

TO THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA

Our daughter and I drove to the sites of these 7 churches in Rev 2 & 3. Not much of the ancient ruins remain in Alasehir, but here is what we saw.

Show video in P and a photo or two

Philadelphia was named by Attalus, king of Pergamum. It is in a wonderfully fertile area watered by the same river Pactolus, we talked about in Sardis, which is about 30 miles away. It was not a very important city, but an agriculturally rich area.

Prone to earthquakes

First, we must remember that this is not John talking... it is the Lord Jesus from the right hand of God to these churches. My take is that this is a wonderful Christian community that receives praise from the Lord Jesus Christ and no rebuke. There is a Jewish community picking on them, which he calls a synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews but are not. Jesus doesn't even consider these bad guys here real Jews. We can imagine that Jews who professed Christ as their Messiah and Lord were shut out of their synagogue. The Jews who don't accept Jesus are offended that Jesus is proclaimed as the Messiah. This happened back then and it happens today. These OT Jewish references in this message to Philadelphia are a slap in the face to this synagogue and turning the tables on them. He is the holy and true one who opens and no one shuts and shuts and no one opens. Jesus is going to make those unbelieving Jews worship at the feet of those who believe in him. Jesus is going to give the Philadelphian believers a special place in the eternal temple of God.

Let's dive into the text of this message. Read 3:7-9

The messenger or leader of that church is not powerful or influential. By extension, we can assume that applies to the ecclesia as a whole. They are being picked on by some segment of the Jewish community there, who is called a synagogue of Satan. We'll just call them the SS. So, we can suppose that this SS is saying they have the real truth, they are the true followers of the God of Israel and that these Christians are deceived and wrong and that God wants them to stop what they are doing. The SS may have money and influence in the community. This ecclesia of Christ is continuing faithful in the face of the powers and forces that the devil is sending against them.

The Lord Jesus Christ is setting the record straight as to who is really on God's side, just as he often did with the Pharisees during his ministry here on earth. He is going to specifically slam the SS here with the Jewish references that he makes. He is exposing their hypocrisy like he did with the Pharisees.

The Holy One – hosios, not hagios. *undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious,*

In other words, having the complete ritual purity and holiness that Judaism seeks.

[slide] Ps 16:8-11. Jesus is this holy one David foresaw—the Messiah. This is quoted by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and by Paul in Acts 13. Think about

it...can anyone else say “I am the holy one”? We are saints, we have been made holy in Christ, but only he can say, “I am the [one and only] holy one.

The True One. He is the standard for truth—the way, the truth and the life. Anyone saying that he was a false Messiah and that the Christians are following falsehood will have to answer to him.

Why are we talking about the key of David to a Christian community here in Revelation? I Googled the question of how many OT references are there in Revelation. One source said there are over 800 quotes and allusions—mostly allusions. Two main reasons for that in this message are: Revelation is the last book in the Bible wrapping up all the OT and NT have to say. This is another huge slap in the face to the SS. The Key of David means that he is the proper steward, or overseer of the household of David. Isa 22:15-25 (read slide with segments). Shebna, the bad steward is being thrown out. Eliakim is put in place by God with complete authority. “He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” “he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.” Whatever scriptures or authority the SS was using to beat up on this ecclesia at Philadelphia, was false—like the bad steward Shebna who God rejected and replaced with Eliakim.

Remember on the road to Emmaus? They said, “did not our heart burn within us when he opened to us the scriptures?” Look how cool this is! He is still doing that!

3:8. I’ve given you an open door that the SS cannot shut. We can imagine the SS was shutting them out of their synagogue. Maybe shutting other doors in making a living and being part of the larger Philadelphia community. But the Lord Jesus is opening doors that no one can shut.

“Kept my word and not denied my name”. Lord Jesus isn’t expecting anything to complicated from these 7 churches or from us. They did not have whole Bibles yet. They had some epistles, some gospels and some eyewitness accounts in their cities. They learned these words and were devoted to Jesus the Messiah as their lord. They would not deny his name.

Denied my name. The whole pressure point in the conflict between the Jews and the Christians is **the name of Jesus Christ**. Acts 4:10-12, 17, 18. This is all through the book of Acts—making known the name of Jesus Christ. He is the Messiah. He is the savior of the world. This ecclesia did not have the whole bible at their fingertip, they had to hide the Word that they heard in their hearts. They had the name.

3:9 It seems that what is going on here in Philadelphia in 95 AD is pretty much what was going on in Jerusalem in 30 AD. This rejection of the Messiah and attempt to suppress the name of Jesus Christ cost them their nation in 70 AD, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and most of the Judeans went to other countries, other places, like Philadelphia. That same spiritual battle is here. Remember, it was also mentioned in Smyrna—a synagogue of Satan. “who say that they are Jews **and are not, but lie**” It would

be wrong to say this is all Jews, but we can see that during the life of Jesus the Jewish leadership were his main opposition. The devil had infiltrated and controlled that religious structure. This had apparently happened in Smyrna and Philadelphia, and is often true today, both among some Jewish and Christian religious hierarchies. Lord Jesus says they are lying to say they are Jews. Imagine how these SS people will feel at the 2nd resurrection, after the 1,000 year reign of Messiah, when they see the glory of God and the glory of King Jesus and see that they missed the boat and have nothing but shame. Then king Jesus will order them to come and bow down before these glorified Philadelphia believers before they are presumably cast into the lake of fire.

And they will learn that I have loved you. The LJC, the 2nd in command of the universe, loves you and I. Is there someone who has been persecuting you? Who knows, perhaps they will bow and your feet in the life to come. His love for us is protecting us now in this life and from the awesome judgments of God.

