

Equipping Hour

The Church

The Seven Churches in Revelation

Philadelphia

Key Verse: 1 Thessalonians 1:6–8

“You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.”

Overview

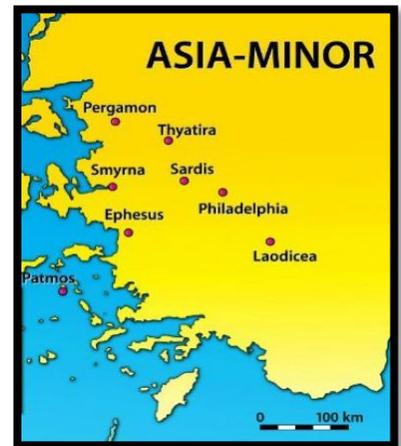
Philadelphia was located about 30 miles southeast of Sardis. It was centered between a dying church to the north and a useless church to the south. The church at Philadelphia is only one of two churches that are never rebuked by Christ (the other being Smyrna).

The city of Philadelphia was the youngest of the seven cities, founded around 189 BC by Attalus II who was king of Pergamum. Attalus II was devoted to his brother, King Eumenes, and was given the nickname *Philadelphus* (“brother lover”). Thus, the city was named in honor of Attalus II. Today, in modern Turkey, it is known as Alasehir.

Philadelphia was founded to be a center of Greek culture and language. It was intended to be an outpost for missionaries who wanted to spread Hellenism (admiration of Greek ideas, style, and culture) to the regions of Lydia and Phrygia to the east. By AD 19, the Lydian language had been replaced by Greek.

The city was located at a junction that connected several important trade routes. One of those was a major trade route called the Imperial Post Road. This earned it the title “gateway to the East.” It was located on the edge of a volcanic region with fertile soil and was constantly under the threat of seismic activity. The earthquake of AD 17 hit Philadelphia, along with Sardis, and many other cities in the region. Over the next 20 years, the city experienced frequent aftershocks that caused great fear among the people. The memory of the great earthquake caused many to live in huts and booths outside of the city.

Caesar Tiberius gave financial aid to help rebuild Philadelphia, so the city joined with many other cities in erecting a monument to him. For several years, the city actually changed its name to Neocaesarea in honor of Caesar Tiberius. The fertile soil made it ideal to grow vineyards and led to the worship of Dionysus, the god of grape harvest, winemaking, vegetation, and fertility.



The Letter

Revelation 3:7

1. Who is the angel? _____

2. What four ways does Christ describe Himself?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

The Commendation

Revelation 3:8-11

1. What did Christ know about them? _____
2. In what four ways is the church described?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
3. What did Christ promise to bless this church with?
 - a. v.8: _____
 - b. v.9: _____
 - c. v. 10: _____
 - d. v. 11a: _____
 - e. v. 11b: _____

The Command

Revelation 3:11

1. What does Christ command the church to do? _____

The Challenge

Revelation 3:12–13

1. Who is this challenge given to? _____
2. What does Christ promise to give those who overcome?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

“Philadelphia proves to be a noteworthy church. Though its appearance was not spectacular, Philadelphia’s faithfulness shows us the power of a congregation that pleases Christ.”
—Richard Mayhue

Application

1. What are we doing to pursue effective gospel ministry?
2. How do Christ’s promises motivate us to be a faithful church?