

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 346 – December 12th – Revelation 3:7-22

Works frequently referenced in these notes on the book of Revelation

Morris, Leon	<i>The Revelation of St John</i> (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969
Mounce, Robert H	<i>The Book of Revelation</i> (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977
Peterson, Eugene H	<i>Reversed Thunder</i> , San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991
Witherington, Ben	<i>Revelation</i> (New Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003

Verse 7

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείσει, καὶ κλειῶν καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει·

Philadelphia was the newest of the cities addressed in these seven letters. It stood in a region where earthquakes were common and had been totally destroyed along with Sardis in 17 AD. The city had later been rebuilt and was devoted to Hellenistic culture – being called 'little Athens' for all its temples.

ὁδε, ἦδε, τοδε see 2:1

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

ἀληθινός, η, ον real, genuine, true

Cf. 6:10 where applied to God. Jesus is God and is the true Messiah.

κλεις, ειδος f key

ἀνοίγω open

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing

κλειω shut, shut up, lock

Because the letter is primarily concerned with the church's relation to the Jews, it opens with Christ's claim to be the true Messiah, who holds the key of David. John echoes here the language of Is 22:22 in which the key of the house of David is entrusted to a new steward Eliakim, as a symbol of his complete control over the royal household and of his authority to grant or refuse access to the king's presence. Morris thinks that the opening and shutting refers to admission to the city of David, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Mounce adds "It may be an intentional contrast with the practice of the local synagogue in excommunicating Christian Jews."

Verse 8

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα – ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἠνεωγμένην, ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλείσαι αὐτήν – ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου.

δέδωκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s δίδωμι

ἐνώπιον see v.2

θύρα, ας f door, gate

ἠνεωγμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s

ἀνοίγω

Most think this refers to opportunity for missionary activity (1 Cor 16:9, cf. 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3).

"Ramsay explains the expression in terms of Philadelphia's geographic position at the eastern end of the valley leading up onto the great central plain. As the 'keeper of the gateway to the plateau' it had been given a unique opportunity to carry the gospel to the cities of Phrygia... A different interpretation, however, fits the context better. The preceding verse spoke of a messianic kingdom whose access was under the absolute control of Christ. He is the one who possesses the key and can open and shut at will. Now in verse 8 he reminds the Christians at Philadelphia who may have been excommunicated from the local synagogue (vs. 9) that he has placed before them an open door into the eternal kingdom, and no one can shut it." Mounce. So also Morris.

δύναμαι can, be able to

ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν continues the thought of the first four words. The RSV makes this explicit by repeating 'I know' and continuing 'that you have little power...'

Probably a small congregation that had not made a major impact on the city.

τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

ἠρνήσω Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 s

ἄρνεομαι deny, disown, renounce

The aorists suggest a particular period of trial that had been faced.

Verse 9

ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ Σατανᾶ, τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται – ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἤξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου, καὶ γνώσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε.

διδῶ Verb, pres act indic (variant form)
διδωμι

Cf 2:9 By rejecting the Messiah they have lost their right to claim that they are Jews. Cf. Rom 2:28,29; Gal 6:16. In opposing Christ and his people they show themselves to be the servants of Satan, cf. Jn 8:44.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself
εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι
ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive
ἦκω come
προσκυνεω fall at another's feet
πους, ποδος m foot

Cf. the OT prophecies in Is 45:14; 49:23; Zech 8:20ff. which are in the context of the conversion of the Gentile nations (Is 49:6). Mounce says, "What the Jews fondly expected from the Gentiles, they themselves will be forced to render to the Christians. They will play the role of the heathen and acknowledge that the church is the true Israel of God." Mounce thinks that the reference is not to conversion but simply eschatological "acknowledgement that the church is the object of Christ's love."

γνωσις Verb, fut act indic, 3 s γινωσκω
ἀγαπαω love, show love for
σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Verse 10

ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, κἀγὼ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

The believers at Philadelphia had kept "Christ's command to endure patiently for his sake." Bruce.

καγω from και ἐγω and I, I also

ἐκ τῆς ὥρας is either:

- i) 'Keep you from undergoing trial...,' or
- ii) 'Keep you right through the trial...'

