

Part 9: "Sardis – a church full of zombies"

THE BOOK OF **REVELATION**
A STORY OF THE LAST DAYS

2026Oct4 Dan Fisher - Rev 9

Message to the Seven Churches

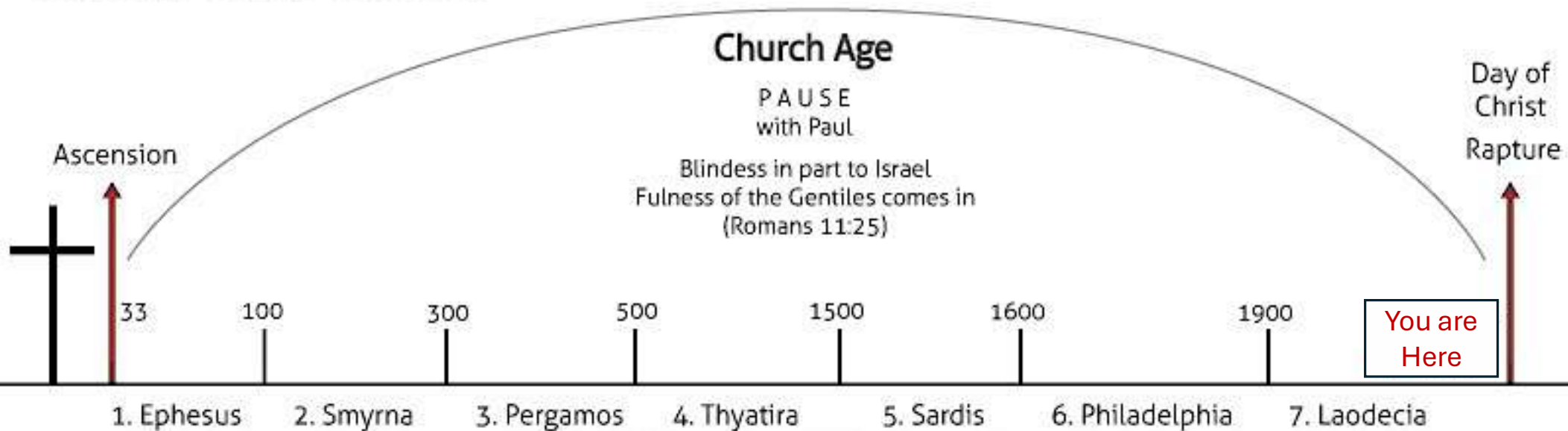


A map of the Aegean region in Asia Minor, showing the locations of the Seven Churches of Revelation. The map is rendered in a brown, textured style. A grey line connects the seven churches, which are marked with blue dots. The churches are labeled in white text: Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Ephesus, and Smyrna. The map shows the coastlines of Asia Minor and the Aegean Sea to the west.

Pergamum
Thyatira
Sardis
Philadelphia
Laodicea
Ephesus
Smyrna

The things which are – **Rev 2-3: the churches**

History of the Church



The things which are **Rev 2-3: the churches**

©2004 Dan Fisher - Rev 9

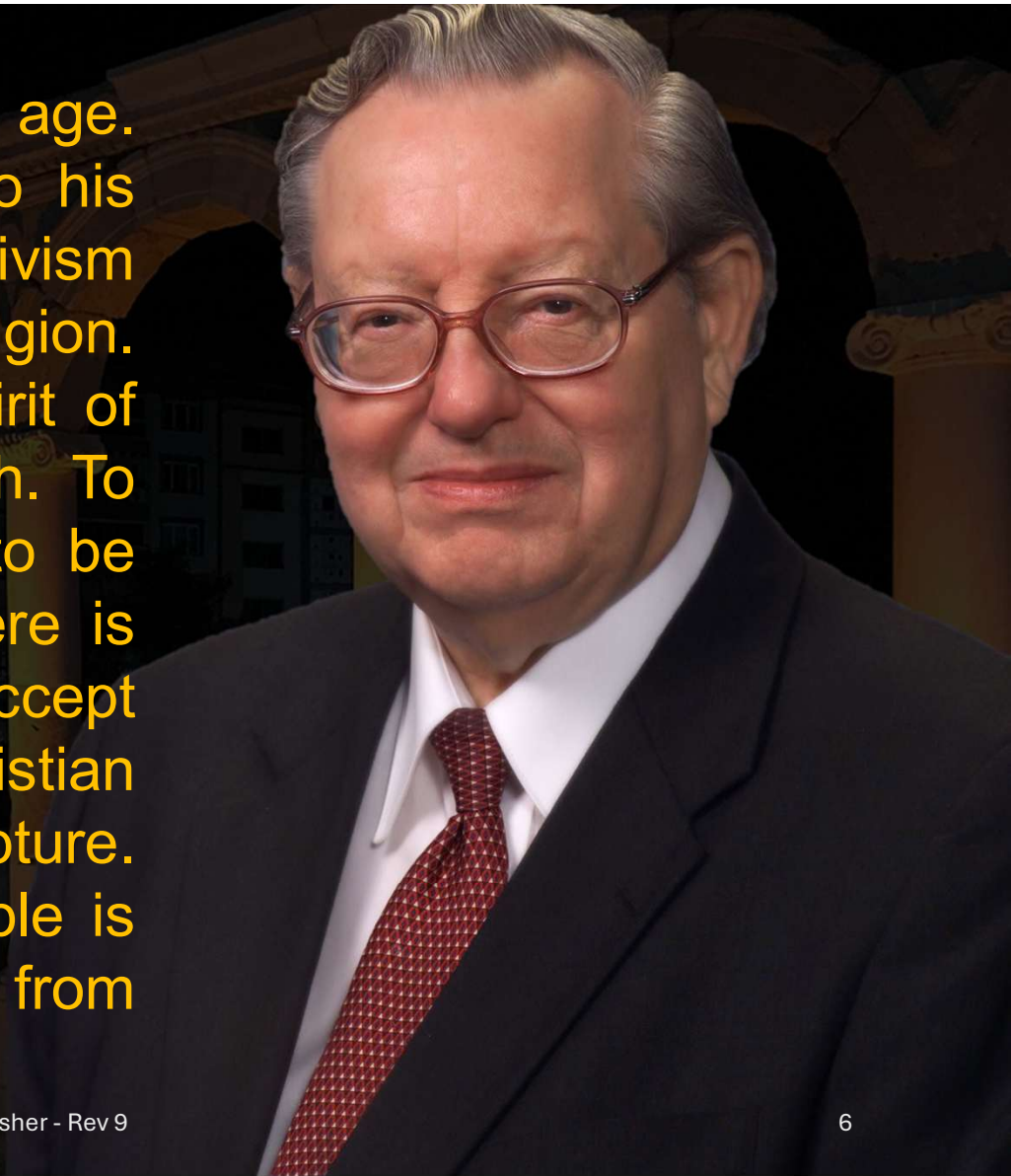
**Thyatira – the
church not just in
but of the world**



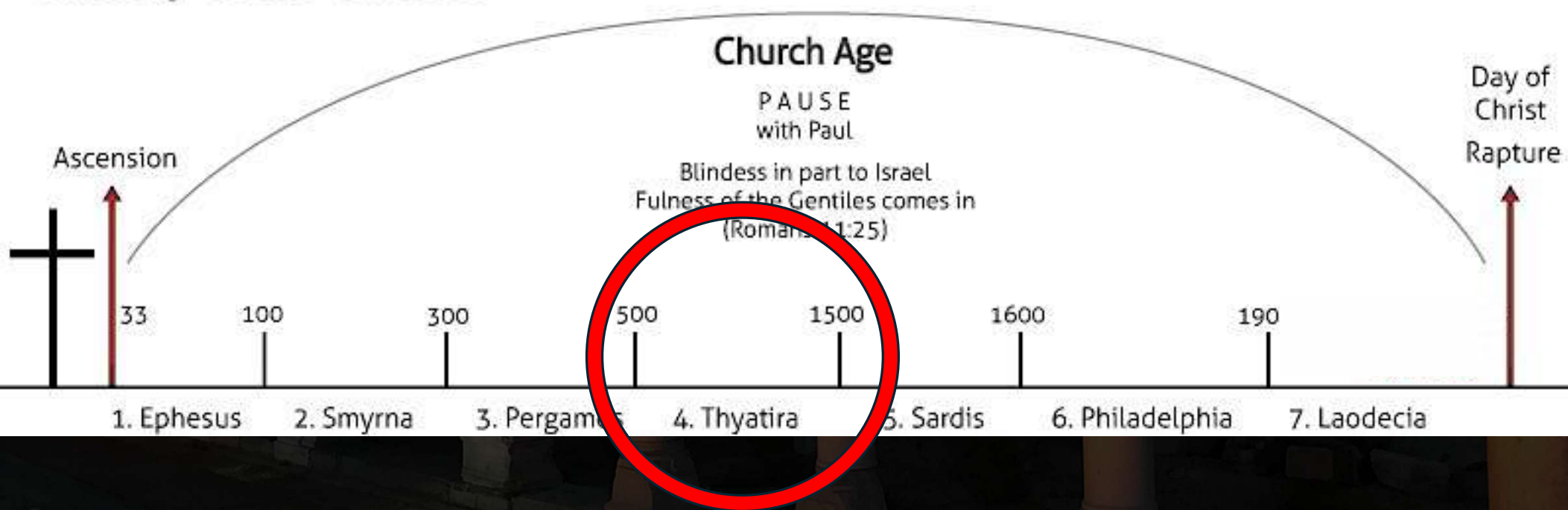
**Jesus' message to the believers in Thyatira
is found in Rev 2:18-29**

