

A few favorite Religionators

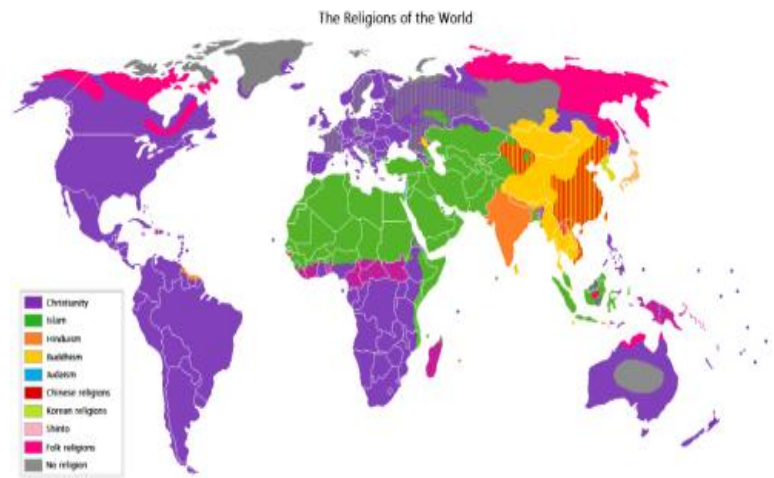


... a collection of memes, images, and commentaries that shed great Light upon the Bible, the development & modern-day manifestation of the Christian church, and indeed the nature of religion in general – showing subtly yet clearly how we humans need no longer be subservient in any way to man-made creeds or church-made dogmas in order to live full & even fully spiritual lives.

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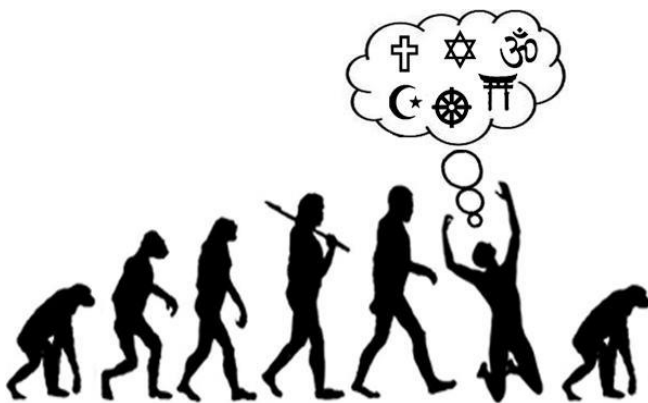
An Introduction to what Follows ...

First & foremost, it is important that readers of this tome understand the difference between **religion** (which I consistently & humbly denounce herein) and **spirituality** (which I unconditionally & wholeheartedly affirm). For purposes of deeper understanding, the former (**religion**) can best be defined as the still-ubiquitous & highly institutionalized systems of attitudes, beliefs, practices, and rituals centered around the worship &/or adoration of an extra material &/or supernatural godhead(s) ... The latter (**spirituality**), on the other hand, is simply a uniquely personalized belief in an unquantifiable “supernatural” connection between one’s internal conscious life essence and the seemingly conscious (or at the very least the intimately interactive) energies that seem to permeate all other beings (if not all other material entities – i.e. Nature itself).



Whereas the former (**religion**) has empirically inspired massive denigration and suffering (via wars and colonial conquests and inquisitions and crusades and torturous persecutions), the latter (**spirituality**) has inspired great & humble acts of Kindness & Generosity & Respect & Self-sacrifice ... Whereas the former (**religion**) entrenches tribalist division & discord (us vs them; believers vs non-believers etc), supports the persecution of minorities (based on race &/or gender &/or sexual orientation),

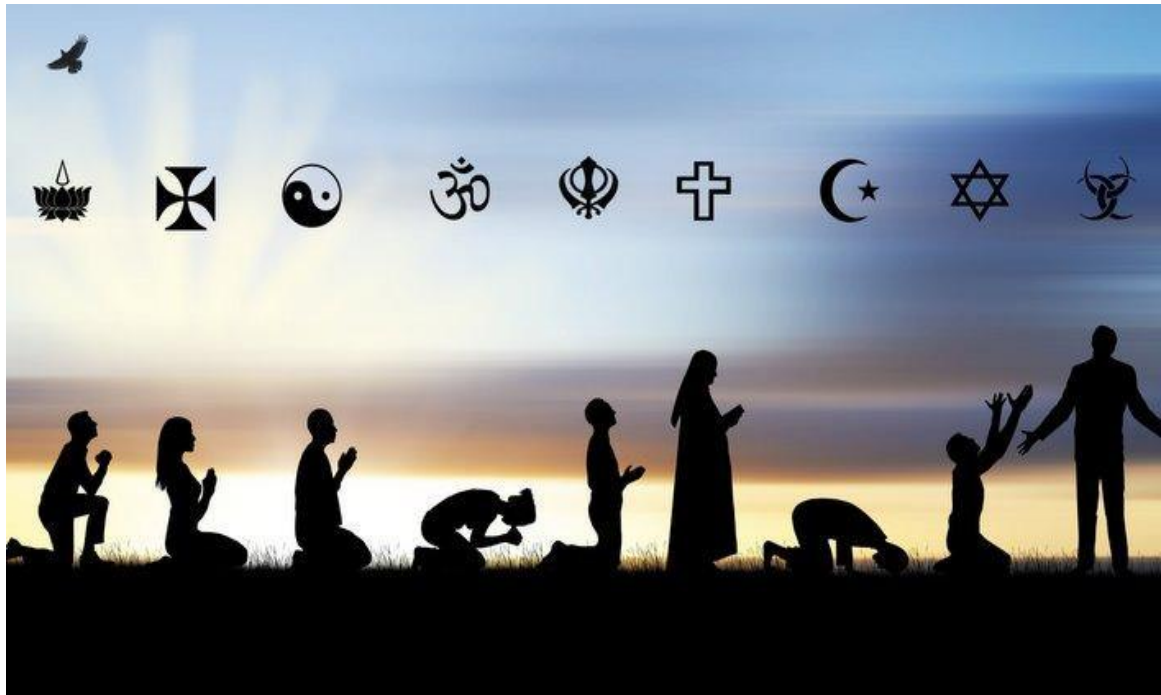
encourages the hindrance of intellectual advancement, supports the abject rejection of reason & rationality, and weakens our innate impulse to actively & selflessly help others (replacing the same with meek acts of tithing &/or hollow acts of mere prayer), the latter (**spirituality**) innately in-Courages unity, acceptance, scientific and moral evolution, and communities founded in deeds of service and generosity.



Please **note** that even though most of these memes & images are directly related in one way or another to Christianity, the wisdom within them all relates equally well to all other religious beliefs, tenets, &/or practices ... And with this all in mind, I wish you all a Joy-full & Insight-filled perusal of the same.

Scaughdt
(September 2017)





“I think it's perfectly possible to explain how the universe came about without bringing God into it, but I don't know everything, and there may well be a God somewhere, hiding away. Actually, if he is keeping out of sight, it's because he's ashamed of his followers and all the cruelty and ignorance they're responsible for promoting in his name. If I were him, I'd want nothing to do with them.” ~ Philip Pullman

“God has no religion.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

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“Religion: It's given people hope in a world torn apart by religion.” ~ Jon Stewart

“Do not wait for the last judgment. It comes every day.” ~ Albert Camus

“Human decency is not derived from religion. It precedes it.” ~ Christopher Hitchens

Chapter 01) on GOD the Loving Father

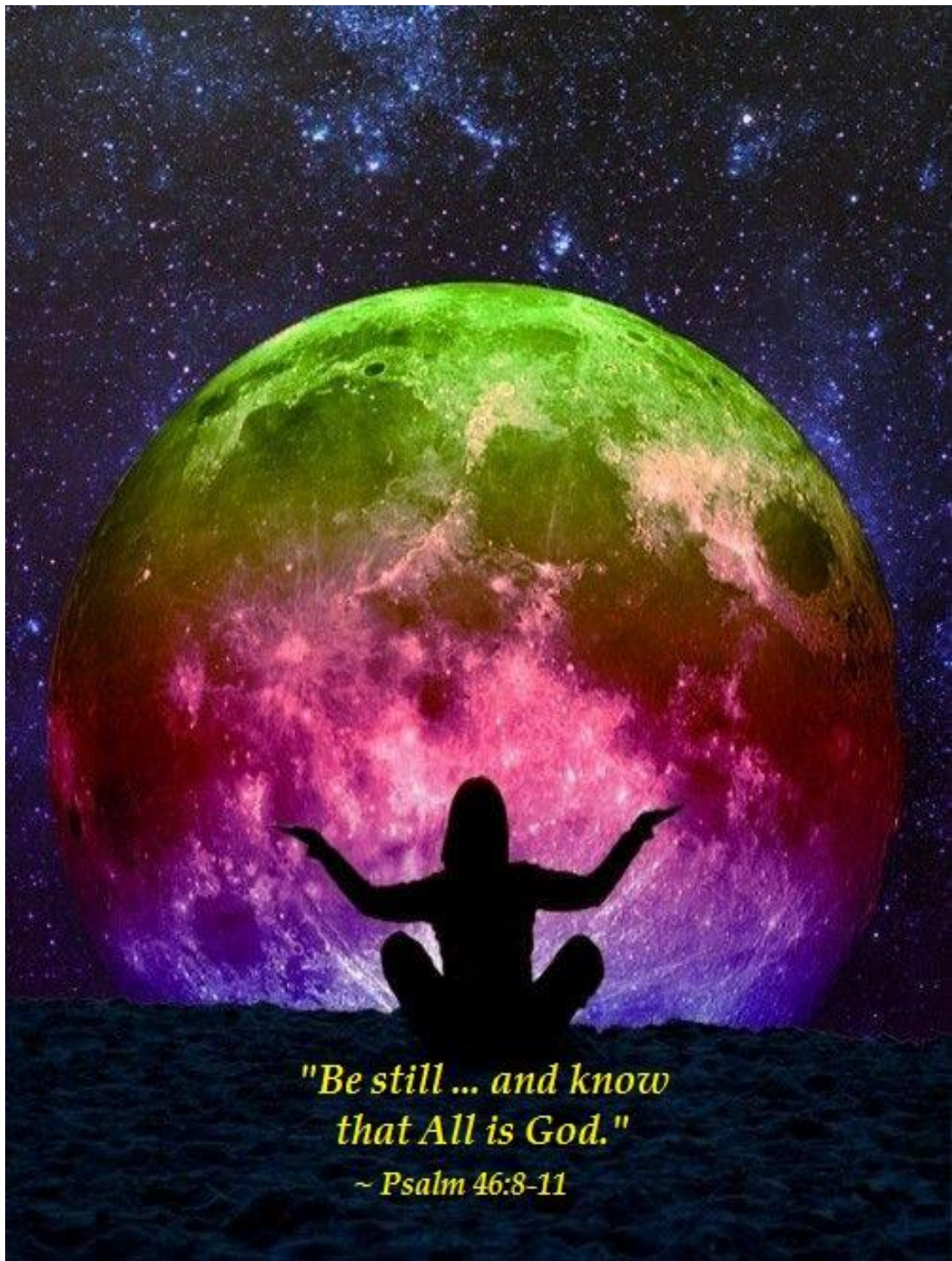


"I say that God is everywhere; not in any particular form, but as a ubiquitous awareness -- an ever-shimmering Power. Indeed, God is consciousness itself. And by concentrated, heartfelt, prayer-backed acts of service, we can tune our mental radios in to receive & embrace & harness that Power ... So let us seek, then, the gift of deeper silence and stiller solitude that rests within every act of Gentleness; where I choose to embrace everything I meet, and where everything I embrace is turned into prayer. Where the sky becomes my prayer, where the birds become my prayer, where the wind in the trees becomes my prayer, and where all the others I happen to meet become my prayer ... For God is all, and in all."

~ inspired by Satchidananda & Thomas Merton

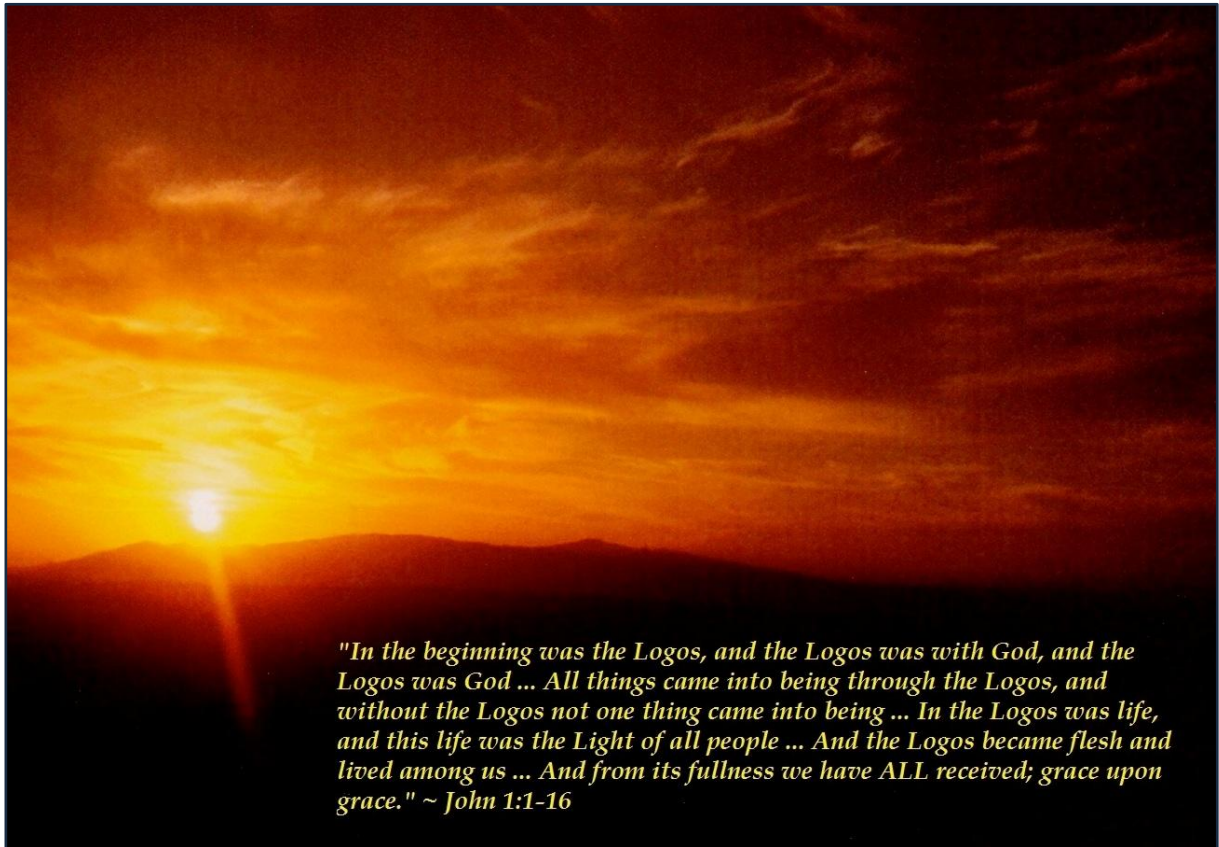


"We are in each & every moment immersed in the presence of God ... The only thing that is missing is our awarness thereof." ~ via Richard Rohr



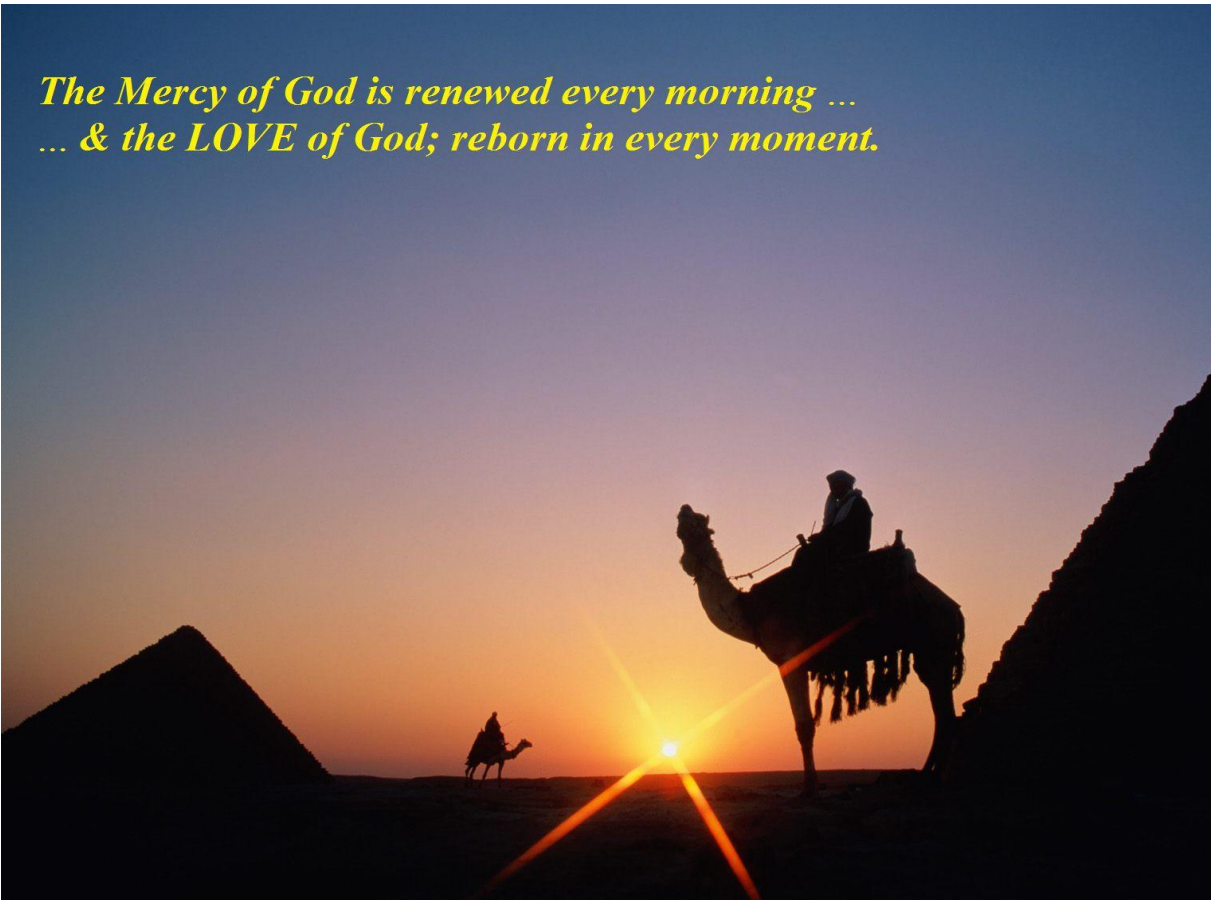


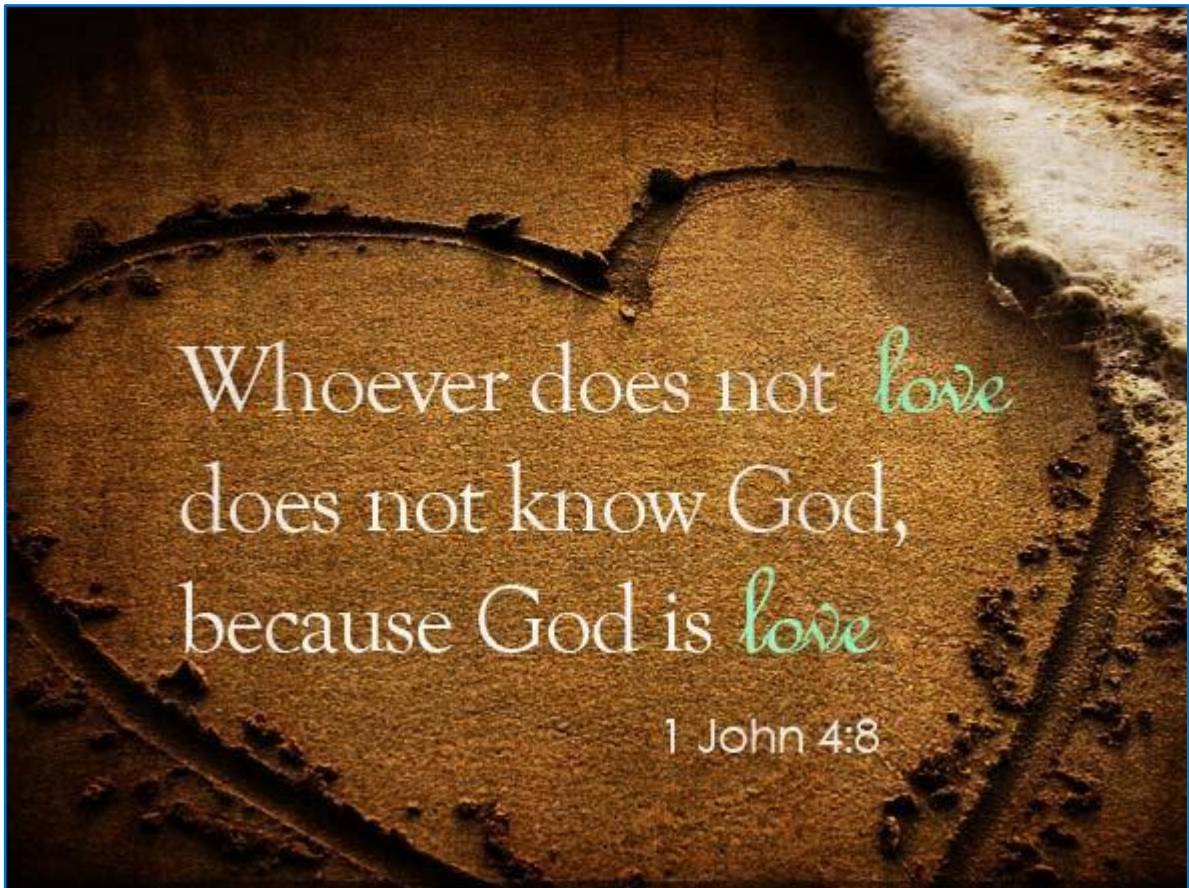
*"God used brilliantly
beautiful mathematics in
creating the Cosmos."
~ via Paul Dirac*




"In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God ... All things came into being through the Logos, and without the Logos not one thing came into being ... In the Logos was life, and this life was the Light of all people ... And the Logos became flesh and lived among us ... And from its fullness we have ALL received; grace upon grace." ~ John 1:1-16

*The Mercy of God is renewed every morning ...
... & the LOVE of God; reborn in every moment.*





A vibrant red heart is placed on a weathered wooden plank. The heart is glossy and stands out against the natural, textured wood. The plank has a prominent vertical crack running through it.

“Anyone who does not *love* does not know God, because God is love... So we have come to know and to believe the *love* that God has for us. God is *love*, and whoever abides in *love* abides in God, and God abides in him”

1 John 4:8,16

The Spirit of God is LOVE, and that perfect LOVE is always a verb. As such, the only way to truly know God is to truly know His Love, and the only way to truly know that perfect Love is to LOVE others perfectly -- without exception, without condition, without agenda, and without limit.

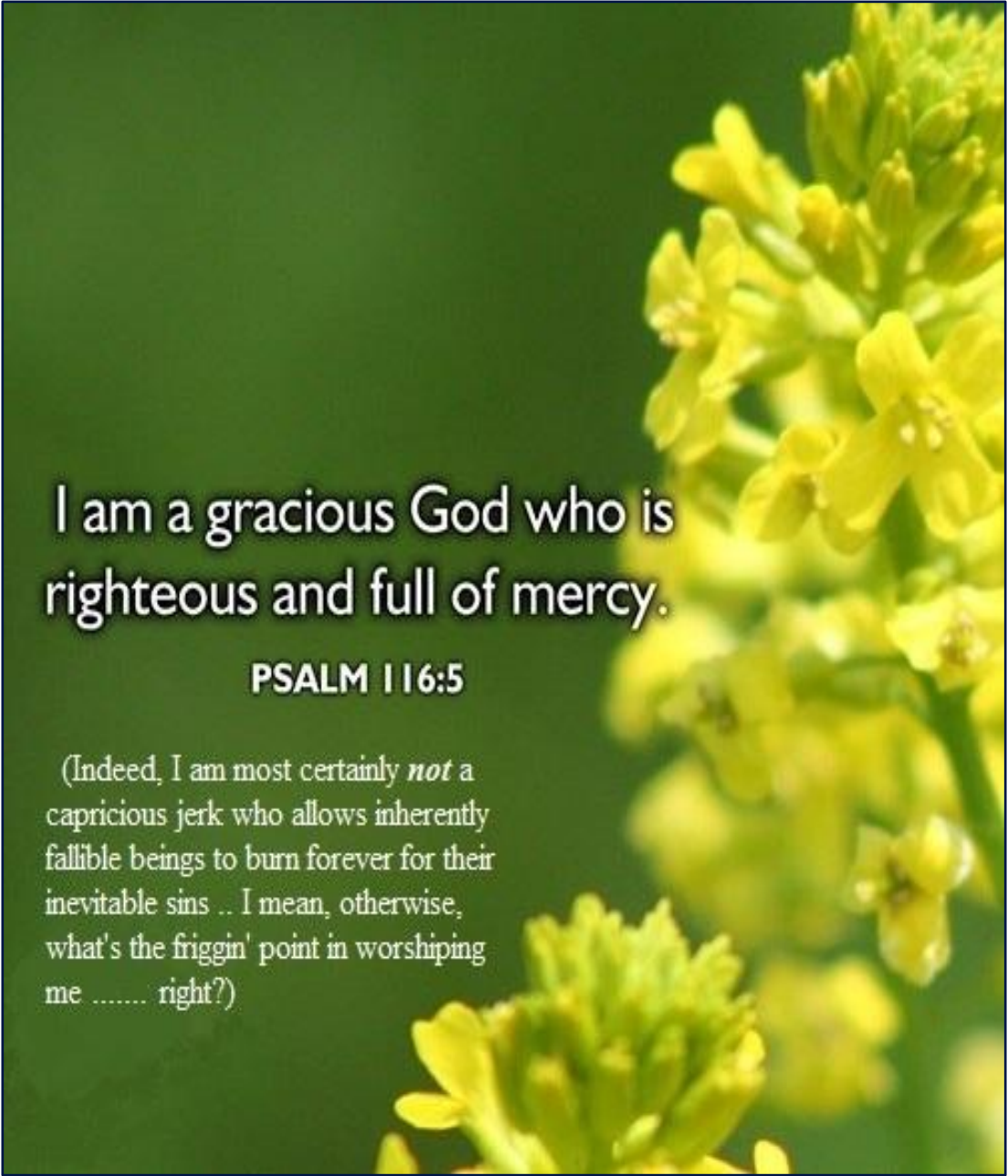
A landscape photograph showing a sunset or sunrise over a field. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The foreground is dark, with silhouettes of trees and bushes.

**GOD IS GOOD
ALL THE TIME**

God is Good for the simple reason that the essence of anything truly Divine is LOVE ...
... and what's not to love about LOVE?



*"For the Lord God is merciful & gracious;
slow to anger & abounding in steadfast Love."
~ Psalm 103:8*



I am a gracious God who is
righteous and full of mercy.

PSALM 116:5

(Indeed, I am most certainly *not* a capricious jerk who allows inherently fallible beings to burn forever for their inevitable sins .. I mean, otherwise, what's the friggin' point in worshipping me right?)

The Consistent Characteristics of God From Old to New Testament

OLD TESTAMENT

NEW TESTAMENT

PEACE-LOVING

Numbers 6:26; Psalm 91:1-2;
119:165; Proverbs 16:7;
Isaiah 26:3; 32:17

Luke 24:36; John 14:27
Romans 15:13; Philippians 4:7; 2
Corinthians 13:11

MERCIFUL AND FORGIVING

Exodus 34:7; Nehemiah 9:17;
Psalm 89:14; 119:132; 145:9;
Isaiah 54:8; Micah 6:8

Matthew 6:14; John 8:11;
Romans 2:4; 5:8; Ephesians 1:7;
2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 1:9

LOVING

Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy
6:5; 7:7-9; 10:12-15; 33:3; Psalm
92:2; Proverbs 3:12; 15:9; Isaiah
43:4; Ezekiel 16:8

Matthew 5:43-44; 19:19; 22:37-
39; John 3:16; 11:5; 13:1, 34; 15:9,
17; Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians
13:4-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 2
Timothy 1:7; 1 John 2:5; 4:8, 10

KIND AND GENTLE

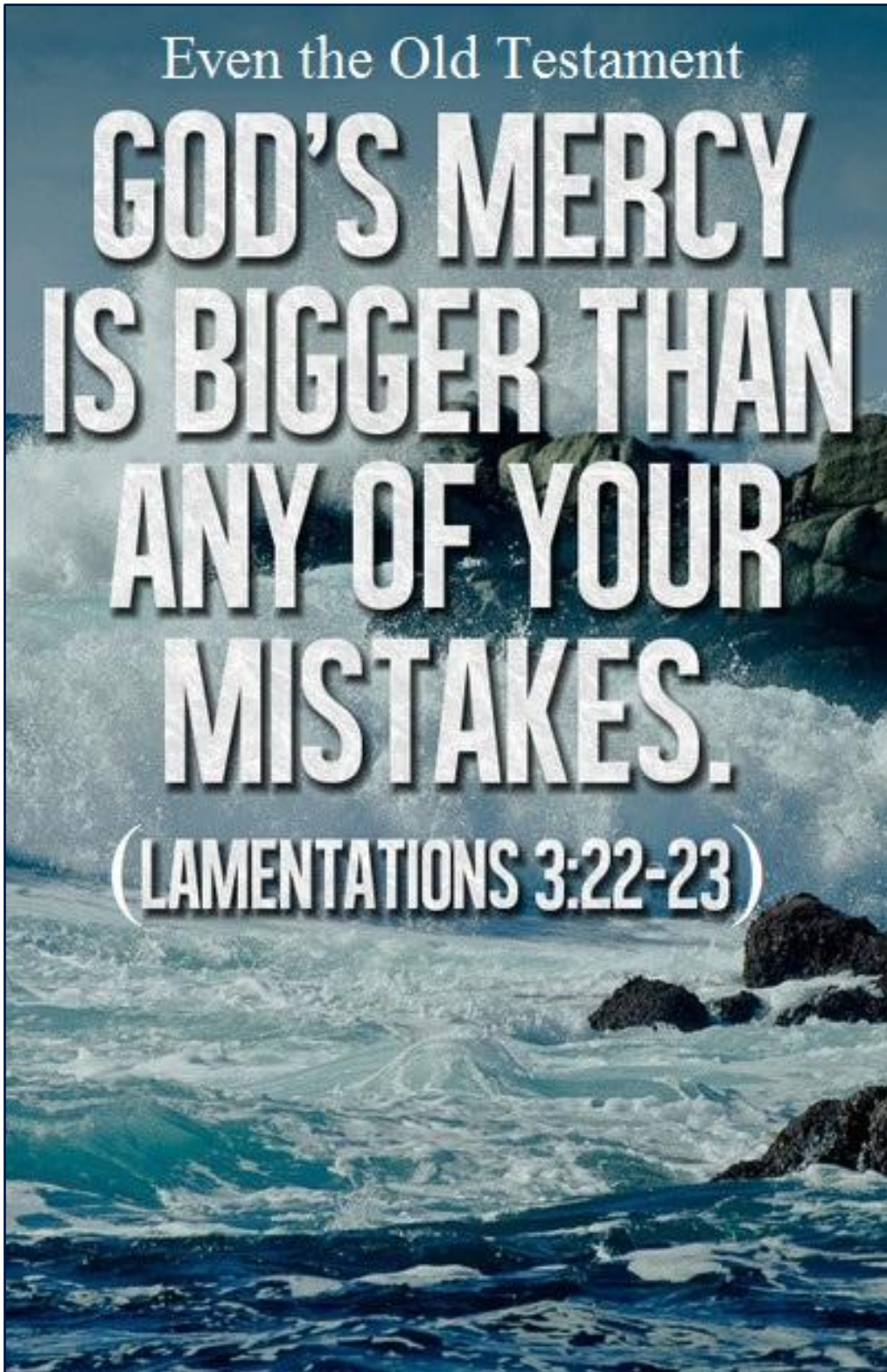
Deuteronomy 10:18; 1
Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 86:5;
117:2; 146:7-9; Isaiah 40:11

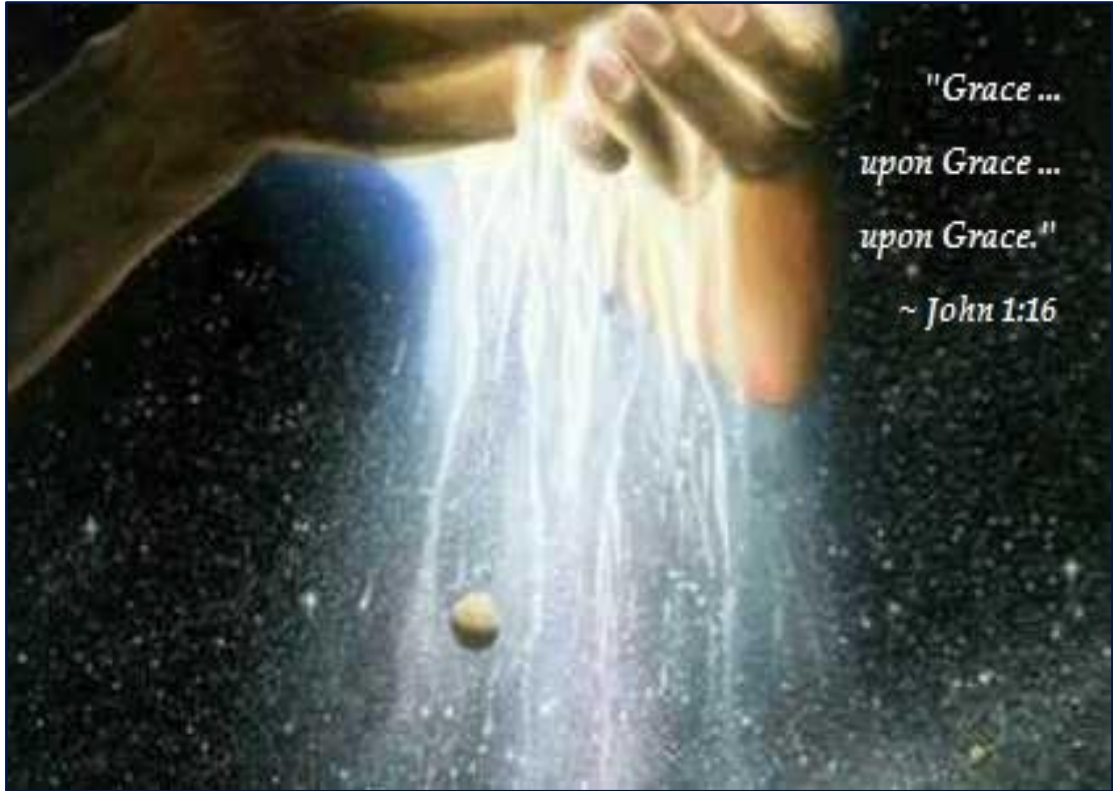
Mark 1:40-42; 10:13-16; 2
Corinthians 1:3-4; Ephesians
2:7; Titus 3:4; James 3:17

