

1

The slide has a background of a low-poly, geometric pattern in shades of orange and red. The title "The book of Revelation" is centered at the top in a white, sans-serif font. Below the title are three bullet points, also in white, sans-serif font. The first bullet point reads: "• In Rev. 2-3, Jesus Christ dictated seven letters to the angels of 'ekklēsia' in the Roman province of Asia." The second bullet point reads: "• Each letter had **local application**, yet each was to read **all** of the letters." The third bullet point reads: "• Each letter **applies to us** today as well." At the bottom right of the slide, there is a citation in a smaller white font: "(Missler 2005, 24)".

The book of Revelation

- In Rev. 2-3, Jesus Christ dictated seven letters to the angels of "ekklēsia" in the Roman province of Asia.
- Each letter had **local application**, yet each was to read **all** of the letters.
- Each letter **applies to us** today as well.

(Missler 2005, 24)

2

Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13)

- While each letter was tailored and unique, an unusual prophetic promise was made in the letter to Philadelphia”

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (trial), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”

(Revelation 3:10)

- Few Christians understand this verse. It has become hostage to hermeneutics.

3

Who is the promise to?

- “Revelation spoke only to its own time and place.”
- Philadelphia doesn’t exist so the promise is fulfilled.
- The promise is made to corporate congregations, denominations or religions most like Philadelphia.
- Because Philadelphia was the “missionary church”, the promise is for churches spreading the Gospel.
- The promise is to churches who, like faithful Philadelphia, faithfully follow God’s rituals, sacraments and ceremonies.
- “God considers me a Philadelphian because....”

4

Personal Observations

- The presenter visited biblical sites in Israel in 2008 and in Greece and Turkey in 2012.
- Photographs, maps and artwork are the work of the presenter (Sarlin) unless otherwise noted.

The author and wife in Alaşehir, Turkey (ancient Philadelphia) with friends.



5

Part 1. Philadelphia

A Brief History of the Ancient City of Philadelphia

6

Φιλαδέλφεια

- King Eumenes II (r. 197-159 BC) of Pergamum founded it in 189 BC and named it for his brother Attalus II (r. 159-138 BC) whose loyalty in refusing bribes from Rome earned him the nickname “Philadelphus [brotherly love].” (Wilson 2012, 293)
- “Philadelphia” is “(city of) brotherly love.” (Strong 1996, G5359)
- The last king of Pergamum Attalus III (r. 138-133 BC), died without heir and bequeathed his kingdom to Rome. (Fant, 300)

7



8



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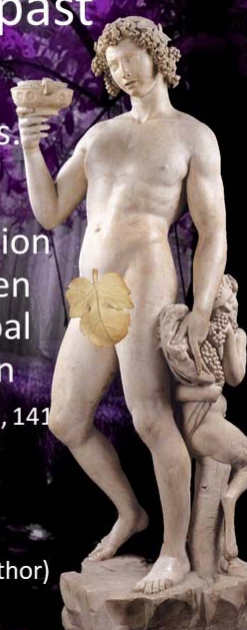
Looking back to the past

- “Philadelphia was a missionary city from the beginning.... the apostle of Hellenism in an Oriental land.” (Ramsay 1904)
- Philadelphia was to be an exemplar of Greek culture to the barbarians, and provide an “open door” to the East.
- “It was a successful teacher. Before AD 19 the Lydian tongue had ceased to be spoken in Lydia, and Greek was the only language of the country.” (Ramsay 1904,)

10

Looking back to the past

- “It was called a ‘Little Athens’ on account of its festivals and temples. (Ramsay 1890, 121)
- A late 2nd/early 1st century BC inscription from Philadelphia mentions at least ten pagan temples. Zeus was their principal deity, but the city’s god was Zeus’s son Dionysus, the god of wine. (Ascough 2012, 141)



Michelangelo's Bacchus (fig leaf by author)

11

The Catacecaumene

- The city lay on a fault in an earthquake-prone region called Catacecaumene (“burnt land” or “burnt earth”). (Strabo, 181)

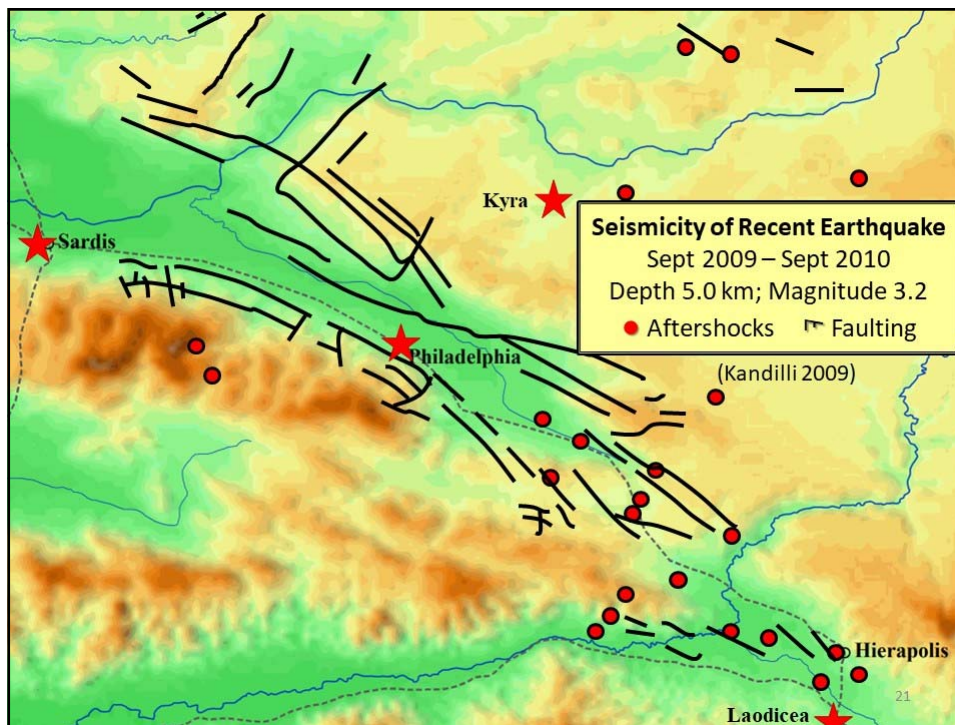


12

The Catacecaumene

- The city lay on a fault in an earthquake-prone region called Catacecaumene ("burnt land" or "burnt earth"). (Strabo, 181)
- It is a volcanic zone about 40 km x 10 km in size characterized by ash-like soil and black rocks. (Strabo, 181)
- Strabo wrote that it was "ever subject to earthquakes," and that "incessantly the walls of the houses are cracked, different parts of the city being affected at different times." (McRay 1991, 246)

13



14

The “city of earthquakes”

- “Philadelphia was known to the whole world as the city of earthquakes, whose citizens for the most part lived outside, not venturing to remain in the town, and were always on the watch for the next great catastrophe.” (Ramsay 1895, Ch. 4)
- Devastated in the great earthquake of AD 17, Strabo noted that daily aftershocks forced the residents to abandon the city and live in the fields. (Strabo ,)

15

The fertile soil

- Strabo also wrote that because of the earthquakes, “but few people live in the city, and most of them spend their lives as farmers in the country, since they have a fertile soil.” (Strabo, 181)
- The amply watered volcanic soil, then as now, is perfect for vineyards. (McRay 1991, 246)



16

Christian background

- Philadelphia's importance peaked in the early-Christian and Byzantine periods:
 - It remains a titular see of Rome, and
 - the Greek Orthodox metropolis of Lydia.
- It was home to Ammia, a respected 2nd century prophetess. (Eusebius, 172; Ramsay 1904)
- A center of wide influence, it guarded a key node in the communications system.
- It was especially prosperous as a 13th-14th Cent AD Genoese trading colony producing leather goods, silk and grapes. (Ramsay 1904)

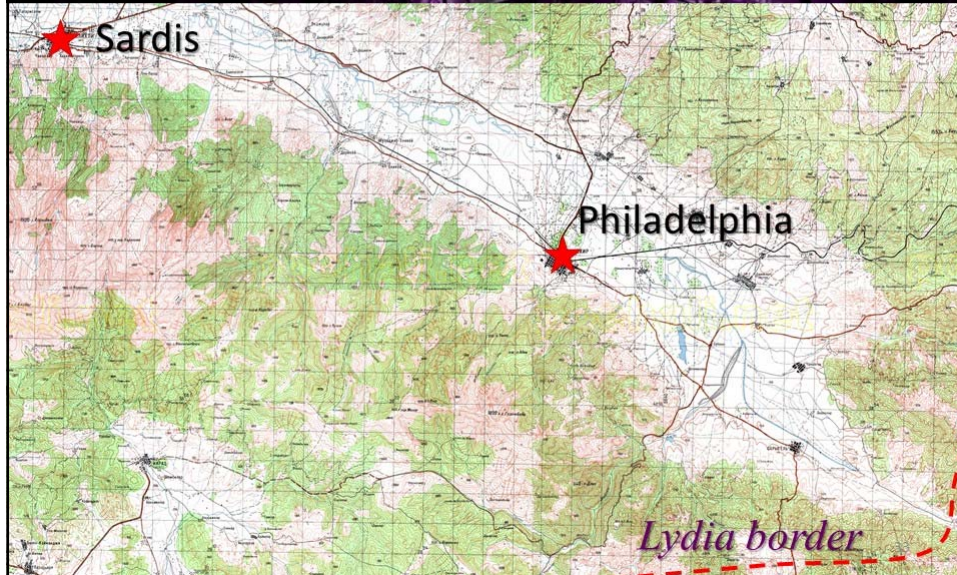
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Christian background

- Surrounded by Turkish emirates, the city maintained nominal allegiance to the Byzantine emperor, but thrice revolted against Byzantine emperor excesses:
 - 1182 (John Komnenos Vatatzes)
 - 1188-1196 & 1206 ("Theodore the Fool")
- Philadelphia remained the last bastion of Christianity in Anatolia, remaining Christian until 1391.

