

A FAITHFUL SAYING
The Axis of History
1 Timothy 1:15–17

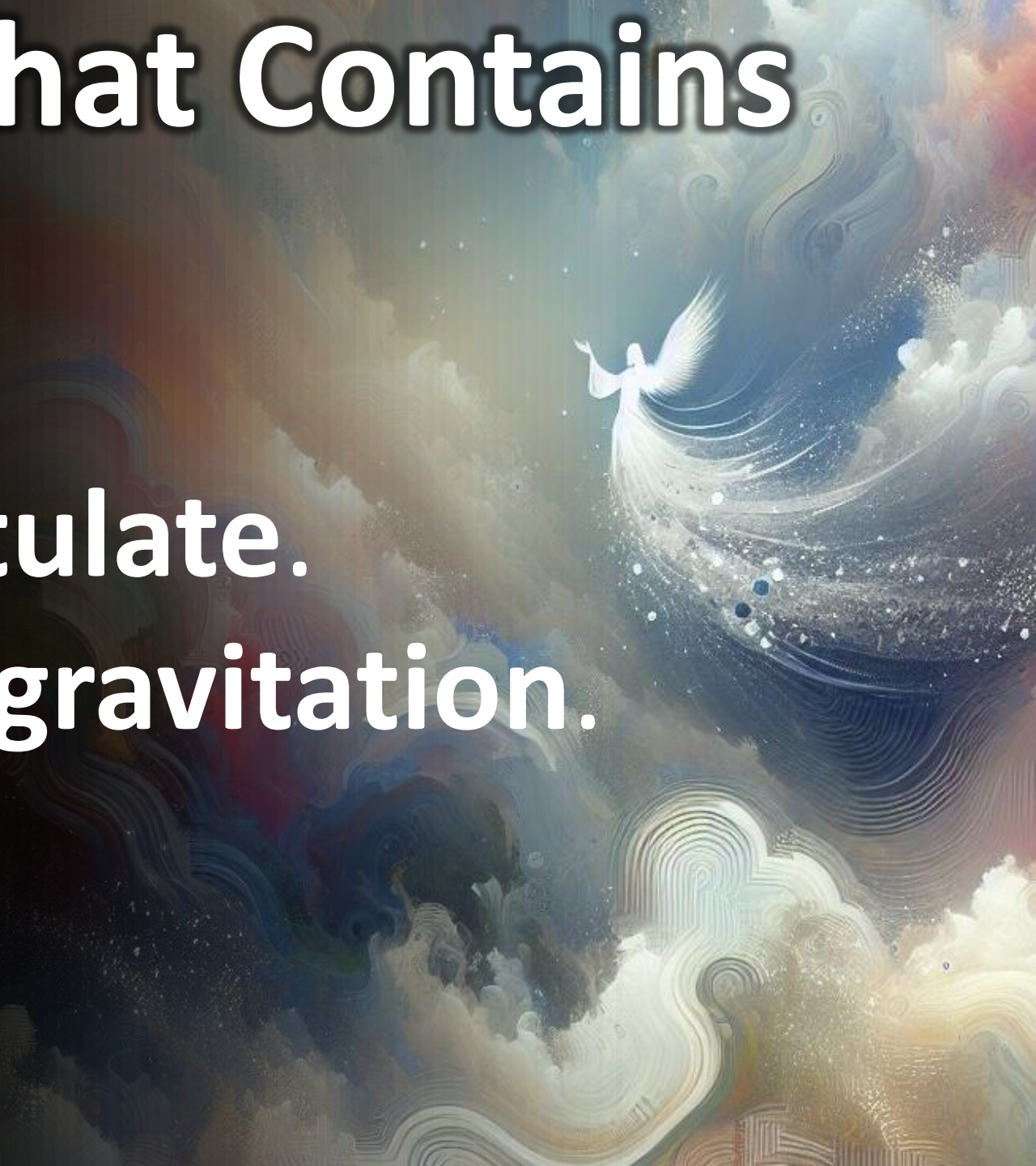
1 Timothy 1:15-17

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.



The Sentence that Contains the Universe

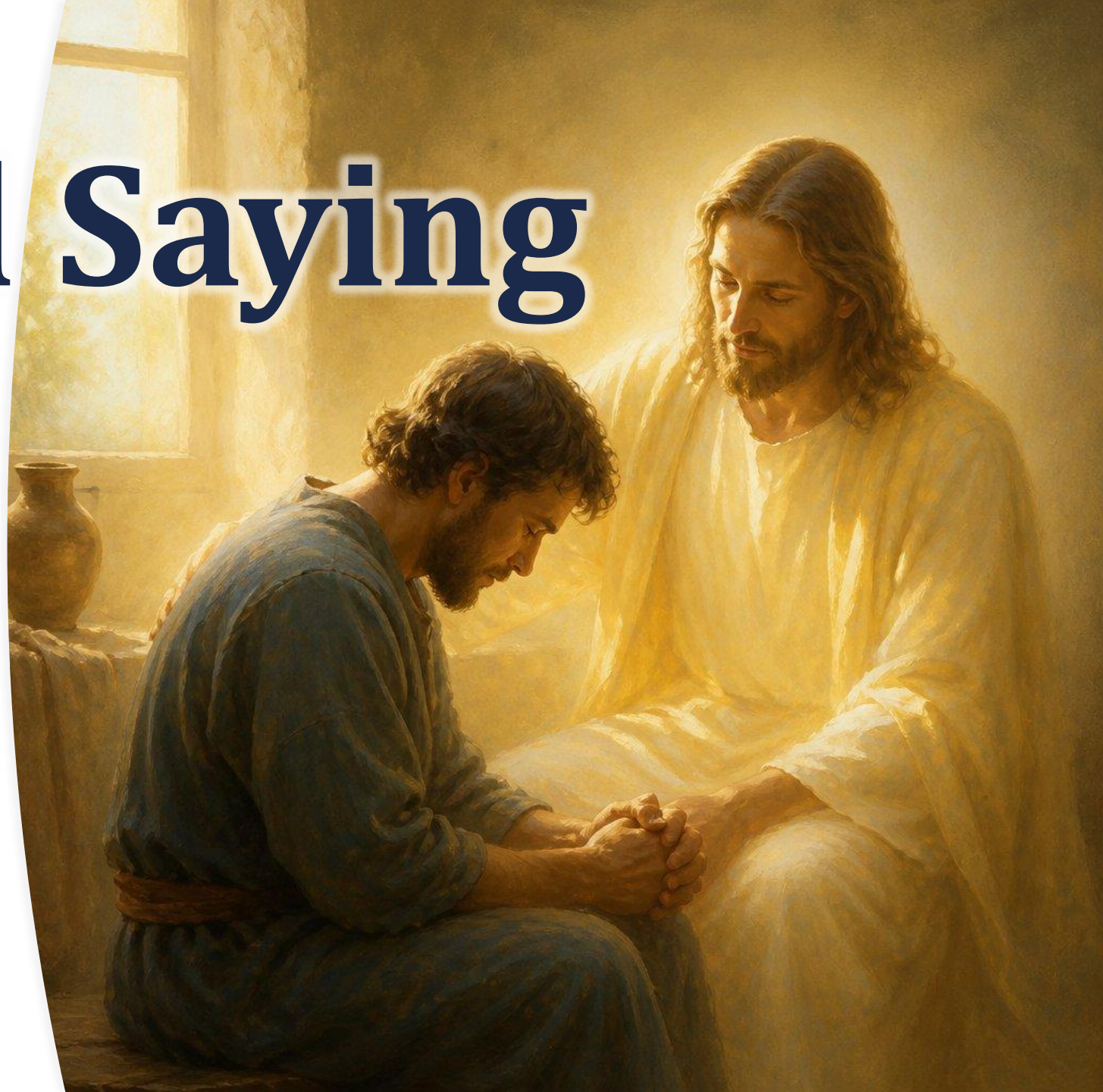
- Euclid's fifth postulate.
- Newton's law of gravitation.
- Einstein's $E=mc^2$.



A Faithful Saying

This phrase occurs **5 times**
in the Pastoral Epistles
(**1 Timothy 1:15;**
3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy
2:11; Titus 3:8)

and each time it introduces
a statement of foundational
theological importance.



**1 Timothy 3:1 says this is a faithful saying;
2 Timothy 2:11 says this is a faithful saying.
But 1 Timothy 1:15 says this is a faithful
saying and worthy of all acceptance.**



**THIS IS A
FAITHFUL SAYING**



The Weight of the Formula

it has been preached in
**Jerusalem and Rome, in
Antioch and Ephesus**

πιστός **Pistos**

FAITHFUL



A GOOD
WORD

πιστός - faithful

— 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13

God is faithful, who
will not allow you to
be tempted beyond
what you are able.



1 Corinthians 4:2

Moreover it is
required in
stewards that one
be found faithful.



A religious painting depicting Jesus standing in a white robe, gesturing with his right hand towards a man who is bowing deeply in prayer. The scene is set in a room with a large window in the background, through which a landscape with a church spire is visible. The lighting is warm and golden, creating a serene and reverent atmosphere.

Worthy of All Acceptance

— The Universal Invitation

The word **apodexis** means to receive, to welcome, to embrace — not passive reception but active, deliberate welcoming

ἀποδοχή

Apodoche

TO RECEIVE, WELCOME, EMBRACE

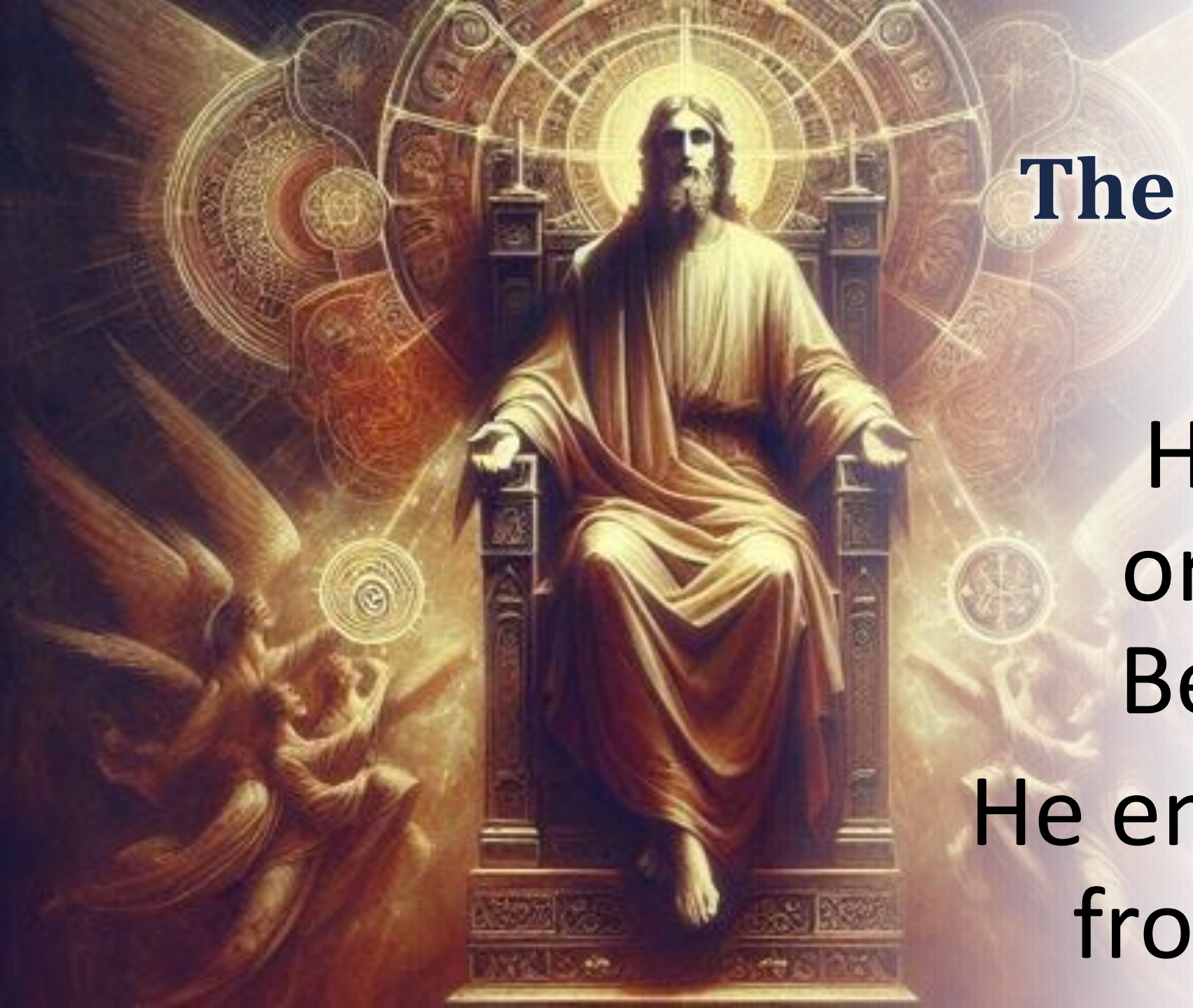
Not passive reception but active, deliberate welcoming. Paul is saying that this truth demands a response — it must be embraced, welcomed into the inner life, staked upon.





Christ Jesus Came into the World — The Incarnation

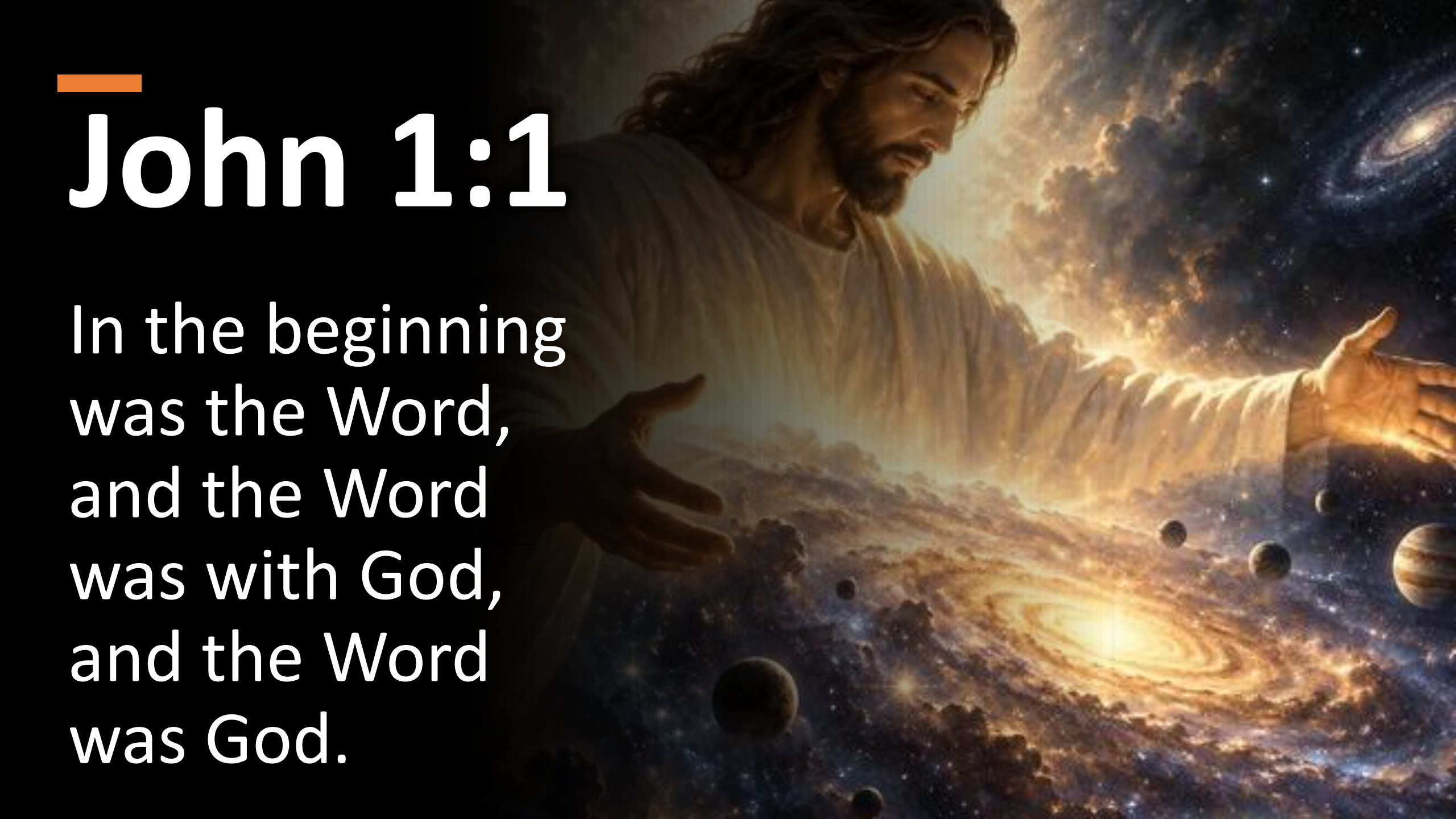
The phrase 'came into the world' is loaded with Christological implication. It assumes that before coming into the world, Christ existed — He did not originate at Bethlehem, but entered history from eternity.



The Pre-Existence of Christ

He did not
originate at
Bethlehem.

He entered history
from eternity.

