



+INTRODUCTION

Philadelphia was located about 30 miles to the southeast of Sardis and situated on a hillside. It was founded by the king of Pergamum around 190 B.C, and received its name from his nickname, 'Philadelphus' or brotherly love. This king had a special devotion to his brother, Eumenes II. The city was well know for it's wine production and was the so-called 'gateway' or 'open door', to central Asia Minor.

Because of an earthquake that devastated the city and the perpetual aftershocks, many of the cities' inhabitants out of fear for their safety, chose to live in the country or suburbs rather than inside the city walls.

The Church that resided in Philadelphia remained faithful to Jesus and as a result found themselves marginalized by the Jewish community from which many of them probably originated. The mistreatment they endured

from the group, Jesus identified as 'the synagogue of satan', (3:9) did not go unnoticed. It's in light of this alienation which they suffered that tremendous promises were given, intended to encourage and strengthen these dedicated believers.

Out of the many promises that were given, perhaps the greatest was, 'I will make them come (those of the synagogue of satan who excluded them) and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you.' (3:9) Jesus alone sets the terms for admission into 'his kingdom', regardless of what any other religious agency may allege. He wants his loyal saints to live with the awareness that He loves them, and will be their ultimate advocate.

+READ (Revelation 3:7-13)

Read this passage out loud together as a group/family before asking any of the below questions.

+OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

1. Read this letter. What stands out to you about this church? What's your overall impression?
2. "The key of David" refers to Isaiah 22:20-23, where the key of the house of David was given to Eliakim, who had access to all the wealth of the kingdom. What is Jesus implying in Rev. 3:7 when He says He "has the key of David"? (See also Heb. 3:5-6.)
3. Jesus is also identified as He "who opens and no one shuts & who shuts & no one opens." How do Isaiah 43:13 + 46:9-11 clarify the meaning of this description?
4. What four things does Jesus commend this church for?

As you read through each of the 7 letters to the churches observe how each follows or deviates from the basic pattern below:

1. Address (what is the letter addressing?)
2. A title/s of Jesus (what title from chapter 1 is repeated here?)
3. Commendation (what does Jesus commend them for?)
4. Criticism (what does Jesus criticize them for?)
5. Counsel (how does Jesus counsel them?)
6. Command (what command/s does Jesus give to them to follow?)
7. Promise (what is promised to them?)

+APPLICATION

1. Read John 14:23-24 What role does 'love' play in 'obeying' Christ? Is your faithfulness to Jesus based on love or duty? What areas in your life do you need to change in order to make this happen?
2. How do the many promises to this church encourage you to remain faithful in your loving service to Jesus?

+MEMORY VERSE

Rev 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

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