



Philadelphia

6: Philadelphia

BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

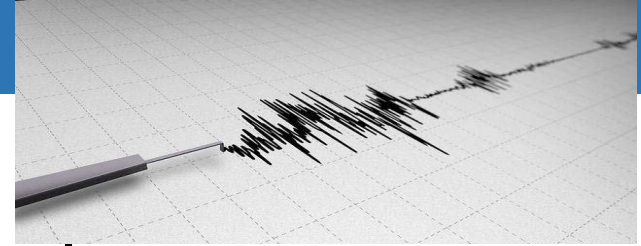
- Youngest of 7 cities, name means "brotherly love."
- Founded by Attalus II around 140 BC
- City's name commemorates loyalty and devotion that Attalus, king of Pergamos, had for brother Eumenes II.
- Considered an outpost of Greek culture, as it sat on the frontier of western Asia.
- A border town, standing where three countries met (Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia). **Gateway to the east**, and from one continent (Asia) to the next (Europe).

6: Philadelphia

BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

- Also great highway between several key cities in Asia.
- Purpose initially as a "missionary city" to spread Greek culture to lands beyond.
- **Jesus uses this unique history to indicate a greater missionary goal.**
- City had neither a predominantly Greek or Roman life style. Practiced "open door" policy, allowing people to adopt and practice their own culture of choice.

6: Philadelphia



BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

- Another feature of city used by Jesus here: Philadelphia located on prominent earthquake fault.
- Known as the "burned land" due to **active volcanic region**. After quake of 17 AD which destroyed Sardis and 10 other cities, Philadelphia received financial aid from Rome to rebuild. They were so grateful they even renamed the city "NeoCaesarea" (new town of Caesar), but name didn't stick.

6: Philadelphia

BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

- People here subject to many earthquakes, always **"running to the hills,"** quite literally, to escape falling debris from quakes and aftershocks.
- Because of volcanic activity was also one of most fertile areas in the world. Grape growing and wine industry flourished, known world wide.
- Also **rich in hot springs** (*medicinal value*). People came from all over world to bathe and be healed.

6: Philadelphia

BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

- Famous center of heathen worship, principal god **Dionysus, the god of wine.**
- So many gods here, and so many temples, it was known as "Little Athens." (*Athens was center of worship of Olympian gods.*)



6: Philadelphia

BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

- A custom in Philadelphia also referenced. When a person served the city well, after he died a memorial was established in his honor - a pillar in one of the temples with servant's name inscribed.
- Although famous for its gods and temples, threat of persecution here not terribly great, at least not directly from Roman government



6: Philadelphia

BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

- A large, active **group of Jews here**, however, who took great delight in persecuting Christians in town. (*The “synagogue of satan”*)
- However, years later, the bishop of Antioch, Ignatius, wrote to the church at Philadelphia indicating that these Jews had been converted, and were repentant of problems they caused early Christians here.



6: Philadelphia

BACKGROUND ON PHILADELPHIA

- Now called Ala-shehir, still a Christian town, with $\frac{1}{4}$ population Greek.
- Today can see ruins of the ancient city, and near the city walls an indication of the foundation of the early church here.



6: Philadelphia

- **SPEAKER:** *"... He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens'"* This greeting not from original description of Jesus in first chapter.
- *"He who is holy..."* He knew no sin, was completely separate from world, yet still human.
- *"He who is true..."* *true = alethinos*, means real and genuine, as opposed to something false