A dramatic, artistic depiction of Jesus Christ with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a white robe. He is shown from the chest up, with his arms outstretched horizontally, palms facing down. He appears to be looking down at a vast, glowing cosmic universe. The background is a deep blue space filled with numerous galaxies, including a prominent spiral galaxy in the lower center, and several planets of various sizes and colors (brown, blue, orange) floating in the foreground. The lighting is warm and golden, emanating from the galaxies and creating a sense of divine light and creation.

John 1:1

In the beginning
was the Word,
and the Word
was with God,
and the Word
was God.



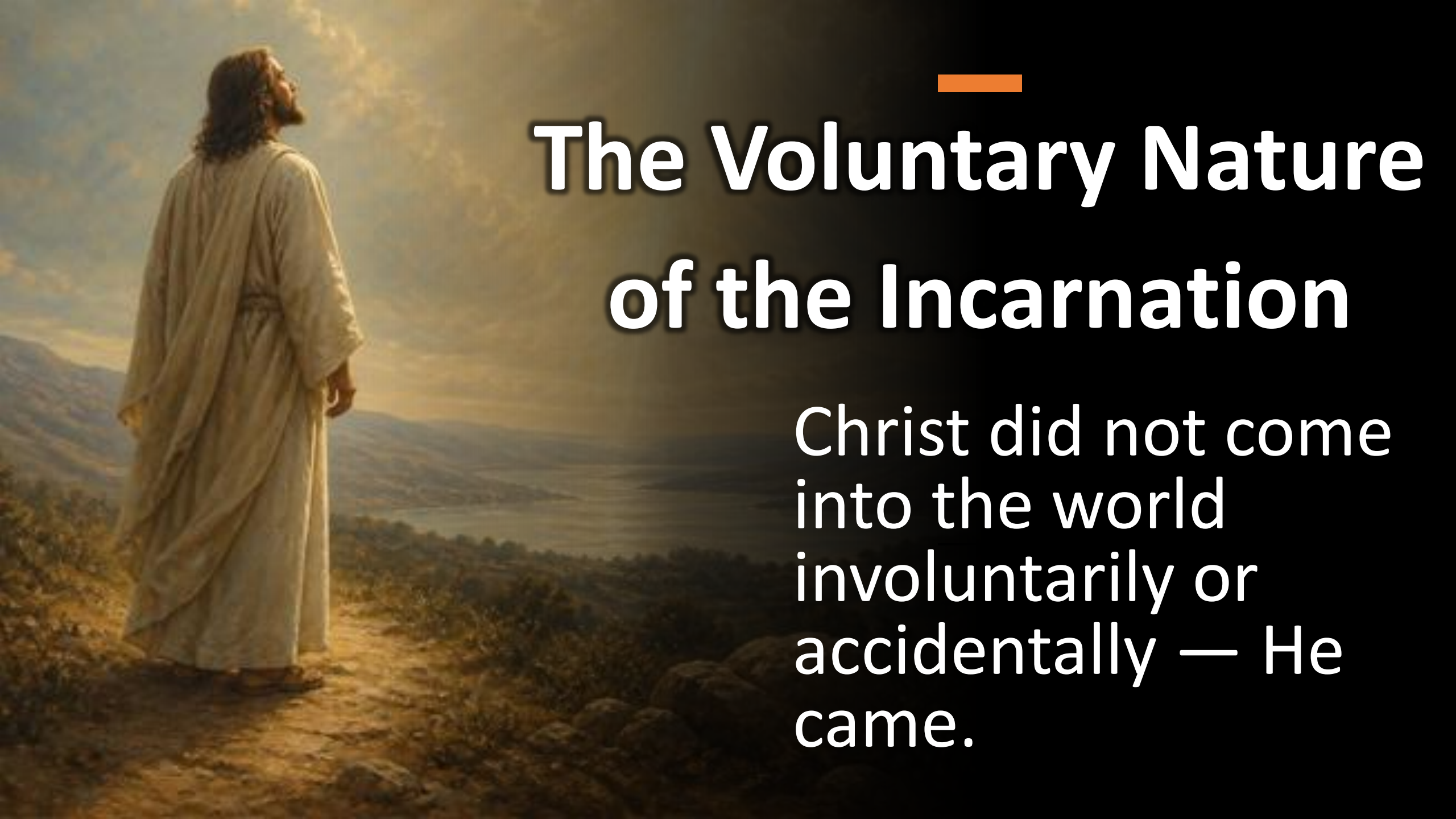
John 1:14

And the Word
became flesh and
dwelt among us,
and we beheld His
glory, the glory as of
the only begotten of
the Father, full of
grace and truth.



Colossians 1:15–17

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

A full-page background image of Jesus Christ standing on a hill, looking out over a landscape at sunset. He is wearing a long, light-colored robe and has long, wavy hair and a beard. The sky is filled with warm, golden light from the setting sun, and the landscape below is a mix of green hills and a body of water.

The Voluntary Nature of the Incarnation

Christ did not come
into the world
involuntarily or
accidentally — He
came.

Philippians 2:6–8

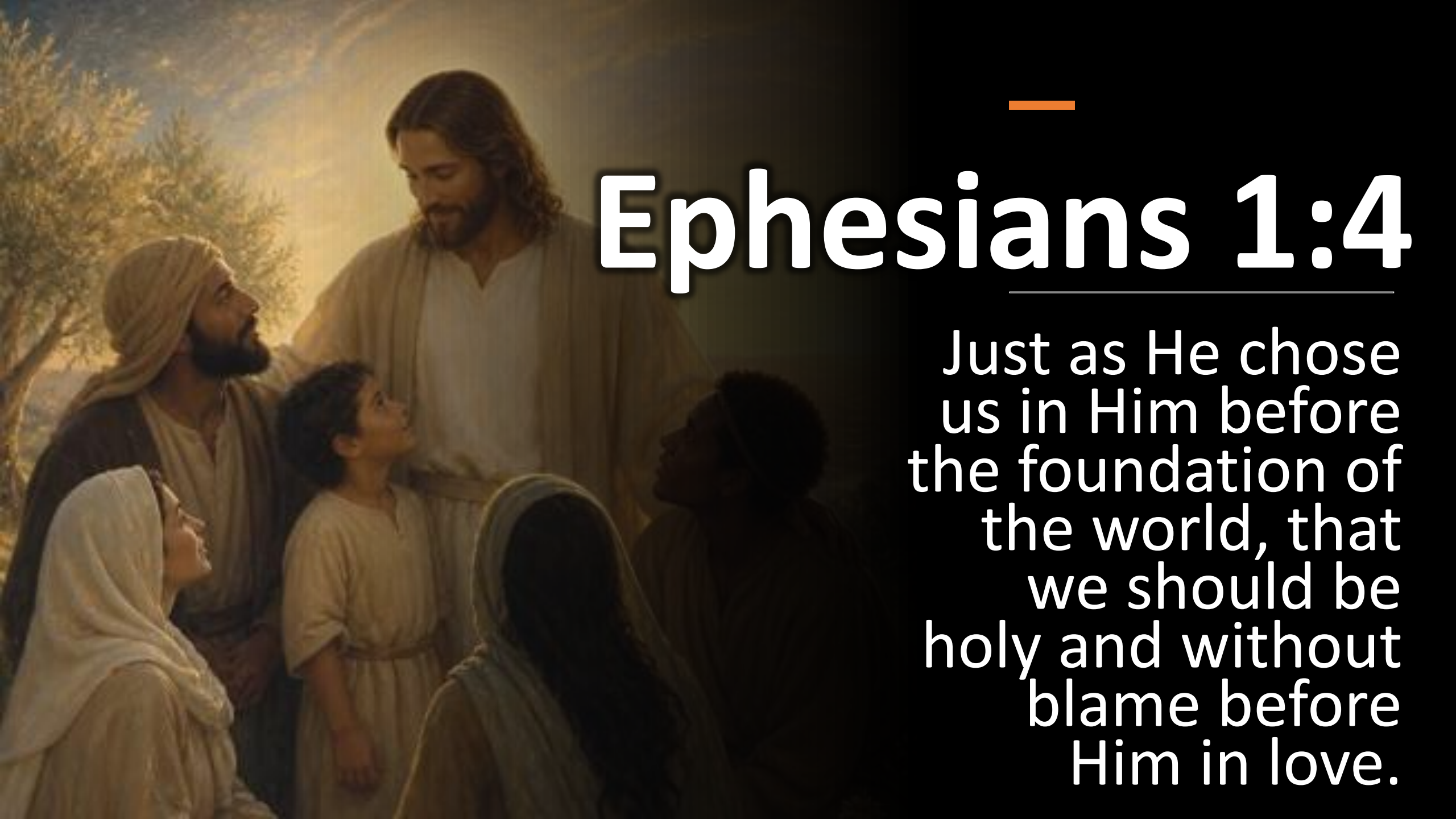
Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.



A religious painting depicting Jesus with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a simple robe, kneeling on the ground. He is holding a piece of bread in his hands, offering it to a young boy who is also kneeling and looking up at him with a hopeful expression. To the right, a woman wearing a headscarf and a young girl are seated, watching the interaction. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with a warm, golden light source, possibly the sun or a fire, creating a peaceful and tender atmosphere. The overall style is reminiscent of classical religious art.

2 Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.



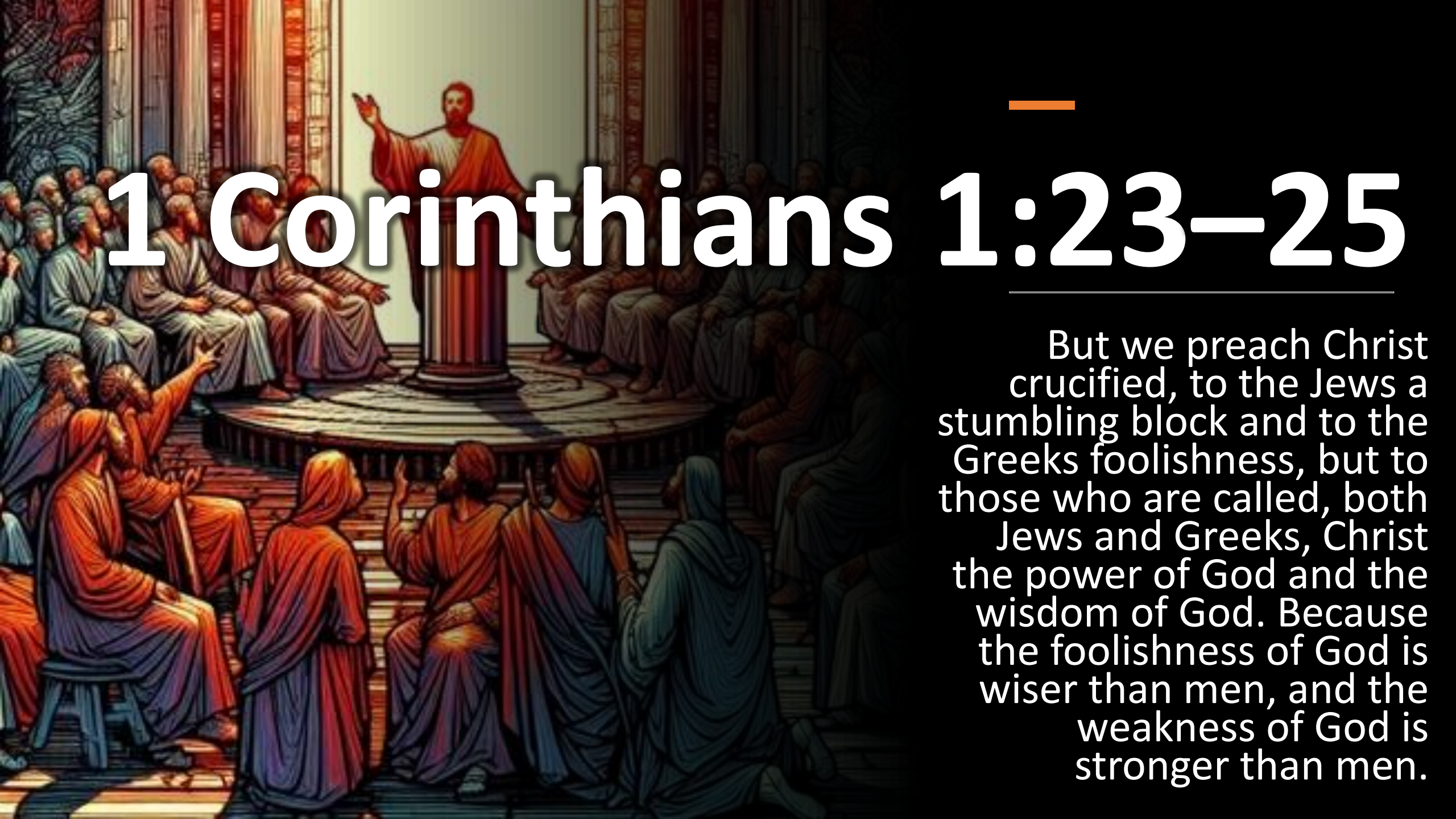
Ephesians 1:4

Just as He chose
us in Him before
the foundation of
the world, that
we should be
holy and without
blame before
Him in love.

The Scandal of the Incarnation in the Ephesian Context

Jesus became not an impressive human but a carpenter's son in an occupied province, born in a stable, who ended His earthly life on a cross reserved for slaves and criminals.



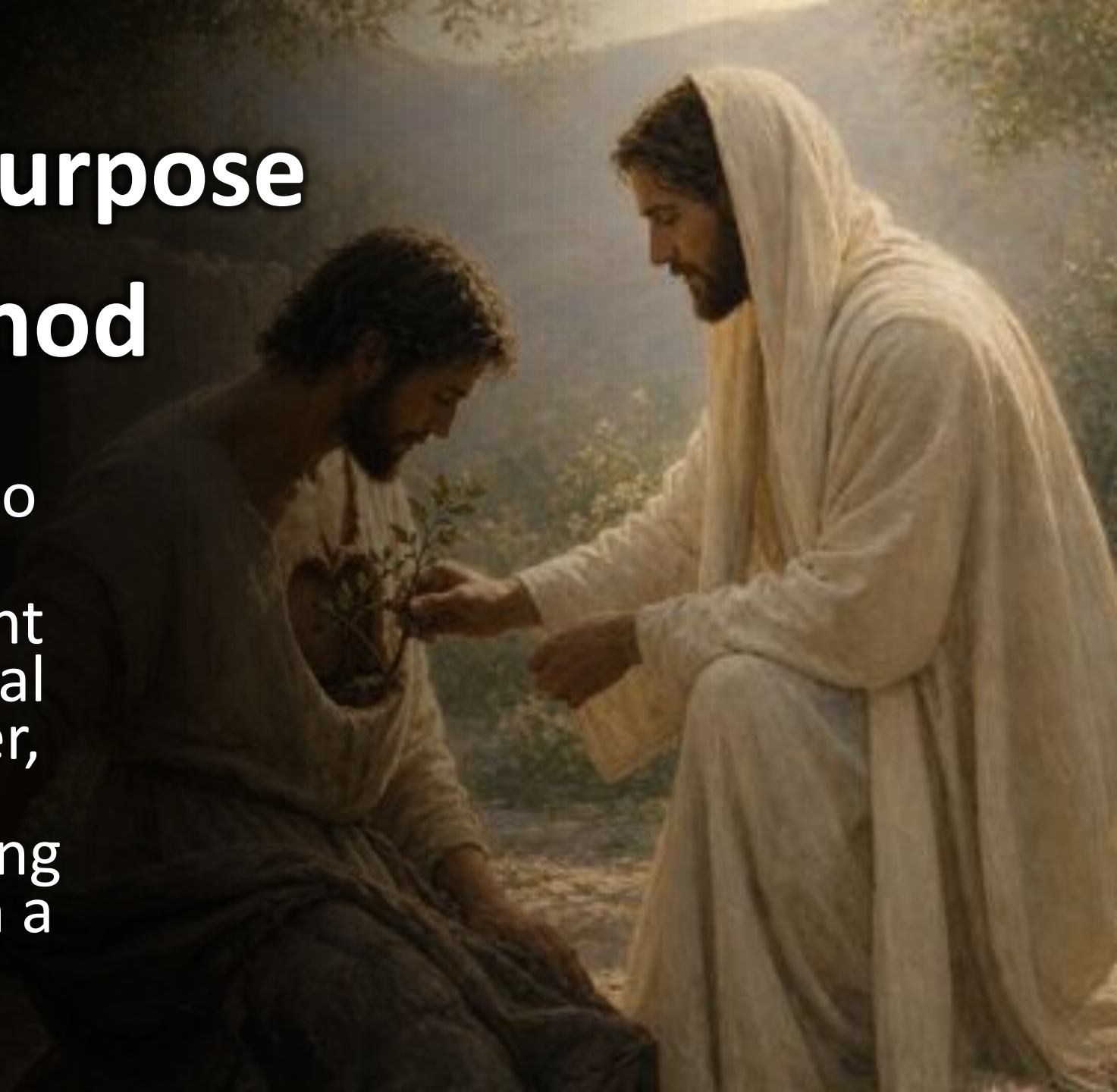


1 Corinthians 1:23–25

But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

To Save — The Purpose and the Method

The Greek word **Sozo** (to save) is one of the richest words in the New Testament vocabulary, used for physical healing, rescue from danger, and spiritual salvation. In every case, the core meaning is the same: to rescue from a danger the person cannot escape alone.



The Word Sozo

to describe the comprehensive rescue God has accomplished in Christ: justification, redemption, reconciliation, sanctification, and glorification.



Matthew

9:21-22

For she said within herself, 'If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.' But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, 'Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And the woman was made well from that hour.





