

Revelation

The Churches

CHURCH 6: PHILADELPHIA

Revelation 3:7-13



BACKGROUND

The church at Philadelphia is the penultimate church along the postal route. Located in modern-day Alaşehir, Turkey) it was a city prone to severe earthquakes, meaning its citizens constantly lived with instability and the fear of ruin. This is the second of the 7 churches that does not receive a rebuke.



INTRODUCTION

Vincent van Gogh is celebrated today, but during his lifetime, he was impoverished, deeply troubled, and sold perhaps only one painting. For years, his brother Theo sent Vincent a monthly allowance out of his own salary to pay for food, rent, canvas, and paint. They wrote over 600 letters to each other and died within 6 months of each other.

1. How do you feel about this kind of family bond?
2. Do you think Peter has this kind of brotherly love in mind for the church (1 Peter 1:22) ?

PHILADELPHIA

The city was founded around 189 BC by King Eumenes II of Pergamum. Eumenes had a younger brother named Attalus II, who was his loyal right-hand man and military commander. The relationship between the two brothers became legendary in the ancient world because it defied the typical royal family dynamics of the time, which were usually full of betrayal, assassination, and civil war. The city was named as a recognition of this brotherly love.

THOUGHTS

1. Read Isaiah 22:23. What do you think it means that Jesus holds the key of David?
2. What do you think is the significance of the open door in verse 8?
3. RC Sproul points out that early Christians were expelled from synagogues leading to the loss of their religious protections. How important should religious freedom be in the world today?
4. How might the promise in verse 10 be of some comfort to the Philadelphian church?
5. "Little strength and great opportunity often go hand in hand." Do you agree with this statement?
6. Why do you think this church receives no reprimand?

APPLICATION

1. How difficult is it to survive as a local church with little to no resources?
2. How can we encourage each other to be a people of patience and endurance?
3. How far do you agree that faithfulness in small things matters far more than having massive resources?



Revelation



THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

The church in Philadelphia was a community that, true to its city's name, was praised for its unity, mutual support, and patient endurance.



PHILADELPHIA

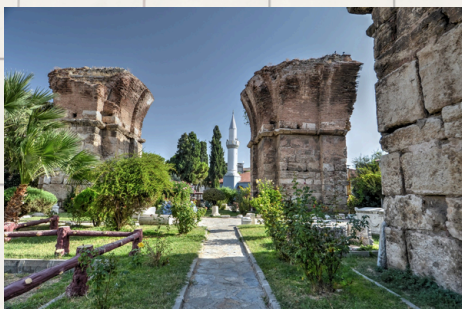
Location: The "Marketplace of the World" was situated on a fertile plateau along a major trade route, ancient Philadelphia was a bustling commercial hub. It was famous for its extensive vineyards and exquisite wine production.

The Missionary City: The city was originally built by the Pergamene kings to be a central hub for spreading the Greek language, culture, and manners.

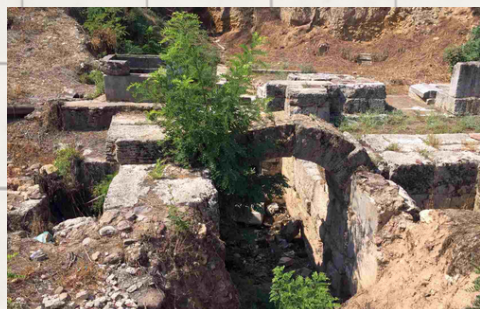
A City of Constant Tremors: The geographer Strabo recorded that Philadelphia was plagued by near-constant earthquakes. The massive earthquake of 17 AD, which destroyed twelve cities in the region, hit Philadelphia so hard that its citizens lived in tents outside the city walls for years, terrified that shifting stone pillars would crush them.

The Last Christian Holdout: Long after the other cities of the Seven Churches had fallen, Philadelphia remained an independent, resilient Christian outpost until 1390 AD

The Modern American City: Founded in 1682 by William Penn, a Quaker, the city was deliberately planned as a refuge from religious persecution. Penn chose the name precisely because of its biblical meaning.



Basilica of St John



Roman Theatre



Temple Remains

The name "Philadelphia" comes from two Greek words - philos meaning love and delphos meaning brother. It is a reminder to love our brothers and sisters both spiritual and by blood.