Even the Old Testament

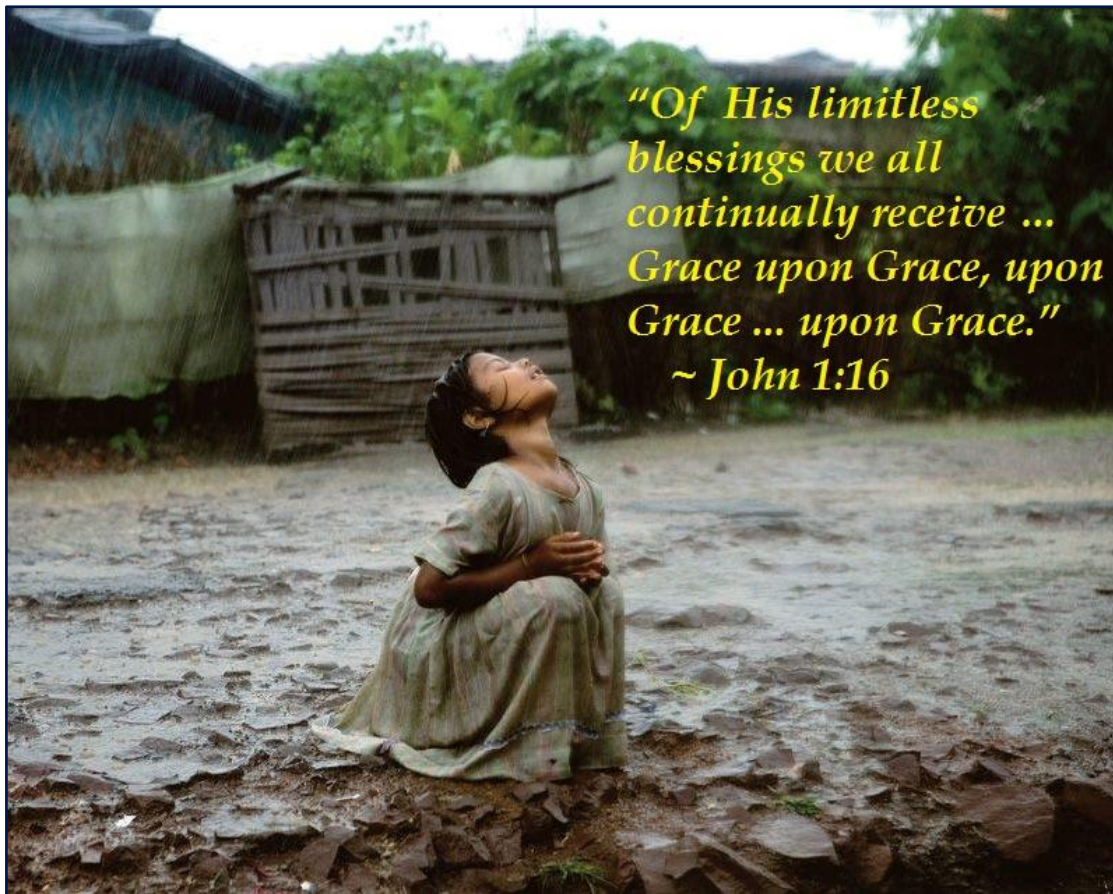
**GOD'S MERCY
IS BIGGER THAN
ANY OF YOUR
MISTAKES.**

(LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23)





*"Grace ...
upon Grace ...
upon Grace."
~ John 1:16*



*"Of His limitless
blessings we all
continually receive ...
Grace upon Grace, upon
Grace ... upon Grace."
~ John 1:16*



*"God's LOVE is perfect --
without limit & without
condition ... As such, He
Loves you just as perfectly;
no matter what -- limitlessly
& unconditionally -- as you
are, not as you should be."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 5:48
+ John 5:22)*



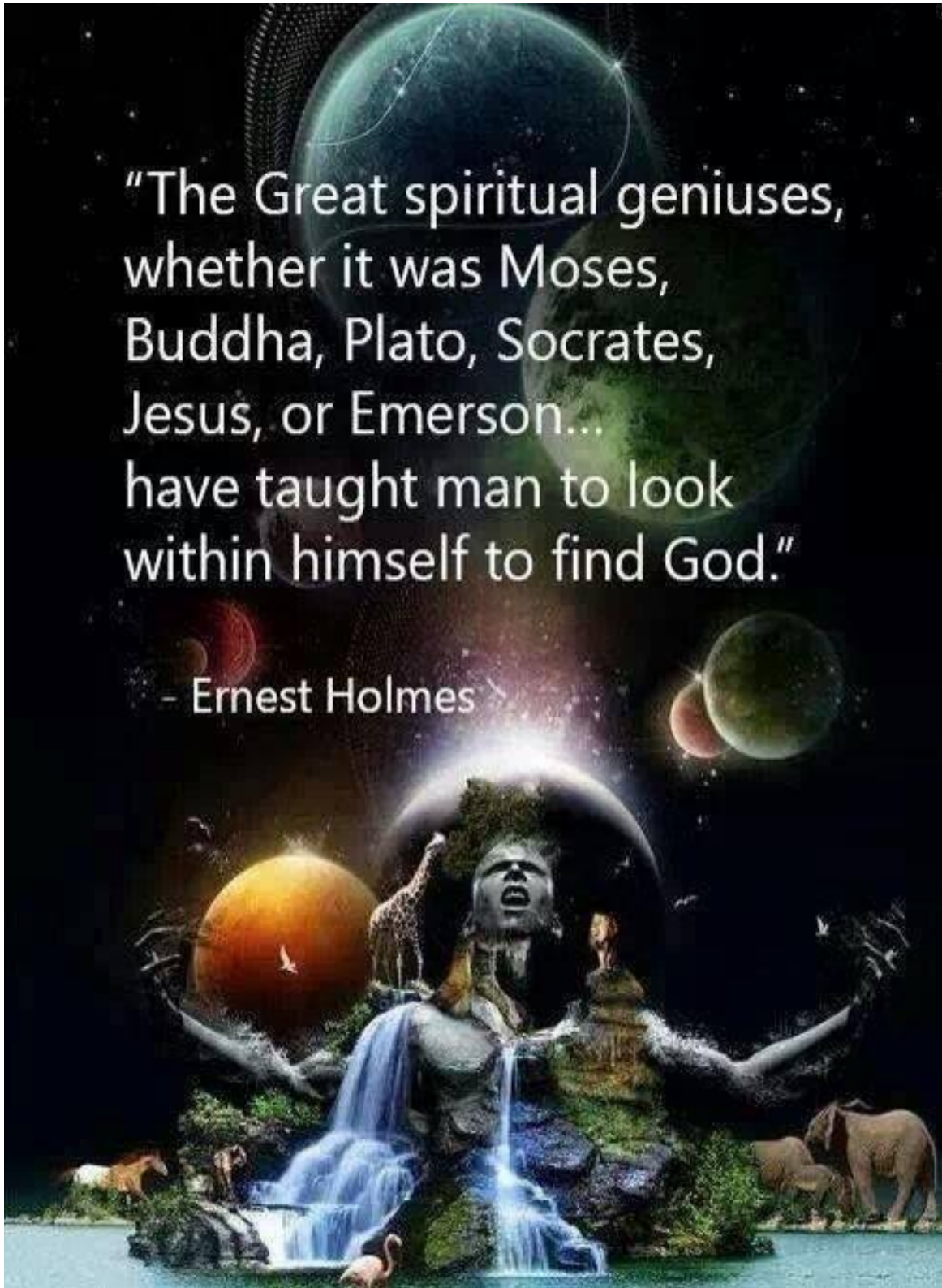


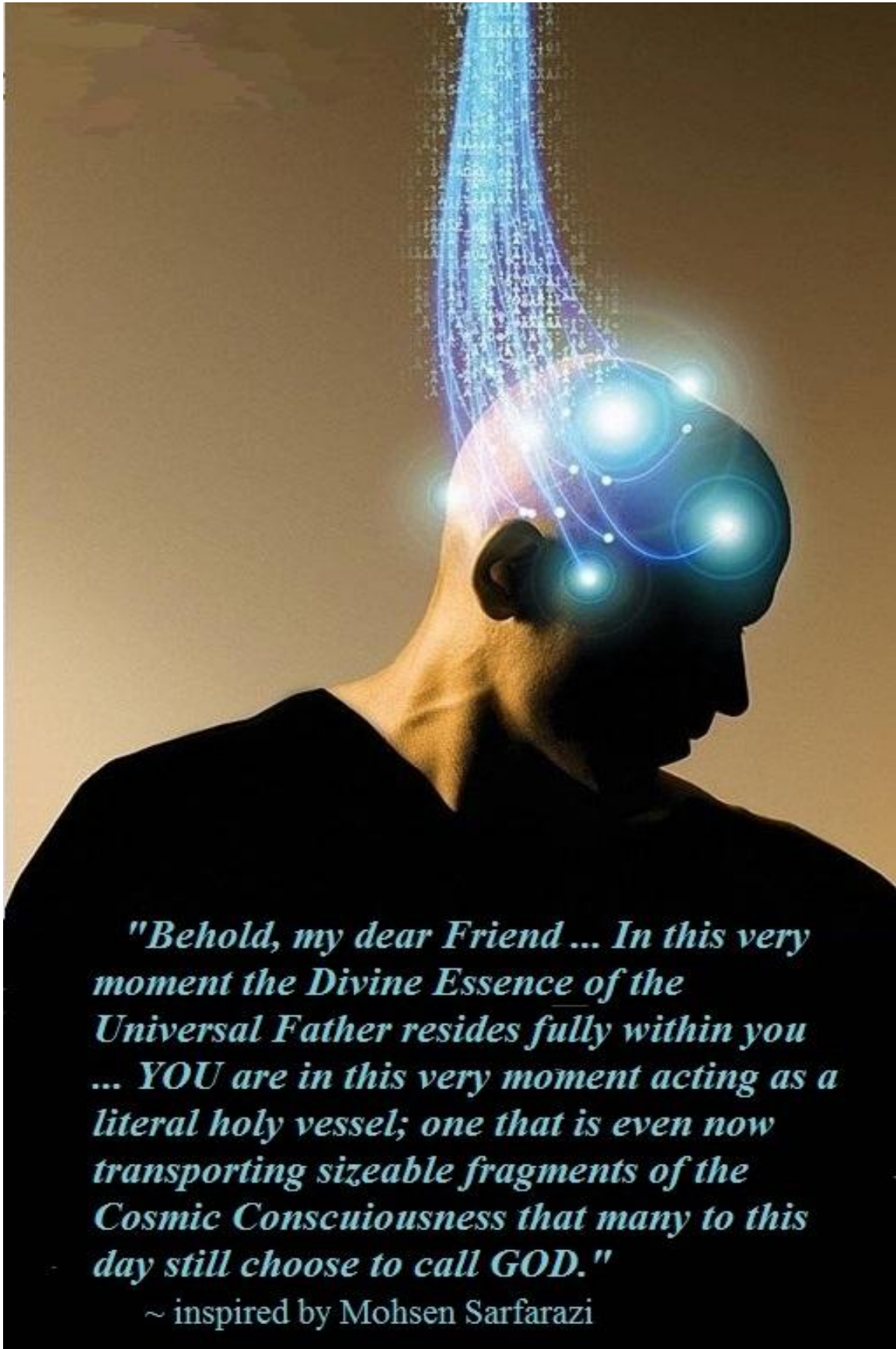
Those who know God well -- mystics, hermits,
pilgrims, social servants, prayerful people;
those who joyfully give everything to find God
by living accordingly -- always end up meeting
a Celestial Lover, never a divine dictator.

(inspired by Richard Rohr)

"The Great spiritual geniuses,
whether it was Moses,
Buddha, Plato, Socrates,
Jesus, or Emerson...
have taught man to look
within himself to find God."

- Ernest Holmes





*"Behold, my dear Friend ... In this very moment the Divine Essence of the Universal Father resides fully within you ... YOU are in this very moment acting as a literal holy vessel; one that is even now transporting sizeable fragments of the Cosmic Consciousness that many to this day still choose to call **GOD.**"*

~ inspired by Mohsen Sarfarazi



Because of
the merciful
compassions
of our God,
in which the rising sun
will visit us from ~~on high.~~
Luke 1:78 within

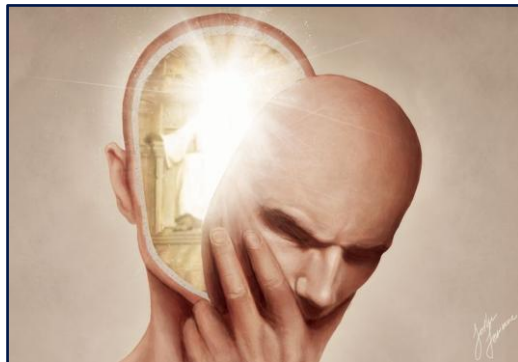


Arise & shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord
rises *within you!*

Isaiah 60:1

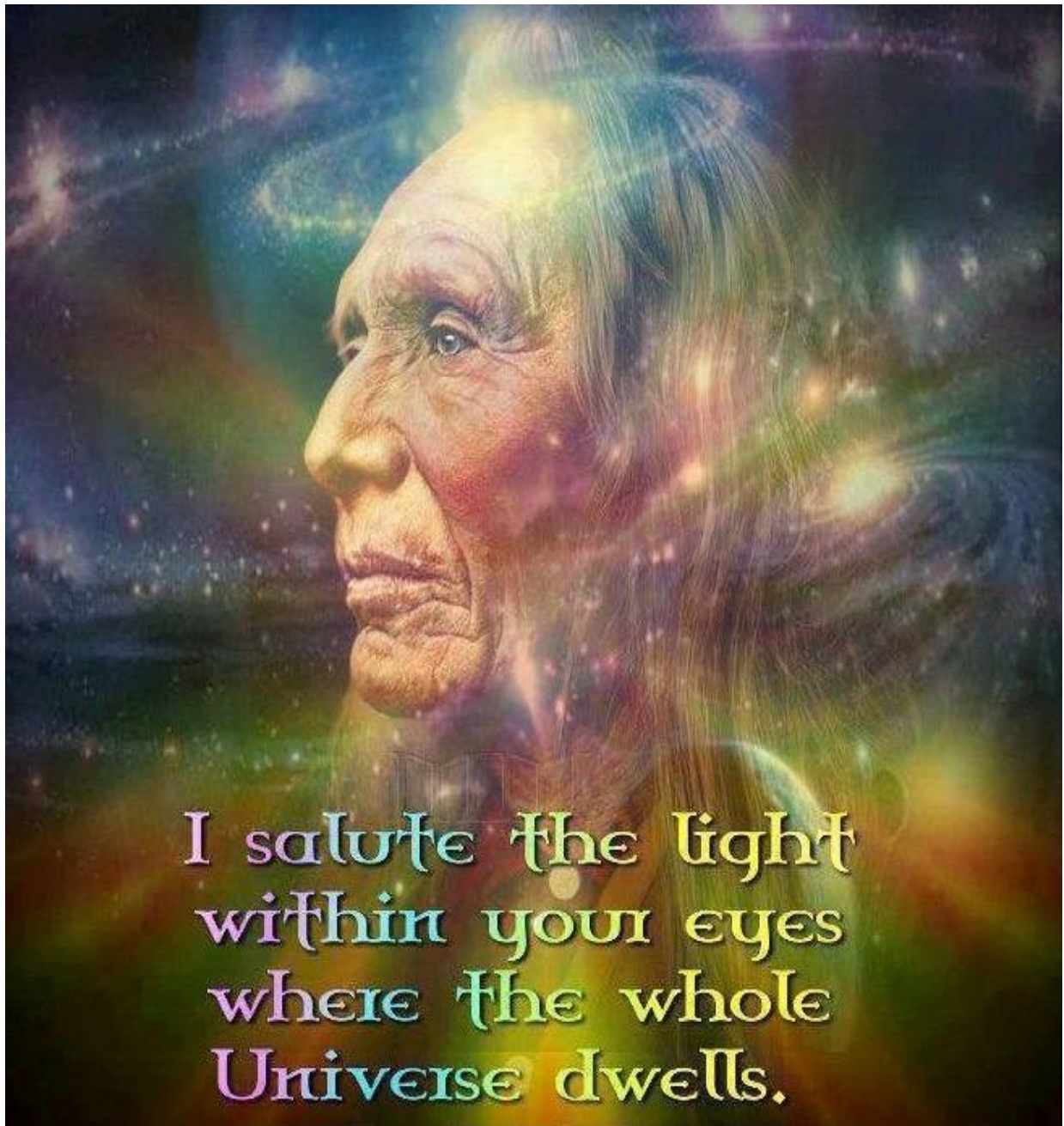


(John 14:20)



*"This is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees It nor knows It ... And yet you do know It, because It abides with you, and It lives within you."
~ Jesus Christ (John 14:17)*





"And on that day you will know that I am in my Father -- and that you are in me -- and that I am in you."

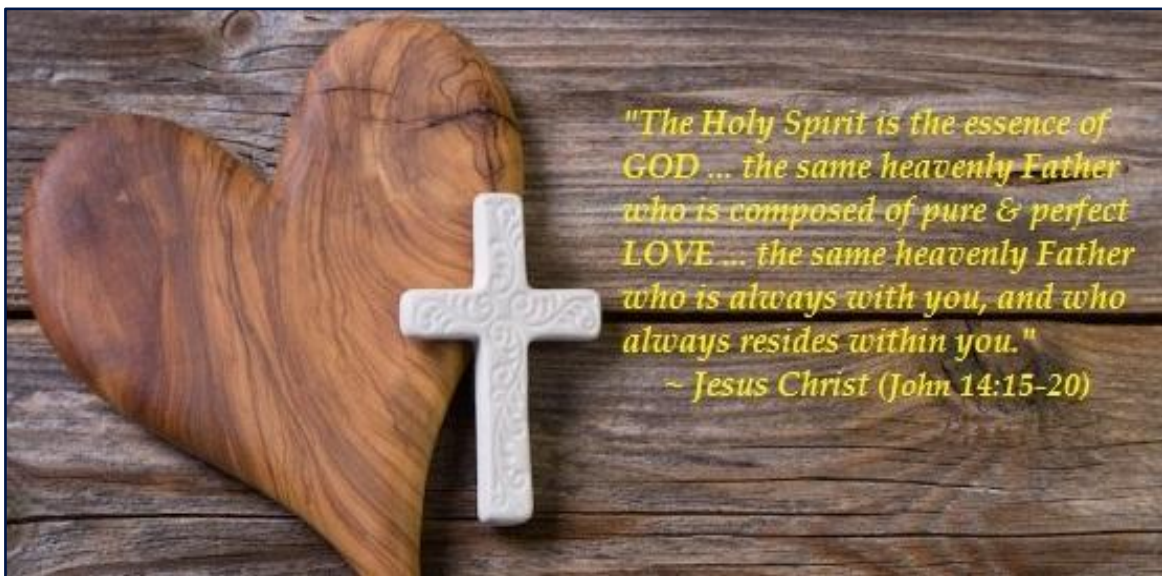
~ Jesus Christ (John 14:20)

Amen ... Let it be so.



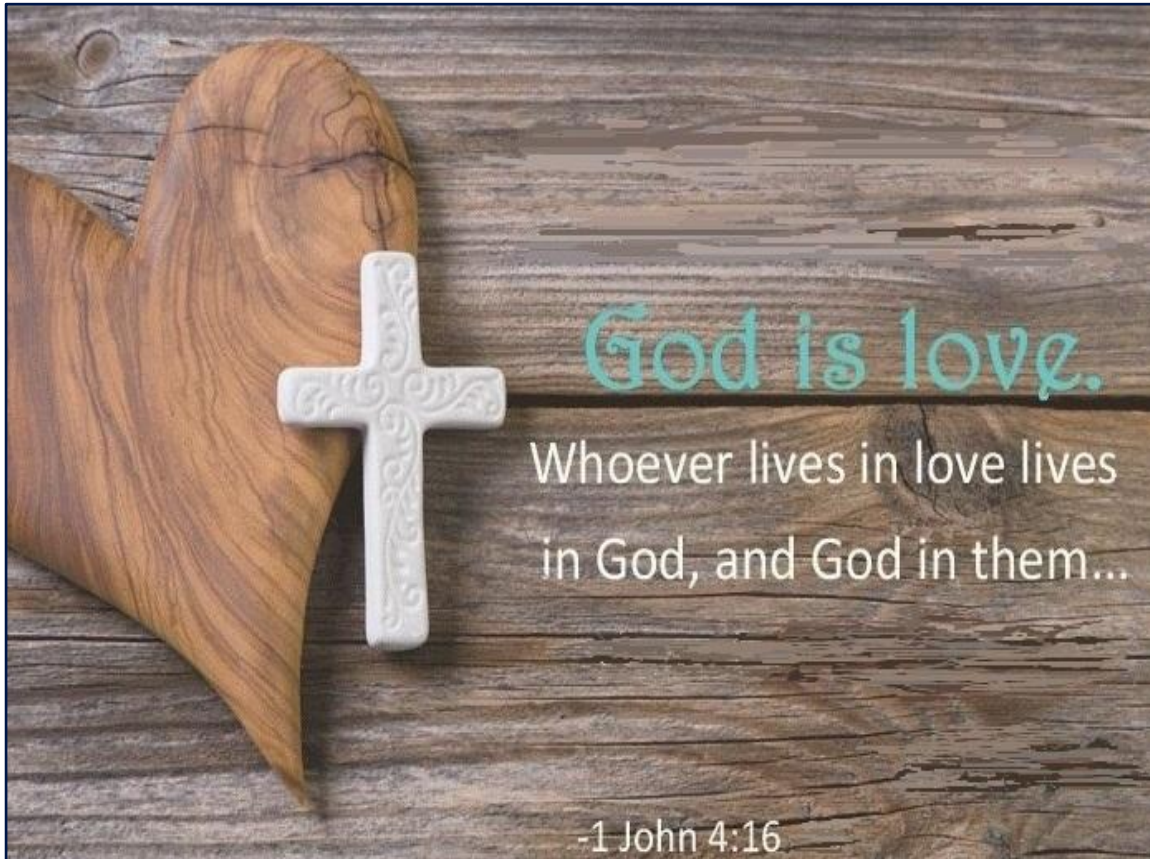
*"And on that day you will know
that I am in my Father, and that you
are in me, and that I am in you ...
Beloved, let us all Love one naother,
because Love is from God. Everyone
who Loves is born of God and knows
God ... for God is LOVE."*

~ John 14:20 + 1 John 4:7-8



*"The Holy Spirit is the essence of
GOD ... the same heavenly Father
who is composed of pure & perfect
LOVE ... the same heavenly Father
who is always with you, and who
always resides within you."*

~ Jesus Christ (John 14:15-20)



God is love.

Whoever lives in love lives
in God, and God in them...

-1 John 4:16



*"If we Love one another,
God resides within us,
and His LOVE is made
complete by our Loving."
~ 1 John 4:12*

Translation:

GOD IS A VERB...

Please act accordingly.

*God is perfect LOVE,
and thus only those who Love like God
are those who are truly*

Born *of*
GOD

(see 1 John 5:4)



"It has been said that God becomes man that man might become God, and indeed I have found that His presence *is* present in my presence. If I Am, then He Is. And in knowing that I Am -- in penetrating to the depths of my own existence and my own present reality; into the indefinable "Am" that is my deepest spiritual Self, then through this deep Center I pass into the infinite '**I AM**' which is the very essence of the Almighty ... The act in me is the movement of Him; His Spirit and His Love -- both of which reside within me. When He moves, I move with Him, so that it is also I who move. And in this movement I simultaneously awaken to know that '**I Am**,' even while crying 'Abba, my Father!'" ~ via Thomas Merton & the Bhagavad Gita

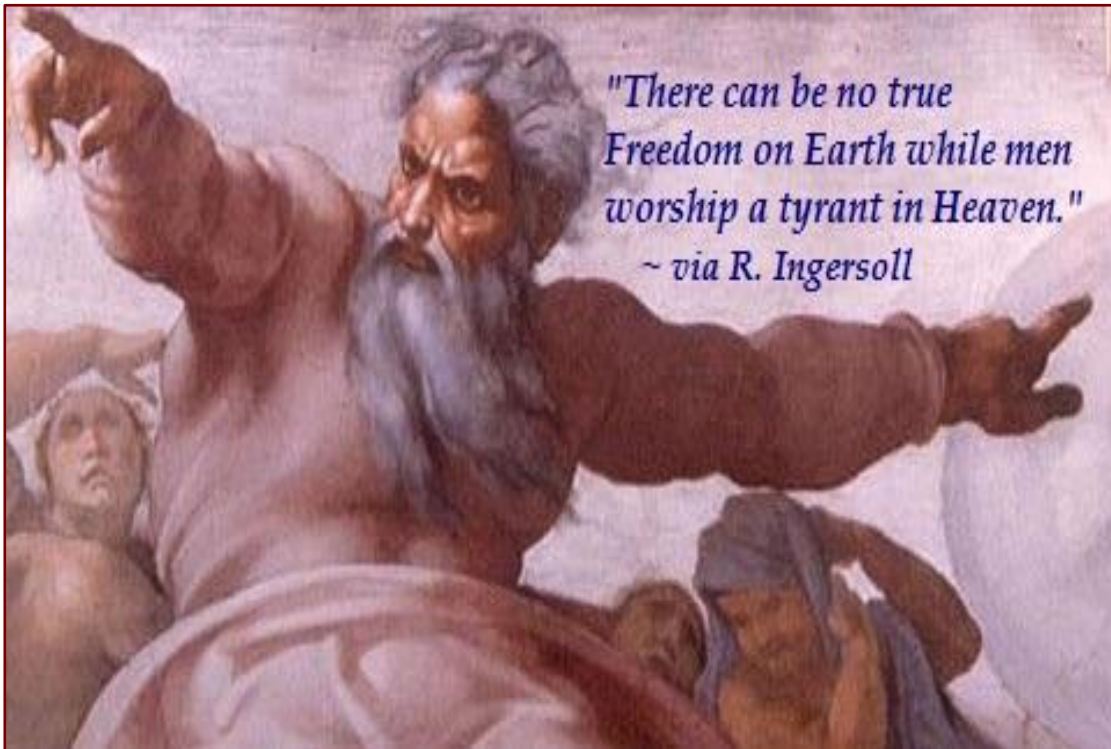
Chapter 02) on the Elohim *("God" in most of the OT)*



"Billions of years ago God was creating galaxies and stars and planets; millions of years ago God was creating life; and thousands of years ago God was sending angry floods & burning bushes and demanding sin-saving sacrifices ... And today? Today God occasionally appears on a piece of toast ... So I guess saying that God has become somewhat reclusive over the years is making an overwhelming understatement indeed." ~ via Trevor Treharne



"The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it -- a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak -- a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser -- a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, and capriciously malevolent bully." ~ Richard Dawkins



"I am a jealous God."

Exodus 34:14

**The first sign of when
you know you are in a
bad spiritual relationship.**

- SEVAN BOMAR

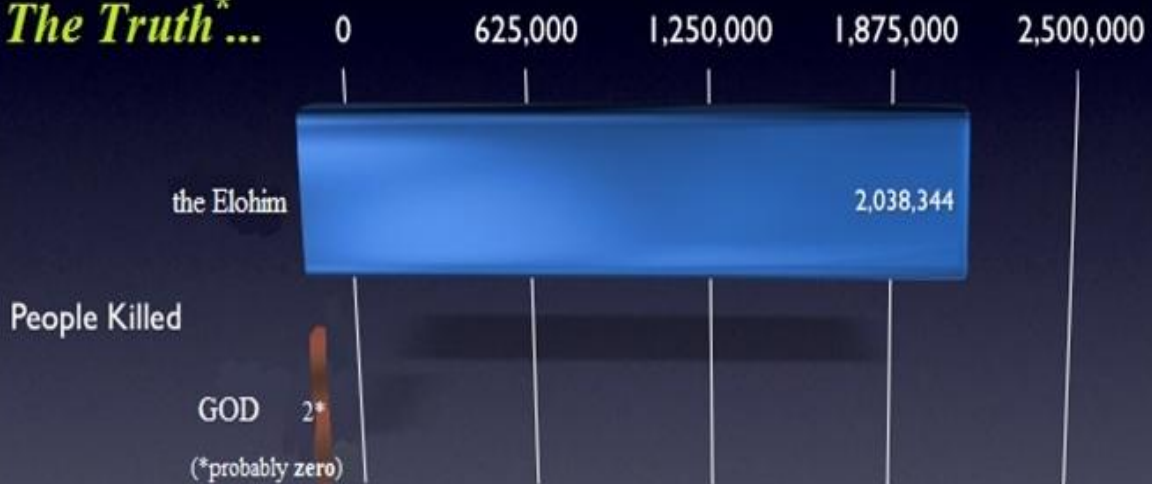
Who killed more people in the Bible?

The Lie ...



Who killed more people in the Bible?

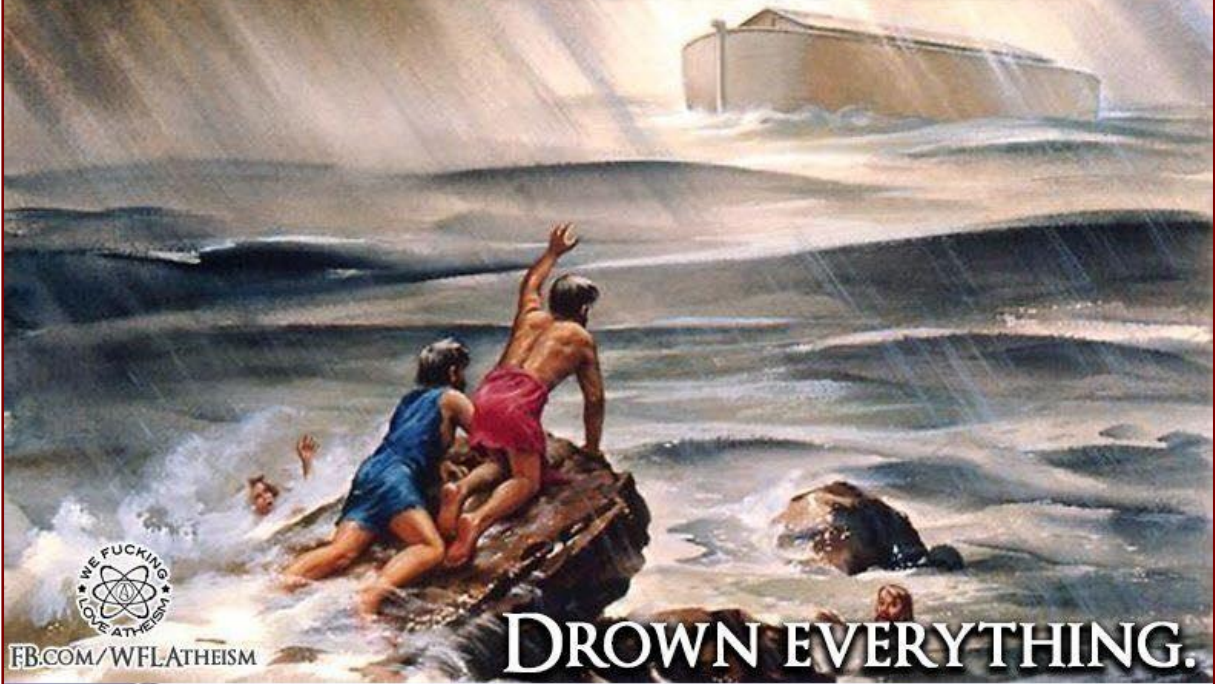
*The Truth**



(*probably zero)

*According to the ancient manuscripts, it was actually fallen angels posing as "God" (written as *Elohim* – the plural word "gods" – in the Hebrew) who performed almost all the wicked deeds portrayed in the Old Testament, while the "LORD" (or GOD, written as *YHWH* or *Adonai* in the texts) is only seen killing two people, Er & Onan – and this possibly only metaphorically – in Genesis chapter 38.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...



WE FUCKING
LOVE
ATHEISM
FB.COM/WFLATHEISM

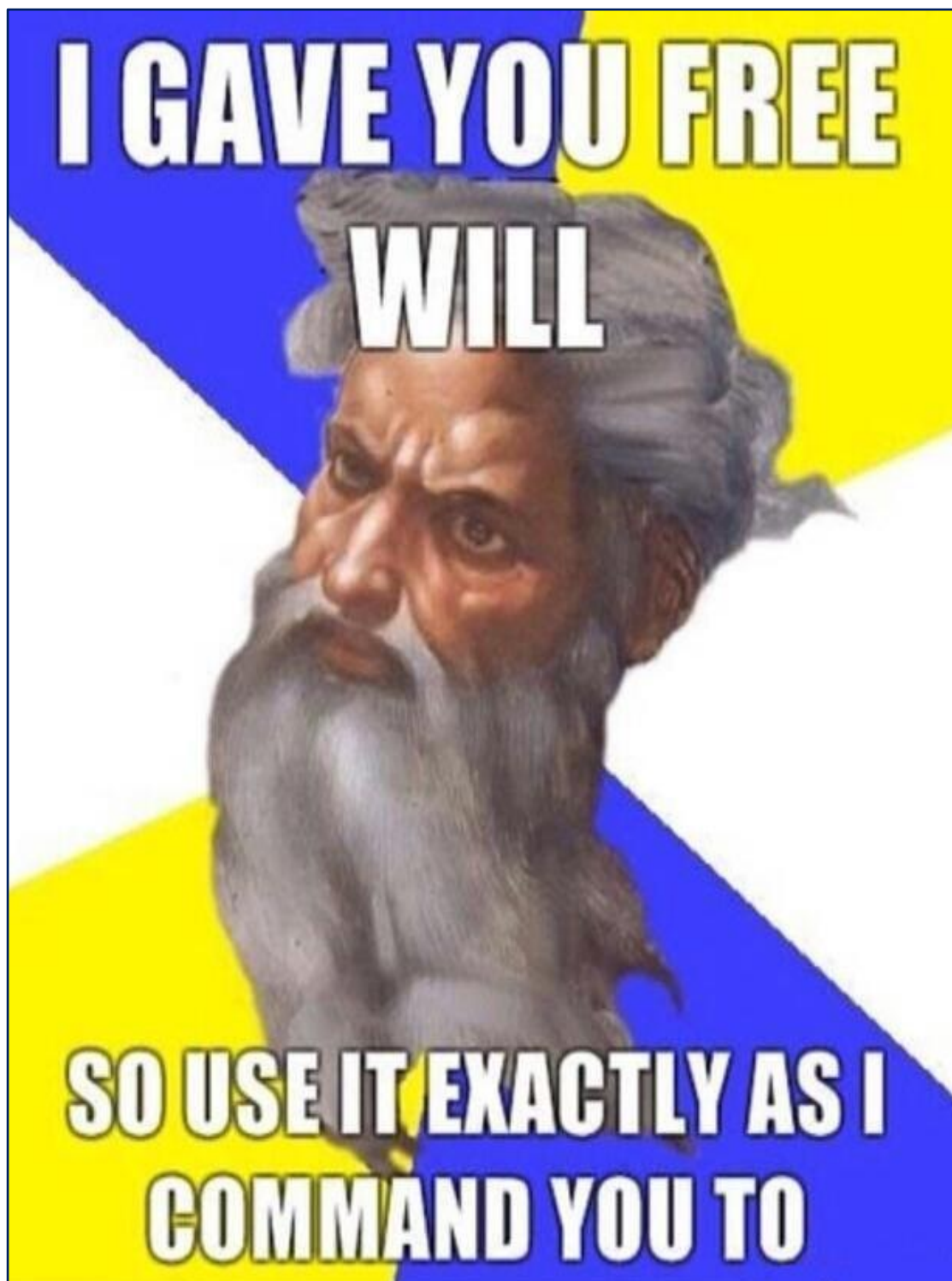
DROWN EVERYTHING.