Matthew

8:25

Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!'



Matthew

1:21

And she will
bring forth a Son,
and you shall call
His name JESUS,
for He will save
His people from
their sins.



σώζω
SOZO

TO SAVE, RESCUE, HEAL

One of the richest words in the New Testament vocabulary. Used for physical healing, rescue from physical danger, and spiritual salvation from sin — in every case, to rescue from a danger the person cannot escape alone.

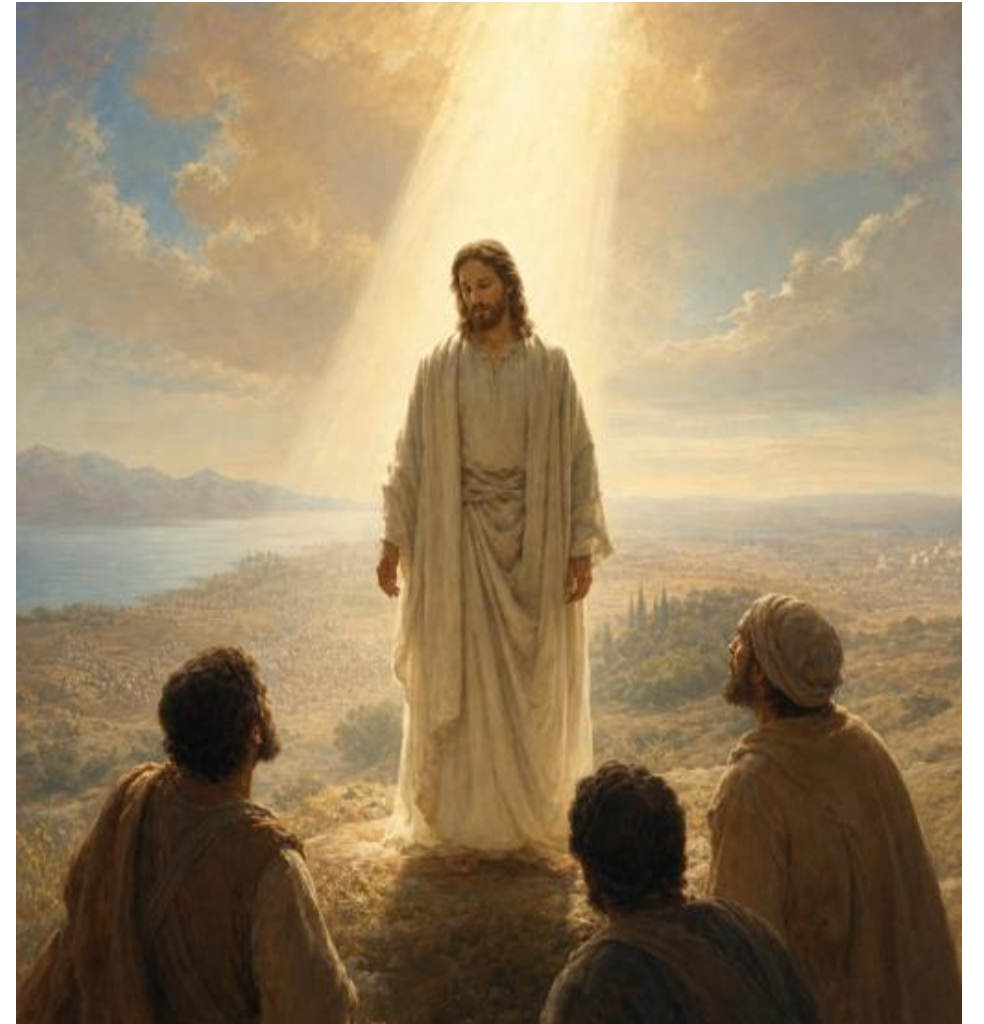


σωτηρία · σωτήρ · σωτήριον

Soteria · Soter · Soterion

SALVATION · SAVIOUR · SALVATION

The Sozo word-family Paul used extensively throughout his letters to describe the comprehensive rescue God has accomplished in Christ.



Romans

5:1

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.



Ephesians 1:7

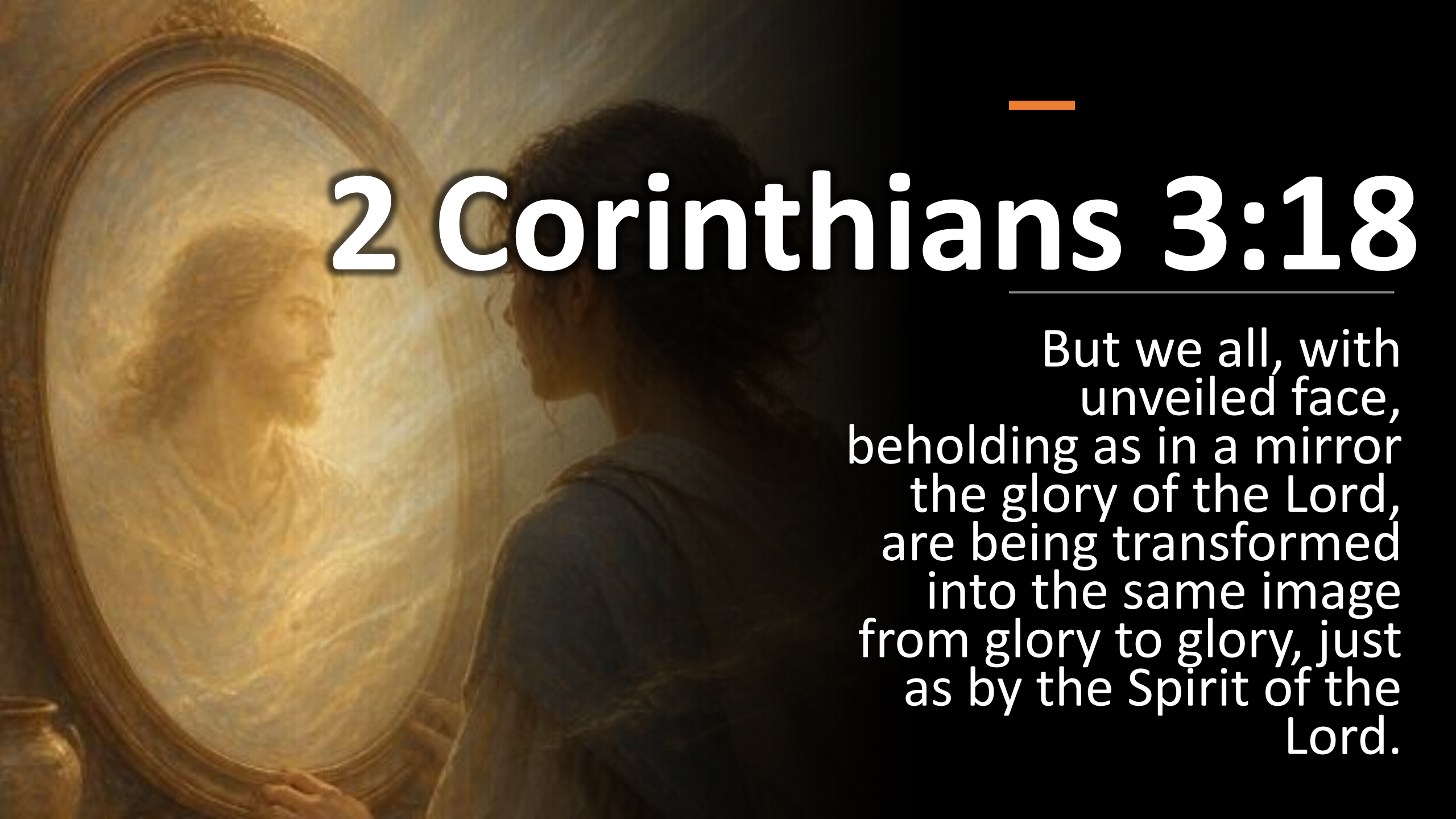
In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.





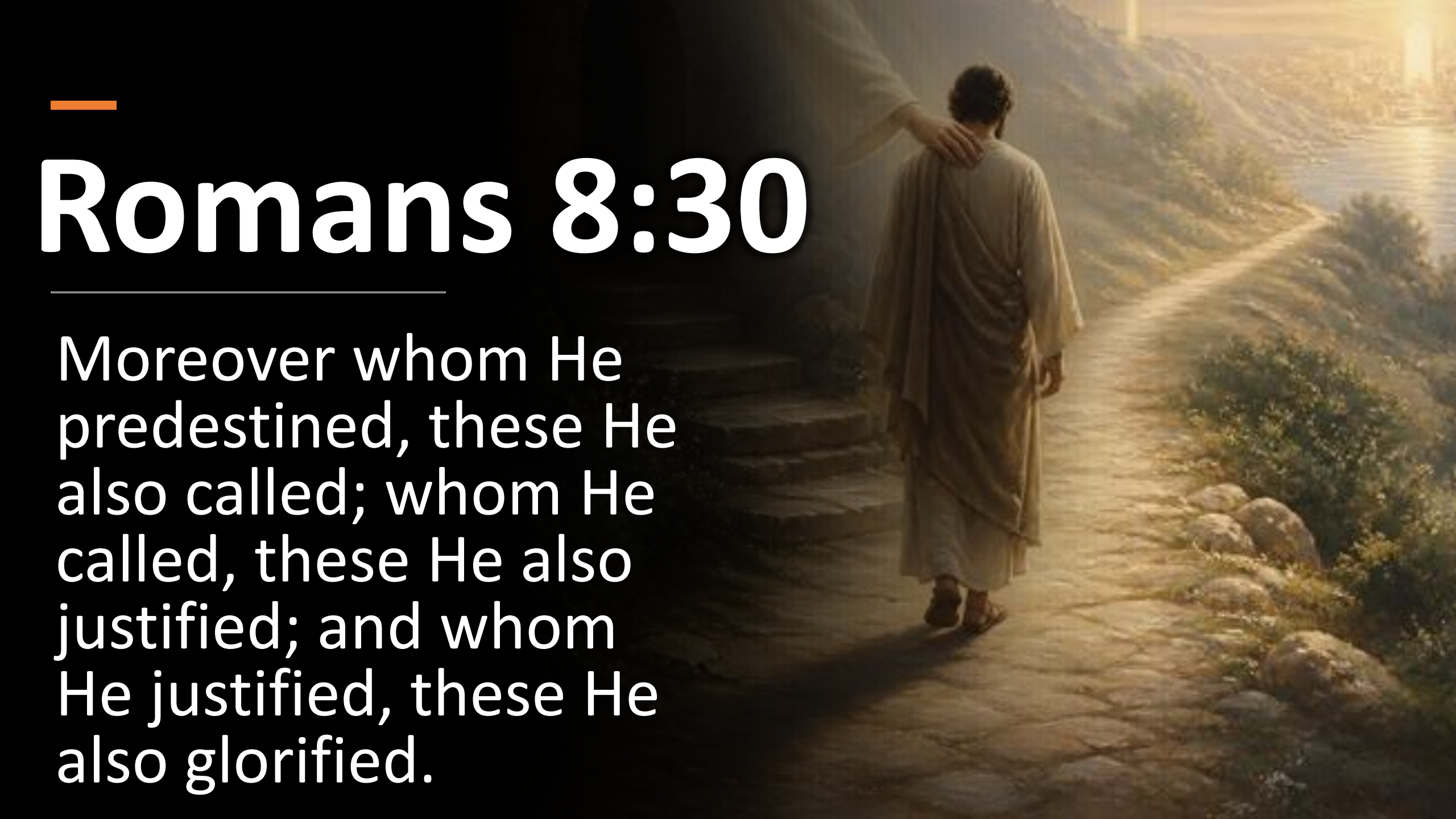
Romans 5:10–11

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

A woman with dark hair is seen from the side, looking into an oval mirror. The mirror reflects a glowing, ethereal image of Jesus with long hair and a beard. The scene is dimly lit, with the light source being the reflection in the mirror. A small orange horizontal line is positioned above the title text.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with
unveiled face,
beholding as in a mirror
the glory of the Lord,
are being transformed
into the same image
from glory to glory, just
as by the Spirit of the
Lord.

A man in a white robe is walking away from the viewer on a stone path that leads towards a bright, hazy horizon. A hand is resting on his right shoulder, suggesting guidance or support. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, possibly from a low sun, creating a sense of hope and journey. The path is flanked by greenery and rocks, and the overall atmosphere is one of spiritual journey and divine accompaniment.

Romans 8:30

Moreover whom He
predestined, these He
also called; whom He
called, these He also
justified; and whom
He justified, these He
also glorified.



Save Sinners — The Scope and Specificity

Christ came to save sinners, not helpers, not seekers, not the morally promising. The tax collectors and sinners of the Gospel accounts were those publicly identified as living outside the covenant

Mark 2:17

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.



The Substitutionary Heart of Salvation

Paul does not elaborate the mechanics here, but the rest of his theology fills in the picture.



Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



A religious illustration depicting Jesus Christ, with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a white robe. He is holding out a white garment towards a man in a dark, textured robe who is bowing slightly. The background is a warm, golden sunset over a hazy landscape. A small orange horizontal bar is located in the upper right area of the image.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him
who knew no sin
to be sin for us,
that we might
become the
righteousness of
God in Him.

Galatians

3:13

Christ has redeemed us
from the curse of the law,
having become a curse for
us.



Isaiah

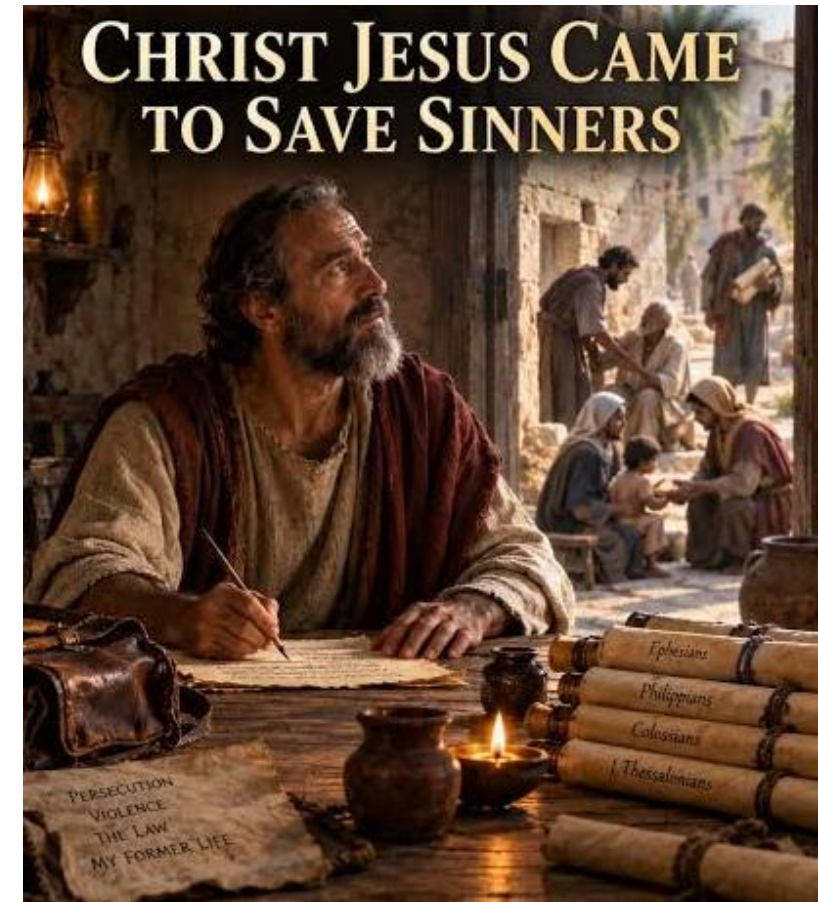
53:5-6

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.



Of Whom I Am Chief — The Present Tense Confession

- *I am chief.*
- Not I was.
- Not before my conversion I was the chief.
- Present tense.



The Grammar of Humility

The closer Paul walked with Christ, the more clearly he saw himself in contrast to Christ's holiness, and the more deeply he felt the weight of his own sinfulness.



Isaiah 6:5

Woe is me,
for I am
undone! I am
a man of
unclean lips.



Job 42:6

I abhor
myself, and
repent in
dust and
ashes.



Luke 5:8

Depart from me, for I am a
sinful man, O Lord!



Paul has catalogued his sins:

- Blasphemer,
- Persecutor,
- Insolent man.



πρῶτος
Protos

CHIEF, FIRST

First in sequence, first in
importance.





