

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Church of Philadelphia

Revelation 3:7-13

1. _____
The church of Philadelphia is commended for having kept Christ's Word and have persevered (v.10a) amidst the social and religious difficulties of their day. God has given them a specific ministry in this specific city and time which no one can stop. They were not a large church with a widely known influence, but the Lord has never valued things in the way that the world does (cf. 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Cor. 1:27). They are being commended for faithfully responding to the word of Christ which they have been taught (cf. Matt 23:3; John 15:10; 2 Tim 4:7), and this is how everyone is to respond to this letter from the Lord (cf. Rev. 1:3).
2. _____
Some of their difficulties through which they have had to persevere have come at the hands of the local Jewish synagogue (cf. Rev. 2:9). The synagogue and the larger religious establishment has been hostile to the Christian church from before its inception (cf. John 8:43-47). Following the ascension of Christ, many disciples were persecuted unto hardship or death on account of Jewish zeal (cf. Acts 9:21; 26:10-11; Gal. 1:23). The Lord has indicated that one of the blessings they will experience in their faithfulness is the conversion of some of their Jewish antagonists. The Lord also reveals that though they are undergoing difficulties now, He will keep these believers from a future and universal time of testing which will last for a short while (v.10). This appears to be a comforting word promising that believers will not have to endure the unique time of judgment which the Lord will soon reveal beginning in chapter 4.
3. _____
The final rest and reward awaiting the Christians in Philadelphia was not yet there, and so the Lord commands them to stand firm in their faith (cf. Heb. 4:14). The Lord promises that all who remain steadfast in Him will remain as a permanent fixture in the presence God forever (v.12; cf. Ps. 84:10). Philadelphia was wracked by earthquakes and other disasters which frequently caused its people to flee or relocate, this will not be the case when the Lord gives His reward.