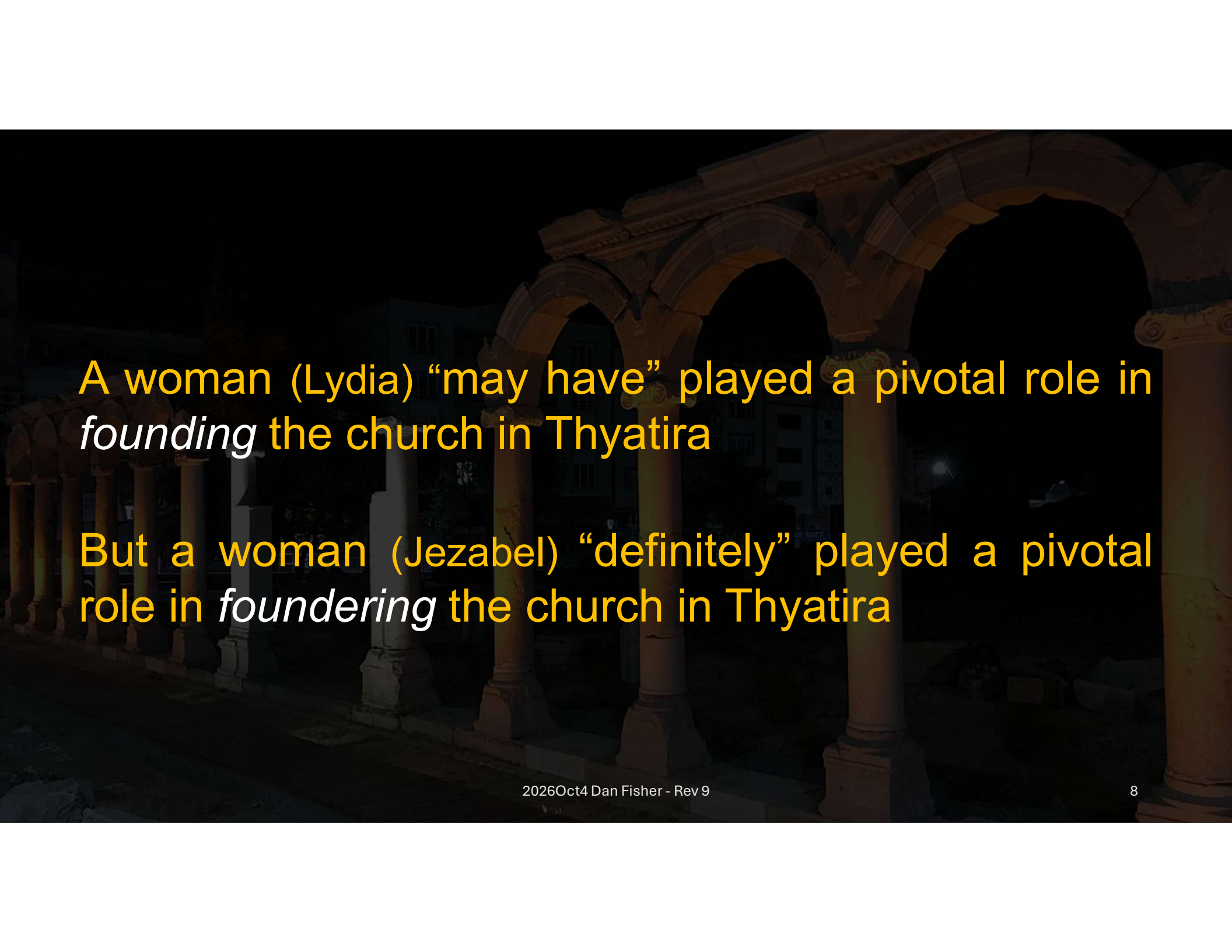
“We are living in a most tolerant age. Everyone must be allowed to ‘do his own thing.’ This is the age of relativism in morals and syncretism in religion. There are no absolutes. The spirit of the age has crept into the church. To denounce a belief as heresy is to be branded intolerant. Certainly, there is no room for bigotry, but to accept anything in the name of Christian charity is a spirit foreign to Scripture. The strongest language in the Bible is reserved for those who depart from revealed truth.” John Phillips