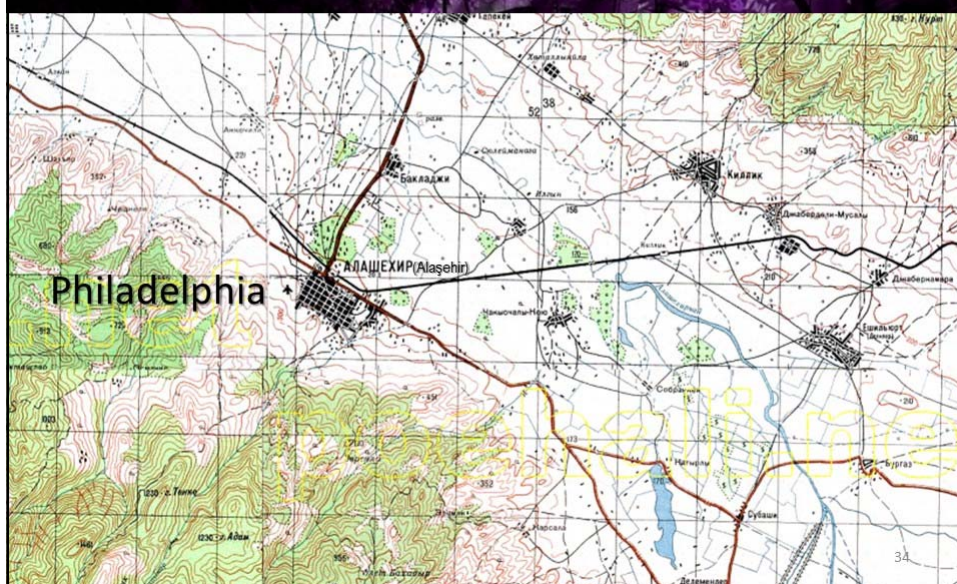
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Strategic considerations



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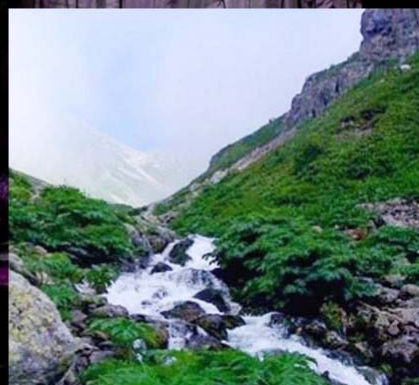
Tactical considerations



20

Military history

- Originally an outpost of Sardis guarding the Pergamum kingdom's boundary, after AD133 the frontier city guarded the imperial post road from Rome to the Orient.
- Its location held the key to the open door to the East that climbed 2500 feet through a narrow pass to the Phrygian plain 8 miles away.



21

Military history

- Despite its geography, Philadelphia proved its strength "in many long and terrible sieges by Mohammedans in later centuries." (Ramsay 1904, 396)



22

Yet Christian Philadelphia...



23

... never fell to Islam!



24

“Long after all the country round
had passed finally under Turkish
power, Philadelphia held up the
banner of Christendom.”

(Ramsay 1904, 400)

25

The Byzantine Empire, AD 1360



26

The Byzantine Empire, AD 1380

Philadelphia, Thessalonica and the Mani Peninsula hold out.

→ Byzantine Empire
← Ottoman advance



27

The Byzantine Empire, AD 1387

Thessalonica falls to the Turks in April 1387.

→ Byzantine Empire
← Ottoman advance



28

The Byzantine Empire, AD 1390



29

Philadelphia stood alone

- Unconquered by earthquake or battle, Philadelphia faced a new threat in 1391.
- Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I brought a Byzantine army under his vassal the newly crowned Byzantine emperor Manuel II up to its walls.
- Faithful Philadelphia obeyed their emperor... (Baum 2002)



Manuel II Palaeologus
(Baum 2002)

30

An Islamic earth was close

- Philadelphia became Turkish Alaşehir, the “magnificent city” or “City of Allah.”
- Turning west to complete the conquest of Christian Europe, Bayezid I paid scant attention to the Turkic-Mongol (Tartar) armies ravaging to the East. They were nominally Muslim with eyes set on China.
- A small border dispute in 1402 escalated when Bayezid wrote his counterpart Timur the Lame (Tamerlane) a derogatory letter.

(González de Clavijo, 74)

31

The fall of Bayezid I

- Tamerlane turned west and the Turkic-Mongol hordes defeated the Ottoman army at the Battle of Ankara (July 28, 1402).



Sultan Bayezid I being led away in chains by Timur (Chlebowski)

32



Without God's protection

- Alaşehir was crushed by Tamerlane's hordes in 1402. They built high walls with the corpses of its Turkish defenders.
- The Turkic/Mongol invaders left carnage along their path, killing about 5% of the world's population.

33



Without God's protection

- Alaşehir was crushed by Tamerlane's hordes in 1402. They built high walls with the corpses of its Turkish defenders.
- The Turkic/Mongol invaders left carnage along their path, killing about 5% of the world's population.
- Instead of conquering Europe, Tamerlane stopped at the Aegean Sea.

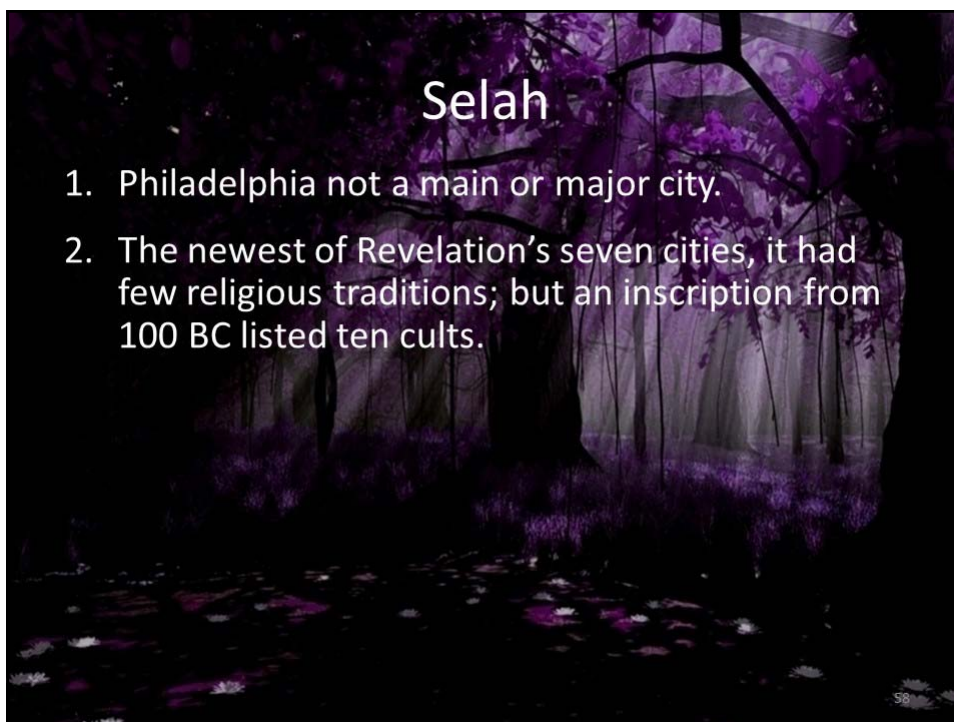
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Without God's protection

- Alaşehir was crushed by Tamerlane's hordes in 1402. They built high walls with the corpses of its Turkish defenders.
- The Turkic/Mongol invaders left carnage along their path, killing about 5% of the world's population.
- Instead of conquering Europe, Tamerlane stopped at the Aegean Sea.
 - Perhaps gifts from Rome, Spain, France, and other powers satisfied him.
 - Perhaps he just wasn't interested.

