

## Maps & Pictures Of Philadelphia



Map of the seven churches of Revelation (Revelation 2:1-3:22). The book of revelation was written by John from the island of Patmos (southern island on the map to which John was exiled) to seven churches which may have been under his previous leadership. Philadelphia is circled on the map.



Philadelphia was situated in the valley of the Cogamis River, a southeast offshoot of the Hermus River Valley. The city was located on the junction of several important trade routes, earning it the nickname "gateway to the east."



Philadelphia was located in a region plagued by many earthquakes, which severely damaged the city in 17 and 23 A.D. Out of gratitude to Emperor Tiberius for his help in rebuilding it, the city took on the name Neo Caesarea. Since the region was plagued by earthquakes, there have been few meaningful excavations (since most finds would be rubble).

Just outside of Philadelphia was a fertile volcanic plain suitable for agriculture, especially grapes; Philadelphia was well known for its viticulture. In 92 A.D., Emperor Domitian issued an edict demanding that half the vines be cut down and grain be planted instead. This seriously hampered the Philadelphian economy, since the volcanic soil was not well suited for grain. Domitian's edict caused outrage toward Rome, and proved disastrous for the region.



# How Does God Measure Success?

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**I KNOW YOUR DEEDS. BEHOLD, I HAVE PUT BEFORE YOU AN OPEN DOOR WHICH NO ONE CAN SHUT, BECAUSE YOU HAVE A LITTLE POWER, AND HAVE KEPT MY WORD, AND HAVE NOT DENIED MY NAME.**  
**~REVELATION 3:8 (NASB)**

### 1) The City Of Philadelphia

- A) Founded in 189 B.C. by Eumenes II, king of Pergamum, the city was probably named after his brother, Attalus Philadelphus, for his love and loyalty to his older brother\*.

\* Eumenes and Attalus were two of four brothers who were deeply loyal to their mother, Apollonis. There are several references to the unity of the two brothers, and coins from the region celebrated their "brotherly love" for many centuries into the future (coins with two brothers in an alliance, two brothers being suckled together, etc.). Two foundational incidents give the basis for the love between the two brothers. First, when a false rumor of Eumenes' assassination reached Pergamum, Attalus assumed the role of king. When Eumenes returned, he forgave his brother and Attalus resumed his secondary role willingly. Second, Attalus was presented with the opportunity of supplanting his brother with Roman help during a time when Eumenes was suspected of corresponding with the enemy (Perseus). Attalus, however, refused to turn against his brother, revealing his deep loyalty. The *Philadelphia Games*, which celebrated fraternal affection, were held into the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century in memory of the brothers. Attalus did eventually become king upon his brother's death in 159 B.C. (Various sources, esp. *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in their Local Setting*, by Colin J. Hemer, pages 153-177).

B) Philadelphia was positioned on the main Roman postal road through Asia Minor, and was in a perfect location for commerce. The city was known as "the gateway to the east."

C) Philadelphia's location was both a blessing and a curse:

- i. The city was situated next to an active line of volcanoes. The volcanic soil was perfect for growing vines, and the local viticulture (products from the vine) was strong.
- ii. Since the city was close to a line of volcanoes, there were many earthquakes in the region. In both 17 & 23 A.D., earthquakes devastated the city. Many people lived out in the open countryside rather than in the crumbling city.

D) Rome helped, under the leadership of Emperor Tiberius, to rebuild the city in the 30's (A.D.). The city adopted the name Neo Caesarea for a time, erected a monument in Rome in appreciation and even developed cult worship to Tiberius' son, Germanicus.

E) Philadelphia's connection with Rome was severed abruptly in 92 A.D. (close to the time of John writing Revelation from Patmos) when Emperor Domitian issued an edict which devastated the viticulture economy in Philadelphia. This severely weakened the city and its people.

## 2) The Powerful Character Of Christ For His Church

A) Jesus Christ is described as holy, true, having the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens (Revelation 3:7, cf. Isaiah 22:22). These characteristics would have stood in stark contrast to Emperor Domitian.

## 3) Unreserved Compliments & Encouragements

- A) Jesus, speaking to a weakened church, compliments them on keeping (standing strong in) Christ's teaching and showing faithfulness to Christ, despite difficult circumstances (3:8).
- B) Christ contrasts the faithfulness of the Philadelphian church against those who think they are following God, but are really in opposition to God (and thus, in league with Satan, 3:9).
- C) Christ again affirms the faithfulness of His church, noting their enemies would bow down to them (3:9), and that the church would be receive mercy from further "testing" (3:10).

## 4) The Call Of Christ To His Church & Rewards

- A) Jesus calls His church to "hold fast" (3:11) to show themselves continually faithful and in order to reach their goal of a life of faithfulness and reward in heaven.
- B) The overcomer (all Christians, the faithful -- 3:12) are to be a pillar (a strong foundation) in the eternal temple of God, a position of great power for the weakest of churches!
- C) The overcomer will never leave (as opposed to Philadelphia) the city of God (heaven), because they have "the name" of God, His city, and the name of Christ (3:12).
- D) In other words, the faithful overcomer will be 100% identified with Christ, the perfect Emperor and great King! This is the measure of success in God's Kingdom, the faithfulness of His people!