2026Oct4 Dan Fisher - Rev 9



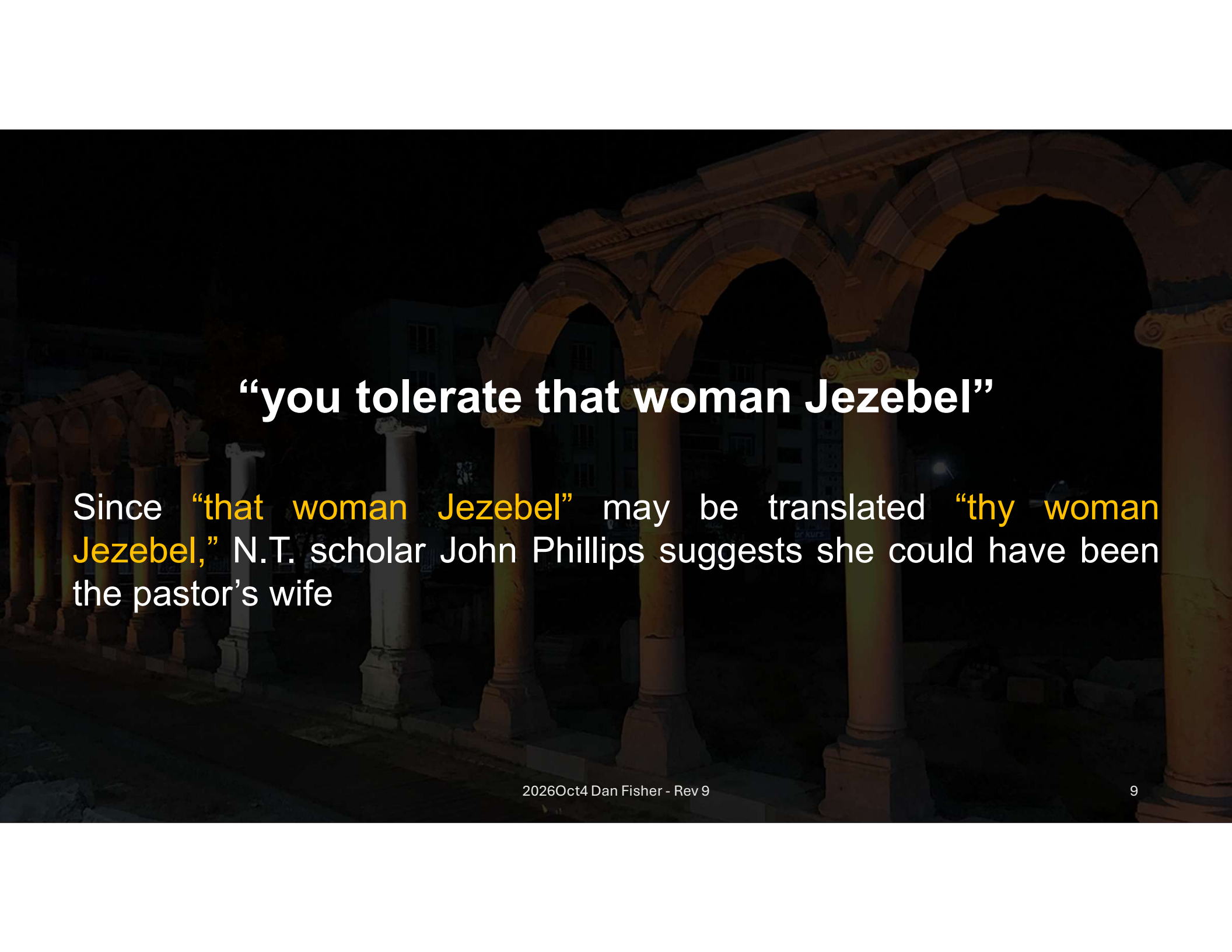
History of the Church





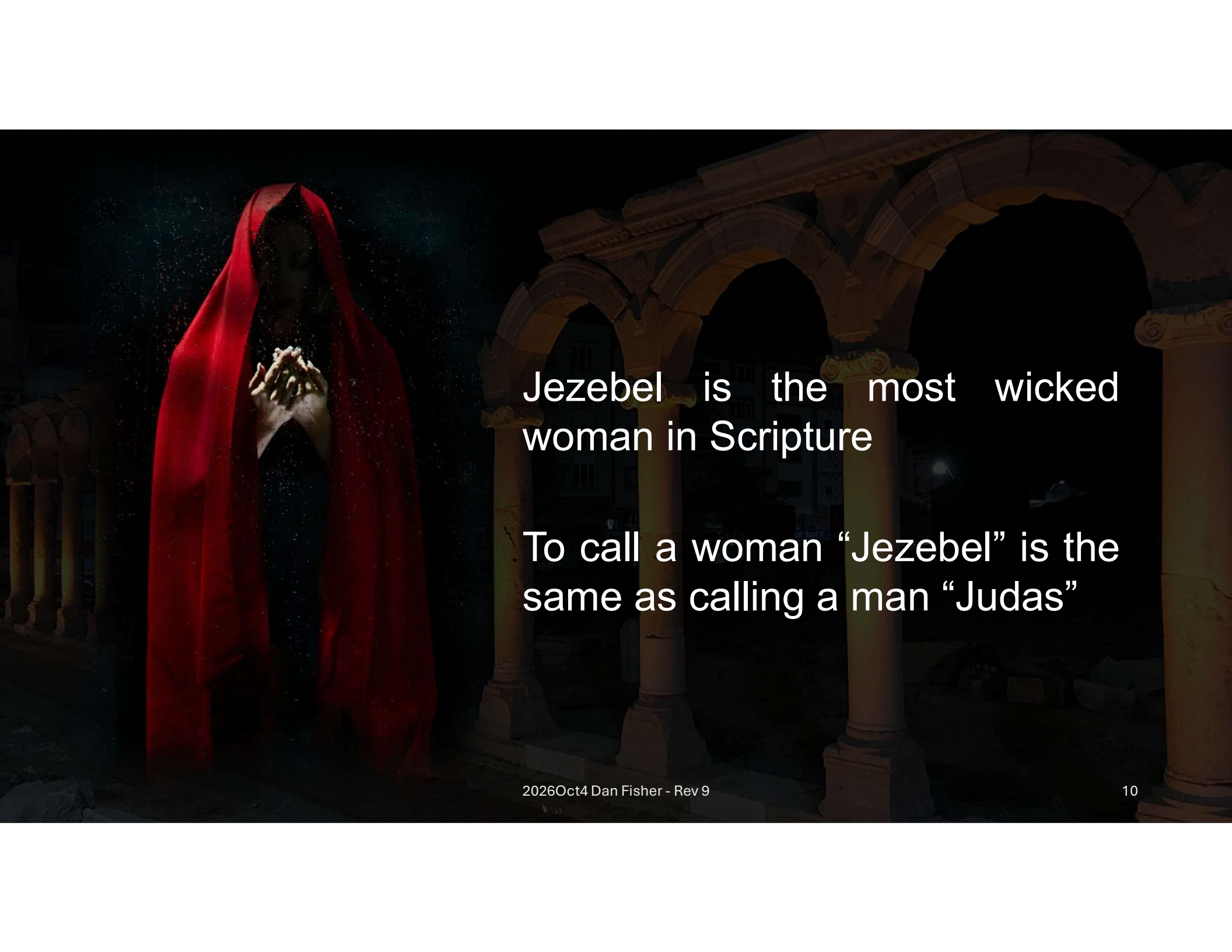
A woman (Lydia) “may have” played a pivotal role in
founding the church in Thyatira

But a woman (Jezabel) “definitely” played a pivotal
role in *foundering* the church in Thyatira



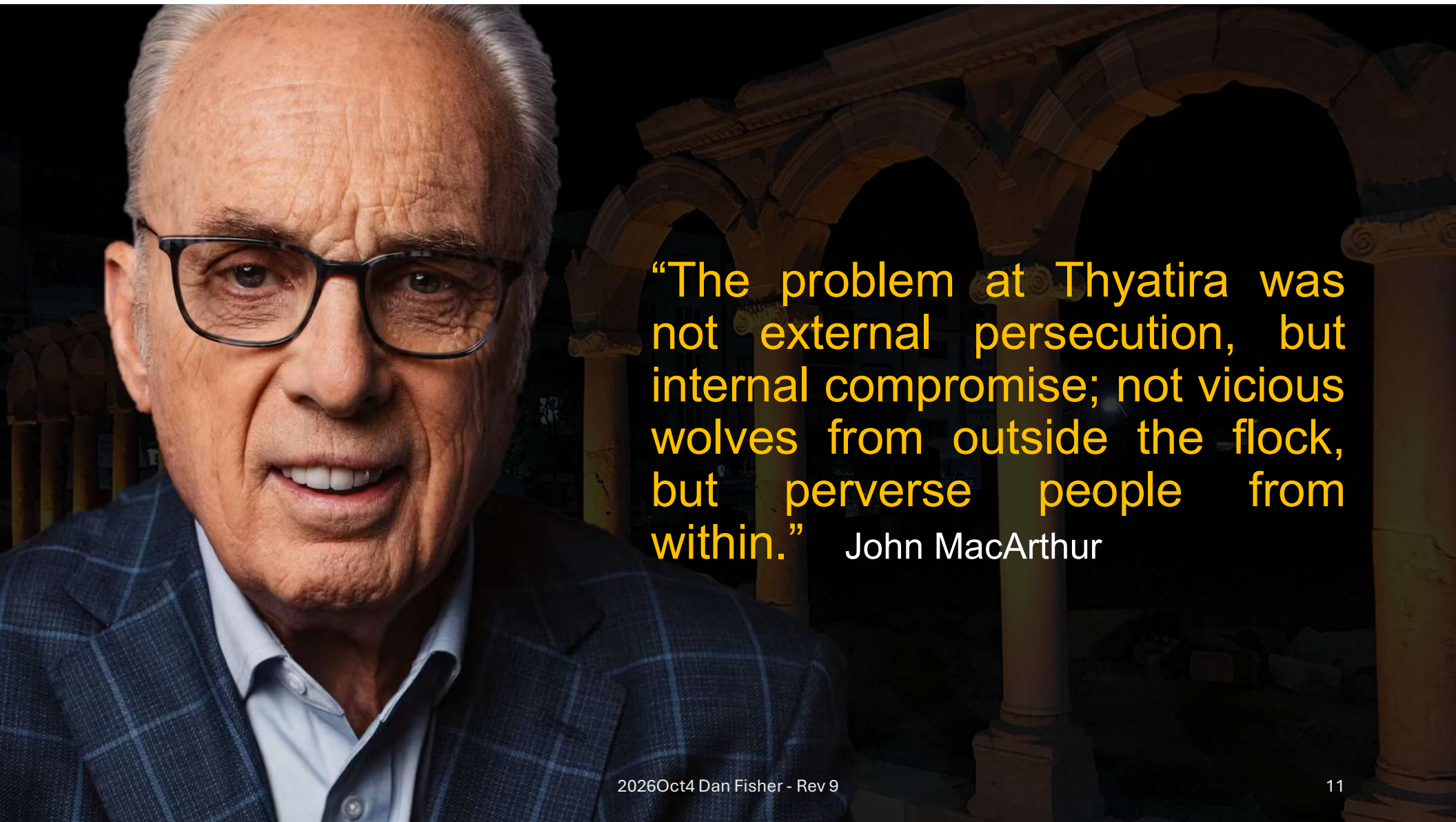
“you tolerate that woman Jezebel”

Since “that woman Jezebel” may be translated “thy woman Jezebel,” N.T. scholar John Phillips suggests she could have been the pastor’s wife

A woman wearing a vibrant red cloak stands in a dark, atmospheric setting. Her hands are clasped in prayer, and a soft, ethereal light emanates from her chest. She is positioned in front of ancient stone arches and columns, which are partially illuminated, suggesting a ruined temple or palace at night. The background is dark with some distant lights and architectural details visible through the arches.

Jezebel is the most wicked woman in Scripture

To call a woman “Jezebel” is the same as calling a man “Judas”



“The problem at Thyatira was not external persecution, but internal compromise; not vicious wolves from outside the flock, but perverse people from within.” John MacArthur

v. 18 – Thyatira made the Lord’s **eyes “flash”** and His **feet stomp**

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.”

1 Cor 4:5

v. 19 – **Works cannot save, but they can damn**

Works are critical to the Christian journey, but the Gospel order is **“come”** and then **“go”**

v. 20 – Allowing sin is committing sin

“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” **1 Cor 5:6**

“Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’” **2 Cor 6:17**

- **Allowing her to teach was a major sin**

“I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.” **1 Tim 2:12-14**

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. ²A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife ... ⁴one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence ⁵(for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)” **1 Tim 3:1-2,4-5**

- **Allowing her teaching to take root was a sin** — (sexual immorality & idolatry)

“Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

1 Cor 6:18-20

“that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.” **Acts 15:29**

v. 21 – Grace rejected hardens the heart and secures judgment

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵ But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,” **Rom 2:4-5**

