

PHILADELPHIA

Int.

1. Aim: To give an explanation of the letter, to give some background history of the city and make some applications to us today.
2. The church at Philadelphia - Rev. 3:7-13
 - a. No record of its establishment
 - b. Nothing in this letter but praise for them
3. The city
 - a. On or near the site of a modern city called Alashehir
 - b. Founded in 189 B.C. by Attalus I I
 - c. Name - it was named in honor of Attalus II who had such loyalty for his brother "Eumenes" = Philadelphia means brotherly love
 - d. Land - volcanic - fertile -good vine growing area - their coins bore the image of Baachus the Roman god of wine -- also had timber and minerals
 - e. Industries -wool workers - tanners - wine makers
 - f. Earthquakes were common - in A.D. 17 a severe earthquake destroyed the city just as it did Sardis. They were also exempt from taxes and were given money to help repair the town
 - g. Religions - worshiped idols, Zeus = the sun god ---also Baachus and Dionysisus the wine gods of Rome and Greece
4. The Letter to Philadelphia
 - a. He has no rebuke or fault - Praises and commends them
 - b. It has: Int. of speaker, commendation, promises, admonition and comfort, and exhortations.

Discussion

I. INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER Rev. 3:7

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;”

- A. Addressed to the angel of the church
- B. Identification or description of Christ
 1. These things saith he THAT IS HOLY
 - a. Holy = being separate from evil, having a perfect hatred of that which is evil.
Being set apart for God!
 - b. Christ is described as being holy - Acts 2:27 Heb. 7:26 I Pet. 1:15
 2. He that is TRUE
 - a. True = it is real as opposed to the unreal, imperfect
 - b. Jn.14:6 “I am the way, the truth and the life.”
 - c. He is a truth lover and truth speaker - he is truth itself - genuine or real - not a false god
 - d. This shows that right doctrine and right living go together
 3. He that hath the KEY OF DAVID
 - a. Symbolizes his power over the royal household of which David was chief
 - b. Key of David - denotes authority - man with key to house has unlimited access to it. Jesus has complete authority about admission or exclusion to the city of David, the New Jerusalem. - Head of the Church - Eph. 1:22

c. He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth---He admits or shuts men out of his kingdom according to his will. Christ will determine who will be saved and who will be lost, who will go to heaven and who will go to hell.

C. This is a description that would fit God only. Jesus is man, but He is truly God also!

II. COMMENDATION [what is right] Rev. 3:8

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

A. I know thy works

1. Same said of all 7 churches
2. This was not a guess, or a rumor, but he really knew
3. Christ knows all about us also

B. Open Door

1. Used by Paul many times - meant that he had an opportunity for fruitful mission work - Acts 14:27 I Cor. 16:9 II Cor. 2:12 Col. 4:3-4
2. The faithfulness of this church was to be rewarded with more opportunities. A healthy church is an active church.
3. Philadelphia was located in a good area to help spread the gospel. One open door leads to another.
4. No one could shut the door. This is a hint that someone is trying to stop this work here in Philadelphia.

C. Thou hast a Little Strength - "Power" in A.S.V.

1. This was not an indication of spiritual infirmity, but of fewness in number and lack of influence
2. They had some power, but it was small and of little account in the eyes of men
3. Yet it used this little power to accomplish great things in His service.

D. And hast Kept my Word

1. This did not mean that they merely had it in their possession & safeguarding it - but it meant they were obeying it!
2. Keeping of the word is referred to 6 other times in Revelation- Rev. 1:3 3:10
12:12 14:12 22:7 22:9
3. Found 20 other times in N.T.

E. And has not Denied my Name

1. Emperor Worship
 - a. In 12 B.C. Augustus established emperor worship as a state religion
 - b. He did this to unify the empire and insure loyalty to the Monarch
 - c. The citizens were required to attend a festival a few times each year and throw a handful of incense on the altar
2. Pressure was applied to Christians
 - a. In A.D. 112 Pliny wrote that he would ask a person 3 times if he were a Christian. If he answered "yes" he would be put to death. If he answered "no" and would reverence the emperors image and curse Christ then they were discharged.

- b. This is the real test of keeping His word !
- c. Mt. 10:32-33
- d. II Tim. 2:12 "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: If we deny him, he also will deny us:"

III. PROMISES Rev.3: 9-10

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou has kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

A. Synagogue of Satan

- 1. Referred to in 2:9 in letter to Smyrna
- 2. An assembly of men whom Satan governs
- 3. Jews who persecuted Christians
 - a. Rm. 2:28,29 Rm.9:6-8
 - b. The Jews hated and harassed the Church in Philadelphia
 - c. Even though these Jews claimed to be of the seed of Abraham, they were actually under the influence of Satan and deserved to be called his synagogue!

