

The Seven Churches of Revelation

Part 3

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] We shall be reading in the Revelation, chapter 3, beginning at verse 7.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. I know thy works. Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it. For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my [00:01:01] patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. We've been placing the greatest importance upon the fact that the view taken of the churches [00:02:02] in these letters is that they are candlesticks, or as we have always expressed it, they are lamps.

And although we only have this at the beginning, and in the first letter we have the word of God, a warning that the Lord, if they didn't hear his word, would come and remove the lamp out of its place, yet there's no question, since there are seven lamps to correspond to the seven churches, we're to keep in mind right through to the end that the churches in this particular aspect of them, not viewed as a heavenly body, but viewed as a community of churches, each in closest fellowship with each other, but individually intended to be as lights and as witnesses. Witnesses [00:03:03] in the widest sense to God as he has made himself known fully in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Witnesses to all the truth. Witnesses to the person who here presents himself to us as the holy and the true. How far the churches, by the time we come to Philadelphia, had slipped away from this, then we have been taking note day by day. Now we obviously come to a very, a stage of very special interest to us as we read the address to the church in Philadelphia.

And let us first think of the manner in which the Lord Jesus Christ presents himself here. The days that must be upon the church in Philadelphia, there must be closing days.

[00:04:02] There must be days when everything that ever appeared great of Christianity in the eyes of the world is gone. If there is strength, there is only a little strength. And yet, the Lord Jesus Christ presents himself as one who is fully adequate to the responsibility to be lamps of the churches in closing days. He presents himself first in what he is, and second in what he does. And both these aspects of what the Lord Jesus Christ says about himself in this presentation are particularly suitable to the closing days of the responsible history of the church here upon earth. He is the holy one. When the church had fallen so far in all the sad history of corruption and departure that we have followed as we have gone down the history [00:05:07] of the churches, as seen by him, the Lord Jesus Christ, these are no human histories, their history as seen by him and as imparted to him personally to the churches being what they need to know in order to make them and keep them faithful in their own time. The Lord Jesus Christ presents himself against, over against, in contrast with, indeed the very word means, in separation from all the corruption and evil that has manifested itself in the churches.

And so we first of all get the very essence of what it means to be a separate person. That's the basic meaning of holiness. The one who has that quality in himself which is entirely apart from, entirely separate from evil of every kind. And then from the very earliest days we have seen [00:06:08] how God looks with pleasure upon a man who was separated even though he was separated from his brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, over against all the corruption and all the evil and all that is false that has shown itself in the church, the Lord Jesus Christ is the holy one. And I feel sure that there's a similarity in the intention with which the Lord Jesus speaks to us of himself like this, a similarity to what he said to the father in the hearing of the disciples in John 17, for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

You see, there you have sanctification or separation or holiness on the one hand and you have it connected with truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified [00:07:05] through the truth. The knowledge of the holy one separated in heaven is adequate to sustain the people of God when separation becomes necessary and vital. Now the other thing about himself that the Lord Jesus says, the Lord Jesus risen and in the midst of the throne, he is, he speaks and says, and the true. Now this does not strictly and straightforwardly mean truth speaking. Of course the Lord Jesus Christ is truth speaking. All that he says corresponds absolutely with reality. But the thought behind this word, the holy and the true, the thought behind that word true is the complete in contrast with the partial.

[00:08:03] It is the final in contrast with the temporary. And it is the substance in contrast with the shadow. You see, all these words that I've used, the partial, the temporary, and the shadow, they applied to the knowledge of God that came in the Old Testament. There was that knowledge. It was the knowledge of the true God. But it was a partial knowledge. It was a temporary knowledge to be superseded by the perfect. And it was the shadow but not the substance. Now the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who here presents himself, is the one in whom God's last word has been spoken. There's not a word to be spoken upon any theme after the Lord Jesus Christ has been fully manifested and known. He has fully made known the Father. All truth rests in him.

[00:09:04] And it's a very cardinal element in the teaching of John in his gospel that in the Lord Jesus Christ we have the truth. He's the true light. He's the true bread. He's the true vine. He's the true God. And this is the quality that is contained in the name that he gives to himself, the description for our strengthening and for the satisfaction that we need in heart and mind. He is the holy and he is the true. How rightly do we make so much of this. How much mood when we sing about the holy and the true. And all that we receive as we look to him in this character in the kind of days in which we live.

