

# **WHAT JESUS THINKS OF THE CHURCH**

## **A STUDY OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA**

### **REVELATION 2-3**

**Letter to the church at  
Sardis**

# Satellite View

**Patmos**

Size:  
About 22 sq. miles  
of land area.

10 miles N-S  
6 miles E-W at  
north end



NASA Photo

Crete

# Seven Churches of Asia

Black Sea

THRACE

BITHYNIA

Hellespontus

Aegean Sea

- Pergamum
- Thyatira
- Smyrna
- Sardis
- Philadelphia
- Ephesus
- Laodicea

ASIA

Patmos

GA

PAMPH





In the Middle of the  
Lampstands

This:



Not  
this:



# Seven Churches of Asia



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Laodicea

Patmos

GALATIA

PAMPHLYGIA

**To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. 3 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.**

**“But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”**



# Lydian House RECONSTRUCTION

**Lydians lived  
here as early as  
13<sup>th</sup> century BC**

**First coined  
money in 7<sup>th</sup>  
century BC**

**Croesus was  
last and most  
famous king  
– 560-546 BC**



**LYDIAN KINGDOM**

**GREEK CITY STATES**

**NEW BABYLONIAN EMPIRE**

*The Babylonian Empire*

**MEDIAN EMPIRE**

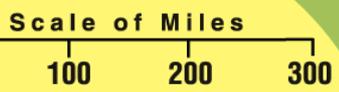
**EGYPTIAN KINGDOM**

Caspian Sea

Mediterranean Sea

Red Sea

Persian Gulf



# Seven Churches of Asia



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CHURCH OF THE GROUP  
CYPRUSIAN BOSS ENTRANCE



Large hieroglyphic inscription on the left block, including a prominent cross symbol. The text is arranged in several horizontal lines, with the cross symbol occupying a central vertical space.

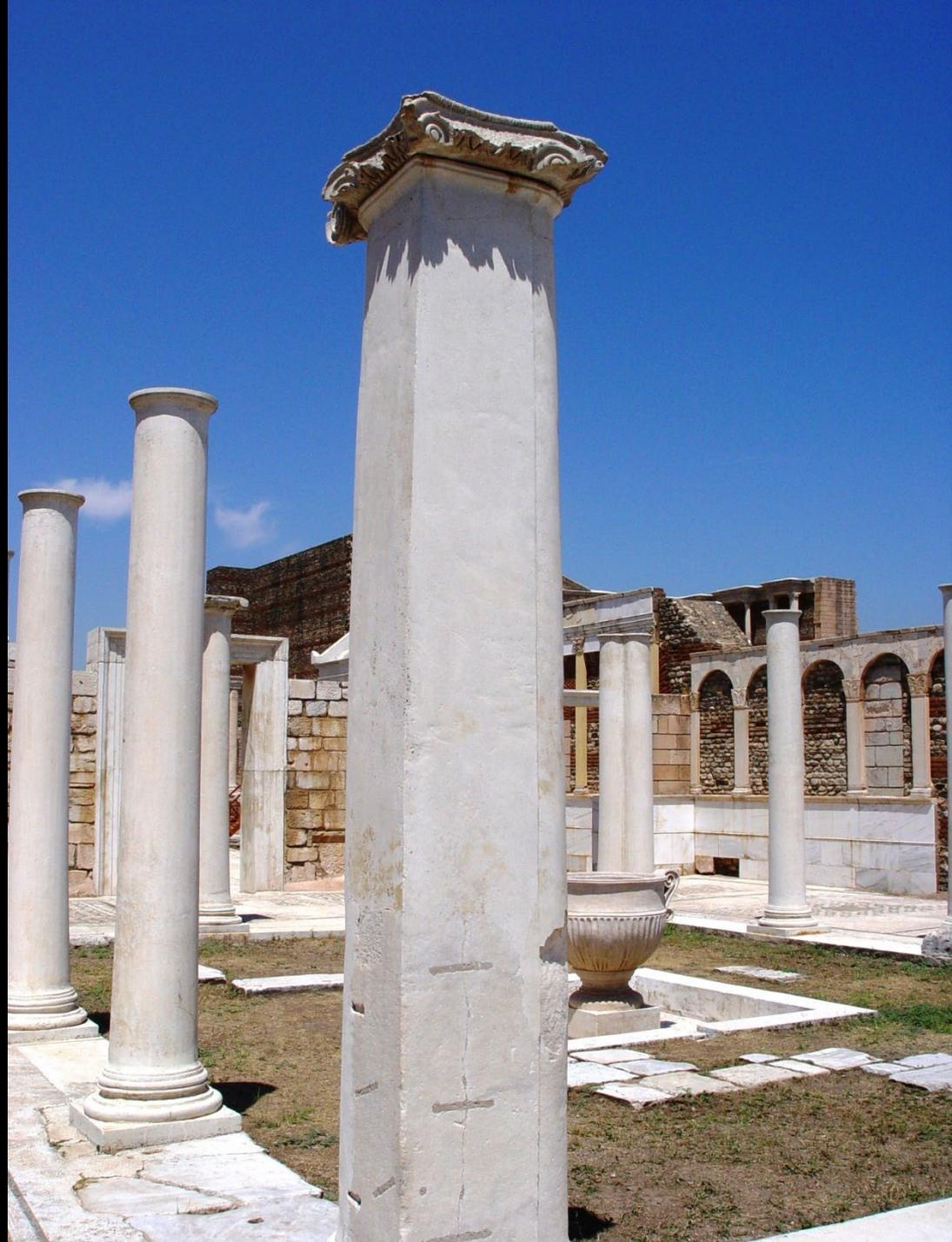
Large hieroglyphic inscription on the right block, including a prominent cross symbol. The text is arranged in several horizontal lines, with the cross symbol occupying a central vertical space. A small circular hole is visible near the top of this block.

