

Philadelphia was seventy-five miles southeast of Sardis. It was the second largest city in Lydia. It was built upon several hills in a famous wine-growing district. Its coins bore the head of Bacchus and the figure of a Baccante (priestess of Bacchus). The population of the city included Jews, Christians of Jewish origin, and converts from heathenism. The city suffered frequent earthquakes, yet its duration was the longest of the seven cities of Revelation. In fact the city still exists under the Turkish name of Alasehir, or City of God.

It lies along a fault line. The region is highly volcanic and was constantly subject to earthquakes which probably resulted in much poverty. Even so it was renowned for its extensive luscious vineyards and was never entirely deserted. The earthquakes are amply recorded in history, a severe one occurring in 17 AD, which destroyed this city and eleven others. Sardis fared worse from the initial quake, but Philadelphia shook more frequently from severe aftershocks, traumatizing the population. Strabo noted the city was "ever subject to quakes". After Emperor Tiberius aided in their rebuilding, it took the new name of "Neocaesarea" (New Caesar). Under Vespasian's rule (69-79 AD), it changed names to "Flavia".

New Orleans did not host the first North American Mardi Gras.

Mardi Gras is believed to have arrived in North America on March 3, 1699, when the French-Canadian explorer Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville camped about 60 miles downriver from the future site of New Orleans. Knowing it was Fat Tuesday back in France, Iberville named the spot Point du Mardi Gras and held a small gala. A few years later, French soldiers and settlers feasted and wore masks as part of Mardi Gras festivities in the newly founded city of Mobile (present-day Alabama). To this day, Mobile claims to have the oldest annual Mardi Gras celebration in the United States.

Mardi Gras in New Orleans survived early efforts at suppression.

Mardi Gras got going in New Orleans soon after the city's founding in 1718. The Spanish, who ruled the Big Easy from 1762 to 1800, apparently cracked down on certain Mardi Gras rituals (though documentation from that period is scarce). U.S. authorities did much the same after taking control in 1803, banning both masked balls and public disguises. Nonetheless, they eventually accepted the festival's existence. The first recorded Mardi Gras street parade in New Orleans took place in 1837, by which time the city had transformed from a small backwater into a major metropolis. Twenty years later, six men organized a secret society called the Mistick Krewe of

Comus. By holding a parade with the theme of "The Demon Actors in Milton's Paradise Lost," along with a lavish grand ball, Comus reversed the declining popularity of Mardi Gras and helped establish New Orleans as its clear epicenter in the United States. This year, more than 1 million visitors are expected to attend.

It should also be mentioned that Wesley never did desire to build a work upon a denominational or sectarian basis. Though he was an Arminian in his beliefs, he did not want to separate himself from brethren on the grounds of doctrine. He was a good candidate for James: He based his eternal life on faith and works, or the living of the life, rather than simply accepting a creed or a doctrinal statement.

John Wesley died at the age of 88 having served God as few men would dare to even think they might.

Open Door

Part Five (Philadelphia)

Introduction:

So far in our studies we are finding that the churches of Asia Minor have been unfaithful with the only exception being Smyrna. Well, Philadelphia will now be another exception. They are a faithful and strong group of Christians.

Text: Revelation 3:7-13

I. Historical Facts About the City of Philadelphia

A. Philadelphia was originally called "Rabbath-ammon, Amman".

1. This city originally known as Rabbath-ammon and was beautified by Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.).
2. The city was renamed in honor of the king of Pergamos "Attalus II"
 - a. He was given the title of "Philadelphus" because of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, who was the king of Lydia.
3. Philadelphia comes from the Greek word, "philadelphos" which means, "one who loves his brother."

B. Philadelphia was located about 25-30 miles southeast of Sardis.

1. Philadelphia was located on a main trade route from west to east.

It soon became a wealthy trading center. This city lied in the Cogamis valley. This valley served as a natural line of communication from Pergamum to Philadelphia via Sardis.

2. Philadelphia was first built by the Greeks to spread the Greek language and culture to the countries of Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia. Philadelphia had the characteristics of a border town.

3. This city was also known as Neocaesarea in the first Century.

a. It was also know as "Little Athens" because of the temples and other public buildings that were so grand.

4. Philadelphia was also a rich farming region.

C. Philadelphia's Idolatry:

1. This city had vast vineyards, thus, they worshipped Bacchus and Dionysus.

a. They were the god and goddess of wine, drama and fertility.

b. Coins from Philadelphia bore the image of Bacchus.

D. The city was destroyed by a great earthquake in 17 A.D. just like Sardis and 10 other cities in this area.

1. It was later rebuilt with the help of the Roman Emperor, Tiberius who waived their taxes for 5 years and contributed heavily to them as they were rebuilding.