But then he goes on to present himself in what he does. And this we have in the same verse. We have been speaking about the fact that [00:10:10] he says, he that is holy, he that is true. This is the speaker. What he says that the speaker is able to do is he openeth and no man shutteth and he shutteth and no man openeth.

He has the key of David. Now this of course is practically a direct quotation from the 22nd chapter of the prophet Isaiah. But its meaning is quite abundantly plain to us because it is in the name of David that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to take power over this world. In the wider sense he'll be the son of man. But then he is going to take power and the governmental power over this world as David. And therefore to say that he has the key of David indicates that he is able by [00:11:10] intervention, by the power that's going to rule all the world, he has the power of intervention by providential means at the present time to give special opportunities to his people. And this is what he says here. In the presentation he says, I am the one who opens and no man shuts and the one who shutteth and no man openeth. But when we come to the next verse we find how the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with this particular church has used that power, the power of intervention in earthly affairs, the power of providential intervention, he has used it to set before them an open door. Now I want to speak quite a bit about this question of the providential [00:12:06] intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ. But first of all let us take a general look at what the Church of Philadelphia might stand for. We have seen in Laodicea, we have seen in Thyatira, a great ecclesiastical system which is marked by teaching within it which leads to the most frightful corruption. We have seen it partially replaced by another great ecclesiastical system that cuts a great figure in the sight of the world, in the eyes of the world. Now when we come to Philadelphia we find a church that has very different marks indeed and that is it has these special marks that it has a little strength. It has kept his word and not denied his name and [00:13:03] it is marked by the love of the brethren. That's the meaning as we all know of the name Philadelphia. It's a very striking thing that in these two churches, all springing out of Pergamos of course, in Thyatira and Sardis, we have the church as it cuts a very big figure in the establishment of the world. It's a force to be reckoned with and it does make itself heard in the matters of the world. I often think about the way the ecumenical movement makes itself known relative for example to the black races in Africa. What is it concerned with the ecumenical movement which so nearly joins together Sardis and Thyatira? What is it concerned with? It's concerned with racist things. It's concerned that there should be an absence of racial feeling. It is concerned with the fact [00:14:02] that the black races should have equal political rights. There's not a single word about concern for the salvation of their souls and their being brought to Christ and that's a very striking picture of what these churches that are great in the establishment in our time manifest their true character. They want to intervene in the things of earth. Well now apart from all that you see the very fact that there is a separate church indicates that it's separate from all that we have this church of Philadelphia and it's a church that has a little strength. There is strength but there's a little strength. It has kept his word and not denied his name and it is marked by brotherly love. Now I want to come back to those features a little later but for the time being I want to come back to this most important concept of the providential intervention of God. Now the church at Philadelphia has always been [00:15:09] subject to the greatest interest of the brethren. From my earliest days I've bawled over these passages and I've heard them explained and expanded and I would like um in the simplest possible way to repeat myself by saying this. The brethren do not claim to be Philadelphia. What they do is they aim to be Philadelphia and I feel that I would carry a good deal of conviction with you when I put it like that. We do not claim to be Philadelphia but it is in our hearts because of the effect upon us of words like this spoken by the Lord Jesus it is in our hearts to aim to be Philadelphia. It is perhaps necessary to clear the air just a little by saying that to start with. Now we saw in the earlier churches [00:16:08] an important fact that I have myself not often heard explained and expressed and that is that in these

