

Aspects of Philadelphia at the time of Revelation

-) A minor city in Lydia in Asia Minor, surrounded by more important towns.
-) Founded by Attalus II, king of Pergamum, 2nd century BCE.
-) Its economy was dependent on surrounding vineyards.
-) As the farthest of Revelation's cities from the coast, it stood at the border of Greek culture, and yet, had close relations with Rome.
-) Destroyed in the 17 CE earthquake that also leveled Sardis. Rebuilt with help from Emperor Tiberius, and the city name was changed to Neocaesarea in gratitude.
-) According to the roughly contemporaneous letter (perhaps early 2nd century) of Ignatius of Antioch to the *ekklēsia* in Philadelphia, it was organized hierarchically with a bishop, presbyters and deacons, and there was some unnamed struggle over authority and "doctrine".
-) Principal deity was Anaitas, a Persian goddess that blended with the mother goddess Meter and Greek Athena. Also worshiped where the usual deities of Zeus and Apollo.
-) An established Jewish community had long been present, but by this time, was in tension with the *ekklēsia*.