

Shayla: What is the “key of David” in Revelation 3:7?

Midrash:

Revelation 3:7 HCSB "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "The Holy One, the True One, the One who has the key of David, who opens and no one will close, and closes and no one opens says:



This particular phrase is only found twice in the Bible. It is found in Revelation 3:7 as seen above and in Isaiah 22 where Adonai granted Eliakim son of Hilkiyah the “Key of David” and clearly meant the throne of Israel and the authority that came along with it.

- **Isaiah 22:19-25 HCSB** I will remove you from your office; you will be ousted from your position. (20) "On that day I will call for my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiyah. (21) I will clothe him with your robe and tie your sash around him. I will put your authority into his hand, and he will be like a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. (22) I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; what he opens, no one can close; what he closes,

no one can open. (23) I will drive him, like a peg, into a firm place. He will be a throne of honor for his father's house. (24) They will hang on him the whole burden of his father's house: the descendants and the offshoots--all the small vessels, from bowls to every kind of jar. (25) On that day"--the declaration of the LORD of Hosts--"the peg that was driven into a firm place will give way, be cut off, and fall, and the load on it will be destroyed." Indeed, the LORD has spoken.

This is one of several correlations between the books of Isaiah and Revelation. For example, the phrase “the First and the Last” is also only found in these two prophetic books.¹

Keys are representative of power, ability or authority. Consider the following passages:

- **Isaiah 22:22 HCSB** I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; what he opens, no one can close; what he closes, no one can open.
- **Matthew 16:16-19 HCSB** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!" (17) And Jesus responded, "Simon son of Jonah, you are blessed because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven. (18) And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it. (19) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven."
- **Cp Matthew 18:15-20 HCSB** "If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. (16) But if he won't listen, take one or two more with you, so that **by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established.** (17) If he pays no attention to them, tell the church. But if he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like an unbeliever and a tax collector to you. (18) I assure you: Whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven. (19) Again, I assure you: If two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. (20) For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there among them."
- **Revelation 1:17-19 HCSB** (17) When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. He laid His right hand on me, and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last, (18) and the Living One. I was dead, but look--I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the

¹ Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Revelation 1:11, 17; 2:8; 22:13

keys of death and Hades. (19) Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this.

- Revelation 3:7 HCSB "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: "The Holy One, the True One, the One who has the key of David, who opens and no one will close, and closes and no one opens says:

There are a few lessons that we can learn from the references to the Keys of David. First, simply receiving the keys do not make us infallibly authoritative. Eliakim son of Hilkiyah was given the keys but shortly thereafter gave away, was cut off and fell. The Church was given the Keys of the Kingdom but has miserably failed over and over again. Peter himself betrayed the Lord shortly after the statements in Matthew 16 and 18 were uttered.

There is only One who can infallibly rule – that is the Messiah, the Lord's Anointed. Small wonder that the titles "the First and the Last", Possessor of the Keys of Death and Hades and Possessor of the Keys of David all apply to Him. This is Yeshua ben Adonai as He now is. He is no longer presented as the Lamb, "Sweet Jesus Meek and Mild" but as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, King of kings and Lord of Lords.

The second lesson I see here is that it would behoove us humans to remember that any authority that we do possess is derived. Eliakim was given the keys and when he was no longer worthy, they were taken away. Immediately after Peter uttered the life-changing statement "You are the Christ the Son of the Living God", he was given the keys. Within minutes, when he allowed the power to go to his head, he was rebuked with, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me because you're not thinking about God's concerns, but man's."² It is when the Christ is present in the midst of His Church that she has authority. If we are to have any spiritual authority at all, we must receive it as a boon from our King.

- Matthew 10:1 HCSB Summoning His 12 disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every disease and sickness.

Since the authority we have is derived, there is no room to boast except in Who is our Lord. We may not take that authority for granted and we may not use it to abuse one another. It must be wielded solemnly, reverently and with compassion.

The third lesson I see here is that authority must be put to work. Listen to the Master:

- Matthew 28:18-20 HCSB Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

"All authority has been given to Me...go therefore." We are not to stand around congratulating ourselves on our good fortunes. We must not be like the wicked servant in the parable of the talents who did nothing with his gift. That one ended in the outer darkness. We must demonstrate our understanding of the value of the Keys by using them to free fellow slaves from the kingdom of darkness.

The key of David is the authority to sit on the Messianic throne and rule the world from Jerusalem. It is a promise to David that Yahweh made that someone from David's line would sit on the throne forever.³ There is only one person who is sinless and therefore may hold that key in perpetuity. Eliakim failed, Peter failed, the Church continues to fail – only the Messiah, the only begotten and sinless Son of God may permanently possess that key.

² Matthew 16:23

³ 2 Samuel 7:8-17