

# Other Open Doors

(Sermon Notes)

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Has the Gospel been preached to the entire world as a final witness – or is there more to come. Will there be a great outpouring of the Gospel to virtually every man, woman and child on earth?

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

The Plain Truth once went to eight-million homes every month – that was a great witness – but the two witnesses will go to billions and billions. The two witnesses will get everyone's attention by sending plagues and natural disasters upon those who reject their message. After three and a half years of being the object of every news program on earth - the Beast will finally kill them.

Revelation 11:9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

Revelation 11:10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Revelation 11:11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

Revelation 11:12 And the [two witnesses] heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

That will happen on Pentecost when all the saints will be gathered by God.

1Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

That is what we just saw with the two witnesses. This is the resurrection of all the saints who have ever lived – from righteous Abel all the way up to the very last faithful saint to die in the faith.

That resurrection will include the two witnesses who will have died only three and a half days before.

Isn't that interesting – we will know the exact time of the resurrection – to the hour – 3½ days before Pentecost.

1Thessalonians 4:17 Then **we which are alive** and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

'We which are alive' – we are going to be talking about that group today.

And we are talking about **Open Doors**. There has been an ongoing argument since the death of Herbert W. Armstrong over 30 years ago – whether or not the door is **open** or **closed**. Some church leaders say it both ways – depending on the circumstances and their audiences. Jesus said:

Matthew 24:14 And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The end has not yet come.

In Herbert W. Armstrong's last letter, all arguments about the work being over were dismissed, forestalled, and staved by him:

"It may be that the Work that God has given me to do is complete, but **not** the Work of God's Church, which will be faithfully doing God's Work till Christ, the True Head of this Church, returns... Remember brethren, this is not the work of Herbert W. Armstrong... The greatest work **lies ahead**... God's work must push ahead as never before. God is opening up new **doors**... (Letter, 1/10/86).

...the work will continue right on to the Second Coming of Christ (Letter dated 12/23/85).

The phrase, "Open Doors" became the hallmark of the work of the Worldwide Church of God. "The work of God," the "work of the Church," and "Open Doors" became synonymous and interchangeable sayings.

We had approximately 100,000 baptized members at our height. However, the apostasy revealed that upwards of 70% of those baptisms were not valid baptisms – because they fell away, going back into the world. If you include all the Sabbath keeping Churches of God today – baptisms are at an absolute minimum. God is not doing the same great work that He was doing – let's say – some 40 years ago. We are a **small flock**:

Luke 12:32 Fear not, **little flock**; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

True believers pale into insignificance when compared to the false churches. The Baptist Church probably baptizes 100,000 every year. The Catholic Church has 1000 million adherents around the world – they probably baptize 100,000 babies every day! The true Church of God today is not even on the radar.

Under Herbert W. Armstrong, it was taught that the "**Door was Open**" until the Philadelphians went to the Place of Safety! It was taught that Mr. Armstrong set the highest priority in going through the "**open doors**" of preaching the Gospel. Here's an example:

"Immediately after Mr. Armstrong rejected his salary from the Oregon Conference, God **opened a door** to preach the Gospel to a wider audience. In October 1933, Mr. Armstrong learned that KORE, a local 100-watt radio station, offered 15 minutes of free daily broadcasting as a public service. This was an opportunity to instantly reach several hundred listeners at once! Mr. Armstrong immediately went down to the station, and was given free airtime the following week."

Soon, doors were being opened around the globe to Kings, Queens, Prime Ministers, and world leaders... And so, the **Door was Opened** to preach the Gospel message. That is the way we've always understood the phrase "Open Door" to be used. The problem is that the brethren are 'once removed' in that scenario. The leader (Apostle, Pastor General, leading evangelist, etc.) or organization had an open door to go through – but the Bible never supports the idea that a Church corporation goes through open doors, while the brethren were simply observers.

This sermon will demonstrate that we should view the subject of "Open Doors" in a much more personal way.