The Pattern for Those Who Believe

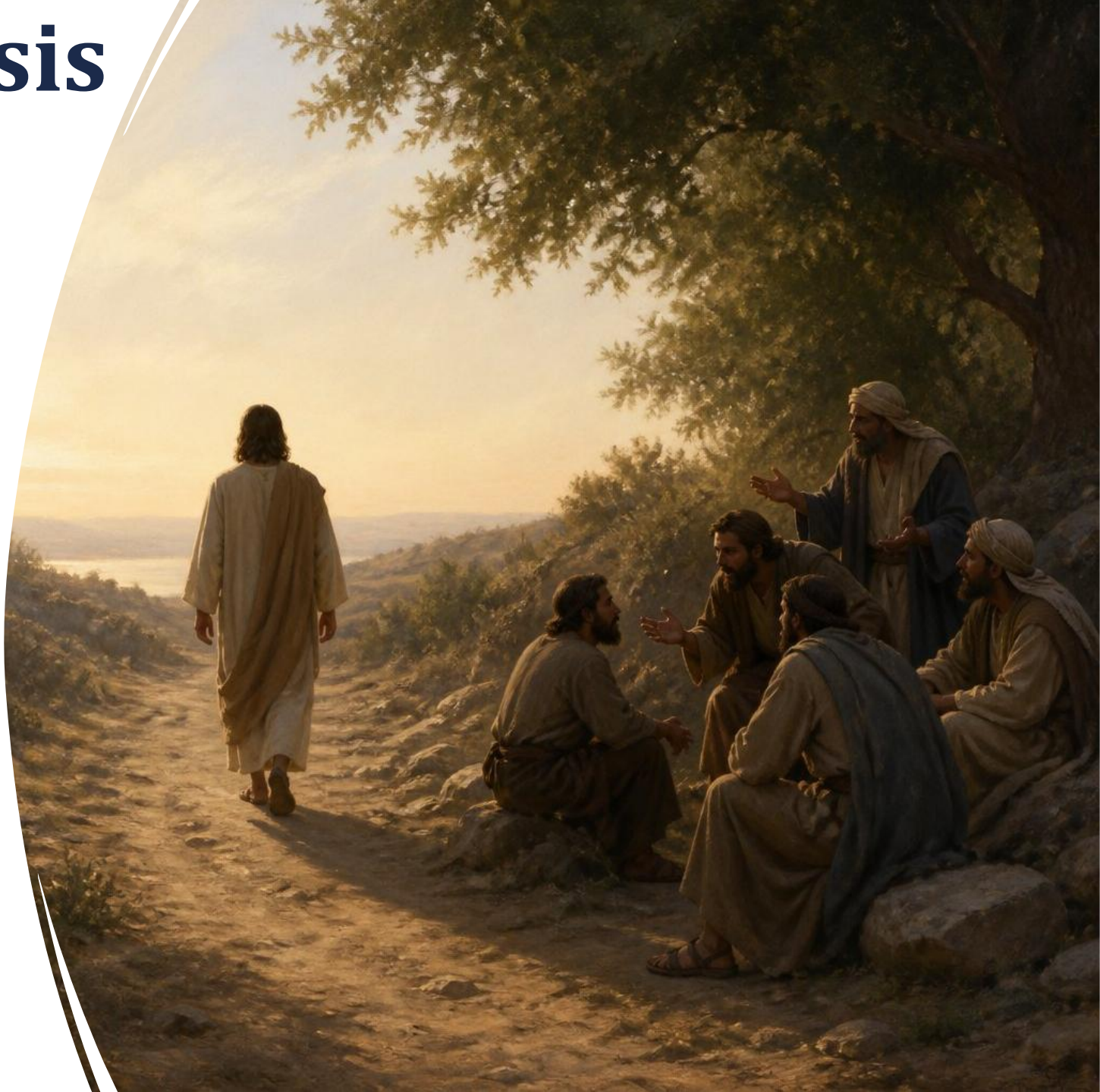
the purpose of Paul's
dramatic conversion

Paul as Hupotyposis

1 Timothy

1:16

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.



ὑποτύπωσις
Hypotyposis

PATTERN, PROTOTYPE

a sketch, a preliminary outline, a
prototype from



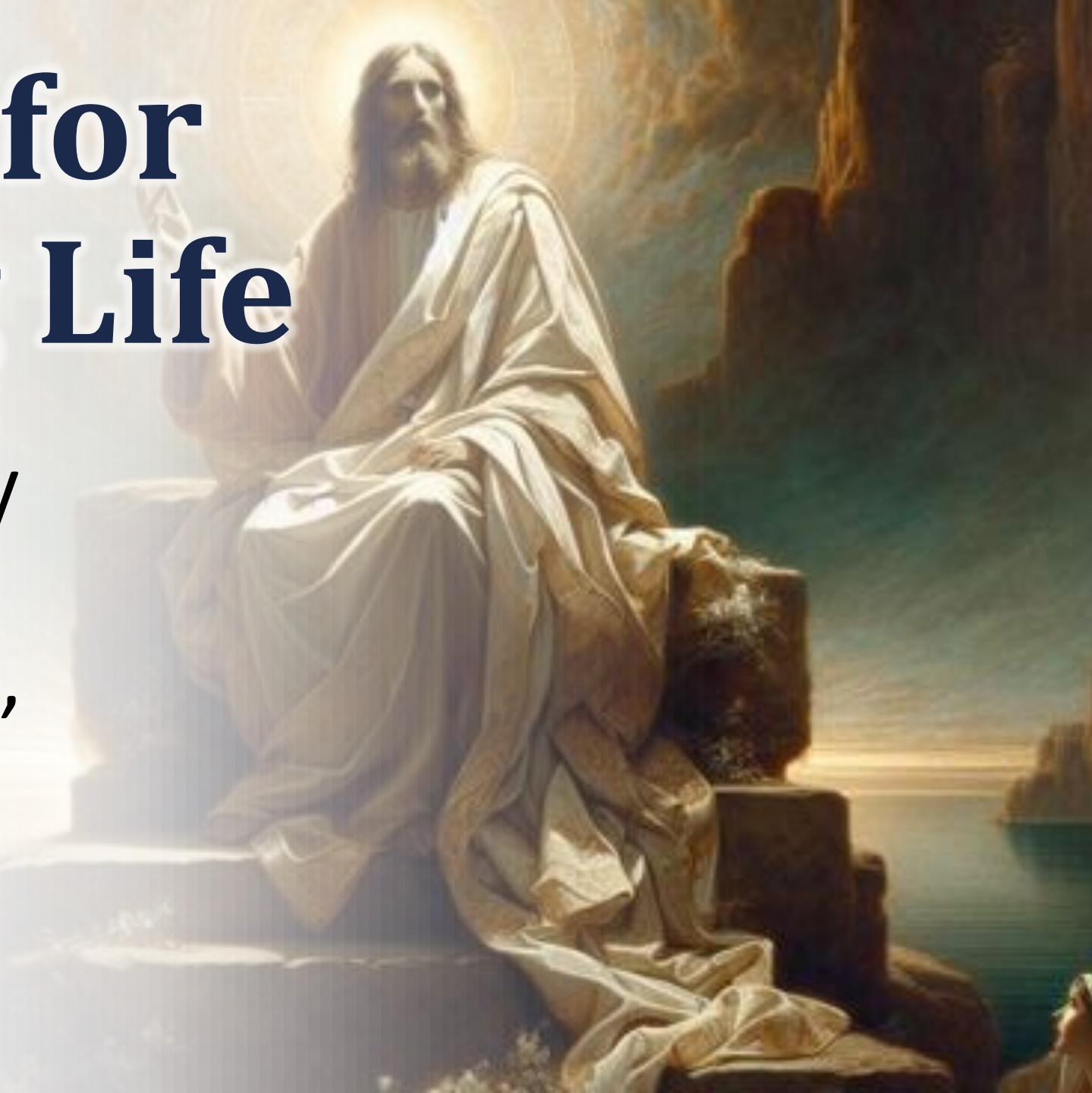
2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.



—Believing for Everlasting Life

Salvation is not merely about the present — the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Spirit, peace with God. It is about everlasting life:



John 17:3

This is eternal life,
that they may know
You, the only true
God, and Jesus
Christ whom You
have sent.



Psalm 16:11

You will show me
the path of life; in
Your presence is
fullness of joy; at
Your right hand are
pleasures
forevermore.



The Doxology — Sound Doctrine Always Produces Worship

Paul cannot contemplate
the faithful saying Christ
came to save sinners, I
was the worst, and I was
saved without erupting
into praise.

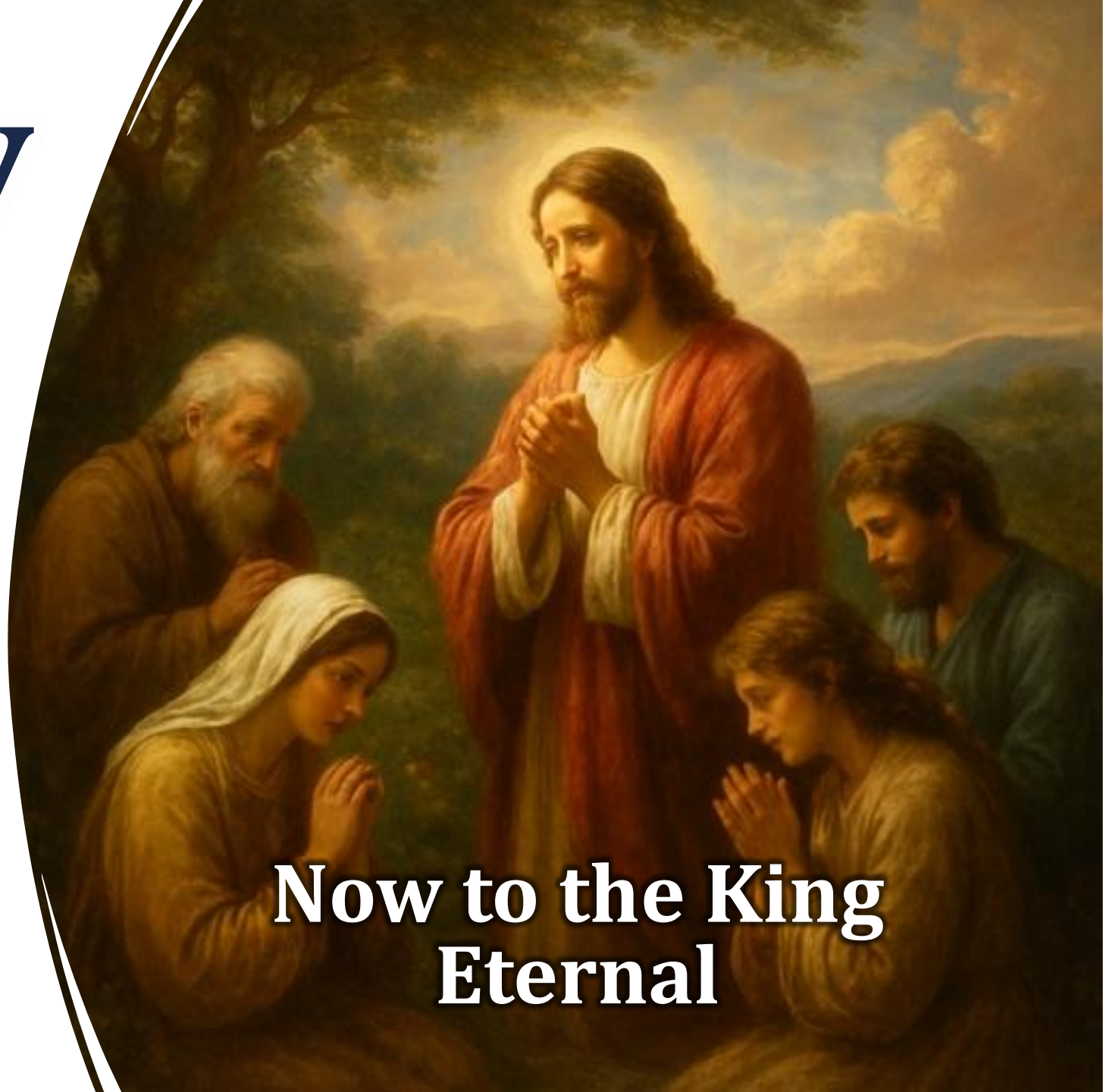


1 Timothy

1:16-17

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now

to the King
eternal, immortal, invisible,
to God who alone is
wise, be honour and glory
forever and ever. Amen.



**Now to the King
Eternal**

Revelation 15:3

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: 'Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!'

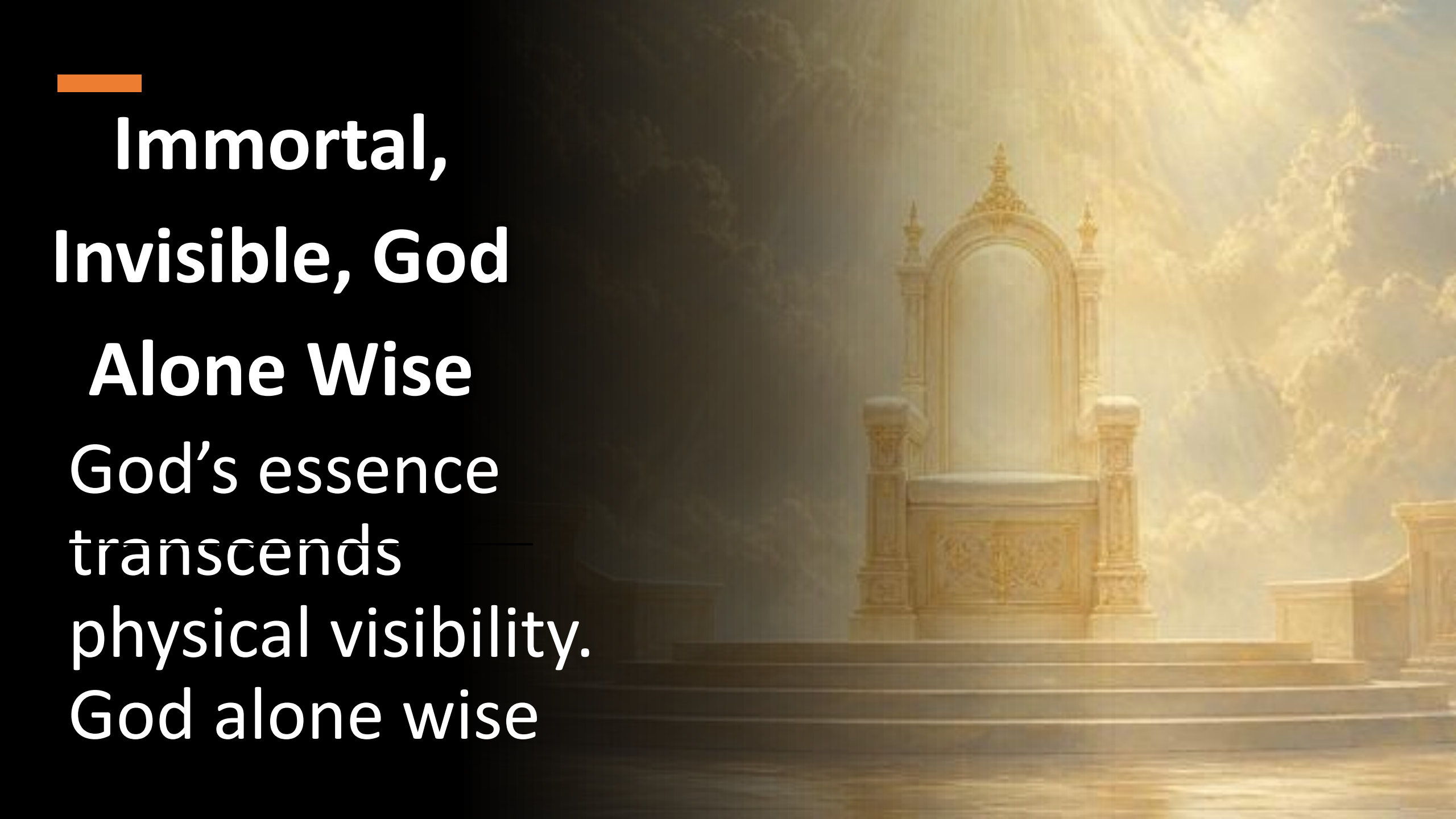


Revelation

19:16

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.



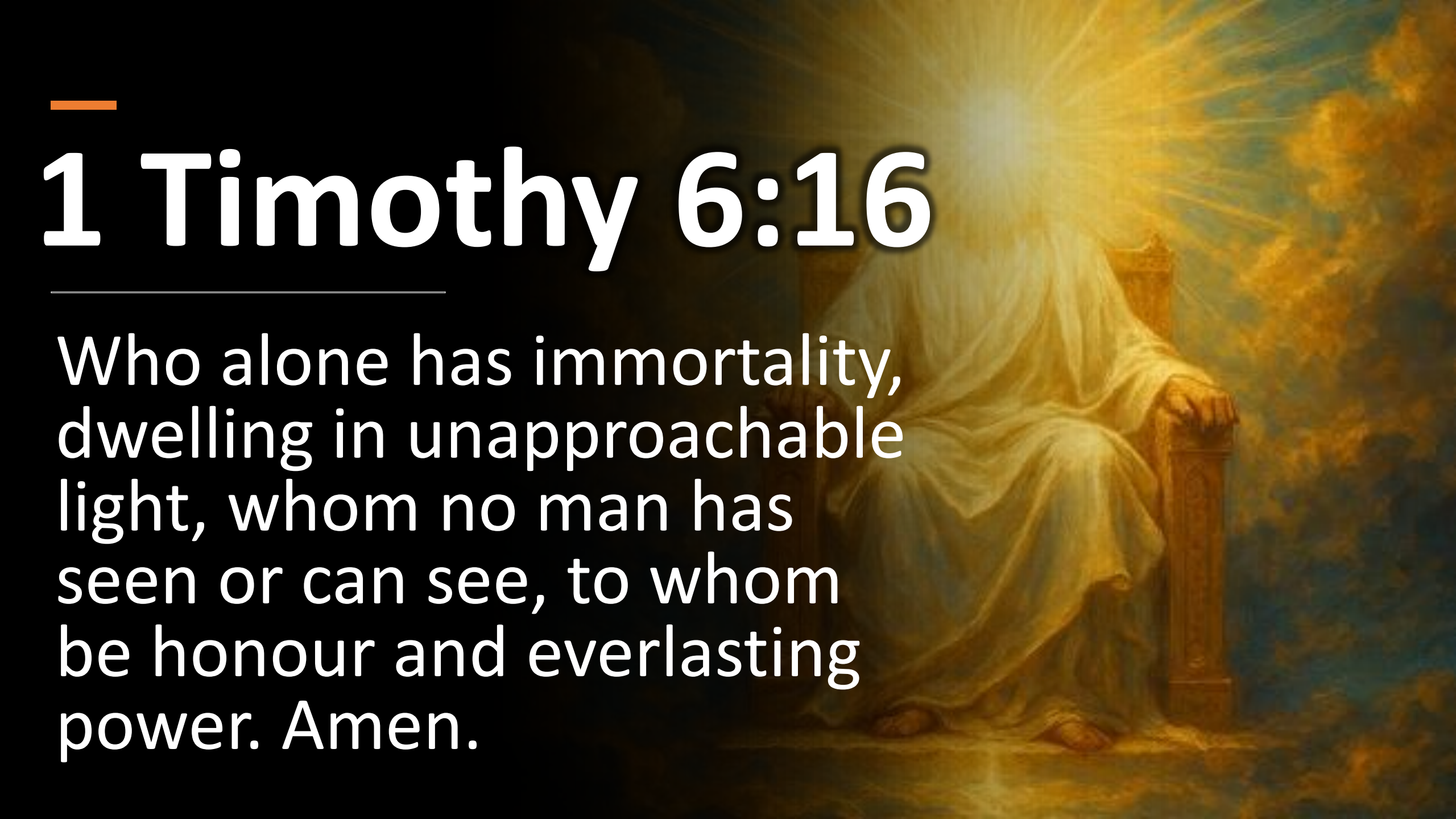


**Immortal,
Invisible, God
Alone Wise**
God's essence
transcends
physical visibility.
God alone wise

ἄφθαρτος
Aphthartos
IMMORTAL, INCORRUPTIBLE

God does not decay, diminish, or die.
He is incorruptible, exempt from the
mortality that characterises everything
else in the created order.