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,’” **Heb 3:7-8**

v. 22-23 – Judgment is always works-based

“But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

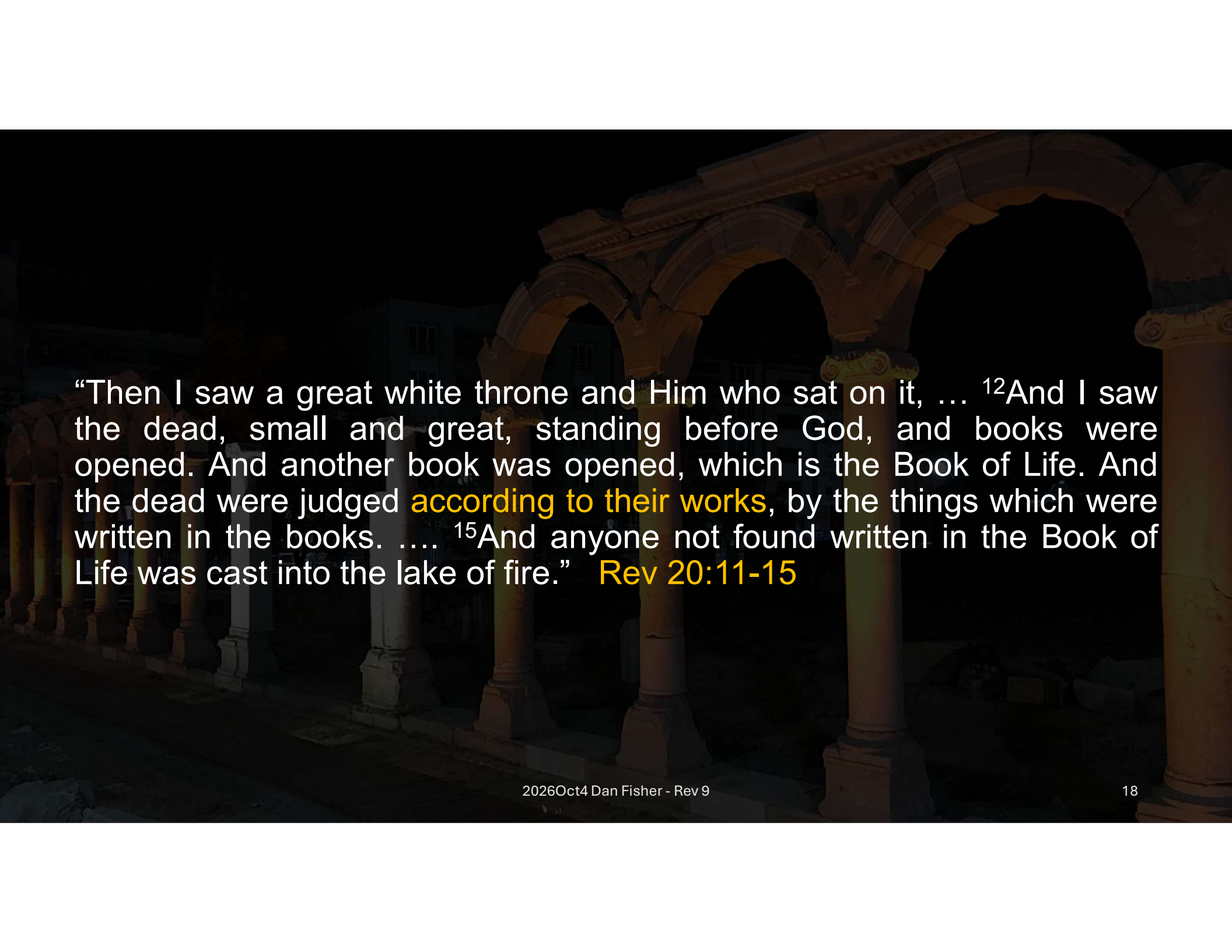
⁶ He will render to each one according to his works:” **Rom 2:5-6**

“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works.” **2 Tim 4:14**

Judgment is not only disciplinary; it is also exemplary

Ananias & Sapphira: “So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.” **Acts 5:11**

“As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.” **1 Tim 5:20**



“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, ... ¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged **according to their works**, by the things which were written in the books. ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” **Rev 20:11-15**

v. 24 – Knowing our situation, Jesus grants us grace accordingly

“and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked ⁸ (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); ⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials,” **2 Pet 2:7-9**

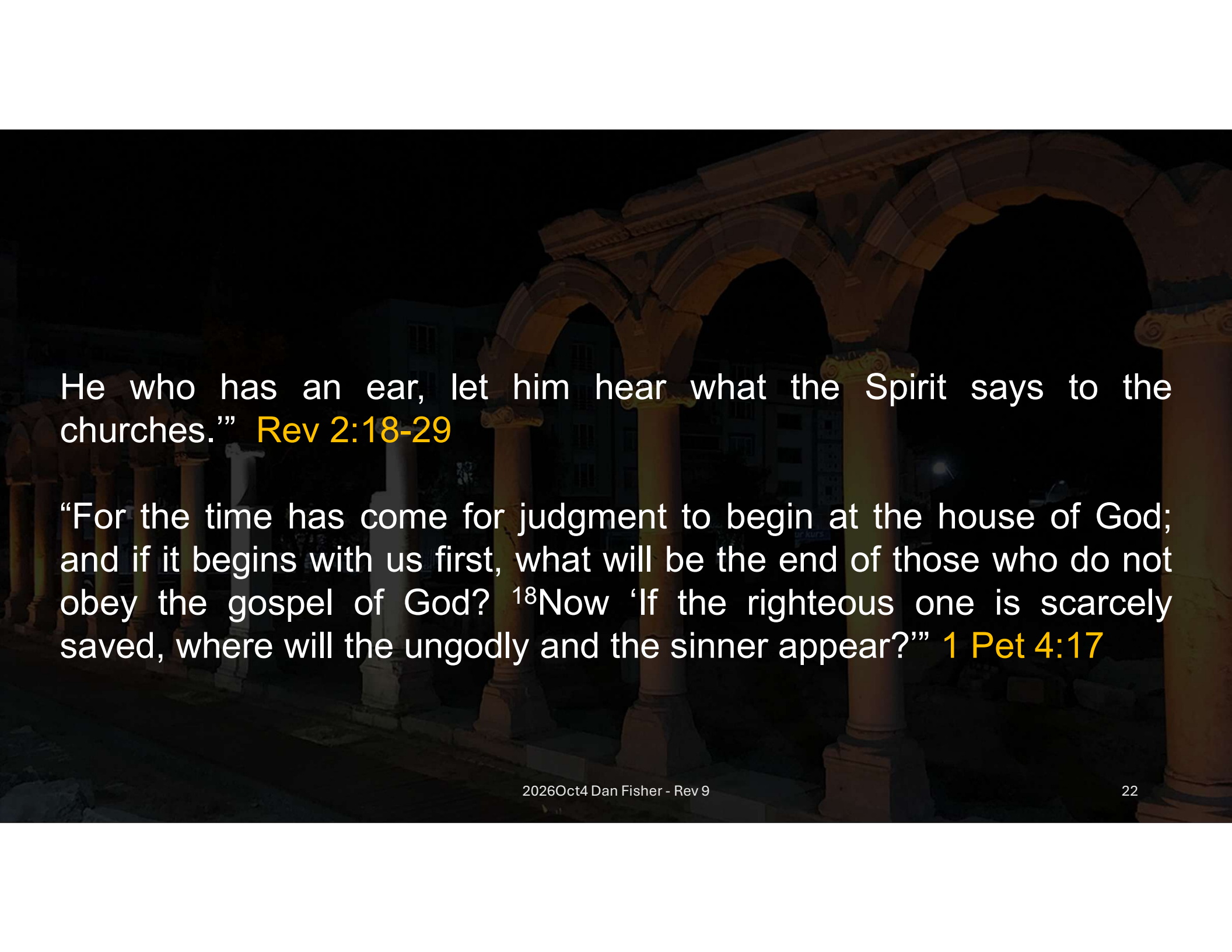
v. 25-26 – Saved by grace or by holding on?

- We aren't saved by overcoming, we overcome because we are saved
- Faithfulness will always be rewarded



