



## [Revelation 3:7-8](#)

(7) And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write: These things says the Holy One, the One Who *is* true; the One Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens.

(8) I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

*A Faithful Version*

What is this open door? The conventional interpretation among those who have come out of the [Worldwide Church of God](#) is that Christ has given the Philadelphians [an open door to preach the gospel](#), an idea that is not without merit. In three of Paul's epistles, he uses an open door as a metaphor for an opportunity to preach ([I Corinthians 16:9](#); [II Corinthians 2:12](#); [Colossians 4:3](#)). But this metaphor has no connection at all to Christ's quotation of [Isaiah 22:22](#). Moreover, the fruit of this interpretation has been exclusivity, comparing ourselves among ourselves, division, competition, and a pitiful supply of love—[works of the flesh](#) rather than [fruit of the Spirit](#). This occurs largely because people keep pushing [God](#) and all He is doing out of the picture and focusing on the works of men.

When we understand Christ's reference to Eliakim, that He is now fulfilling that role, we can understand the open door without having to force anything. Consider the access He grants, saying in [John 14:6](#), "I am the way, the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" Through Christ's blood, we have access to the Almighty, the Most High God.

After the [seven letters](#), in [Revelation 4:1](#), John is shown an open door in heaven. To see what is behind the open door, we must read and meditate on

the rest of the chapter. It is profound, describing where we approach in spirit when we pray. Far from suggesting that the Philadelphians are [going to heaven](#), the chapter reiterates the fact of their *access* to the One in heaven. Through Christ, we have entrance into the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of the Great God, which we may enter with boldness ([Hebrews 10:19](#)).

Notice what Jesus says in [Luke 11:9-10](#), 13:

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. . . . If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

If we knock and keep knocking (as the Greek indicates), God opens the door. The Philadelphians have had to knock because they have only a little strength, and they know it. But they also know that the only way to endure courageously ([Revelation 3:10](#)) is to seek the strength of God. Thus, the One they seek responds, giving more of His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the means by which the Father and the Son dwell within the adopted sons of God. By giving the Spirit, He gives more of Himself. No one can shut that open door, though we can certainly ignore it and “neglect so great a salvation” ([Hebrews 2:3](#)).

The [letter to Philadelphia](#) is not about the mighty works of powerful men. It begins with the tremendous help available to those who are weak, but who keep God's Word, who do not deny His name, and who persevere in [faith](#). Because they consistently knock, Christ reminds them of His pivotal position as second-in-command to the Absolute Deity and that through Him as Steward, they have access to the throne of God.

The Philadelphians' strength is small, but God's is without limit. They are not those who seek after earthly glory, like Shebna, but they are faithful in their responsibilities to the Most High God, like Eliakim—and like [Jesus Christ](#).

— David C. Grabbe

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