churches we do not get the providential acts of God that set the stage for them. We get the results of changes brought about under the providence of God. We don't read anything about the accession of persecuting emperors. We don't find anything about the reasons which changed Nero from being for five years a reasonably good ruler to a murderous murderous persecutor of the Christians. We don't read anything about that but we do read what happened, the result. There was a church suffering, a church in tribulation, a church in prison, a church in death, and it's to these the Lord Jesus Christ said be thou faithful unto death [00:17:05] and I will give thee a crown of life. We don't read anything about the accession, the providential intervention of God, the accession of a Christian, a professing Christian emperor who brought toleration and therefore peace to the church. When we come to Sardis, and this is the thing that puzzled me for years and years, when you read Sardis you don't read anything at all about the reformation. The providential intervention of God that brought about the tremendous changes were very great and these men are strongly to be commended for what they actually and positively achieved. But the result of what they did we do read about and it's one of the saddest parts of the whole story. After such a name to live, you see, in what the reformers achieved. After such a name to live it was dead and it's dead today and its works were not complete [00:18:09] in the sight of God. Now let us keep that particular point in mind. This after all is said and done about the great wonder of the beginning and the end of having only a name to live and being dead and the explanation its work was not perfect, not complete before God. Now we would therefore expect that if there is a restoration and revival, I say that because as we all know there's no reproach at all to Philadelphia. There's something there very precious to the heart of the Lord. There's everything to encourage it and there's nothing to condemn it. But we would expect that in its character, in its beginning, it would have some connection with [00:19:03] the completion of the work that was left incomplete by the reformers and those who came after them. Now what was the particular nature of the imperfection of their work? The great principle of the reformation was the word of God. They physically set free the Bible from being hand-copied manuscripts hidden in monasteries in languages that nobody knew. It became translated and it became printed and became liberated so that all the people could have the word of God in their hands, in their own tongue. And then they acted upon the fact that that scripture, that word, that they had set free, it was the sole authority in matters relating to life and faith. And then they preached the great gospel doctrine [00:20:05] of justification by faith in Christ alone through the blood of his sacrifice. Well that was a very great principle, the word of God alone, faith in the word of God alone, obedience to the word of God alone, but they took it no further. And the churches that stand in their tradition take it no further. They do not carry the principle of the reformation, which is obedience to the word of God, into the matters of the church and its doctrine and its worship. And I cannot spend very long on that negative side of our story, but any careful inquiry that you care to make will show that this is so. The great theologian of the reformation, whose name still commands the greatest possible respect [00:21:02] amongst the evangelicals in Salis, he was a person who never got to the knowledge of the true church. He believed that the church was one from Abel to the coming of Christ. It was all one body, and Abraham and Moses were just as much pillars of the church as the apostles were. They failed altogether to discern the true church, and very particularly what they failed to do was to discern the place that the one pearl of great price has in the counsels of God and the love of Christ. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. The idea that the church was to be a lamp might be understood by them, but the idea that the church in its wonderful, lovely beauty and unity was the object of the love of Christ, to be in the end, [00:22:02] through his sacrifice and his ministrations, perfected and beautiful to be presented to himself for the satisfaction of his heart. And this was the counsel of the Father. This is hidden. Now, it was at this point, although I would be, and I think we would all here be quite backward in claiming that we ourselves or any whom we know are fully Philadelphia. Why? Because there's no reproach, and we know very well that there are many ways in which we ourselves do merit the reproach that might

come from the Lord. But nevertheless, the Lord Jesus himself has given this. He set it before us as what we aim to be in these closing days. Although I may wish, and we all may wish, to be humble and careful in the statement of who is Philadelphia, there's absolutely no doubt as to the providential intervention by which God opened this door. [00:23:08] It's this to which the Lord Jesus refers when he says, I have set before thee an open door. Now, the question as to who, under God, recovered these truths that I've spoken of, there can be no question at all. They were hidden. When we look back to the first revelation of the truth of God, that revelation was incomplete. In that sense, it was perhaps, in some senses, rather like Sardis. The revelation was incomplete until such time as after the gift of the Holy Ghost, we're told that the Apostle Paul received by revelation and taught to others for the first time what had been hidden from ages and generations, and unknown to the Old Testament saints, [00:24:06] he taught them the mystery, that is the truth of Christ and the church, so precious to the heart of Christ as I've spoken of it. Now, the Apostle says about this, after saying that he was a minister of the gospel in Colossians chapter 1, he says in that same chapter, verse 25, that he's minister of the church, the mystery, and because it was given to me to complete, to make fully perfect the word of God. It wasn't the last book, but it was the last doctrine, the last great truth to be revealed. The Apostle John had made known the great truth of the Father, and the last truth to be revealed. In it, the word of God was completed, was the truth of the mystery, Christ, and the church. Before this was made known, then the edifice of revelation was incomplete. [00:25:02] Now, after Sardis, the work of the recovery of the truth that was there in the word of God all the time, it was incomplete. The process of the recovery of lost truth was not complete, but under God, J. N. Darby was the person who was raised up providentially to do this, and it's a very interesting thing to me. If anyone doubts this question, it's a very interesting thing to me that even the enemies of the truth have had to confess to this. I've sometimes asked myself strange questions, like if we were to take other movements, other movements of the last 200 years, the last 150 years, and say, how do we know that these aren't Philadelphia? How do we know that these aren't the great prime result of a special [00:26:03] providential intervention of God? We think of General Booth, a very great man in many ways, a very great man in many ways, a man who did some wonderful things, and his followers are greatly devoted people, devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, devoted to the spread of the gospel, devoted to the compassions of God. But we can see that there was absolutely nothing at all distinctive about an advance in the knowledge of revealed truth in that movement. It could not possibly be that which is required to come after Sardis. Many would say, surely the charismatic movement is what we want. You and I don't say that, but other people would very likely answer us and say, that's what it really is. It's the revival of really spiritual truth. Now, of course, I can't stop at this moment to speak about that, but there are one or two points which make it absolutely [00:27:04] plain that this is not of God. When you think of all the centuries that intervened between the scripture days and the days of the last hundred years, then obviously tongues and miraculous gifts have ceased. Well, now the Holy Scripture expressly speaks about that kind of state affairs. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, we have what is tantamount to being a scale of values in spiritual gifts, and nobody could imagine that the apostle Paul is putting tongues at the top. In the scale of values of spiritual gifts, it's at the bottom, and yet he says, covet earnestly the best gifts. If you haven't got it, you are not to spend your nights praying for it. You are not to covet it. It's not the thing to be sought for. It's edification. It's the best gifts that we are to seek for. And therefore, you see, it couldn't possibly be that, as the [00:28:06] continuance of the line of things suggested by the imperfections. But what I'm saying concerning the work of that servant of God who called himself unknown and yet well-known bears the marks exactly of being used by God to recover the last part of revealed truth so that the whole New Testament truth of God is made known. I've written down what two of his enemies have said. They might not like to be called that, but it seems to me very plain that the name is justified. Code. C-O-A-D. Code. He says at the same time in the early 1830s, he was developing his

