

## *Lesson 9* The Church of Philadelphia – the missionary church/ the persevering church

Let's start out with a real quick review on the 5 churches that we have looked at so far: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, and Sardis.

What did Jesus have against each one of these churches?

The Church of Ephesus was so busy doing good works that they forgot to pay attention to their relationship with God and His Son.

God was not displeased at all with the Church of Smyrna. Jesus had nothing against them. They were only told to be faithful until death; and they would indeed suffer severe persecution.

False teachings were infiltrating the Church of Pergamum, both from those who followed the teachings of Balaam, and also those who followed the teachings of the Nicolaitans. Those who taught Balaam incited those in the church of Pergamum to commit acts of immorality and to eat things sacrificed to other gods.

Some of those who were in the Church of Thyatira were tolerating a woman in their midst who taught and led some away from the faith. Again, the end result for their tolerance of this woman was that some fell into immorality and the worship of other gods.

Jesus addressed the Church of Sardis as a dead church even though they thought they were alive. They were to wake up from the dead and complete the deeds for which they had committed themselves.

### *Days 1-3*

#### **History of Philadelphia**

Of the seven cities known as the Seven Churches of Revelation, Philadelphia was the youngest city. Today the city is known as Alashehir or Antalia. The King of Philadelphia, Attalus II was very fond of his older brother, Eumenes, the former king, thus the name of the city of Brotherly Love. After his brother was killed in battle, Attalus II married his brother's widow. There is scant information on some kind of award for brotherly love, called the cognomen Philadelphus that was granted to Attalus because of the love he had for his brother. This cognomen remained a part of this family's lineage and later became a part of their surname, i.e. Attalus Philadelphus. The two brothers were very much alike in height, features, and dress as found on coinage from that period of time. The land on which this city dwells, was obtained by the Romans in 189 B.C.

The people of Philadelphia worshiped the wine god, Dionysis (Greek) or Bacchus

(Roman). This area was well suited for the production of wine and it was situated on the road to Rome that made commerce with Rome, Troas, Pergamum (the city)<sup>1</sup> Sardis, and Phrygia very convenient. The commoners who sold their wares to the above cities were probably like some of our Coke or Pepsi products' drivers, stocking the stores with wine frequently in these cities. This city was also a missionary city of sorts; Greek missionaries were sent out from this city to spread the Greek language and manners. This area in modern day Turkey is subject to earthquakes. It is highly volcanic and has suffered frequent earthquakes. An earthquake in 17 A.D. devastated Philadelphia as well as Sardis and another 10 cities. It seems as though this is kind of a general theme for these cities in the ancient and modern world of Turkey.

In 17 A.D., as a result of the devastation from the earthquake, Emperor Tiberius of Rome, stepped up to the plate and supplied the area with financial help. In his honor, Philadelphia renamed the city, "Neo-Caesarea." Later on, the Emperor Vespasian of Rome changed the name of the city to Flavia after his family name. The name changes didn't stick, and the people eventually revived the former name Philadelphia. Because of the earthquake of 17 A.D., Philadelphia never regained the economic prosperity she once formerly had. It remained a Roman town until 1392 when the Turks conquered it.

The large Jewish community in Philadelphia persecuted those in the church. Ignatius, a Bishop in the early church at Antioch, wrote: even though these Jews were persecuting those Believers in Philadelphia, many of those same Jews were coming to Christ. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the very small group of Christians who are in Turkey today could impact their country for Christ like that? I believe they can. It will take a lot of prayer for them and a lot of intervention by the Spirit of God...and probably their lives.