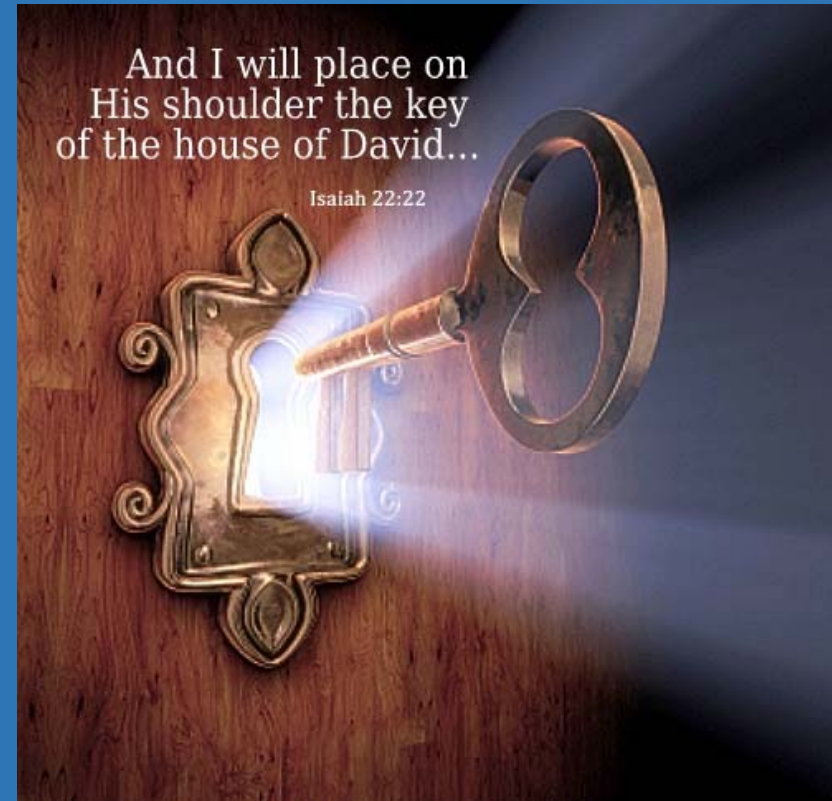
6: Philadelphia

- ***"He who has the key of David..."*** keys are symbol of supreme authority. David is the king of Israel from which Messiah would be descended.
- Yeshua is asserting His authority as King of Kings.
- God, (not "a god") the Almighty, the Supreme Authority of everything holds keys (*symbols of authority*) of the kingdom.
- Door to the kingdom of God opened by Him and Him alone. *If He opens it, no one can shut it. If He shuts it, no one can open it*



6: Philadelphia

- “...*the key of David*...” only other time this phrase used in scripture, Isaiah 22, regarding Eliakim.
- Shebna was evil servant, used as reference to antichrist.
- Eliakim righteous, used as symbol of Messiah. Key of David was key to all of Israel’s treasure.



6: Philadelphia

‘Then it shall be in that day,
That I will call My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah;
I will clothe him with your robe and strengthen him
with your belt; I will commit your responsibility into his
hand. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of
Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

The key of the house of David

I will lay on his shoulder;

So he shall open, and no one shall shut;

And he shall shut, and no one shall open.

(Isaiah 22:20-22)

Isn't the
"connectedness"
of scripture
beautiful!?!?

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A good reminder to a missionary church, or to any believer, that the kingdom is opened by God, not by human “missionaries.”

He is the One who commissions the work of the Kingdom.



6: Philadelphia

The Commendation: *“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.”*

- Jesus knows their works for Him, and He has opened door of evangelism. No one can shut this door.
- John 10, Jesus refers to Himself as "the Door." (*one of the 7 "I AMs" in John*) He is entrance to Kingdom of God. He not only IS the door, but He *opens the door*.

6: Philadelphia

- The phrase ***"for you have a little strength"*** interpreted as they have some "strength" to do His work here, even though they are persecuted.
- Does not mean they were weak, but had access to His power, and He was opening the door for their work.
- Their commendation was that they had kept His commands (*were true to His Word*), and had not denied His name.

6: Philadelphia

- *"... Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you."*
- **"synagogue of Satan"** reference to those Jews who called themselves Jews, but were in name only. Hearts hardened, **thought they were only ones righteous and deserving of God's grace.**
- This group persecuted true believers, after having rejected the Messiah

6: Philadelphia

- Jesus has no tolerance for this, rightly calls them a group **dedicated to their Father, Satan** (see John 8). Hypocrites, a "brood of vipers" as Jesus said in Matthew, *children of the serpent*.
- Jesus knew believers in Philadelphia were persecuted, but He promised something that took place a short time later.
- They (these Jews) would come and ***"worship before your feet, and...know that I have loved you."*** According to Ignatius, this indeed happened

6: Philadelphia

- Many of these hypocritical Jews came to know Jesus, and were **repentant toward the believers** for their previous persecution.
- Is prophecy which literally was fulfilled at that time, and will be again; ***“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”*** (Zechariah 12:10)

6: Philadelphia – AN EXTRA BLESSING

"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."