3:10 is a huge verse in the world of those who study and discuss end times prophecy. NIV “Since you have kept my command to endure patiently”. Again, that is our Lord’s command to us. It is the ὑπομονή patience, that divinely empowered endurance that Jesus Christ had that he gives us on the inside and then commands us to endure.

Used 5 times in chapters 1-3 of Rev. Defined in 13:10 and 14:12 [slide].

Unless it’s just coincidence, this endurance is well past the beginning and even the midpoint of the final 7 year period called the 70th Week of Daniel. This does not support the pre-tribulation rapture, which says the Christians are raptured before any of this.

Watch or listen to Episode 29 – called Empowered Endurance

Here are some key verses [Slides] Heb 12:1-3, [Slide] Col 1:11

I know I repeat this a lot in Finish Faithful, but it is one of the most important instructions we have from the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the end times—endure!

“Keep you from the hour of trial”

[slide] TD Ice Article – Director of the Pretrib Research Institute

Critics of the pretrib rapture position often say that we cannot produce one single passage that teaches our position. I believe that Revelation 3:10 is a verse which answers their challenge.

Is he admitting there are no other verses to “prove” the pre-trib rapture? Not quite, but almost.

[slide] Charles Ryrie notes, “the promise of Revelation 3:10 not only guarantees being kept from Tribulation trials but from the Tribulation period itself.

https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=pretrib_arch
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Kurschner on Rev 3:10

I agree that the hour of testing is the day of the Lord's wrath. And we know that the church will not experience the day of the Lord's wrath according to 1 Thess 5:9. Revelation 3:10, however, does not address *when the day of the Lord begins*, only the promise that the faithful will not experience it. As for *when* the day of the Lord's wrath begins, we must look elsewhere in Scripture since Rev 3:10 does not address this point.

<https://www.alankurschner.com/2022/05/27/a-super-easy-way-to-deflate-the-pretrib-revelation-310-argument/>

<https://www.alankurschner.com/2021/01/26/what-is-the-hour-of-peirasmos-testing-in-revelation-310/>

IN OTHER WORDS, THE CHURCH WILL BE KEPT FROM THIS HOUR OF TRIAL WHETHER THE RAPTURE IS PRE-TRIB OR PRE-WRATH (AFTER THE 6TH SEAL). THIS VERSE DOES NOT PROVE THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE UNLESS YOU ASSUME IT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

this hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth Earth (gē) is used 83 times in Rev. That's more than any other book in the NT. Contrasted with heaven, but also shows this is not some ethereal metaphor. The things in Revelation are going to happen on Earth.

Those who dwell on the earth is used 13 times in Rev and only in Rev. Acts 17:26 is quite similar "those who dwell on the face of the earth". Some of the uses of earth dwellers here in Rev. are: [slide]

- Avenge the martyrs blood on them 6:10
- Woe, woe, woe because of the trumpet and bowl judgments 8:13
- The false prophet who works for the beast deceives them 13:14
- They worship the beast 13:8
- Whose names not written in the book of life 13:8
- They have the mark of the beast
- A flying angel preaches to them 14:6

When it says here in Rev 3 that those who have kept his word will be kept from the hour of trial, that agrees with other messaging about Messiah's return.

[slides] I Pet 2:5-9 S & G is like a type of the fire and brimstone that will come in the 7th seal in the first two trumpet judgments right after the rapture. Just like when Lot left the city, the destruction started. and like Matt 24:36-42, where as soon as Noah was safely aboard the ark, the flood came.

3:11 Paul writes in 4 places and James and Peter also refer to crowns awarded by the Lord Jesus at his return as with athletes who were victors at the games. We have here, then,

three things: 'thy crown'; the possibility of losing it; the way to secure it.
this crown, not the symbol of dominion, but the symbol of a race accomplished and a conquest won

3:12 A pillar in the temple with an inscription on it. I'm assuming this is a figure of speech meaning a permanent, honored adornment. Remember the two front columns in Solomon's temple had names. James and Peter are called "pillars" in the church. Receiving a victory-reward crown, becoming an attractive adornment in the heavenly temple. These are incredibly honorific rewards. These rewarded believers will be identified with the name above all names, and with Jerusalem. This totally turns the tables of the SS who think they are identified with God and with the holy city of Jerusalem.

[Slide] Rev 21:10, 22. I can't explain how these two verses fit together, except to say that the believers who receive this honor are intimately in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ in the final New Jerusalem. How much are we able to understand about what that will be like?

It is also interesting that P was the last city to fall to the Muslim conquests and negotiated better terms for the Christians to go on worshipping.

You might be thinking, "this is so Jewish—what does it have to do with Christians? We are brought into their covenants Eph 2, Rom 11.

You may also be thinking this episode went all over the place. It's hard to even follow the main point. Revelation has more OT quotes, by far, than any other book of the Bible. It wraps up God's story of redemption. It pulls in themes from the whole rest of the Bible, like Jezebel, like Balaam, like the key of David (over 800 quotes and references by one count). This passage to the church at Philadelphia is only 7 verses and look how much it communicates. Could a human author, who was kind of kooky and apocalyptic come up with that?! This is of divine origin, the words of the glorified Jesus Christ, for those who have ears to hear. The main message that impresses me the most is the simplicity of what the Lord Jesus praises them for. They had little power or strength in themselves, but they kept his Word and did not deny his name. Jesus Christ himself is pleased that they are keeping his command to endure and to FINISH FAITHFUL.