II. He That Is Holy, True, and Hath the Key of David Rev. 3:7

A. Christ is Holy (Strong's #40 hagios "most holy"):

1. Holy means spiritually pure, clean, without blemish.

2. Christ certainly meets the criteria of this definition:

a. I Peter 1:18-19

b. II Corinthians 5:19-21

B. Christ is true (Strong's #228 "that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, real, true genuine" - Thayer):

1. There will be false Christ's come, to whom we are not to believe, because Christ is obvious in who He is and has forewarned of false Christ's (Matthew 24:23-27).

2. Christ is truth: (see 2 charts below)

Syllogism # 1:

Christ is God (Matthew 1:23)



God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)



Therefore, Christ cannot lie!

Syllogism # 2:
Christ is the word (John 1:1-5)



The word is truth (John 17:17)



Therefore, Christ is truth!

3. Christ says He is truth (John 14:6).
4. The devil is the liar and the father of lies, not God (John 8:44).
- C. He that hath the key of David:
 1. Keys represent power or authority.
 2. Jesus has all-authority:
 - a. Matthew 28:18
 - b. Ephesians 1:20-23
 - c. Colossians 3:17
- D. The reference to "he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" is back to:
 1. References to David and a key point towards a King (Jesus) and His Kingdom.
 2. Christ had the keys of the Kingdom and gave them away (Matthew 16:18-19).

- a. To be used on the designated day, at the designated time (Isaiah 2:2-3, Micah 4:1-2, and Luke 24:47).
 - b. The Kingdom would come with power during the days of the lives of the folks Christ was talking with in Mark 9:1.
 - c. The Holy Spirit would bring power, in Jerusalem, pointing again to the point made in letter a (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, and Acts 2:1-4). - The Kingdom was established in AD 33 in Acts 2!!!
 - d. The church will prevail over the gates of hades (power of death).
 - e. No man has power to close the gates of the Kingdom or open them. Christ told them the when! The choice was not in the hands of men.
 - f. God the Father will choose when people are no longer added to the Kingdom (Matthew 24:35-36).
 - g. At that time the Kingdom will be delivered up into Heaven (I Corinthians 15:24-28).
3. Those keys (authority), were used to open the kingdom to all men on the day of Pentecost, as people were added to the kingdom / church (Acts 2:47).
- a. The kingdom / church is what you are translated into after being delivered from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13).

b.

III. The Open Door (Revelation 3:8-10)

A. V. 8 "behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:"
 WHY "for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

B.

1. The open door reference is used throughout other areas of the New Testament. It means a door of opportunities:

- a. Acts 14:27
- b. I Corinthians 16:5-9
- c. II Corinthians 2:12
- d. Colossians 4:3

2. They had little strength (numbers, money, etc.), but kept the word and confessed Christ. See: Matthew 7:24-27

B. V 9a "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie..."

1. There were obviously some around (not in the church) the church here that were claiming to be God's people, but were liars.

a. Those claiming to be to be God's people failed to realize that the obedient to Christ are the heirs of the promise to Abraham, not a nation of a particular people (Galatians 3:21-29).

b. Jesus answered those who were by flesh Jews, but not in faith (John 8:31-47).

2. Smyrna was faced with a similar problem (Revelation 2:9).

3. V 9b "behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

a. Christ is not promoting the worship of man, but is telling them that soon these individuals will humble themselves before the feet of the brethren. Similar promises are made in the O.T. such as Isaiah 60:13-14.

C. V10 "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

1. "Kept" Strong's # 5083 "tereo tay-reh' -o": "to attend to carefully, take care of; to guard; to observe to reserve..." -Thayer

2. Notice the following passages with the same Greek word (noted by underlined blue print):

a. Matthew 19:17 "And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

b. Matthew 28:20 "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen"

c. John 8:51 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

d. John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

e. II Timothy 4:7-8 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

f. I John 2:5 "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."

2. The hour of temptation (trial) - a period in which there would be trials in their lives that will affect them and all the world, but Christ will strengthen them to be able to overcome (Philippians 4:13).

Conclusion: VS 11-13

V 11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

A. Christ admonishes the brethren to hold on to their faithfulness and not to allow anyone to take their faith from them. Christ will quickly (readily) be their to strengthen and protect.

1. To loose the crown would be to loose eternal life; see: Revelation 2:10.

V 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

A. In the ancient of days one who died having given outstanding service would have his name inscribed in a pillar as one who served faithfully in the temple of their god.

B. Because of our overcoming we will have a reserved place Revelation 21:3-7.

V13: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."