

Revelation Chapter 3 - Philadelphia

Background:

Philadelphia lies in a valley at the foot of a mountainous plateau in west central Turkey. The low dark hill in the center of the picture shows the area of the ancient city. The kings of Pergamum founded Philadelphia as an outpost of their realm in the second century B.C. The town was located along an important travel route that linked Pergamum in the north with Laodicea to the south. In New Testament times, Philadelphia was part of the Roman province of Asia. The town was devastated by an earthquake in A.D. 17, and for a time people lived in fear of aftershocks. Philadelphia was rebuilt with help from the emperor Tiberius.



Like other towns in the region, Philadelphia prospered through agriculture and related industries. The soil in the valley was suited to growing vines, making wine production an important. The flocks that grazed in the area supplied wool and hides for textiles and leather production.

An inscription from Philadelphia mentions a number of gods and goddesses. Zeus, the chief god, was said to have commanded people to be pure and to refrain from deceit, murder, theft, adultery, and other types of evil. There was an altar to Hestia, the goddess of hearth and home. The inscription also

mentions the savior gods, including Good Fortune, Virtue, Health, and other deities.

Scriptures by verse

V 7 Characteristics of Jesus that are used to illustrate this church: Holy, True, Key of David, Open and Shut. He is holy in His life, death, and resurrection. He will sit on the Throne of his father David here on earth during the millennium. – The Church should be a picture of Christ. **So, how are you doing on that?**

V 8 He knows their deeds, but they are not found lacking. Instead of condemnation, they only receive commendation. Jesus opened the door because they had a little strength (Greek – Dynamite), kept and knew the word of God and have not denied him. The church did not deny Him or His Deity. This was and today represents a Bible Church that defends the doctrine, serves others and is doing Christ's will on earth. **Do you want an open door in your life?** The recipe is here, maybe one of the reasons we are not seeing doors open is we are not following the recipe. **Are you looking for the doors that Christ has opened? How many open doors have you missed--or were simply unwilling to go through? Is it easy or hard to deny Christ today? How do we and society deny Him?**

V 9 At this point, one interpretation is that the remnant of Israel had already accepted Christ and had converted. To support this claim, there were 12 self-identified Messianic Jews in 1948, and the latest statistic estimated 15,000-20,000 in Israel today. One book explaining the plight of the Messianic Jews in Israel was aptly named "The Most Hated People on Earth". Under this interpretation, the rest who reject Jesus continue in a false religion looking for the messiah when He has already come. Jesus also says to the church in Philadelphia that your enemies will fall at your feet and know that you are loved by the Lord. **Considering the church was going through persecution at the time this was written how comforting do you think those words were to hear?**

V 10 We don't have prophets as the Old Testament did; we have the Word of God. Because this church kept his word and observed his commands, they will be spared from the Great Tribulation. **How about you? Will the Lord be able to say because you have kept my Word, I will spare you the Great Tribulation? Notice this tribulation is over the whole world – not just part.**

V 11 - 13 "Soon" means suddenly no man knows when. Hold fast so you do not lose your rewards. You can't lose your salvation because you can earn it. Paul says that if all of your works add up to wood, hay, and

stubble, you will still be saved (1 Cor. 3:12, 15). Rewards and crowns though will be earned. New Jerusalem is Heaven.

What do the rewards indicate? Remember, if everyone got these items they would not be rewards.

- Being a pillar in the Temple of God communicates your permanence, prominence, honor, importance, strength and security.
- Three names indicate you will be identified by all three – God, Heaven and Jesus in a Special and Unique way!

Where are you invested? Are all of your earning rewards in Heaven or are you settling for the rewards of earth?

As a believer, how does knowing the promises in verse Rev. 3:10 & 3:12 encourage you?

Application:

1. Examine the three attributes of Jesus Christ that are listed in Revelation 3:7. What things has Christ done in your life that reveals His holiness, His truth, and His opening of doors for the gospel? Are those same attributes reflected in your daily Christian walk? Give examples of some instances when each one was reflected in your walk, and some instances when you had an opportunity to reflect each one and didn't. Given the command of 1 Peter 1:15, what are some practical ways that you can be holy in all you do? What are some practical ways that you can stand for God's truth in the world? Finally, what are some practical ways that you can be more active in sharing your faith? Take this moment to make the commitment to reflect the attributes of Jesus Christ. Follow the practical suggestions that you have made, and be consistent to apply them daily.

2. How do you set up standards of conduct for yourself and your family? Are they based on what the world has said or what the Word of God says? The church at Philadelphia was commended because they kept God's Word amidst the pagan society they lived in. Can you be commended in the same way? What do you need to change in your life for God to commend you for keeping His Word?

3. Review the promises that Christ gives to the overcomer in Revelation 3:12-13. Have you ever desired to be recognized for some achievement? Compare that desire to having your name memorialized for eternity in the presence of God. How does that make you feel? Spend this time in prayer. Thank God for the security He has given you for eternity.