v. 27 – Rewards are given for the millennium

v. 28 – Overcomers are given Jesus



He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” **Rev 2:18-29**

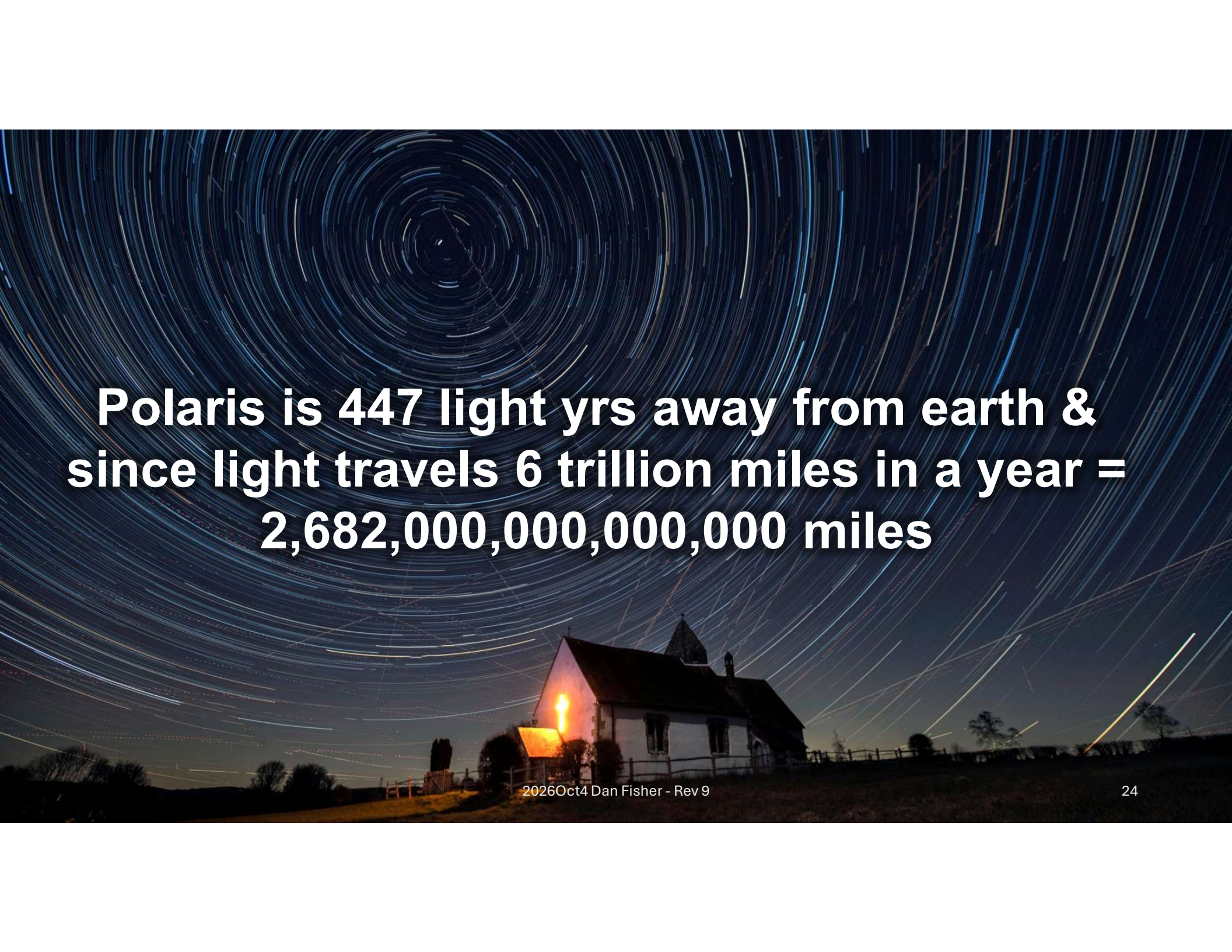
“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸Now ‘If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?’” **1 Pet 4:17**

Part 9: "Sardis – a church full of zombies"

THE BOOK OF
REVELATION
A STORY OF THE LAST DAYS

2026Oct4 Dan Fisher - Rev 9

23

A long-exposure photograph of a night sky filled with star trails, creating concentric circular patterns. In the foreground, a small, white, stone church with a dark roof and a small steeple is visible. The church is illuminated from within, and a bright light source, possibly a fire or a lamp, is visible near its entrance. The church is situated on a grassy hill. The overall scene is dark, with the star trails providing a vibrant, colorful backdrop.

**Polaris is 447 light yrs away from earth &
since light travels 6 trillion miles in a year =
2,682,000,000,000,000 miles**

The church at Sardis had a reputation of being alive, but they were really dead

Message to the Seven Churches



A map of the Aegean region in Asia Minor, showing the locations of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation. The map is rendered in a brown, textured style. A grey line connects the seven churches, which are marked with blue dots. The churches are labeled in white text: Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Ephesus, and Smyrna. The map shows the coastline of Asia Minor and the surrounding waters.

Pergamum
Thyatira
Sardis
Philadelphia
Laodicea
Ephesus
Smyrna

The things which are – **Rev 2-3: the churches**

Message to the Seven Churches



The church in Sardis was about 30 miles south of Thyatira

It likely started as an outgrowth of Paul's ministry in Ephesus – Acts 19:10

Aesop (Aesop's fables) was probably from Sardis



“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. ‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. ⁴ Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. 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.’” **Rev 3:1-6**

3:1 “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. ‘I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

- **7 Spirits of God?**

“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” **Is 11:2**

“I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, ... ⁵ Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, ‘Do you not know what these are?’ I said, ‘No, my lord.’ ⁶ Then he said to me, ‘This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. ... ¹⁰ These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth.’” **Zech 4:2,5-6,10**

- **7 Stars?**

“As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, ... the seven stars are the angels [messengers] of the seven churches” **Rev 1:20**

- **I know your works – your reputation of being alive, but dead**

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.” **Jn 10:10**

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” **Rom 6:11**



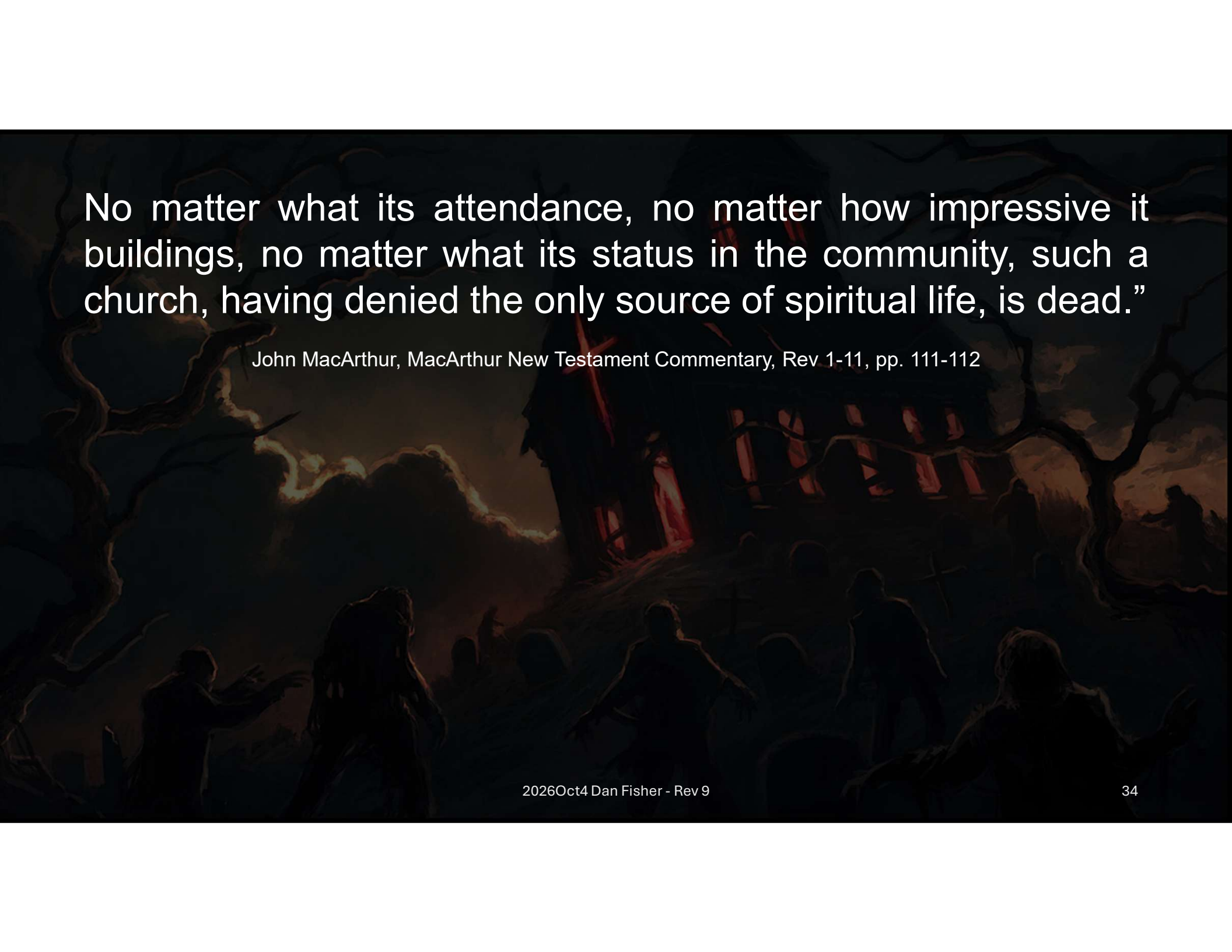
“The church at Sardis was like a museum in which stuffed animals are exhibited in their natural habitats. Everything appears to be normal, but nothing is alive.”

