

CCCN Bible Study End Times Notes – Pastor John Stackhouse

Revelation 3 – Letter to the church in Philadelphia

3:7 - The commentary notes that about twenty-five miles southeast of Sardis, along the Hermus River valley, lay the important high plateau city of Philadelphia, modern Alasehir. In A.D. 17, an earthquake destroyed Sardis, 10 other cities, and also destroyed Philadelphia. Although nothing is known about the origin of the Philadelphian church, in A.D. 100-160 the church prospered under the ministry of a prophetess named Ammia, who was universally recognized as ranking with Agabus and the four daughters of Philip in her possession of the gift of prophecy (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.17.2). Long after all the surrounding country had succumbed to Muslim control under Turkey, Philadelphia held out as a Christian area until 1392.



3:9 - Commentary notes that Jesus is likely talking about those Jews that persecute the church of Christ. In writing to the church in Philadelphia a few years later, Ignatius warned them not to listen to “any one propounding Judaism unto you”.

3:10 - Related to the promise “I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth”, needs closer review, primarily the identification of the “hour of trial” and being kept from it.

Both references are part of an ongoing debate among Bible scholars related to the Rapture. The “hour of trial” could be the intense persecution of believers by the beast, and the divine judgments poured out on the rebellious world (trumpet and bowl plagues). Believers are kept from harm from God’s judgments but from Satan’s persecutions (*Commentary on Revelation*, p. 62). The confusion of these references may be avoided by identifying “the hour of trial” as the wrath of God, deliverance from which is promised to every one of Christ’s overcomers.