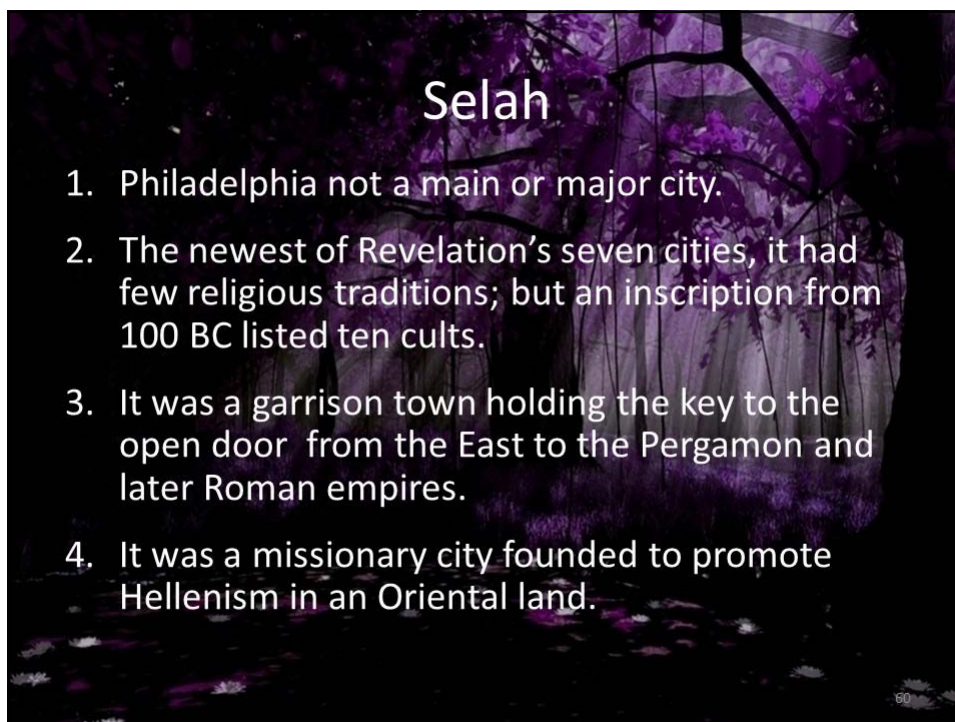
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Selah

1. Philadelphia not a main or major city.
2. The newest of Revelation's seven cities, it had few religious traditions; but an inscription from 100 BC listed ten cults.

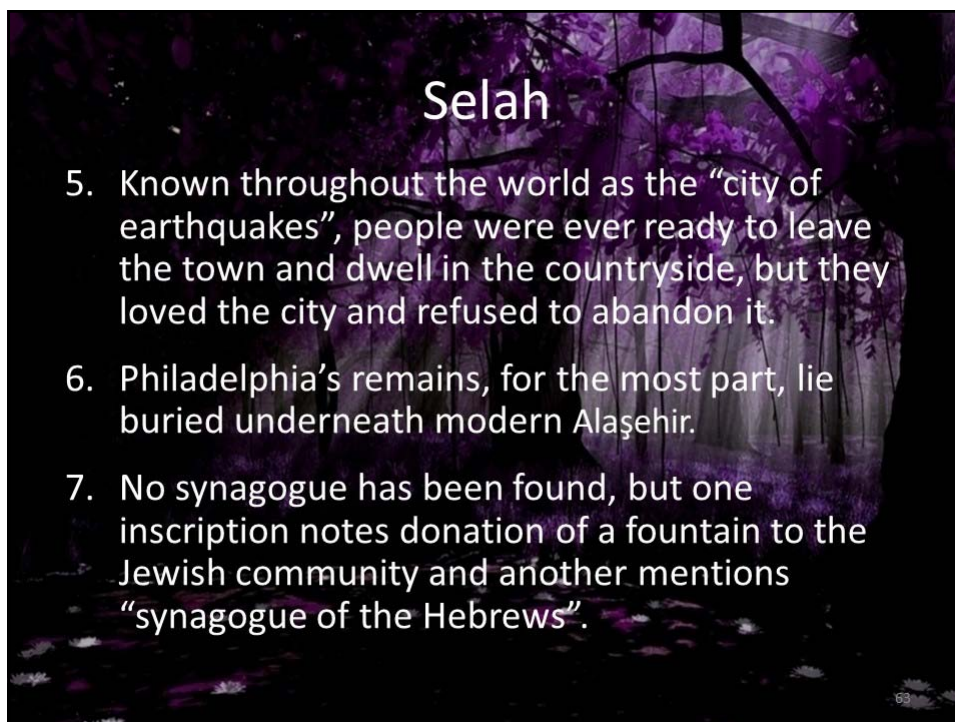
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Selah

1. Philadelphia not a main or major city.
2. The newest of Revelation's seven cities, it had few religious traditions; but an inscription from 100 BC listed ten cults.
3. It was a garrison town holding the key to the open door from the East to the Pergamon and later Roman empires.
4. It was a missionary city founded to promote Hellenism in an Oriental land.

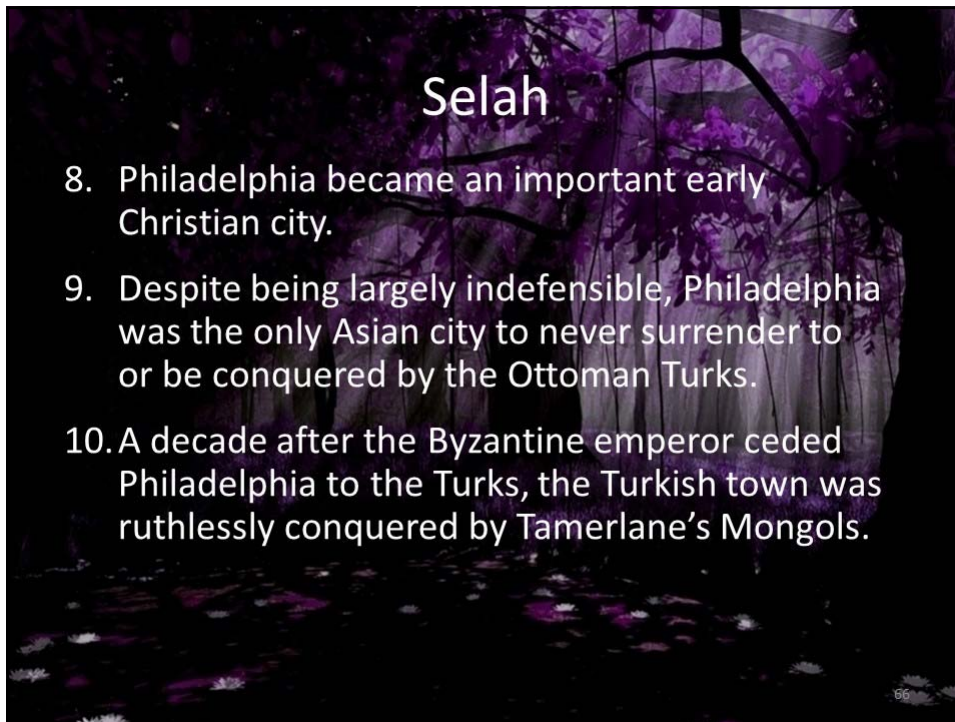
37



Selah

5. Known throughout the world as the "city of earthquakes", people were ever ready to leave the town and dwell in the countryside, but they loved the city and refused to abandon it.
6. Philadelphia's remains, for the most part, lie buried underneath modern Alaşehir.
7. No synagogue has been found, but one inscription notes donation of a fountain to the Jewish community and another mentions "synagogue of the Hebrews".

