

PHILADELPHIA was the youngest of all the seven cities. It was founded by colonists from Pergamum some time from 159 to 138BC.

The current king, Attalus II, who ruled in Pergamum loved his brother Eumenes that he was called Philadelphos, Greek for one who loves his brother. It was after him that Philadelphia was named. It was situated where the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia met. It was founded with the intention that from there, the Greek culture might spread to the surrounding cities and towns. The citizens did it so well, that by AD 19 the Lydians had forgotten their own language and were all but Greeks.

Philadelphia had one particular characteristic which has left its mark upon this letter. It was on the edge of a great plain called the the Burned Land (Greek: Katakekaumenē). It was a great volcanic plain bearing the marks of the lava and the ashes of volcanoes then extinct. Such land is fertile; and Philadelphia was the center of a great grape-growing area and a famous producer of wines.

In AD 17, there was a great earthquake which destroyed Sardis and ten other cities. In Philadelphia, the tremors went on for years; The historian **Strabo** describes it as a 'city full of earthquakes'. At first, the people acted courageously in the face of danger, but the constantly recurring minor shocks drove them to sheer panic. **Strabo** describes the scene. *"Shocks were an everyday occurrence. Gaping cracks appeared in the walls of the houses. First one part of the city was in ruins, then another. Most of the population lived outside the city in huts and were afraid even to go on to the city streets in case they should be killed by falling masonry. Those who still dared to live in the city were considered mad; they spent their time shoring up the shaking buildings and every now and then fleeing to the open spaces for safety. These terrible days in Philadelphia were never wholly forgotten, and people in the city were always waiting subconsciously for the ominous tremors of the ground, ready to flee for their lives to the open spaces."* It was eventually destroyed and like Saris, rebuilt by Tiberius and it went thru several name changes, finally back to Philadelphia. (as related by Barclay)

When the Turks and Muslims flooded across Asia Minor, and every other town had fallen, Philadelphia stood firm. For centuries, it was a free Greek Christian city amid people from a very different culture. It was the last bastion of Asian Christianity. It was not until midway through the fourteenth century that it fell (and was renamed to a Turkish name); but while it became a Turkish city, it still had a small community of 1,000 Christians until the early 20th century.

(Revelation 3:7) "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, "These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "HE WHO HAS THE KEY OF DAVID, HE WHO OPENS AND NO ONE SHUTS, AND SHUTS AND NO ONE OPENS":

HOLY:

holy (hagios) means **different, separate from**. God is holy because he is different from us;

(Isaiah 6:3) And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; The whole earth *is* full of His glory!"

(Isaiah 40:25) "To whom then will you liken Me, Or *to whom* shall I be equal?" says the

Holy One.

TRUE:

In Greek, there are two words for true. There is *alēthēs*, which means true in the sense that a true statement is different from a false statement. There is *alēthinos*, which means real as opposed to that which is unreal. It is the second of these words which is used here. In Jesus, there is **reality**. When we are confronted with him, we are confronted with no shadowy outline of the truth but with the truth itself.

(John 1:9) That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

(John 6:32) Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

(John 15:1) "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

(1 John 5:20) And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

(27 times: 18 by John in his gospel, his epistle and in the Revelation of Jesus Christ)

KEY OF DAVID:

OT Quote: (Isaiah 22:22).

Isaiah 22:20-22 'Then it shall be in that day, That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah; (21) I will clothe him with your robe And strengthen him with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem And to the house of Judah. (22) **The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.**

Matthew 16:19 **And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."**

He still retains all authority; if they should err in their binding and loosing, His will stands!

DOOR: see next verse; But, in this verse, think "**authority**"! **Only He** opens the door and **only He** can shut it!

(Revelation 3:8) "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

DOOR:

- 1) He is the new and living way into the presence of God.
- 2) A door of opportunity to proclaim the Gospel;
- 3) To open the Scriptures and reveal their truth;
- 4) The door to the Church that He builds

The church was commended for keeping the Word of Christ and for not denying His Name in the face of much persecution. AND, all this while they had just a little strength – therefore, they relied on the Holy Spirit for everything!

(Revelation 3:9) Indeed I will make *those* of the **synagogue of Satan**, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—**indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.**

Sadly, much Christian persecution came from the unbelieving Jews. The persecution was overt, fierce, and, in a sense, not much different than how they blindly persecuted their Messiah! In their coming **against** Christ they showed their true colors.