The latter is the more likely. Cf Jn 17:15.

ώρα, ας f hour, moment, period of time
πειρασμος, ου m period or process of testing, trial

Reference is to the worldwide πειρασμος which is the subject of the rest of this book.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
οικουμενη, ης f world, inhabited earth

όλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire
πειραζω test, put to the test
κατοικεω live, inhabit

Verse 11

ἔρχομαι ταχύ· κράτει ὁ ἔχεις, ἵνα μηδεὶς λάβῃ τὸν στέφανόν σου.

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon

Cf. 1:1

κρατεω see 2:25

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing
στεφανος, ου m see 2:10

Philadelphia was well known for its games and festivals.

Verse 12

ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἔτι, καὶ γράψω ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἰερουσαλήμ, ἡ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν.

νικαω see 2:11

στυλος, ου m pillar, column

Cf. Gal 2:9; 1 Tim 3:15. A picture of stability and permanence.

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

ἐξω adv. out, outside, away

ἔτι still, yet, any more

"To a city that had experienced devastating earthquakes which caused people to flee into the countryside and establish temporary dwellings there, the promise of permanence within the New Jerusalem would have a special meaning." Mounce.

γραφω write

πολις, εως f city, town

καινος, η, ον new

καταβαινω come down, descend

ουρανος, ου m heaven

"The impact of the threefold inscription is to show that the faithful belong to God, hold citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and in a special way are related to Christ." Mounce. Cf. 7:3; 14:1; 22:4 also Gal 4:26; Phil 3:20. Reddish comments, "Now those who have kept 'the name' will be inscribed with the name."

Verse 13

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὖς, ὄτος n see 2:7

Verse 14

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικεῖα ἐκκλησίας γράβων· Τάδε λέγει ὁ Ἄμην, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ·

Laodicea was an extremely wealthy city, famous for its wool and textiles. Agricultural and commercial prosperity had resulted in Laodicea also becoming a centre for banking. It also had a notable medical school which, among other things, was famed for its eye-salve. However, the city lacked a natural water supply. Its water was piped in from hot springs 6 miles away, arriving tepid and so impure as to have an emetic effect. There was a sizable Jewish community in the city. The church had probably been founded during Paul's stay at Ephesus. Paul wrote them a letter (Col 4:16) which was subsequently lost.

ὁδε, ἡδε, τοδε see 2:1

μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

"Ford suggests that it was added to clarify for the non-Hebrew-speaking audience the meaning of 'amen'... It presents the trustworthiness of Christ in sharp contrast to the unfaithfulness of the Laodicean church." Mounce. God is called the Amen in Isa 65:16.

ἀληθινος, η, ον see v.7

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, origin

κτισις, εως f creation

Cf. Col 1:15. The Laodiceans should have been familiar with the Colossian letter (see Col 4:16).

Verse 15

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός, ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἢς ἢ ζεστός.

οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)

ψυχρος, α, ον cold

ζεστος, η, ον hot

ὄφελον would that, I wish that

ἢς Verb, imperfect indic, 2 s εἰμι

ἢ or

"In an important article, Rudwick and Green argue that the adjectives 'hot,' 'cold,' and 'lukewarm' are not to be taken as describing the spiritual fervour (or lack of it) of people. The contrast is between the hot medicinal waters of Hierapolis and the cold, pure waters of Colossae. Thus the church in Laodicea 'was providing neither refreshment for the spiritually weary, nor healing for the spiritually sick. It was totally ineffective, and thus distasteful to the Lord'... On this interpretation the church is not being called to task for its spiritual temperature but for the barrenness of its works. Among the several advantages of this interpretation is the fact that it is no longer necessary to wonder why Christ would prefer the church to be 'cold' rather than 'lukewarm'." Mounce. See also Colin Hemer's Article in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 1, pp 317-319.

Verse 16

οὕτως, ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ καὶ οὔτε ζεστός οὔτε ψυχρὸς, μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου.