Small, faint hieroglyphic text located at the bottom of the right block, appearing as a separate line of characters.















## SANCTUARY OF ARTEMIS

The huge temple, one of the largest in the world, was originally dedicated to Artemis as inscriptions indicate. It may later also have incorporated the cults of Zeus and the Roman Imperial family: as is partly suggested by the division of the cella, which you can see in the exposed foundations. The Temple was the focus of a large precinct, which offered protection against summary arrest.

The oldest monument in the Sanctuary is the altar which dates from the 5th century B.C. The Temple was begun soon after 300 B.C. and, as construction features like the Roman concrete between column foundations show, building continued for many centuries. A devastating earthquake in A.D. 17 may have required major rebuilding. Unfinished surface parts and repairs, particularly conspicuous at the far end, provide clues to methods and techniques of construction.

The Christian chapel at far end of the Temple was probably built in the 5th century A.D. After antiquity the Sanctuary was gradually abandoned, its monuments were plundered for building materials and fell into ruin. By the beginning of the 20th century, the ruins were deeply buried under earth, except for the tops of the two complete columns. Excavation of the precinct was conducted between 1910 and 1914, under the auspices of an American Expedition directed by Howard Crosby Butler of Princeton University.





















HARUN

SYRIA  
LIBAN  
HARUN

**ARTEMİS RAHİBİ APPHİON'un  
ŞEREFİNE DİKİLEN ANIT**

**STELE HONORING APPHION  
PRIESTESS OF ARTEMIS**





# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

- **Outward Appearance: A church with no problems.**
- **No false doctrine mentioned.**
- **Do not hear of Balaam.**
- **Nor Nicolaitans.**
- **Nor Jezebel.**
- **Seemed to be a lively church.**



# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

- **Condemnation:** “you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”
- **1 Sam. 16:7:** The Lord sees not as man sees.
- **They belonged to Christ in name, but not in heart.**
- **Isa. 29:13:** These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me...
- **2 Tim. 3:5:** “...having a form of godliness but denying its power.”



# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

- **Condemnation: “you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”**
- **In reality they were spiritually dead.**
- **Can be physically alive but spiritually dead (cf. Lk.9:60).**
- **Dead in trespasses and sins (Eph.2:1)**
- **“dead even while she lives” (1 Tim.5:6)**



# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

- **Condemnation:** “you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”
- **Nothing completed.**



# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

- **Command--Five staccato imperatives:**
- **Wake up!**
- **Strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die...**
- **Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard;**
- **Keep it**
- **And repent.**



# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

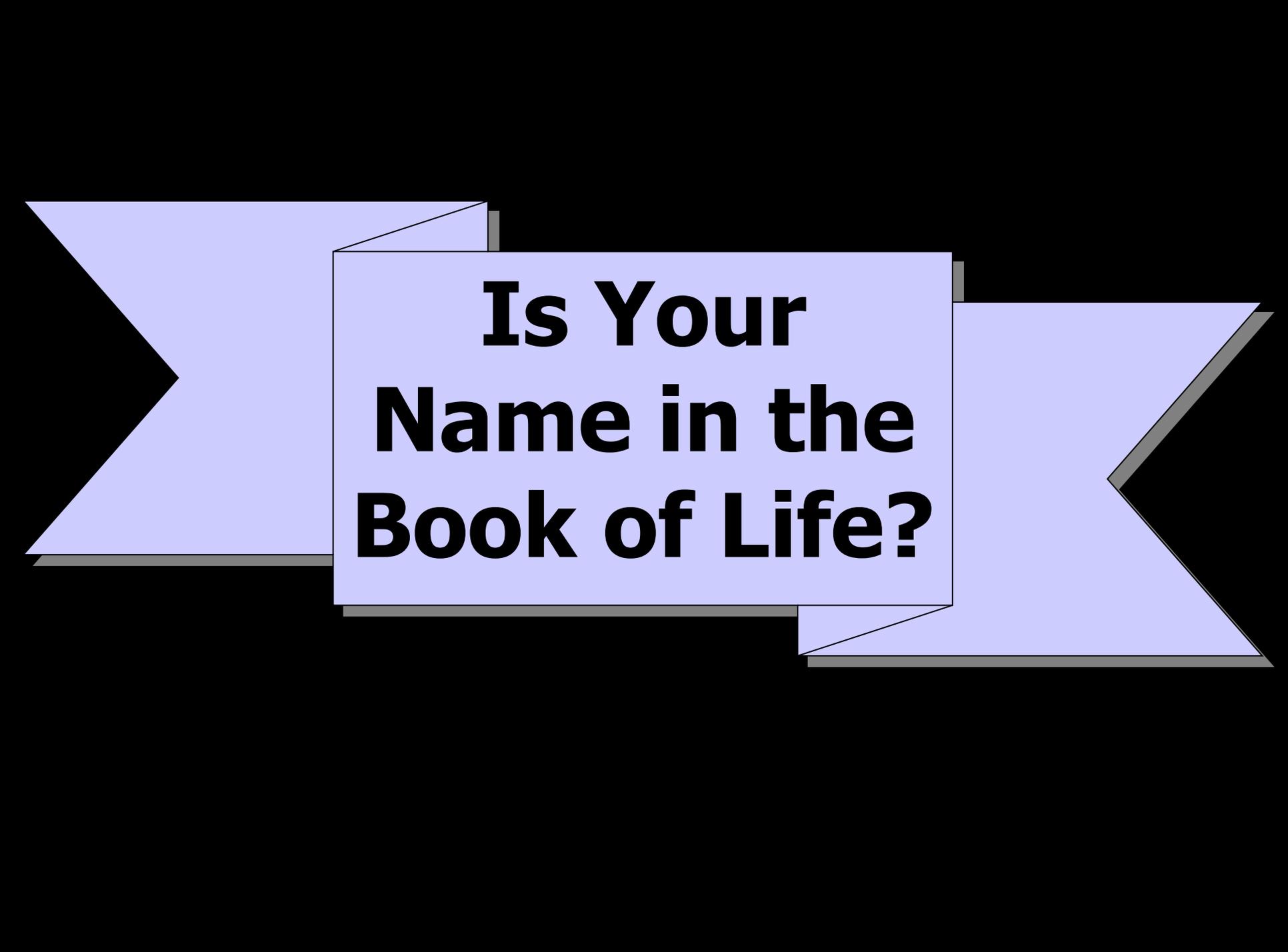
- Commendation:
- **A Few have remained Pure.**
- **The doctrine of the Remnant.**
- **Told to establish the things that remain.**
- **To stabilize themselves and proceed with doing God's will.**

# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

- **Promise:**
- **He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels**

# Sardis: The Dead Church With A Name

- ... and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels
- Lk. 10:20
- Heb. 12:23
- Rev.20:15: And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
- Luke 12:8: Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. Open acknowledgement!



**Is Your  
Name in the  
Book of Life?**



# WHAT JESUS THINKS OF THE CHURCH

Letter to the church at  
**Philadelphia**

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**" And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ' These things says 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": <sup>8</sup> "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.**

**9 "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. 10 "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. 11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.**

**12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And 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. 13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."**



# Philadelphia: Modern Alaşehir

















































# Dionysus

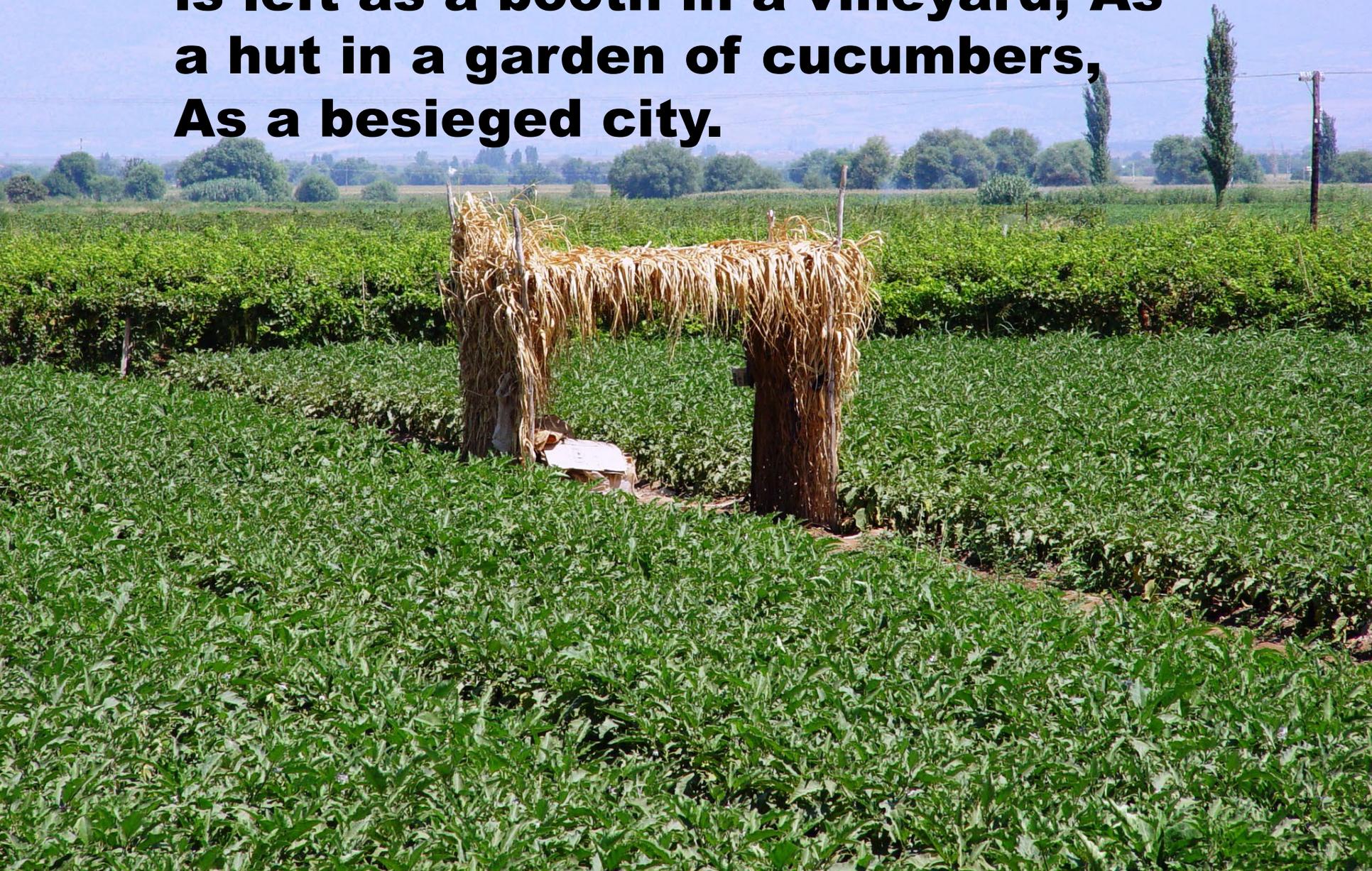
– Bacchus –

- God of wine
- Worshipped at Philadelphia





**Isaiah 1:8: So the daughter of Zion  
is left as a booth in a vineyard,  
As a hut in a garden of cucumbers,  
As a besieged city.**





# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

- Jesus, He who:
- Is Holy
- Is True (19:11)
- Has the key of David
- Opens and no one shuts
- Shuts and no one opens
- OT background: **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. Isa 22:22.**

# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

Open Door (v.8) Is Suggestive of:

- **Opportunity of Service.**
- **Door for Effective Work.**
- **cf. 1 Cor. 16:9:** a great and effective door has been opened to me (a great door for effective work has opened to me, NIV)
- **Col. 4:3,4** And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

Open Door (v.8) Is Suggestive of:

- **Their location:**
- **On a great Roman road on the borders of Mysia, Lydia and Phrygia. On a main West-East trade route.**
- **Ramsay describes it as being the keeper of the gateway to the central plateau and on the threshold of the eastern country.**
- **Could thus spread far and wide the good news of God's grace and kingdom!**

# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

- Commendation:
- **Little strength/power.**
- **---Few in number?**
- **Zech.4:9,10:** The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know That the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. For who has despised the day of small things?
- **Luke 16:10** He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

- Commendation:
- **Little strength/power.**
- **Had faithfully kept God's word**

# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

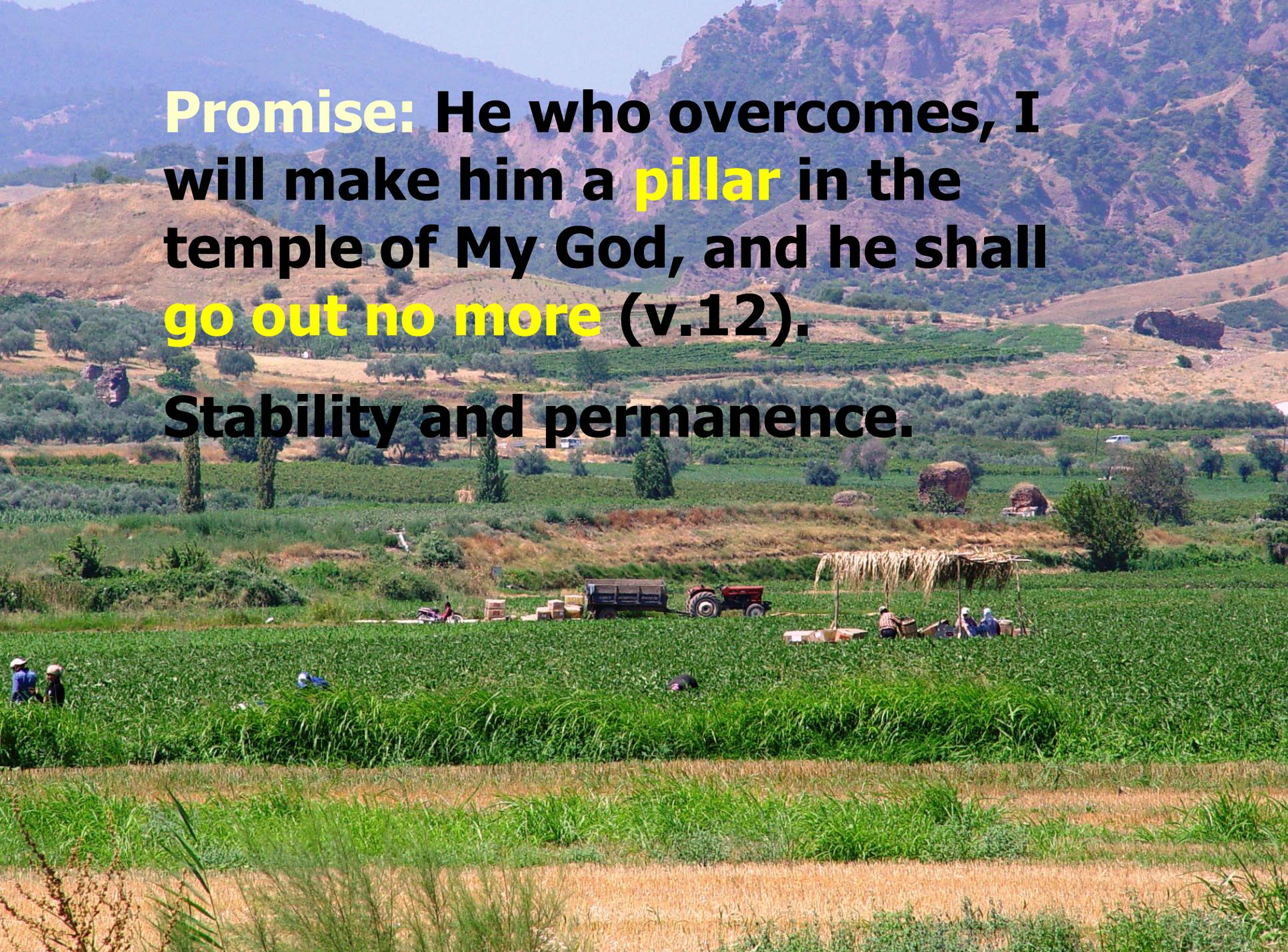
- Presence of “synagogue of Satan”:
- **Church is the true Israel.**
- **Cf. Rom. 2:29**
- **Gal. 6:15,16**

# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

**Promise: I will keep you from the hour of trial  
(v.10).**

- **Does not say He would spare them from the persecution/suffering, but He would uphold them.**

**Promise: He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more (v.12).  
Stability and permanence.**



**Promise: and he shall go out no more (v.12).**

**In A.D. 17 a great earthquake had caused very serious damage; and the effects lasted for years...Two or three years later, when Strabo wrote, shocks of earthquake were an everyday occurrence...Few people ventured to live in the city; most spent their lives outside, and devoted themselves to cultivating the fertile Philadelphian territory (Ramsay.406-407).**

ἘΡΩΔΗΣ ΜΟΝ  
ΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΣ ΤΟΣ  
ΥΙΟΣ ΑΜΑΤΟΙΣ  
ΤΕΚΝΟΙΣ ΕΚΤΙ  
ΕΑΝ  
ΤΟΝ ΚΙΘΑ



# Philadelphia: The Church With An Open Door

Promise: And 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**.

- **It was a church (1) w/opportunity**
- **(2) with assurance of victory.**
- **This was a church that glorified God.**

# Will You Be a Pillar in the Temple of God?