characteristic contrast between the earthly, in inverted commas, hopes of the Jewish church [00:29:08] and the heavenly, in inverted commas, the heavenly hopes of the Christian church. Now, when I write that down, I write sick and sick and sick because he uses terms that the gentleman himself would never have used, but he's got to admit that he was the first person who really saw the contrast, the sharp contrast between the earthly hopes of Israel and the heavenly hopes of the church. A person whose word is very much more to be held in esteem, it seems to me, is Ian Murray, the secretary of the Banner of Truth. He held that the church is Christ's mystic body and will be complete at the rapture. The Jews and Gentiles converted [00:30:02] after the rapture will never be Christ's bride. I deny that saints before Christ's first coming or after his second are part of the church. You see, the distinct calling of the church to be a heavenly body, to be the bride of Christ, they think that they're saying something vituperative about it. They think that they're saying something condemning what he said, but thereby doing this, they're absolutely admitting that the one who under God brought this out. So, the saints have had it as the very breath of their new life ever since was the person that I've named. Now, the particular providential aspect of it is this, it seems to me. I don't know whether you remember the story of the Reformation going back to this providential interposition once again, but it was not only that Luther saw the doctrine of [00:31:07] justification by faith. He was taught that himself from a long memory. I'm not quite sure of the name of the superior monk who taught it to him, but I think it was Staupitz. He was taught it by another monk, and that monk was doubtless taught it by another. The truth of justification by faith was known and deeply treasured by certain individuals, but it was in the providence of God that a man of iron came out who with the strength given by God could stand against the pope and the church and the emperor and the empire. It was the two together, the truth and the vessel for the establishment of that truth in its right place was what was the providential intervention. Well, J. N. Darby was not only a person of given that special insight into the truth of God to [00:32:04] bring to us that which is most precious to the Father and the Son and is precious to us and is the subject of our fellowship and worship, but he was a man of such tremendous energy and selfless toil that he traveled over the world and he was given providentially a long, long life. And at the end of his life, there were in all the English-speaking countries and in all Western Europe something like 1,500 assemblies where these truths were the very breath of life, the very treasure which they possessed. And every time one of those assemblies goes off the book, then we have failed to hold fast. A tremendous part played in holding fast is the maintenance, the care, the pastoral care, the growing by the gospel of those assemblies where that truth is [00:33:02] known. And it's the very substance of the communion of saints and the prayers of the saints to hold it fast. It's a very important part of holding it fast that we should be increased and confirmed in the individual assemblies. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Every prayer meeting that's given up, every meeting which becomes small and fades away is just another failure in holding fast. It's one aspect of the failure but we must never think lightly of it because it's a very serious thing that the area over this which this treasure is treasured in the hearts of the saints is diminishing by these sad events that we see around us. Now let us come back for a few moments to speak about the marks of this church which I spoke of in the first place. A little strength. Now I'm personally convinced [00:34:08] and I should think most of you are already personally convinced that the best example we have of the meaning of that little strength is in the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah. There was no priest with Urim and Thummim. There was no Shekinah glory to fill the temple.