John MacArthur

MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Rev 1-11, pp. 111

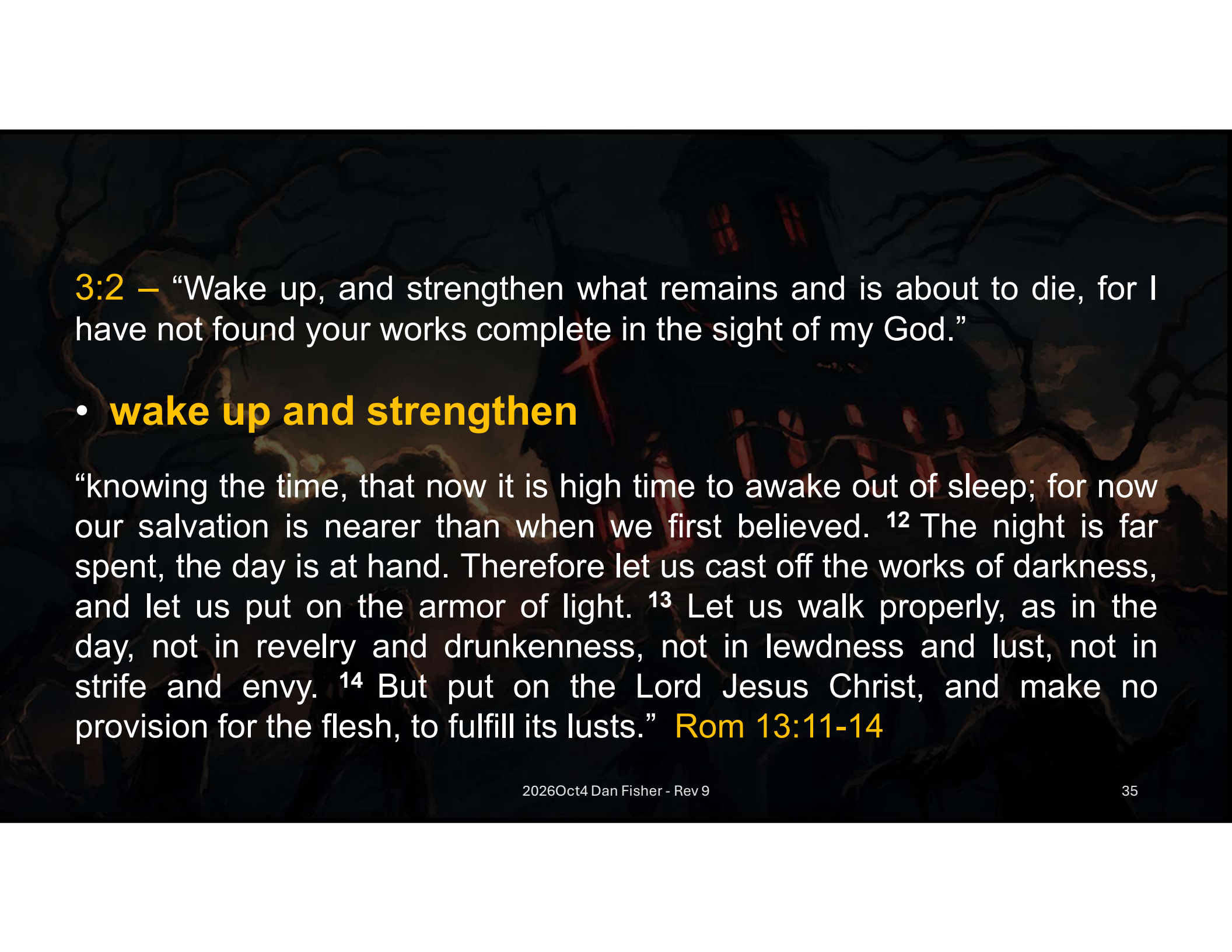
A church is in danger of dying ...

- when it is content to rest on its past laurels
- when it is more concerned with liturgical forms than spiritual reality
- when it focuses on curing social ills rather than changing people's hearts through preaching the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ
- when it is more concerned with material than spiritual things
- when it more concerned with what men think than what God said
- when it is more enamored with doctrinal creeds and systems of theology than with the Word of God
- when it loses its conviction that every word of the Bible is the word of God Himself



No matter what its attendance, no matter how impressive its buildings, no matter what its status in the community, such a church, having denied the only source of spiritual life, is dead.”

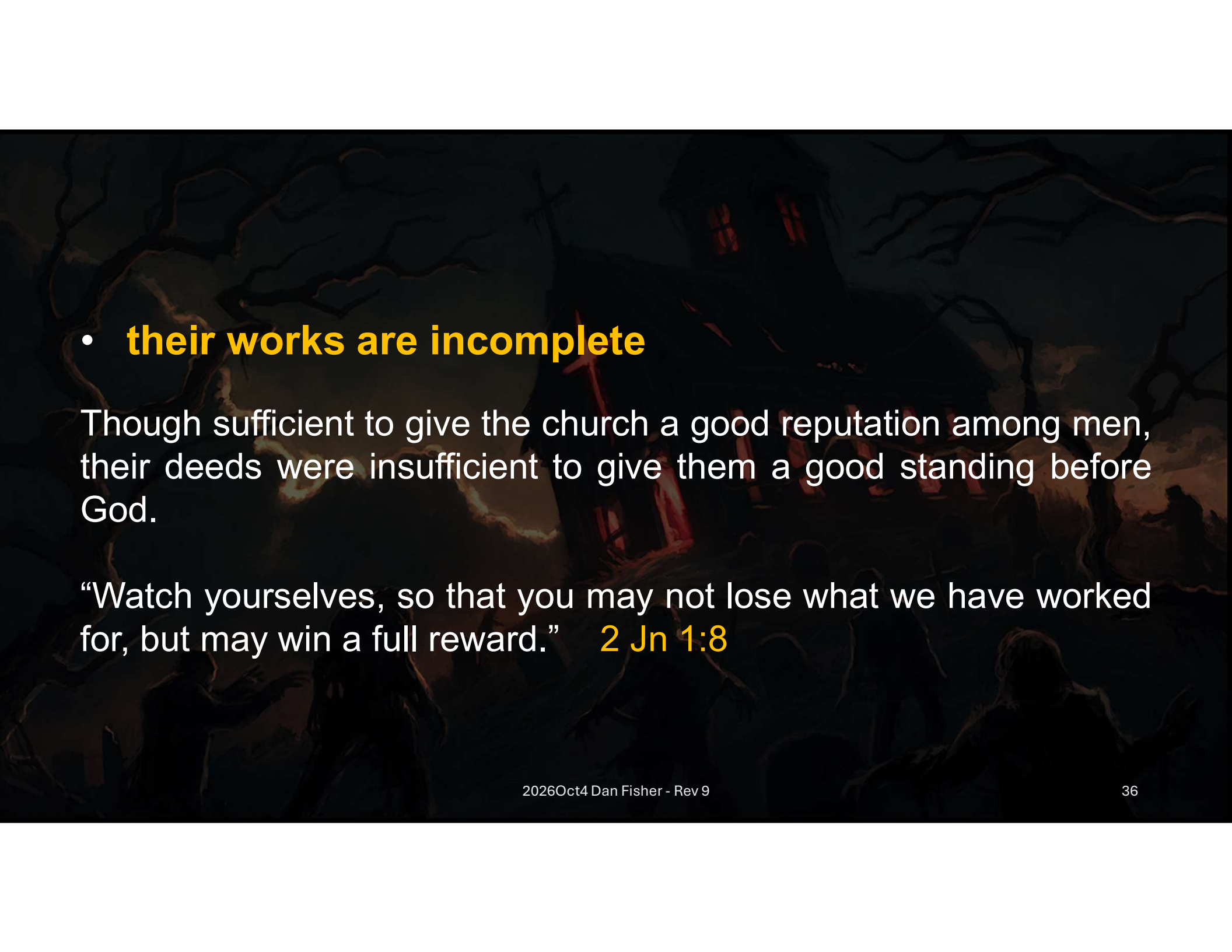
John MacArthur, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Rev 1-11, pp. 111-112



3:2 – “Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.”

- **wake up and strengthen**

“knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” **Rom 13:11-14**

- 
- **their works are incomplete**

Though sufficient to give the church a good reputation among men, their deeds were insufficient to give them a good standing before God.

“Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.” **2 Jn 1:8**

3:3 – Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

- **remember**



John Newton kept this verse on his fireplace mantel: “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you” **Deut 15:15**