38



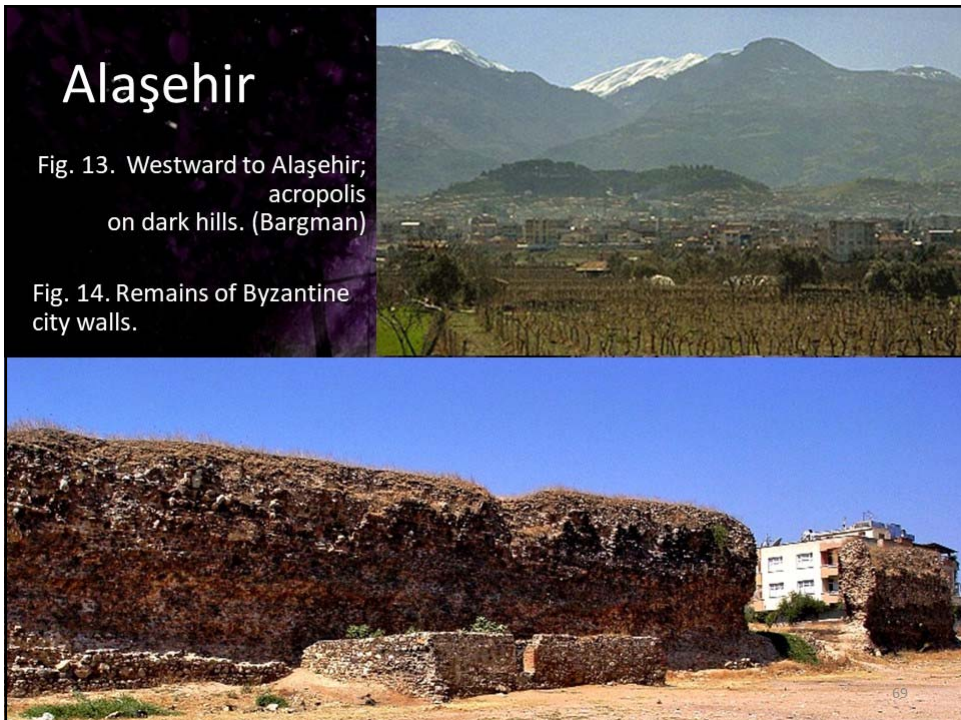
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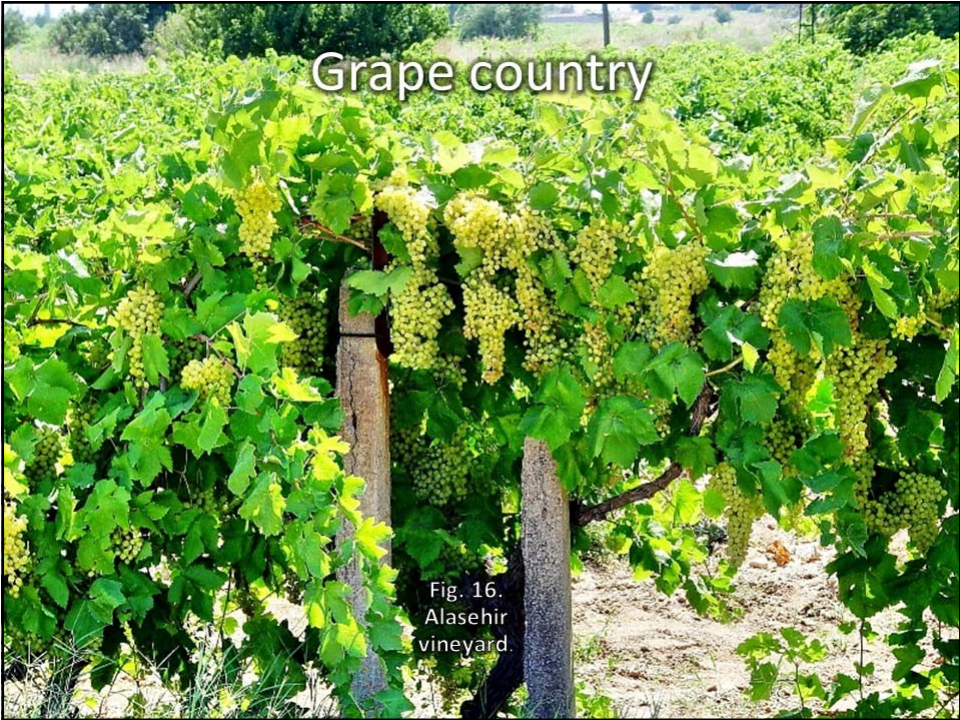
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44

The home of the Sultana

- Sultana grapes and raisins **originated here**, and Alaşehir is Turkey's major producing and exporting center.

Alaşehir Sultana production (Teksaya)



45

Some of the dozens of inscriptions from Philadelphia.



46



Ancient architrave

47

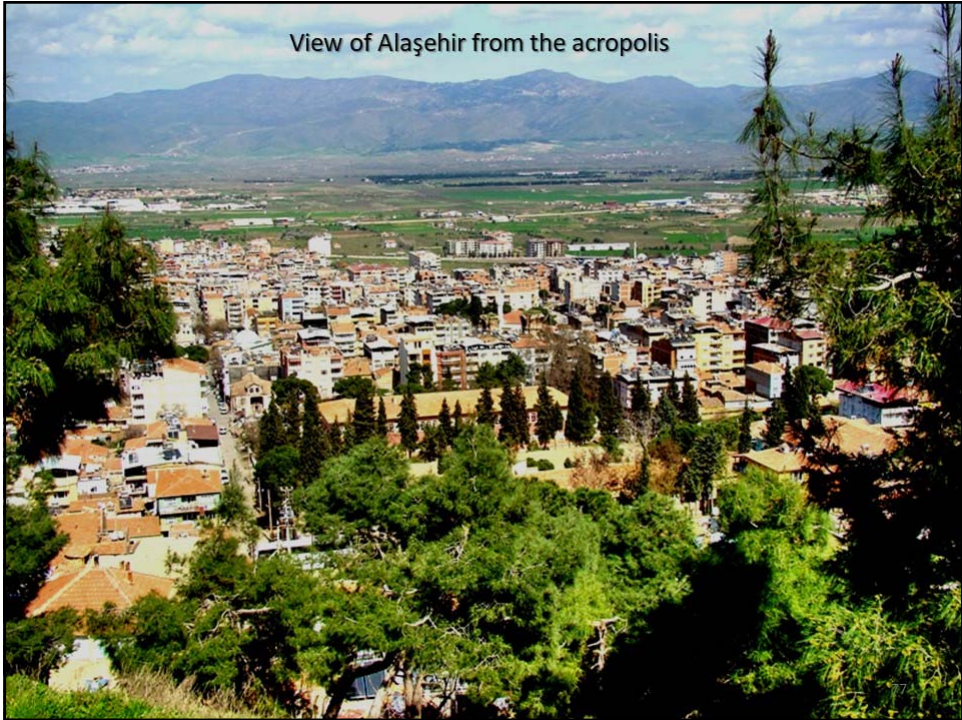


Ancient capital from church pillar

48



49



50



51



52



Entry to St. John's Basilica, 2012

53



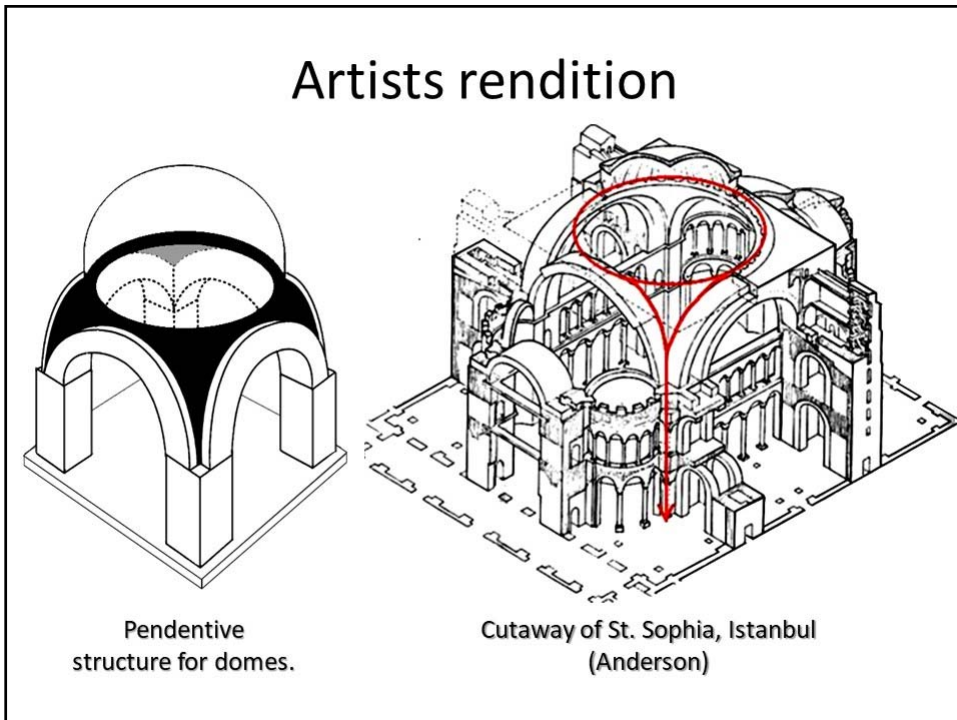
Entering the basilica, 2012

54



Another pillar, 2012

55



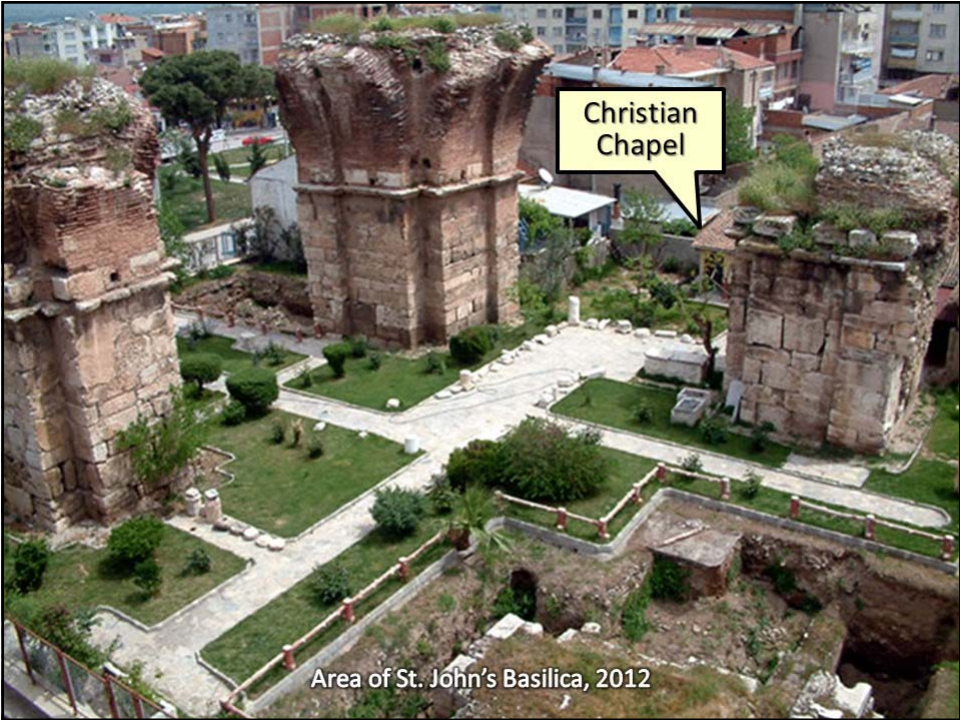
Pendentive structure for domes.

