

The Church of Philadelphia – The Faithful Church

Revelation 3:7-13 records Christ’s message to the **sixth of the seven churches** addressed in the Book of Revelation chapters two and three.

Jesus encourages the Philadelphian believers regarding His future coming: “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon.

Jesus Christ promises victory to the church of Philadelphia over its enemies

Philadelphia was a city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) on the Imperial Post Road which was an important trade route at the time. The message is from the Lord Jesus Christ through an angel or “messenger” “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write . . .” (Revelation 3:7). This was not John’s personal message to these believers; it was a message from the Lord, who identifies Himself as “him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.” This description of Jesus emphasizes His holiness, His sovereignty, and His authority.

Jesus affirms the church of its positive actions: He says in Revelation 3:8; “I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name”. Even though the church of Philadelphia was weak in some respects, they had remained faithful in the face of many trials. Because of this, the Lord promises them an “**open door**” of blessings.

Jesus’ letter strongly condemns the enemies of the Philadelphian believers: He says this in Revelation 3:9; “I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you”. Those who persecuted the believers (the persecutors were religious hypocrites in this case – they practiced a form of godliness but denied the power of the Gospel). Jesus said that they would one day realize Christ love for His children. Jesus Christ affirms that the church of Philadelphia would be victorious over its enemies.

In Revelation 3:10-11, Jesus also encourages the Philadelphian believers regarding His future coming: He says; “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown”. The church’s faithful endurance would serve as a blessing. Jesus would take them to be with Him before the coming tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

He also exhorts them to remain faithful, because this would lead to rewards in the afterlife. Unfortunately, based on this verse and other passages in the Book of Revelation, many Bible interpreters conclude that the rapture is an event distinct from the second coming of Christ.

However, the fact that the Philadelphians are promised to be preserved from the time of the tribulation corresponds with the pretribulation view of the rapture.

Jesus provides a final promise to the believers in Philadelphia and to all believers:

He says in Revelation 3:12; “Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down from out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name”.

The Bible says to us who believe “We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13). Jesus’ words of comfort certainly would have been a blessing to the Philadelphians who had faithfully stood for Christ in their pagan culture. His words continue to serve as an encouragement to faithful believers in the midst of chaotic - political and cultural behaviors in the world today.