1 Timothy 6:16

Who alone has immortality,
dwelling in unapproachable
light, whom no man has
seen or can see, to whom
be honour and everlasting
power. Amen.

ἀόρατος **Aoratos**

INVISIBLE

God is not visible to physical eyes — this does not mean He is absent, but that His essence transcends the category of physical visibility.

The Incarnation is God's great act of self-disclosure, making the invisible visible.





John 1:18

No one has seen
God at any time.
The only begotten
Son, who is in the
bosom of the
Father, He has
declared Him.

μόνῳ σοφῷ Θεῷ

Monō Sophō Theō

TO GOD ALONE WISE

Only God is truly and completely wise — in contrast to the false teachers whose wisdom is foolishness, the Greek philosophical schools whose wisdom is ultimately ignorance, and the Roman imperial wisdom that relies on power and violence.



1 Corinthians

1:20

Where is the wise?
Where is the scribe?
Where is the disputer
of this age? Has not
God made foolish the
wisdom of this world?





Honor and Glory Forever and Ever — The Eternal Response

**Honour (time) is the recognition of
supreme worth that the creature owes the
Creator**

Revelation 4:11

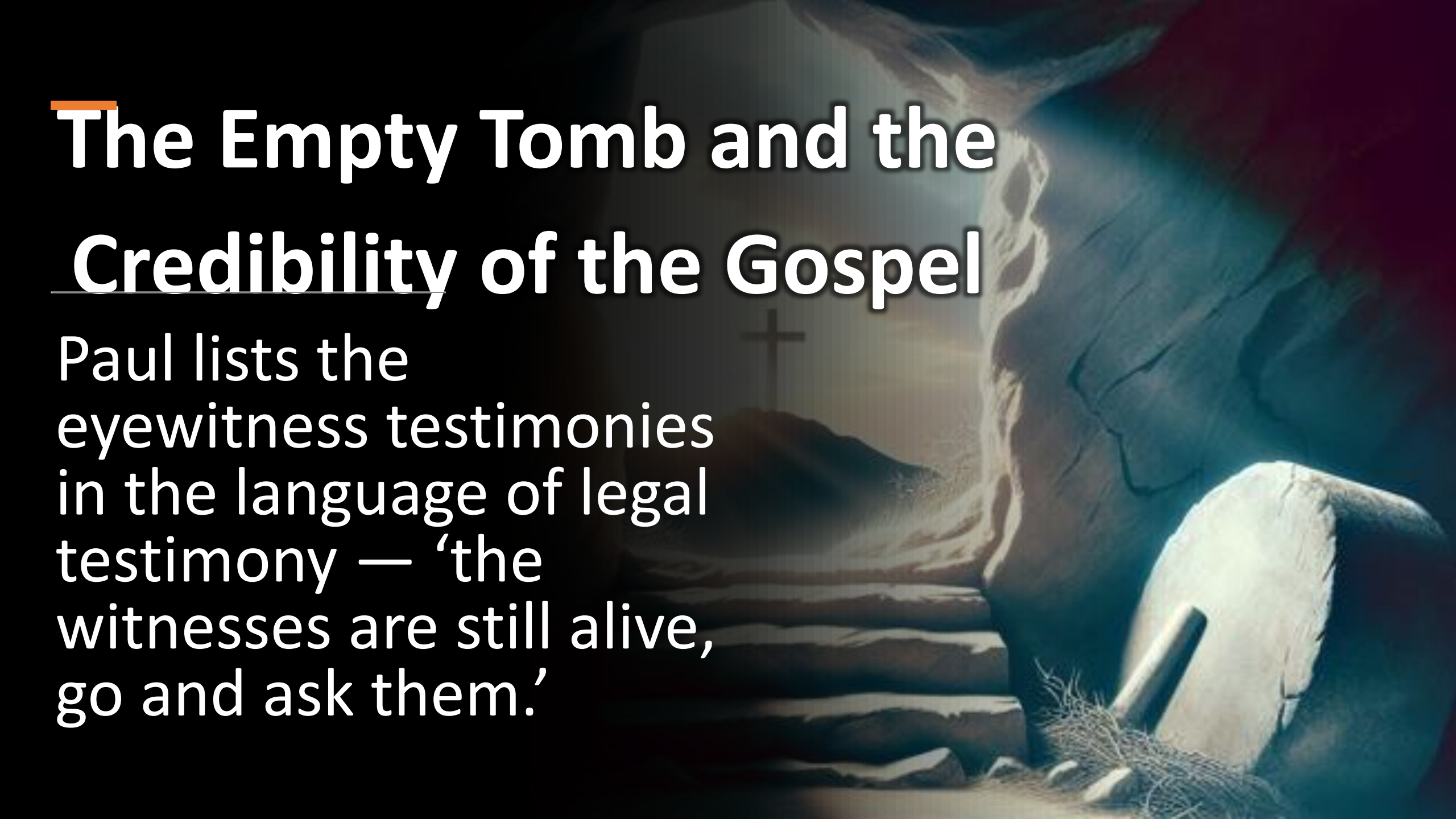
You are worthy, O Lord,
to receive glory and
honour and power; for
You created all things,
and by Your will they
exist and were created.



The Resurrection as the Ground of the Faithful Saying

The faithful saying is
not a philosophical
proposition but a
historical claim





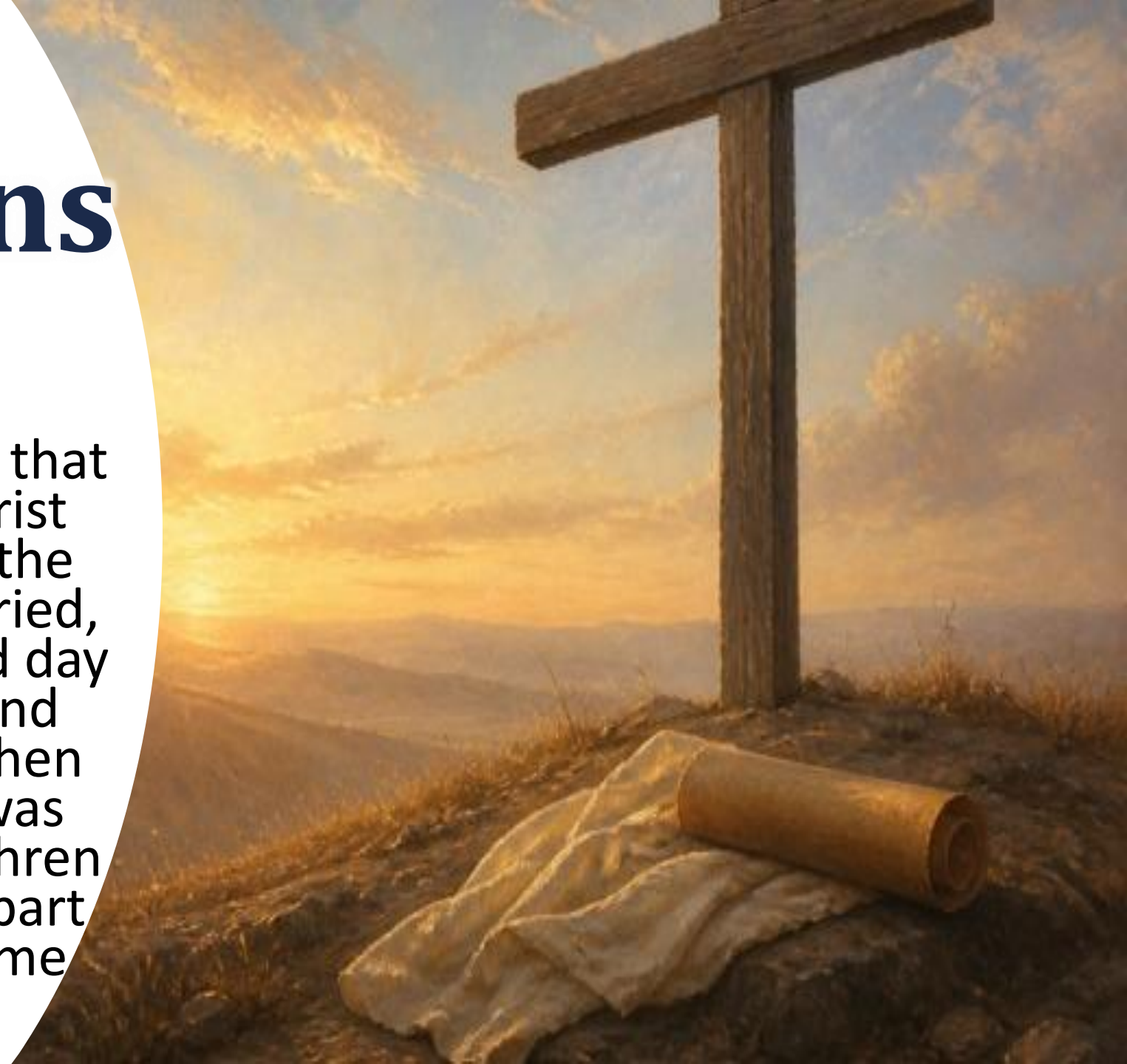
The Empty Tomb and the Credibility of the Gospel

Paul lists the
eyewitness testimonies
in the language of legal
testimony — ‘the
witnesses are still alive,
go and ask them.’

1 Corinthians

15:3–6

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.



- The empty tomb,
- The post-resurrection appearances,
- The transformation of the disciples,
- The conversion of Paul,
- The conversion of James



Resurrection and the New Creation

The resurrection of Christ is not merely proof of His personal victory over death — it is the first instalment of the new creation God has promised.

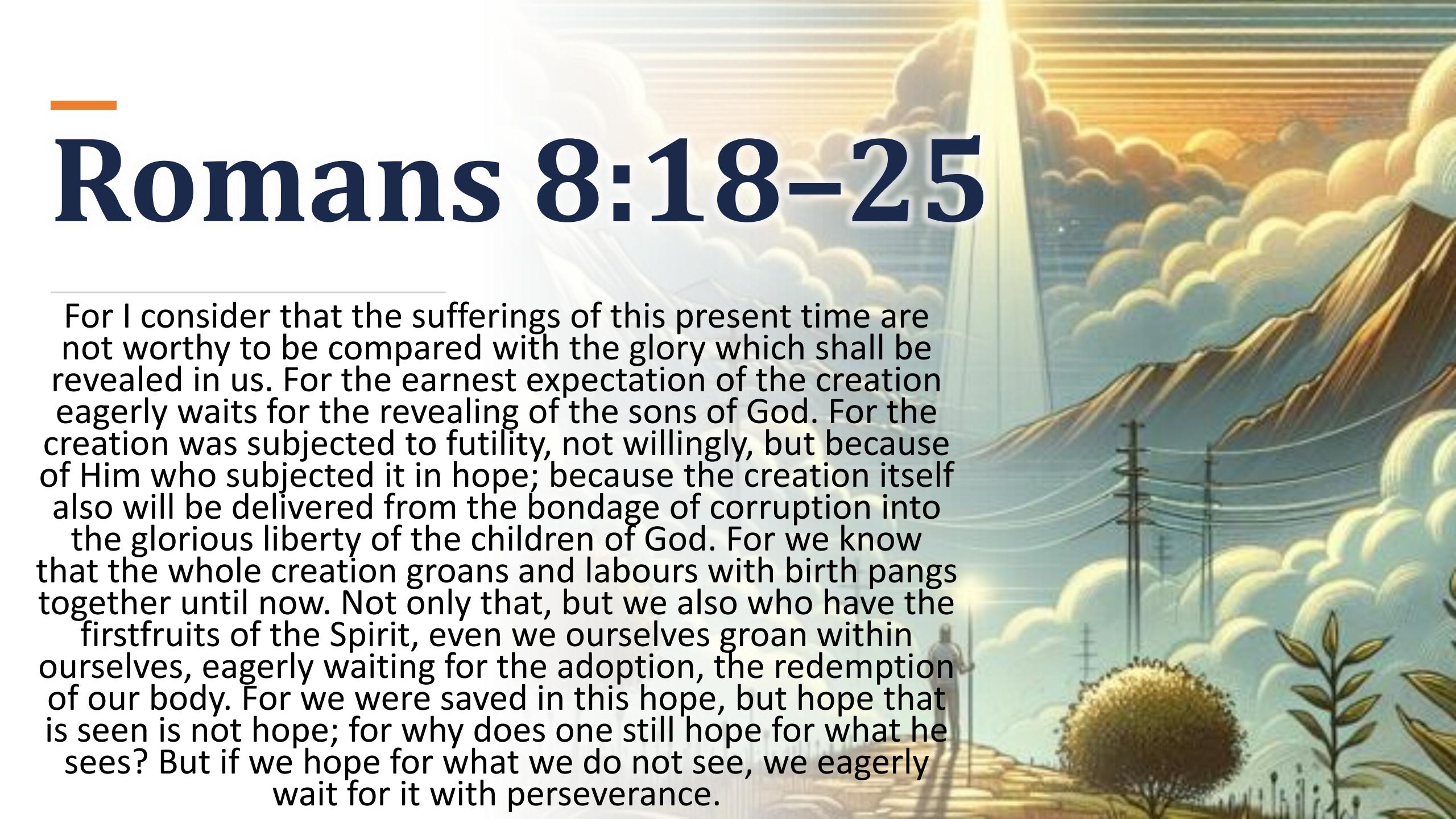


— 1 Corinthians

15:20

But now Christ is
risen from the dead,
and has become the
firstfruits of those
who have fallen
asleep.



