to see, live, and practice “the **present truth**,” the “up-to-date” truth, in order to change the age and bring Christ back; **we need to hear** what the Spirit is speaking to the churches, the voice of God in the present hour—2 Pet. 1:12; Rev. 2:7; Matt. 16:18; Gen. 2:22; Eph. 5:25-27; cf. John 1:23; S. S. 8:13-14:
- A. All the truths are in the Bible, but through man’s foolishness, unfaithfulness, negligence, disobedience, and degradation, many truths were lost and hidden from man—cf. 2 Kings 22:8-11; 23:24-25.
 - B. These freshly revealed truths are not God’s new inventions; rather, they are man’s new discoveries; every worker of the Lord should inquire before God as to what the **present truth** is—Eph. 1:17; Ezek. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:10; 21:10.
 - C. God’s truths are cumulative; later truths do not negate the former ones; what we see today are the **cumulative revelations of God**; today we are living in the tide of God’s will, which is a continuation of all the past works of God in the previous ages; may God be gracious to us so that we do not become castaways of “the present truth”—1 Cor. 9:27; cf. 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8-9; 5:18-21.
 - D. The **present truth** of the **Lord’s** up-to-date and ultimate recovery is to bring us into a new revival to turn the age by our **choosing to take the way of Philadelphia**; only the recovered church, the church of brotherly love, signified by the church in Philadelphia, can fulfill God’s eternal purpose and satisfy His heart’s desire—Rev. 1:1-3; 3:7-13; *Hymns*, #880.

The first part of 2:7 says, “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” At the beginning of each of the seven epistles in chapters two and three, it is the **Lord who speaks**. But at the end of all seven epistles it is the Spirit speaking to the churches. Once again, this proves that the speaking **Christ is the Spirit**. Whatever Christ speaks, that is the speaking of the Spirit. No one can argue with this. Who was speaking to the church in Ephesus? Christ, the Son of Man holding the messengers in His right hand and walking in the midst of the churches. As verse 7 indicates, the speaker eventually is the Spirit. This proves that Christ is the speaking Spirit. This not only indicates that the Spirit is the Lord and the Lord is the Spirit; it also emphasizes the vital importance of the Spirit in the darkness of the church’s degradation as indicated by the sevenfold intensified Spirit in 1:4. The same emphasis is also seen in 14:13 and 22:17. It is foolish to say that Christ today is not the speaking Spirit, and it is ridiculous to separate the speaking Spirit from Christ. The two are one.

If the speaker were only Christ without being the speaking Spirit, He could never speak some words into our spirit, and His speaking would not be very subjective and touching. But, as our experience testifies, if, as we read these epistles, we are open in our spirit to Him, **the Spirit will immediately speak something of Christ into us**. Because the speaker is not the objective Christ but the subjective Spirit, He speaks not only in the black and white letters of the Bible, but also in our spirit. Once we hear His speaking, something indelible is wrought into us, and nothing can take it away. **Our Christ today is the speaking Spirit**. I rejoice over this fact and I boldly proclaim it. (*Life-Study of Revelation*, chapter 10)

Day 2

- Revelation 3:8* - I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have *kept My word* and have not denied My name.
- 1 Timothy 1:3-4* - Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things

II. The characteristic of the overcomers in Philadelphia (vv. 7-13) is their aspiration to arrive at the highest peak of the divine revelation of God's economy—this highest peak is **God becoming man to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead** so that the Body of Christ can be produced, the bride can be prepared, and the New Jerusalem can be consummated:

- A. Even though the churches in Asia, in a general sense, had turned away from the apostle Paul's ministry (2 Tim. 1:15), one church was unique and was highly appraised by the Lord—the church in **Philadelphia**; the Lord highly appraised them and even appreciated them because they **kept His word**, which means that they did not turn away from the word of the apostle Paul's healthy teaching of God's economy, the highest peak of the divine revelation—Rev. 3:8; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3:
1. **God's eternal economy is to make man the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead** and to make Himself one with man and man one with Him, thus to be enlarged and expanded in His expression, that all His divine attributes may be expressed in human virtues.
 2. God's eternal economy is His plan to **dispense Himself** into His chosen, predestinated, and redeemed people as their life, their life supply, and their everything to produce, constitute, and build up the organic Body of Christ—1:3-6; 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 11:2-3; Titus 1:9; Col. 2:19.
- B. Those in Philadelphia are “rich toward God” (Luke 12:21) by **pray-reading** and **musings upon His word** to treasure up His word in their heart (Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:11, 15); they lift up their hands unto the word of God, indicating that they receive it warmly and gladly and that they say Amen to it (v. 48; Neh. 8:5-6).
- C. For the **overcomers** to be pillars in the temple means that they will be **pillars in the Triune God**, for the temple is “the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb”; God is built into them to make them living and precious stones, and they are built into God to make them pillars of stone in God for their incorporation with God as the mutual abode of God and man—Rev. 3:12a; 21:22, 3; Psa. 90:1; John 14:23; cf. 1 Kings 7:17.
- D. That the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the Lord's new name are written upon the overcomer indicates that the **overcomer is possessed by God**, by the New Jerusalem, and by the Lord and that God Himself, His city (the New Jerusalem), and the Lord Himself all belong to him.
- E. That the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the Lord's new name are written upon the overcomers indicates that **what God is**, the nature of the New Jerusalem, and the person of the Lord have all been **wrought into them**, labeling them with the Triune God as their “name badge” and making them God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—Rev. 3:12b; 22:4b.

