



# The Church at Philadelphia

A Bit of History



Ruins at the city of Philadelphia

**P**hiladelphia, also known as Alasehir, was a Lydian city (Lydia was an ancient kingdom in western Turkey) founded between 159-138 B.C. by Attalus II, King of Pergamum. In commemoration of the king's love and loyalty for his brother Eumenes II, the city was called Philadelphia, which in Greek meant "city of brotherly love."

The city is located in Asia Minor, today southwestern Turkey. Built on an elevated terrace, the city overlooked the nearby Hermus Valley, in which ran a Persian Royal Road. The area is very susceptible to earthquakes, and in 17 A.D. the city was completely devastated. Apparently built right above the fault line, the city continued to be severely shaken by periodic aftershocks for another 20 years after the great quake.

# The Sixth Message to The Church at Philadelphia

(Revelation 3:7-13)

A Favored (faithful) Church – A.D. 1798 to A.D. 1866

A loving church and one the Lord had no negative words for.

The Commendation: “I know your works: behold I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.”

The Promise: “Behold I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of My patience, I will also keep you from the hour of tribulation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold fast to what you have, that no man take your crown. Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God and He shall not go 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 comes down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name.”

## A Closer Look at Philadelphia



There is no question about the meaning of the word Philadelphia. It means “brotherly love,” and well describes the charity and brotherly fellowship that dissipated the bitter personal animosities that characterized the theological disputants of the “Sardis Period,” and made possible the evangelistic and missionary labors of the past 200 years. Three things are said of this church:

1. It had a “*little strength.*” It was like a person coming back to life who was still very weak. It was the “dead” Sardis Church “revived,” and **Revival** was the characteristic of the Philadelphia Period. These Revivals began with George Whitefield in A.D. 1739, followed by John Wesley, Charles G. Finney and D. L. Moody.
2. It had set before it an “*open door*” that no “man” could shut. Note that this promise was made by Him who has the “Key of David,” He that “opens” and no man shuts; and “shuts” and no man “opens.” In 1793 William Carey sailed for India, where he found an “*open door,*” and since then the Lord has opened the door into China, Japan, Korea, India, Africa and the isles of the sea, until there is not a country in the world where the missionary cannot go.
3. The church was promised to be kept from the “*Hour of Temptation*” (TRIBULATION) that shall come upon ALL THE WORLD. There has never yet been a WORLDWIDE Tribulation as it is described in chapters 6 thru 19 of Revelation. Jesus Christ made a promise to this church and thus all those who trust in Him (Rev.3:10) saying “*I will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*” The word “*from*” is translated from the Greek word “*ek*” meaning “out of” (Strong’s #1537). In other words the church will be “*caught up,*” (raptured) or taken “out of” the way before this “Hour of Temptation” begins.

The Philadelphia Period covers the time between A.D. 1798 and A. D. 1866. We must not forget that the characteristics of all these Periods continue on in the Church down to the end. This is true of the Evangelistic and Missionary movements of the “Philadelphia Period,” but they are now more mechanical and based on business methods, and there is less spiritual power, and this will continue until:

Revelation 3:12, “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”

### The Three Promises to the church, those who overcome

1. Be made rulers over the nations when He returns to earth. Rev. 20:4
2. Sharing in His glorious time of perfect righteousness. Ps. 2:8-9
3. The abiding presence of the blessed Savior throughout time and eternity.  
Rev.22:14,16