B. Come and Worship

1. Not likely that he was talking about them coming to worship God -- for this would be forced and worship cannot be forced - Jn. 4:24
2. They would be constrained to admit that Christians were children of God and that God regarded them with his favor.
3. It may refer to a successful period of evangelism among the Jews. They would convert some of the adversaries and thus they would worship before the people.
4. But if not, at the judgment all enemies of the Gospel will concede that the church is the Divine institution - Phi. 2:10-11
5. The Jews would come to know that Christ loved them
 - a. Only statement like this in the 7 letters
 - b. Philadelphia had a place of honor.
6. Isa. 43:4 Jer.31:3 Mal. 1:2

C. Kept word of my patience

1. The teaching about Jesus and his patience - he was patient with all people -he suffered persecution with patience
2. These Philadelphians had patiently endured in spite of all kinds of opposition, persecution and affliction!

D. Keep thee from the Hour of Temptation

1. He pledges to keep those who keep his word
 - a. Those who faithfully keep will be faithfully kept.
 - b. Our faithfulness is rewarded with the Lord's faithfulness

- c. Hour = season or time
 - d. Temptation = trial or test --- Lk. 8:13 Mt.13:21 Mk. 4:17
2. Which shall come upon all the world
- a. World-wide
 - b. The Roman World
 - c. Trial would be very general of Christians and sinners
3. Keep them from
- a. An assurance of safekeeping in any trial
 - b. Keep hold or preserve
 - c. Jn. 17:15
 - d. This does not mean that they would be exempt from persecution or calamities
 - e. But it does mean that He would sustain them, giving them the grace and power to bear the difficulties
 - f. The same is true for faithful Christians today -- I I Tim.3:12 I I Tim. 4:18 I Cor. 10:13

IV. ADMONITION AND COMFORT v. 11

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown"

- A. Behold I Come quickly
 - 1. Word "behold" occurs 7 times in these letters-4 times to Philadelphia
 - a. Given to arrest attention
 - b. Look for your own interest

2. I Come quickly - perhaps keynote of Revelation
 - a. Rev.2:16 - repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly
 - b. Rev. 22:7 Behold I come quickly
 - c. Rev. 22:12
 - d. Rev. 22:10
3. What was he coming quickly to do?
 - a. They understood probably to mean the second coming
 - b. This would be a great comfort to them in their tribulations
 - c. But it has been over 1900 years! His coming is always at hand. God's standard for measuring time is not like ours - II Pet. 3:8
 - d. His coming is imminent
 - e. Christ would come in that he would reward them for faithfulness

B. Hold that fast which thou hast

1. Hold to - do not let go or discard
2. What did they have?
 - a. Christ's name
 - b. His word
 - c. His patience
 - d. His promise to return
 - e. His opportunity for service

C. That no man take thy crown

1. They should hold fast to keep their crown
2. Be watchful lest someone deprive you of the heavenly reward

3. Crown - often used in N.T. I Cor. 9:25 Jas.1:12 Rev. 2:10 II Tim. 4:8
4. Source of encouragement to know that poorest, weakest most despised saint on earth could wear a crown of glory!

V. CLOSING EXHORTATIONS V. 12

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

A. Overcometh - maketh a pillar

1. Overcometh - comes off victorious - prevails
 - a. To Christians who were persecuted it was important that they have strength to overcome
 - b. Every church was assured a blessing if they overcame
2. Pillar
 - a. Pillar is a symbol of stability and firm support and permanence
 - b. Temple - in O.T. times the Holy Place and the Most holy Place is where God dwelt - Can refer to Heaven as in Rev. 7:15 -- so here it must mean that he will be in heaven.

B. And he shall go out no more

1. When he is made a permanent part of heaven he will never be expelled - never have to go out
2. Philadelphia had experienced earthquakes
 - a. Shocks and tremors keep recurring
 - b. People would often have to leave the city because of the tottering walls
 - c. But in this new Jerusalem they will never have to go out for safety
3. "...and so shall we ever be with the Lord." I Thes. 4:17

C. And I will write upon him the name of my God

1. Name denotes possession and identification
2. They belong to God, they have a place in God's household
3. Those who overcome will have a permanent engraving of his name

D. And the name of the city

1. This will also be inscribed upon them
2. Heaven is likened to a new Jerusalem
 - a. City of David - II Sam. 6:9
 - b. The holy city - Mt. 4:5
 - c. The new Jerusalem will be the permanent address for the saved for "our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20

E. Write upon him my New Name

1. Those who were given the emperor's name felt honored and much benefitted
2. Christians could be confident that the new name of Christ would do far more for them.
3. This new name means he will dwell with Christ forever!

CONCLUSION

1. V. 13 "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 - a. Proper hearing means submission - obedience
 - b. To the churches - not just Philadelphia - the truth's apply to all
2. Lessons we can learn
 - a. We are to be Holy as Christ is Holy = separate from evil , set apart for God
 - b. We must keep the Word - obey Rev. 22:7
 - c. Christ will keep those who keep his word - I I Cor. 10:13 - Jesus knew that the church at Philadelphia had served God under difficult circumstances.
 - d. Men can take our crown - salvation is for faithful and we can follow unfaithful men and loose our crown
 - e. We can have a new name -Christian - live as a new person
 - f. This was a church with an open door
 - i. An Open door is a sign of Divine Approval
 - ii. This was a picture of evangelistic opportunity