οὕτως thus, in this way

χλιαρος, α, ον tepid, lukewarm

μέλλω (before an infin) be going, be about

ἐμεω spit out, vomit

στομα, τος n mouth

Verse 17

ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι Πλούσιός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδὲν χρεῖαν ἔχω, καὶ οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός,

πλουσιος, α, ον rich

πεπλούτηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s

πλουτεω be rich, grow rich

οὐδεις, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing

χρεια, ας f need, want

ταλαιπωρος, ον miserable, wretched

ἐλεινός, η, ον pitiable

πτωχος, η, ον poor, pitiful

τυφλος, η, ον blind

γυμνος, η, ον naked, poorly dressed

Cf. 2:9.

Verse 18

συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ' ἐμοῦ χρυσίον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσης, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνη τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλούριον ἐγχεῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα βλέπῃς.

συμβουλεω advise, counsel

ἀγοραζω buy, redeem

χρυσιον, ου n gold

πεπυρωμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s πυροομαι burn; perf. be
refined

πυρ, ος n fire

ίματιον, ου n see v.4

λευκος, η, ον see v.4

"A contrast with the black woollen fabric for which for which the city was famous could be intended, but the figure of white garments as symbolic of righteousness is so widely used in Revelation (3:4,5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13-14; 19:14) that no local allusion is necessary." Mounce.

περιβάλλη Verb, aor act subj, 2 s περιβαλλω
see v.5

φανερωθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s φανερωω
make known, reveal, make evident

αίσχυνη, ης f shame, disgrace

γυμνοτης, ητος f nakedness

κολλουριον, ου n eye salve

"Laodicea was known for its famous medical school ... and exported 'Phrygian powder' widely used as an eye-salve." Mounce.

ἐγγριω rub on (of ointment)

βλεπω see, be able to see

Verse 19

ἐγὼ ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω·
ζήλευε οὖν καὶ μετανόησον.

Ramsay considers vv 19-22 an epilogue to all 7 letters but this view has attracted little support.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as,
whoever; pl. as many as, all
φιλεω love, have deep feeling for

Charles comments, "It is a touching and unexpected manifestation of love to those who deserve it least among the seven churches." And Witherington writes, "Even with such people as the Laodiceans, Christ does not give up."

ἐλέγχω show (someone his) fault, convince
(someone of his) error, rebuke

παιδευω instruct, train, discipline, correct

Cf. Prov 3:11,12; Heb 12:5,6.

ζηλωω be jealous of, be zealous

μετανοεω repent

Verse 20

ἰδοὺ ἕστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἐάν τις
ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν,
καὶ εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ δειπνήσω
μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ' ἐμοῦ.

ἕστηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s ἵστημι
stand

θυρα, ας f door, gate

κρουω knock (at a door)

Present continuous.

ἀνοίξῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀνοίγω open

εἰσελεύσομαι Verb, fut midd sep indic, 1 s

εἰσερχομαι enter, come in

δειπνήσω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s δειπνεω

eat, dine

Cf. Lk 22:30. A picture of that fellowship with Christ which is an anticipation of the future messianic kingdom (cf. Mt 26:29; Rev 19:9).

Verse 21

ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσει μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ
θρόνῳ μου, ὡς κἀγὼ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα
μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ.

νικαω see 2:11

δωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s διδωμι

καθίζω sit down, sit, take one's seat

θρονος, ου m throne

Cf. Mt 19:28; 2 Tim 2:12.

κἀγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγώ

ἐκάθισα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s καθίζω

Verse 22

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς
ἐκκλησίαις.

οὖς, ὠτος n see 2:7.

Postscript

Of the letters to the churches (and of the book of Revelation as a whole), Talbert writes, "It speaks harshly to those so-called Christian prophets who eagerly advocate assimilation to an alien ethos as something compatible with Christian faith. It also speaks a word of warning to the unthinking mass of Christians who simply want to share in the economic fruits of Babylon's wealth and luxury and are quite willing to assimilate in order to reap temporal benefits. Revelation addresses not so much those alienated from the larger society because they belong to the 'have-nots' as it does those with upward social mobility who want to be totally immersed in the larger society and are consciously or unconsciously willing to lose their souls in order to do so."