

1. History:

- The city was founded by Eumenes II (ca. 180 BCE) and was named Philadelphia based on his brother Attalus II “Philadelphus.”
- *Philos* – love or beloved and *adelphos* – brotherly.
- The city was founded as a “missionary” or “gateway” city for the Greek worldview called Hellenism.
 - Bring Hellenism and a Greek-speaking world to Lydians, Phrygians, and Mysians.
 - The city is also a “doorway” city that sits at the entrance to the *Hermus* river valley.

2. Two primary industries:

- Grapes and wine. The god *Dionysus* is the primary god of the city due to wine.
- Commerce on the road.

3. Earthquakes

- 17 AD – the same earthquake that demolished Sardis (30 miles west) leveled Philadelphia.
- For many years they were plagued by aftershocks.
- *Strabo* (63 BC – 24 AD) (historian and geographer from Asia Minor) writes:

“In Philadelphia...not even the walls are safe, but in a sense are shaken and caused to crack every day. And the inhabitants are continually attentive to the disturbances in the earth...For this reason but few people live in the city, and most of them spend their lives as farmers in the country, since they have fertile soil. Yet one may be surprised at the few, that they are so fond of the place where their dwellings are so insecure; and one might marvel still more at those who founded the city.”

4. Names

- After the 17 AD earthquake – Caesar Tiberius – gave money (economic stimulus package) to rebuild the city as their “savior.”
- **New Name:** the city was given a new name of “Neo-Caesarea.”
 - City was named after their ‘god’ and ‘savior’ – Caesar.
- **Name Change:** Under Nero, the city went back to Philadelphia.
- **New Name:** Under Vespasian and Titus – the Flavians – the city took a new name of “Flavia.”

5. Famine: Domitian decreed that 50% of grapes must be cut down and replaced with wheat. Why?

- Possible that there was grain shortage in other areas of the Roman Empire (wheat was to Rome as oil is to the US)
- Possible that due to Domitian’s family owning vineyards that he had a personal interest in reducing competition.
- The result was a famine in Asia Minor.
- Rev. 6:6 – reflects Roman records of what happened to food prices.

4. Read the Letter to Philadelphia: **Rev. 3: 7-13**

<i>v.</i>	Old Testament Text	Cultural Context
7	- Key of David – open/shut. Isaiah 22:22	- Philadelphia is a “gateway” or “doorway” city
8	- placed before you an open door – Isaiah 45:1	
8	See also New Testament use of “door” as an opening to spread the Good News of Jesus 1 Cor 16:8-9, 2 Cor. 2:12, and Col. 4:3	- the mandate of Philadelphia as a city to spread the Greek worldview of Hellenism.
8		- little strength – rebuilding was slow, and earthquakes plagued them.
9	- Isaiah 60:14 - bow down at your feet	- ‘claim to be Jews though they are not’ – a possible allusion to those Christians – under Nero – who claimed to be “Jews though they are not” to avoid persecution.
10		- a possible allusion to either the many earthquakes that continually rattle their foundation or to the famine induced by Domitian’s decree to uproot grapes.
11	A possible allusion to Exodus 24: 2 and 7 “we will do” and “we will obey (hear)” and the legend that arose surrounding faithful obedience to God.	Jewish Culture: A legend (a story to help explain obedience to God) arose that when the Israelites decreed “we will do” and “we will obey” – a myriad of angels descended and wove together crowns (see Ex. 19:5-6). If you <i>obey</i> – you become a <i>kingdom</i> of priests. When the Israelites disobeyed (golden calf), 2x a myriad of angels descended to take away the crowns. Moral of the story? Maintain your faithful obedience to God, and you will receive crowning glory.
12	- 2 Chron. 3:15-17 – Solomon places two pillars in front of God’s temple and then names them. <i>Jakin</i> – “he establishes.” <i>Boaz</i> – “in strength.”	- Vespasian and Titus just destroyed God’s temple in Jerusalem and moved the pillars. “Pillar” is a symbol of strength and stability. Compare to v. 8 “little strength.”
12	- Both Isaiah 60 and Ezekiel 48 are concerning New Jerusalem. - Both Isa. 60 and Ezek. 48 reference new names.	- the city had been named after Tiberius and was called a “new” city – Neo-Caesarea.
12	- Numbers 6: 22-27 – the Aaronic Blessing – is how God places his name on his people.	