“TRIAL/TEST” = Pierasmos/Pierazo = putting to a test, proving by experience, indicates adversity and temptation used to “prove” something or someone.

TONS OF SPECULATION ABOUT THIS BLESSING...

6: Philadelphia – AN EXTRA BLESSING

- “**Hour of trial**” thought to be 7-year Tribulation period, coming *“upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth.”*
- May be interpreted as **special “pass”** from having to endure Tribulation, meaning faithful Church will be removed (*rapture, harpazo, catching away literally*) prior to this time.
- Others disagree, say Jesus will **not keep them FROM, but THROUGH the hour of trial**. In other words, they will live through it, but God will be with them.

6: Philadelphia – AN EXTRA BLESSING

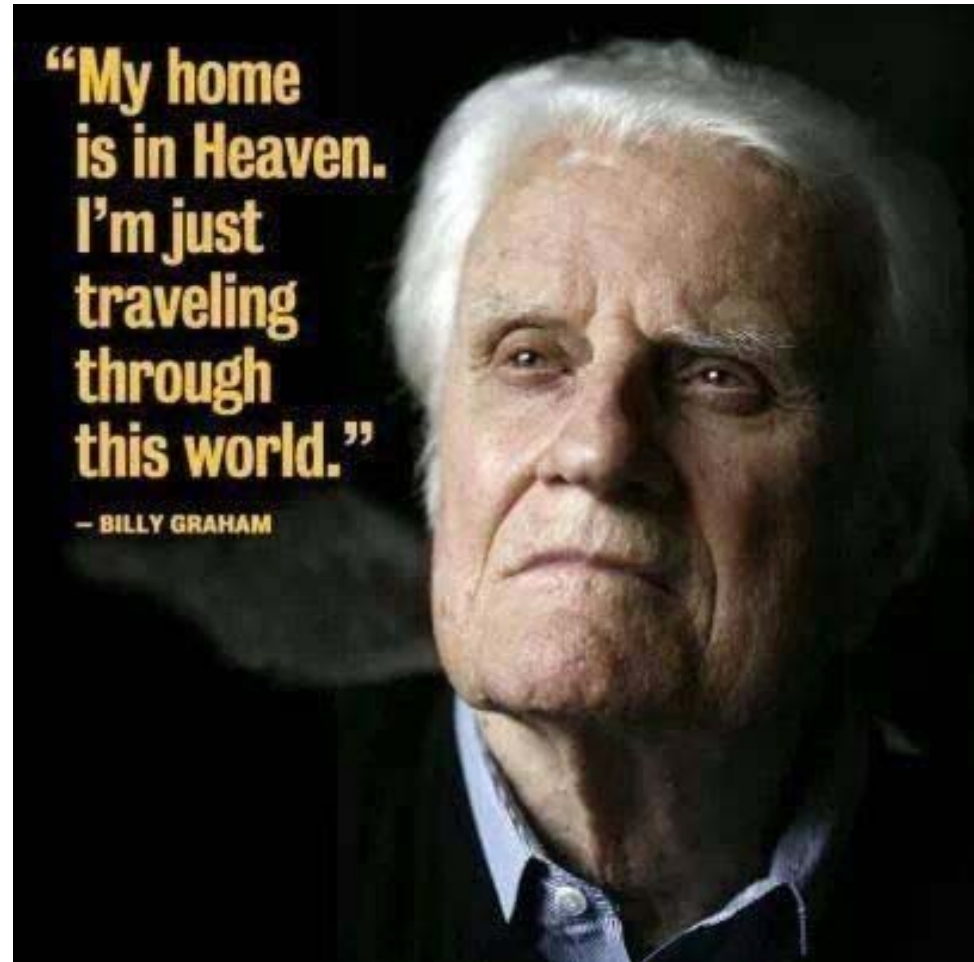
- This is main difference between pre-Tribulation philosophy, a mid-Trib and post-Trib belief.
- ***"To test those..."*** indicates whole world at that time will be tested to determine if they will acknowledge the Truth of God, or not.
- “Pre-tribbers” argue believers have already passed this test and do not need to take it again!
- **“Soul harvest”** in this time probably greater than any other time in history as millions come to Him and pass the “test.”