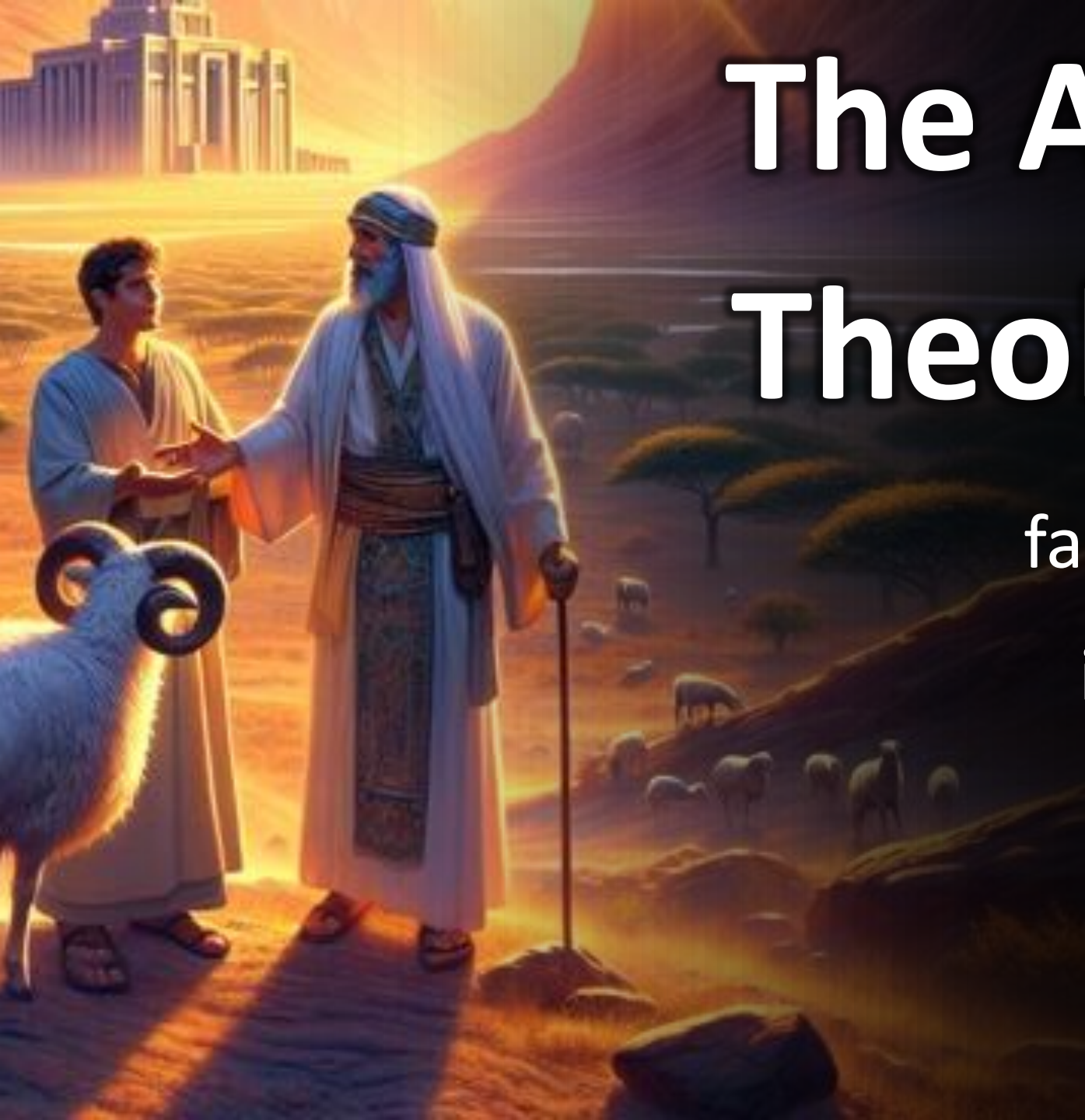


Romans 8:18–25

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

The Atonement — Theological Depth

The word Sozo in the faithful saying encompasses at least four distinct but inseparable dimensions of the rescue Christ accomplished — each addressing a different aspect of the human predicament before God.



The Four Dimensions of Salvation

Justification addresses the legal problem of guilt.

Redemption addresses the power problem of bondage. R

Reconciliation addresses the relational problem of enmity.

Propitiation addresses the wrath problem

Justification

The legal declaration,
made possible by the
substitutionary death of
Christ, that the guilty
sinner is reckoned
righteous



Romans

4:5-6

But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works.



Redemption

Sin does not merely make us guilty; it enslaves us. Redemption is the purchase of freedom, the payment of the ransom that sets the captive free



John 8:34

Most assuredly, I
say to you,
whoever
commits sin is a
slave of sin.



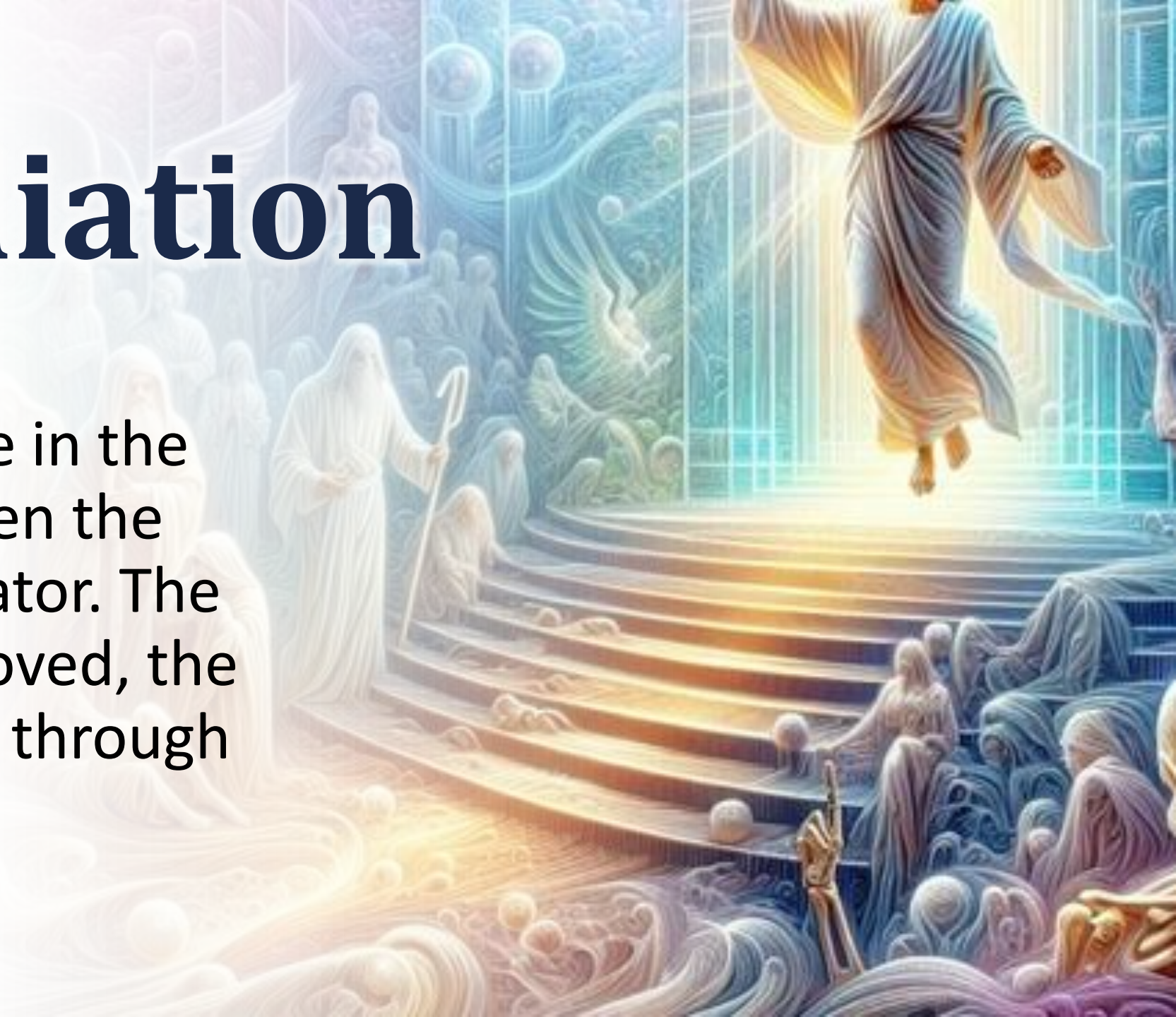
Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.



Reconciliation

Sin creates a rupture in the relationship between the creature and the Creator. The enmity has been removed, the relationship restored, through the peace



2 Corinthians 5:18–20

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.



Colossians 1:20

And by Him to
reconcile all things to
Himself, by Him,
whether things on
earth or things in
heaven, having made
peace through the
blood of His cross.



Propitiation

God's holiness requires that every sin be judged. His wrath must be satisfied before His mercy can be extended.



1 John 2:2

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.



Romans

3:24-26

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.



The Cross in the Old Testament

The entire sacrificial system of the Mosaic law was a divinely designed illustration of the atonement Christ would accomplish. The Passover lamb, the scapegoat of Leviticus 16



1 Corinthians 5:7

For indeed Christ, our
Passover, was sacrificed for
us.



1 Peter 2:24

Who Himself bore
our sins in His own
body on the tree,
that we, having died
to sins, might live for
righteousness — by
whose stripes you
were healed.



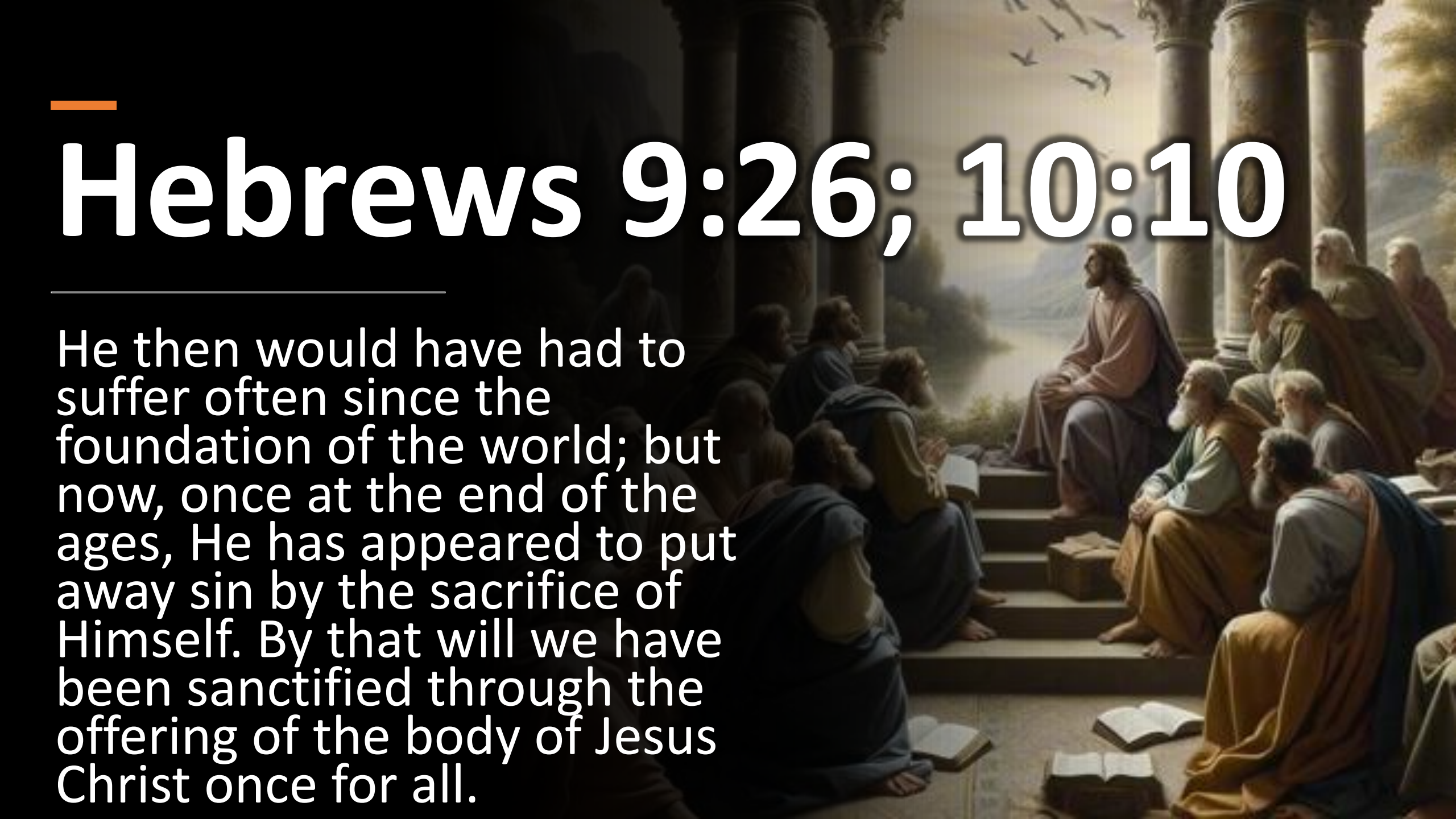
Hebrews

9:11-14

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the

Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?





Hebrews 9:26; 10:10

He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity
between you and
the woman, and
between your seed
and her seed; He
shall bruise your
head, and you shall
bruise His heel.

GENESIS 3:15

FIRST PROMISE



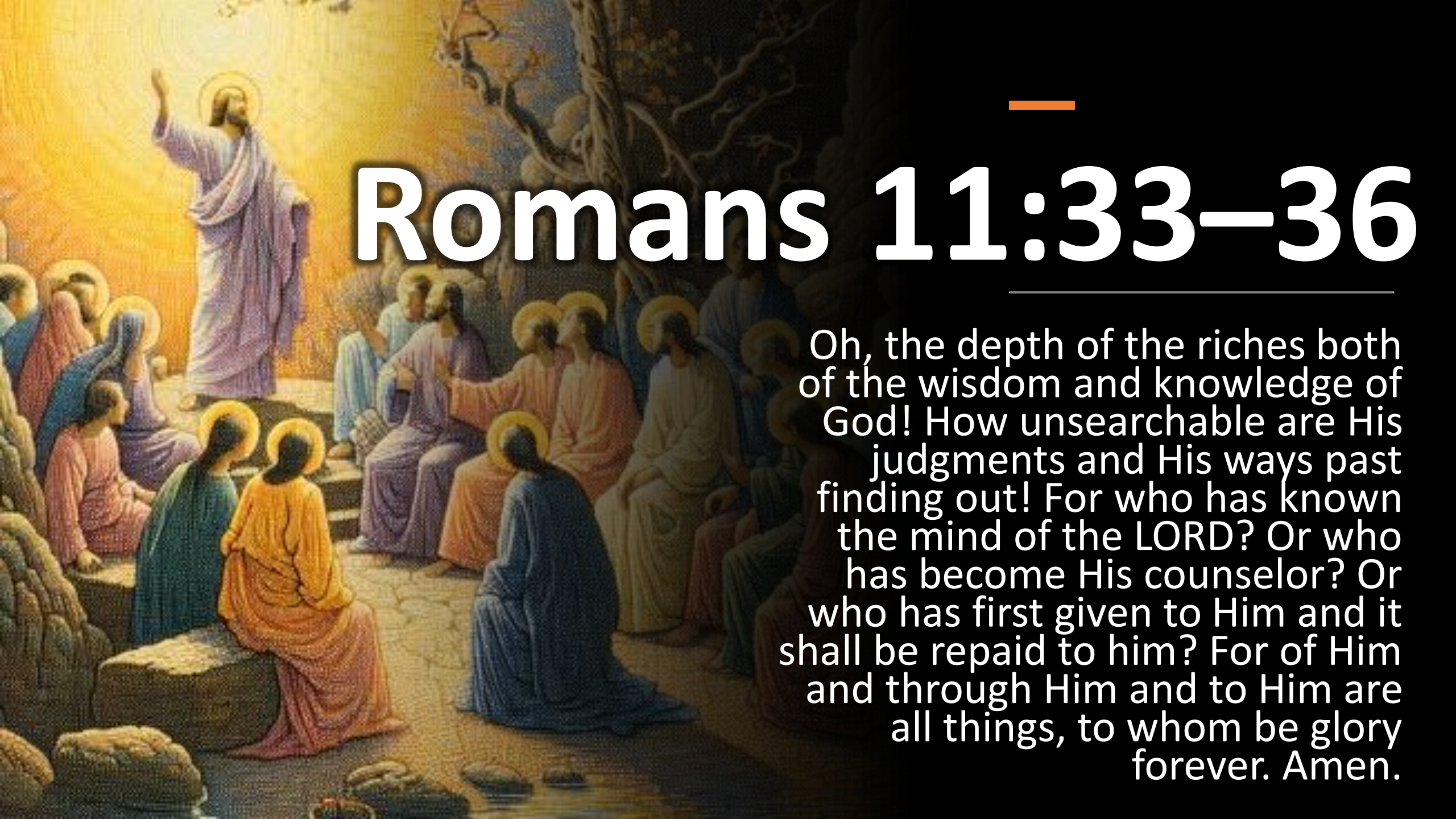
The Doxology as the Goal of Theology

The movement from verses 15–17, from the faithful saying to the doxology, is not accidental. It reflects the fundamental relationship between doctrine and worship that characterises all of Paul's mature theology.

—Why Must Doxology Follow Doctrine?

The person who can explain justification without feeling the weight of its gift has studied about God without encountering God.