Some folks get upset at conservative Christians & orthodox Jews for being so judgmental ... Personally, I actually think they are all doing relatively well in that department -- considering how downright mean & outright unforgiving their original role model was.

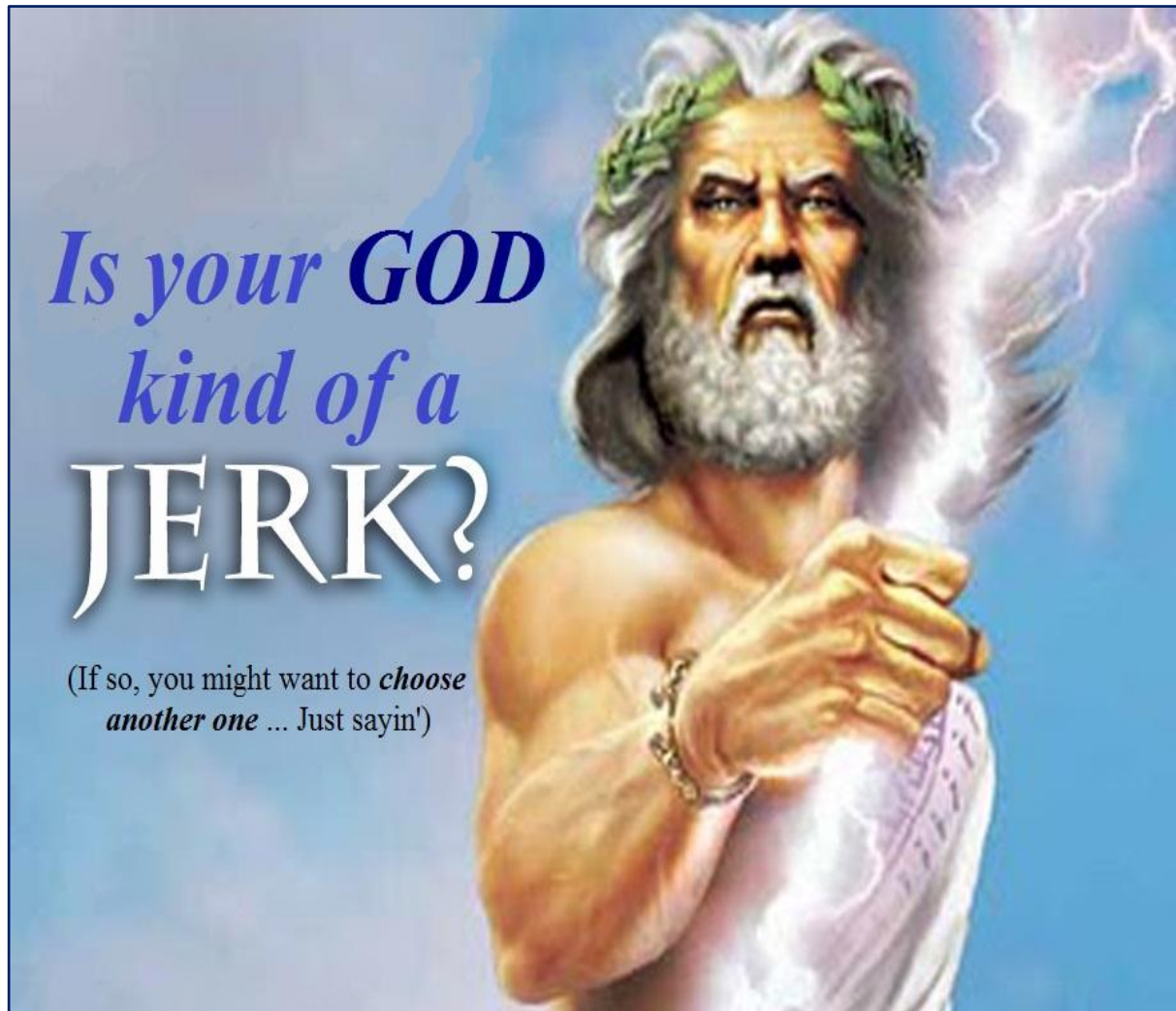


PASSOVER:

**When God needed to be reminded
which children NOT to kill.**



NOTE: Truly free will does not mean that no negative consequences accrue from selfish actions; merely that those negative consequences come from the choices made, not the free will that enabled them to be chosen.



"In meinem Auftrag?!
Ich kenne die Typen gar nicht!!"

(Gott)

"In *my* Name?!?
I don't even know those guys!"

(God)

"God is the moral law-giver. Otherwise no person would have the ability to know right from wrong."

Actually, this belief has been thoroughly disproven by literally MILLIONS of highly moral atheists and many more MILLIONS of highly moral non-Christians all over the world. In fact, many of the greatest moral thinkers and many of the greatest moral Doers throughout human history did not have any belief in God whatsoever or engage in any religious practice at all ...

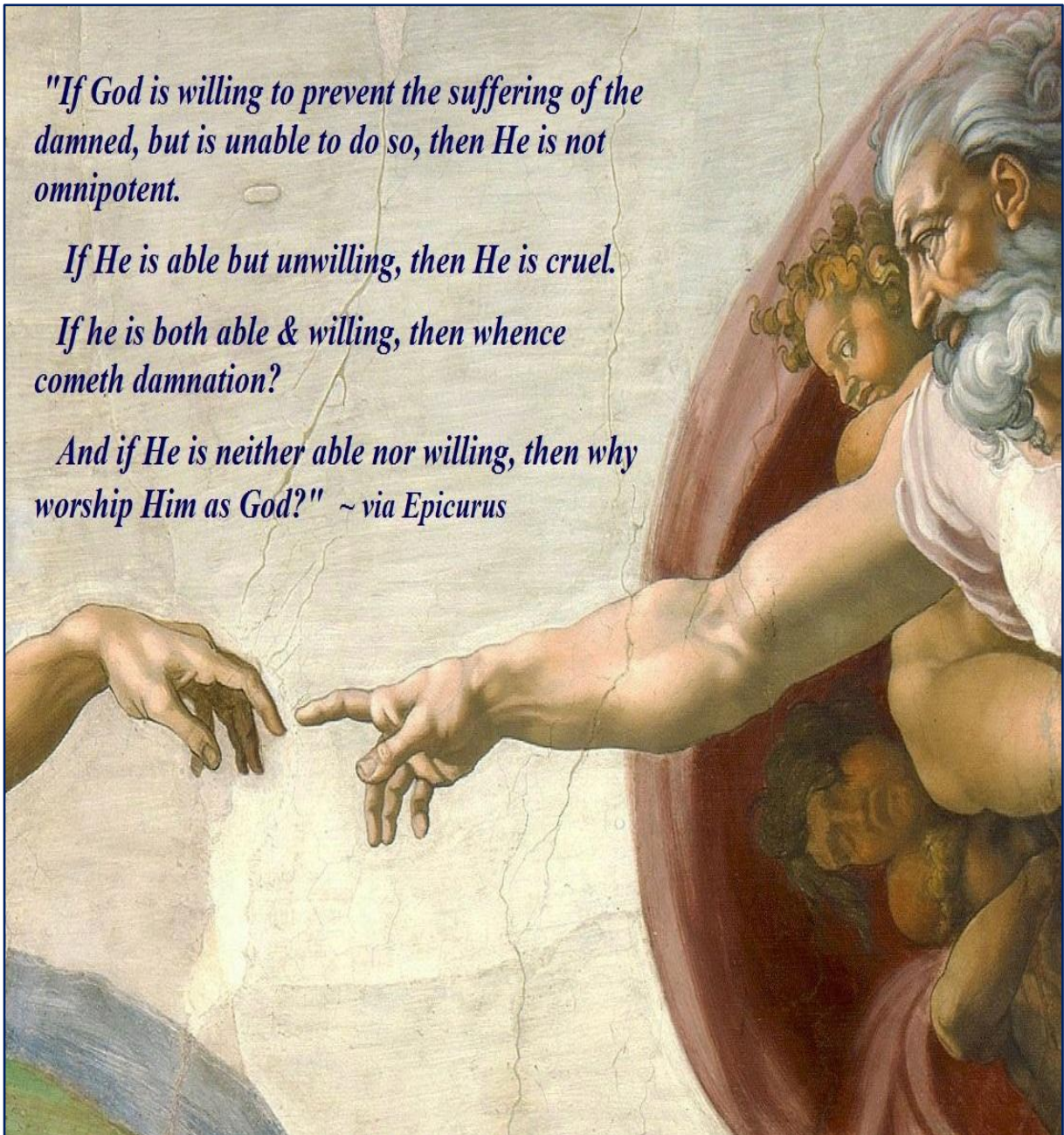
And besides, if God did implant everyone -- Christian & non-Christian alike -- with their moral conscience, then God is the one who also implanted them with the ability to see that damning anyone to Hell for eternity for *any* offense committed over a mere human lifetime is patently unjust; and to see that demanding subservience in any form from *any* person is patently petty; and to see that creating humans as innately fallible and then demanding that we somehow make ourselves "well" (via either a lucky guess if born in a non-Christian community, or the good fortune of being born in a Christian one) is patently unfair and -- quite ironically -- blatantly *immoral*.

"If God is willing to prevent the suffering of the damned, but is unable to do so, then He is not omnipotent.

If He is able but unwilling, then He is cruel.

If he is both able & willing, then whence cometh damnation?

And if He is neither able nor willing, then why worship Him as God?" ~ via Epicurus



Chapter 03) on Religion in general



"Religion is the frozen thoughts of man from which they build their temples." ~ Krishnamurti



"I contend that we are all atheists. I simply believe in one fewer god than the religious do. Indeed, when the religious understand why they dismiss all other possible gods than their own, they will understand why I dismiss theirs as well." ~ via Stephen Roberts

"And I contend that we are all in some way spiritual. I simply happen to recognize one more over-arching (and as yet unquantified) Cosmic Power than you do. As such, once *you* come to understand why you objectively dismiss the existence of all gods, you will also come to understand why I respectfully dismiss your dismissal thereof." ~ unknown

Did you know? ...



Counting indigenous cultures, there are roughly **5000** distinct religions being practiced today.

- *85% of the world's people say that 4999 of them are false ...
- *05% of the world's people believe that all 5000 are false ...
- *& the other 10% think that the other 90% could very well be right.



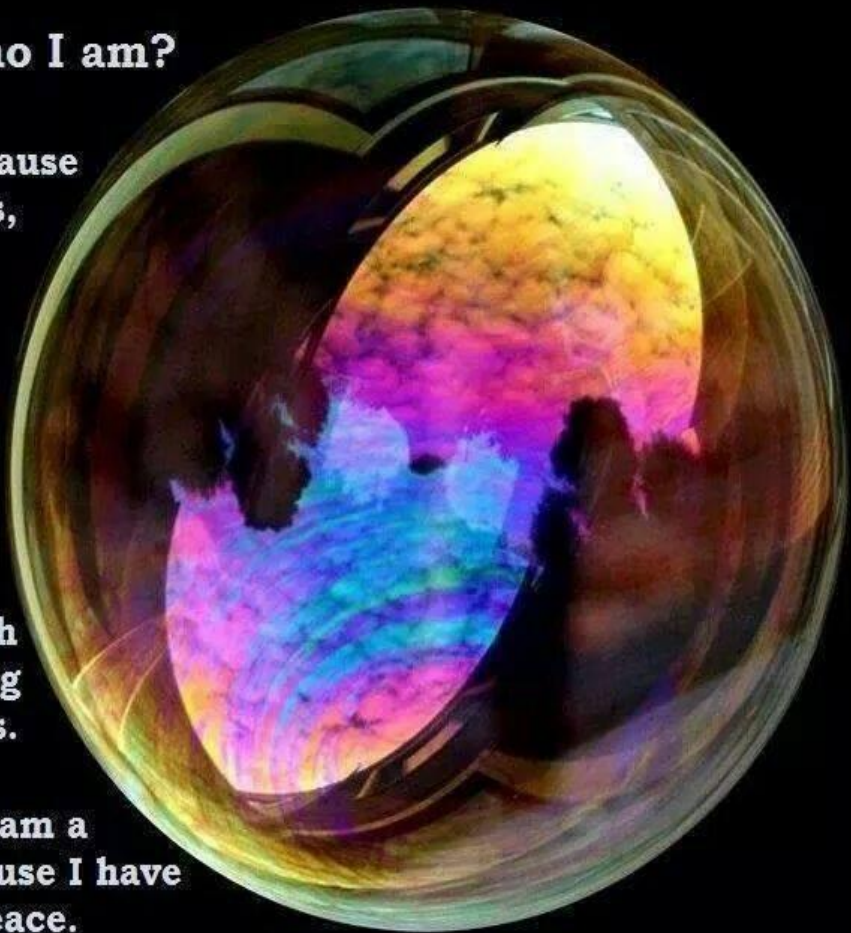
Do you know who I am?

I say "namaste" because I like what it means, not because I am Hindu.

A lot of people here think that I am a Christian because they think I talk about Christian values, but the truth is I am really talking about human values.

I've been asked if I am a Buddhist, just because I have discovered inner peace.

A lot of my friends are Pagans, and they think I am one too because I say that being in Nature is my idea of going to church.



Please **NOTE**: If your connection to the Divine fits inside any one particular religious box, the chances are astoundingly high that you are selling both your God and your Self *way* short ... Indeed, whatever you call GOD is much bigger & tons "better" than you are imagining Him/Her/It to be.

P.S. It is much easier to find the Divine by staring deep into a mirror than it is while gazing up at the heavens.

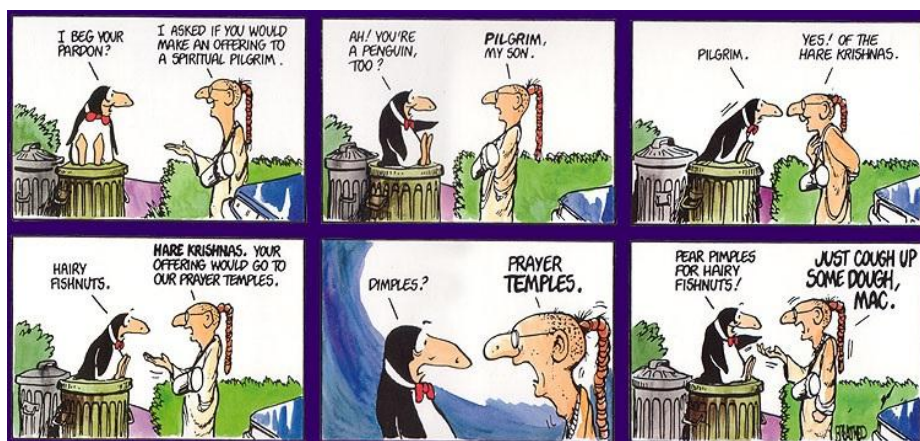


There are many thousands of different paths leading up the Mountain -- some of them might be a bit rockier than others and some might follow a more circuitous route, and yet they all essentially head in the same direction and they all ultimately arrive at the same End ... As such, the only person who is truly wasting their time is the one running around the base of the mountain telling everyone else that his or her chosen path is the wrong one.

P.S. One of the quickest ways up the Mountain is to find one of those same judgmental naysayers and give them a heartfelt hug.




"Mormons believe that Joseph Smith received God's Law on gold tablets from an angel on a hill. That's ridiculous, of course, because everybody knows that it was actually Moses who received God's Law on stone tablets from a burning bush on a mountain." ~ via S. Colbert

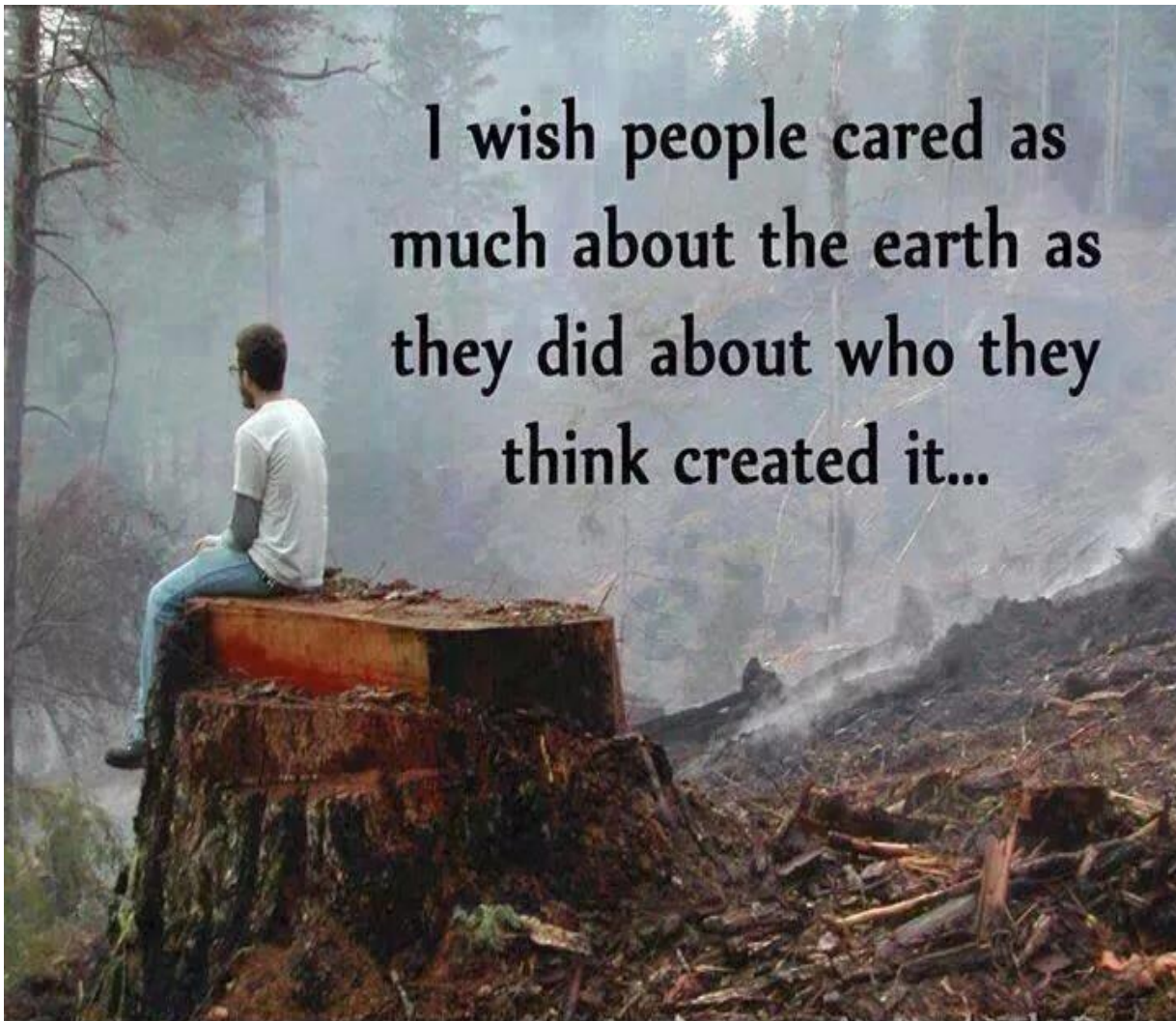


Money and Spirituality do not mix ...
Money and Religion are inextricable.

*THIS is the only true Holy Land ...
and we are ALL Children of the
Divine -- residing both
upon & within it.*



*“And GOD said, ‘See, I have given
you every plant yielding seed that is
upon the face of all the earth, and
every tree with seed in its fruit; you
shall have them for food. And to
every beast of the earth, and to every
bird of the air, ... everything that has
the breath of life, I have given every
green plant for food.’ And it was so.
GOD saw everything that he had
made, and indeed, it was very good.”
~ Genesis 1:29-31*



(What a lot of folks don't realize is that many of the same systems that are encouraging people to focus intensely on "who" created the Earth are the very same systems that are quietly yet insistently encouraging those same people to dominate, dismantle, and destroy the Earth.)

An extremely brief summary of the Bible ...

GENESIS

GOD: Alright you two, take care of this garden and everything in it, and don't do the one thing.

Adam & Eve: Okay ... Thanks God!

Satan: You should do the one thing.

Adam & Eve: Okay.

GOD: What happened?

Adam & Eve: We did the thing.

GOD: Seriously?!?

The rest of *The OLD TESTAMENT*

GOD: I love you people. Here are some guidelines for getting along ... Above all, don't do the things.

People: We won't do the things.

GOD: Good What happened?

People: We did the things – lots of times in many different ways.

GOD: Seriously?!?

THE GOSPELS

Jesus: I am a manifestation of the Child of God within you all – a Child of God that you can still manifest if you wish. Even though you have done the things – many times in many different ways – my Father & I still Love you dearly. Please stop doing the things. I have even set you an example to show you how to do so.

People: Okay ... Thanks Jesus!

Other people: We've never seen him do the things, and we still do the things ourselves, and yet we're pretty sure that he does the things when no one is looking.

Jesus: I do not do the things, nor does it even matter if I do or not. If *you* wish to know Peace & Joy, simply stop doing the things.

Other people: We don't like the way that sounds. We are putting you on trial for doing the things.

Pilate: Did you do the things?

Jesus: Not that it matters, but no I do not do the things.

Pilate: He does not do the things.

Other people: Kill him anyway.

Pilate: If you say so.

Jesus: Seriously?!?

PAUL'S LETTERS

Paul: Even though I never heard Jesus preach or saw him in person, I feel really bad about persecuting & murdering his earliest followers, so I am inventing an entire theology that actually contradicts his teachings, but that does so in his name and for his honor ... This new theology is simple: You have done the things, you are sinners and will continue to do the things, and yet if you bow down to Jesus as though he were God, he will forgive you and you can keep doing the things.

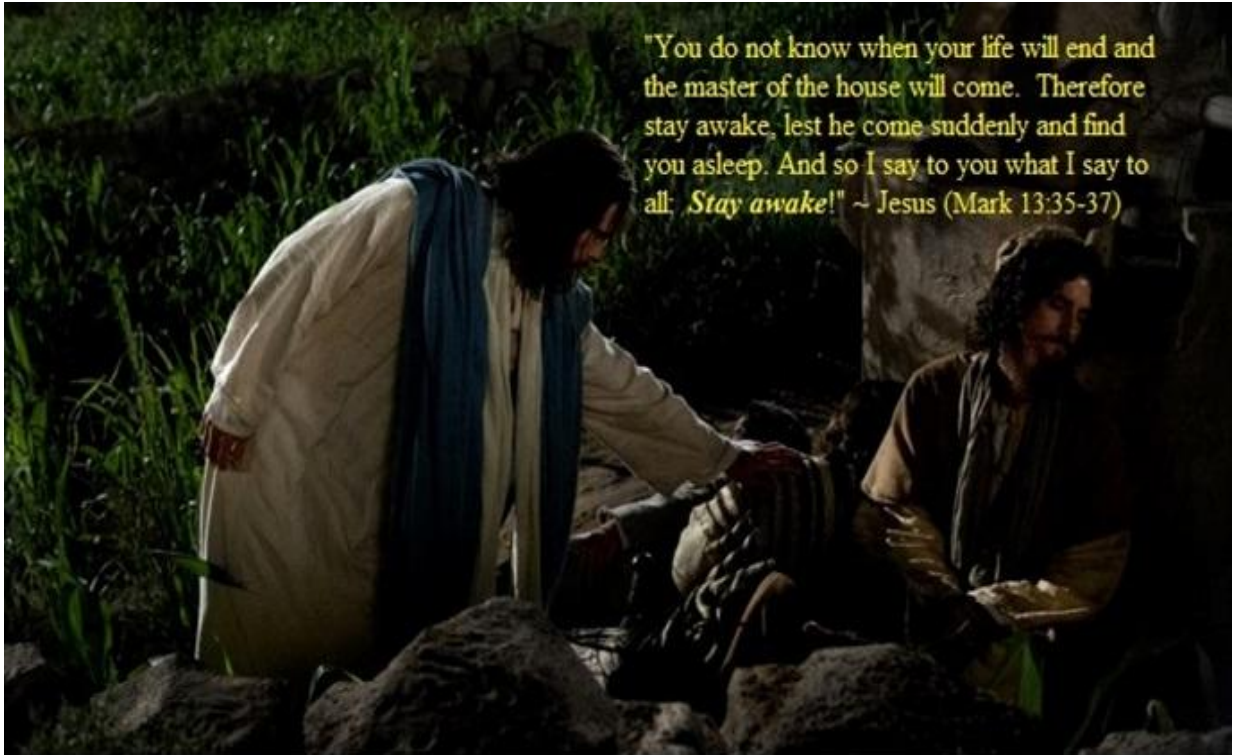
Jesus: Seriously?!?

The Book of *REVELATION*

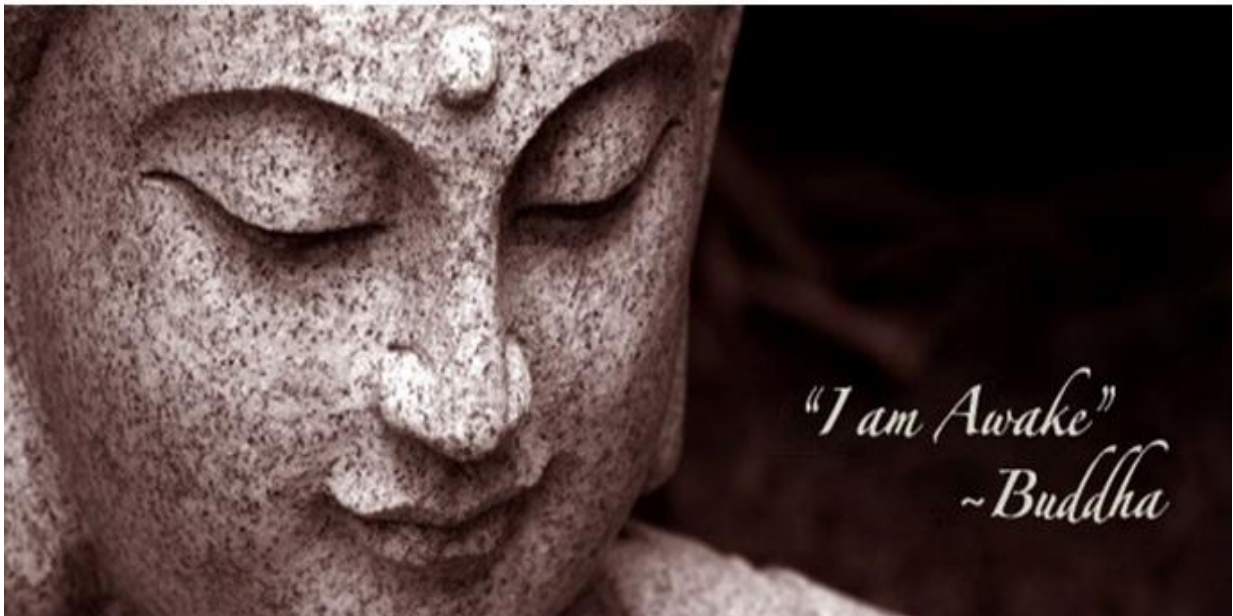
John: Jesus is coming back, and when he does he is going to gather up all the people who are not doing the things and let them into Heaven, and he is going to cast all the rest who are still doing the things down into Hell. In the meantime, go to church, obey the advice of your preacher, and stop doing the things.

Jesus & God: Seriously?!? (with double facepalm)

THE END



"You do not know when your life will end and the master of the house will come. Therefore stay awake, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And so I say to you what I say to all: *Stay awake!*" ~ Jesus (Mark 13:35-37)



"I am Awake"
~ Buddha



As children, Siddhartha and Jesus both realized that life is filled with suffering. The Buddha became aware at an early age that suffering is pervasive. Jesus must have had the same kind of insight, because they both made every effort to offer a way out. We, too, must learn to live in ways that reduce the world's suffering.

— *Nhat Hanh* —



“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 4:16

“But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 5:39

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 5:44-48

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 6:19-20

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 6:22

“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 7:1-2

“Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 8:20

“Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit ... The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 12:33-35

“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 16:25

“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 19:29

“You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.” ~ Jesus in Matthew 23:26

“Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone.” ~ Jesus in John 8:7

“The wise man should renounce the way of darkness and follow the way of light.” ~ Buddha (Dhammapada 6:12).

“If anyone should give you a blow with his hand, with a stick, or with a knife, you should abandon any desires and utter no evil words.” ~ Buddha (Majjhima Nikaya 21.6)

“Surmount hatred by not hating, surmount evil with good; surmount greed through generosity, surmount lies with truth; speak what is true, do not succumb to anger, give when you are asked.” ~ Buddha (Gandhari Dharmapada 280-281) ... “The great cloud rains down on all whether their nature is superior or inferior. The light of the sun and the moon illuminates the whole world, both him who does well and him who does ill, both him who stands high and him who stands low.” ~ Buddha (Sadharmapundarika Sutra 5)

“People must store up reserves of faith since true merits cannot be taken away and no one need fear thieves.” ~ Buddha (Udanavarga 10:11).

“Whosoever has heard the law of virtue is as a man who has eyes and carries a lamp, seeing everything. He will become completely wise.” ~ Buddha (Udanavarga 22:4)

“Judge not the mistakes of others, neither what they do or leave undone, but judge your own deeds, that just and the unjust.” ~ Buddha (Gandhari Dharmapada 271-272)

“The thoughtful exert themselves; they do not delight in an abode. Like swans who have left their lake they leave their house & home.” ~ Buddha (Majjhima Nikaya)

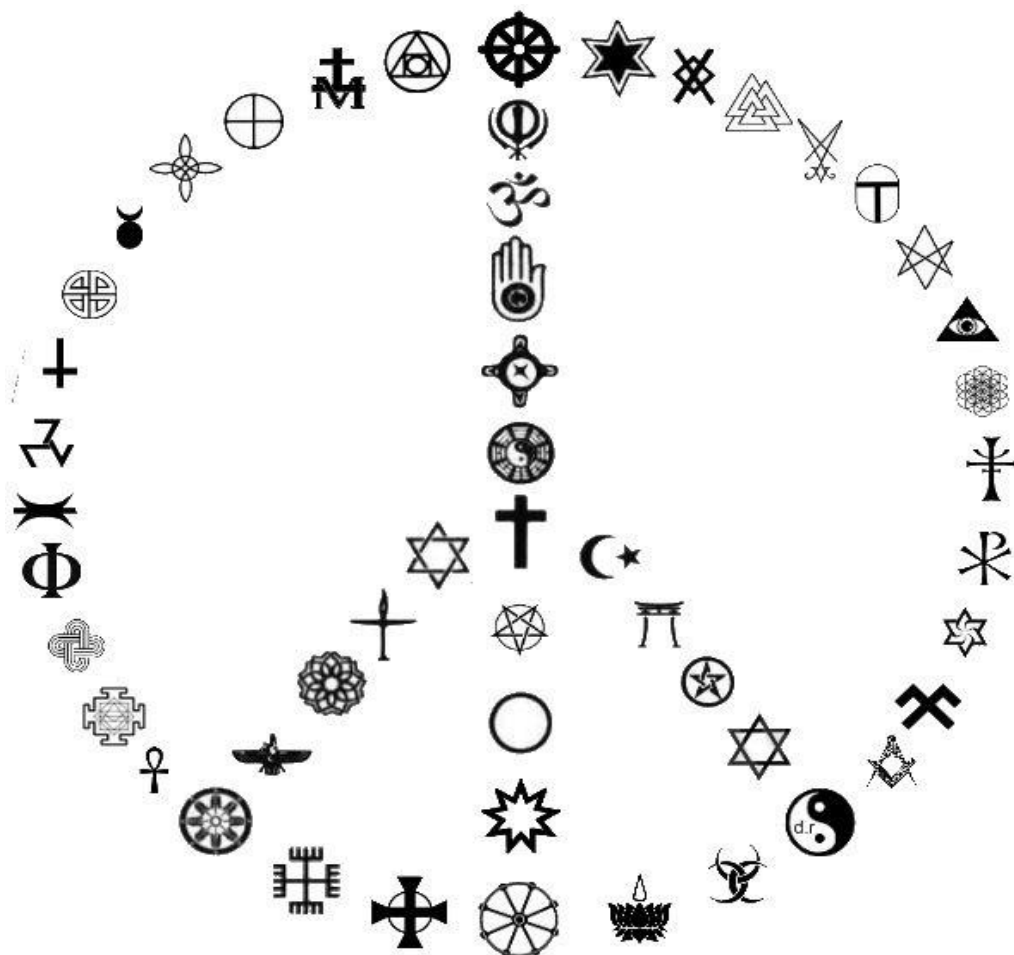
“No matter what a man does, whether his deeds serve virtue or vice, nothing lacks importance. All actions bear a kind of fruit” ~ Buddha (Udanavarga 9:8).

“With the relinquishing of all thought and egotism, the enlightened one is liberated through not clinging.” ~ Buddha (Majjhima Nikaya 72:15)

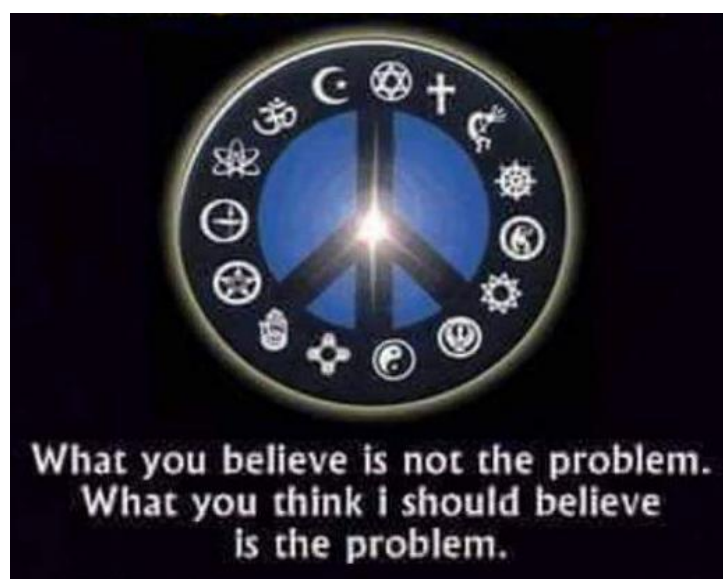
“Whosoever has laid aside human ties, leaving behind the powers of attraction of the gods, free of all bonds, that man I call holy.” ~ Buddha (Udanavarga 33:52).