As I am writing this study, thoughts of a 99% Muslim Turkey today, horrify me. Does God know each and every one of the Turks? Turkey is overcrowded today. Does God love each and every one of them, too? Do our prayers for the Turkish people make a difference? The answer has to be "yes" to all of these questions, but I find it mind-boggling to think about. This is an afterword, dated November 27, 2016: last evening during our Thanksgiving week service at church, we heard from many people in church who were thankful to God for the blessings, the healings, the provisions, the protection, that He has given to them or their loved ones. The first man who spoke told of his son who has gone to the Syrian refugees who are in Turkey and sharing life and the Gospel with them. Many Syrians are already Christians. Some of them are Muslims, too. As I listened to this message, my spirit, my heart, began to soar. What we think is a travesty (and it is) is also a huge answer to prayer. The Syrian Christian Refugees are in 99% Muslim Turkey. Will God be working through them? A RESOUNDING "YES!" Again, we need to pray for both the Syrians and the Turks that they would be ready for the King of Glory to come in.

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<sup>1</sup> Pergamous must have been the name for a larger piece of land than the city that later bore the name Pergamous or Pergamum. This is deductive reasoning on my part because I cannot find adequate information on this city's formation.

Now, back to the Church of Philadelphia. During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the city of Philadelphia defended their city against the entire Turkish army, and they withstood 2 sieges. They were a Christian city standing against the whole of the Turkish army. Finally, they were overtaken by a combined force of Turkish and Byzantine armies. Few Christians were left.

The Greeks occupied the city of Philadelphia during the Greco-Turkish war in 1919-1922. The Greek army retreated and on their way out of the city, they burned it. Supposedly 70% of the buildings of Alaşehir were destroyed by fire with an estimated 3,000 lives lost just within this city alone.

Supposedly, Philadelphia and Smyrna are the only two churches of Revelation who have any remnants in this land today.

“Philadelphia” actually means fond of brethren; fraternal; love as brethren.

What does the name of the Church of Philadelphia have to do with what the church was known for or how they excelled? Read the following verses and write your thoughts down in the space allotted.

**Romans 12:10**

**I Thessalonians 4:9**

**Hebrews 13:1**

**I Peter 1:22**

**II Peter 1: 7**

What does Philadelphia mean within the context of Scripture in **Revelation 3:7-13**?

**Title of Jesus used for the Church of Revelation**

What is the Title used for Jesus in **Revelation 3:7**? It's long.

Where have you seen something involving keys in **Revelation 1**? What other key does Jesus have according to Revelation 3:7?

## **Holy and True**

Two key phrases used in the description of Christ in **Rev 3:7** are “He who is holy” and He “who is true.” We will look at the meaning of these two phrases and the associated names of God.

### **He who is holy**

Look up the word “holy” in your Bible dictionaries or concordances. What does the word “holy” mean? You may want to return to the Church of Thyatira also and review what it means to grieve the Holy Spirit, and also what it means to quench the Holy Spirit. Write your thoughts below in the space provided.

To be holy is to be set apart, separate. God is holy because He is set apart from sinful man. I honestly don’t know how this plays out with the sinful fallen angels. I know that ha-satan supposedly has direct access to God (perhaps only when he is summoned, like Esther) and he has to report to God concerning the things he has been doing on the earth. See Job chapter 1.

Look at the following cross-references concerning Jesus and His holiness.

How did the demons address Him in **Mark 1:24**?

From this reference, we realize that the demon’s recognized that Jesus is the ***Holy One of God.***

Let’s explore the name of God, *the “Holy One of God,* and *the “Holy One of Israel.”*

The Hebrew name used for the ***Holy One of God*** is ***El Hakkadosh*** and the Hebrew name used for the Holy One of Israel is ***Qedosh Yisrael.*** I don’t remember exactly how many times the ***Holy One of Israel*** is used in the Book of Isaiah, but it is used a bunch. I use to mark this name in my Bible in the book of Isaiah as “HOI.” Holiness is grounded in God’s nature. He is absolutely and totally holy. By His very nature of holiness, He cannot be in the presence of sin. So therefore, He must live outside the realm where sin exists.

How do things or people become holy? Or is it impossible for men and things to be holy?