6: Philadelphia – AN EXTRA BLESSING

- ***"Those who dwell on the earth..."*** --the first reference to phrase used frequently in Revelation - *"the inhabitants of the earth."*
- Greek words here imply these people are identified with the earth, they are associated with it, instead of heaven. These dwellers have a "permanent" arrangement with the earth, instead of believers just passing through.
- ***"inhabitants of the earth"*** those who have made earth their permanent home

6: Philadelphia – AN EXTRA BLESSING

- Opposed to “inhabitants of the earth, “ **believers are just passing through** here on their way home to God.
- Throughout scripture, this term implies unbelievers, those whose home is the earth, not heaven.



6: Philadelphia – AN EXTRA BLESSING

- So is the “extra blessing” given this church an indication believers will be “caught up” before the time of “testing” (tribulation) that comes upon the whole earth?
- **There are many scriptural reasons to believe the answer is a resounding YES!**
- **Do your own studies** to frame your personal beliefs about this. But do not allow your conclusions to cause division in the Body. We are all headed to heaven, in His time, and in His way, if we remain faithful.

6: Philadelphia – **AN EXTRA BLESSING**

Remember passage in Isaiah (26:19-21) that may allude to believers not being present during Tribulation:

Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past.

For behold, the Lord comes out of His place, To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.

6: Philadelphia

**The Criticism (Concern):
None!**

(Smyrna and Philadelphia are the only churches with no criticism)

6: Philadelphia

- In many ways, just like Sardis and Laodicea (*unwatchful, apathetic, worldly*) are indicative of the straying organized church in the last days, **so are Philadelphia and Smyrna about the REMNANT of true believers in last days.**
- Both Smyrna and Philadelphia were persecuted “called out ones.” Both were living true to God, both were attempting to spread the good news.

6: Philadelphia

The Exhortation

(encouragement):



"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.."

- Jesus gives this church a little "inside" info...



He is coming quickly (*Greek=suddenly*).

- Church was awake, unlike church at Sardis. Told to "**hold fast**" so they don't lose what they have

6: Philadelphia



Good reminder - **unless we diligently follow Him** (and make Him absolute *TOP* priority and relationship), we can succumb to the enemy and worldly temptation to fall away. **(Many will!)**

Like Sardis, we could be caught sleeping at His return. Scriptures are filled with examples of those who "lost" things (Esau, Reuben, Moses, Saul, etc...) **because their faith and obedience flagged.**

6: Philadelphia

The Promise:

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name..."

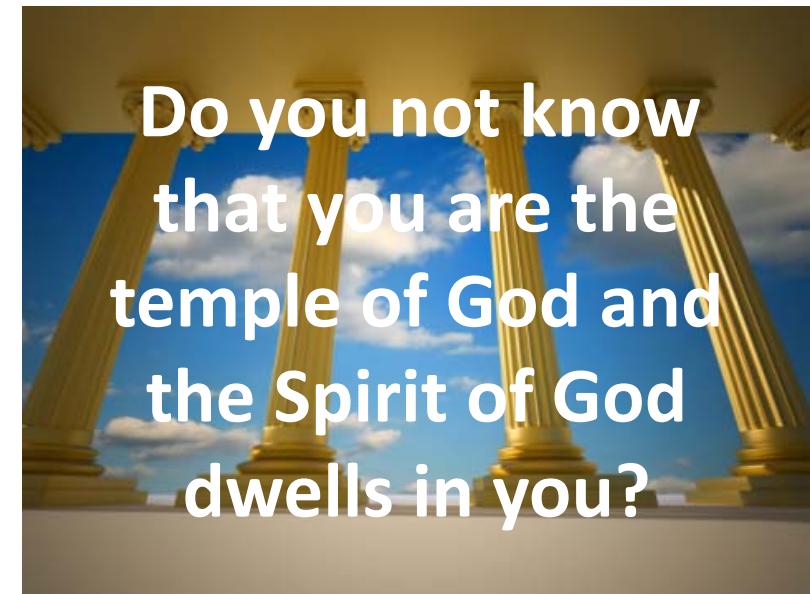
6: Philadelphia

- “**Pillar**”- direct reference to practice of honoring people by putting names on pillars in temples.
- Overcomers **will BE “pillars”** in temple of God, have His new name written on them.
- **Won't have to "run for the hills"** anymore (*as they did, fleeing falling debris from earthquakes there*). Won't have to flee God's presence anymore because of our sin. (*should remind us of Revelation chapter 6 when the “inhabitants of the earth” ran to the hills to protect themselves from the “Wrath of the Lamb!”*)