Cutaway of St. Sophia, Istanbul (Anderson)

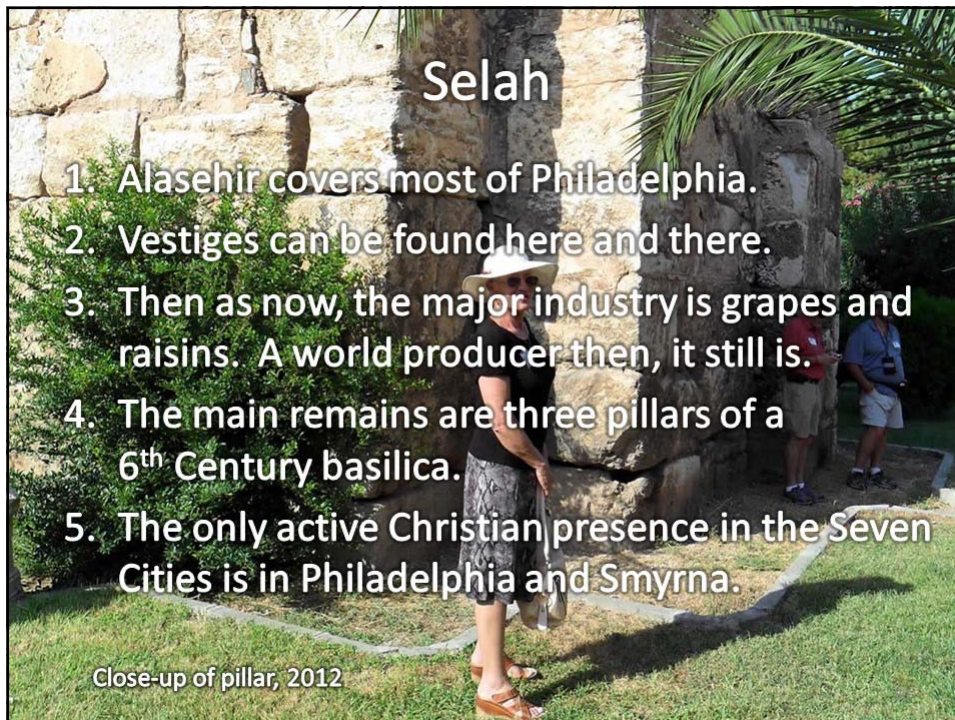
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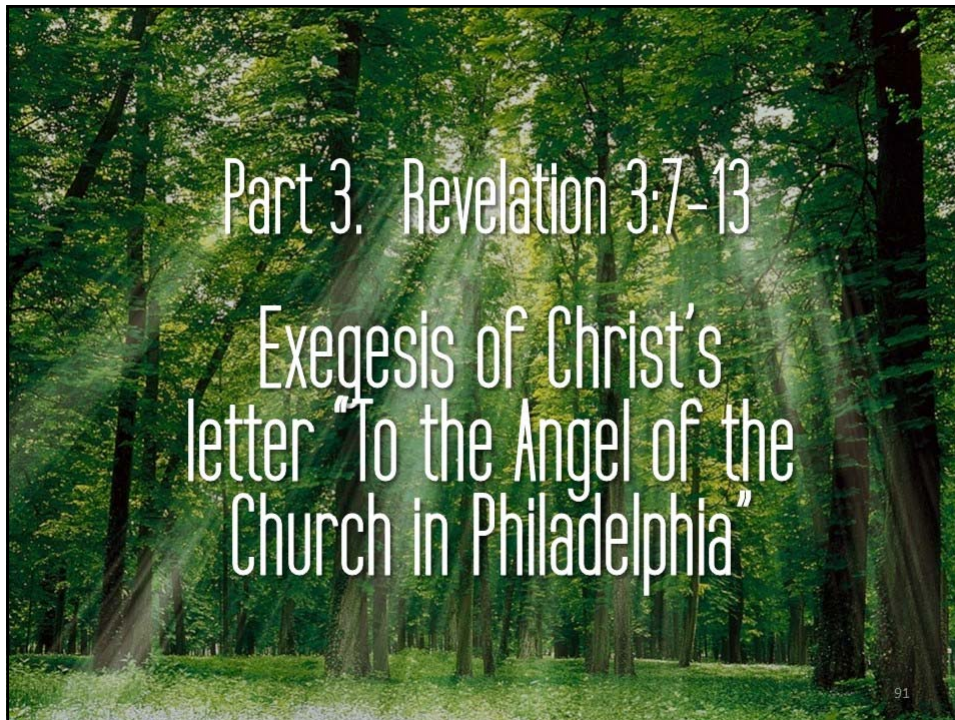
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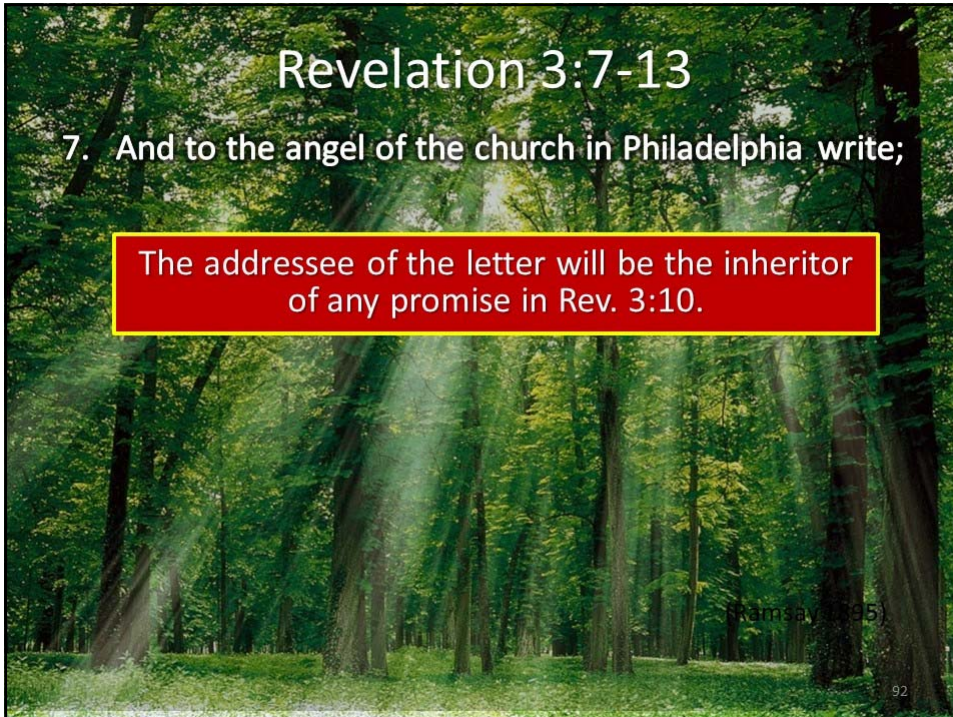
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59



60



Revelation 3:7-13

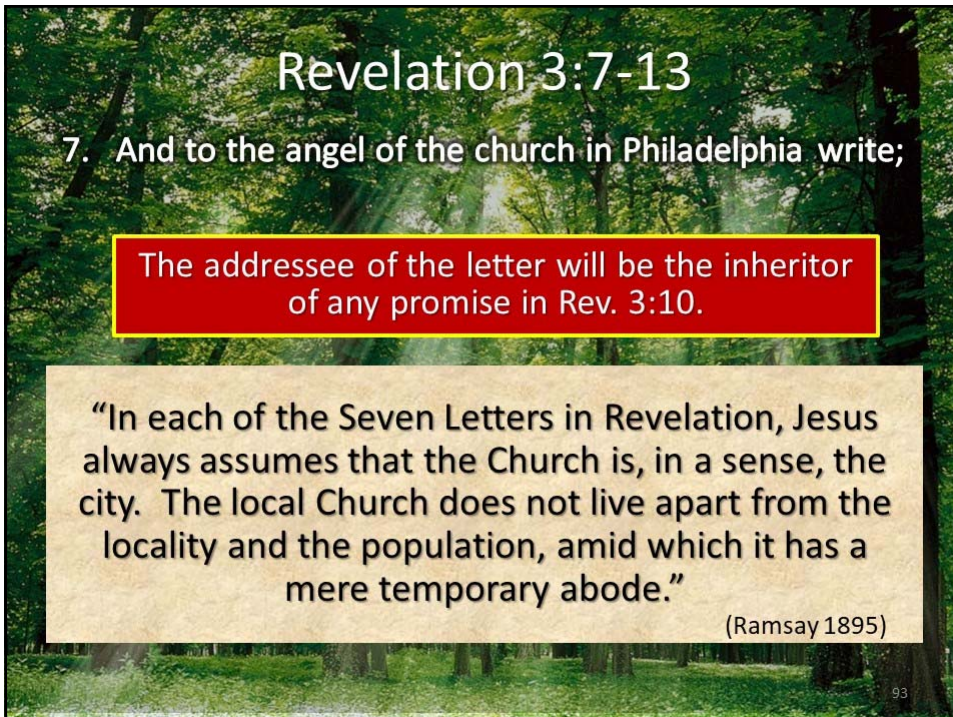
7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;

The addressee of the letter will be the inheritor
of any promise in Rev. 3:10.