The only way for the Israelites to be holy was to be associated with their God ***YHWH*** via the rituals and sacrifices performed by the priests in the Tabernacle/ Temple. These set them apart from any of the other nations. For us today, in New Testament times, our holiness still comes through a relationship with God, but we are sanctified or set apart because God the Son took upon Himself our sin. He bridged that gap between a Holy God and sinful Man. God now works with us through His Holy Spirit because He indwells us. He puts His laws upon our hearts and He causes us to walk in His ways. He takes us through His sanctifying process so that at the end of our physical lives, we look

a whole lot more like His Son Jesus than when we were first saved. Do we ever get to the end point of total holiness in this lifetime? Can we be totally sinless in every thing we do? Some say we can. I just don't know about this. We are told in the New Testament that we are to be holy as He is holy, so we are at the least to have holiness as a goal to meet. All I know is that He has a long way to go with me. Read **Hebrews 10:14-17**.

How did the angel describe the child that would be born to Mary in **Luke 1:35**?

What was Peter's response when Jesus asked the twelve in **John 6:68-69** if they would also leave, as some had already left?

As you examine the description of Jesus, can you think of anyone mentioned in the rest of this message that was not true? See **Revelation 3:9**.

In which other church did we see this, "synagogue of satan"?

I think it is very interesting that these Jewish people who were persecuting the Church of Philadelphia, who said they were Jews, but really were not, and who were probably of those Jesus is calling the "synagogue of satan," may have been the very ones that Jesus caused to come and bow down at the feet of those in the Church of Philadelphia, and to know that He loved them. And oh, by the way, they were probably the Jewish ones who came to know Him later as their Lord and Savior, too. The Church of Philadelphia suffered and persevered through their persecution, but what they gained for the Kingdom was...**BROTHERS FOREVER**. God is good!

### **No Rebuke**

What else is common about these two churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia?

How does Jesus explain Himself to be in **John 14:6**?

What is Truth? Is this not Pilate's question he asked Jesus, "What is Truth?"

This is what the Apostle John, who wrote the Gospel account of Jesus' life as well as the three letters of John and Revelation, said about Truth in regards to Christ. See **John 1:14**: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Hebrew Name for God as "**Faithful and True**," is "**Emet Elohim Emet**," It occurs in **Deuteronomy 7:9**. Write this verse below:

## **He who is True**

### **God is Truth**

This is what is said to Israel immediately after this name is given in the text of Deuteronomy: “If you listen to these rules and faithfully obey them, **YHWH** your **Elohim** will keep his promise to you and be merciful to you, as he swore to your ancestors.”

God was faithful to them.

God is and will be faithful to you.

### **The Key of David**

What do “keys” do?

What does the “key” of David unlock?

The key of David unlocks the door to the kingdom. Jesus will actually reign on the political throne of His father David in Jerusalem during the Millennial Kingdom.

The Jews were expecting the Messiah to come as a conquering king the first time He would come to this earth. They were looking for a political king. At the time of Christ, they were looking for the Messiah who would come and overthrow Rome. In His written Word, God gave the Jewish people clues that He would either come in two persons, a Suffering Servant and a Conquering King, or He would come twice, the first time as a Suffering Servant, Messiah Ben Joseph, and the second time as a Conquering King, Messiah Ben David. This is why when John the Baptist was in prison, he sent some of his disciples to Jesus to ask if He was the One or were they to look for another.

What does possession of a key mean symbolically?

Peek at the following verses and tell me what authority was given to Jesus:

**Rev 1:18**

**Rev 1:5**

**John 5:21**

**John 5:26-29**

Where did Jesus get this authority? Take a look at the next three verses.

**Matt 28:18**

**Jeremiah 23:5-6**

Another Name for God is written in verse 6. It is *Jehovah Tsidkenu*. It means *the LORD our Righteousness*. Don't forget to write down the names of God in the Appendix provided.

**Luke 1:31-33**

Lets take a look at three of the Old Testament prophecies that speak of Messiah the King.

**Isaiah 9:6,7**

**Isaiah 22:22-23**

In the immediate and contextual sense of the Isaiah passage, this is talking about Eliakim, the king's servant, the son of Hilkiah (see Isaiah 22:20 above). Eliakim was given full administrative authority when King Hezekiah's treasurer, Shebna, was deposed. Look at this prophecy again, but this time in the light of the cross. Who will hang all of His Glory on Jesus?

