

## Jesus Wants an Impactful Church

(Revelation 3:7-13)

### Churches so far:

- **Ephesus** (symbolizing the apostolic church, A.D. 30-100)
- **Smyrna** (symbolizing the persecuted church, A.D. 100-312)
- **Pergamum** (symbolizing the church married to the world, A.D. 300-500)
- **Thyatira** (symbolizing the church of Middle Ages, A.D. 500-1500)
- **Sardis** (symbolizing the church of the Reformation, A.D. 1517-1800)
- **Philadelphia** (symbolizing the faithful, Christ-honoring, zealous, missionary-minded church that is in love with Jesus Christ, bringing glory to God, A.D. 1750-1900 AD)



Photo: ancient Philadelphia ruins

Dr. Daniel Akin states, "Philadelphia was located at a strategic cross-section of trade routes in the Hermus River Valley about 28 miles SE of Sardis and 100 miles due west of Smyrna. A main highway connected Smyrna and Philadelphia and the imperial post road ran through the city as well. Philadelphia was destroyed by earthquake in AD 17 but rebuilt with the help of Tiberius Caesar. Its loyalty to Rome was strong. A prosperous and strong fortress city, the city was meant to be a 'missionary city' for the spread of Greek culture to the east. Rightly was it called 'the gateway to the East.'

"Philadelphia's name, meaning 'brotherly love,' honors and remembers the loyalty and love of Attalus II to his brother Eumenes II. When a false rumor got out that Eumenes had been assassinated, Attalus took his crown. When his brother returned alive from Greece, Attalus relinquished the crown without debate. Later Rome encouraged Attalus to overthrow his brother, but he again remained faithful to Eumenes."<sup>1</sup>

**Revelation 3:7-13 (NKJV) – Bible passage [my explanatory notes]**

<sup>7</sup> "And to the angel [messenger/pastor] of the church in Philadelphia [brotherly love] write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, [literally "the holy One" and "the true One"] "He who has the key of David [the key to the eternal kingdom], He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens":

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Akin manuscript, "The Church that Honors Jesus" (Revelation 3:7-13), [www.danielakin.com](http://www.danielakin.com).

## Extra Notes:

- Isaiah 22:22 – “I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; what he opens, no one can close; what he closes, no one can open.” Robert Mounce says, “The language of Isaiah is used to present Christ as the Davidic Messiah with absolute power to control entrance to the heavenly kingdom.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>8</sup> “I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door [for impactful ministry and missions], and no one can shut it; for **[BECAUSE]** you have a little strength [limited strength, or ESV “little power”], have kept My word, and have not denied My name.

- “I have set before you an open door” - This faithful church needed to also seize their opportunities to share the Gospel. Jesus had opened the door BECAUSE of their faithfulness. (See 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Acts 14:27.)
- “you have a little strength” – “[This] means that the church lacked size and stature in the community and was looked down upon and persecuted. They had ‘little authority’ or influence. But they were faithful, and that has always been the test of divine blessing rather than success.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie [true Jews or “truly the people of God” were circumcised of the heart – or separated unto God in the heart – see Romans 2:28-29] – indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. [because of their faithfulness, some of these same people who persecuted them would acknowledge Christ as Lord one day.]

<sup>10</sup> 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 [I believe this as a reference to the rapture of the church before the Great Tribulation (see Rev. 6-18), because it is referencing the trial that will be world-wide – see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18], to test those who dwell on the earth.

<sup>11</sup> Behold, I am coming quickly! [this is an **encouraging** word for these believers] Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.

<sup>12</sup> 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 [Akin says, “The names signify who my God is, where my home is and who my Lord is! I belong to the Father, heaven is my home, and Jesus is my Lord.”].

- “To a people continually threatened by earthquakes and the need to flee the city when they come, this word would speak powerfully to their hearts. **Alan Johnson notes, ‘Often the only parts of a city left standing after a severe quake were the huge stone temple columns [pillars]’** (Revelation, 1983, 61).”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>13</sup> “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’

<sup>2</sup> Robert Mounce, *Revelation*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 100.

<sup>3</sup> Grant Osborne, *Revelation: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2002), 189.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 98.