

THE REVELATION

LESSON 10: THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA: THE PATIENTLY ENDURING CHURCH

Intro:

BIG IDEA: Jesus is the One who determines who _____ the New Jerusalem.

Background

- It is about 28 miles _____ of _____.
- Founded in 140 BC by Attalus II of Pergamum to spread Greek culture.
- It was on a fertile plain with _____.
- The area was dangerously _____.
- In AD 17 it was nearly demolished by an _____ & granted disaster relief from Tiberius.
- Strabo- “a city full of _____.”

The Self-Revelation of Jesus

⁷“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.’

- “*The holy one*” is how God referred to Himself in the Old Testament. Jesus claims to be _____.
- “*The true one*” who was being _____ by the Jews in Philadelphia. He’s the authentic _____, the real deal.
- “*key of David*” (read Isaiah 22:15-25).
- Jesus is the new “_____” over Israel. He has the keys and authority to determine who enters the true Jerusalem (see below).

² Open the gates, that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in. ³ You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. ⁴ Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock. **Isaiah 26**

The Good

⁸“I know your works. ... I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ... Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, ...

- This church does not have much _____ and _____.
- But they are _____. They experienced persecution, but have not _____.

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- This persecution seems to have come from the _____ community in Philadelphia.

Why, biblically, were they able to patiently endure?

Is Jesus put off by their lack of influence and size?

“But we are sometimes in a greater hurry than God. Instead, we need to be patient, pray hard and love much, and to wait expectantly for the God-given opportunity to witness.” **John Stott**²⁶

The Promise

Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. ¹²The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, 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 from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. ¹³He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

- They had an open door, an opportunity, that no one could stop because _____ had opened it.
- A city founded to spread Hellenistic culture now had a church to spread the gospel. _____.
- Don't just hold the truth, _____ the truth so others can enter the door!
- The Jews were saying Christians were not in the _____: the door was _____ to them.
- Those Jews who persecuted them would eventually bow before them. _____!
- Truth is Jesus has loved them!
- They will be preserved in the coming time of trial.
- Futurists believe this is a reference to the _____ of the church.

²⁶ Stott, pp. 107.

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- Preterists believe that this refers to the crisis of _____ which affected Jews throughout the Empire.
- They were to hold fast, continuing to _____ to their faith and _____ the victors prize.
- They will become pillars in the new _____ (symbolic, see 21:22). They are reliable!
- Not merely _____ - they hold the building together.
- They will be marked with God's name, Jesus' name & the name of the new Jerusalem.

¹¹ Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. ... ¹⁴ The sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. **Isaiah 60**
⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2**

“The synagogue at Philadelphia was criticized, not for being Jewish, but for being hostile to Christians.” **Bruce Metzger**²⁷

“No earthquake will ever fill them with fear or drive them out of the heavenly city. They will abide there.” **William Hendriksen**²⁸

Application: How does this letter apply to us in 2012?

Conclusion:

²⁷ Metzger, pp. 41.

²⁸ Hendriksen, pp. 75.