The Lord promises to write upon the overcomer His new name. This new name will be according to our experiences. I cannot tell you what the Lord's new name will be because it is according to our personal experiences of Him. In other words, **what we experience of the Lord will become us**. We experience God, and God becomes us. We experience the New Jerusalem, and that also becomes us. We experience the Lord in an intimate, personal way, and that becomes us. Therefore, the Lord will rightly designate us, writing upon us the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and His new name. This will indicate that we have become a **person who is one with God**, who is a part of the New Jerusalem, and who has experienced the Lord Himself as the One who makes Himself us.

The name of God, the name of New Jerusalem, and the Lord's new name written upon the overcomer indicate that the **overcomer is possessed by God**, by the New Jerusalem, and by the Lord; that God Himself, His city, the New Jerusalem, and the Lord Himself all belong to him; and that he is one with God, with the New Jerusalem, and with the Lord. The name of God means God Himself, the name of the New Jerusalem means the city itself, and the name of the Lord means the Lord Himself. **To write the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the name of the Lord upon the overcomer indicate that what God is, the nature of the New Jerusalem, and the Person of the Lord have all been wrought into the overcomer.** The mentioning of the New Jerusalem as a prize to the overcomer indicates that this promise will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom. The New Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom will be a prize only to the overcoming saints, whereas the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth will be the common portion of all the redeemed for eternity. (*Life-Study of Revelation, chapter 15*)

Day 3 & Day 4

<i>Revelation 3:7</i>	<i>- And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:</i>
<i>Galatians 2:20</i>	<i>- I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.</i>
<i>Isiah 22:22</i>	<i>- And I will set the key of the house of David upon his shoulder — / When he opens, no one will shut; / When he shuts, no one will open.</i>
<i>Ephesians 3:8</i>	<i>- To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel</i>
<i>2 Corinthians 2:10</i>	<i>- But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;</i>

III. The characteristic of the overcomers in Philadelphia is their endeavoring to enter into the God-man living by **enjoying the riches of Christ** as their indwelling treasure—Eph. 3:8; 2 Cor. 4:7:

- A. In Isaiah 22 God fired Shebna, a steward in the house of the king (vv. 15-19), and replaced him with Eliakim, a type of the all-inclusive Christ as the Steward in God's house, the One upon whose shoulder the key of the house of God is set (vv. 20-25; Rev. 3:7-8); **Christ has the key to control the door of God's treasury**, in which are the riches of God in Christ for our enjoyment (1 Thes. 5:16-19; 1 John 1:7, 9; cf. Ezek. 1:22, 26):
 1. When God created us, **He hired us**, and when He put us on the cross, crucifying us with Christ, **He fired us**—Gal. 2:20.
 2. Whatever or whoever is not Christ, God fires; God has replaced everything in His Old Testament economy **with Christ**—Mark 1:1-8; Matt. 17:3-5; Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 10:5-10; 11:5-6.

3. The real church life is a life in which all the saints are **fired and replaced with Christ**, making Christ everything in the church; all of us are Shebnas, who should be removed and replaced by Christ as the real Eliakim to make us His duplication as stewards of the mysteries of God and the varied grace of God—Col. 3:10-11; 1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10.
 4. In the New Testament Christ's replacing of us is altogether a matter of a grafted life; as wild olive branches, **we have been grafted into Christ** as the cultivated olive tree (Rom. 11:17, 24); thus, we are united with Christ, and in this union Christ replaces us.
 5. Because we have been joined to Christ, and Christ joined Himself to us, uniting Himself with us, when He died on the cross, we died with Him and were terminated; now in our **organic union with Christ**, He replaces us by living **in** us, **with** us, **by** us, and **through** us—6:6; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a; Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 6. We live, yet not we, but Christ lives in us, and we live by the faith of the Son of God; this indicates a union with Christ; on the one hand, we are fired, and on the other hand, we are not expelled, for Christ comes to live **in** us, **with** us, **by** us, and **through** us (Gal. 2:20); thus, the **all-inclusive Christ as Immanuel** (Isa. 7:14) **replaces everything and becomes everything in God's economy** (Col. 3:10-11).
- B. In order to enjoy the riches of God in Christ as the treasure, we need to **remain in the touch with the Lord**, staying in contact with the Lord according to the sense of life and exercising ourselves to be poor in spirit and pure in heart—2 Cor. 2:10; Rom. 8:6; 10:12-13; Col. 3:16; Matt. 5:3, 8.
- C. In order to enjoy the riches of God in Christ as the treasure, we need to use **the "keys" of denying the self**, taking up the cross, and losing the soul-life—Rev. 3:7; Isa. 22:15-24; Matt. 16:18-19, 24-25; 17:5, 8.

