



REVELATION

A STORY OF THE LAST DAYS

Part 10: Philadelphia – the church with an open door

Message to the Seven Churches



A map of the eastern coast of the Roman Empire, showing the locations of the Seven Churches of Asia. A grey line connects the seven cities, marked with white dots. The cities are labeled in grey text: Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Ephesus, and Smyrna. Philadelphia is highlighted with a dark brown rectangular background.

Pergamum

Thyatira

Sardis

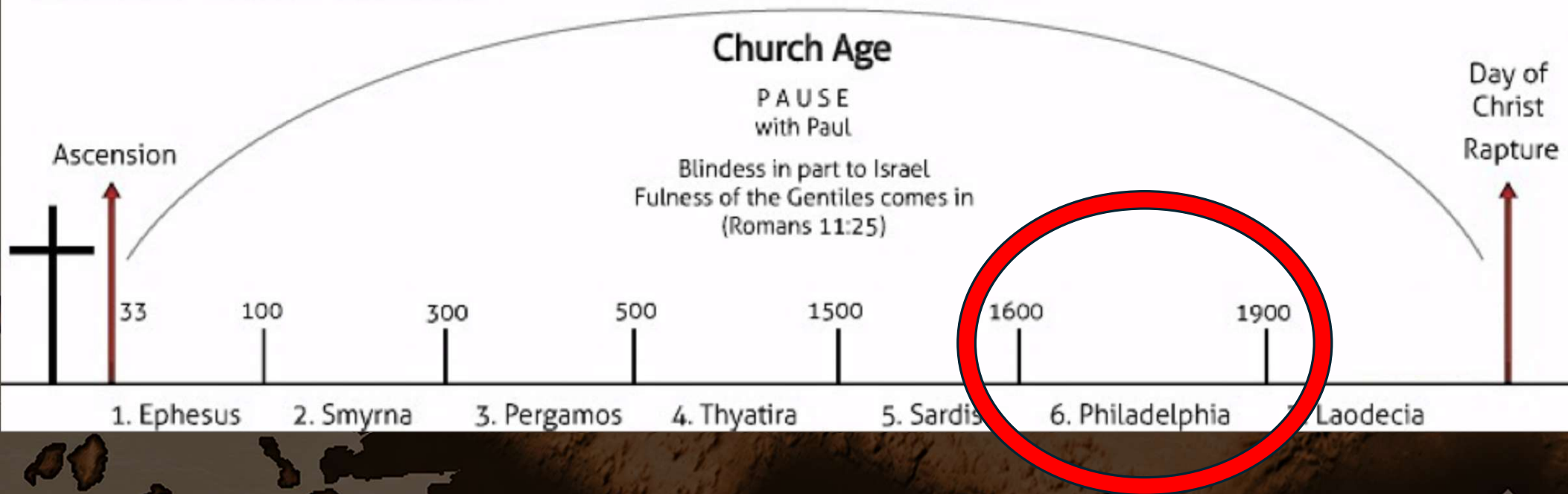
Philadelphia

Smyrna

Ephesus

Message to the Seven Churches

History of the Church





“There are no perfect churches. Churches struggle because all are made up of imperfect, sinning people. The church is not a place for people with no weaknesses; it is a fellowship of those who are aware of their weaknesses and long for the strength and grace of God to fill their lives. It is a kind of hospital for those who know they are sick and needy.”

John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Rev 1-11*, p. 118.

“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: ⁸ 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. 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.’” **Rev 3:7-13**



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- Philadelphia was located at the junction of several important trade routes earning it the title “gateway to the East.”
 - It was a center of Greek culture

The church in Philadelphia

- Likely resulted from Paul's ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10)
- A few years after John wrote Revelation, the church father Ignatius passed through Philadelphia on his way to be martyred. He later wrote the church a letter of encouragement and instruction.
- Some Christians from Philadelphia were martyred with Polycarp at Smyrna
- The church lasted for centuries – even after Philadelphia was overrun by Muslims
- It finally succumbed in the middle of the 1300s

3:7 – the Author introduces Himself

“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:” **Rev 3:7**

“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ...” **Heb 12:2**

- **He who is holy**

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” **Is 6:3**

“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God.” **Mk 1:24**

“And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God.’” **Lk 1:35**

“and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” **Jn 6:69**

- **He who is holy**

“But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,” **Acts 3:14**

“but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” **1**
Pet 1:15-16

- **He who is true**

“from Jesus Christ the faithful witness” Rev 1:5

“the faithful and true witness” Rev 3:14

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’” Jn 14:6

“Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world – to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.’” Jn 18:37

