

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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Mission Statement

This study of the Book of Revelation gives special attention to the testimony it provides concerning our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10; cp. 1:2), leading us to worship and serve Him in everything.

- I. What you have seen (Rev 1).
- II. What is now (Rev 2–3)—the seven churches of Asia Minor.
 - A. Ephesus (2:1–7)
 - B. Smyrna (2:8–11)
 - C. Pergamum (2:12–17)
 - D. Thyatira (2:18–29)
 - E. Sardis (3:1–6)
 - F. Philadelphia (3:7–13)

A Pergamenian king founded the city of Philadelphia a little over 150 years before Christ. The king’s intent was to consolidate, regulate, and educate the central regions belonging to him. The primary goal in education was Greek culture and language. Greek supplanted the Lydian language by A.D. 19 and became the area’s only spoken language. The city lay on the main trade and communications route from the harbor at Smyrna into Phrygia and the east. The city became a major stop along the Roman imperial postal road. Philadelphia sat on the edge of the Katakekaumene (“that which has been burned down”), an area of volcanic activity accompanied by frequent earthquakes. Great earthquakes in A.D. 17 and A.D. 60 destroyed much of Philadelphia, which had to be rebuilt.

Tiberius sent aid to rebuild Philadelphia after its greatest catastrophe. The city then adopted a new name, Neocaesarea to honor the emperor. During the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 70–79), it took yet another new name, Flavia. The Cogamis River valley’s fertile volcanic soil produced great vineyards. Today the modern city of Alasehir sits on the site.

1. Characterization of Christ (v. 7)

- He is holy (sinless and belonging exclusively to God) and true (genuine, real—His reliability is founded upon His being the genuine Messiah).
- Possessing Messianic authority, He has the key of David—He alone controls entrance into the Messianic kingdom.
 - ▶ See Isaiah 22:22.

2. Commendation from Christ (v. 8)

- He commends the church at Philadelphia for obeying His word even though they had a little strength (meaning limited influence because of a small number of believers).
- He commends the church at Philadelphia for not denying His name.

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3. Complaint by Christ

- He has no complaint against the church at Philadelphia (cp. Smyrna).

4. Counsel from Christ (v. 11a)

- He counsels the church at Philadelphia to hold fast to the truth and their faith.

5. Caution by Christ (v. 11b)

- He warns the church at Philadelphia to hold fast to what they have lest some take their reward.

6. Commitment of Christ (vv. 9–10, 12)

- He will force the Jewish opposition to render homage to the church at Philadelphia.
- He will cause the unbelievers to recognize that He loves the church at Philadelphia.
- He will preserve them from the time of a great worldwide tribulation.
- He will give them a secure place in the kingdom (like a pillar in the Temple).
- He will write on them three names (the name of God, the name of the new Jerusalem, and Christ's new name).

7. Practical Implications

- A church must rely on the power of Christ to rein in and force the submission of Satan's people and program.
- A church must trust the word of Christ to overcome discouragement and trials.
- A church must maintain its hope for the soon return of Christ.

Questions for Discussion

- What is it about the future Messianic kingdom that provides _____ with encouragement and hope?
- How does _____ hold fast to what we have?

Implications Regarding Jesus Christ

- ▶ He is holy and true.
- ▶ He has authority over the Davidic kingdom.
- ▶ He knows His church's works.
- ▶ He knows His church's spiritual condition and faithfulness.
- ▶ He has authority over Satan's kingdom.
- ▶ He loves His church.
- ▶ He will preserve His church from the coming great tribulation.
- ▶ He rewards the faithful.
- ▶ He has a new name.