Christ today holds the key of this house, this kingdom. Isaiah 22:22 says that Jehovah would set the key of the house of David upon Eliakim's shoulder. It does not say that Eliakim holds the key but that the key is set upon his shoulder. This expression indicates that this key is a great key. A small key is merely held by someone; it is not put upon his shoulder. The key that God has put on the shoulder of Christ is a great one. Such a big key indicates that the door which it opens is big and thick. Such a door would be a **stronghold to protect and keep the treasures of the house of God**.

Christ has a big key to open the treasury of all His riches. When He opens the treasury, no one will shut. When He shuts the treasury, no one will open. **Christ is the One who can open up to us all the riches of God embodied in Him**. He can also shut the door to these riches. Sometimes we experience the door of the divine treasures being open to us to flood into us. But at other times we may do something to offend the Lord. Then we have the sensation that the door is shut and that the riches coming to us are stopped. His opening and His shutting are all for one thing—the **enjoyment of His riches as the treasure**.

I believe the direct application of Isaiah 22:22 is this—Christ has the key to control the door of God's treasury, in which are the riches of God in Christ for our enjoyment. We have experienced both His opening of these riches to us and His shutting up of these riches. When He shuts up these riches, we have the feeling of being dried up or inwardly deprived. Our experience indicates that **Christ is the One who has the key to all of His riches**.

We should not allow anything or anyone, including ourselves, to replace Christ. **We need to be replaced by Christ**. He Himself must be everything in us and to us. (*Life-Study of Isaiah, chapter 42*)

Day 5

Revelation 3:12 - He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

- D. The Lord's using the key of David to open the door for the spread of His recovery is objective to us, but Christ is also using the key of David to **subjectively open the door in our inner being** for us to be transformed and built into the house of God as a **pillar with the name of God**, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the new name of the Lord—Rev. 2:17; 3:12; cf. 21:22:
1. *The name of My God* indicates that the pillar is God; *the name of the city of My God* indicates that the pillar is the New Jerusalem; and *My new name* indicates that the pillar is Christ in a new significance; the **overcomer as a pillar becomes God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead**, he becomes a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and he becomes Christ in a new experiential sense—3:12.
 2. The **New Jerusalem is the new Christ**; as God's enlargement and expansion, we are Christ in a new sense as the New Jerusalem; the new Christ is not the same as He was in the four Gospels; the bride, who is the increase of the Bridegroom, is the New Jerusalem, including all of God's regenerated ones—John 3:29-30; Rev. 21:9-10.
 3. For us to be built into God, become a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and become a part of the new Christ is humanly impossible, but the **law of the Spirit of life** within us contains an element that deals with impossibility—Rom. 8:2; Luke 18:27; cf. Gen. 28:12-19; John 1:51.

Day 6

Revelation 3:8 - I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a **little power** and have **kept My word** and **have not denied My name**.

Revelation 3:18 - I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.

- E. The overcomers in Philadelphia pay more attention to life than to work, caring more about quality than quantity (cf. 1 Cor. 3:12); they have “a **little power**” with the realization that what pleases the Lord is not their doing much for Him but their **doing their best for Him with what they have** (Rev. 3:8; Mark 14:8).
- F. The overcomers in Philadelphia **do not deny the Lord's name**; they have abandoned all names other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they **call upon the name of the Lord**, who is rich to all who call upon Him (Rom. 10:9-10, 12-13); they openly confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:11), and they do not preach themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and themselves as the believers' slaves for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:5).

IV. The characteristic of the overcomers in Philadelphia is their **brotherly love**; love prevails among them so that they shepherd people according to God (1 Pet. 5:2) by **cherishing** them with the cheering presence of God and **nourishing** them with the healthy teaching of the economy of God (Eph. 4:11; 5:29; Acts 20:28):

- A. The Lord's recovery with Philadelphia is a recovery in quality, a recovery of the original substance of the church, the **inner substance of God**, which is **love** (1 John 4:8); to stand on the genuine ground of oneness, the ground of the church, is to choose to love all the brothers (Rev. 3:7a; cf. 2:4, 7).