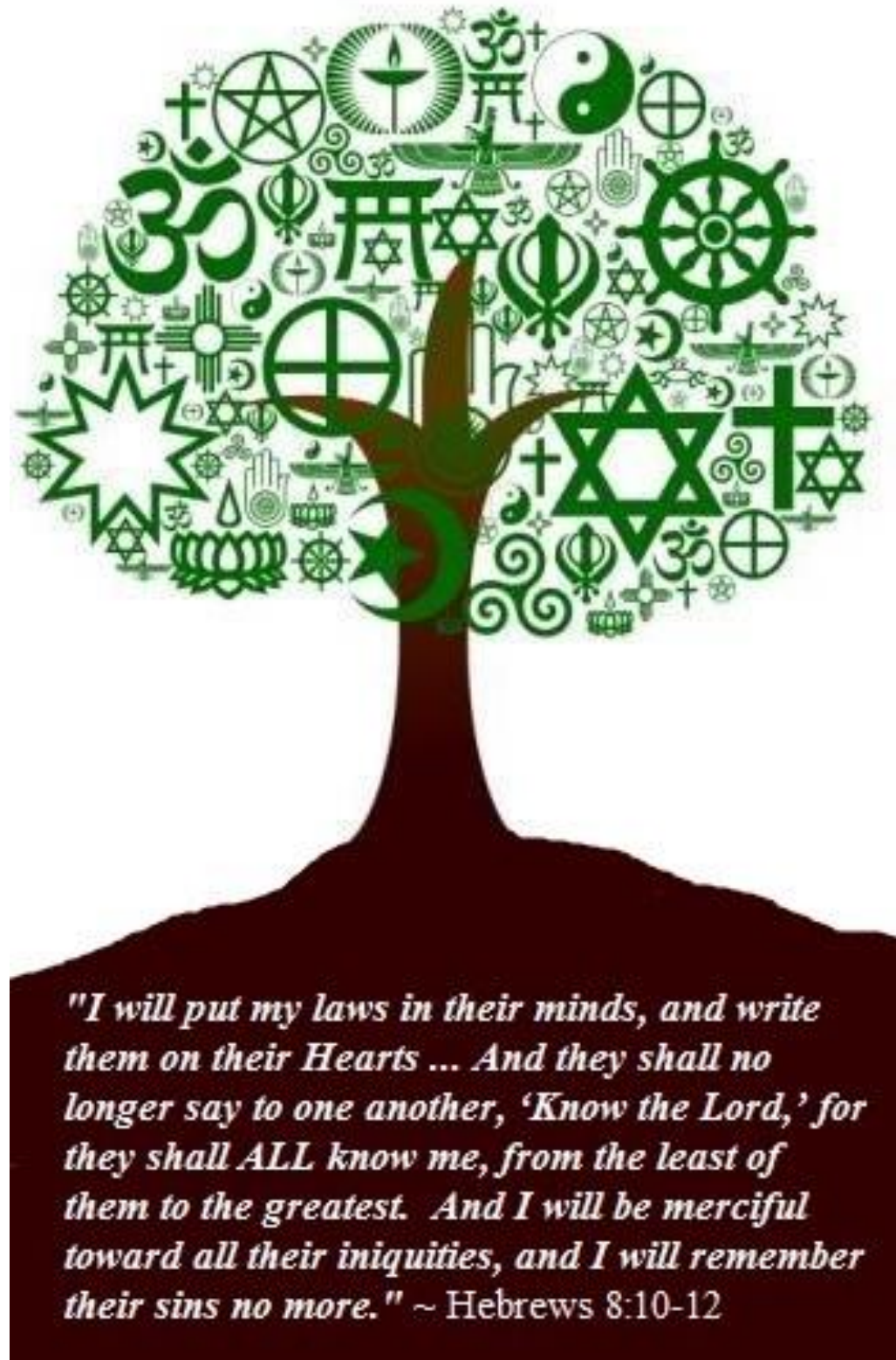
“Of what use is your matted hair, O fool! Of what use your clothes made of animal hides? Within yourself is a jungle, but outwardly you adorn yourself.” ~ Buddha (Dhammapada 26:12).

“Do not look at the faults of others, or what others have done or not done. Observe what you yourself have done and have not done.” ~ Buddha (Dhammapada 4:7)



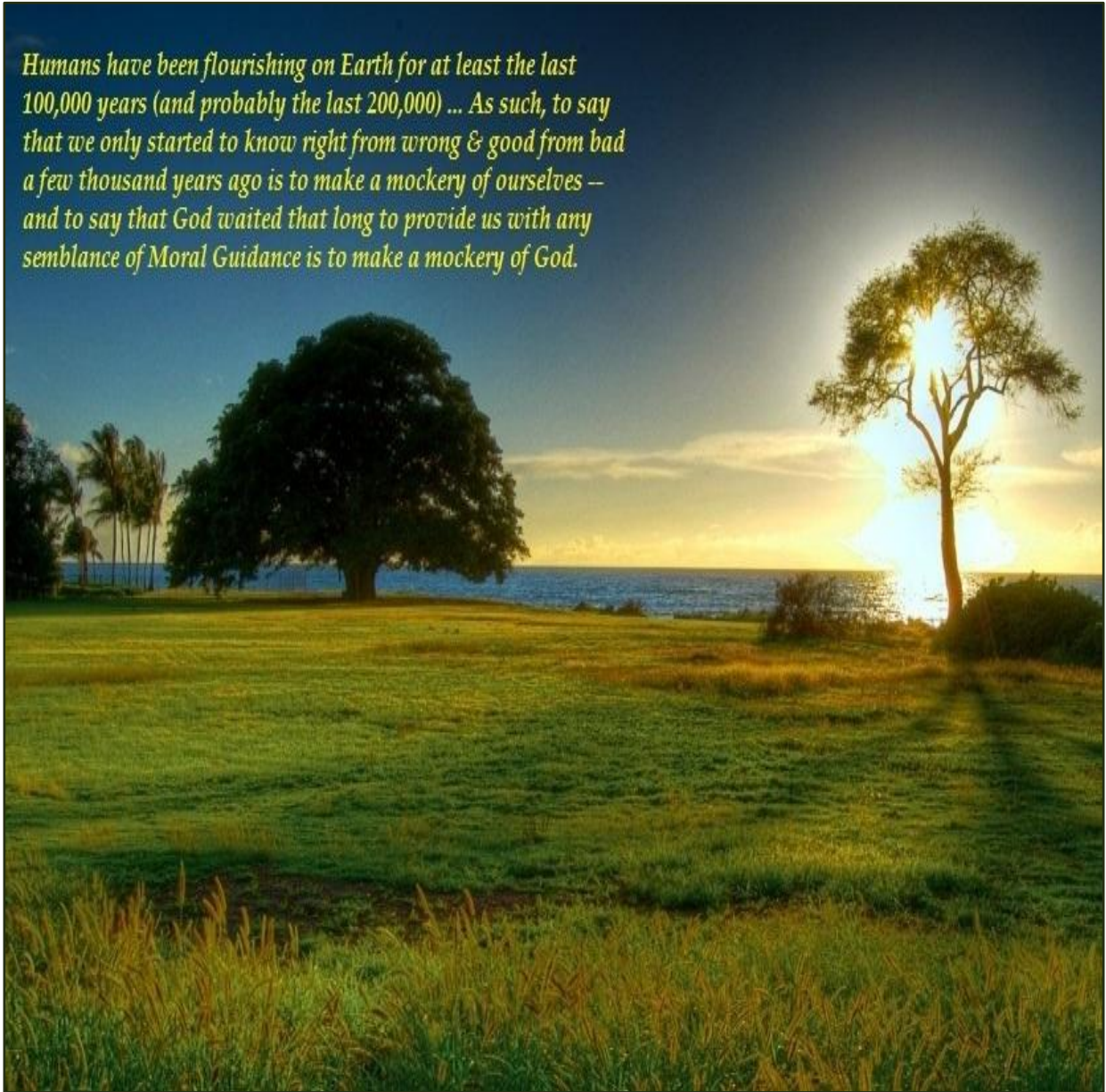
If there is no room in your religion for the open & unconditional Respect of the religious beliefs of others, then your religion is just as much of a problem as theirs ever could be.





"I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their Hearts ... And they shall no longer say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall ALL know me, from the least of them to the greatest. And I will be merciful toward all their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." ~ Hebrews 8:10-12

Humans have been flourishing on Earth for at least the last 100,000 years (and probably the last 200,000) ... As such, to say that we only started to know right from wrong & good from bad a few thousand years ago is to make a mockery of ourselves – and to say that God waited that long to provide us with any semblance of Moral Guidance is to make a mockery of God.





Justin

@shitmydadsays



Follow

"We ain't a sharp species. We kill each other over arguments about what happens when you die, then fail to see the ~~fuckin~~g irony in that."

"It would be almost unbelievable, if history did not record the tragic fact, that men have gone to war and cut each other's throats because they could not agree as to what was to become of them after their throats were cut."

- Walter P. Stacy (1925-1951)

"And Jesus wept -- again, & again, & again, & again."

(John 11:35)

God raptures the faithful

...taking all the religious people away to heaven



suddenly...



Peace on Earth

"It is impossible for our limited minds to grasp the infinite One. So the finite mind takes hold of the infinitesimal part of the infinite that it can understand and says 'This is God!' ... It's like ten thousand people going to the ocean with ten thousand different containers and lifting their own cup of the same seawater."

~ inspired by Satchidananda

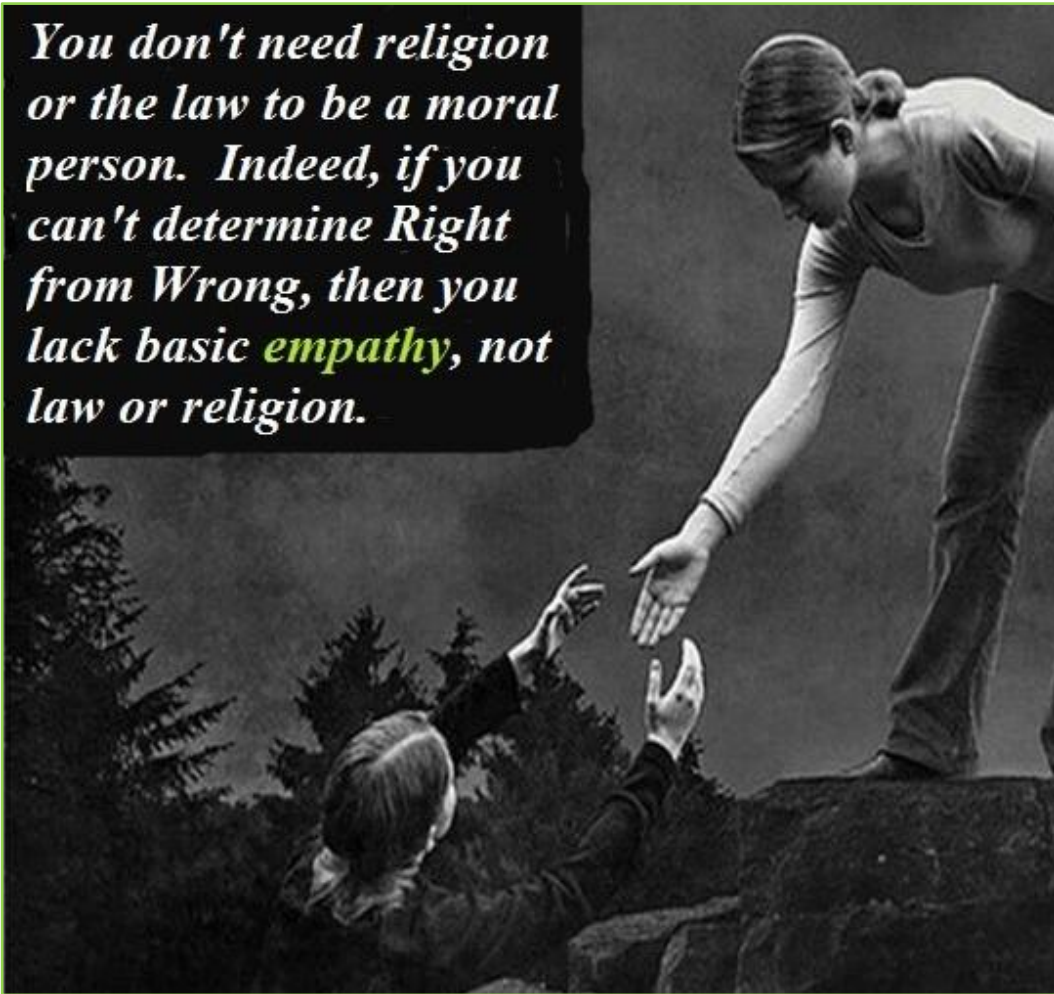


Religion is a guy sitting in church thinking about surfing ...

Spirituality is a guy out surfing feeling at One with God.



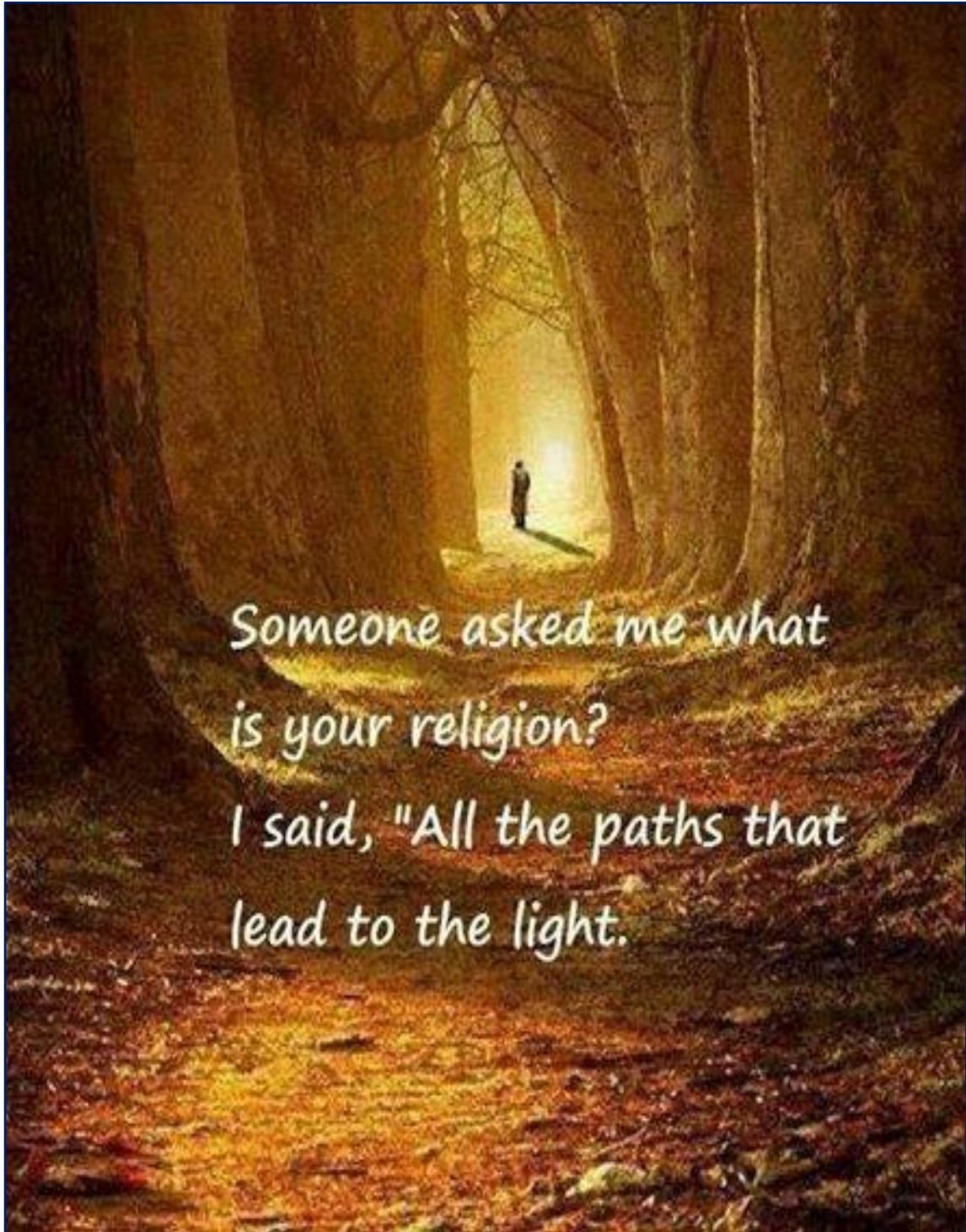
*You don't need religion
or the law to be a moral
person. Indeed, if you
can't determine Right
from Wrong, then you
lack basic **empathy**, not
law or religion.*



So many gods, so
many creeds;
So many paths
that wind
and wind,
While just
the art of
being kind
Is all the
sad world
needs.

*Ella Wheeler
Wilcox
(1850-1919)*





*Someone asked me what
is your religion?*

*I said, "All the paths that
lead to the light."*

Chapter 04) on Religion vs. Science

And God said...

$$\oiint \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{s} = \frac{Q}{\epsilon_0}$$

$$\oiint \vec{B} \cdot d\vec{s} = 0$$

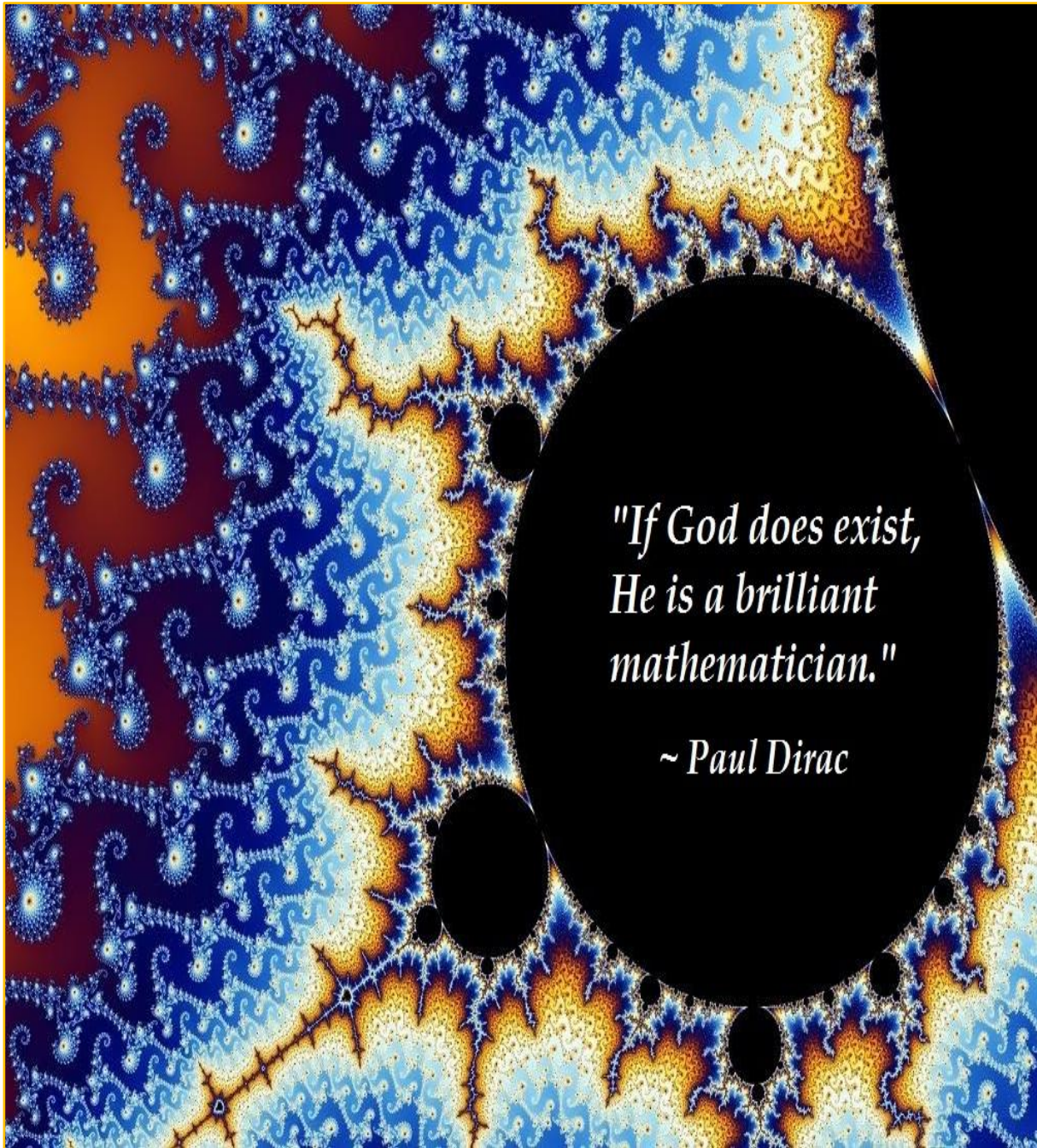
$$\oint \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{l} = - \oiint \frac{\partial \vec{B}}{\partial t}$$

$$\oint \vec{H} \cdot d\vec{l} = i + \epsilon \frac{\partial \vec{B}}{\partial t}$$

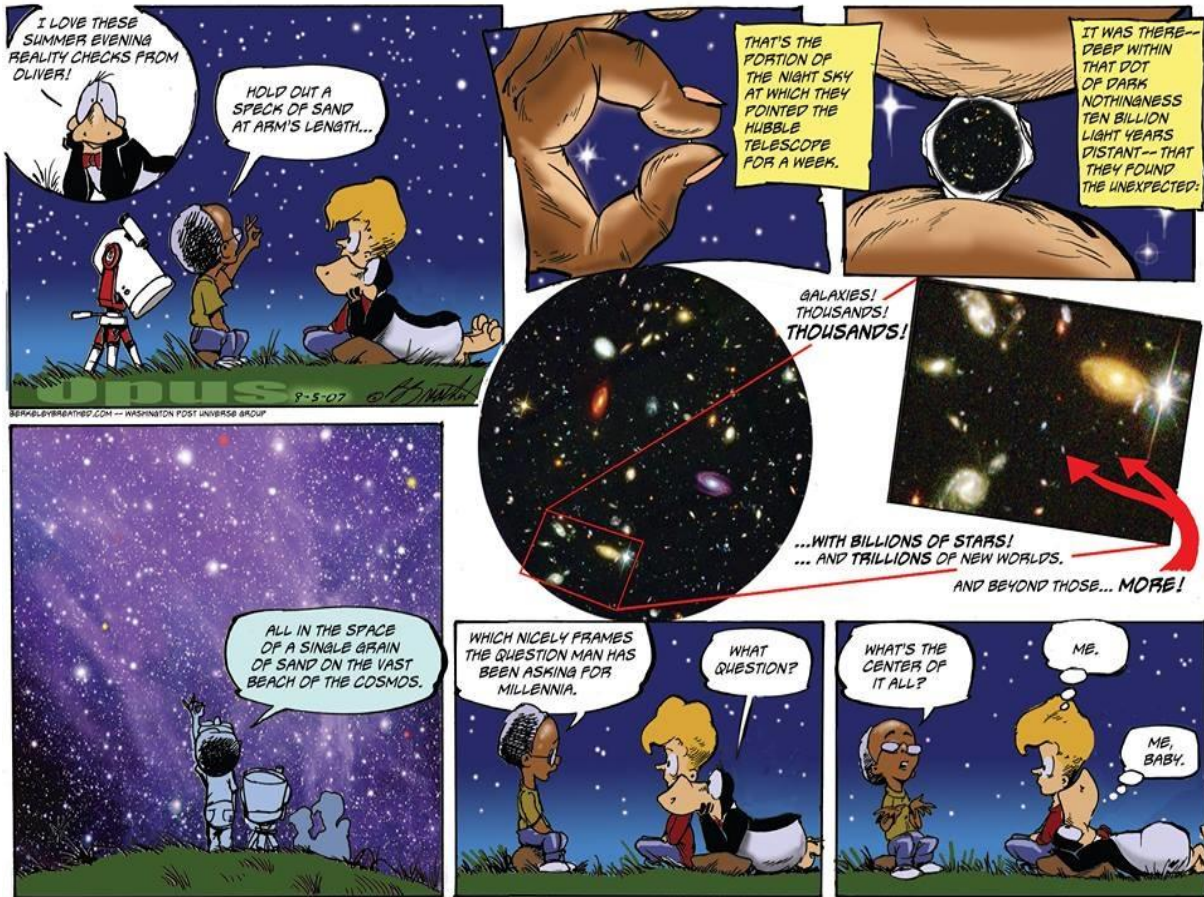
...and there was light.

Remember that there
is no greater Light
than your **LOVE** ...

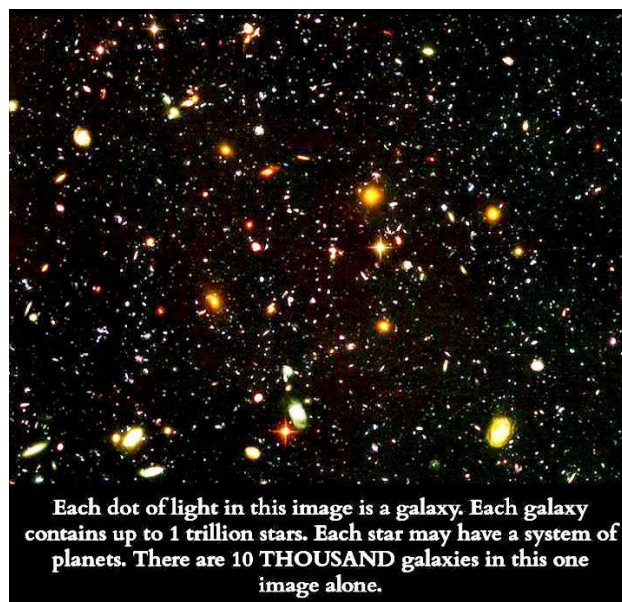
let it *Shine*



2007



In all those moments we are acting primarily for our own benefit, we are indeed lost beyond measure ... And yet in all those moments we are Joy-fully sacrificing for another, we become the true Center of the Cosmos.



IT BAFFLES ME
WHY AN OMNIPOTENT CREATOR
WOULD CREATE AN ENTIRE GALAXY

FOR HIS CHOSEN CHILDREN TO INHABIT ONLY
0.00000000000000000000000015% OF IT'S AREA,
FOR ONLY 0.00004% OF IT'S HISTORY

This meme in no way disproves the potential existence of a God who created the Universe, and yet it most certainly *does* expose the great likelihood (if such a God does indeed exist) that we are almost certainly not alone herein.

Philosophy is like being in a dark warehouse looking for a black cat ...

Metaphysics is like being in a dark warehouse looking for a black cat who isn't there ...

Theology is like being in a dark warehouse looking for a black cat by following the cues of blindfolded "experts" ...

Religion is like being in a dark warehouse looking for a black cat and then screaming "I found it!" after hearing a mouse ...

Science is like being in a dark warehouse looking for a black cat using a flashlight and then claiming to have found it after seeing the mouse's shadow.





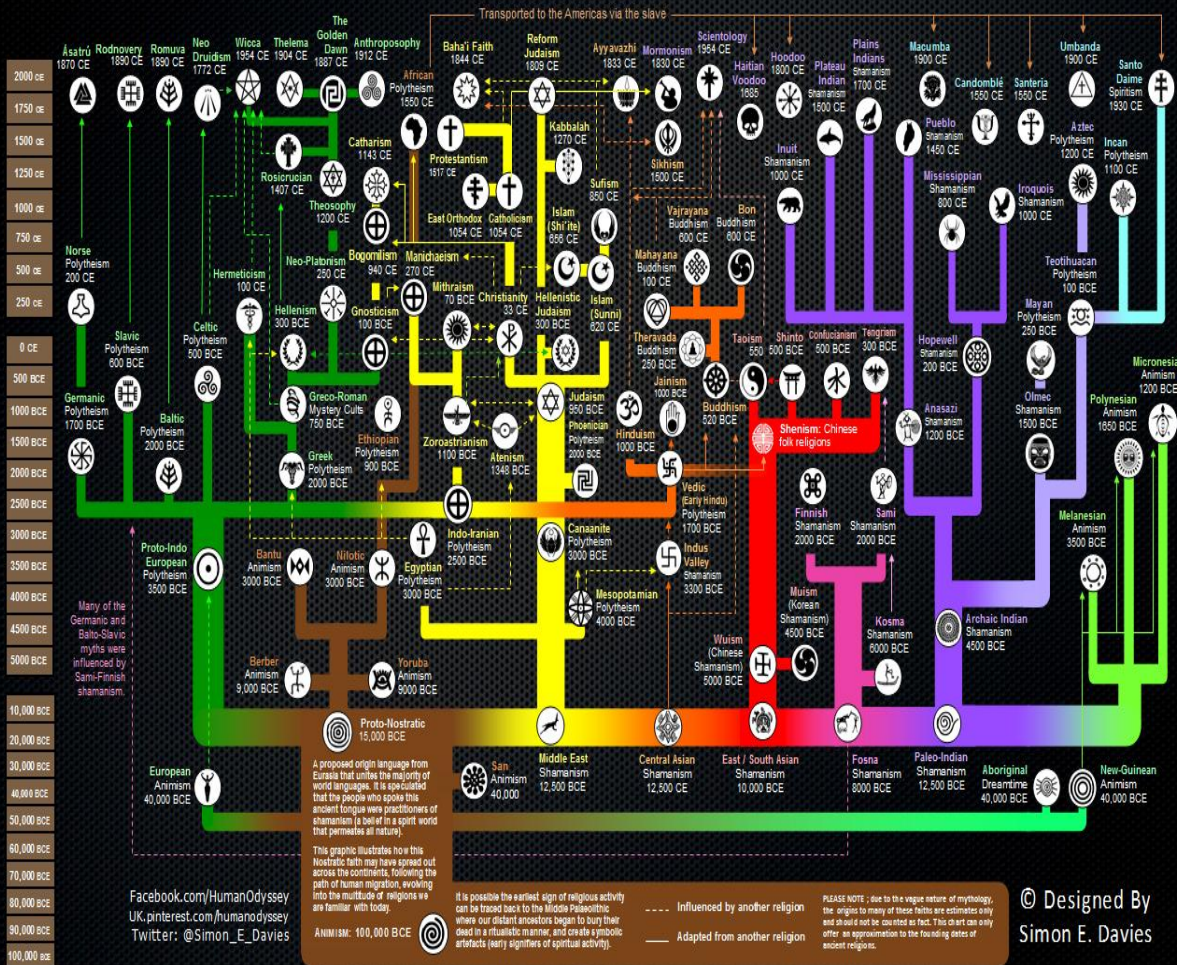
God
@TheGoodGodAbove

Religion had its chance to run the world:
It's called THE DARK AGES.



THE EVOLUTIONARY TREE OF RELIGION (Faith, Myths & Mysticism) v 2.0

European African Middle East Indian East Asian Arctic N. American Central / Mesoamerica S. American New Guinean / Australian Oceanic



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Morality is doing what is Right, often despite what you are told; **Religion** is doing what you are told, often despite what is Right.

The fact of the matter is that Morality does **not** come from religion ... Did the followers of Moses really not know it was wrong to steal and rape and murder before he came down from Mt. Sinai carrying the Ten Commandments written in stone? Of course they did! We humans are herd animals, and as such innately understand that to Care for those in need is Right and that to cause others unnecessary suffering is Wrong.

Indeed, if you need the promise of a heavenly reward to extend respect & compassion to others, then you lack empathy, not religion. And similarly, if you need the threat of damnation or hellfire to keep you from being selfish or cruel, then you lack a sense of basic decency & integrity ... not religion.

(via Eugene Ramirez)

The good parts of your morality do not come from your religion
... The good parts of your religion come from your Morality.



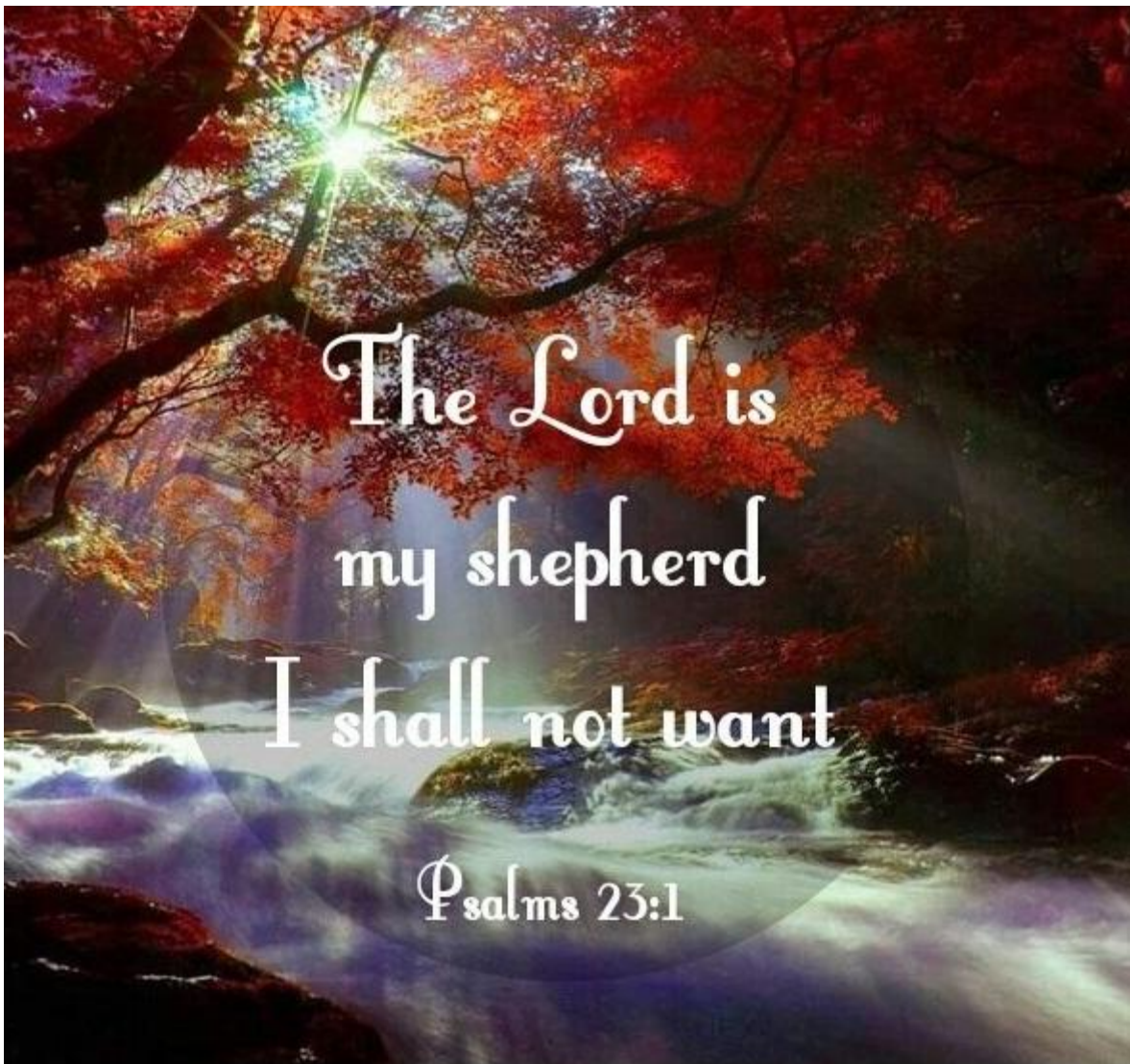
"My youngest son has a very simple formula for comparing and evaluating the various religions. According to him, whatever their other differences and similarities, religions fall into one of two basic categories: those that encourage their adherents to earnestly engage life's Great Questions (good), and those that hand their believers fixed and inflexible answers (bad) ... It's quite the handy guide." ~ via Sheila Kennedy



"It is customary to blame secular science and anti-religious philosophy for the eclipse of religion in modern society, and yet it would be far more honest to blame religion for its own defeats. Indeed, religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became dull, oppressive, immoral, and insipid. And this is perfectly understandable, for when faith is replaced by dogmatic certainty, when worship is replaced by bland habit, when Love is replaced by vapid greed; when the crises of today are ignored because of the hollow splendors of yesteryear; when salvation becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain -- when religion speaks only in the booming shout of tyrannical authority rather than with the gentle voice of merciful compassion, then religion's message has become meaningless and religion's place in society has become a danger."