6: Philadelphia

- We will have God's name written on us, indicating His ownership.
- We will **own all the promises of heaven**, and God will own us.
- New names are common in scripture. God assigns a new name to correspond to new character, a new creature in the Messiah.
- We will serve as **the pillars of His “temple”**





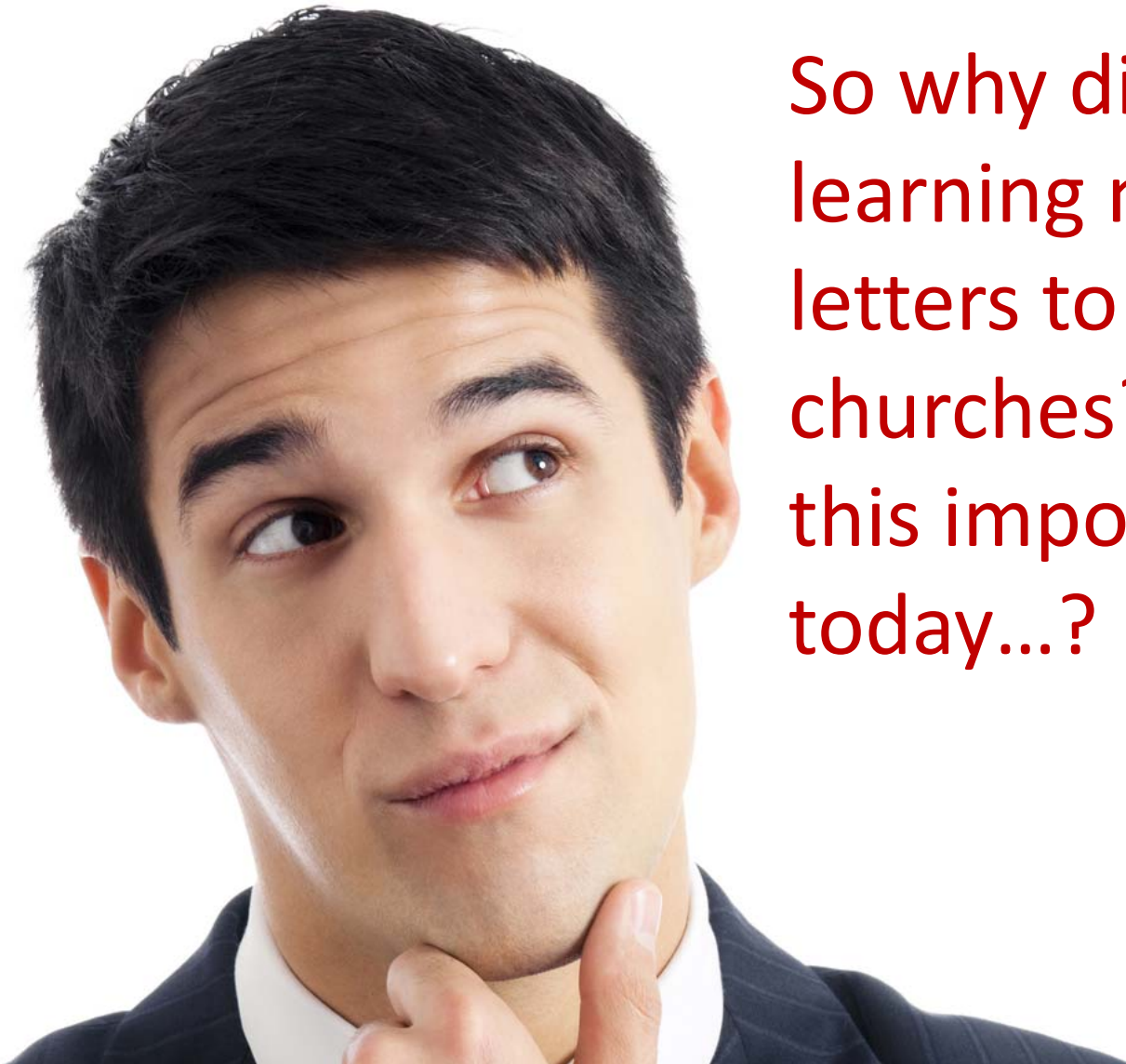
Revelation 3:12

6: Philadelphia

- Church at Philadelphia, a believing, living and telling active church persecuted but empowered by Jesus, is thought to **prophetically represent the Missionary Church era from 1750 - 1945 AD** in an historical timeline of the Christian Church.
- Today, inspiration of scriptures denied, supreme authority of God denounced from seminaries, pulpits.
- Historically, we are living in age of Laodicea, but the people representing the church in Philadelphia, during the missionary age, and today ***"keep my Word...and have not denied my name."***

Revelation 3:7-13, Church 6: Philadelphia

Symbolic Age	Missionary Church 1750-1900
Speaker	<i>“He who is holy, He who is true. He who has the Key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.”</i>
Praise	Works, have a little strength (influence, ability), <u>kept His word, not denied His Name</u> . Kept command to persevere*
Problem	NONE!
Counsel Or Warning	Will make those of synagogue of Satan come worship before their feet. <u>Hold fast what you</u> have so no one can take crown.
Promise	<i>*will keep them from hour of trial coming upon whole world to test those “who dwell on the earth”</i> Make a pillar in temple of God, ...will write on him name of God, name of city of God, New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God...will write on him My new name.
Nutshell	No problems, hold fast, persevere



So why did we spend time learning more about the letters to these ancient churches? Why is all of this important for us today...?



Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

³ As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen? What will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴ Yeshua answered them, *“Be careful that no one leads you astray! ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will lead many astray. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must happen but it is not yet the end. ⁷ For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ But all these things are only the beginning of birth pains.*

Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

⁹ *“Then they will hand you over to persecution and will kill you. You will be hated by all the nations because of My name. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one other. ¹¹ Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ This Good News of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

¹⁵ *“So when you see ‘the abomination of desolation,’ which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the Holy Place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.*

Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

¹⁷ The one on the roof must not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and the one in the field must not turn back to get his coat.

¹⁹ Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your escape will not happen in winter, or on Shabbat. ²¹ For then there will be great trouble, such as has not happened since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. ²² And unless those days were cut short, no one would be delivered. But for the sake of the chosen, those days will be cut short.

²³ “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here’s the Messiah,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe it. ²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the chosen. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand.

Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

²⁶ “So if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. Or, ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. ²⁷ For just as lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ For wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹ “But immediately after the trouble of those days, ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.’

³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory.

Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

³¹ He will send out His angels with a great shofar, and they will gather together His chosen from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

³² “Now learn the parable from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the door. ³⁴ Amen, I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things happen. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away. ³⁶ But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, except the Father alone.

Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

³⁷ “For just as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark. ³⁹ And they did not understand until the flood came and swept them all away. So shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field, one taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill, one taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore stay alert; for you do not know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what time the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and not let his house be broken into.

Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

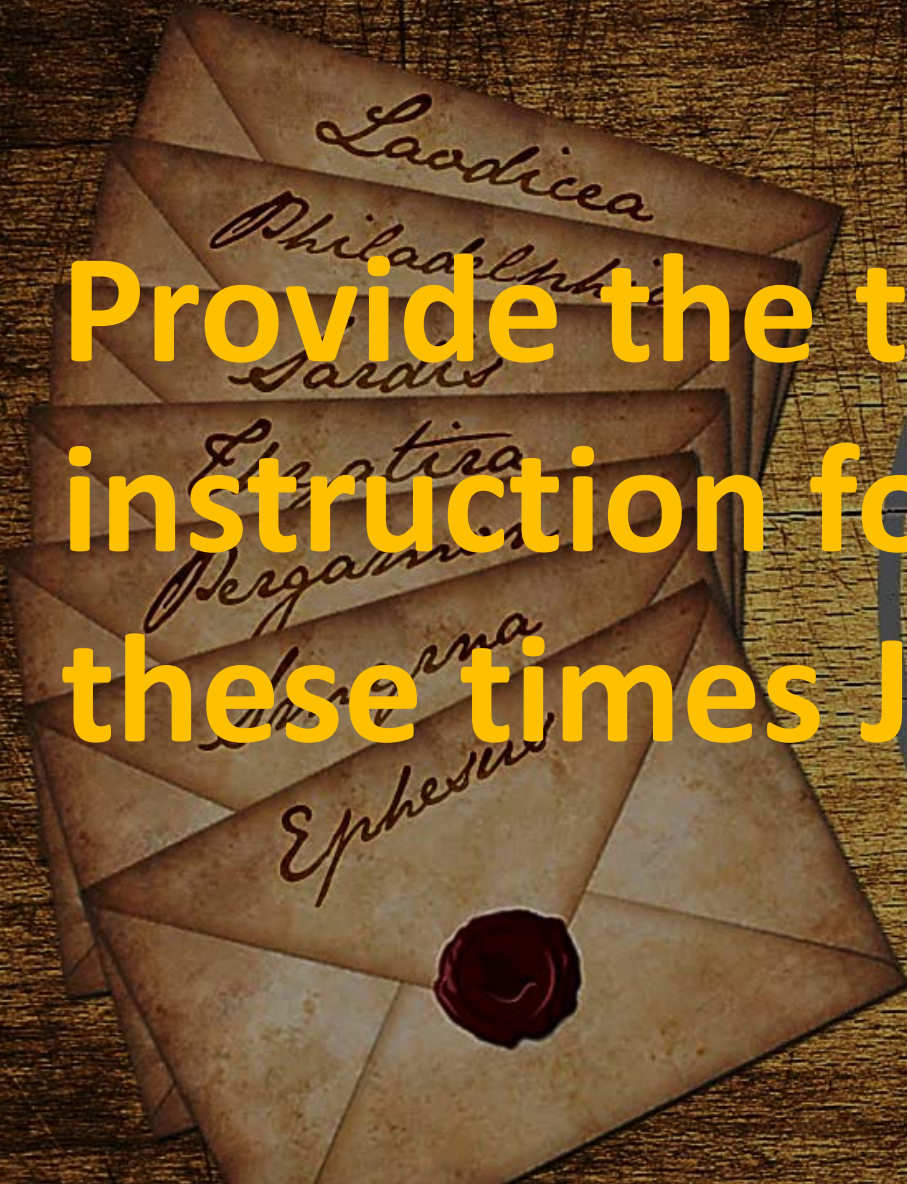
44 So you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Remembering the words of Jesus...(Matthew 24)

⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master put in charge of his household to give them food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whose master finds him so doing when he comes. ⁴⁷ Amen, I tell you, his master will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that wicked servant says in his heart, ‘My master is taking a long time,’ ⁴⁹ and he begins to beat his fellow servants, and he eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know. ⁵¹ And he will cut him in two and assign his place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Provide the tools and instruction for survival of these times Jesus spoke of...

THE
LETTERS
TO THE
SEVEN
CHURCHES



LESSONS FROM ANCIENT CHURCHES: 20 Ways to Survive the Times

1. Make Him top priority- FIRST love
2. Keep your passion for God. Be sold out for Him – zealous!
3. Give every part of self to Him. (Submitted totally)
4. Trust Him, depend on Him completely.
5. Don't be afraid. No fear in any situation.
6. Be faithful to Him even in face of death.
7. Overcome, hang on, persevere.
8. Ask for and use spiritual discernment.
9. Do not allow false teaching.
10. Do not tolerate sin.

Encouragement
and instruction
from the letters to
the 7 churches of
Asia Minor...

LESSONS FROM ANCIENT CHURCHES: 20 Ways to Survive the Times

11. Hold fast to what is true and right, faith, truth, etc.
12. Be spiritually “alive.”
13. Be watchful.
14. Strengthen the good things.
15. No compromise with the world.
16. Repent from evil, sin.
17. Guard your crown. Don't allow anyone to take it.
18. Keep doing for Him, not self.
19. Don't allow apathy.
20. Be refined. (Allow Him to test and purify you)

And one more thing...

**ALWAYS REMEMBER THE
PROMISES...and the One
who made them!**