Only a tiny proportion of what I believe to be the millions of Jews to whom the opportunity was given of the open door to return and occupy the old ground and have the eye and heart of God upon them as it was in the days of Malachi. It was indeed a little strength but the eye of God was there and the heart of God was there and the moment that we get to think that we've got a lot of strength then we are slipping off into the position occupied by a Thyatira or a Sardis. [00:35:06] The brethren of former

times were very very frequently quoting to each other and I'm not quite sure that I get the words in exactly the right order but it's from the prophets and it says that they are an afflicted and poor people but their trust is in the name of the Lord and that's what we are and that's what we want to continue to be an afflicted and poor people understanding ourselves to be such but above all our trust is in the name of the Lord because you see that's the next thing they kept his word and they did not deny his name. Now we were once known to be a people who knew the word and older people are still people who know the world very well indeed but oh how much we want to be careful about this. I have read and many of you will read I won't in [00:36:08] this case disclose the author but many of you will read have read about a lady who had been brought up in an evangelical family and she was heard to declare her belief that the story of the woman at Sychar's well would be found in the gospel of Saint Luke. Now the writer said now no earnest sister would ever have been guilty of such a blunder not only from the habit of turning to it in the pages of Saint John but because of an intense if inarticulate certainty of its Johannine character and of course this is intended to be a joke but it is it's exactly true. We should be we rejoice to be we desire to be a people who keep his word keep that means treasure [00:37:06] that means God we want to be a people who treasure that is we possess it it's our own and we continue through life in making it our own and doing what the Jews did not do being brought by it to the Lord himself who is eternal life and it says they have not denied his name. Well of course I suppose one of the central ideas of the name is it means the person himself is absent and those who did not deny his name they gave the honor due to him they gave the honor due to him to his name which was the gathering center here upon earth. There's a very wonderful pictures of what the importance is of assembling to the name of doing all honor to the [00:38:03] name of the Lord. Little Samuel when he was brought up he had a father who went to Shiloh and that was the very first place Jeremiah told us where the name of the Lord was placed. He was brought up in a home where they were diligent in keeping to the practice of gathering together to the name of the Lord. A people who keep have kept his word and have not denied his faith and then of course I did mention that the very name Philadelphia signifies brotherly love and how much we do desire recognizing the great love that God has set upon us recognizing all that's contained in the words of the Lord Jesus as I have loved you he says this is my commandment that ye love one another.

[00:39:02] There's not time for me at this particular moment to give the final touch to the explanation of this providential intervention but it's a theme that is very well worth inquiring for and in in in sticking fast to it and that is I've spoken about the establishment under God of assemblies marked by their rejoicing in the treasure of the knowledge of Christ and the church the love of Christ how he loved it and gave himself for it the love of Christ that passeth knowledge I've spoken about the fact that the establishment of churches where this was known was the essential part of the providential intervention of God like it wasn't only the truth of justification that made Luther that intervention but the fact that he was a man [00:40:05] formed by God to take on these immense powers and not to be got down by them and that is that there were special certain special scriptures that were used in this great work when the work was done in Dublin and in Plymouth then there was a good deal of feeling the way there that the the the constraint was at first of all the Church of England perhaps the people who call themselves Jews and are not but the synagogue of Satan the constraint was first of all the Church of England not very long after the constraint was the tongues movement under Edward Irving and when he went to Geneva the constraint was the reformed faith which means the Calvinist faith well by the time he got to Geneva the truth regarding the gathering of the saints [00:41:03] had become clear before that there was a good deal of trial and error and taking a wrong step step of being helped by the law to write it again but by the time he came to Geneva the scriptures were clear in his mind and from that time forth almost like wildfire the knowledge of these things spread there were five particular scriptures and I'll only mention the first two the first one was let him that nameth the name