~ inspired by Abraham J. Heschel

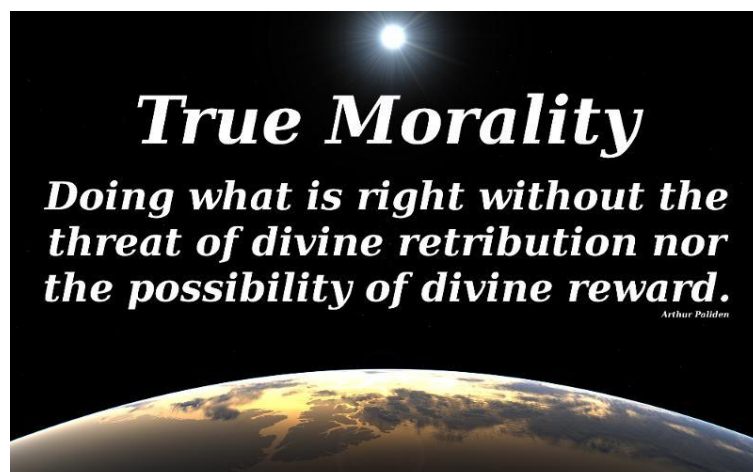
Chapter 05) on Faith & Believing



For those following *The Way of Christ*, the Lord is known as perfect **LOVE** ... And for those enlivening that **LOVE**, there can be no want or desire ... And for those without want or desire, Kindness rules each moment ... And when Kindness rules the moment, the shadow of death flees & fades, and it becomes impossible to stray into fear or darkness.



"If you are doing your works to somehow prove or show or enliven your own religious faith, then you aren't doing real Works of Faith at all ... For real & true Faith is always what we DO for others, not something we strive to have within (or maintain for) ourselves." ~ anonymous









*Real & true **Belief** is remembering that every moment is a chance to start anew; that every moment is a chance to **Love** again ...*





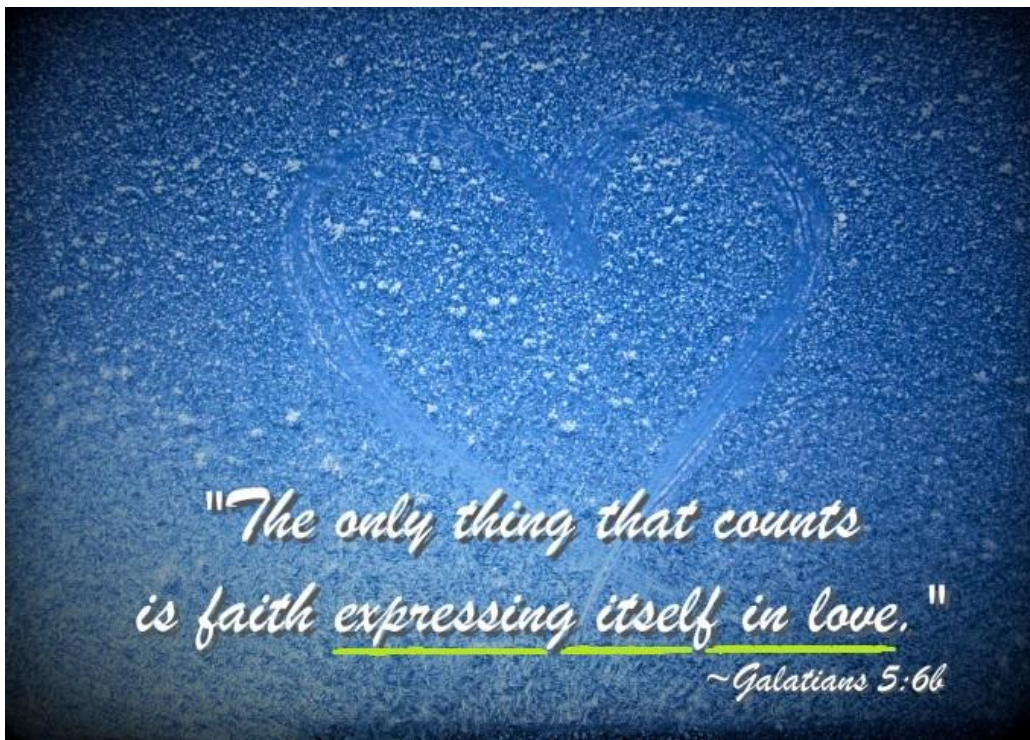
"Blessed are those who soften what is rigid in their bodies and minds; for they shall receive support & sustenance from the founding forces of Creation." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:5 – from the Aramaic)

NOTE: The word usually translated as "meek" in Matthew 5:5 more accurately means "those who soften what is rigid" ... "Ar'ah" (read in most English Bibles as "Earth") can mean all of natural creation/the environment ... The Aramaic language also blurs the distinction between inner and outer, hence "in bodies and minds" ... "Inherit" is actually "to receive sustenance and strength from" ... Also, there is no "good" and "evil" here; only "ripe" or "unripe" ... Aramaic was the mother tongue of Jesus, and was in all probability the language he used during many of his sermons.

*"Humility doesn't mean thinking less of yourself,
it means thinking of yourself less." ~ C. S. Lewis*



(Matthew 18:3-4 + Matthew 23:12)



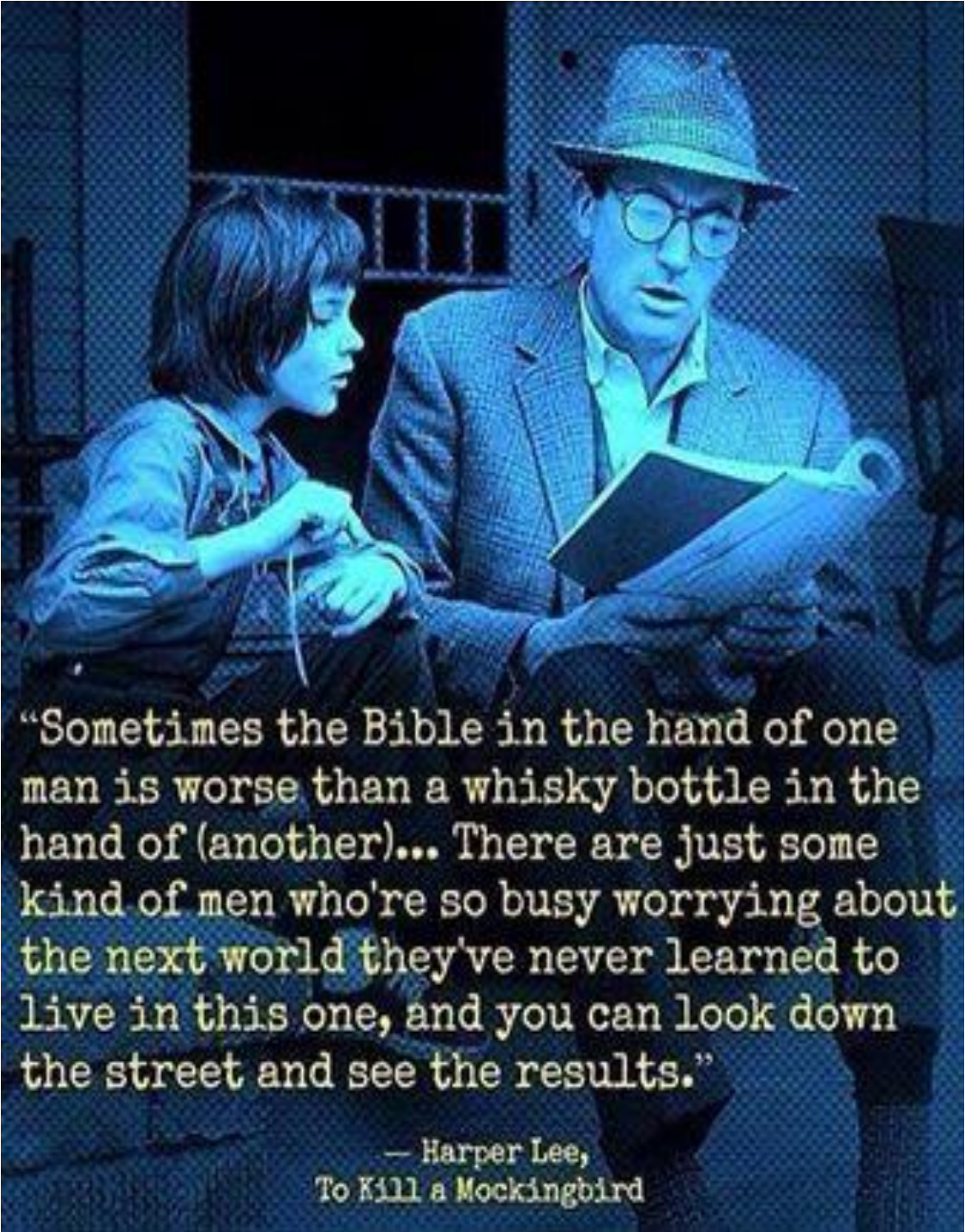
Chapter 06) on Religion & Politics



In this one picture -- exposing only a tiny portion of the night sky -- there are billions upon billions of worlds; a spectacular array of diverse & wondrous solar systems, many of which are almost certainly inhabited by civilizations at least as advanced as our own ... **And yet** here we are on Earth; a single, tiny, moist rock, orbiting an average-sized star in a remote, outback arm of a quite modest spiral galaxy, still warring to this very day over which pseudo-literate, ancient Middle Eastern sect penned the more accurate account of the creation of the Cosmos ... Seriously, you'd think we would have realized by now that there are so many far more important things to be considering.



"When Jesus comes back I sure hope he doesn't land in America. Being a progressive rabbi from the Middle East, teaching a message that is anti-war and anti-rich, all while claiming that the poor are the ones who are blessed and that those who don't welcome immigrants and forgive criminals will be excluded from his Kingdom ... Heck, current Christian leaders in the U.S. would probably have him immediately deported." ~ via Benjamin Corey

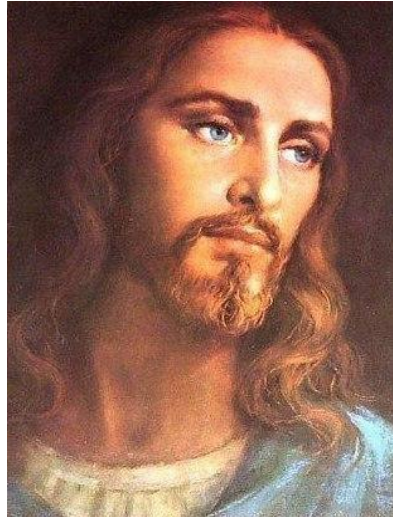


“Sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whisky bottle in the hand of (another)... There are just some kind of men who're so busy worrying about the next world they've never learned to live in this one, and you can look down the street and see the results.”

— Harper Lee,
To Kill a Mockingbird



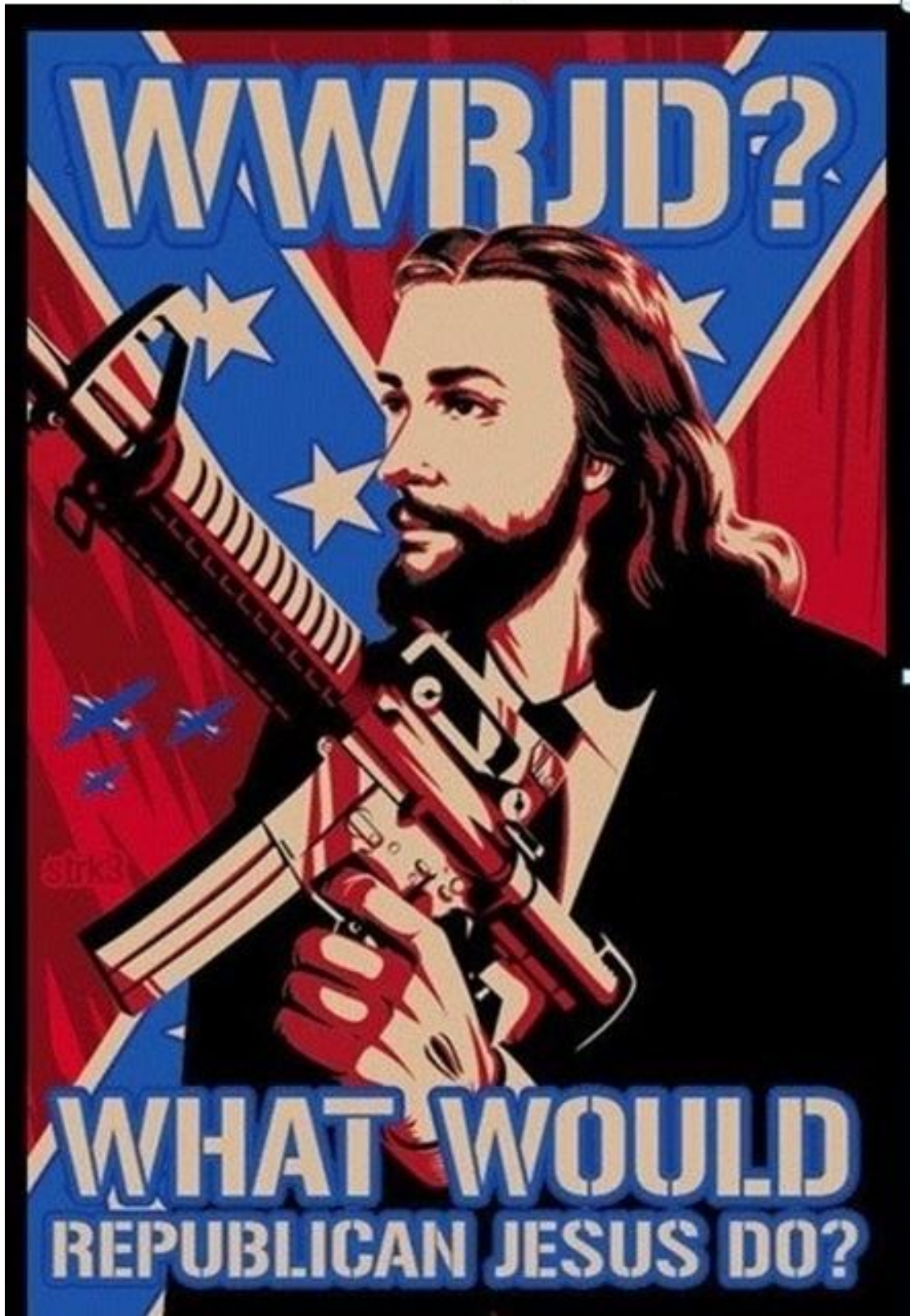
When zealous arrogance and empowered corruption meet, massive suffering is reborn.



"You were hungry and thirsty, so I eliminated funding for Meals On Wheels and food banks. You were a stranger, so I vilified you and demanded that you be deported. You were naked, so I called you an evil liberal who hates conservative family values. You were sick, so I repealed your only hope for health care. You were in prison, so I tortured you."

— Matthew 25.31-46 in
The Conservative Bible

A ridiculous Question ...



And an awesome Answer ...

JESUS WAS A RADICAL
NONVIOLENT REVOLUTIONARY
WHO HUNG AROUND WITH LEPERS
HOOKERS AND CROOKS; WASN'T
AMERICAN AND NEVER SPOKE
ENGLISH; WAS ANTI-WEALTH
ANTI-DEATH PENALTY ANTI-PUBLIC
PRAYER (M 6:5); BUT WAS NEVER
ANTI-GAY, NEVER MENTIONED
ABORTION OR BIRTH CONTROL,
NEVER CALLED THE POOR LAZY,
NEVER JUSTIFIED TORTURE,
NEVER FOUGHT FOR TAX CUTS
FOR THE WEALTHIEST NAZARENES,
NEVER ASKED A LEPER FOR A COPAY;
AND WAS A LONG-HAIRED BROWN-
SKINNED HOMELESS COMMUNITY-
ORGANIZING ANTI-SLUT-SHAMING
MIDDLE EASTERN JEW.

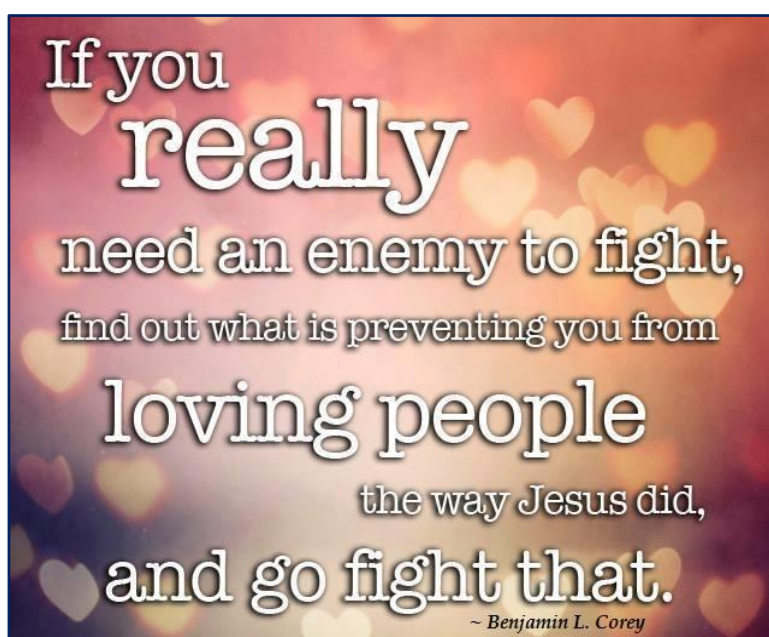
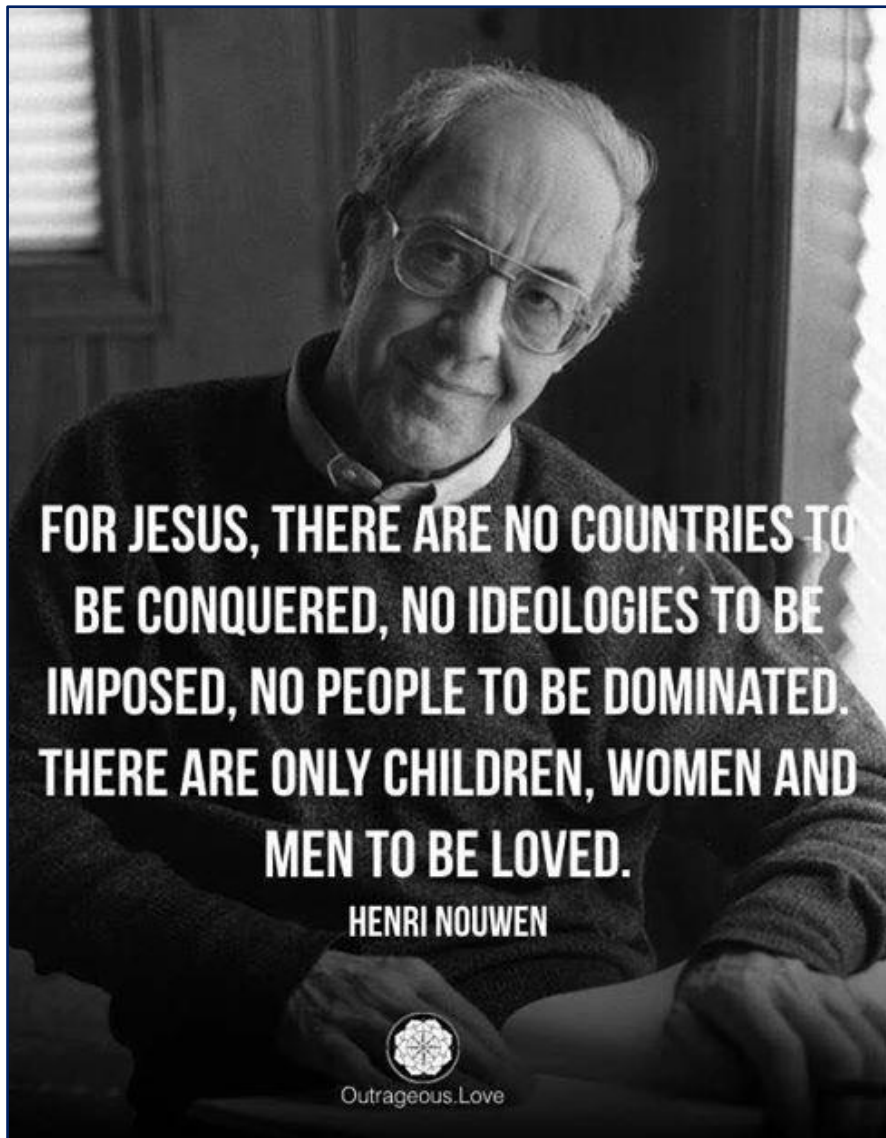
@JohnFugelsang



"When a foreigner resides amongst you, you shall not oppress or mistreat them. The foreigner who resides amongst you shall be treated as though native-born. Indeed you shall Love them the same as your own, for you too were once foreigners in the land of Egypt ... I am the Lord your God." ~ Leviticus 19:33-34

(You know, if even Leviticus says we should be kind to immigrants, maybe conservative Christians should step up to the plate and act accordingly.)





Chapter 07) on Inerrancy (& “believing every word”)

The Failure of Inerrancy ...



"I told some conservative friends the other day that their belief in an 'inerrant Bible' is just as subjective as my belief in a beautifully poetic and often highly metaphorical Bible, but they just couldn't see it. Indeed, no matter how many times I point out the fact that there truly are multiple equally valid interpretations of the scriptures, they keep shouting the same refrain: that their position rests on objective Truth while mine is mere subjective theory. These folks and other evangelicals like them actually believe that they are the only rational ones; that they are the only ones who have managed to interpret the Bible correctly. This is the most fundamental fallacy of the wildly errant stance that is Christian fundamentalism ... Indeed, it is actually an insult to the Bible itself to be a fundamentalist in this regard. It thumbs its nose at the humble Way of Christ, and it chases many away from the Bible by preventing them from appreciating its innate Wisdoms intelligently." ~ inspired by Charles Queen & Fred Clark



"There is a thread that runs through the Bible from beginning to end that emphasizes (or better stated, that warns about) the fact that we humans can easily delude ourselves into thinking that we are especially biblical, or especially right, or especially moral, or especially whatever -- when in fact we are not ... Yet it is precisely those who most avidly proclaim their 'devout' character &/or their 'biblical' beliefs -- and who most emphasize that theirs is the way that everyone else should also follow, who tend to be the LEAST open to learning, the LEAST open to awakening, and the LEAST open to being shown that they are indeed not walking along The Way of Christ."
 ~ inspired by Jesus & J. McGrath



GOD the Father
 @HeavenisHere&Now

"The Bible was written by dozens of men (and more than a few women) over thousands of years; all of whom *believed* to have been divinely inspired, and yet none of whom actually were perfectly so ... As such, especially where the Scriptures are concerned, it is very important to remember that OPINIONS ARE NOT FACTS ... Thanks." ~ God



*According to more than a few biblical chronologists, the Earth was completely flooded by God around 2350 BC, with only four human couples surviving that devastating catastrophe ...

*According to the vast majority of archaeologists, the Great Pyramids of Egypt were built several hundreds of years before this "Great Flood", and yet somehow managed to survive intact ...

*To counter this scientific claim, many conservative Christians postulate that these archaeologists are not correct -- stating that the Great Pyramids were actually built 100-150 years after The Flood occurred ...

*Even assuming that the latter hypothesis is true, we are still left to wonder the following: How did the 4 couples who survived The Flood produce enough offspring in only 150 years to build the Pyramids?

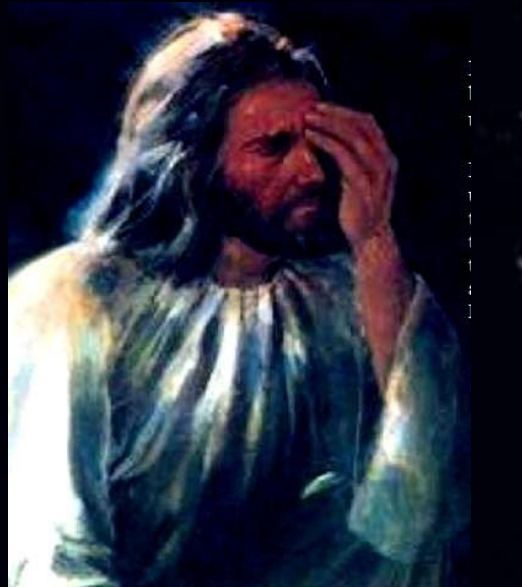


Many fundamentalist Christians -- you know, those who claim to take the words of the Bible "literally" -- believe that the Universe is only around 7500 years old (about 2.7 millions days) ... Well, considering that light from the spiral galaxy that is *closest* to the Milky Way takes over 2.5 million *years* to reach the Earth, and seeing as how we would therefore not even be able to see that galaxy at all had not at least that amount of time already passed, it goes without saying that those fundamentalists can only be correct when every "day" in the Bible actually means "at least 338 days, but probably a lot more" ... *literally*.

FACT: Jesus was conceived by -- and was born to -- an unwed mother (Matthew 1:18) ...

FACT: "Those born of illicit unions shall not be admitted to the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the Lord" ~ Deuteronomy 23:2

Well, I'd say that certainly qualifies as a major "Oops" moment, don't you?



The Holy Bible -- a most Immoral Guide ...

For those Christians who claim to "worship the whole Bible"; believing it to be "literally true" in its entirety, and using its texts to justify their support of war &/or their denigration of women &/or their condemnation of homosexuals (etc etc), you would do well to realize that the Bible also quite clearly & quite openly justifies the following choices as well:

***mass murder** (1 Chronicles 21, Deuteronomy 3, Joshua 6, Judges 21 & 2 Kings 10:18-27) ...

***sexual enslavement** (Exodus 21:1-11) ...

***child abuse** (Judges 11:29-40 & Isaiah 13:16) ...

***infanticide** (Hosea 13:16 & Psalms 137:9) ...

***rape** (Numbers 31:17, Deuteronomy 20:10-14 & Judges 5:30) ...

***& slavery** (Ephesians 6:5 et al).

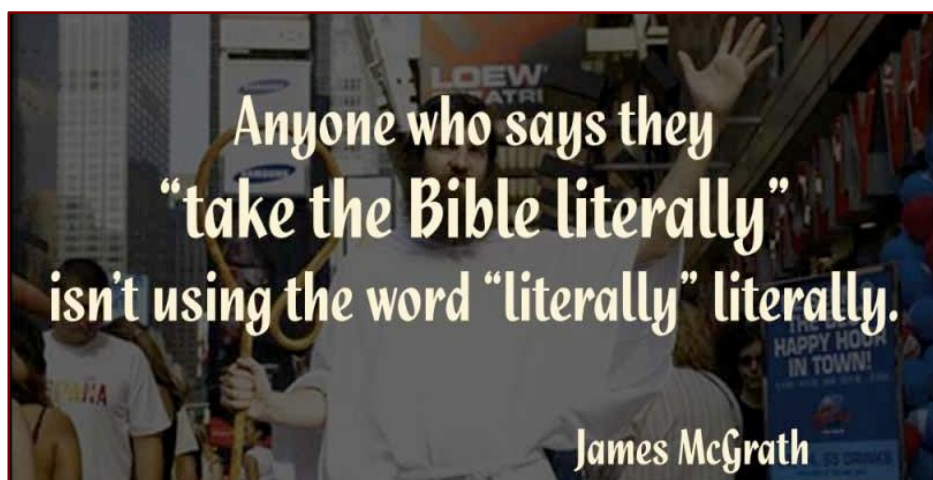
Now don't get me wrong -- there *is* quite a bit of the good and the wondrous in the Bible. It's just that using it to justify your personal bigotries &/or uphold your personal prejudices against others will only end up outing you as being either a hypocrite or a sociopath ...

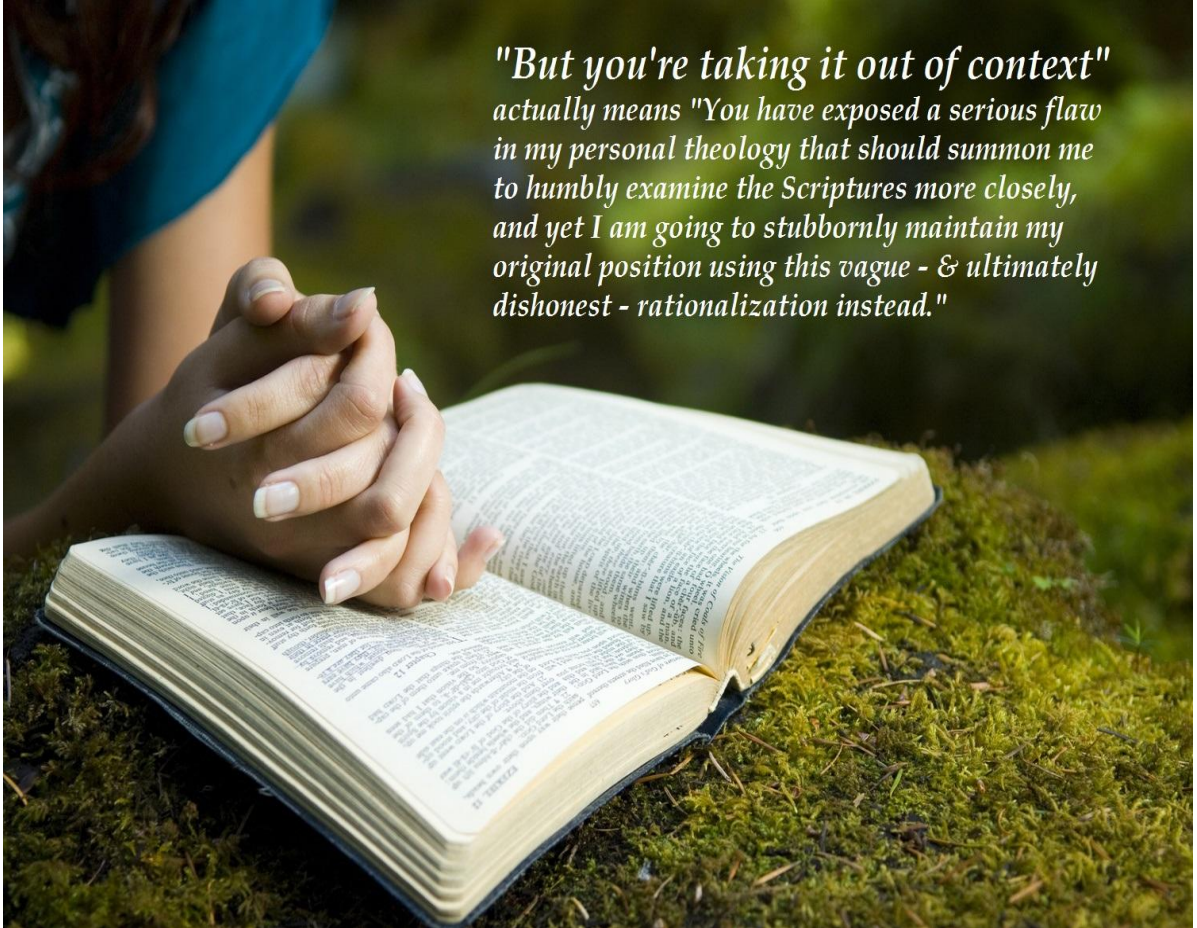
Peace to all instead.



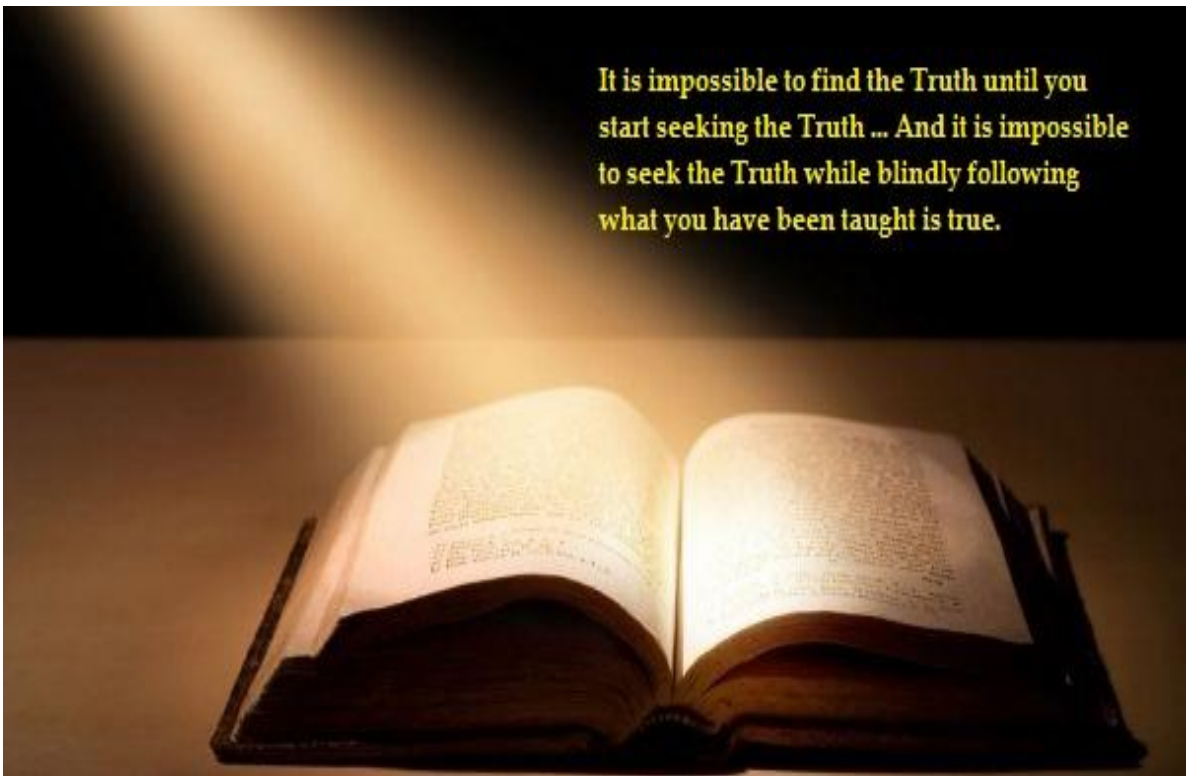
"Actually, biblical inerrancy is only used to indirectly defend one's own sins -- either those that seek to enslave others, or those that announce an arrogantly flawed exaltation of one's own thinking."

