

*"I know your works. 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."* (Revelation 3:8)

### **I. Philadelphia at a Glance**

- a. In verse 7, Jesus presents Himself as the "Holy One": holy in character, in words, in actions and purposes. (Rev 1:4; 5:6)
- b. *Philadelphia* means "love of the brethren". It is not enough to love fellow believers; we must also love a lost world and seek to reach unbelievers with the Gospel.
- c. *Philadelphia* was situated along a main trade route called the gateway to the East. It was also referred to as "little Athens" because the many temples in the city.
- d. In those days, there were hundreds of false gods. (1 Cor 8:5-6) Only Jesus Christ could rightfully claim to be the true God. The original, the authentic God and not a manufactured one.
- e. Jesus has the power to "open doors", which speaks to the opportunity for ministry. (Acts 14:27)
  1. Christ is the Lord of the harvest and the Head of the Church. He determines where and when people will serve. (Acts 16:6-10)
  2. Jesus gave the church at *Philadelphia* a great opportunity for ministry.

### **II. Philadelphia, The Faithful Church**

- a. There were two obstacles the *Philadelphia* church had to overcome: their own lack of strength and the Jews in the city who opposed them.
- b. Apparently, the church was not large or strong (wealthy), but they were faithful. They were true to God's Word and were not afraid to speak His Name. (v.10)
  1. It appears they endured some special testing and proved to be faithful.
- c. It is not the size of a church that determines effectiveness in ministry, but faith in doing what the Lord has called us to do.
  1. If Jesus gave them an open door, He would see to it they were able to walk through it.
- d. The second obstacle was Jewish opposition (the opposition of Satan working through people).
- e. These people were Jews in the flesh, but they were being used as instruments of Satan. (v.9)
  1. Satan's greatest weaponry is false accusation. He is an accuser and uses religious people.
  2. It is not easy to witness for Christ, when community leaders (Jews) are spreading lies about you.
- f. Jesus gave encouraging promises to this church: 1) He would deal with their enemies; 2) He would keep them from the time of Tribulation (not trouble); 3) He would honor them. (v.12).
- g. The symbolism of a "pillar" means their names would be known and honored in Heaven.

### **III. Personal Application for Today**

- a. It is true, all of us have a little strength and that strength needs to be renewed every day.
- b. We are not sufficient in ourselves to face every issue in life that comes our way, but we do have some strength.
- c. What practical actions did the believers take to encourage their witness?
- d. Every church faces opportunities and obstacles. Unbelief sees the obstacles, but faith sees the opportunities.
- e. The church today is like *Philadelphia*. God has opened doors of opportunity, we must work. If He shuts the door, we must wait. Above all we must remain faithful.