

## **A Philadelphia Christian**

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Jesus Christ “hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father... and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 1:6 and Rev. 5:10). “Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God”, Jesus Christ goes on to thunder to His *faithful* begotten children in Rev. 3:12.

As events in the Church and in the World clearly demonstrate how close we must be to the coming of the Son of Man and to the Day of the Lord as a “thief in the night”, we need to understand that we also live in those Bible times during which it was prophesied that “there shall be **two** in one bed”, “**two** shall be grinding together”, “**two** shall be in the field” (Luke 17:34-36).

In the very near future, Jesus Christ “will give *power* unto His **two** witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days” (Rev. 11:3). The time is soon coming when the very few faithful Philadelphians will be ‘taken’ to their promised place of protection from this time of greatest trouble ever on this Earth, whereas the lukewarm Laodiceans will be spewed out of Christ’s mouth into the Great Tribulation, (Rev. 3:16, 10).

The sure Word of God clearly shows us that those individuals who display the **Laodicean** characteristics, the ones who mainly prevail during this Laodicean era, **shall be ‘left’**; whilst **the faithful few shall be ‘taken’** to a place of protection (Matt. 24:40-41).

The scriptures in Luke 17:37 is closely connected to Rev. 3:10. Here, our Head promises that the *faithful Philadelphians* who “keep the word of His patience” will be spared from the Great Tribulation. This expression means that we must be *keeping our eyes upon* (Strong’s G5083) *the Divine expression*, which is *Christ* (Strong’s G3056). As we determine to continue to *learn* and *receive* God’s Word – His truth – we will then be “taken”, so we may be *received into an intimate relationship* (Strong’s G3080).

On the other hand, the “*blind*” *Laodiceans* who believe that they are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17), both physically *and spiritually* (Strong’s G4147: wealthy, fig. or lit.) will be “left”; because they *forsake* truth, they are *put away* (Strong’s G863).

Never was there a time as urgent as today that we need to personally ask ourselves the question, **where do I stand? Am I part of Philadelphia, or Laodicea?**

Do I uphold the standards of Jesus Christ?

*Philadelphia* means *fraternal affection, love of the brethren* or *brotherly love*. It’s thus obvious that one trait of being part of Philadelphia is expressing genuine love toward the brethren, which may also entail sacrifice.

### **Philadelphia Ministers’ responsibility**

We ministers must make certain that we fulfill the very high calling of having been inducted into Christ’s ministry – for service toward **His people**, who **are our beloved brethren**. **Together, we are all members of one Family**, about to be born of God as **God Beings**.

Through Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34, we understand that during this Laodicean era, more than at any other time, ministers have been very much responsible for *scattering God’s*

*flock*. See also Jer. 50:6. Every minister must look into the spiritual mirror of God's Word. We must continue to ensure that none of us become responsible for causing any kind of confusion and discouragement among God's faithful sheep. We have seen enough "shepherds" who have been abusive toward God's precious sheep. We must continue to fear God and always be mindful of His specific warning to the ministry: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them" (Ezek. 34:10).

A *Philadelphia* minister will thus be teaching, encouraging, protecting and serving the brethren in every way possible. *Philadelphia* ministers and lay members alike recognize that we are all human and therefore subject to error. This keeps us aware that Christ, as Head of the Church, will correct and redirect us when wrong, for the good of all. The *faithful* Christian understands that he will sometimes have to exercise patience here; Christ may not act immediately and may use a situation to test everyone to see how prepared we are to wait without slipping into rebellion.

Here's what God *promises* His faithful shepherds – His *Philadelphia* ministers – as a reward for their loving care and concern for His flock: "The elders which are among you I exhort... Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:1-4).

### ***Philadelphia* Christians do God's Work**

In John 21:17, Jesus asked Simon Peter whether he loved Him. "He saith to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus said to him, ***Feed my sheep***".

*Feeding Christ's sheep* was the formula that the apostle Peter had to activate, to prove his love for Christ. Loving the brethren includes nourishing them. Proper food must include instruction that reflects continuous deeper understanding of Truth, which will include a real understanding of that basic instruction that God had given us through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong. Proper Christian fellowship is another key that is conducive to maturing in spiritual growth. The apostle Paul recognized the vital importance of getting together more often, as we see that the Day of the Lord is approaching, so we may stir up and exhort one another (Heb. 10:24-25).

The commission that God gave His high priest and those who rally to his support at this time, immediately prior to the coming of the BRANCH, is to *walk in His ways* and to *keep His charge* (Zech. 3:7-8).

A *Philadelphia* Christian will thus be striving to increasingly develop God's mind as he daily harvests the fruits of God's Holy Spirit – His very characteristics (Gal. 5:22-23). A *faithful* Christian will reveal by his actions that he is **producing good fruit**: "But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance* ["self-control"]: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). A *faithful* Christian will be urgent in his endeavour to get ready, as well as help get others ready, for "the marriage of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7).

Here's what Jesus Christ states about this particular moment in Church history: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, **I stand at the door**,

**and knock:** if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:19-20). A *Philadelphia* Christian grasps that Christ is very upset with *Laodicean* Christians and that He is about to spew them into the Great Tribulation (Rev. 3:16). This will fill us up with great urgency to boldly “blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in (His) holy mountain” (Joel 2:1), as we zealously and urgently do Christ’s Work in love.

We must be living by God’s law of love, thereby expressing love to God and to neighbour as a way of life. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, **if ye have love one to another**” (John 13:35). A *Philadelphia* Christian will be eager and enthusiastic and deeply concerned for his brethren. He will be quick to forgive, and always ready to support and encourage others (Heb. 10:24-25). A *Philadelphia* Christian will always go directly to anyone who he may believe has wronged him, rather than talk about the perceived problem to others (Matt. 18:15-17). He will also have no problem admitting when wrong.

### ***Continuing Growth for Philadelphia***

God’s *faithful* Church – the Body of Jesus Christ – will never stop growing. God’s *Philadelphia* Christians will never be afraid of New Truth. A *Philadelphia* Christian **will continue** to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 3:18). This is in direct contrast to a *Laodicean* Christian who is characterized as becoming one who begins to believe and say that he has it all (Rev. 3:17)! To the *Laodicean* Christian, his church’s “doctrines” become untouchable, even when most important and timely new understanding right out of God’s Word exposes them to be in serious gross error.

When deeper understanding is given by Jesus Christ, we must be prepared to accept it and internalize it. A *Philadelphia* Christian will accept and understand whatever knowledge and deeper understanding God reveals that emanates from, and is supported by, His sure Word.

The *faithful* Church of God is set apart by truth (John 17:17). God’s truth establishes correct doctrine, which leads to UNITY. This, in turn, helps the Bride to be ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7).

In such an environment, God’s Government in the Church will function the way that He expects. It will be government from the top down, with Jesus Christ as Head, then the Pastor General, and the ministers in accordance with their various offices of responsibility and so on – ALL speaking the same thing (I Cor. 1:10).

This is the stuff a *Philadelphia* Christian is made of!