(Ramsay 1895)

92

61



Revelation 3:7-13

7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;

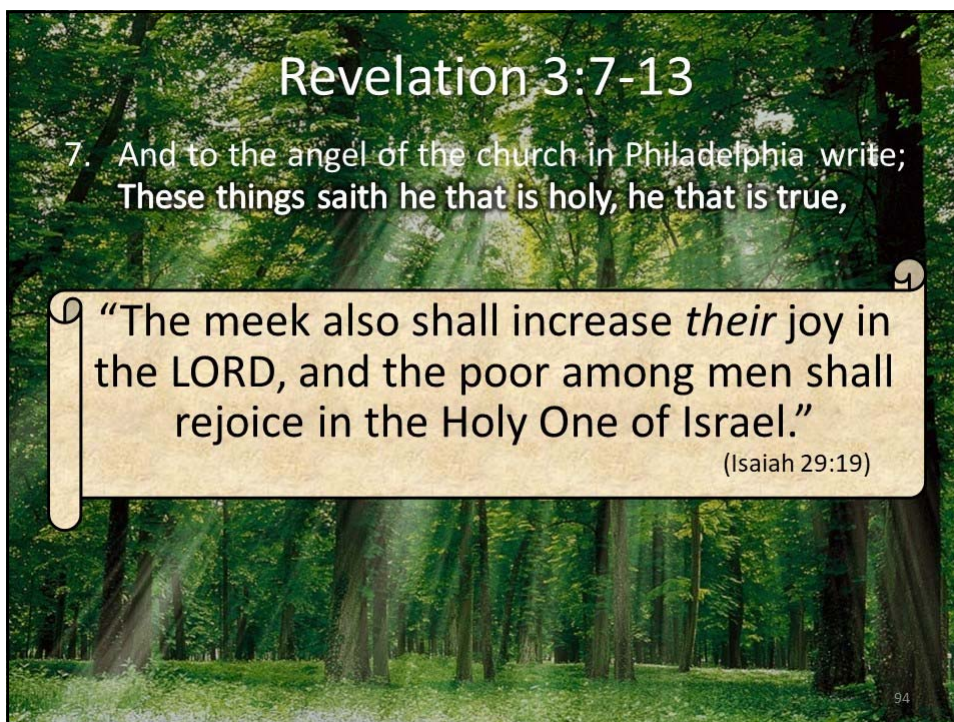
The addressee of the letter will be the inheritor
of any promise in Rev. 3:10.

“In each of the Seven Letters in Revelation, Jesus
always assumes that the Church is, in a sense, the
city. The local Church does not live apart from the
locality and the population, amid which it has a
mere temporary abode.”

(Ramsay 1895)

93

62



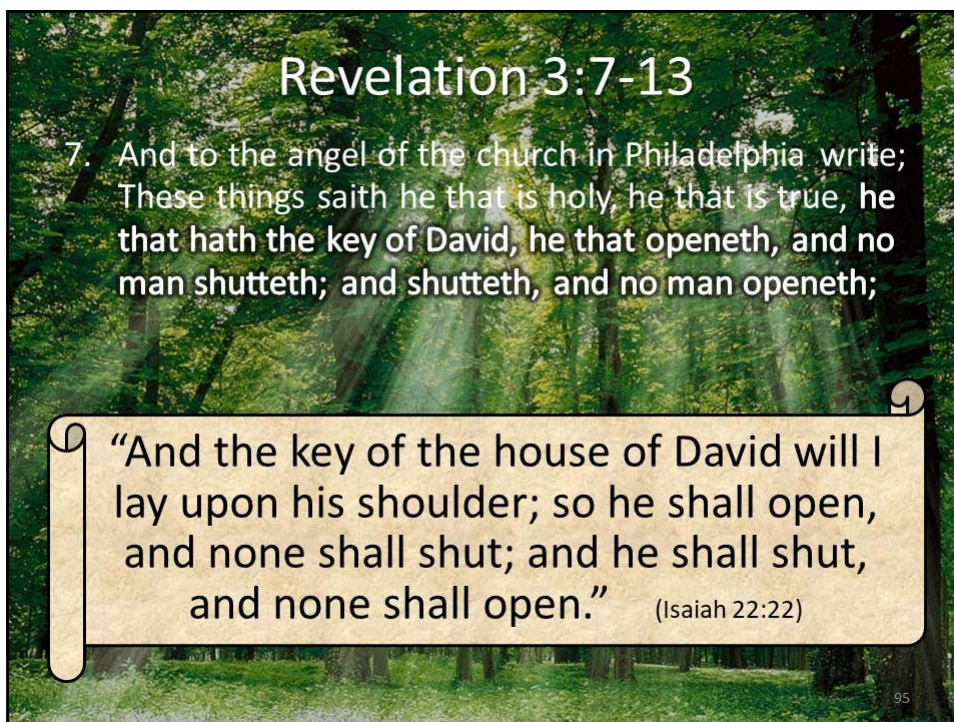
Revelation 3:7-13

7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;
These things saith he that is holy, he that is true,

“The meek also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”
(Isaiah 29:19)

94

63



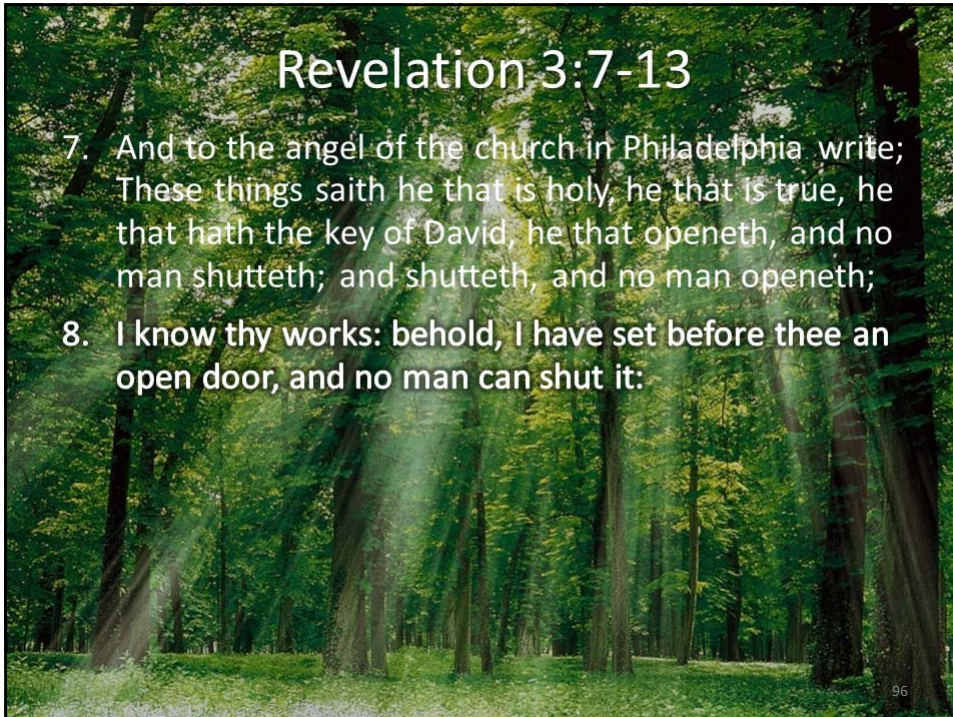
Revelation 3:7-13

7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write;
These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.” (Isaiah 22:22)

95

64




Revelation 3:7-13

7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;
8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:

96

65



Revelation 3:7-13

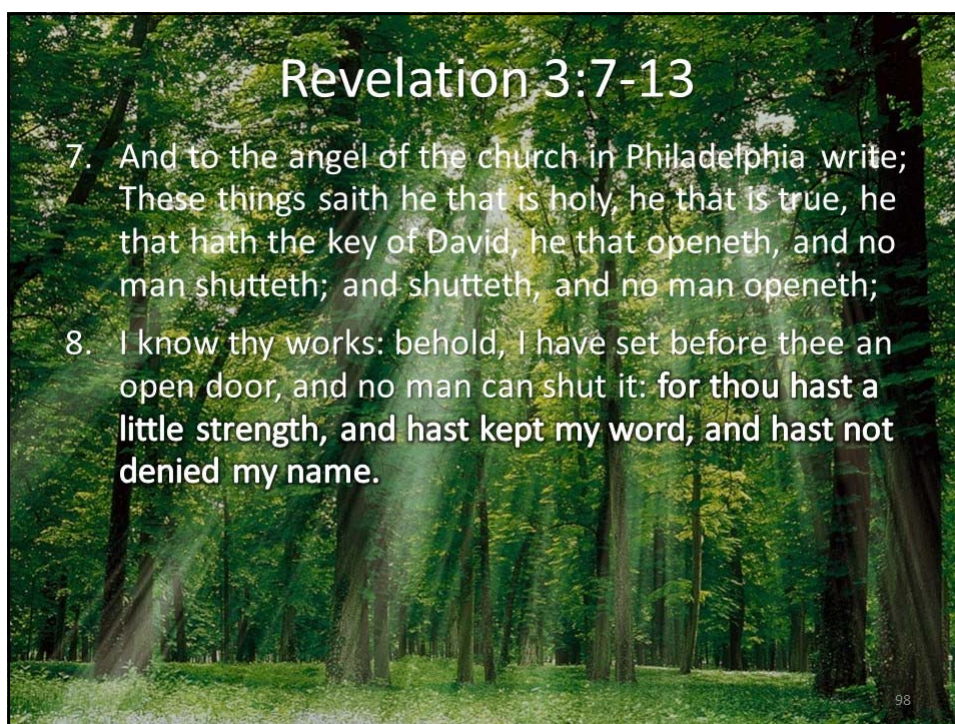
7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;
8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:

9 “Yea, hath God said...?” (Genesis 3:1)

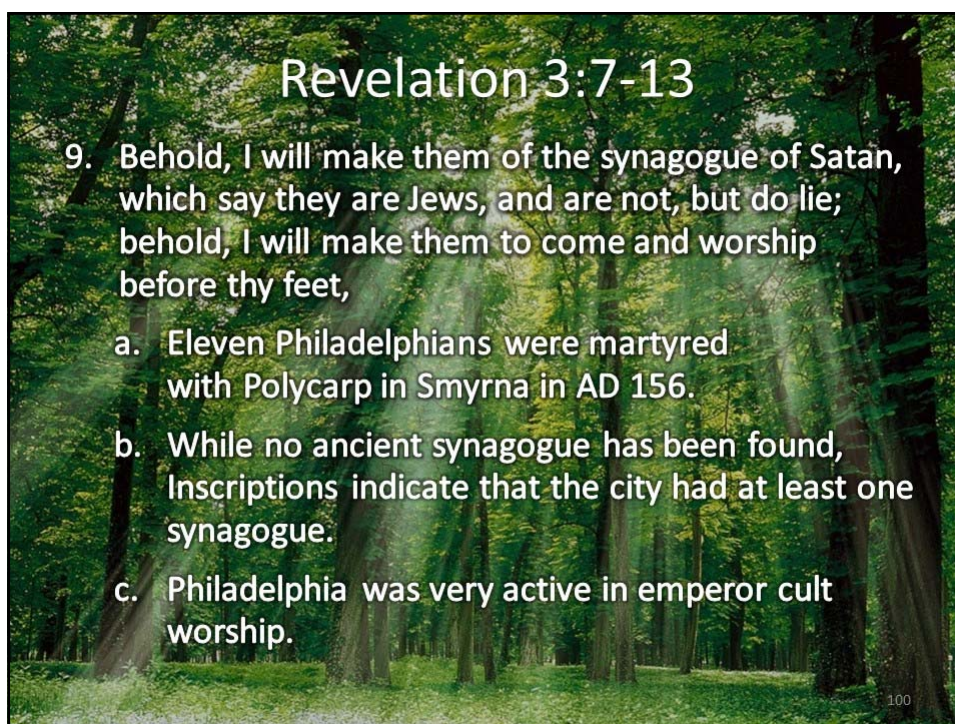
Yet Satan uses the same tool now, the Professing Church, to attack God’s Word that he used in pre-Reformation times.

(Anderson, 98) ⁹⁷

66



67



68

Revelation 3:7-13

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee¹⁰ for thou hast kept My command to persevere.

English (KJV)	Strong's	Greek root	Biblical usage
loved	G25	ἀγαπάω <i>agapaō</i>	1) to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly 2) Thayer's: to have a preference for; to regard the welfare of.

Exegesis of "loved" (Strong 1996, G25)

102

69

Revelation 3:7-13

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee¹⁰ for thou hast have kept My command to persevere.

I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

103

70



71



72



Revelation 3:7-13

"I also will keep thee from ..."

73



Revelation 3:7-13

"I also will keep thee from ..."

74

Revelation 3:7-13

“I also will keep thee from”

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” (Isaiah 26:20)

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

75

Revelation 3:7-13

to try them that dwell upon the earth.

“... and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.” (Daniel 12:1)

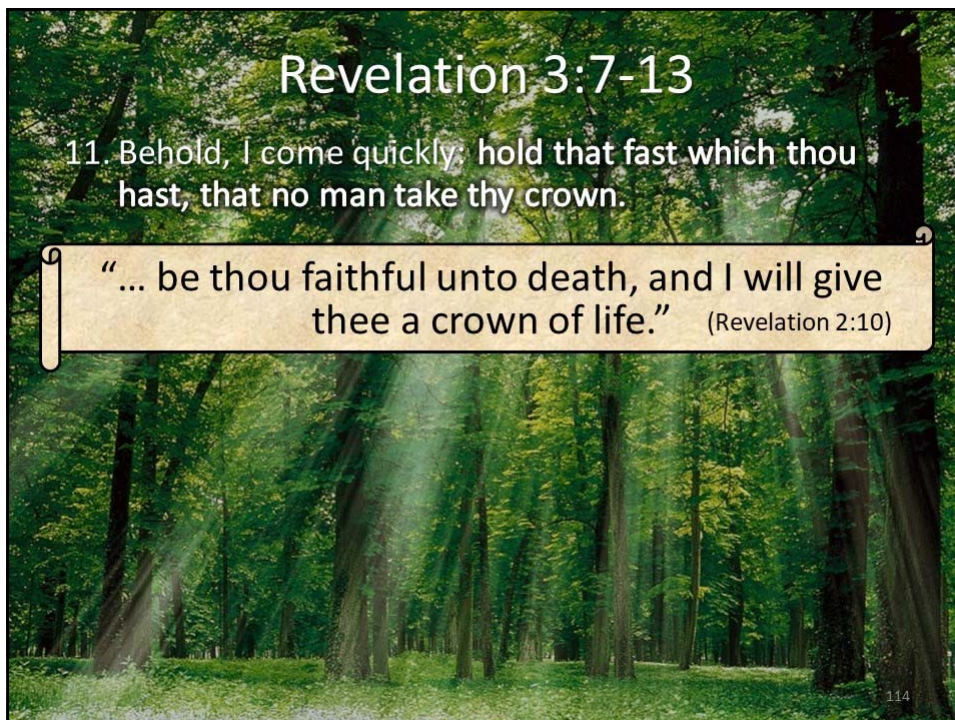
“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:21)

“And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.” (Micah 5:15)

76



77



78

Revelation 3:7-13

11. Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12. Him that overcometh

English (KJV)	Strong's	Greek root	Biblical usage
overcometh	G3528	νικάω <i>nikaō</i>	1) To conquer 2) To carry off the victory 3) Of Christ, victorious over all His foes 4) Of Christians that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, and temptations and persecutions.

Exegesis of “overcometh” (Strong 1996, G35285)

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So who is an “overcomer”?

The image features a woman in a patterned top and orange pants standing in a sun-dappled forest. She is surrounded by a dense word cloud of the word "overcomer" in various shades of green and white, with some letters appearing in all caps and others in title case. The word cloud is layered over the forest background, creating a visual metaphor for the concept of overcoming.

80

So who is an “overcomer”?

“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”
(1 John 5:5)

Rev. 2 and 3 list traits of overcomers:

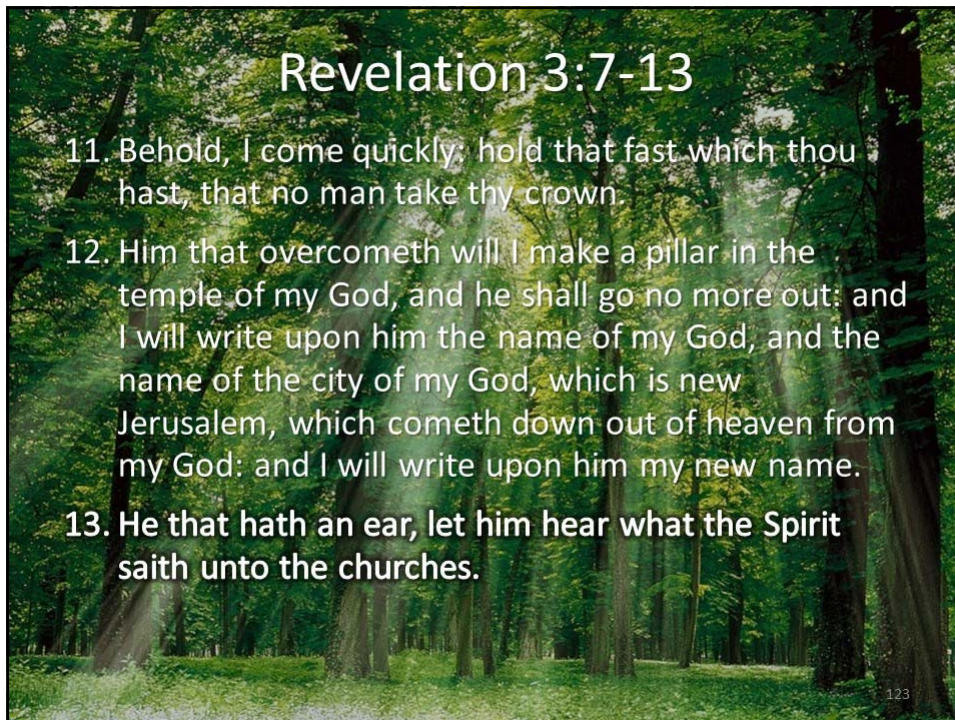
- Kept His Word (Rev 3:8)
- Held fast His name (Rev. 2:13; 3:3; 3:8)
- Did not deny the faith (Rev. 2:13)
- Have not known the depths of Satan (Rev. 2:24)
- Repented (Rev 3:3; 3:19)
- Persevered (Rev 3:10)