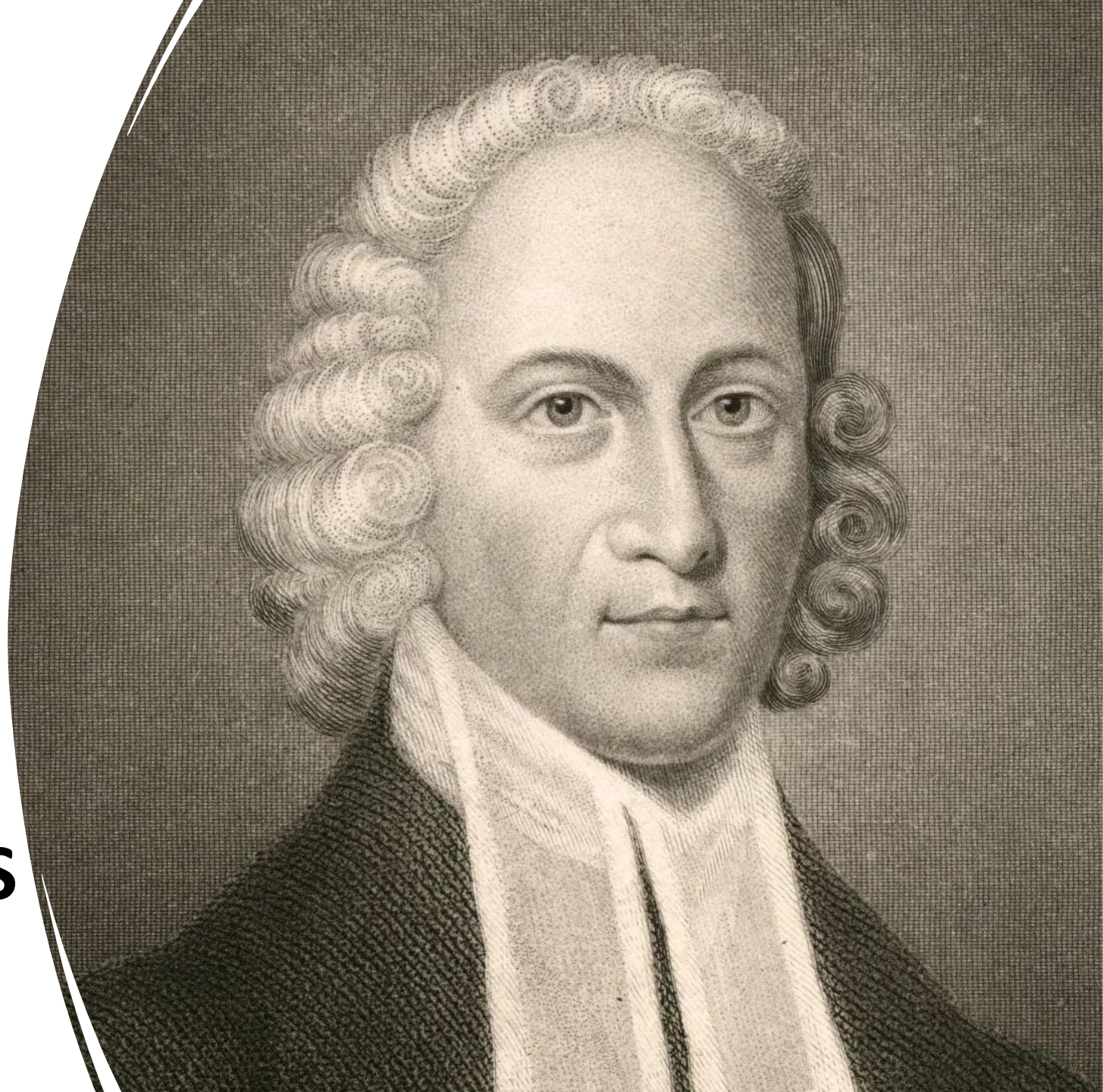


Romans 11:33–36

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

*True religion
consists
largely in holy
affections.*

— JONATHAN
EDWARDS, RELIGIOUS
AFFECTIONS



*The chief end of man is to glorify
God and to enjoy Him forever.
Doctrine without doxology has
missed the chief end. Doxology
without doctrine has nothing to
glorify God about. The two must
never be separated.*

**— WESTMINSTER
SHORTER CATECHISM**



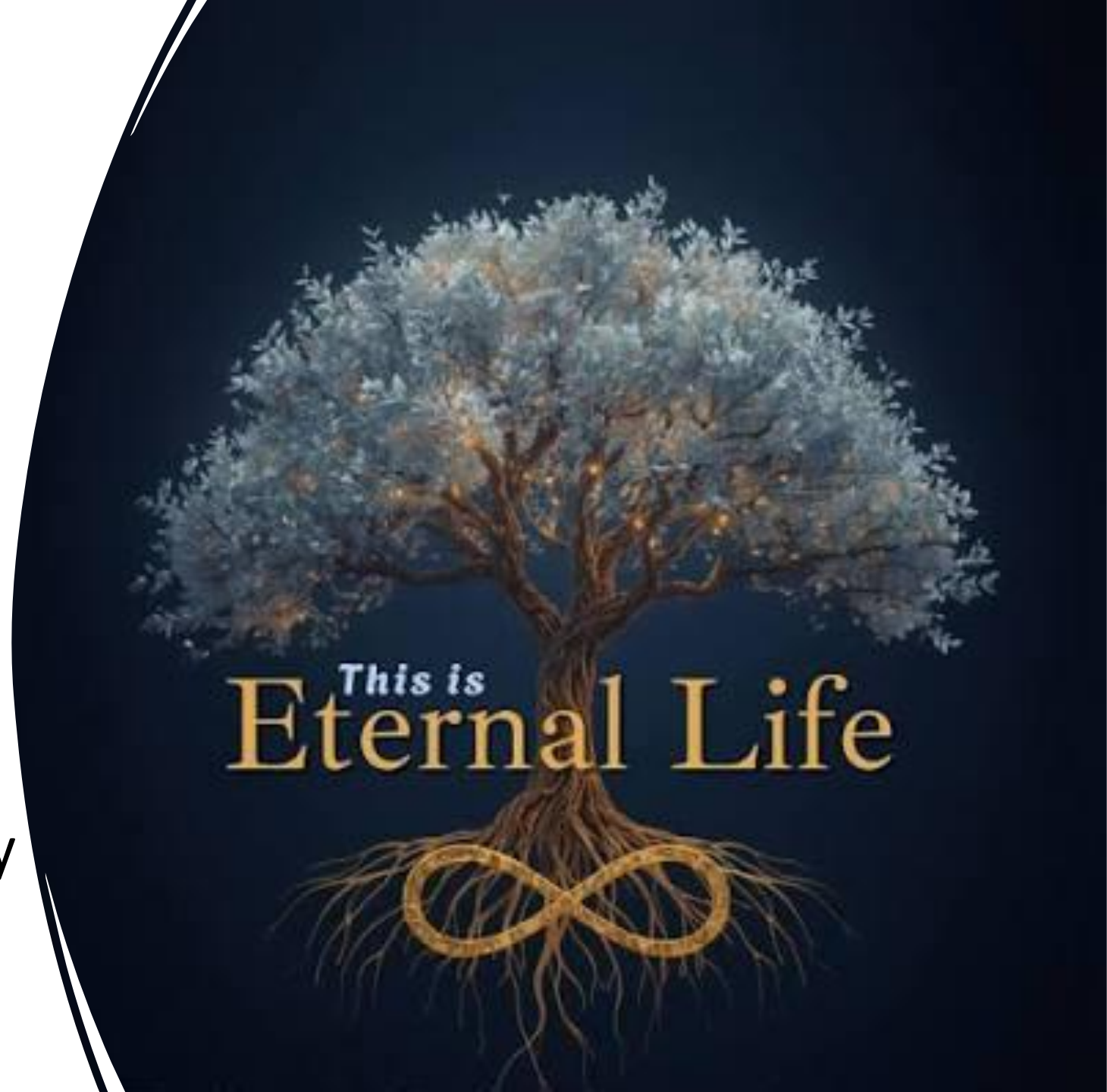
THE ILLUSTRATED
WESTMINSTER
SHORTER
CATECHISM

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Illustrator: Ira Minof



Eternal Life as the Consummation of the Faithful Saying

Eternal life is not primarily
endless duration; it is a quality
of relationship



1 Timothy

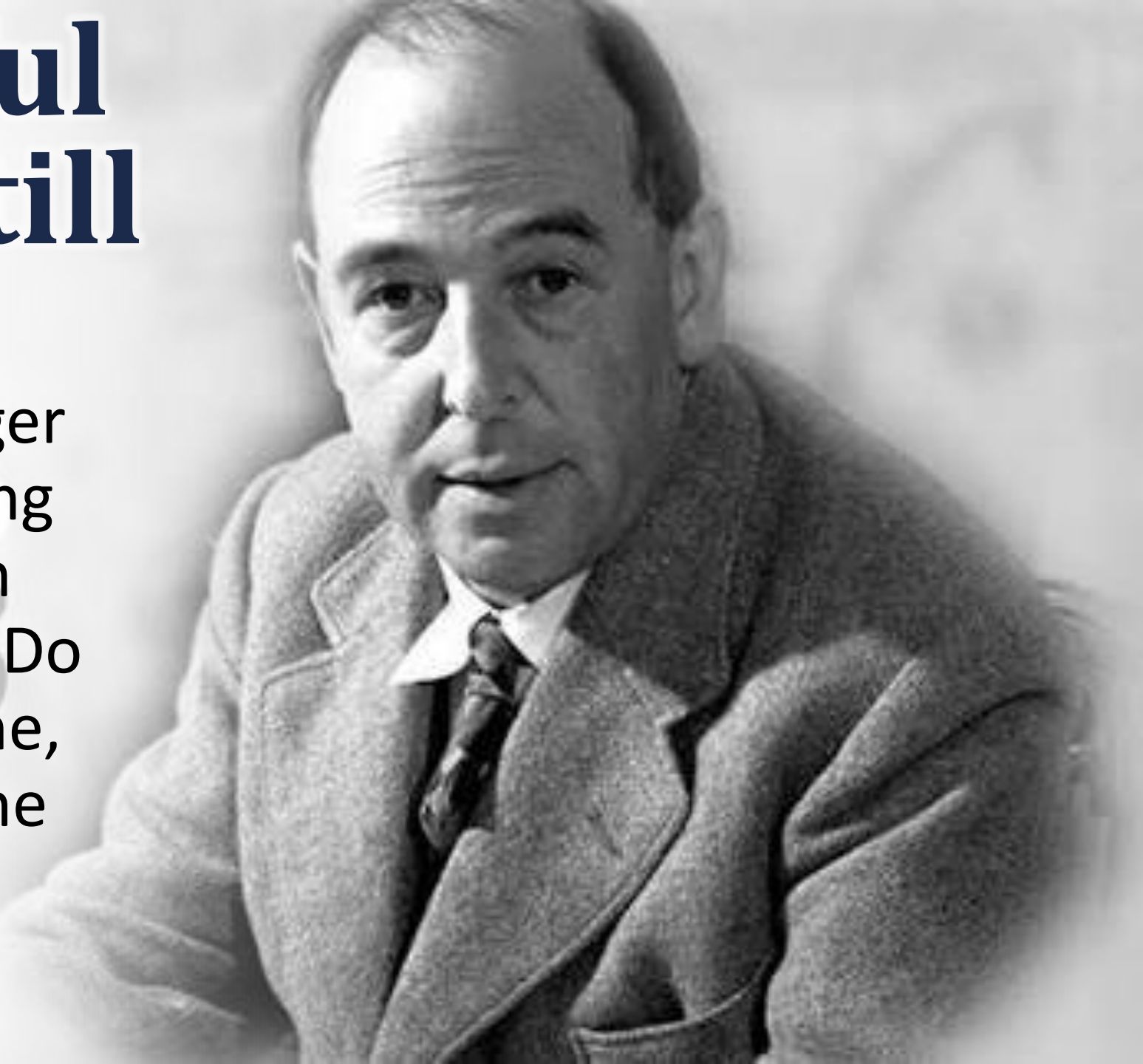
1:16

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

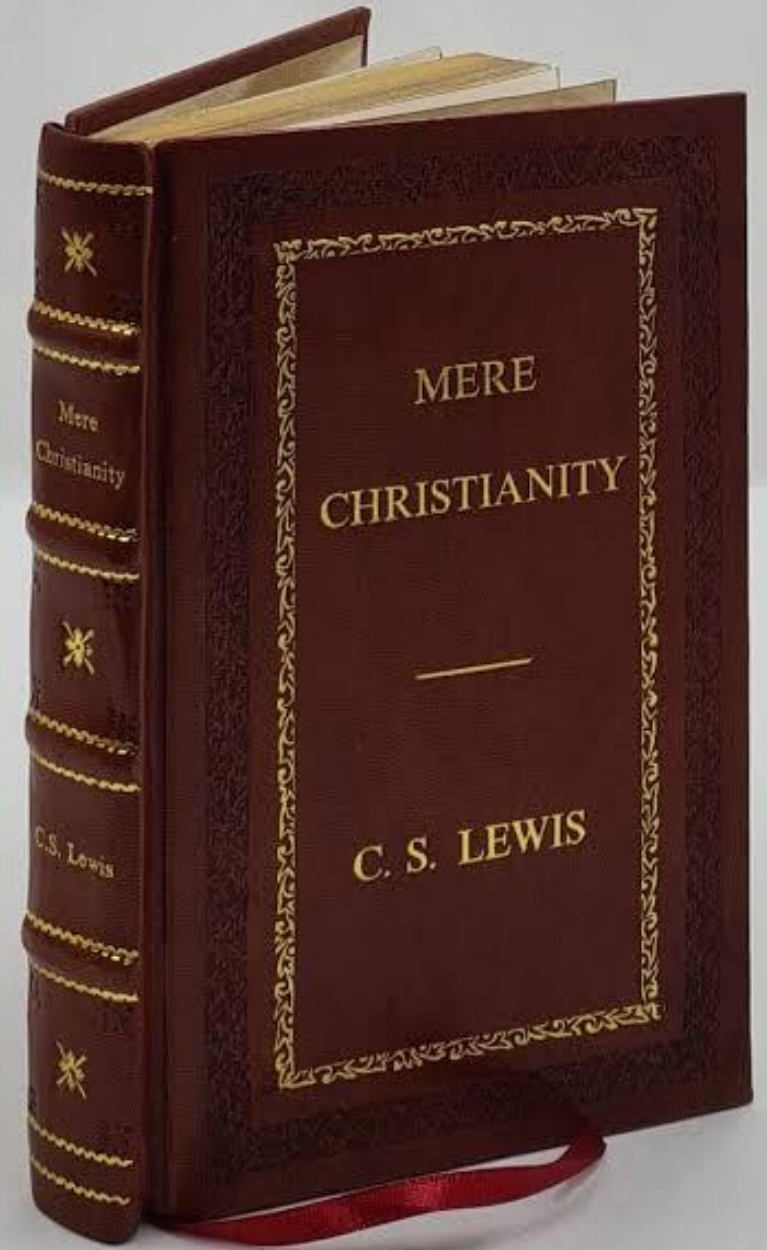


The Faithful Saying Is Still Faithful

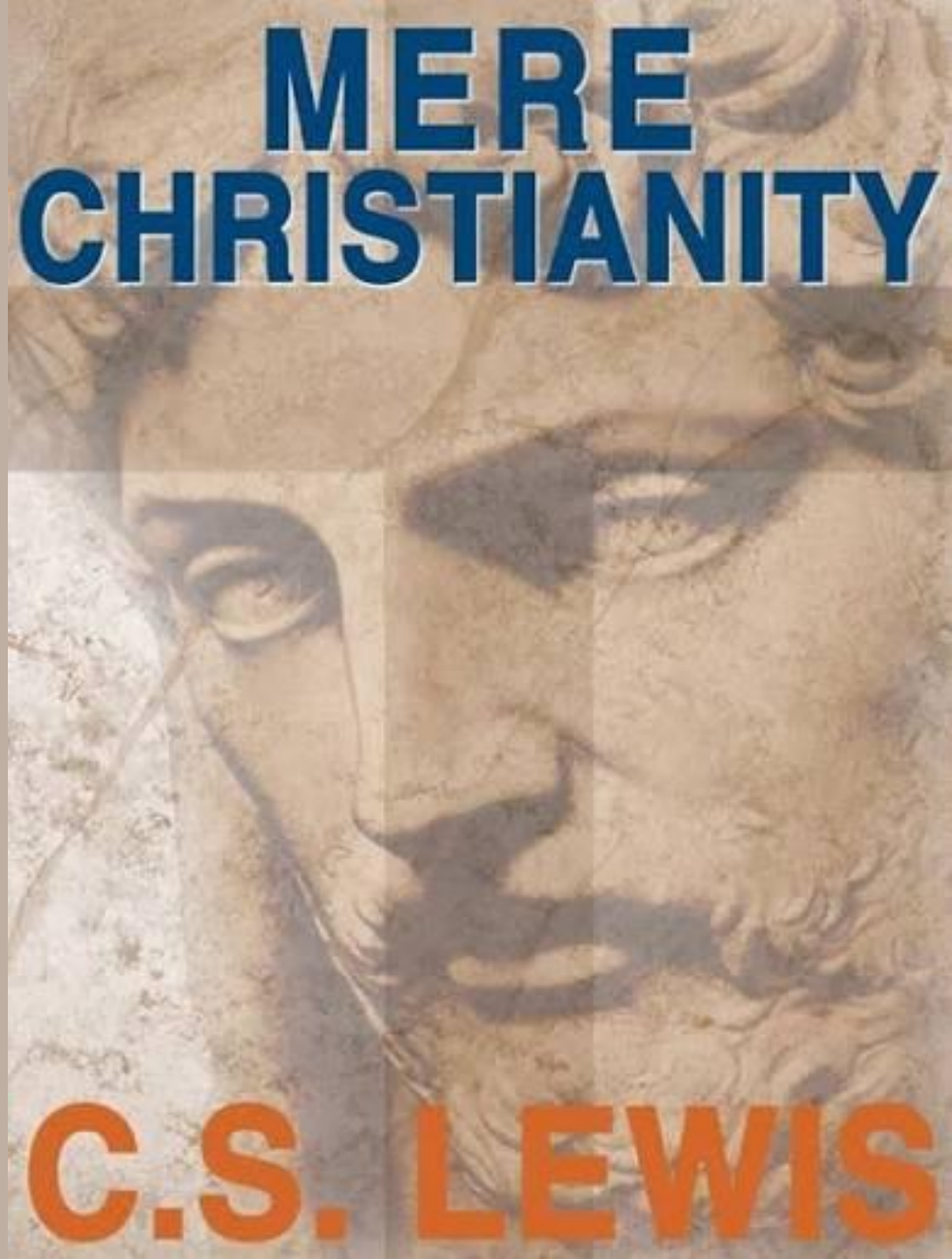
In 1948, a fellow passenger on a train asked the young C.S. Lewis one question about Mere Christianity: 'Do you really believe that line, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?'