~ inspired by J. F. McGrath & Jesus Christ





"But you're taking it out of context" actually means "You have exposed a serious flaw in my personal theology that should summon me to humbly examine the Scriptures more closely, and yet I am going to stubbornly maintain my original position using this vague - & ultimately dishonest - rationalization instead."



It is impossible to find the Truth until you start seeking the Truth ... And it is impossible to seek the Truth while blindly following what you have been taught is true.



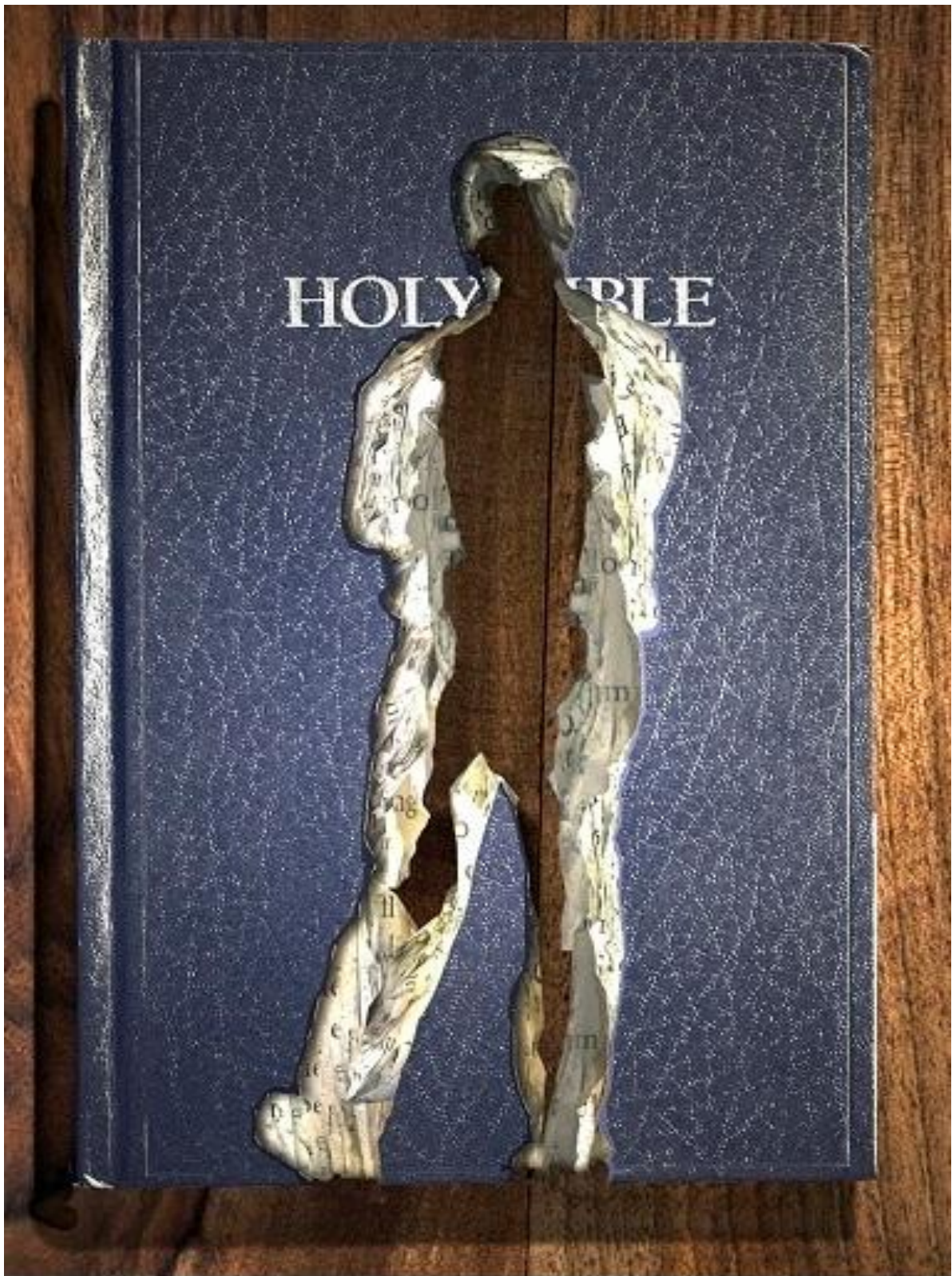
Seek.

SEEK
AND YOU
WILL
FIND;

MATTHEW 7:7

"To read the Bible as God's Word one must read it with his Heart in his eyes -- rising up onto his toes with an almost shortness of breath -- with the eager expectancy of overwhelming Goodness that should accompany any real conversation with God ...

For as one reads the Bible as a love letter is read, only then one reads it as the true Word of God." ~ via S. Kierkegaard



God is Love, and Love is a verb ... As such, God's Word can only be deeply understood while it is being Love-fully enlivened.

Surely God would not have given us the ability to reason and then demanded that we not use the same ... Surely He would not have given us the ability to innately KNOW right from wrong, and then have us abandon that gift in favor of intolerant bigotry and ignorant bias ... Surely not!

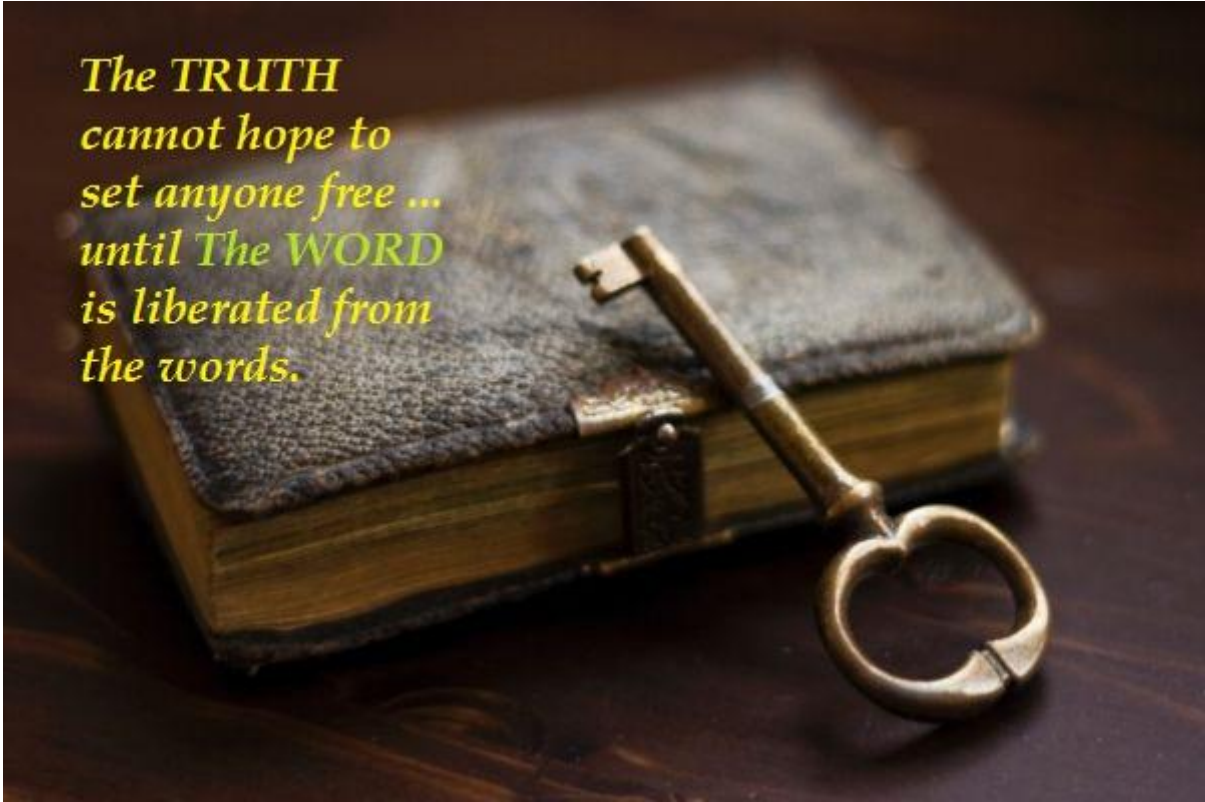


"Why do you not decide for yourself what is Right?" ~ Jesus (Luke 12:57)

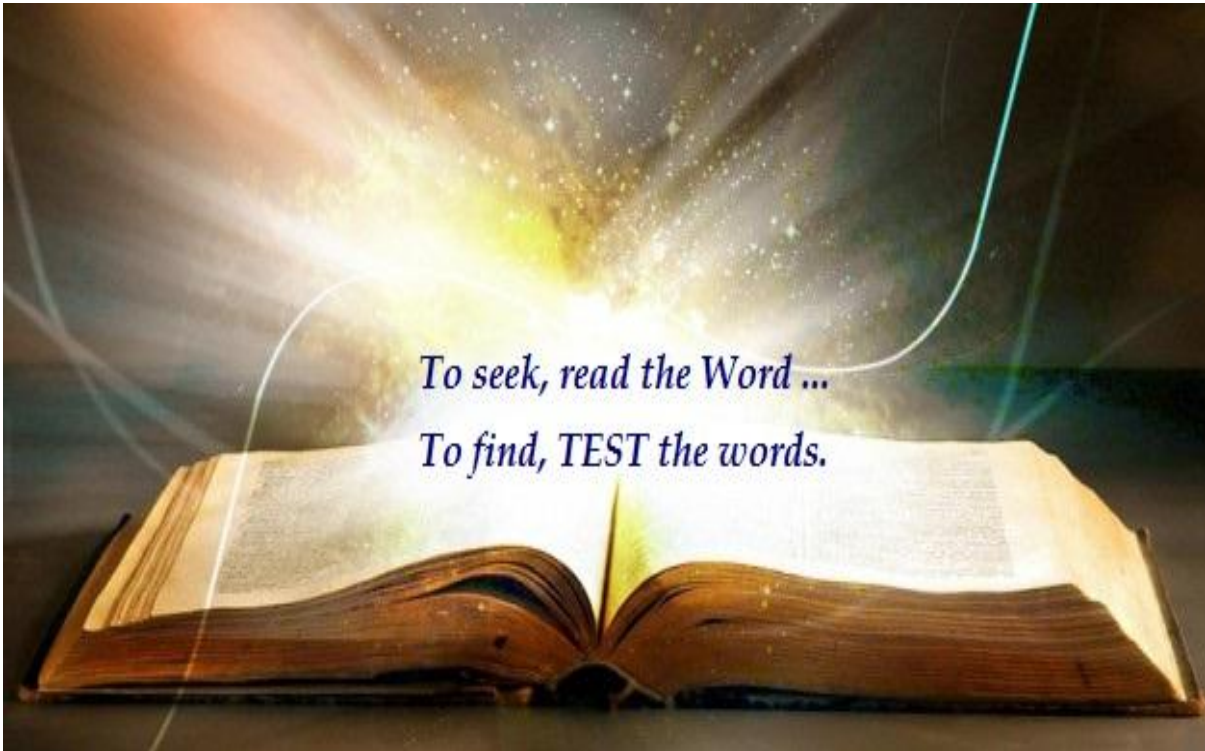


To truly comprehend any sacred scripture, it is necessary to find The Word within the words.

*The TRUTH
cannot hope to
set anyone free ...
until The WORD
is liberated from
the words.*



*To seek, read the Word ...
To find, TEST the words.*

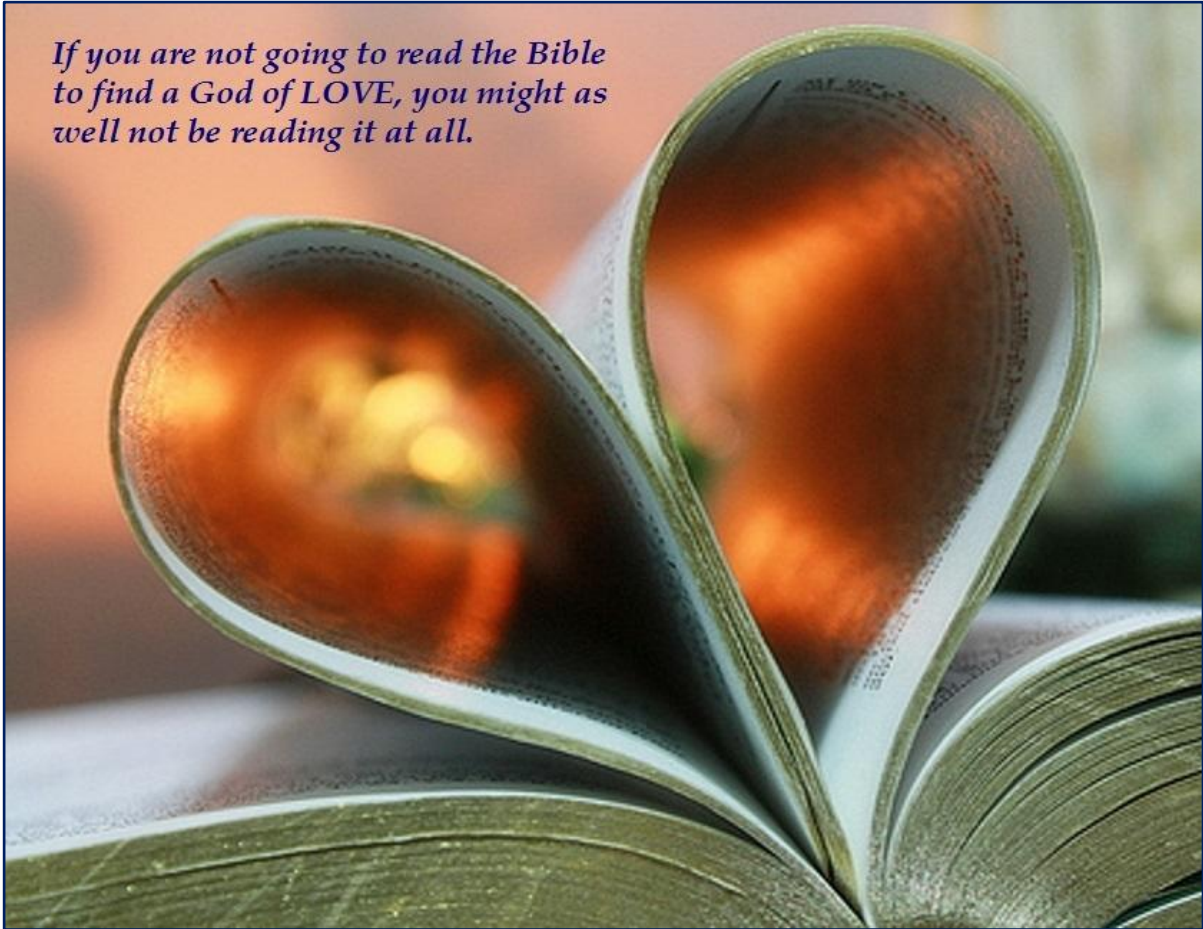


*If God Himself is perfect LOVE (Matthew 5:48),
then the Word of God must relay the same ...*



*And if the Bible is that same Word of God,
then it must be read Lovingly or not at all.*

If you are not going to read the Bible to find a God of LOVE, you might as well not be reading it at all.



Let thine heart be
commandments, and
5 Get wisdom, and
get it not: neither
of my mouth.
6 Forsake her and
serve thee: love
thee.
7 Wisdom is the
fore get wisdom: and
get understanding.
8 Forth have said

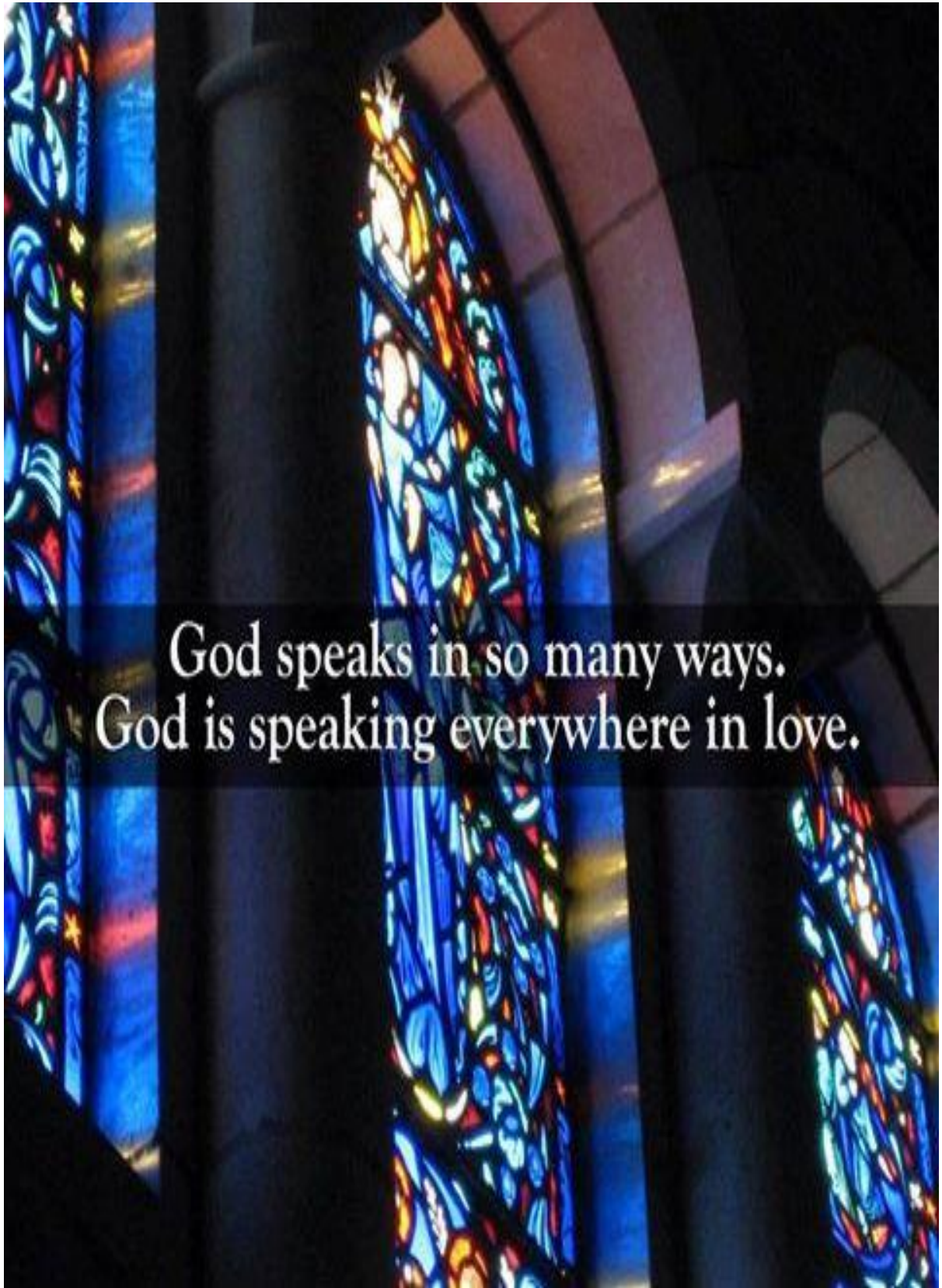
LOVE is the only word that really matters in the entire Bible ... as long as that word becomes a verb.

How do you know your Bible?
You read your Bible.

And how do you read your Bible?
You LIVE your Bible!

And how do you **LIVE** your Bible?
You choose to **LOVE** others!

~ Jesus Christ (John 5:39-40)



God speaks in so many ways.
God is speaking everywhere in love.

*Chapter 08) on The Way of Christ
(self-sacrifice & selfless Love)*

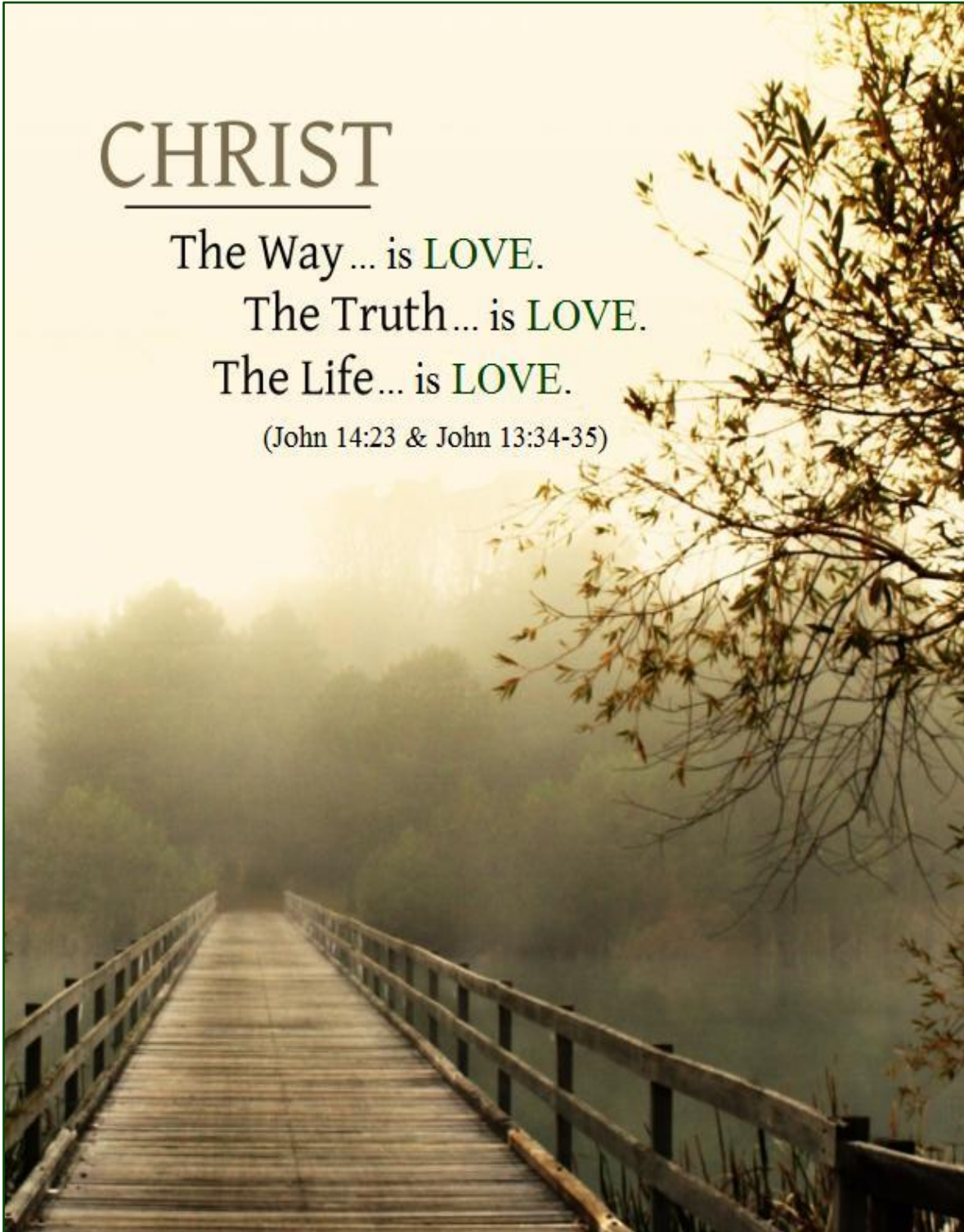
CHRIST

The Way ... is LOVE.

The Truth... is LOVE.

The Life... is LOVE.

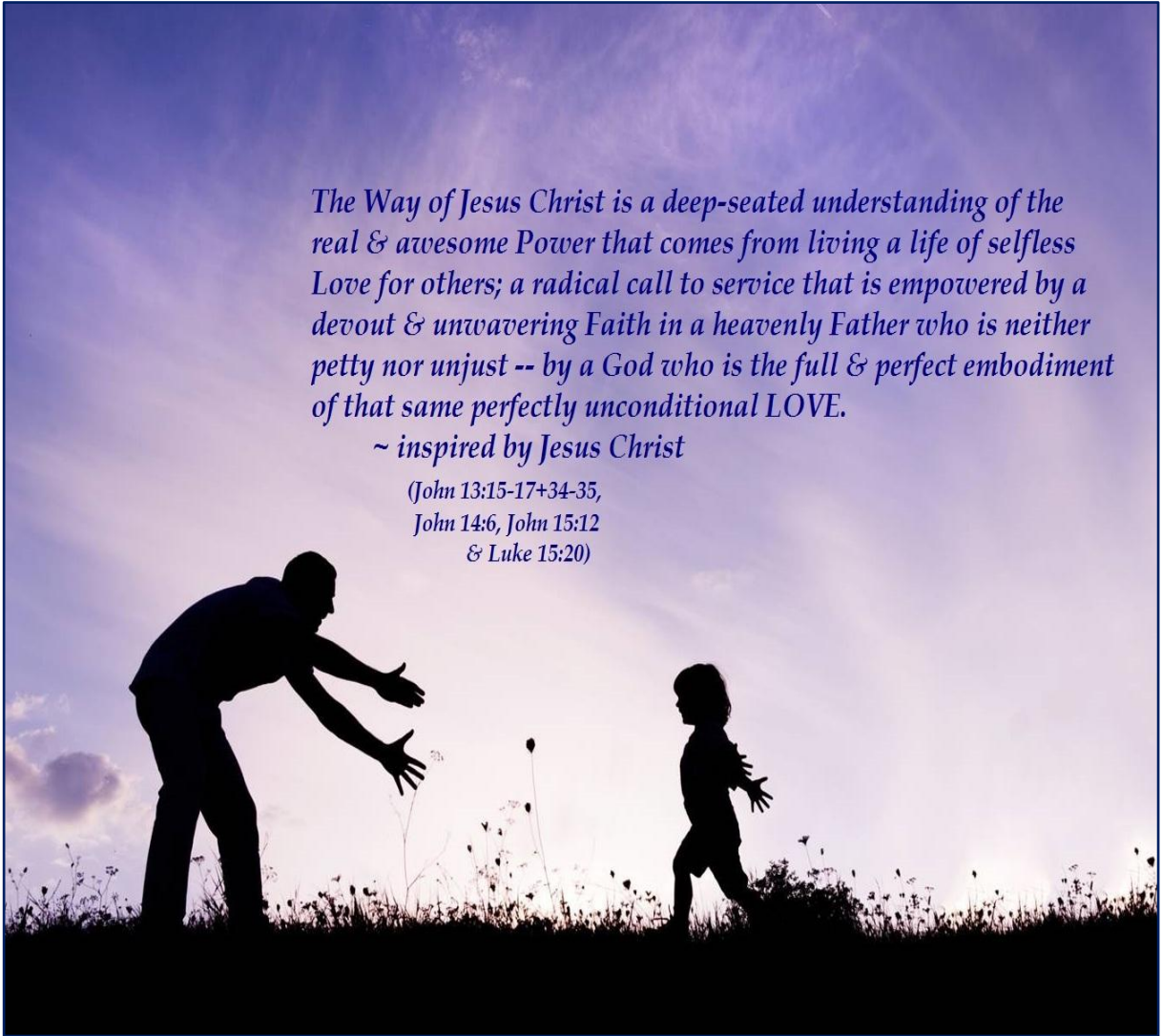
(John 14:23 & John 13:34-35)



The Way of Jesus Christ is a deep-seated understanding of the real & awesome Power that comes from living a life of selfless Love for others; a radical call to service that is empowered by a devout & unwavering Faith in a heavenly Father who is neither petty nor unjust -- by a God who is the full & perfect embodiment of that same perfectly unconditional LOVE.

~ inspired by Jesus Christ

*(John 13:15-17+34-35,
John 14:6, John 15:12
& Luke 15:20)*



*"Take a risk on messy. Live fearlessly.
Love recklessly. Most of all, just love."*

*Julie Johnson
(& Jesus Christ - Matthew 5:38-48)*





The Glory of the New Covenant

"The days are surely coming,' says the Lord, 'when I will establish a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not like the Covenant that I made with their ancestors ... And this is the Covenant that I will make with [them]: I will put my Law in their minds, and write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not reprimand one another or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall *all* know me -- from the least of them to the greatest. And I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.' ... Know that in speaking of "a New Covenant," He has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete will soon fade and disappear."

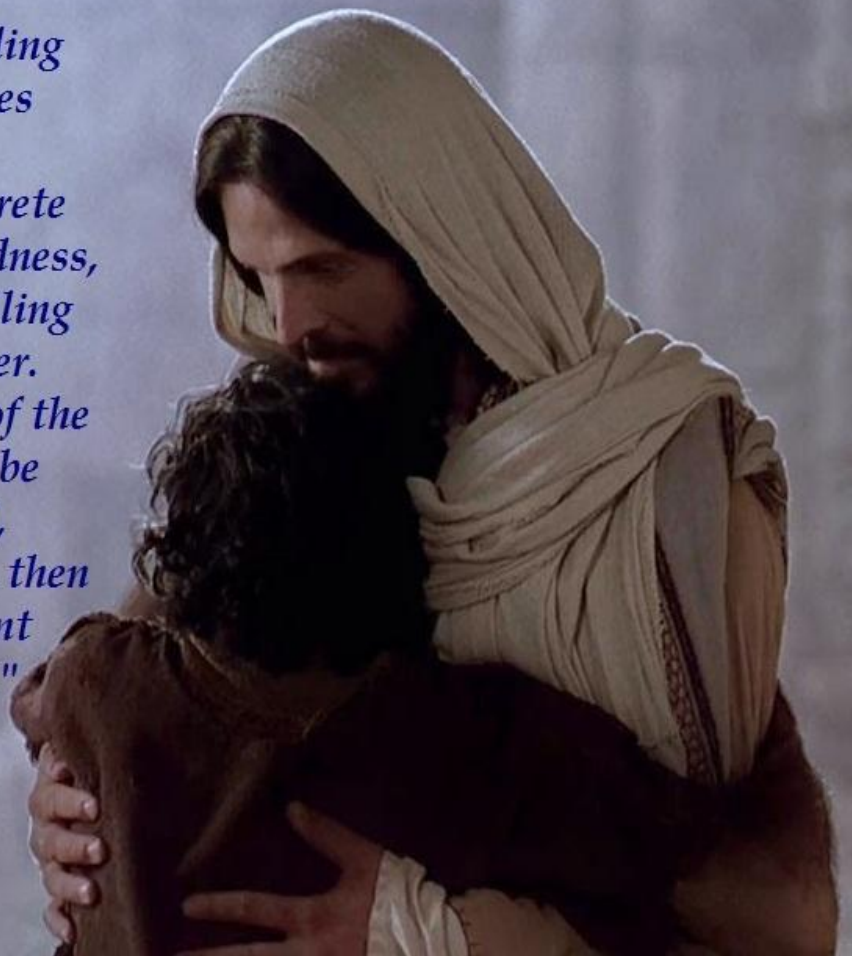
~ unknown (Hebrews 8:8-13)

"Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them ... And this is my commandment: that you *LOVE one another* just as I have loved you"

~ *Jesus* Christ (John 14:23 & John 15:12)

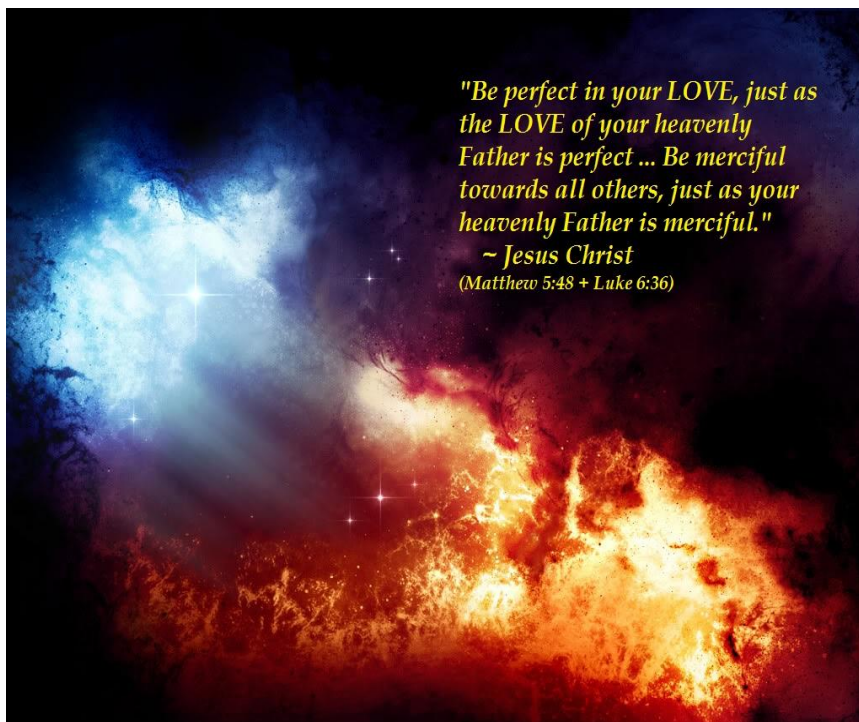
"If your understanding of the Divine inspires you to express compassion in concrete acts of Loving-Kindness, then you are full-filling the will of the Father. But if your notion of the Law tempts you to be unkind, judgmental, belligerent or cruel, then you are not a vibrant worshipper thereof."

*~ Jesus & K. Armstrong
(Matthew 5:17-18)*



"Be perfect in your LOVE, just as the LOVE of your heavenly Father is perfect ... Be merciful towards all others, just as your heavenly Father is merciful."

*~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 5:48 + Luke 6:36)*





"Do not be daunted by the ubiquity of the world's injustice or the enormity of its grief ... Do justly anyway -- Love mercy anyway -- Walk humbly & kindly anyway ... You are in no way obligated to engage this Great Work, of course, and yet neither are you completely free to abandon It without consequence." ~ via The Talmud



*But the path of the just is as
the shining light, that shineth
more and more unto the
perfect day.*

PROVERBS 4:18

(Remembering that "the path of the just" is always the path that is in perfect alignment with the perfect Love & the perfect Mercy of God.)