- **He who has the key of David**

David symbolizes the messianic office: **Rev 5:5; 22:16**

“I have the keys of Death and Hades.” **Rev 1:18**

“I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, ... ²² And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” **Is 22:22**

“So Jesus again said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ... ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.’” **Jn 10:7,9**

- **He who has the key of David**

“No one comes to the Father except through me.” Jn 14:6

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

- **He who opens & no shuts & who shuts & no one opens**

“I am He; and there is no one who can deliver out of My hand; I work, and who will reverse it?” **Is 43:13**

“for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ ¹¹ ... I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.” **Is 46:9-11**

“He does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?” **Dan 4:35**

3:8 – what Jesus emphasized about the church

“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.” **Rev 3:8**

Philadelphia, like Smyrna, received no rebuke from the Lord

What Jesus pointed out about the church:

- **They had an open door before them**

“But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”

1 Cor 16:8-9

“When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord” 2 Cor 2:12

“pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ” Col 4:3

- **They had a little power (they were a small church)**

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Lk 12:32

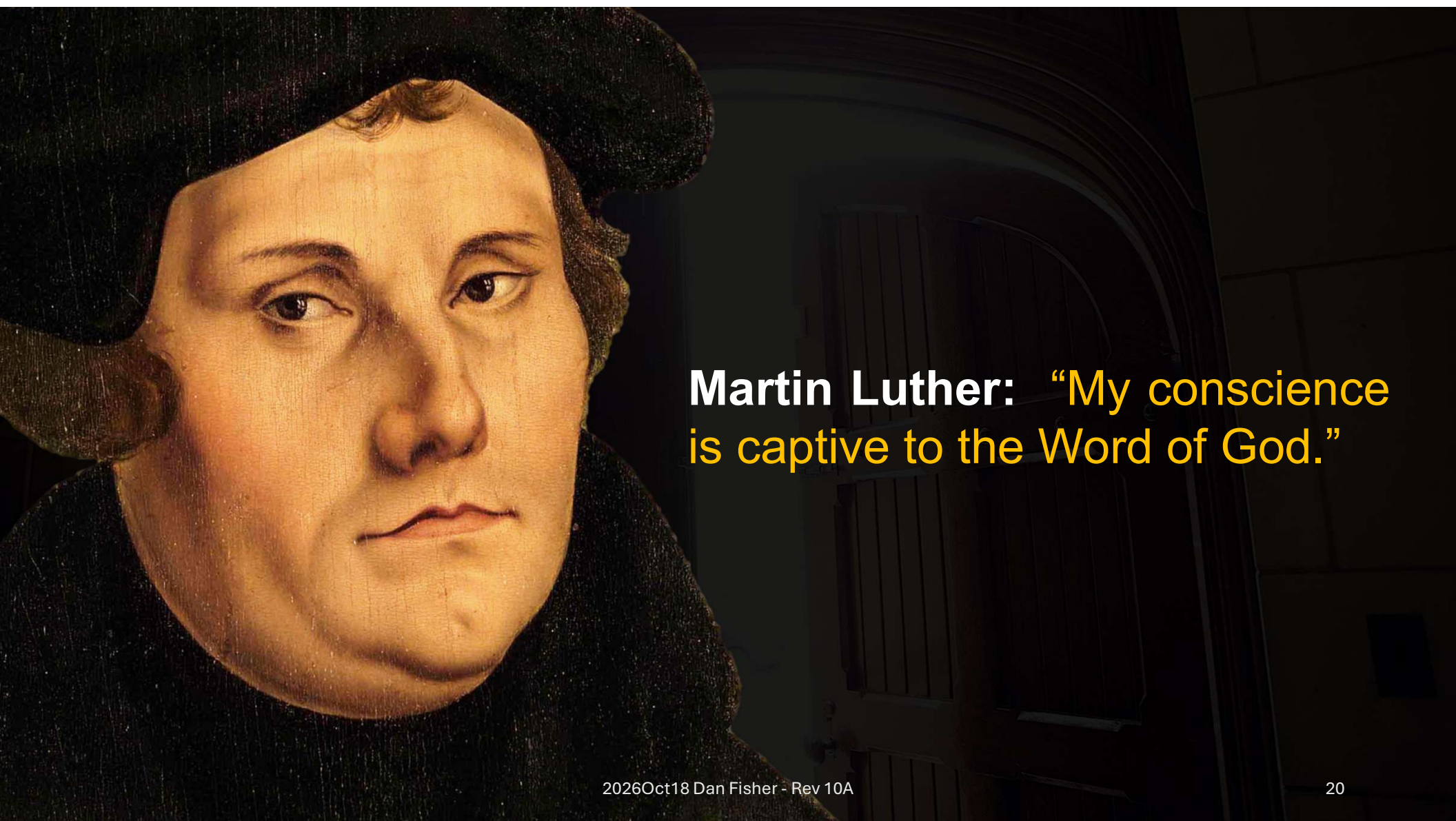
“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.” 1 Cor 1:26-29

“For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Cor 12:10

- **They had kept Jesus' word**

“Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.’” Jn 14:23-24

“You are my friends if you do what I command you.” Jn 15:14



Martin Luther: “My conscience
is captive to the Word of God.”