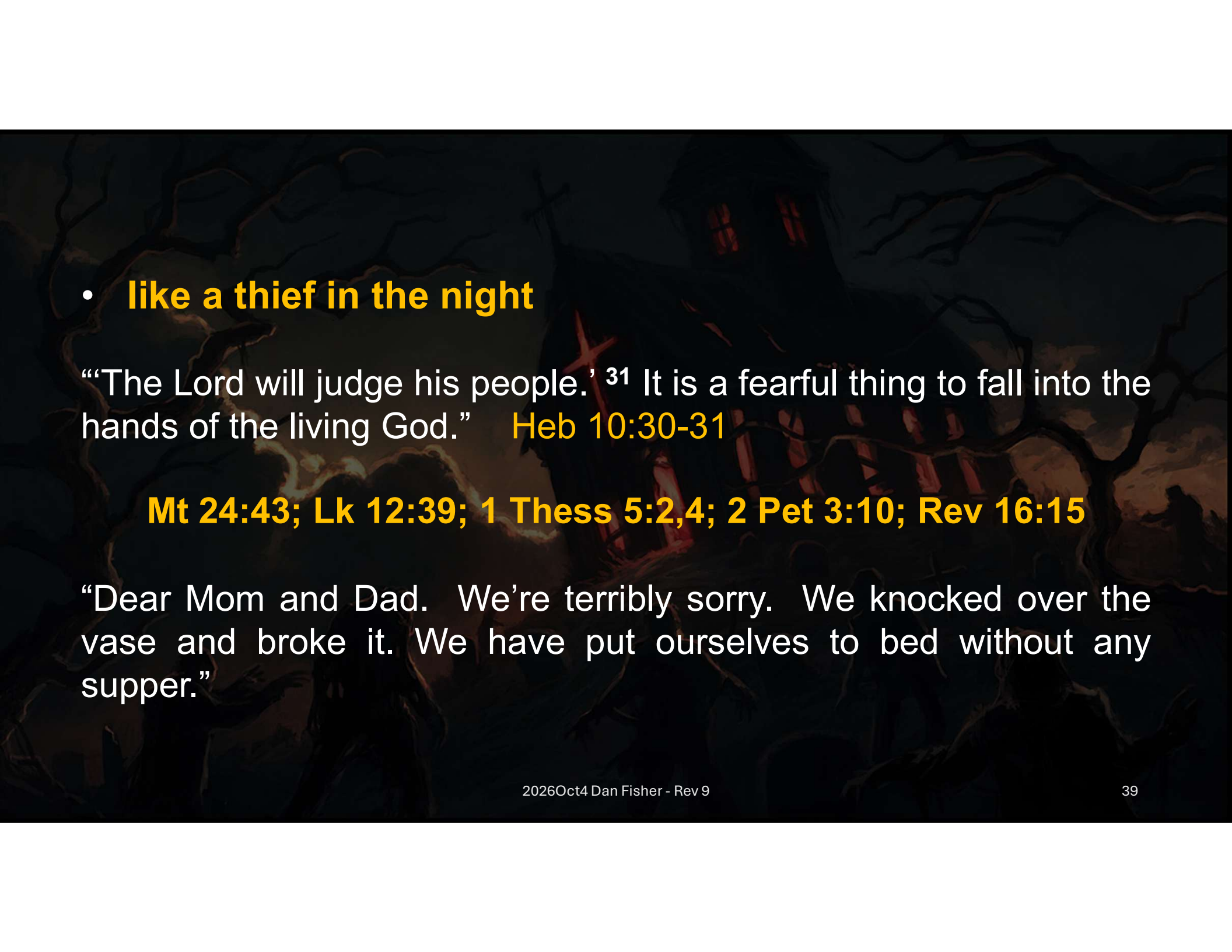
- **keep it**

“But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” **2 Tim 3:14-15**

- **repent**

“Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ ³⁸ And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ’” **Acts 3:37-38**

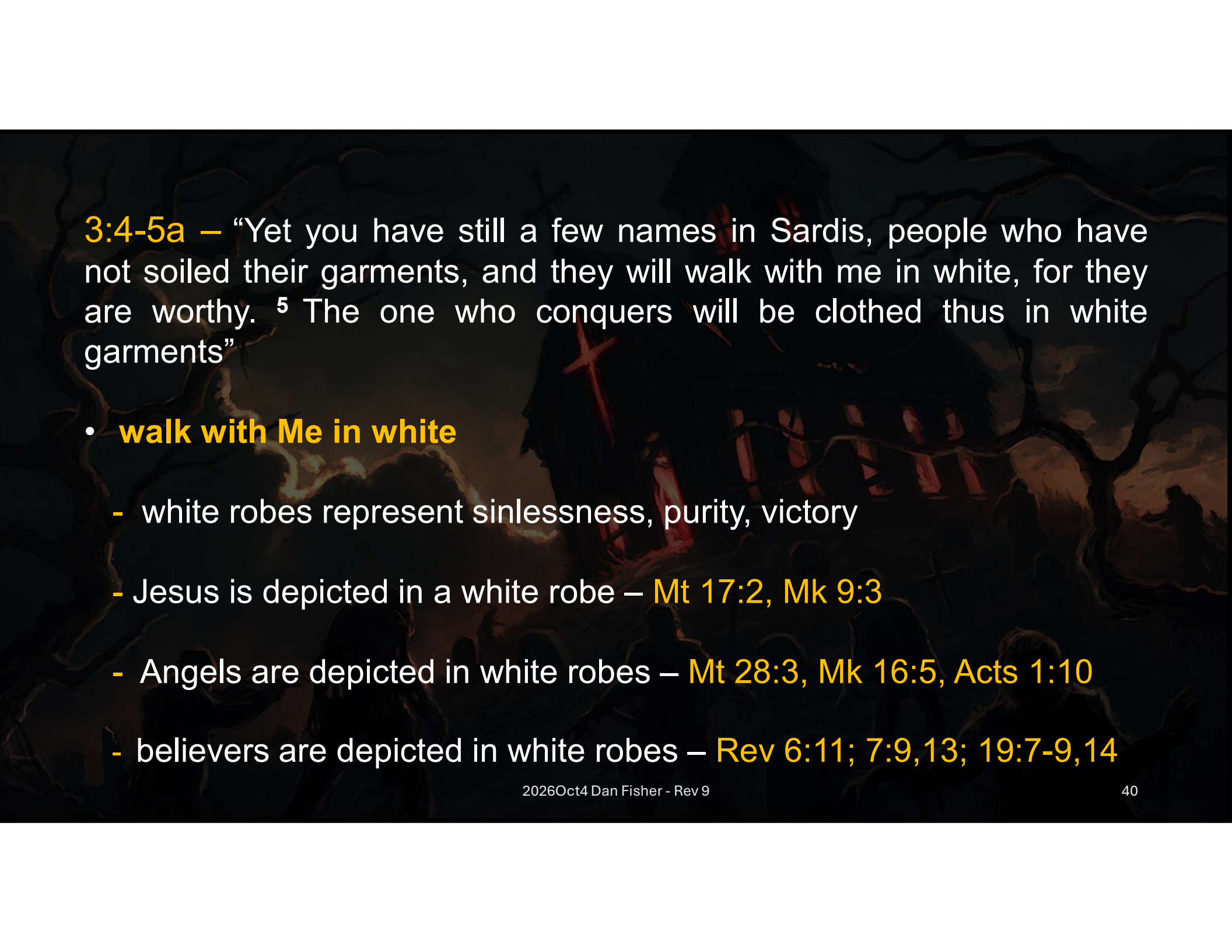
Rev 2:5; 2:16; 2:21; 3:3; 3:19

- 
- **like a thief in the night**

“‘The Lord will judge his people.’³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” **Heb 10:30-31**

Mt 24:43; Lk 12:39; 1 Thess 5:2,4; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 16:15

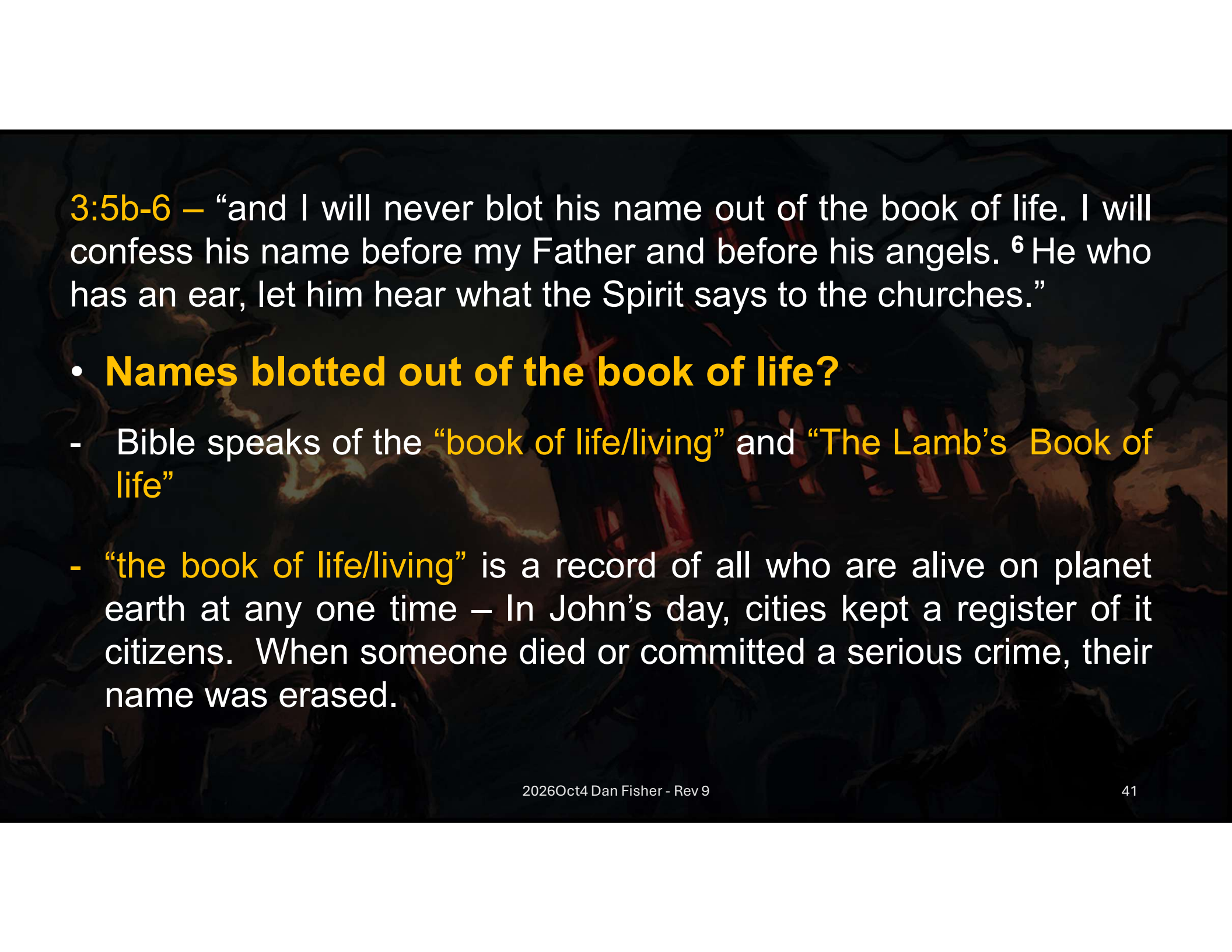
“Dear Mom and Dad. We’re terribly sorry. We knocked over the vase and broke it. We have put ourselves to bed without any supper.”