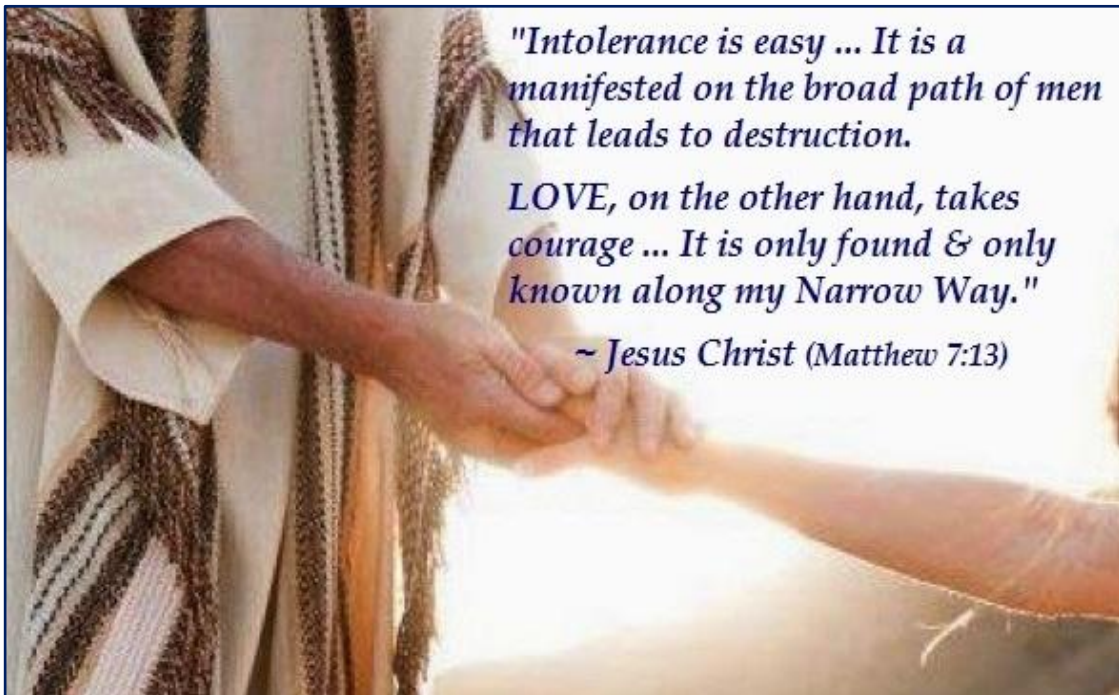
*To walk The Way with courage
is to reawaken the Soul ...
To LOVE others selflessly
is to walk that Noble Way.*



*Faith & Reason always meet at the
Crossroads called "Selfless LOVE" ...*



"I answered that question already -- both indirectly throughout my ministry, as well as directly in Matthew 10:7 & Matthew 24:12-14." ~ Jesus Christ

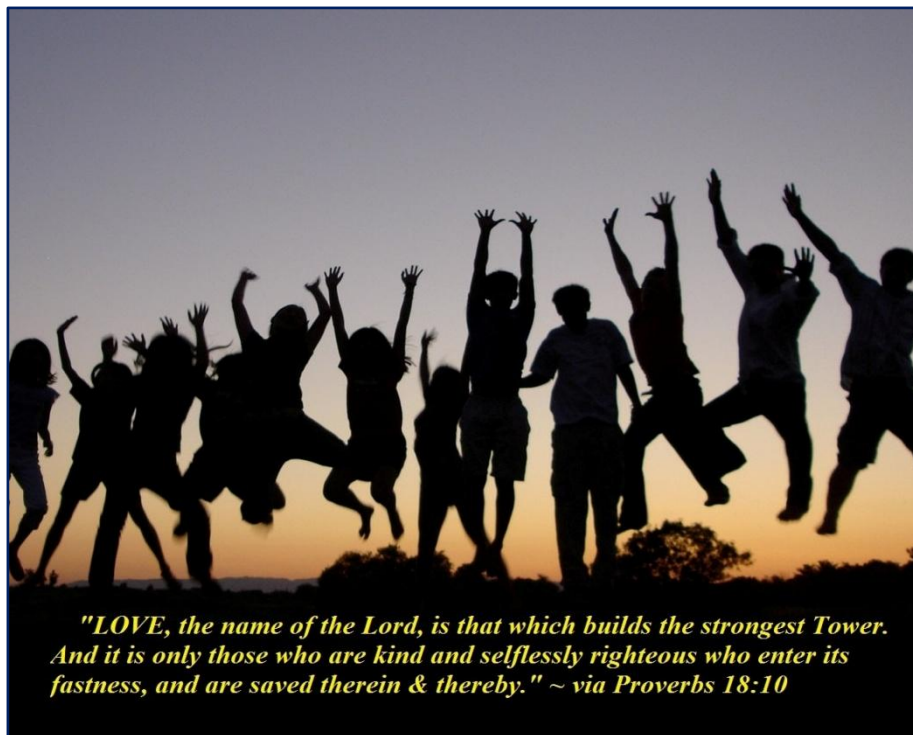






**"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
2 Corinthians 3:17**

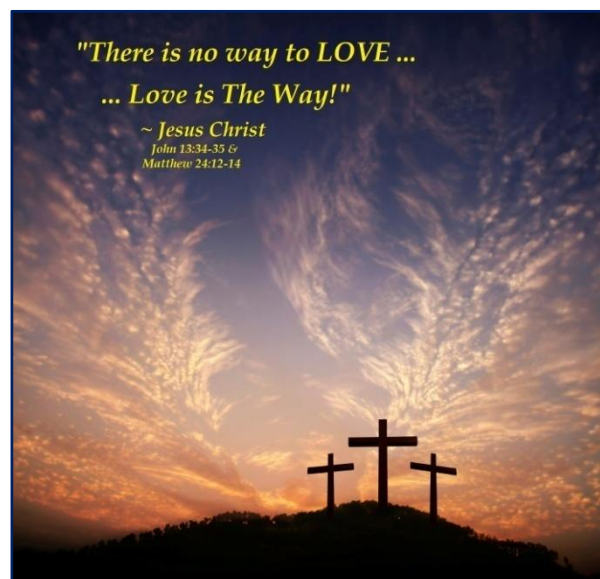
(This is **Truth** in-Deed, seeing as how the Spirit of the Lord is pure & perfect LOVE -- Matthew 5:48, and seeing as how such Divine LOVE must be fully volitional to be given; completely free in order to Be.)

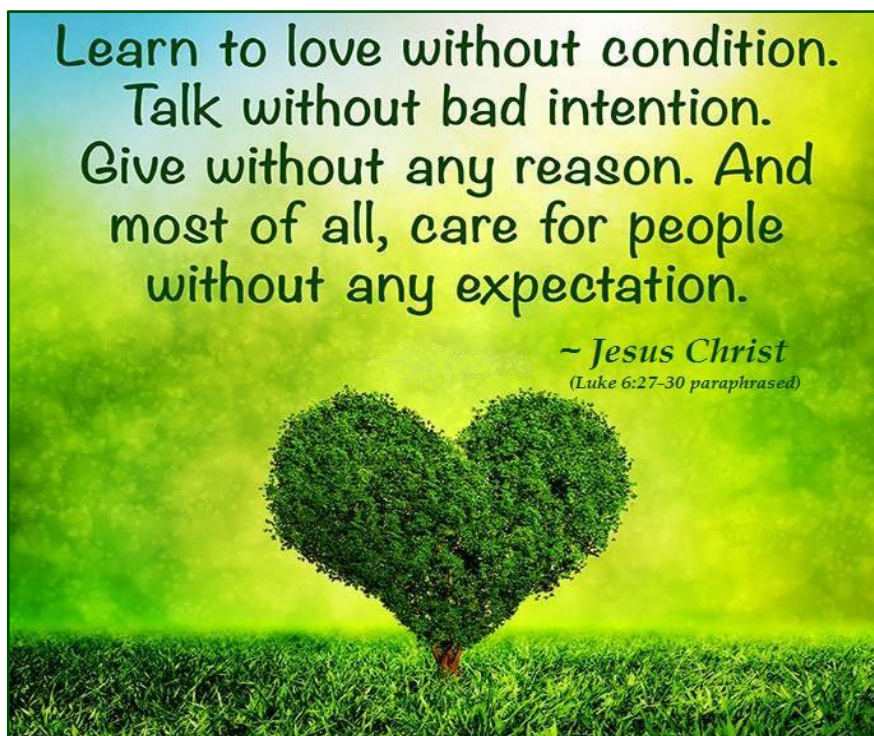


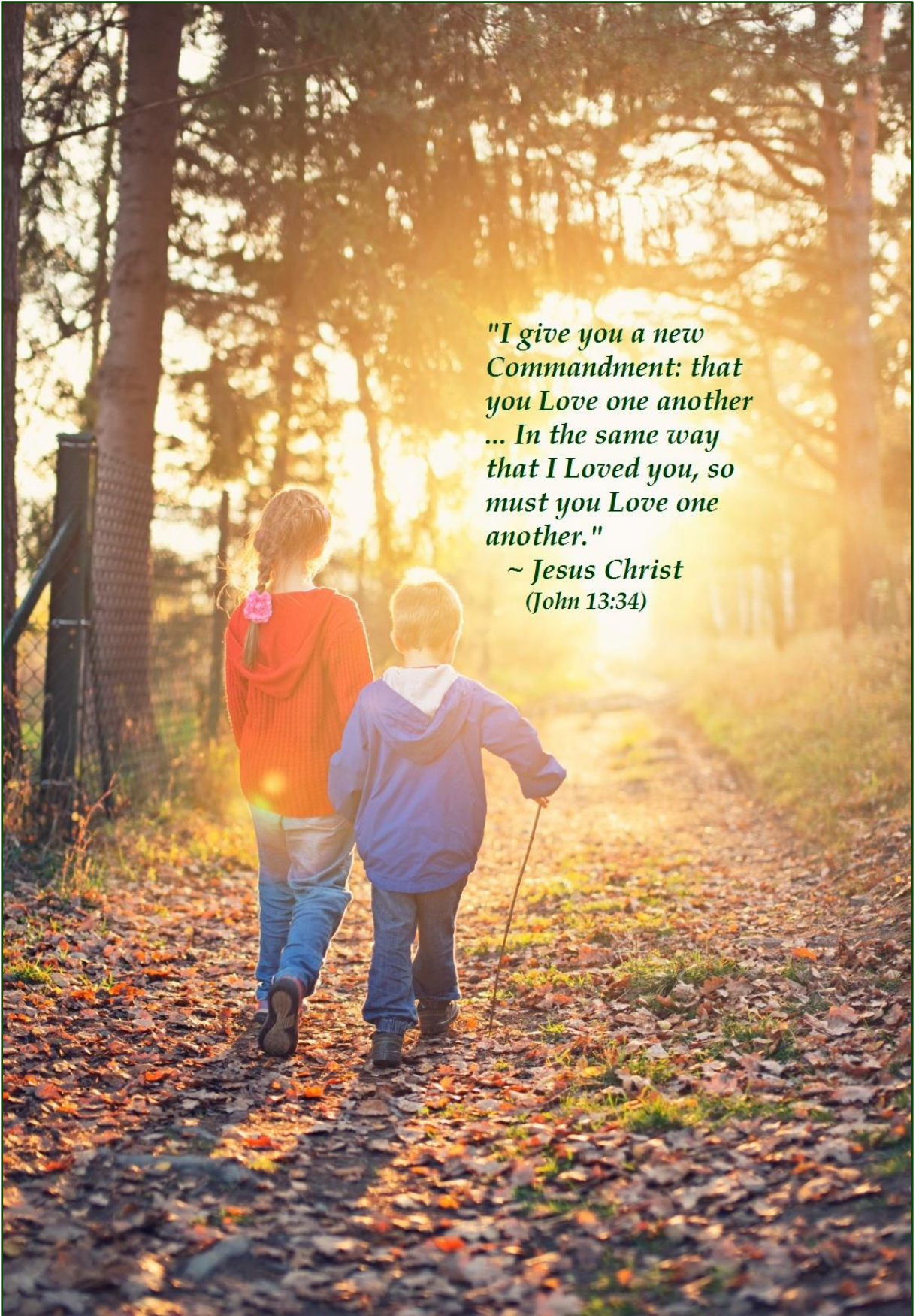
"LOVE, the name of the Lord, is that which builds the strongest Tower. And it is only those who are kind and selflessly righteous who enter its fastness, and are saved therein & thereby." ~ via Proverbs 18:10



"Yes ... *literally*." ~ Jesus
(John 13:15-17 et al)







*"I give you a new
Commandment: that
you Love one another
... In the same way
that I Loved you, so
must you Love one
another."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(John 13:34)*



Chapter 09) on Prayer & Worship

תְּפִילַת הַאֲדוֹן
The Lord's Prayer

אָבִינוּ שֶׁבַשְׁמַיִם, יִתְקַדֵּשׁ שִׁמְךָ,
Sheem-KHA Yeet-ka-DESH Sheh-ba-sha-MA-geem Ah-VE L-noo
Your name sanctified be who is in heaven Our Father

תְּבוֹא מַלְכוּתְךָ, יְיָ שֶׁהָרְצוֹנָה כְּבִשְׁמַיִם כֵּן בְּאָרֶץ.
Ba-ah-1-retz Ken Keh-va-sha-MA-geem Reh-tzon-KHA Yeh-ah-SEH Mal-khoot-KHA Ta-VO
on earth it is as in heaven Your will will be done Your kingdom will come

אֶת לֶחֶם חֲסֵנוּ תֵן לָנוּ הַיּוֹם,
Eh-YOM LA-noo Ten khu-KEH-noo LEH-khem Eh
today us give our daily bread

וְסַלַח לָנוּ עַל חַטָּאֵינוּ
Kha-ta-EY-noo Al LA-noo Oo-seh-LAKH
our sins for us and forgive

כְּפִי שְׂפוֹלְחִים גַּם אֲנַחְנוּ לְחוֹטְאִים לָנוּ.
LA-noo La-khot-EEM Ah-NAKH-noo Gahm Sheh-ah-KHEEM Keh-FEE
against us to those who sin we also forgive as

וְאַל תְּבִיאֵנוּ לְיַדֵי נִסְיוֹן, כִּי אִם חַלְצֵנוּ מִן הָרָע.
Har-RA Maen Khal-TZEH-noo Eem Kee Nee-sa-YON Lij-DAY Teh-vee-EH-noo Veh-AL
the evil from deliver us but a test into the hands of bring us and do not

כִּי לְךָ הַמַּמְלָכָה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת
Veh-ha-keef-EH-ret Veh-ha-geh-voov-RA Ha-mam-la-KHA Leh-KHA Kee
and thy glory and the power the Kingdom Yours is for

לְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים. אָמֵן
Ah-MEN Oh-la-MEEM Leh-ol-MAY
Amen and ever forever

מתי 6:9-13 Matthew 6:9-13

Read from right-to-left, top-to-bottom, word-by-word. Accented syllables are marked with capitals.

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The two types of Prayer ...



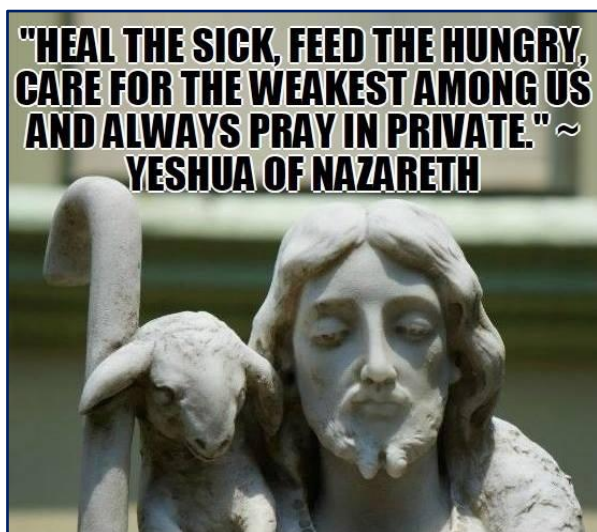
praying
"in Christ"





"... and all who humble themselves will be exalted" ~ Jesus Christ (Matt 23:12)

(Contrary to popular religious belief, devout prayer is NOT the way to spiritual exaltation ... The Way of Christ – which is the life given to selfless service – is.)





"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I cannot clearly see the road ahead of me, nor can I know for certain where it will end. Indeed, I do not even truly know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so ... And yet I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you, and I choose to maintain that true desire in all that I do. In fact, I fervently desire to never do anything apart from that desire, and have full faith that while I do so you will in-deed lead me by the Right Road -- the Road of Kindness; the Road of Compassion; the Road of Service; the Road of Love ... Therefore, even when I might seem lost and full of doubt; even when seemingly sinking in the shadow of death, I choose to abide with you always. Indeed, even when I am deathly afraid I will stride boldly forth, for you are ever within my Heart, and will never leave me to face my perils alone." ~ inspired by Thomas Merton

Chapter 10) on Salvation & Redemption

Learn
to do good.

Seek
justice.

Help
the oppressed.

Defend
the cause of orphans.

Fight
for the rights
of widows.

Isaiah 1:17

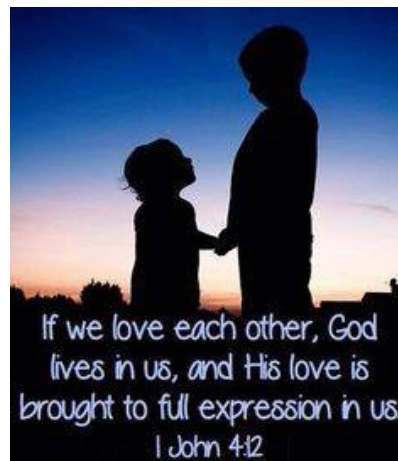
To be truly *Healed*, we must first
choose to become truly *Whole*.



"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become again like young children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. For only those who become humble like this very young child will be considered great in the Kingdom." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:3-4)



"Let the little children come to me. Do not stop them; for it is to such as these to whom the Kingdom of God already belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ~ Jesus Christ (Mark 10:14-15)



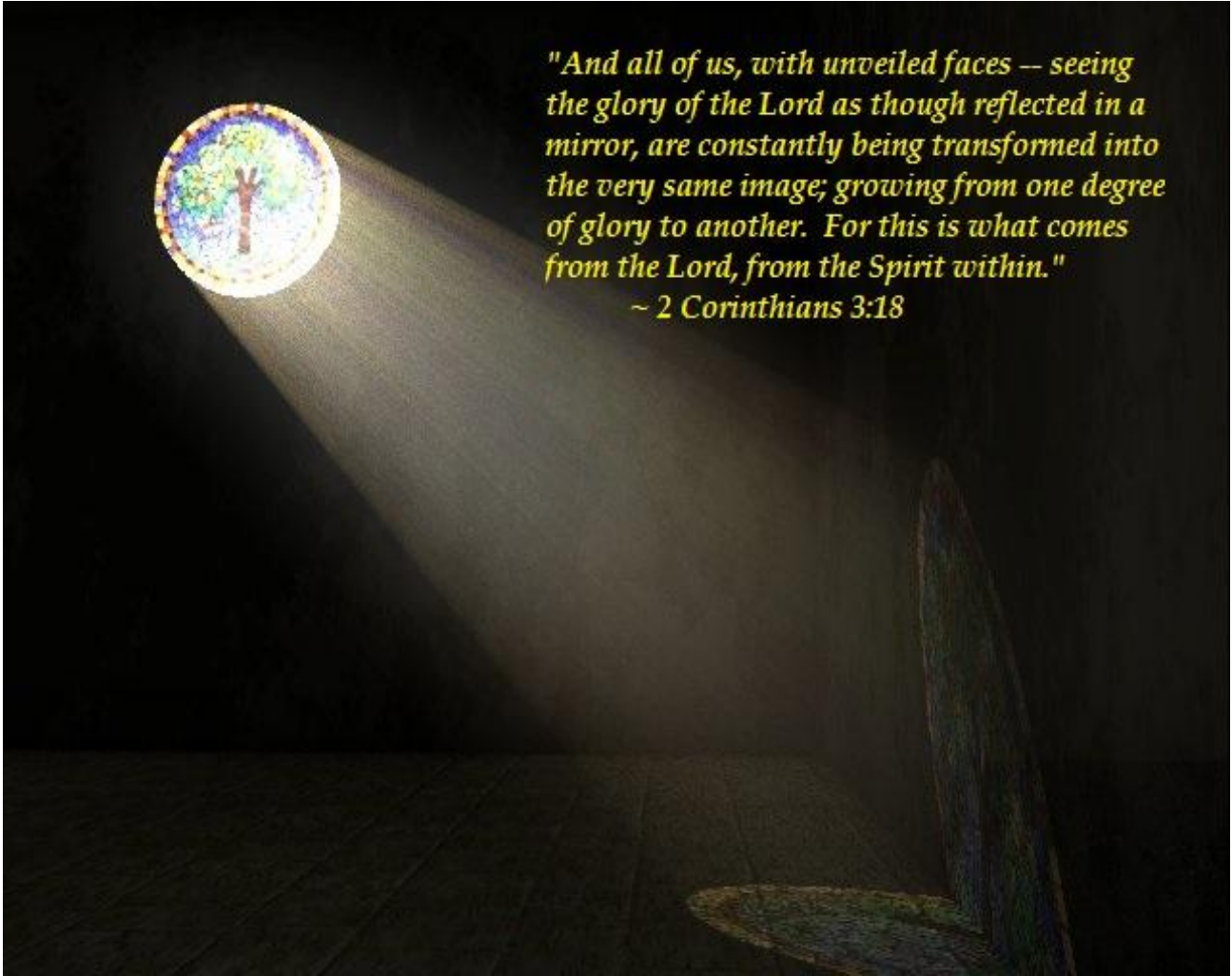
*"Unless you turn and become like little children,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

*Step ONE:
See Life like an infant ...*



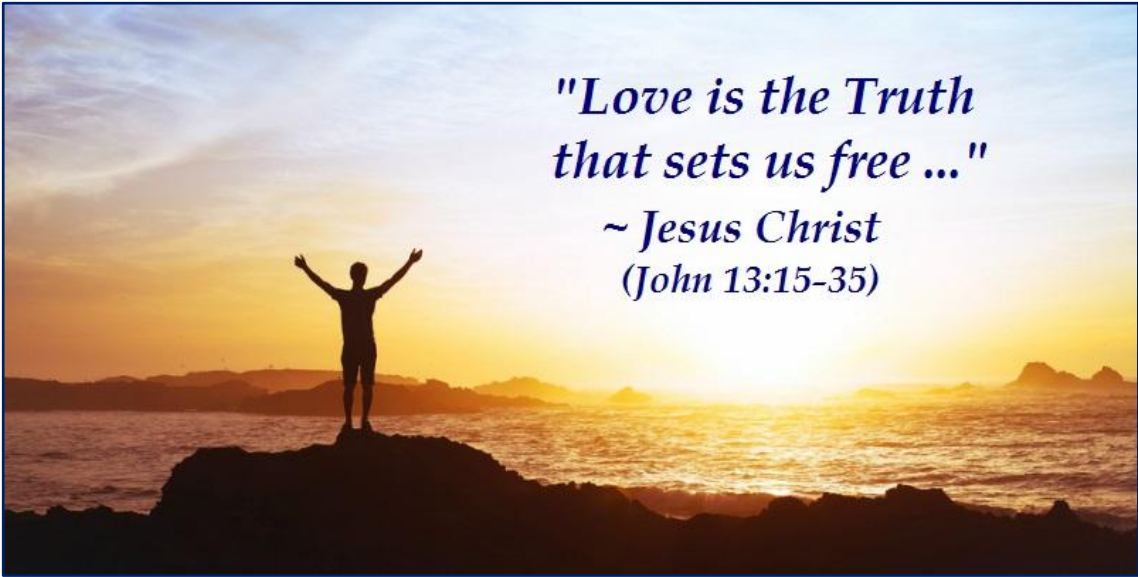
*Step TWO:
Love others like a toddler ...*





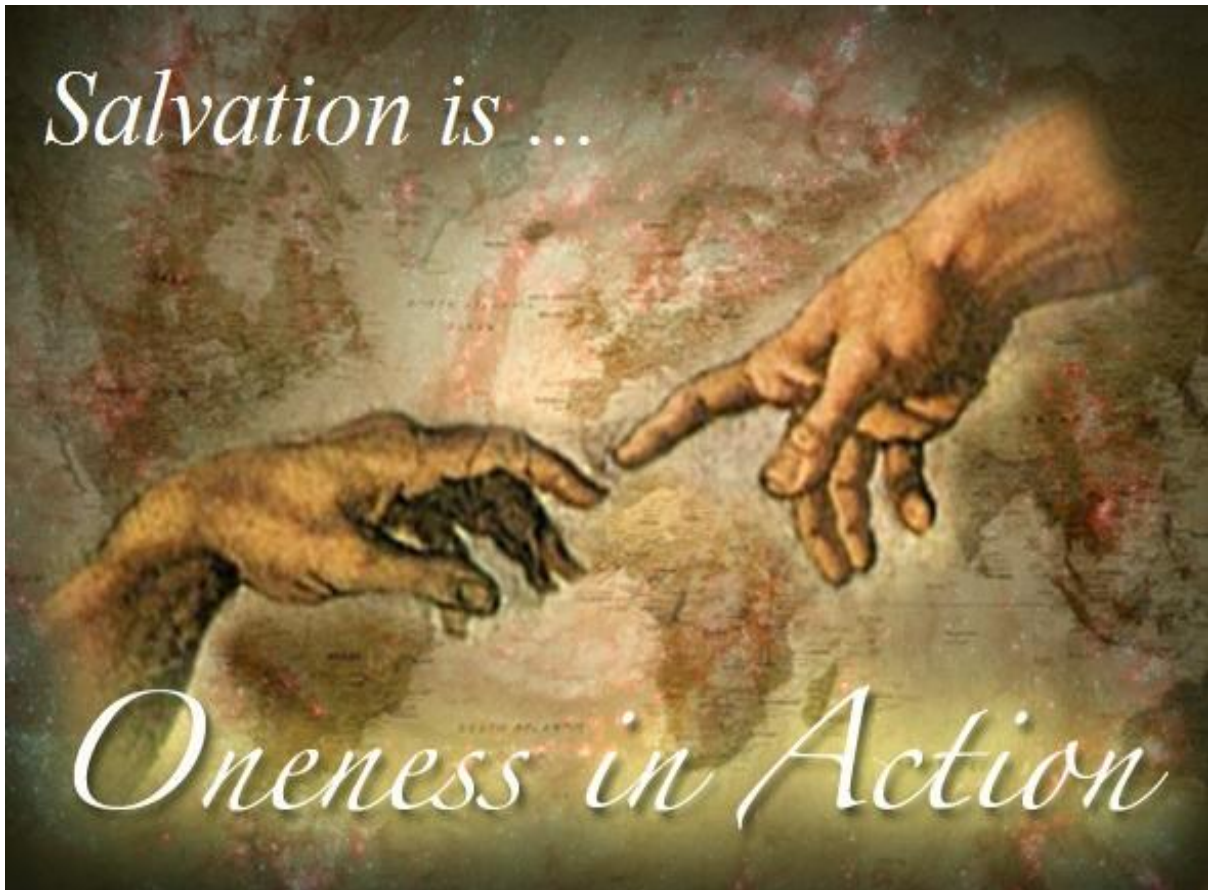
"And all of us, with unveiled faces – seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are constantly being transformed into the very same image; growing from one degree of glory to another. For this is what comes from the Lord, from the Spirit within."

~ 2 Corinthians 3:18



"Love is the Truth that sets us free ..."

*~ Jesus Christ
(John 13:15-35)*



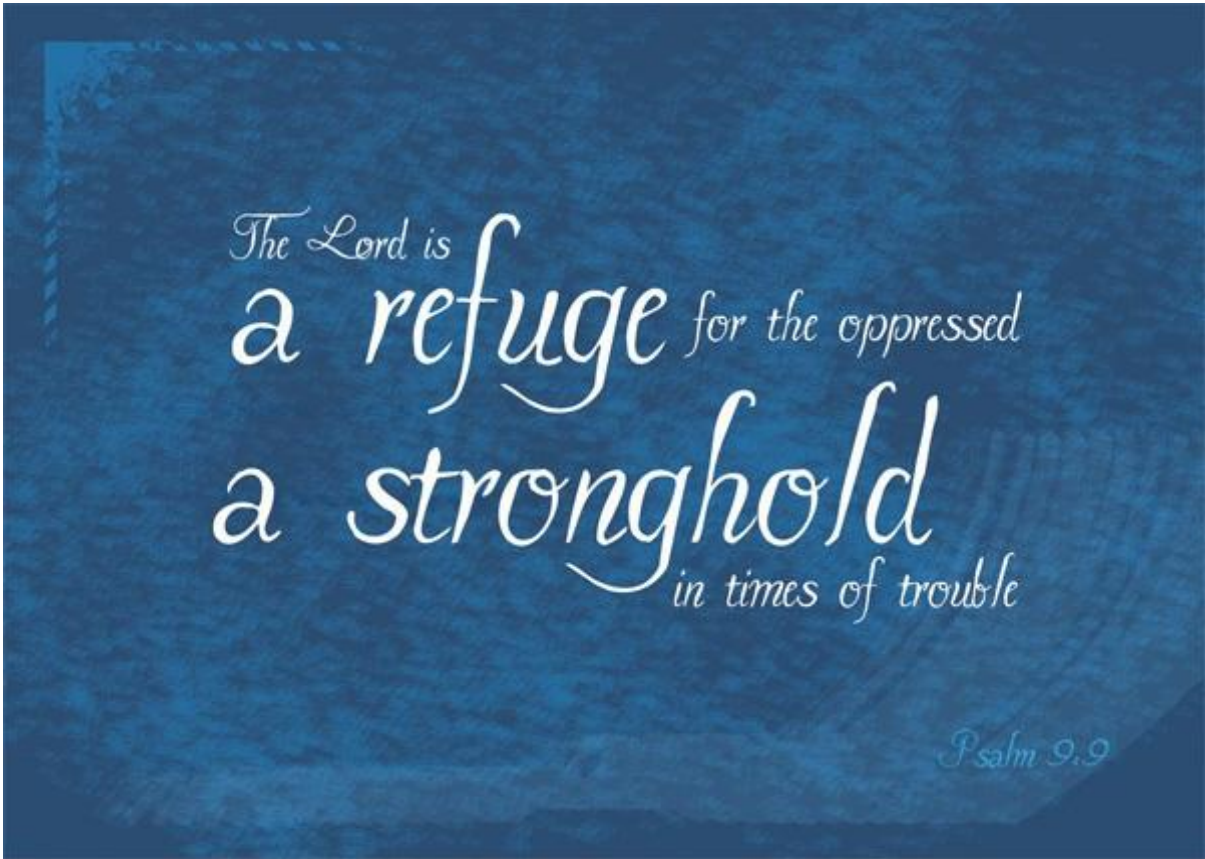
*"... and acts of courageous **LOVE** are the foundation of that Oneness."*

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:12-14)





(Salvation is not rocket science.)



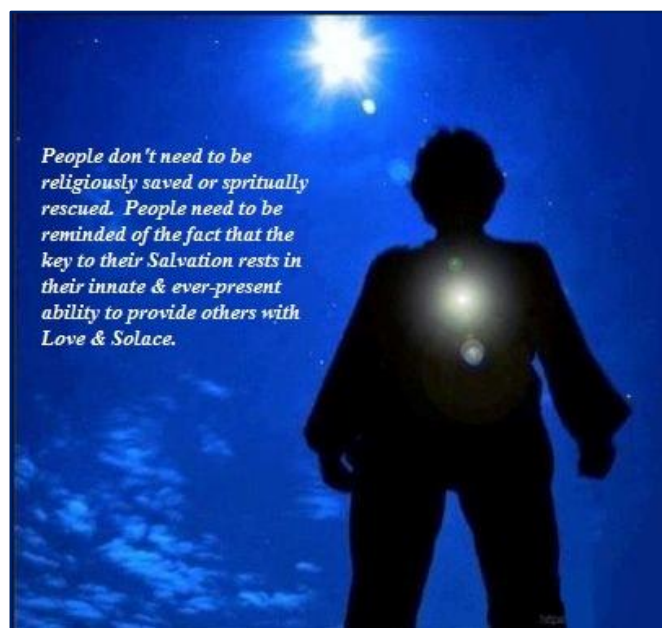
"Actually, it is *we* who prove to be that stronghold;
when our LOVE provides that refuge."

~ Jesus (Luke 4:18-19 & Matthew 25:35-40)





*Honoring a God of
perfect LOVE means
never having to be
perfect in order to
receive the same.*



*People don't need to be
religiously saved or spiritually
rescued. People need to be
reminded of the fact that the
key to their Salvation rests in
their innate & ever-present
ability to provide others with
Love & Solace.*



Being perfect in LOVE is not about becoming perfect as a person ... Being perfect in LOVE is about ignoring your own fears & setting aside your own desires long enough – even if but for a single instant of selfless courage – to Love another perfectly.



*"But if you had understood what it means -- 'I will have Mercy, not sacrifice,' you would never have condemned the guiltless."
~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:7)*

Namaste . . . The Divine within me recognizes
& honors The Divine within you.

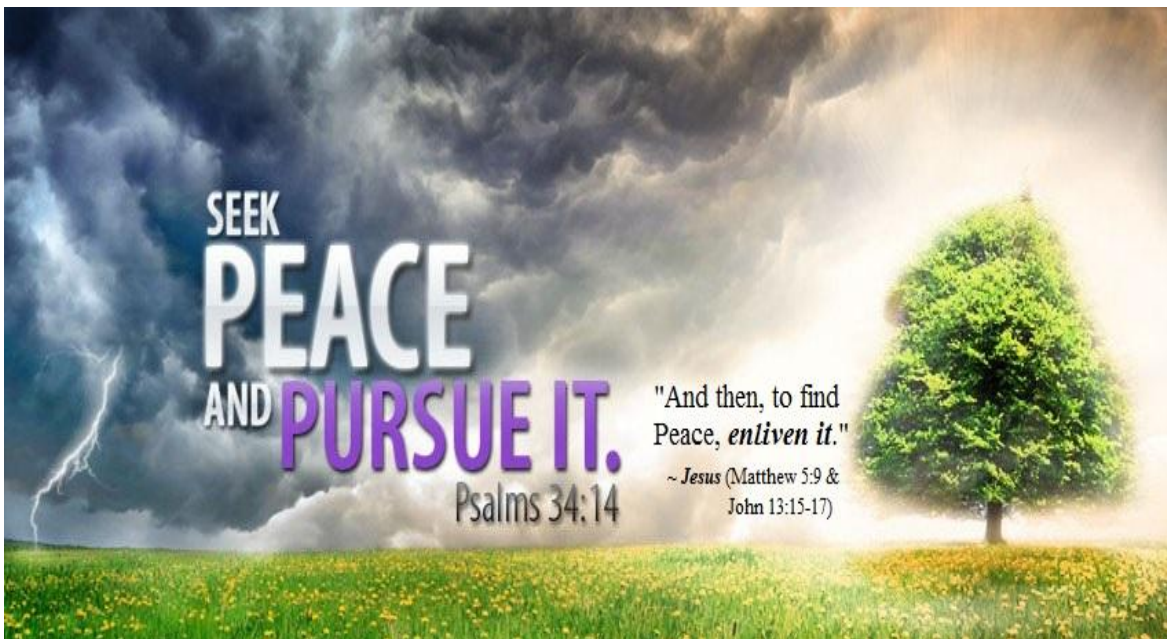


"Blessed are the Peacemakers."

