

Revelation Notes Chapter 3 – Continued

Philadelphia, The Faithful Church 3:7-13

The Church at Philadelphia could perhaps also be called The Little Church that Could.

King Eumenes of Pergamum and his brother, Attalus II, whose nickname was *Philadelphus*, each served as kings in Philadelphia. The city was named after Attalus II. The city was founded around 189 B.C. and was situated on a hill approximately 800 feet above sea level.

Philadelphia was located approximately 30 miles southeast of Sardis and was established primarily to spread the Greek cultural, also known as, Hellenism.

Jesus was so pleased with the church that he had only praise for them.

Verse 8

Christ' identification: "He that is holy, he that is true, he that has the key of David, he that opens and no man shuts and shuts and no man opens.

- "holy" depicts both Christ' purity and deity.
- "true" implies that Christ is genuinely God.
- "key of David" is a clear indication of Christ' Messianic entity.
- "who opens...shuts..." speaks of Christ' omnipotence.

"I know your deeds..." Christ saw only good things in the church at Philadelphia.

"I have set before you an open door and no man can shut it..."

- ***"The open door symbolizes a gift of missionary opportunity and spiritual usefulness to the church by Christ. It means that he gave them greater opportunities and privileges for service as a reward for faithful service."*** – Ray Frank Robbins, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Broadman Press, Nashville, 1975, p.75

"You have a little strength..." This was not a put down, rather it signified the reality that the church were few in number.

"and have kept my word and have not denied my name."

- The members were obedient to the Teachings and Principles of God's Word in the face of trials and persecution.

“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews...”

Verse 9

- This appears to be an allusion to the Jews who were persecuting the Christians. Who is a true Jew? See Romans 2:28-29:
- *“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; ²⁹but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”*

“behold I will make them to come and worship before your feet and to know that I have loved you.”

-MacArthur states that this means that some of those who had been persecuting the church at Philadelphia will actually become Christians themselves and in so doing, they will bow down in total submission to the Gospel. Secondly, in doing so, they will know how much Christ loves the church.

Verse 10

“Because you have kept the word of my perseverance...”

- *“hupomone” (Grk) = steadfastness and endurance in trying circumstances.” Ibid.*
- Because the church had been faithful and persevered the attacks, hardships and persecution, Christ made them a personal promise, i.e.,.....

“I also will keep you from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world...”

-Both MacArthur and Robbins, who are in differing camps on the end time view agree that this is a clear reference to the “Great Tribulation” which shall come near the end of time. This speaks to the Pretribulation perspective on Revelation.

Since it has already been well established each letters truths apply to all churches, it is easy to see the promise that is made here. Christ promised his people that they would be kept from the Great Tribulation, thus the concept of the Rapture is here substantiated.

Verse 11

“Behold, I come quickly...”

- This coming is not one of warning but one of promise. When Christ told the other churches that if they did not repent he would come quickly, He was speaking in terms of judgment. Here Christ speaks a promise which undoubtedly would have brought joy to the church at Philadelphia.

“hold fast what you have that no man take your crown.”

- grip tightly or cling to.
- True believers will persevere to the end and those who do not show that they were not true believers. See I Jn. 2:19.

Verse 12

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God...”

- True believers will have a permanent dwelling place in heaven. This imagery of a pillar is symbolic of the permanence and stability of relationship with God. There is no contradiction here. (See Rev. 21:22)

“But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. “

“And I will write upon him the name of my God, and than name of the city of my God...and I will write upon him my new name.

- The name of my God is a symbolism for the ownership of God upon ones being. Thus being indicative of the permanence of eternal relations with God.
- The name of the city of my God symbolizes security and safety. Ones citizenship is in heaven who knows Christ.
- My new name speaks of the fullness of Christ’s glory that we shall witness and learn of when in his presence. See I Jn. 3:2.

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Verse 13

The appeal for those who have spiritual sensitivity to take heed and obey.

The Church of Laodicea 3:14-22

Locale: Laodicea lay approximately 100 miles East of Ephesus and about 40 miles South/southeast of Philadelphia. The city was located on a plateau and was of great importance to the region. It was so wealthy that in 60 A.D. when it was devastated by an earthquake, the city officials rejected money offered by the Roman government to help them rebuild.

Laodicea was founded by Antiochus II approximately 255B.C. and was named after his wife. Laodicea had to pipe in their water by aqueducts which were several miles in length. This of course was easy for an invading army to cut off, even though the city itself was difficult to invade due to its natural fortifications.

Laodicea, The Hypocrite Church

Verse 14

The Address: “Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write...”

The Identification of Christ: “Saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.”

- Jesus’ every word is accurate and true. Unlike the Laodiceans whose lives were lukewarm and fickle.
- The “Amen” affirms that Christ’ judgments are accurate and unquestionable.
- Jesus is the Amen because he is confirmed all the promises of God.

“Faithful and true witness”

- Everything that Jesus had to say was trustworthy. Thus the Laodicean church could be certain that Jesus’ assessment of their situation was 100% correct.
- Illustration: Certificate of Authenticity.

“The beginning of the Creation of God.”

- Christ was not a created being. Rather, the Greek word for beginning here is *arche*, which means the source or origin of creation. Thus Jesus Christ is the very source or origin of Creation. **See John 1:3 and Colossians 1:15-17.**

Verse 15

“I know your deeds that you are neither cold nor hot: I wish you were cold or hot.”

- **Laodicea was the epitome of hypocrisy.**
- Jesus preferred that they would move out of their lukewarm state.

Verse 16

The Rebuke: Because you are lukewarm I will spit you out of my mouth.

- Lukewarm symbolizes insincerity, hypocrisy and self-deceit.

Verse 17

“Because you say, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing...”

- The danger of Pride
- The danger of Self-deceit.

“And you don’t know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

- Laodicea’s true spiritual state. They were bankrupt.
- Spiritually destitute, spiritually blind and spiritually naked.

Verse 18

The invitation to True Riches.

- Jesus invited them to buy gold tried in the fire.
- Jesus invited them to buy white raiment to cover their nakedness and
- Jesus invited them to buy salve (ointment) for their eyes that they might have spiritual sight.
- **This imagery pertains to salvation. Christ is inviting them to place their faith and trust in him. He alone is the way of salvation. The idea of buying here is similar to that of Isa.55:1.**

Verse 19

Tough Love

Jesus disciplines all who are his. The discipline is a demonstration of His love for the church and for individual believers.

Keep on being zealous
Repent.

Verse 20

The Invitation to Fellowship

- Jesus had every right to come against this church in swift judgment but here we see the tenderness of Christ, inviting those in the church of Laodicea to dine with him. This symbolizes a call to Salvation. He invites them to open the doors of their heart to him before it is too late. When the night of judgment comes it will be too late.
- “Sup with him and he with me”, symbolizes the fellowship that would exist between Jesus and those who open their hearts to him as Savior.

Verse 21

Reigning with Christ

Believers will reign with Christ. (See II Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:6; I Cor. 6:3).

Verse 22

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

This letter ends as all others. An appeal is made to those hearing or receiving this message to give heed to what has been shared by the Holy Spirit.

The truths are for all churches.