

“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia. This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who has the key of David. What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open: “I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my word and did not deny me.” Revelation 3:7-8 NLT

lectio // Revelation 3:7-13

Hope in times of difficulty! This is the REVELATION. I know it often reads like a Sci Fi, with rich and powerful symbolism pulsing on every page, but the book was written to give hope, truth and yes future reality. Here the message to the churches in Philadelphia (notice it's a group, not an individual) is SO encouraging, SO filled with hope. John writes what the Holy Spirit instructs him to say to the Angel, the messenger, possibly the pastor/bishop. This church has the “key of David,” the beloved forerunner to Jesus. This key is a powerful symbol of power and authority. The “key” to the city, the palace, the kingdom! It's referenced here and in Isaiah 22:22 (<https://www.gotquestions.org/key-of-David.html>). WOW, receiving the KEY is such a big deal! It's such a honor and

Isaiah 22:22 (ESV)

22 And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

privilege and responsibility to have a key that controls or allows access to leading a group of people, like a city, estate or even a church.

Then there's this prophetic blessing, “I have opened a door for you,” and, “you have little strength, yet you obeyed.” Again, wow! Brings tears to my soul. Can I (we) appropriate such personal, individual prophetic words to our own life and situation? Many do, and yet others say that is “using or twisting” the word of God to our own ends. This was written to a group of people to read, and it is specifically for them. So, no, I can't take this and say, “It's mine!” or “I have a word for you!” However, here's the thing. When you read or hear God encourage or affirm someone during their struggles. Or when you read or hear a story where kindness and love is given to someone who clearly needs it, don't you RELATE to that? Don't you feel the power of that word of affirmation? So, although, it was not for me specifically, I am nonetheless MOVED by the same grace, the same Spirit of God to share in those moments as if it WERE me! It's like finding out your daughter is pregnant after years of infertility, you are NOT the one who is pregnant, yet you carry the blessing right along with her. I read these words and I am deeply moved by the idea that God can and does give me a key and does see me (“I know all things you do”) and I can appreciate and yes, appropriate that same joy and hope even though it was written about my brothers and sisters thousands of years ago. I don't need to “claim” it or “own” it as my own - it can be SHARED because of the same Spirit we have in common.

Dad,

When one is hurting in the body of Christ, then all are hurting. Also, when one rejoices, we all rejoice! I can receive the affirmation of your word to my life and these letters lift off the ancient page and fall on the very current situation in my life right now. I feel your love, your strength and your belief in me.

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root