81

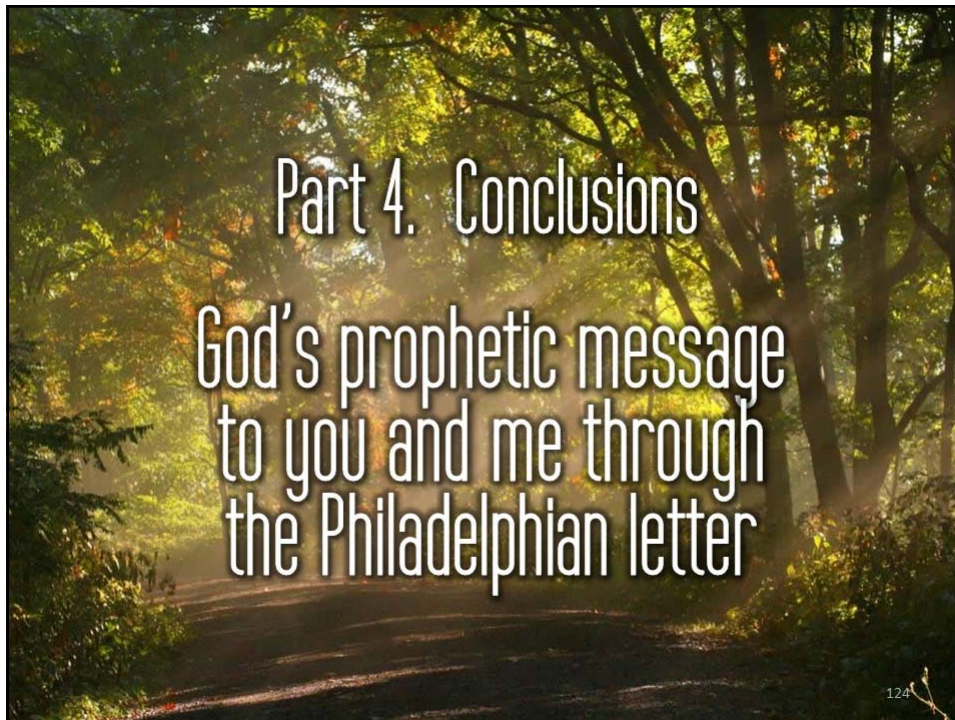
Traits of the Overcomer

1. They did not deny Christ (Rev 3:8, 10b)
2. They did not defile their garments (Rev. 3:4)
3. They kept the word of His patience (Rev. 2:10a)
4. They remained loyal to God (Rev. 2:1-3)
5. They overcame tribulation (Rev 2:8-10)
6. They remained faithful (Rev 2:8-10)
7. They were spiritually zealous (Rev 2:19)

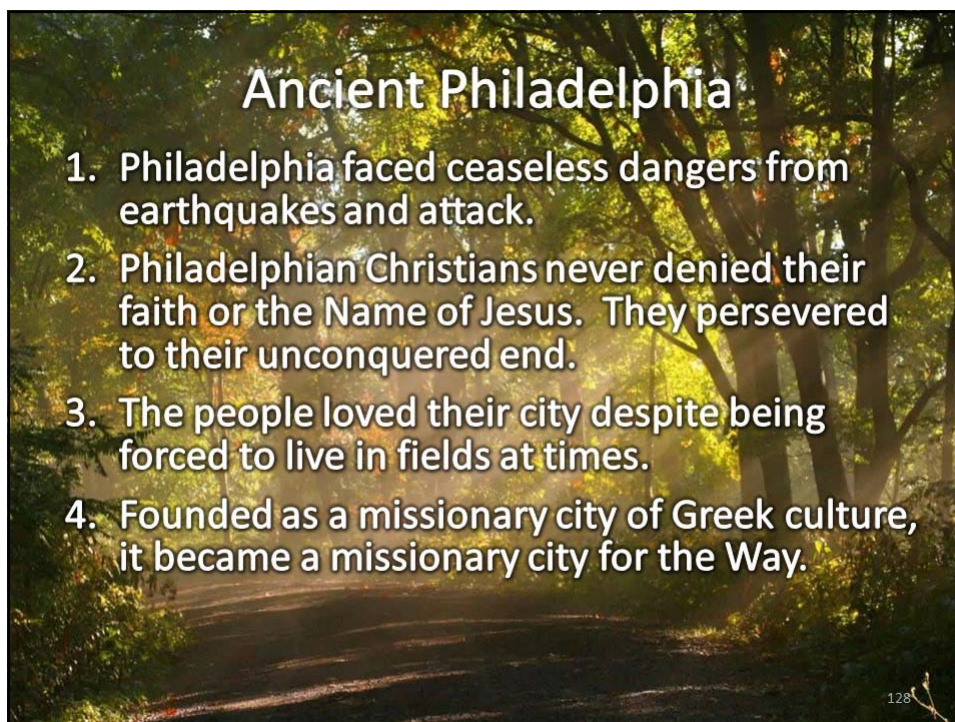
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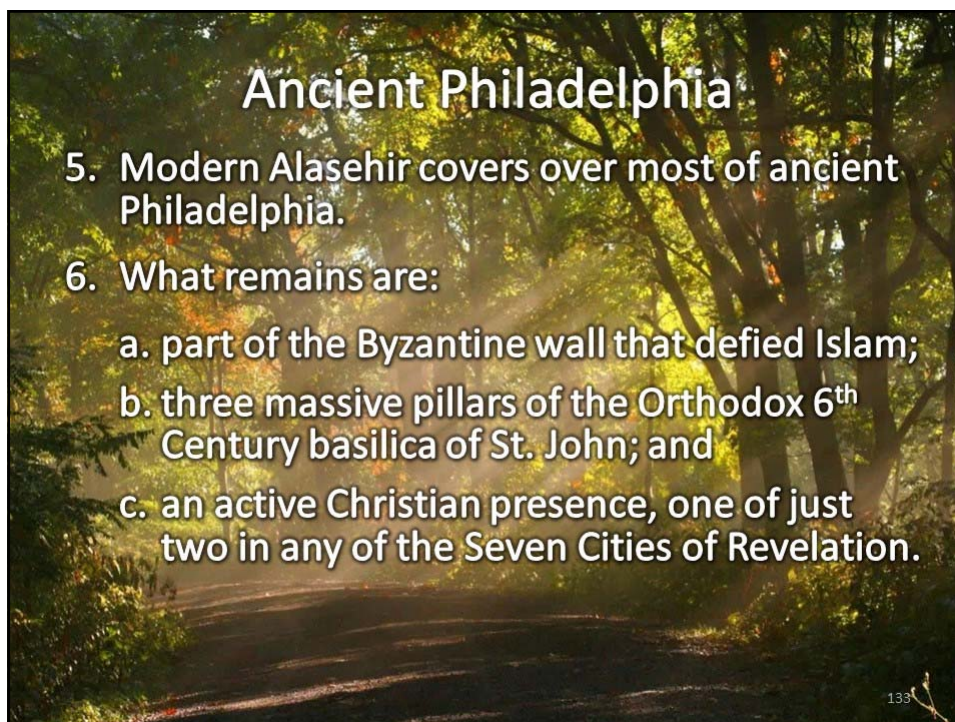
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Ancient Philadelphia

1. Philadelphia faced ceaseless dangers from earthquakes and attack.
2. Philadelphian Christians never denied their faith or the Name of Jesus. They persevered to their unconquered end.
3. The people loved their city despite being forced to live in fields at times.
4. Founded as a missionary city of Greek culture, it became a missionary city for the Way.

85



Ancient Philadelphia

5. Modern Alasehir covers over most of ancient Philadelphia.
6. What remains are:
 - a. part of the Byzantine wall that defied Islam;
 - b. three massive pillars of the Orthodox 6th Century basilica of St. John; and
 - c. an active Christian presence, one of just two in any of the Seven Cities of Revelation.

86