



**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS
27 & 28 NOVEMBER 2021
FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**“O KEY OF DAVID”
REVELATION 3:7-13**

- **Begin by reading the Scripture passage together.**
- **Review the video of the sermon if needed (see <http://www.brmc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).**
- **Feel free to discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.**
- **Remember to budget some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another, before ending your group session.**

O KEY OF DAVID and Scepter of the house of Israel, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens:

Come, and bring forth from prison the captive who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.

***O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home.***

***The captives from their prison free,
and conquer death's deep misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

Sidebox: What are the Antiphons?

Antiphon is a Greek compound word (anti - in return, phone - sound). Thus, an antiphon is a response to an original sound. In church services today, antiphons (often taken from the Psalms) typically serve as calls to worship or other responsive readings.

The Advent Antiphons are a collection of seven simple evening prayers (vespers) which can be traced back to the prayer life of the 6th century church in Italy. Individual prayers may be even older than this.

The Advent Antiphons help us recall and respond (hence the term “antiphon”) to the very character of Christ in Jesus, through the biblical images of creation, redemption, and ultimate restoration. In recalling who Jesus Christ is, we recognise that Christ is already with us, and we respond in faith, anticipating and patiently awaiting his glorious return.

Each prayer recalls a specific biblical title of Christ, as well a messianic prophecy from the book of Isaiah

- Wisdom (Isa 11:2)
- Adonai (the Lord) (Isa 11:4, 33:22)
- Root of Jesse (Isa 11:1, 11:10)
- Key of David (Isa 22:22, 42:7)
- Dayspring (Isa 9:2, 60:1-2)
- King of the nations (Isa 2:2-4, 9:6)
- Emmanuel (God with us) (Isa 7:14)

Discussion Questions

1. From Rev 3:7-8, what authority over people does Jesus Christ now hold as the (holder of the) key of David?

- Jesus Christ who is now seated at the right hand of God the Father (Ps 110:1, Matt 26:54, Col 3:1) now holds the key, and is also the door to (John. 10:7) God’s eternal kingdom.
- To his faithful church, Christ places before them “an open door that no one can shut”
- The church’s faithfulness to Christ was shown by their deeds/works (Rev 3:8)

- The church's deeds and faithfulness was not demonstrated by powerful acts, but despite being weak (likely in the context of persecution) and not denying the name of Jesus

2. In v.9 Christ commends the church despite facing opposition, disparagement, and even persecution from Jews who rejected his name.

- a. What does the term "synagogue of Satan" tell us about the type of opposition faced by the church?**
- b. Does specific culture / ethnicity / race define who God calls as his people? (Also recall from Isaiah series)**
- c. Who then comprises 'Israel' in the New Testament?**

- Spiritual opposition originates from Satan, who from the time of Eden has always used deception and half-truths to turn people (even God's people) away from God.
- God's salvation and restoration plan for fallen humanity has always been to have "every knee bow" and "all tongues confess" by turning to the LORD to be saved (Isa 45:23). This applies to all human beings, not just those of Israelite ancestry. This is seen in Rev 7:9.
- In the New Testament, Israel refers to God's people of all tongues / tribes / nations who receive and respond to God's gracious gift of salvation in Christ by faith.

3. In vv.10-13 Christ speaks of a future time of testing. Who is going to be tested at this time (v.10)? What is Christ going to continue to provide for his church during this time?

- This future time of testing will "come on the whole world to test those who live on the earth" (NET); the whole world and everyone living on earth will be tested.
- Some Christians hold to the concept of a "Pre-Tribulation Rapture" in which God will remove His faithful people from earth into heaven prior to the occurrence of major tribulations at the end of the age. In this view, these Christians will no longer be "living on earth" (v.10b), and thus are protected from "the hour of trial" (v.10a). The concept of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is most often associated with Dispensational theology, beginning in the 1800s.

- Other Christians, who find little Scriptural evidence for this concept of “Rapture”, see verse 10 as Christ promising to guard and protect his faithful church through this future time of testing. The church through Christ will be able to endure steadfastly, emerging as conquerors who overcome trials and tests. Verse 10 thus encourages Christ’s church to remain faithfully obedient despite severe persecution, because God will ultimately guard them. This view has been held by numerous faithful Christians through many centuries.
- This is just an extremely brief summary of the key issues. The entire matter is too complex to address in this study guide. Given the presence of alternative interpretations, we want to simply highlight two points:
 - The main point of verse 10 is that God **will certainly** protect and guard His faithful people. The question of **how or by what means** God chooses to do so is not explicitly stated here.
 - In your group discussion, you may find group members having different views on this issue. The following saying applies here: **“In essentials have unity, in non-essentials have liberty, and in all things act in charity”**.
 - All of us must note that the affirmation or denial of a future “Pre-Tribulation Rapture” is not an article of faith. It is a non-essential, unlike other essential affirmations, e.g. that Jesus is fully human and fully divine, that Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity, or that Jesus rose from the dead.
 - Regardless of our individual views, we can – and must – still embrace fellow Christians as brothers and sisters, even if we have different views about the “Rapture”.

4. In Rev 3:12, what ultimately awaits all those who through Christ overcome / conquer future testing? Jesus Christ as the LORD’s chosen servant was prophesied to “release prisoners from dungeons” (Isa 42:7). Instead of sitting in a prison, where will faithful Christians be when Jesus returns in glory?

- Those who overcome will stand as integral and permanent parts of God’s eternal kingdom, described as “pillars of God’s temple”.
- They will have God’s name inscribed on themselves (bear the names of the LORD, new Jerusalem and Christ).