On Eliakim's shoulder he carried a heavy key. This key was symbolic for the power to deny or grant access to the King. Even though this is symbolic of the King's servant, what does this mean in the sense of Jesus carrying the key here?

Who ideally crowns the King?

Ideally the king before the new king, during the time when the older king is weak and ready to turn over the Scepter, thus making a smooth transition of power from the former king to the new king. I am not saying in any way that God the Father here is weak. That's just not possible.

**Psalm 2:1-12**

What is this holy mountain in **Psalm 2:6**? To the Hebrews whenever the word "mountain" is used symbolically in the Scripture, it refers to "kingdom."

What does it mean that God the Father has installed His King upon Zion? Is this an actual, physical, political throne that God's Son will sit upon someday? The answer to this question will become very important when we study the Millennial Kingdom later in the book of Revelation.

What does **Psalm 2:7-8** imply about the King?

In **Psalm 2:10-12**, who will the kings of the earth be worshipping? How will they be worshipping?

**Micah 5:2-4**

Doesn't verse 2 send chills up your spine?

Verses 3 and 4 speak of the Messiah as the coming King. The Jewish people as a nation missed that Jesus was the Messiah because they failed to or chose not to look at the prophecies concerning the Messiah also coming as the Suffering Servant.

Another reason for their failure to recognize their Messiah is revealed to us in **Daniel 9:24-27** and **Romans 11**. Familiarize yourself with both passages of Scripture and then answer the following questions?

Should the Jews have known what time their Messiah was to come? Please reference **Daniel 9:24**?

In the book of Daniel "seventy weeks" is symbolic for "seventy weeks of years." This means  $70 \times 7 = 490$ , or 490 weeks of years. Simply put, this time period spans 490 years. The final week of years is given to us in Daniel **9:25-27**. What we find out in Daniel is there is a prophecy concerning a period of time that talks about 7 and 62 weeks of years which equals 69 weeks of years or  $69 \times 7 =$  or 483 years. Of the 490 years, there are seven years yet to fulfill this prophecy to completion or that completion will be at the end of 490 years. It just so happens that those seven years match up with the seven years of the tribulation. Coincidence? I think not all ye who can read and understand. The number of days in 483 years (accounting for 30 day months in the Jewish calendar and all the changes in the calendar that occurred) is 173,880 days. This time period starts the countdown of days from the day the decree went out from the Persian king to rebuild and restore Jerusalem. It so happens that in the Jewish calendar, this day we are referring to here is the exact day Jesus came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey and declaring Himself as King of the Jews. (We call this the Triumphal Entry in Christian language). Then Daniel says the Messiah will be cut off or simply, He would be killed (**Daniel 9:26**). This is what happened to Messiah the week following His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Plain and simple, the priests and the Levites, and those having access to the



Holy Scripture should have been at the scene of the Triumphal Entry to accept Jesus as their Messiah, the King. Instead some amongst the crowd that day probably were also among those who would be calling out for their rulers to crucify Him in just three short days.

Now, from **Romans 11:25** we see what happened to Israel, because they as a nation were not unanimous in their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah, the King. “For I do not want you brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in: and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove all ungodliness from Jacob.’” Remember Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. For a period of time, the Jews are blinded to the Truth of Who their Messiah is. It is true that most of the early Christians were Jewish, however, as a whole, collective body of the Nation of Israel, they rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

### *Days 4 and 5*

#### **Commendation**

What is the commendation to the Church of Philadelphia recorded for us in **Rev. 3:8**? Do you see a relationship between the description of Jesus as holy and true and this commendation of the Church of Philadelphia?

The Church of Philadelphia as a whole had been faithful and true to the Gospel message. They were just like Him. What else does He say to the Church of Philadelphia in **Revelation 3:9**?

Have you seen a parallel with any of the other churches?

