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THE SEVEN CHURCHES – LESSON 7

PHILADELPHIA

Revelation 3:7-13 tells of Jesus' words to the sixth of the seven churches which is Philadelphia, often called the "city of brotherly love." It was named after the king of the former Lydian empire, Attalus II Philadelphus, due to the devoted love for his brother Eumenes. The area was devastated by the 17 A.D. earthquake and 20 more years of severe aftershocks. Caesar Tiberius was generous in his support of rebuilding the area. Scholars believe that the verse 12 reference to a "new name" was about the proposal to rename the city "Neo Caesarea" (New Caesar) in honor of Tiberius. I disagree due to the future eternal context of verse 12.

Jesus had no criticism of Philadelphia. Their works were good. The church had held up in strength and had kept Jesus' word faithfully despite living in a pagan environment.

Verse 9 speaks of the "synagogue of Satan" which relates to corrupted apostate Jews who will be brought to realize that these Jesus-followers of Philadelphia are the real children of God.

In verse 10 Jesus promises to protect and preserve them in the time of tribulation (hour of temptation) that shall come upon the entire world. This is a prophetic promise for every believer during the end time Great Tribulation.

Those who overcome in the Tribulation (v. 12) will have God's name written on them and also the name of the New Jerusalem, and a new name from heaven that is yet to be revealed.

Philadelphia still exists today with a Christian presence even though it is located in the southwestern region of the modern-day Islamic state of Turkey.

Revelation 3:12 speaks to the future glorious state of every believer who is faithful to the end of their earthly life. It is a precious promise.