- B. The Lord's recovery is a **recovery of loving the Lord Jesus**; the overcomers in Philadelphia stand on the genuine ground of oneness and keep themselves in the love of God to love the Lord and love all the brothers—Jude 20-21; 2 Cor. 5:14; John 12:3; Luke 7:47; 1 John 3:14-16; cf. Psalms 133.
- C. The overcomers in Philadelphia **keep the Lord's word** in His unique New Testament ministry (Rev. 3:8), which brings them into the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as their life and everything (2 Cor. 11:2-3).
- D. In order to minister life to others and maintain our victory for the building up of the church, **we must have a revived living and a labor in shepherding** that flow out from our love for the Lord and for the brothers—John 21:15-17.
- E. "Beloved, let us love one another, because **love is of God**, and everyone who loves has been begotten of God and knows God. He who does not love has not known God, because God is love"—1 John 4:7-8.
- F. "We know and have believed the love which God has in us. **God is love**, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him"—v. 16.
- G. God first loved us in that He infused us with **His love** and generated within us the love with which we love Him and the brothers—vv. 19-21.
- H. Brother Lee's intention for the international elders' conference in April 1997:
 1. **Do not lord it** over the flock of God that has been allotted to you; the churches are God's possession, allotted to the elders as their allotment, their portion, entrusted to them by God for their care—1 Pet. 5:2-3.
 2. Be **willing** to be a slave to the saints—Matt. 20:26-27; Mark 10:42-45.
 3. The elders should **shepherd** one another and **love** one another to be a model of the Body life.
 4. The elders should **take care** of the saints in everything and in every way for the **dispensing** of Christ into them.
 5. The elders should **contact** and **visit** the saints and invite them to their homes for meals.
- I. Brother Lee's final word to the elders in Anaheim: "The **elders need to love one another**, their wives need to love one another, and they need to love one another's children."

V. In order to continue in the way of Philadelphia, **we must be saved from the way of Laodicea, which is a degraded and distorted Philadelphia—Rev. 3:14-22:**

- A. Laodicea still remembers its history but has lost its former life; we must always remember that all that matters is **God's present presence**—Exo. 33:14; 2 Cor. 2:10.
- B. Laodicea means to know everything but in reality to be fervent about nothing; in name it has everything, but it cannot sacrifice its life for anything; it remembers its former glory but forgets its present condition before God; formerly, it was Philadelphia, but today it is Laodicea, full of **lukewarmness** and **spiritual pride**—Rev. 3:15-17.
- C. If we want to continue in the way of Philadelphia, **we need to humble ourselves** before God and pay the price to gain more of the Triune God as gold, white garments, and eyesalve; then we can be one with the Lord as the leading Overcomer within us in order to sit with Him on His throne in the millennial kingdom—vv. 18, 21.

Philadelphia had two characteristics: They **kept the Lord's word**, and they **did not deny the Lord's name**. Here was a group of people who were led by God to keep His word. God opened up the Word to them, and others were able to understand His Word through them. They had no creed, doctrine, or tradition, only the **Word of God**. At the time of Philadelphia, we find a group of people returning fully to the Word of the Lord, who did not recognize any other authority, doctrine, or creed.

A man can understand and even preach a doctrine, but this does not mean that he understands the Bible. He can memorize creeds and proclaim his faith in them, but this does not mean that he understands the Bible. The Lord would have given us creeds long ago if the church needed them. Today men analyze the Bible and condense its teachings into creeds. Creeds are limited, but the **Bible is unlimited**. Creeds are simple, while the Bible is complicated. A foolish man can understand creeds if he studies them. But a foolish man cannot understand the Bible. Only a certain type of people can understand the Bible. Only under certain conditions can a man understand God's Word. Creeds open a wide door and anyone can go in. But the door to God's Word is not that wide, and only those with life can enter it. The door of the creeds is so wide that a smart mind is all one needs to enter it. But God's Word is not that simple. Unless a man has **life and is single before the Lord**, he will not see or understand His Word.

Many people think that God's Word is too narrow. They want to broaden it so that they can bring more people into it. But those in Philadelphia rejected all creeds and doctrines. They **turned back to the Word of the Lord**. The Lord said, "You...have kept My word." In church history, there was never an age when men understood God's Word more than those in Philadelphia. In Philadelphia God's Word was given its rightful place. In other ages men accepted creeds and traditions. But Philadelphia accepted nothing other than God's Word. It returned to His Word and walked in it. In church history there was never a time when the ministry of the Word was as rich as that which we find in Philadelphia. (*Messages for Building Up New Believers (3), chapter 45*)