

A Journey Into the Heavens
Philadelphia - The Church of the Open Door
November 4, 2015

The sixth church to which our Lord sent a letter in Revelation 2&3 was in Philadelphia. This church was one of only two of the seven churches that receives not a single word of condemnation, the other being Smyrna. The church at Philadelphia was an actual local church at the time John wrote. It was chosen by our Lord because it had the characteristics of certain churches of every generation. Therefore, it had a very special message not only to its original readers, but also to churches and believers of all time. It represents the faithful, evangelistic church, or believer, who endeavors to win people to Christ.

I. The _____ (3:7)

The name Philadelphia comes from two Greek Words: PHILEO, which means “love,” and ADELPHOS, which means “brother.” Thus the name means “_____.” Philadelphia was located about 28 miles southeast of Sardis and the imperial post road that came from Rome via Troas, Pergamos, and Sardis, on its way to the east came through there. Thus, Philadelphia was an important military city in John’s day.

This city was often damaged by _____, which resulted in a fear that kept a large part of the population from living within the city walls. Today there still exists a town on the ancient site of Philadelphia - Alasehir, in modern Turkey, having a population around 15,000.

It should be noted that in Revelation 3:7 we have a description of Christ not previously mentioned in the book of Revelation.

The key of David is a reference to Isaiah 22:20-22. Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, was given the key to the house of David during the reign of King Hezekiah. This key to the house of David specifically referred to all the treasures of the kings of Judah, but it also figuratively referred to all the _____ in government that rested on the office, which was equivalent of prime minister.

Thus the Lord Jesus holds the Key of David, which is the key to all the treasures of truth, power, and reward. Jesus opens, and no one can shut; He shuts and no one can open. This key is also important because of Revelation 1:18.

II. The _____ (3:8-10)

Jesus says, I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it...(3:8). What are some of the things an open door can represent? (Colossians 4:3; Acts 14:27)

We are not told what the open door was at Philadelphia, but based on these Scriptures we have just read we can assume it was an important evangelistic effort. Christ also says in verse 8...thou hast little strength... This does not mean the believers in Philadelphia were weak, but they were _____ in number, and probably monetary resources. (II Corinthians 12:9)

What can be accomplished for God is not determined by money, buildings, or numbers of people, but by the willingness of the believer, or believers, to do the will of God. As Jesus commends the Philadelphian believers. thou hast kept my Word. We must never forget that “little is much when God is in it!”

The Jews whom Christ called the synagogue of Satan in Revelation 3:9 were probably using the same tactics as the Jews who were persecuting the church in Smyrna. The synagogue of Satan seems to describe a Jewish element that _____ Christ as Messiah and actively persecuted those who did proclaim Him as Messiah. Of them Christ says some day they will come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee (3:9).

This is reminiscent of something else that all who have denied Christ will have to do, as described in Philippians 2:10-11. We can clearly see the church at Philadelphia had both opportunities and obstacles. A Church that has no faith sees all the obstacles, while a church that has faith sees the _____ and knows Christ has all the keys, and can open any door!

III. The _____

As with the church at Smyrna, our Lord has no word of condemnation for the believers at Philadelphia.

IV. The _____ (3:11)

Christ assures the believers of their reward by saying... hold fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown (vs.11). Jesus will reward all those who faithfully serve Him with a crown. There are at least five different crowns, or rewards, referred to in the New Testament.

1. **Crown of Life** (James 1:12) - Endureth Patiently Through Trials.
2. **Incorruptible Crown** (I Cor. 9:24-27) - Having Self-Control and being Disciplined in the Christian Life.
3. **Crown of Rejoicing** (I Thes. 2:19-20) - The Soul Winners Crown.
4. **Crown of Righteousness** (II Tim. 4:5-8) - Crown for those who Loved the Lord's Appearing.
5. **Crown of Glory** (I Peter 5:2-4) - Godly Leaders who were Examples to the Flock.

Salvation is the gift of God: not of works (Eph. 2:8-9). It is received by faith alone. However, rewards (Crowns) are not gifts; they are given to believers based upon their works. Salvation has nothing to do with works, but _____ have EVERYTHING to do with works. Christ said in Revelation 3:8, I know thy works... and then the implication is He will give out rewards accordingly.

We can never lose our salvation, however according to II John 2:8 we can loose our rewards if we do not remain faithful to the Lord!

V. The _____ (3:10, 12-13)

Christ comforts this church by saying... I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world... (3:10). What is the hour of temptation? Though there is much disagreement over this verse, it seems most logical to conclude that to the original recipients of this letter it referred to the coming persecution of the Romans, but to all other believers it is a reference to the World Wide Tribulation!

Further comfort is given by the Lord in Revelation 3:12, Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God... It was a common practice at this time to memorialize the deeds of a distinguished municipal leader, a great senator, or an outstanding citizen by inscribing that person's name on a _____ pillar in one of the city's temples. This would serve as a permanent reminder of that person and his deeds. Thus, the faithful believers at Philadelphia were assured of special honor in heaven. To those in this church who had been persecuted and ostracized, Christ promises recognition and honor worthy of a distinguished citizen.

The phrase...he shall go no more out...(3:12) would have special significance to the believers at Philadelphia. They spent their lives fleeing the city at the slightest tremor and only returning when they felt safe. If they lived inside the city walls, these believers were always insecure and fearful of earthquakes. However, Christ is saying when you come to live in the Father's house, there will never be a need to flee in fear, for you will be secure and safe.

At the end of verse 12 Christ says... I will write upon him my new name. No one knows for sure what this new name is, but whatever it is, it will be the new name for Christ. (Revelation 19:12)

The letter ends with the familiar appeal...hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches...(vs.13).