God in His infinite love and wisdom has provided a **unique event** for only a relative few of the end-time Church brethren to experience. I touched on it a moment ago in 1 Thessalonians – "**we which are alive** and remain shall be caught up together."

The apostle Paul actually hoped to be a part in it – and thought he would – because he believed that Jesus would appear momentarily.

Every man who has ever lived has eventually died – even Jesus Christ died. But God has revealed that in these last days there will be a small number of faithful called out brethren **who will never die**, but enter the Kingdom of God without seeing death.

That particular event will be spectacular in nature because as a rule, living human beings cannot cross the threshold into spiritual life. Paul explains:

1Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Corruption" is a reference to things that rot in a grave. "Incorruption" is a reference to spiritual things that will never see decomposition – only everlasting Life.

1Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, [die physically], but we shall all be changed.

**We shall not all die!** We will go into the Kingdom alive! That's an **open door** into the Kingdom of God. That is an incredible statement to make.

1Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

God says to the Church brethren that He will set before those who have a true Godly love of the brethren an **open door** into the Kingdom of God. This promise is so revealing to the Church brethren – more so than a corporate opportunity to preach widely was referred to as the open door. When you see, “open door” do not think to yourself, “they” did the work – because there is so much more to “open door” than that.

God has “somewhat against” – that is correction for all the church eras except for the Philadelphians.

Revelation 3:7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things says He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, **He that opens**, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens;

It is not within the purview of man as to who enters the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an **open door**, and no man can shut it.

We just saw that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

The Bible speaks of this one act – this singular event of transmutation where **a few people** are changed from corruptible flesh into incorruptible spiritual beings.

That is a change from **man-kind** into God-kind. A change from **man-kind** into God-kind without ever dying. What a breathtaking **open door** for a few Church brethren against whom Christ brings no admonition.

Even Paul and all the faithful saints that have preceded us throughout the years have gone through the process of corruption in the grave. It is true, they will not miss out on anything because, in a flash, they too will be raised incorruptible at the exact same time when *Death is swallowed up in victory* (1Corinthians 15:54).

God is so very pleased with this small group of brethren that He will momentarily and miraculously suspend the laws governing life and death in order to literally save those brethren alive.

They will have lived extraordinary lives while on earth. They will have had faith in Jesus Christ – that His blood would cover their sins. They would have been faithful to the entire word of God – living the spiritual intent of God's Word. ...Even to the extent of continuously laying down their lives for the Word of God and to aid their brethren into the Kingdom of God. They will have overcome Satan. And, they will have been witnesses to those who at first failed to heed God's warnings – as we shall see.

So many in the Churches of God are failing to heed God's warnings. And yet, many people see the time of horrendous breakdown of law and order looming on the horizon – it is the coming Great Tribulation. It is prophesied that at the close of his 6000-year rule, Satan's great wrath will bring destruction on all the unprotected inhabitants of the earth.

Jesus Christ tells us to watch and pray always; drawing near to Him, that we may be accounted worthy to escape the near annihilation of mankind.

The devastation will be so great that there would not be a single survivor – except for Christ's intervention to save an elect few.

In God's great providence, He will **protect** a small part of His Church from the horrors of the Great Tribulation, and set before them an **open door** to the Kingdom of God.

Most church members are slated to go into the Tribulation, but it is not too late to avoid it. Do you understand that the Tribulation is the only way that many of the brethren will be able to make it into God's Kingdom? Right now, too many are not doing what God requires of Christians. They are not doing what God requires of them to be in His Kingdom.

The Tribulation is God's last great act of **love and mercy** on His end-time Church brethren to allow them to be made white in a blast furnace of refining.

If you or I found ourselves in the Tribulation and we saw that our friends were in the place of protection and safety – we would ask what caused us not to make the cut. Why were they chosen, and us rejected?

Picture this: Some are protected – while some are not. Those who are not protected – but caught in the Tribulation – will wonder how they missed out on the **open door** God has provided for a few.