- **They had not denied His name**

“Here is the patience [endurance] of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” **Rev 14:12**

“but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.” **Mt 10:33**

“They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.” **Titus 1:16**

- **They had kept Jesus' command to persevere**

“the one who endures to the end will be saved.” **Mt 24:13**

“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” **Heb 10:36**

“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
2 Tim 2:3

“May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.” **2 Thess 3:5**

- **They had kept Jesus' command to persevere**

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness” **2 Pet 1:5-6**

“Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.” **Heb 12:3-4**

3:9 – Fake believers will be revealed

“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.” Rev 3:9

Philadelphia believers faced the same challenge as those in Smyrna (Rev 2:9)

“For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.”

Rom 2:28-29

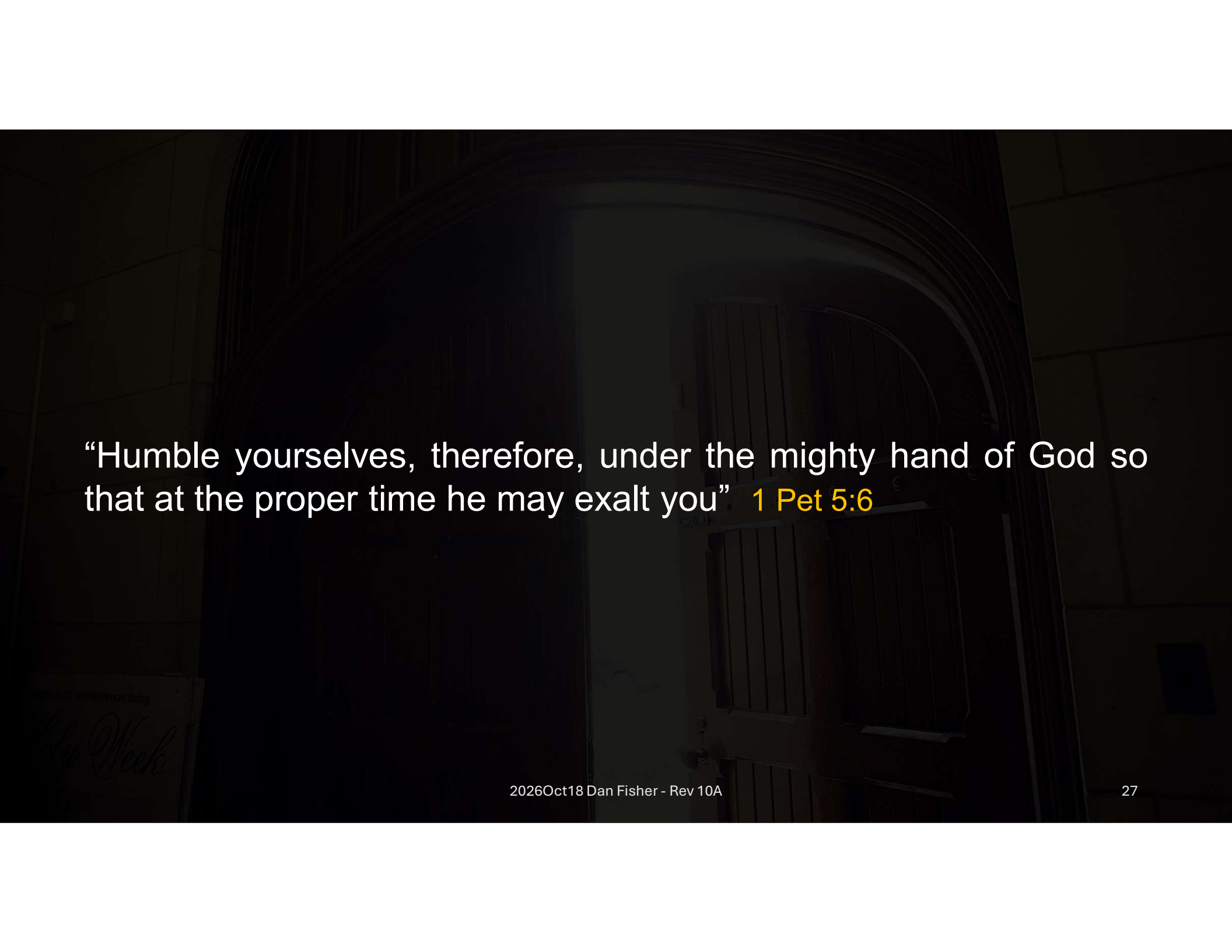
“For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, ⁷ and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” ⁸ This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.” Rom 9:6-8