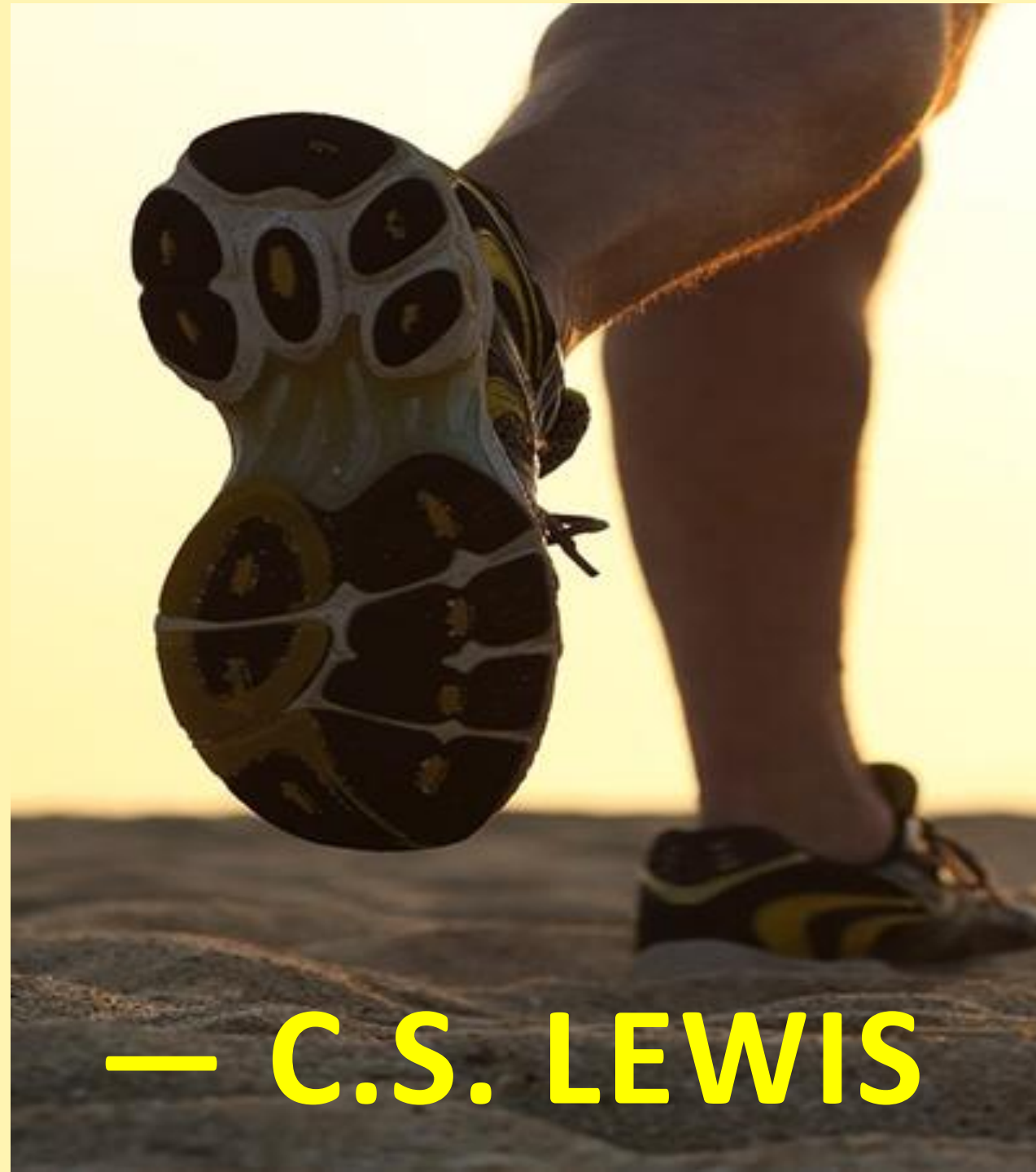
*The man had read
Mere Christianity and
had one question: **Do
you really believe that
line, Christ Jesus came
into the world to save
sinners?***



*I believe it the way I
believe in the sun. Not
because I can see the
sun, but because of it I
can see everything
else. — C.S. LEWIS*

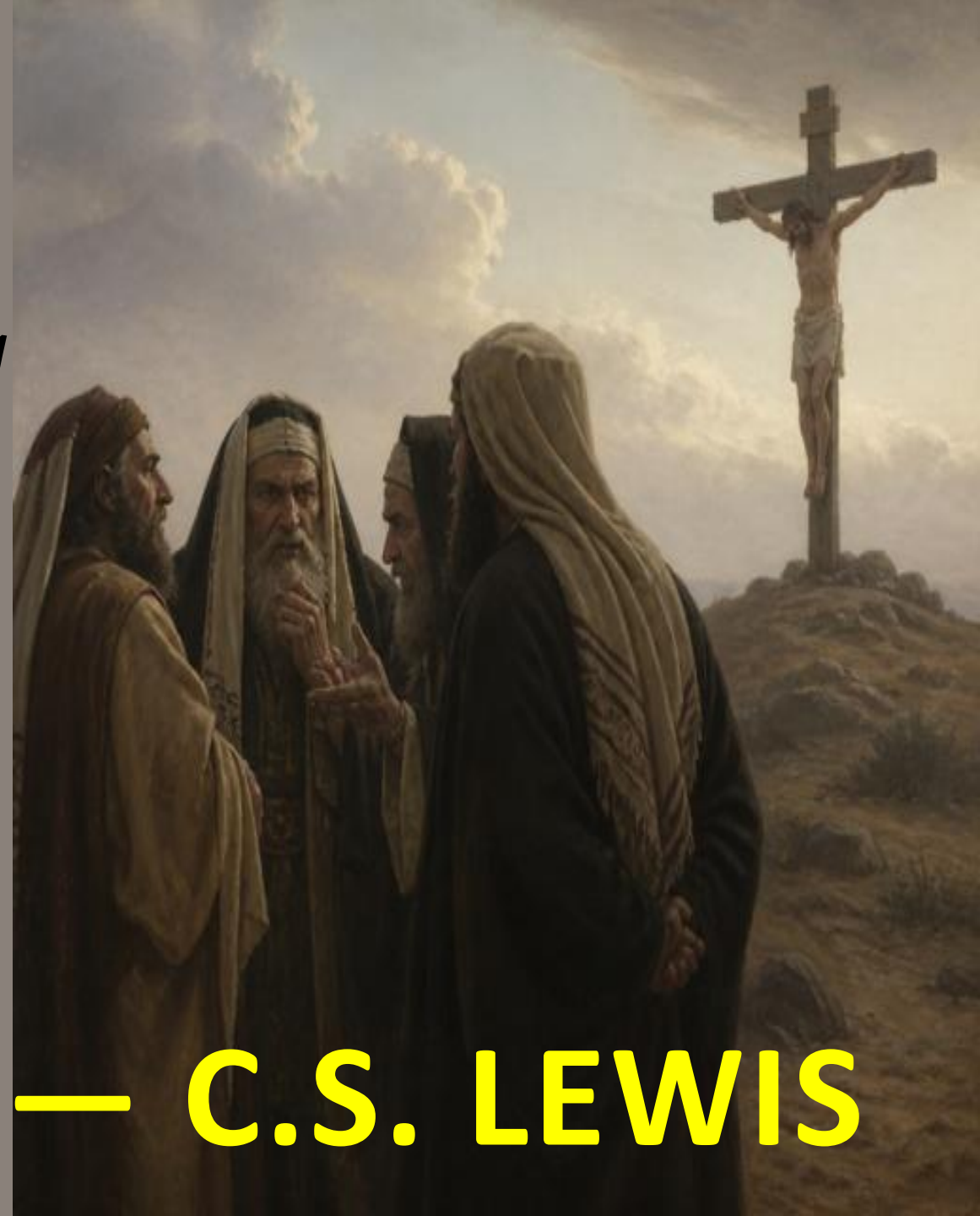


I believe it applies to me particularly. I was not a nice agnostic. I was a hostile agnostic. I did not want God to exist. I resisted the evidence for years. I came in kicking and screaming. I was found. And being found by the God I had been running from has been the central fact of my life ever since.



— C.S. LEWIS

Every day. Every day. The faithful saying is still faithful. Christ is still coming into the world to save sinners. He saves the hostile. He saves the reluctant. He saves the chief. That is what makes the saying worthy of all acceptance.



— C.S. LEWIS

*That sentence will
outlast everything
else ever written.
And if it outlasts
everything else, it is
worth staking your
life on.*

Your life
is WORTH
Living FOR

— C.S. LEWIS

Application for Daily Life

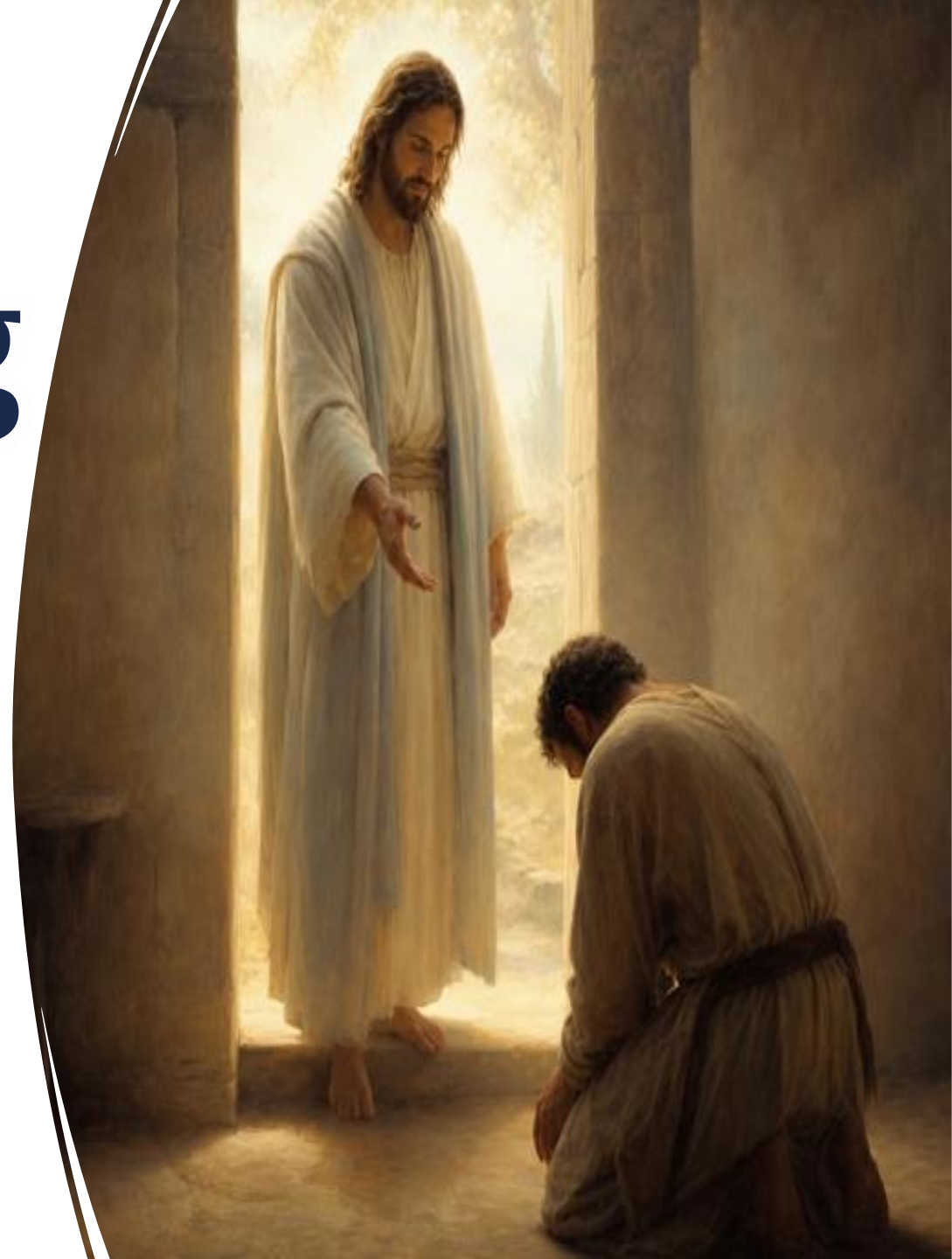
Sound doctrine is
meant to be lived.
Seven practices to
carry this faithful
saying into the
week ahead.



Memorise the Faithful Saying

Memorise 1 Timothy 1:15 in full:

‘This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.’ Use it as your morning declaration this week.



Share It With Someone Who Feels Unworthy

The phrase 'worthy of all acceptance' means this truth is for everyone. Identify one person in your life who has been told they are too broken or too sinful for God. Share 1 Timothy 1:15 with them this week.



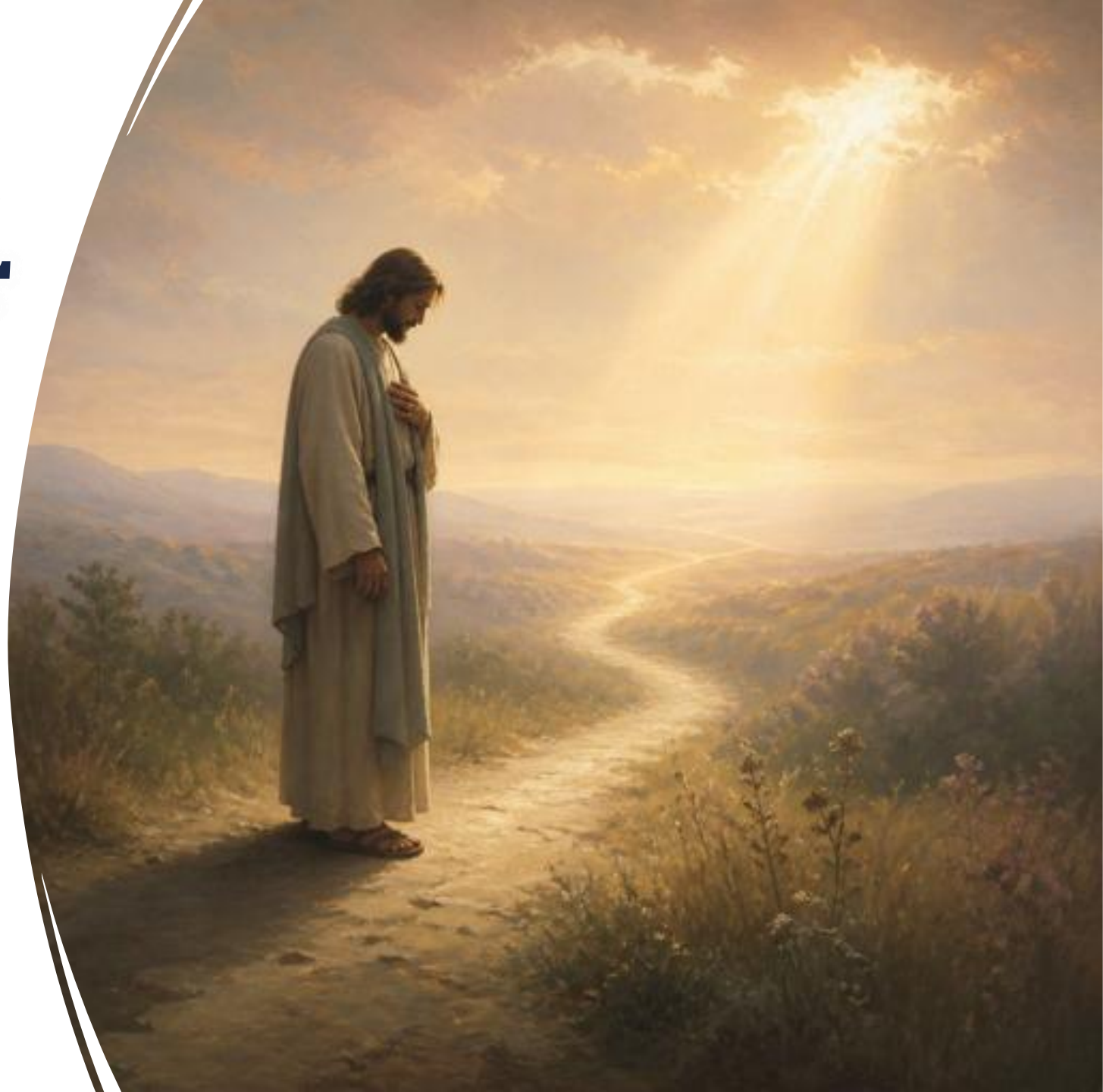
Practise Honest Self-Examination

Paul maintained a present-tense awareness of his sinfulness. Practise honest self-examination this week by reading Psalm 139:23–24 each morning and asking God to search your heart.



Psalm 139:23–24

Search me, O God, and
know my heart; try me,
and know my anxieties;
and see if there is any
wicked way in me, and
lead me in the way
everlasting.



Meditate on the Cost of the Incarnation

The Incarnation was voluntary.
Read Philippians 2:5–11 and
meditate on what Christ gave up to
come into the world for you. Let
this motivate your worship and
your service.

Philippians

2:5-11

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



Write Your Own Doxology



Doctrine should always produce doxology. Write your own doxology this week, based on who God is to you personally. Model it on verse 17: 'To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever.'

Pray With Christ's Patience as Your Model

Christ came with longsuffering for Paul. Who in your circle of relationships is testing your patience today? Pray for them using Christ's patience with Paul as your model and motivation.



Sit in Gratitude for the Great Exchange

Isaiah 53:5–6 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 describe the substitutionary exchange of the cross: my sin for His righteousness. Spend fifteen minutes this week in quiet gratitude, praying through what this means for your daily life.