Smyrna & Philadelphia

Ephesus & Pergamum

Sardis & Laodicea – (not yet, but) nothing good said about either church

Please look at the following verses, all from the Gospel account given by John. Write down the 7 “I AM” statements. Notice another “7” here in John’s writings?

**John 6:35, John 6:48, John 6**

**John 9:5**

**John 10:9**

**John 10:11, 10:14**

**John 11:25**

**John 14:6**

**John 15:1, John 15:5**

Now, let's talk about **doors**.

Who "shut" the door of the ark on Noah and his family and all the animals? See **Gen 7:13-16**

How many days were Noah and his family and all the animals in the ark before the rains came and the waters came up from the deep? See **Genesis 7:9-10**.

If God has given you the desire to be a missionary, what must you wait for God to do?

You must wait for God to open doors for you. Read about the open doors in the following verses. This does not mean that you do nothing in the mean time.

**1 Cors 16:9**

**2 Cors 2:12, Col 4:3**

Cardea or Carda was the ancient Roman **goddess** of the **hinge** (Latin cardo, cardinis), Janus was the Roman god of gates and doors, new beginnings. In the investment world today, Janus, the god of doors, can see ahead and behind him. So just like the god Janus, the financial investor working for the Janus Funds can see ahead and behind concerning the financial world.

Why does Jesus say He will put before the Church of Philadelphia an open door that no one can shut? To where does this "door" lead? Does it lead some of them in the Church of Philadelphia to their deaths?

Is this door opened for those Jews who have been persecuting the Church of Philadelphia to become Believers?

We are told that God is called "the Hound of Heaven." Will He work all things together for His glory in these individual Jewish lives who previously persecuted the church of Smyrna? Before the earth was created, God was! He is! And He will be forever! He is

the One who knows the beginning from the end. He was and is aware of every person's actions, choices, decisions, before the dawn of time, before they ever were. And He made provision for all of them and all of us by the blood of His Son shed on the cross.

### **Exhortation**

What does it mean that the Church of Philadelphia has “kept His word” and not denied His name.

Why would Jesus do this for them?

What is the relationship between how Jesus describes Himself here and this commendation to the Church of Philadelphia?

What does it mean that they have kept His word?

What does it mean that they have not denied His name?

Name refers to His character and attributes. If they have not denied His name, then they have not denied who He is, and what He says.

### Kept His word

Please write the quote of Isaiah **61:1-2a** found in the Gospel of **Luke 4:18-19** below. The Gospel account in Luke was read by the LORD Jesus Christ Himself in front of those from His hometown who had seen Him grow up. As was His custom on the Sabbath, He would enter the synagogues in various towns and read from the Scripture. On this day, in this town, He opened the Scripture to **Isaiah 61** and read all of verse 1, but stopped mid-sentence of verse 2. Why?

Again, we've been shown that there is a gap of unknown time between Christ coming as the Suffering Servant and Him coming as the Conquering King. Jesus stops mid-sentence, and says “today this Scripture (this Word) has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Write the rest of **Isaiah 61:2b** in the space provided below:

When will **Isaiah 61:2b** come to pass in the book of Revelation? If you don't remember, go back to the very first lesson and look at the timeline of Revelation we went over in class. **Isaiah 61:2b** speaks of the coming day of the Wrath of God that begins in chapter 6 of Revelation. Many of the Old Testament prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled speak of the “Day of the LORD” that will come. This day is referring to a short period of time in which we see the judgment of God on the earth dwellers and is called the great day of His wrath. Why are we looking at this? See **Revelation 3:10**.

We are looking at this because Jesus tells the Church of Philadelphia that He is going to keep them from this day of wrath. I believe, as some others do, that the Church will not be on the earth at this time. We will be taken out in an event called the rapture. The word “rapture” does not occur in the Scripture, but the Greek word, “Harpazo” does. Harpazo means to seize, or to carry off by force or to be snatched out or away.<sup>2</sup> The Church will be caught up into the sky with Jesus and we will be forever with the LORD from that moment on. The belief is that the “Rapture” will be sometime between the Church age and the beginning of this great day of God’s wrath, which happens to start with Revelation 6 and the opening of the first of the seven sealed judgments by the LORD Himself. We find no mention of the Church again until we get to chapter 19 of Revelation. If the Church is gone, who will be left on the earth to go through the Tribulation? From now on when speaking of the seven year Tribulation, I will be using the correct term for this seven-year period of time and that is “**Daniel’s 70th week.**” Please write down all those who you believe will be on the earth to go through Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.