John 8:42-44 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. **(43)** Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. **(44)** **You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.**

“I will make” in the Greek means, "I give". The promise to Philadelphia is larger than that to Smyrna. To Smyrna the promise was that "the synagogue of Satan" should **not prevail** against the faithful in her: **to Philadelphia, that she should even win over some of "the synagogue of Satan". For until Christ comes again, and all believing Israel is saved, there will be "a remnant" that He gathers out of the Jews who** by grace have been saved through faith.

This is an instance of how Christ set before her an "open door," **some of her greatest adversaries, the Jews, being brought to the obedience of the faith. Their worshipping before her feet is not true worship as with God but more so to express their humble acknowledgement and confession of seeing a ‘gentile’ worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and His Son, called David’s Greater Son from Psalm 110.**

Warning: Internet searches of “synagogue of Satan” produce many (I’d say too many) links to sites that claim the “synagogue of Satan” refers to the Jewish people today and that promote all kinds of conspiracy theories about how the Jews run the world. This is a misinterpretation and misapplication of the verses in Revelation. The synagogue of Satan refers to specific Jewish communities that persecuted the church, not to any modern situation. Likewise, no modern circumstances should be used as an interpretive tool to explain a passage firmly rooted in the first-century Roman world. And, the bottom line is anti-Semitism.

One other aspect to this is cults (or false religions). Many churches claim to be the “true” Jews (Mormon’s, Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists etc). Several denominations, while not cultic, believe in replacement theology, relegating all Jews to the curses of God and all believers to the blessings of God. ALL of these are anti-Semitic!

(Revelation 3:10) Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Trial = a putting to *proof* by *experience*; And, the church there passed the test! NOTE: Jesus says “My COMMAND to persevere”! You can make up all kinds of excuses why you didn’t persevere, but in the end, it was plain disobedience!

(Revelation 3:11) Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

Quickly: When I come, I will come suddenly!

This isn’t a loss of salvation, but a loss of rewards; One who gives into the world’s ungodly systems, gives into his/her flesh, or yields to the devil’s temptations will lose their Christ-Like reputation and worse, may sully the reputation of Him who you represent. Therefore, whatever light you had, will be dimmed so that it can no longer shine.

(Revelation 3:12) He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

Many ancient sites have little remaining of their initial buildings; often, however, what we do see are pillars: huge cement columns that provided support for the entire building. We saw how earthquakes would destroy much of a town – but often, the only thing standing after a strong shaking are the pillars.

The church will also receive a strong-shaking from the world! I think this is especially true of our current world where religion, especially Christianity and Judaism, are viewed as a killing plague on humanity!

So, it’s easy to see what Jesus will do with the overcomers: they will help to support the life of the Temple of God! This is a reference to the Millennial Temple;

GO OUT NO MORE:

Given the context, it appears that this refers to the secure lives we will have when in the Presence of the King! No more persecutions, no more battles;

Write on Him: Couple of possibilities:

- 1) Many cities of Asia Minor honored a faithful priest who died with his name carved into a new pillar that was built in a temple for this purpose;

- 2) **Numbers 6:22-27** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (23) "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: (24) "The LORD bless you and keep you; (25) The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; (26) The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace." ' (27) "**So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.**"

Here are the three names:

- 1) I will write on him the name of My God and
- 2) the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God.
- 3) And I will write on him My new name.

Writing the Name of God is, I believe, a way of showing God's ownership of His creation, a new creation because of the work of His Son!

Writing the name of the city of God expresses His delight of allowing ALL true believers, regardless of their heritage (Jew or Gentile), into the New Jerusalem from heaven; **And what is the new name?**

Ezekiel 48:35 All the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand *cubits*; **and the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE.**

My new name: we gotta wait!

(Revelation 3:13) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "

Next week, we will be discussing the last church in the list of seven.

Then I would love it if you would all take some time **after next week** to re-read chapters 2 and 3. Please think about each church and compare it to ours. What attributes described in each church do you see in our church today. Be honest!

(Revelation 3:14) "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

(Revelation 3:15) "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

(Revelation 3:16) So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

(Revelation 3:17) Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

(Revelation 3:18) I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

(Revelation 3:19) As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

(Revelation 3:20) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

(Revelation 3:21) To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

(Revelation 3:22) "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." " "