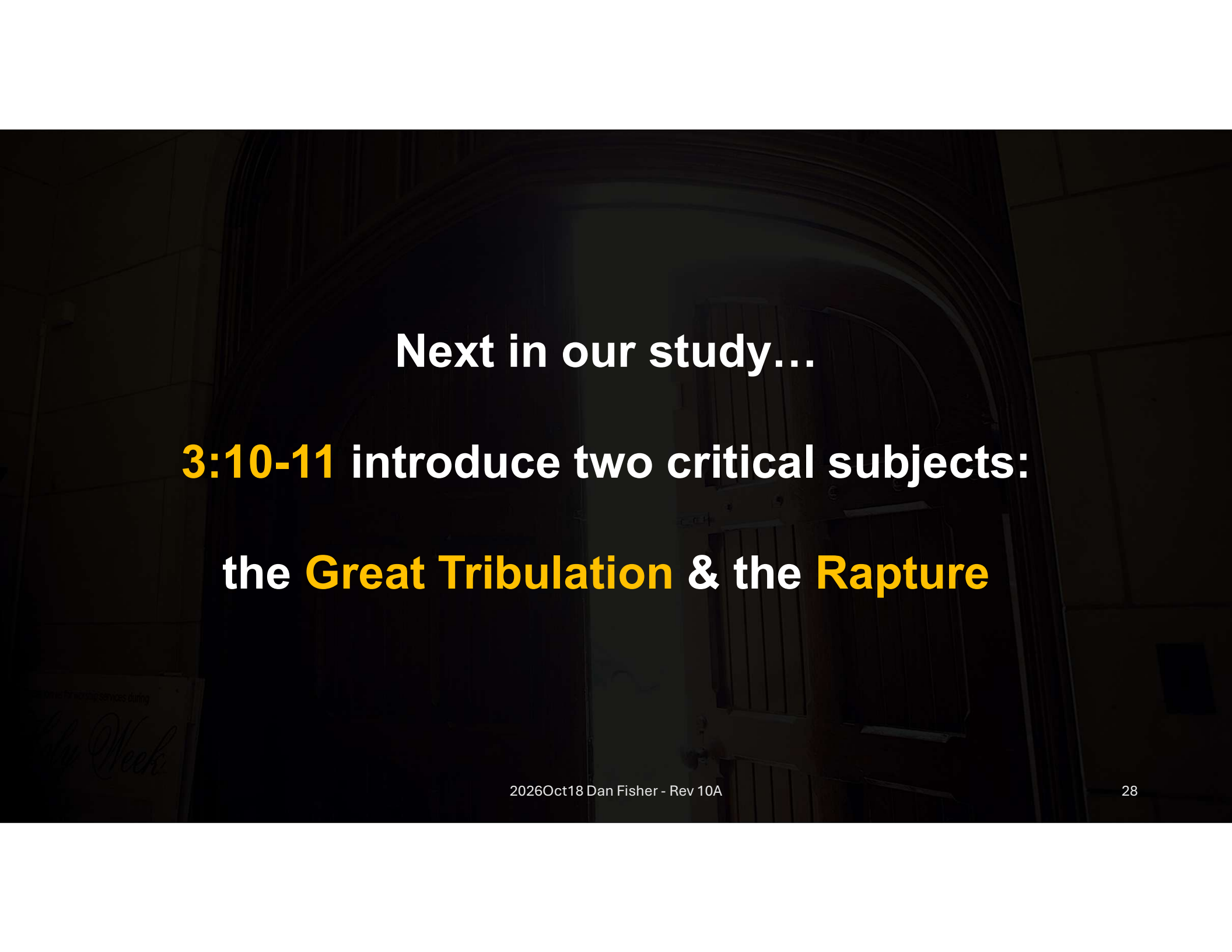
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26



“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you” 1 Pet 5:6



Next in our study...

3:10-11 introduce two critical subjects:
the **Great Tribulation** & the **Rapture**