of Christ depart from iniquity it's absolutely impossible to treasure these things that always being questioned by others unless we are in a separate position and that separate position is an absolutely fundamental part of the intervention of God the establishment of a separate position so that these things could be enjoyed in peace I cannot name the wells that Elijah that Isaac re-dug but he expended his toil upon reading the [00:42:05] wells that was a tremendous thing which we all ought to do every generation must re-dig the wells for itself and if every generation doesn't re-dig the wells for itself then the wells will cease to be enjoyed but it was only when he got into the position where he was the well was called rest or peace in other words he moved away and moved away and moved away but it was only when he really left the philistines that he could enjoy the wells in peace and so it is it's only in a separated position that we can enjoy the things that are disputed all the time you cannot have as some of the meetings have found out you cannot have a peaceful constructive bama reading studying the word of God you've got somebody who is always wanting to argue that there's no millennium it's a bee in his bonnet always and he can't leave it alone and there's no peace to enjoy the [00:43:06] presence of the Lord and the precious things that we can enjoy if we are left in peace to do so let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity and the second was that seeing those scriptures in second Timothy were all individual scriptures then the question arose did God intend in making that a personal matter let him that nameth the name of Christ depart if a man purge himself from these all intensely individual we must become separate as individuals that's the clear teaching of holy scripture we must become separate as individuals but then was it the will of God that they should continue as separated individuals no one can understand when they were thinking like this and they were seeking light from God what heavenly music was in the words [00:44:07] where two or three are gathered together in my name there am i in the midst we they might have said we don't have big numbers they might have said we don't have the best preachers but they did say as long as we are assured of the presence of the Lord what could we possibly lack and so it is of course the gifts will be given but the first thing is that they did gather together in the name of the Lord Jesus and in a certain way all the rest followed from this now my time is gone i'll have to move over the concluding verses of the letter to Philadelphia he says there are certain things that are said that the Lord Jesus will do there will be [00:45:02] opposition and he will bring this opposition in the end into subjection because he says i have loved thee and one of the most precious things about this letter standing in such contrast with the desperate defilement and corruption of the others the way that this church is in personal communication personal nearness with the Lord Jesus Christ the one who's writing i will keep thee from the hour of temptation the hour of trial i come quickly well we know that this is one of the great promises that the church will not pass through the great tribulation it's not alone of course and of itself it might only apply to certain parts but we know from the careful comparison of scripture with scripture that it is indeed true of every true believer he will be kept from the hour of tremendous trial that's going to come [00:46:07] upon all the world to try them and the great um promise that the Lord Jesus Christ says behold i come quickly we have often noticed that it is from sire tyra onward that the Lord Jesus Christ speaks about his coming but it's never just quite like this the personal speaking of the word something perhaps like the midnight cry the Lord Jesus Christ to this church says behold i come quickly and seeing everything has depended upon what he has done first of all he has become the savior he has given himself he has given his all in order that the pearl might be his in order that by his precious blood we might be cleansed and justified he is the one who has intervened with this providential action he is the one who's given these special promises [00:47:05] and in the end he says in that same personal note spoken to every one of us behold i come quickly and then hold that fast which thou hast now that's said to some of the other churches it's said to the remnant who had things precious but far removed from the completion of what belongs to the knowledge of the precious things that we've been speaking of the knowledge of the father and the place of the church in the love of Christ and its destiny to be with him in his glory it's in connection

with this that this call comes hold that fast which thou hast now that's the same word which is translated in the second timothy from which i already quoted that that which that good thing which has been deposited that that good thing that has come to [00:48:02] you then hold it fast guard it and the word really does mean that we've got to treat it like a treasure it's liable to loss by theft by corruption by corrosion and it's in this sense that we are told that we are called upon to hold that fast guard that treasure that we possess because the crown that comes from faithfulness to the lord jesus himself is the end of the pathway there are some wonderful things to the overcomer one that i love to reflect upon is the fact that somewhere in the stormy sects of the 19th and 20th centuries somewhere there are individuals who are preparing the bride that will come down as a city the new jerusalem out of heaven [00:49:08] shining with its streets of gold and its gates of pearl well there is no need of the sun for god is the light and the lamb is the lump thereof and god shall wipe away all tears from their eyes somewhere in the sects of the 20th century that city is preparing and the promise to the overcomer here is hit to him that overcometh i will write upon him the name of the city of my god the new jerusalem i picked that one out simply a matter of time there are four things that i leave that one with you to him that overcometh i will give that i will write upon him the name of the city of my god the new jerusalem that cometh down from god out of heaven