Those whom God has kept out of the Tribulation will be the impetus to inspire those caught in the Tribulation to finally overcome Satan as well. Those in the Tribulation will know that God has a standard that they have not lived up to.

Revelation 12:4 And [Satan's] tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Satan tried to kill the young child, Jesus – more than once.

Revelation 12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne.

That is where Jesus is now.

Revelation 12:6 And the woman [Church] fled into the wilderness, **where she has a place prepared of God**, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

This verse – more than any of the others - is the basis of our understanding that a part of the Church will be protected during the soon coming Tribulation.

**The Church has a place prepared** of God. It is in the wilderness, meaning 'lonesome' or 'solitary' place. "In a place alone."

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

Revelation 12:8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels/demons were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

We've gone over how Christians **overcome** Satan before – but it is important that we review this distinction of who is protected and who is not protected during the Tribulation.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

They will have had faith in Jesus Christ – that His blood would cover their sins.

"By the word of their testimony" means that they would have been faithful to the entire word of God – living the spiritual intent of God's Word.

...Even to the extent of continuously laying down their lives for the Word of God and to aid their brethren into the Kingdom of God.

...they loved not their lives unto the death – and so God has set before them an **open door** into His Kingdom – without seeing death.

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Revelation 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

Revelation 12:14 And to the woman [Church] were given **two wings** of a great **eagle**, that she might fly into the wilderness, into **her place**, [of protection] where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

God uses this terminology - two wings of a great eagle – when speaking of delivering His people to safety as He did with Israel coming out of Egypt. **Eagle wings** to fly away is a symbol of **safety and protection**.

Exodus 19:4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Revelation 12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

Revelation 12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Satan throws everything he has at those protected Church brethren – but to no avail. So Satan goes after the lukewarm Christians who did not make the cut to be protected and go through the open door into the kingdom without dying.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the **remnant** of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Did you notice that – they have not fully overcome Satan – Their conduct is not sufficient for protection? If you read closely you will see that their robes have **not** been made white in the **blood of the Lamb**.

The third point shows that it is necessary for Christians to “lay their lives down for others,” as Christ gave us example. God's act of love in giving His Son defines the ultimate requirement of true love. It is sacrificial in nature.

Therefore, the giving of our most beloved possession – even **our life** in sacrifice for another's ultimate gain, is what God requires of us.

When that lesson is learned and acted on, a Christian becomes eligible, not only for protection during the Tribulation, but also for being caught up unto Jesus Christ without dying. Again:

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

They were not laying down their lives for the Word of God and to aid their brethren into the Kingdom of God – and as a result Jesus' blood was not covering their sin.

Satan attacks those Church brethren who are not being protected. They are caught in the Tribulation – while some are protected. Here is the good news – really good news.

God will graciously present one last opportunity to those ensnared saints – Church brethren – who have not yet learned to lay down their lives for their brethren, **to do so**. There is only one way for those caught up in the Tribulation to be saved. Those caught in the tribulation will have to repent and then **physically** pour out their blood unto death for having neglected to be **spiritual** sacrifices prior to that time.

They have not responded to God's scolding: This is most important – this is God's instruction to us – to the Church of God – right now – in this end time.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Repentance is the first thing – and yet the Church brethren are told to repent. Jesus is the **door keeper** – and He says:

Revelation 3:20 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.

'**Open the door**' It is not too late to be in the Kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:21 To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Luke 13:25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath **shut to the door**, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not **by the door** into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

John 10:2 But he that entereth in by the **door** is the shepherd of the sheep.

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door** of the sheep.

John 10:9 **I am the door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

James 5:9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the **Judge** stands before the **door**.

Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, **a door** was opened in **heaven**: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

Those Christians who have not learned to take a stand and lay their life down at this time, will have to do so in the Tribulation in order to make it into the first resurrection.

The Tribulation is God's last great act of love and mercy on His end-time Church brethren to allow them to be made white in righteousness.

It will be the most difficult task ever, but their sins must be covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 7:13-15 One of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou know. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the **blood of the Lamb**. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

End: Other Open Doors