

THE CHURCH WITH THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

Rev 3:7-13

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Introduction:

*There was a very cautious man
Who never laughed or played
He never risked, he never tried
He never sang or prayed
And when he one day passed away
His insurance was denied
For since he never really lived
They claimed he never died.*

A newspaper ad read: "Wanted: Congressional candidate with no previous political experience to defeat a man who has represented this district in the House for 10 years. Any young man resident of district, preferably a veteran, fair education, may apply for job." In 1946 California lawyer Richard M. Nixon answers that ad in a Whittier-area newspaper and launched his political career.

WE MUST SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE. Why?

I. We Have a Great Stewardship (7,8)

A. Great Message (7a)

1. Love—Philadelphia

2. Holiness

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;" (1 Peter 1:15) "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16)

3. Truth

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17)
"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

*The great English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon told of a **man who had been sentenced to death by a Spanish court.** Because he was an American citizen but also of English birth, the consuls of both countries decided to intervene. They declared that the authorities of Spain had no right to take his life, but their protests went unheeded. Finally, they deliberately wrapped the prisoner in their flags -- the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack. Defying the executioner, they issued this warning: "Fire if you dare! But if you do, you will bring the powers of two great nations upon you!" There stood the condemned. But the rifleman would not shoot. Protected by those flags and the governments they represented, the man was invulnerable.*

B. Great Authority (7b) "Key of David"

Note Isaiah 22:22 "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

God is not working haphazardly
He has a plan (Zodiac, Israel, In Tribulation, the 2 Witnesses & 144,000 Jews)

But now, the Church (Acts 1:8)
We have His authority

C. Great Era (7b,8a)

Note John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, **the works** that I do shall he do also; and **greater works** than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Consider: Travel, communication & printing press.

II. We Have Great Promises (9-12)

A. Concerning our Enemies (9) (politicians and religionists)

B. Concerning our Escape (10) rapture

Ladbroke's, a London bookmaker, takes bets against the odds of someone dropping in from outer space (Encyclopedia of Illustrations, p.1239).

Someone has counted 1,845 references in the O.T to Christ's return, plus 318 in the N.T., or, one out of every 30 verses. For every prophecy of His first coming, there are 8 concerning His return (ibid. p.1239)

C. Concerning our Exaltation (12)

"εξω ου μη εξελθη επι" with I Thessalonians 4:17b "...so shall we ever be with the Lord."

III. We Have a Great Responsibility (8a) "I know thy works"

What is 750,000 miles long, reaching around the earth 30 times, and grows 20 miles longer each day? Answer: The procession of people who are marching to hell without Christ.

A soul winner is one who never gets used to the sound of footsteps marching to hell.

*There is a sense, of course, in which every Christian has an apostleship. We are all of us to be witnesses, no matter what our other calling, profession or labor. A generation ago there was a wealthy man in the midwest who was an outstanding Christian layman. People used to ask him what he did. He would reply, "**I am a witness for Jesus Christ, but I pack pork to pay expenses.**" Your apostleship differs in degree but not in kind from the apostleship that was given by God to Paul.*

CONCLUSION:

Harold L. Fickett, Jr., wrote about a wealthy businessman who on his deathbed was filled with deep remorse. When his pastor called, he opened his heart and shared the burden he was carrying. He said that 10 years earlier he had been given **the opportunity to teach** a Sunday school

class of 9-year-old boys. Thinking he didn't have the time, **he declined** the offer. Now, however, deeply conscious that his life would soon be over, he confessed to the pastor that his **most painful regret** was that he had missed such a golden opportunity to serve the Lord by investing his life in the lives of those 9-year-olds. He estimated that at least **100 boys** would have passed through that class. **"My investments in stocks and bonds will stay behind when I leave," he declared. "What a fool I have been."**