3:4-5a – “Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments”

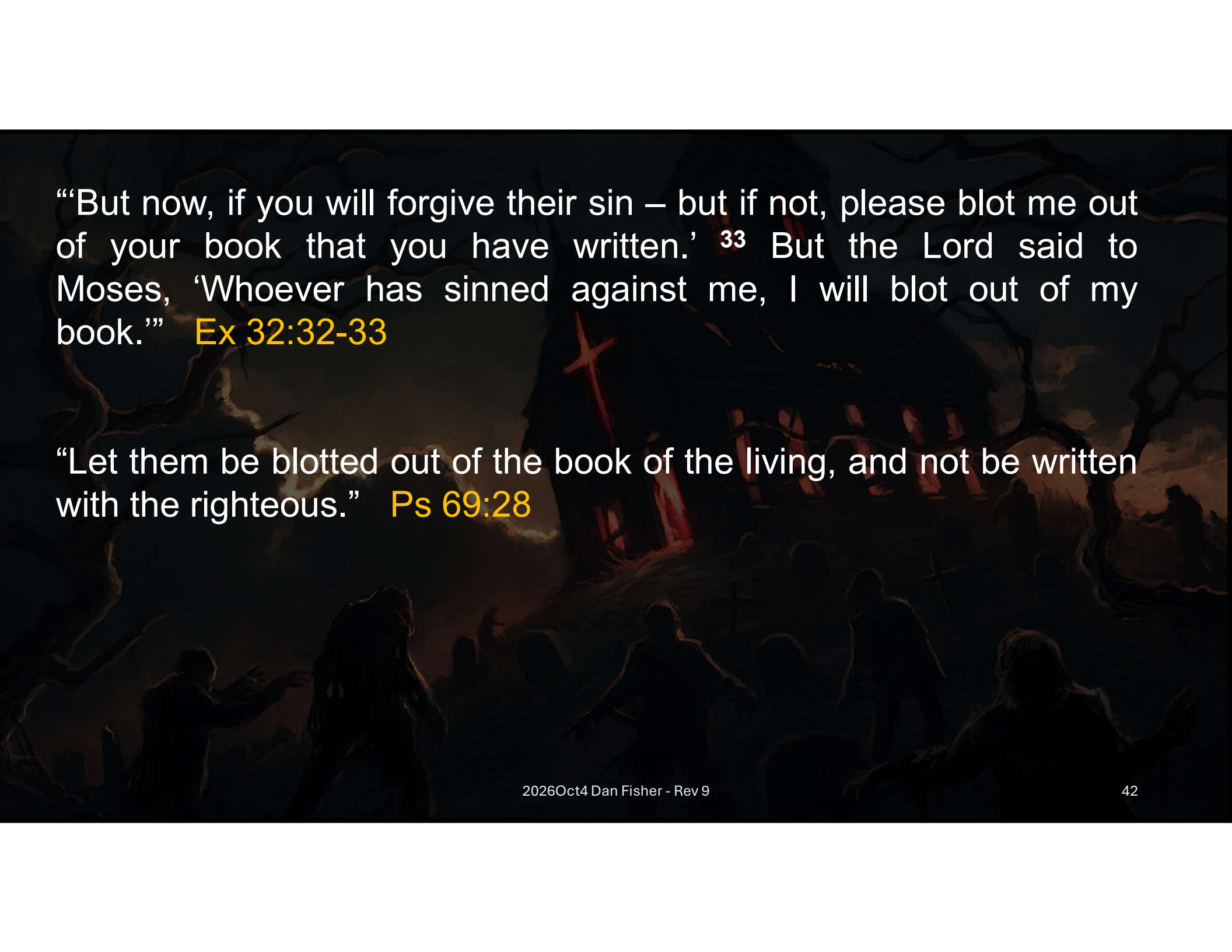
- **walk with Me in white**

- white robes represent sinlessness, purity, victory
- Jesus is depicted in a white robe – **Mt 17:2, Mk 9:3**
- Angels are depicted in white robes – **Mt 28:3, Mk 16:5, Acts 1:10**
- believers are depicted in white robes – **Rev 6:11; 7:9,13; 19:7-9,14**



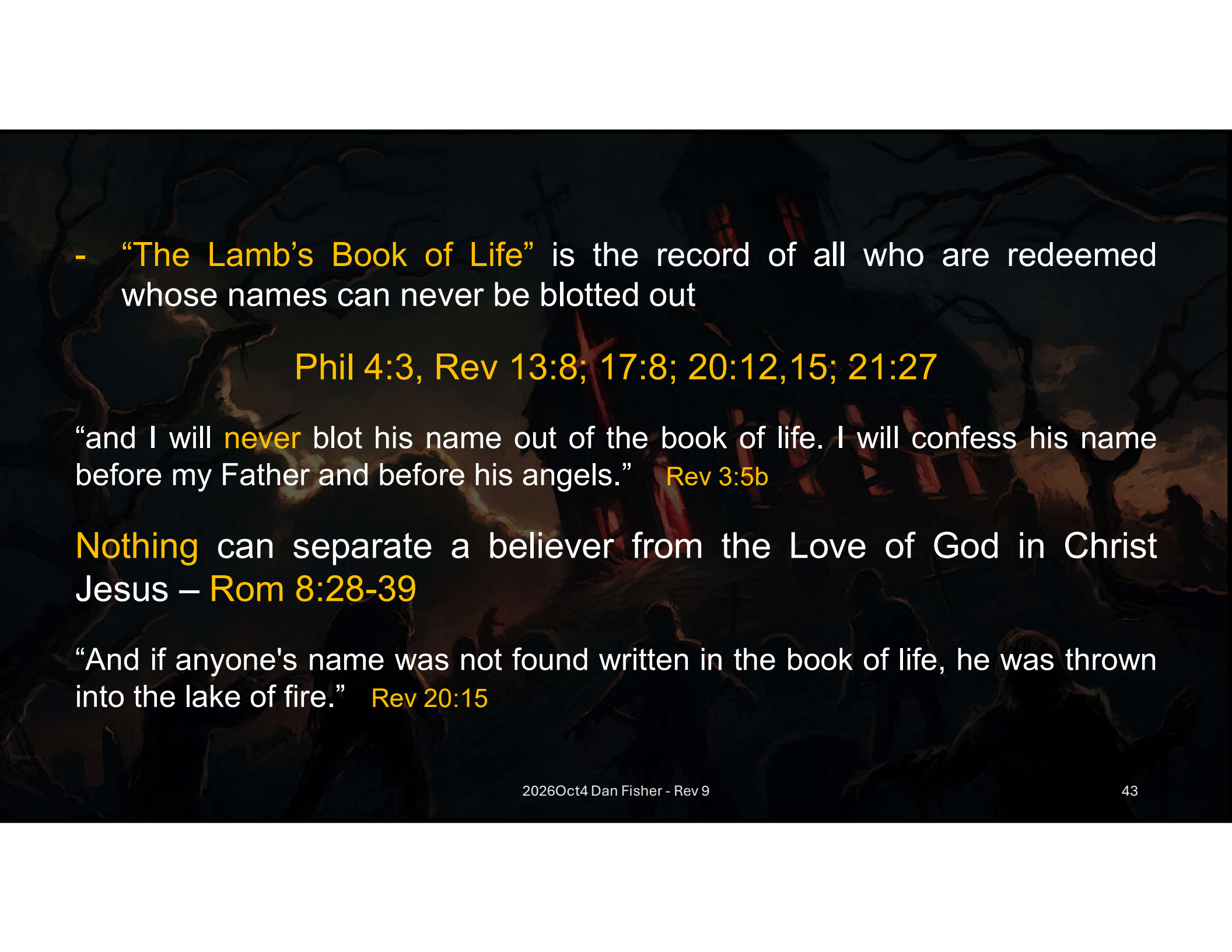
3:5b-6 – “and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

- **Names blotted out of the book of life?**
 - Bible speaks of the “**book of life/living**” and “**The Lamb’s Book of life**”
 - “**the book of life/living**” is a record of all who are alive on planet earth at any one time – In John’s day, cities kept a register of it citizens. When someone died or committed a serious crime, their name was erased.

A dark, atmospheric illustration of a church at night. A large, glowing cross is visible on the church's facade, and several windows are illuminated from within. In the foreground, the silhouettes of a group of people are visible, some with their arms raised in prayer or praise. The overall mood is somber and spiritual.

“But now, if you will forgive their sin – but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.’ ³³ But the Lord said to Moses, ‘Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.’” Ex 32:32-33

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” Ps 69:28

- 
- “The Lamb’s Book of Life” is the record of all who are redeemed whose names can never be blotted out

Phil 4:3, Rev 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27

“and I will **never** blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.” Rev 3:5b

Nothing can separate a believer from the Love of God in Christ Jesus – Rom 8:28-39

“And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” Rev 20:15

- **I will confess him before My Father**

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” **Mt 10:32-33**

3:6 — “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”