Did you write down the Jewish people as some of those who will be on the earth during the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel? Not only are they here during this period of time, but since the Christians are gone, they now will take center stage on this earth. You see: God has given prophecy, covenants, and promises to the Jewish people all through history and God will be faithful to perform His Word to the Jewish people.

There is a prominent heresy that exists within many of today’s churches. This heresy is that God is done with the Jewish people. The thinking is: when the Jews rejected their Messiah, the promises, the covenants, and the prophecies that were given them by God, were forfeited and given to the Church. In short, the Church replaced Israel in the things of God. We are now the New Israel. This has been the source of much anti-Semitism. In Genesis 15, the covenant God made with Abram was an unconditional covenant. Abram did not walk through the pieces of the flesh. Only God did. God ratified this covenant again with Abraham’s son Isaac, and another time with Isaac’s son, Jacob. God gave Jacob a new name and He became the patriarch of the twelve tribes of Israel. Please write the entire text of Revelation 3:7 in the space provided:

What does **Luke 21:35-36** say about the earth dwellers during the time of Jacob’s trouble?

What does Jesus tell His believers to do in this same passage?

So will there be any Christians left on the earth during this 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel? Think about this. This is not just a simple answer.

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<sup>2</sup> James Strong, *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, 726 (Hendrickson Publishers), p.16.

See what you can find out about the Greek word, “Peirasmos” used for “tribulation.”

What have those who are part of the Church of Philadelphia done in regards to the Word of God? See **Revelation 3:10**.

Let’s take a rabbit trail today looking at **God’s wrath**. Read the following verses and write your thoughts down for each.

**Revelation 6:17**

**1 Thess 1:10**

**1 Thess 5:4, 9**

Who are the earth dwellers?

Write Revelation 3:11 below:

The Greek word for “I am coming quickly,” is entechai, and means suddenly. So therefore, once every thing is in place, He will come suddenly, putting many “off guard.” The Church of Philadelphia was to see to it that they did not lose their crown.

### **Overcomers**

Let’s talk about **pillars**.

Jesus tells those who overcome in Philadelphia, He will make them pillars in the temple of His God. I am assuming here that this Temple Jesus is talking about is either the Millennial Temple or the New Jerusalem. The pillars in the Temple in Jerusalem during Old Testament days were named Jachin, meaning “He shall establish,” and Boaz, meaning “in Him is strength.” Those who overcome in Philadelphia and who are made pillars in God’s Temple will not have to come and go. They will be able to stay. Of course if this is extrapolated out to the New Jerusalem, all Believers will have permanent residence in the city, never to be away from the presence of God ever, because “the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” (Revelation 21:22)  
Not denied His Name

If those in the Church of Philadelphia overcome, Christ will write the name of His God and the name of the New Jerusalem on them.

Where do you think God will place these two names on the Believers’ bodies?

Which church of the seven churches of Revelation did we see something else about a “new name?”

Was this name promised to those who overcame the teachings of the Nicolaitans and the teachings of Balaam in the Church of Pergamum?

Just for fun, go back to Ezekiel and take a look at the man with the writing case in **Ezekiel 9**. Where did he place the mark on God’s own? What were the criteria for the mark? What did the mark signify?

Finally, I would like you to read the very last verse of Ezekiel, **Ezekiel 48:35**. What is the name of God used here?

***Jehovah Shammah***, or “***the LORD is there***” What do you think this name means Chapters 40-48 of Ezekiel are either a picture of the Millennial Temple or the New Jerusalem where the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

He will give His city – the New Jerusalem – its new name, and each of His own will be marked with His new name.