~ *Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:9)*



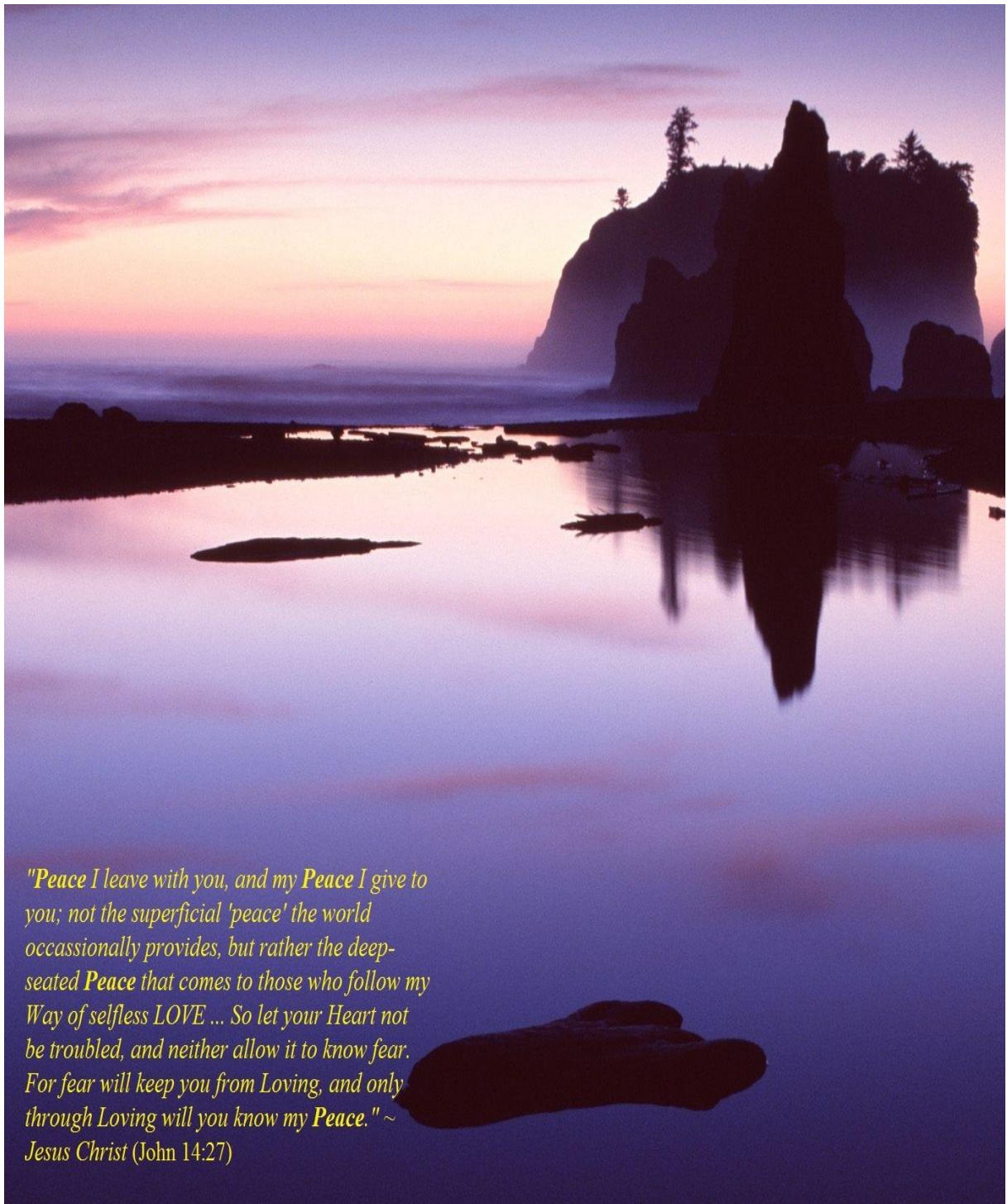
"Let the Peace of Christ reside fully in your Hearts, since as members of one human Family you were all called to Peace." ~ Colossians 3:15



SEEK
PEACE
AND **PURSUE IT.**
Psalms 34:14

"And then, to find Peace, *enliven it.*"

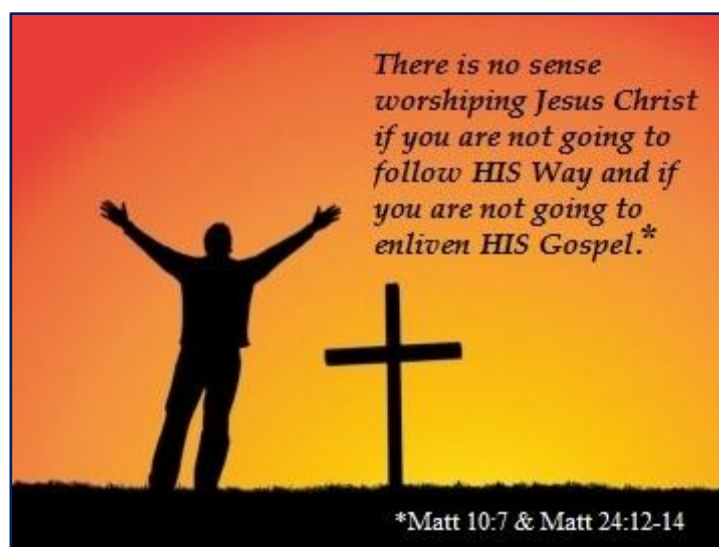
~ Jesus (Matthew 5:9 & John 13:15-17)

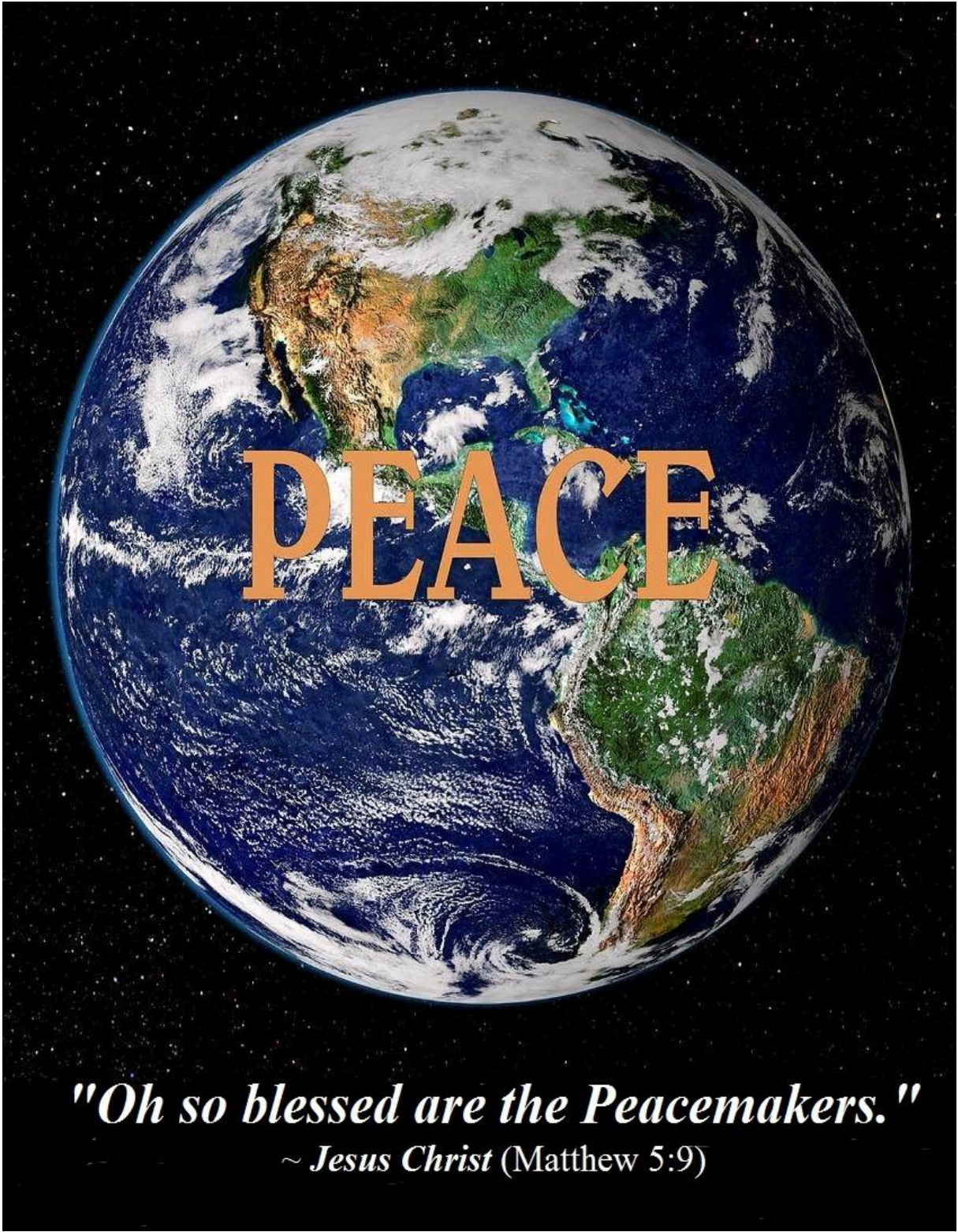


"Peace I leave with you, and my Peace I give to you; not the superficial 'peace' the world occasionally provides, but rather the deep-seated Peace that comes to those who follow my Way of selfless LOVE ... So let your Heart not be troubled, and neither allow it to know fear. For fear will keep you from Loving, and only through Loving will you know my Peace." ~ Jesus Christ (John 14:27)



"And this is my Commandment: That you Love one another. Indeed, just as I have Loved you, so too are you to Love one another." ~ Jesus (John 15:12)





PEACE

*"Oh so blessed are the Peacemakers."
~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:9)*



The key is simply to *Live a Moral Life* ... For if there is a God and He is just, then He will not care how devout you have been, but will welcome you Home based on the Kindness you have shown and the Virtues you have enlivened. And if there is a God and He is unjust, then you should not want to worship Him, much less desire to spend an eternity bowing down to His wicked whims. And if there is no God at all, then you will indeed be gone, and yet you will have lived a Noble Life -- one filled with deeds of Caring & Courage that will reverberate forever onward into eternity. (via Marcus Aurelius)

Chapter 11) on Jesus & the Christ



Question: *Which Jesus pictured here would Jesus himself want you to worship?*



Answer: *None of the above, seeing as how Jesus didn't want us to worship him at all!*

"Why do you praise me? There is only one who is Good, and that is God ... If anyone wishes to become my follower, let him deny his own desires and enliven my Way, by every day raising up his cross of selfless service for others." ~ Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23 & Luke 19:18)



“The Good News of the Father is not about worshiping me at all. It is about honoring HIM, by humbling yourselves in those times when it is most difficult to do so – by reaching out & actively caring for those deemed least worthy of the same.”

~ Jesus Christ

*(Mark 10:18, Matthew 5:40-48
& Matthew 18:3-4)*

Seven Scriptures That Debunk the Trinity as a Single Being

The following seven scriptures show the fallacy of claiming that the Father and the Son are one being as the Trinity teaching asserts. How can one reconcile belief in the Trinity with these simple questions?

Hebrews 1:5 tells us that Jesus was begotten by His Father. Did He beget Himself?

In Matthew 22:44, the Father said Jesus would sit at His right hand until His enemies were made His footstool. Was Jesus to sit at His own right hand?

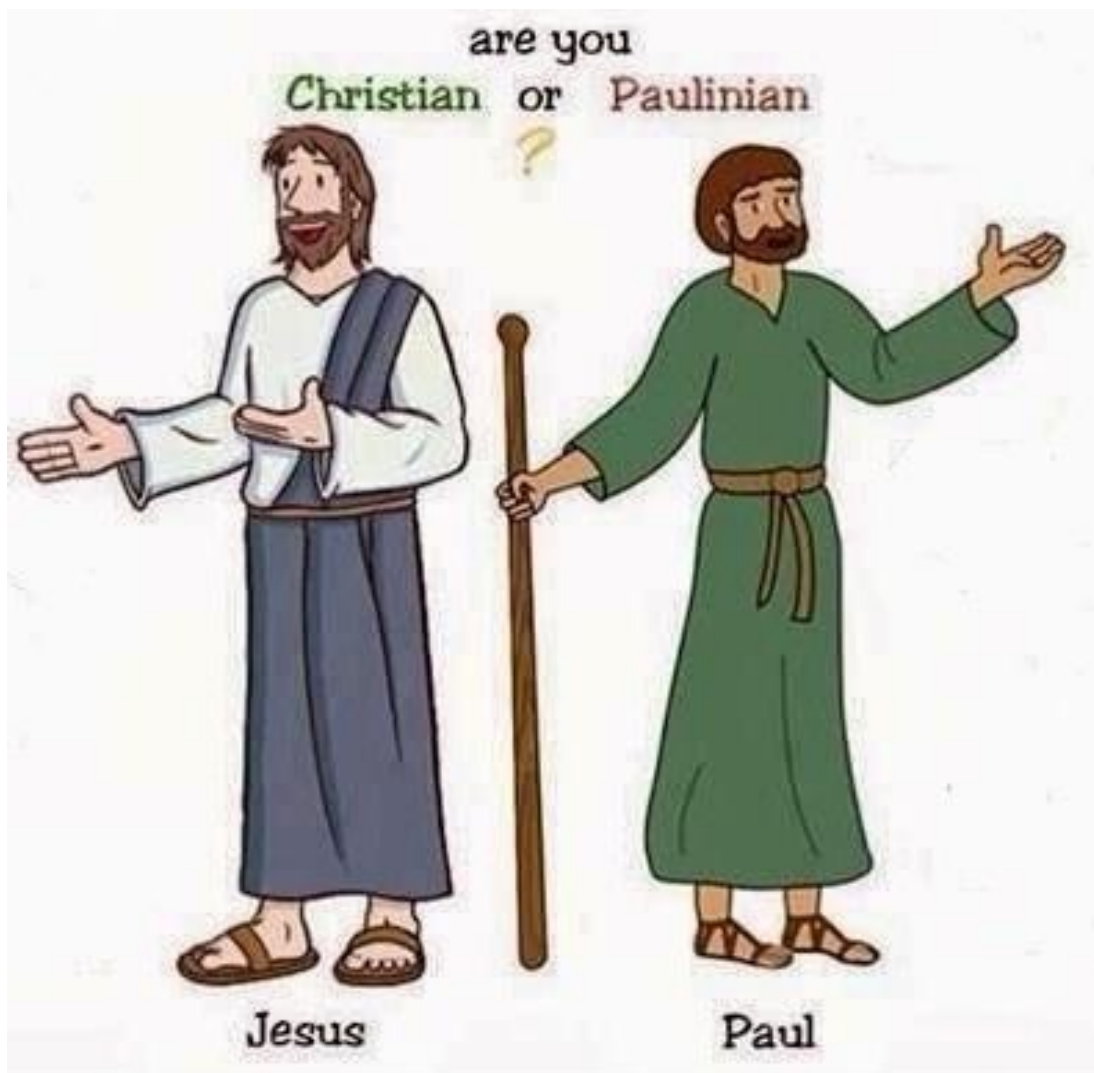
In Matthew 24:36, when Jesus told His disciples that no one knows the day or hour of His return but the Father only, did He really know but made up an excuse to not tell them?

In John 14:28, Jesus said His Father was greater than He was. Does this mean He was greater than Himself?

In John 17:1, Jesus prayed to His Father. Was He praying to Himself?

In Matthew 27:46, Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” Had He forsaken Himself?

In John 20:17, Jesus said He would ascend to the Father after His resurrection. Did He ascend to Himself?



"My Gospel is that you are all innately Children of God, and that you can therefore all experience the 'Kingdom of Heaven' right this instant by simply reaching out to selflessly Love your enemies &/or Care for the poor in your midst." ~ **Jesus** (John 12:44-47, Luke 17:20-21, Matthew 24:12-14 & John 13:15-17)

"My gospel is that you are all innately sinners, and that you will therefore only be allowed into Heaven after you die if you openly worship Jesus Christ in this lifetime as if he were the one and only Son of God." ~ **Paul** (1 Corinthians 15:1-4 & Romans 10:9 et al)

"Fundamentalism is the triumph of Paul over Christ." ~ Will Durant

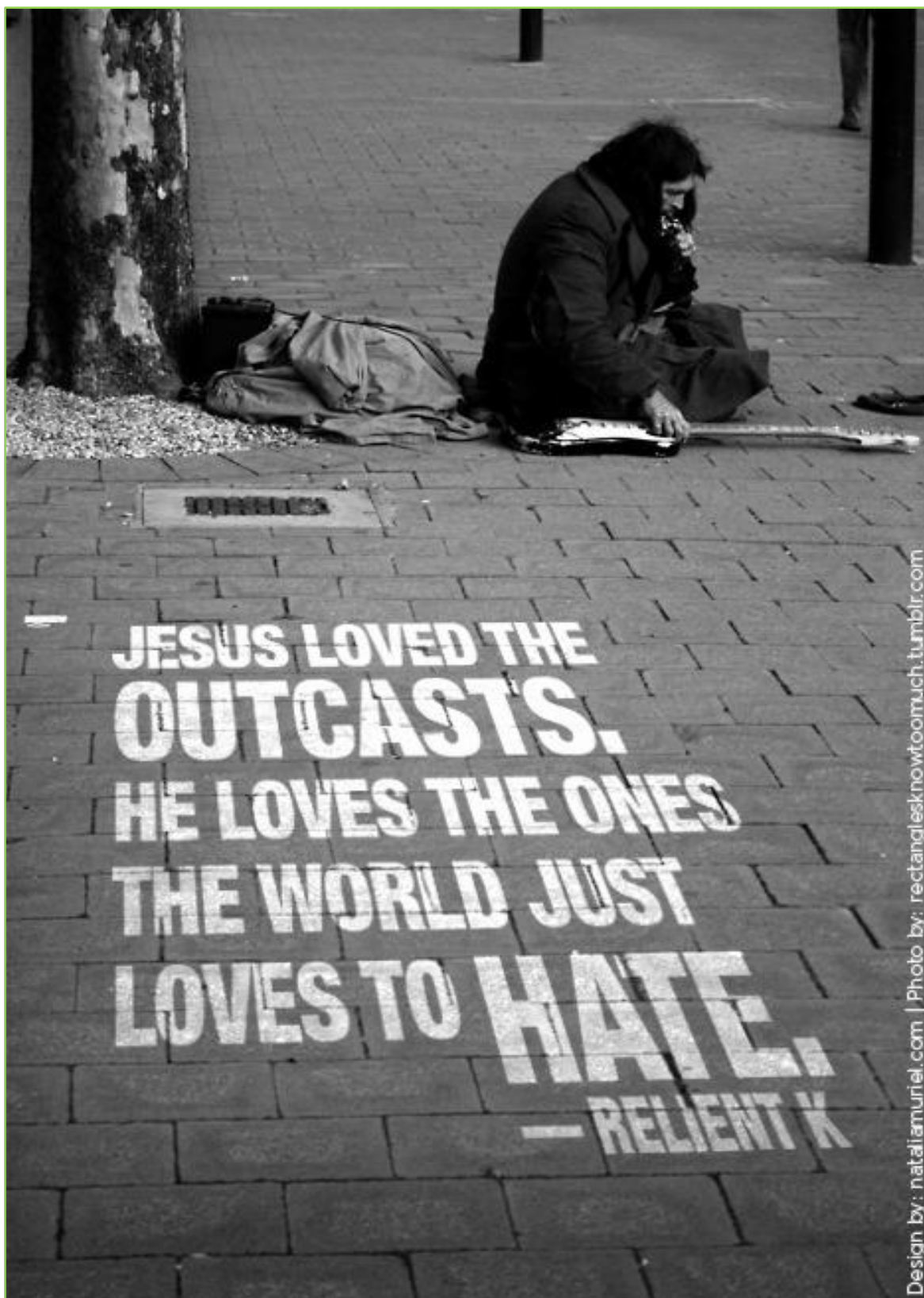


***"Worship the LORD your God and serve Him only ...
Why do you call me Good? No one is Good but one --
and that one is your heavenly Father; the Spirit of Truth
& perfect Love who lives within you."***

~ Jesus Christ (Matt 4:10, Mark 10:18, Matt 5:48, & John 14:20-26)



***"You suggesting that I hate religious people just because I want
to reform religion is like saying that I hate lepers just because I
choose to cure leprosy."*** ~ Jesus Christ (John 8:3-11, Matt 5:17-18, Matt 23)



His eyes flashed like fiery flames,
and the crown of His head is
a thick cluster of diadems
inscribed with names.

And there is a Name
inscribed that no one
knows except Him.*

(*Revelation 19:12)

Note: If you believe that the fire-blasting, wrathfully judgmental "Jesus" mentioned in the book of Revelation is the same gentle, humbly loving Jesus mentioned in the Gospels, then you are choosing to honor and worship a "Lord & Savior" who is clearly a full-on bipolar schizophrenic.



God
@TheGoodGodAbove

The Catholic Church says that abstinence is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy.

HA! Tell that to the Virgin Mary.

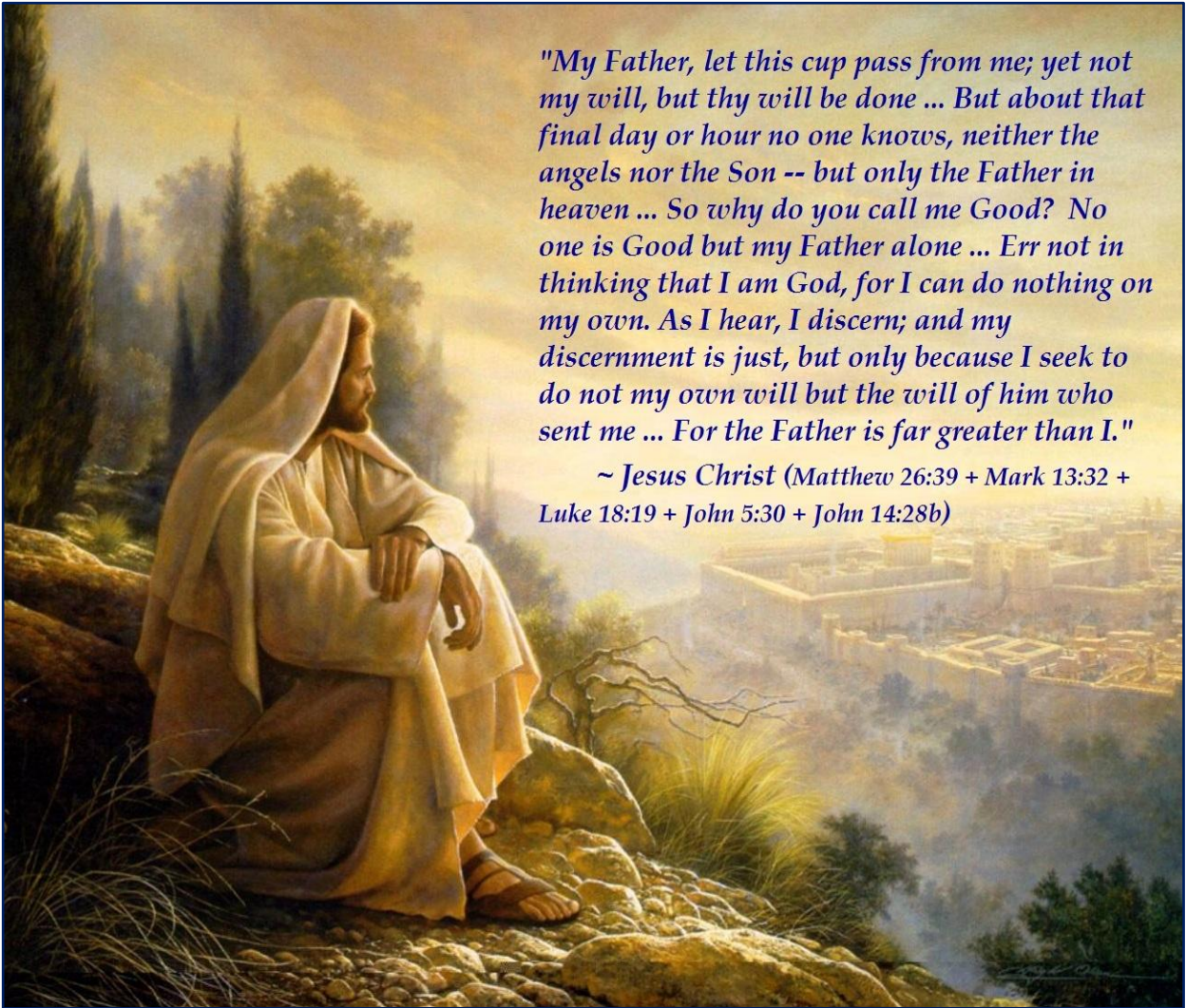
Did you know that the supposed prophecy of Jesus' virgin birth came from Isaiah 7:14 -- a verse that actually reads "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel"? And did you know that the Hebrew word for "young woman" in this verse is "almah" (Strong's #5959) -- a word that is used only 6 other times in the entire Bible (Genesis 24:43, Exodus 2:8, Psalm 68:25, Proverbs 30:19, Song of Solomon 1:3 & Song of Solomon 6:8)? And did you know that of those 7 times "almah" is used, it quite clearly refers indeed to a "young woman" five times, and only possibly to a "virgin" two times (not surprisingly, the two verses in the quite lascivious Song of Solomon)? Well, now you do ...



Before the Truth can set you free, you must realize which lies are holding you hostage.

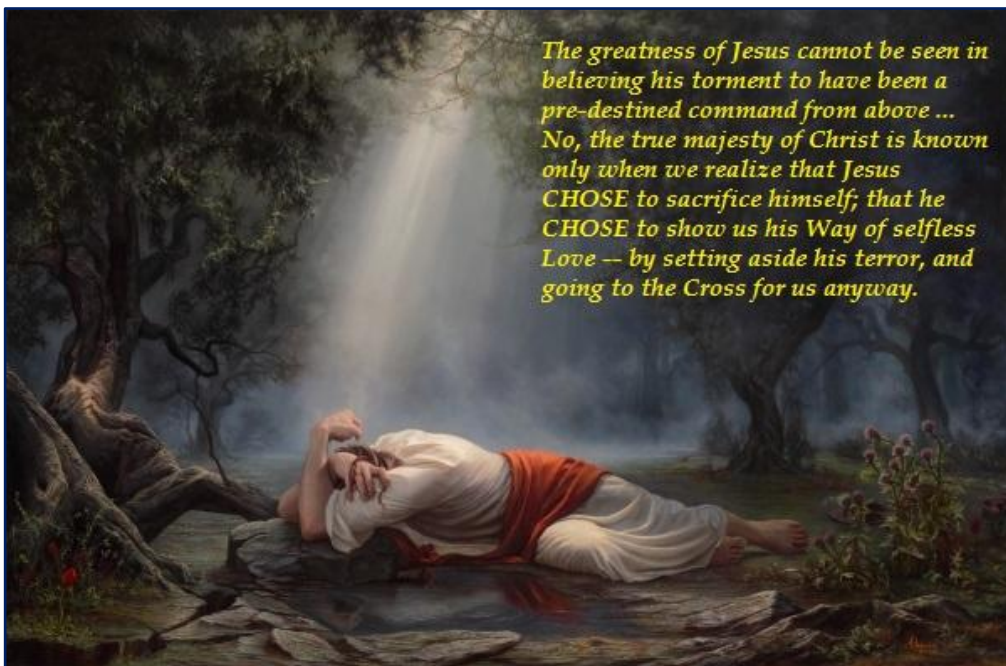
"Why do you call me Good? Only one is Good, and that is your Father in Heaven ... Not everyone who calls to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father ... And we essentially have but one Commandment: Love others the same way we have Loved you ... If you understand these things, blessed will you be while you do them."

~ Jesus Christ (Mark 10:18, Matthew 7:21, John 14:20-23, John 15:12 & John 13:15-17)



"My Father, let this cup pass from me; yet not my will, but thy will be done ... But about that final day or hour no one knows, neither the angels nor the Son -- but only the Father in heaven ... So why do you call me Good? No one is Good but my Father alone ... Err not in thinking that I am God, for I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I discern; and my discernment is just, but only because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me ... For the Father is far greater than I."

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:39 + Mark 13:32 + Luke 18:19 + John 5:30 + John 14:28b)



*The greatness of Jesus cannot be seen in believing his torment to have been a pre-destined command from above ... No, the true majesty of Christ is known only when we realize that Jesus **CHOSE** to sacrifice himself; that he **CHOSE** to show us his Way of selfless Love — by setting aside his terror, and going to the Cross for us anyway.*



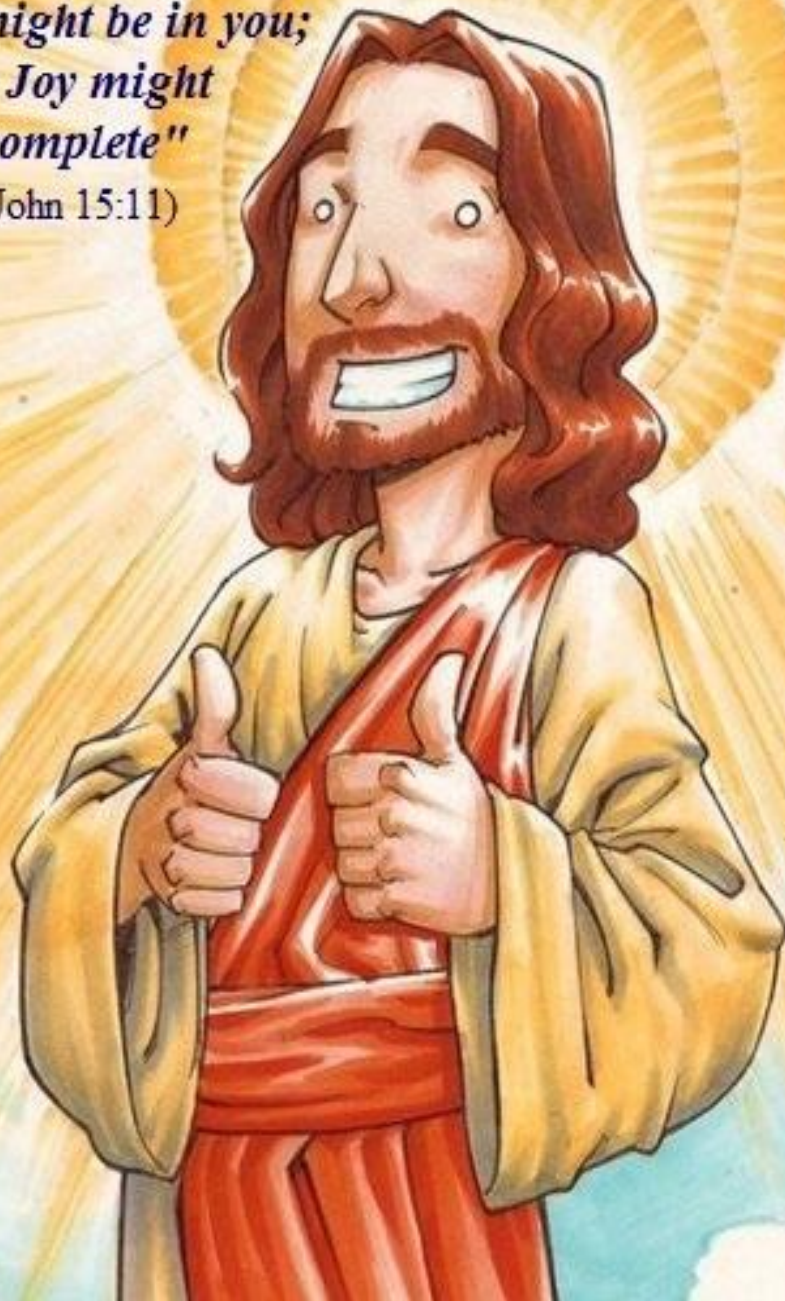
***"I like to picture Jesus in a tuxedo T-shirt,
'cause it says like, 'I wanna be formal, but I'm
here to party too' ... Because I like to party, so
I like my Jesus to party."***

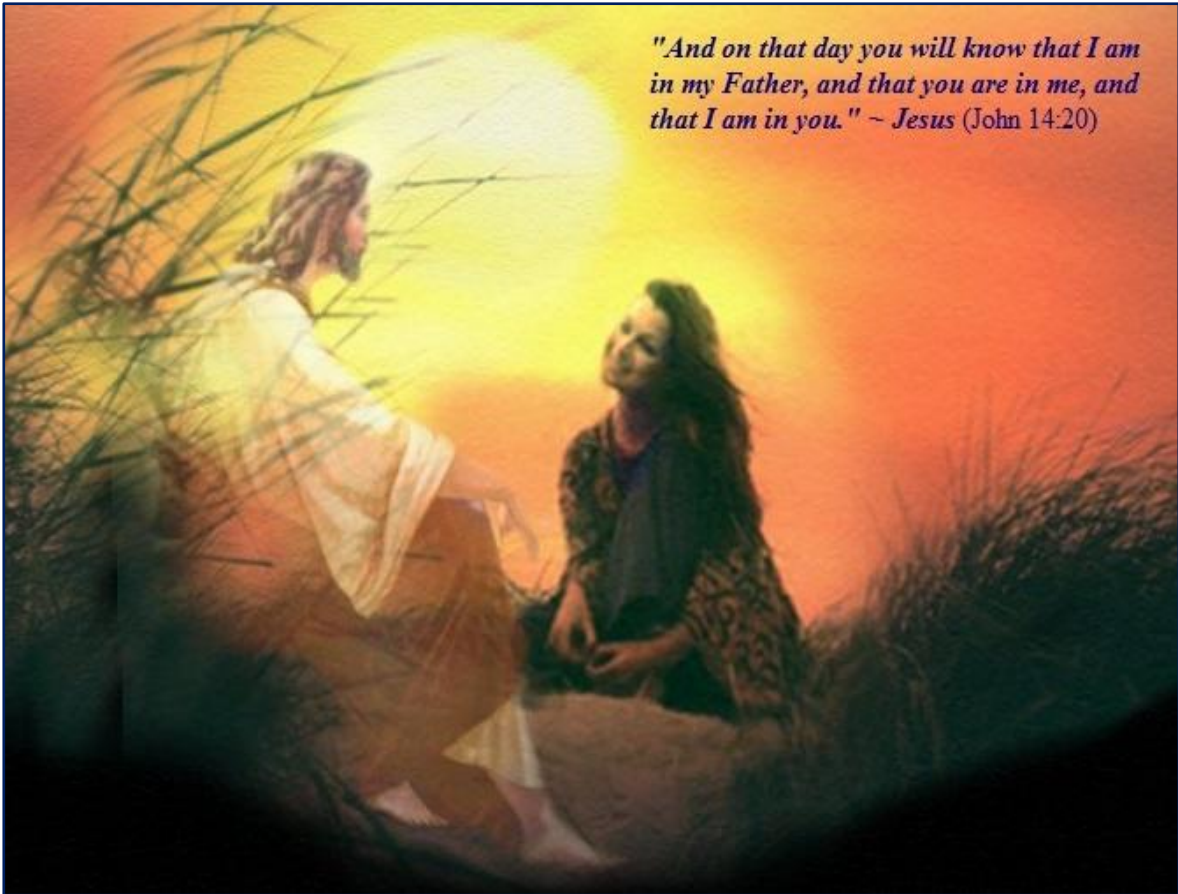
~ Cal Naughton Jr. (Talladega Nights)

(Jesus didn't mind partying, of course -- as long as everyone was invited, as long as the most hated received the best seats, and as long as the downtrodden ended up getting all the best food.)

*"I have given all these
teachings to you so that
my Joy might be in you;
that your Joy might
become complete"*

~ Jesus (John 15:11)



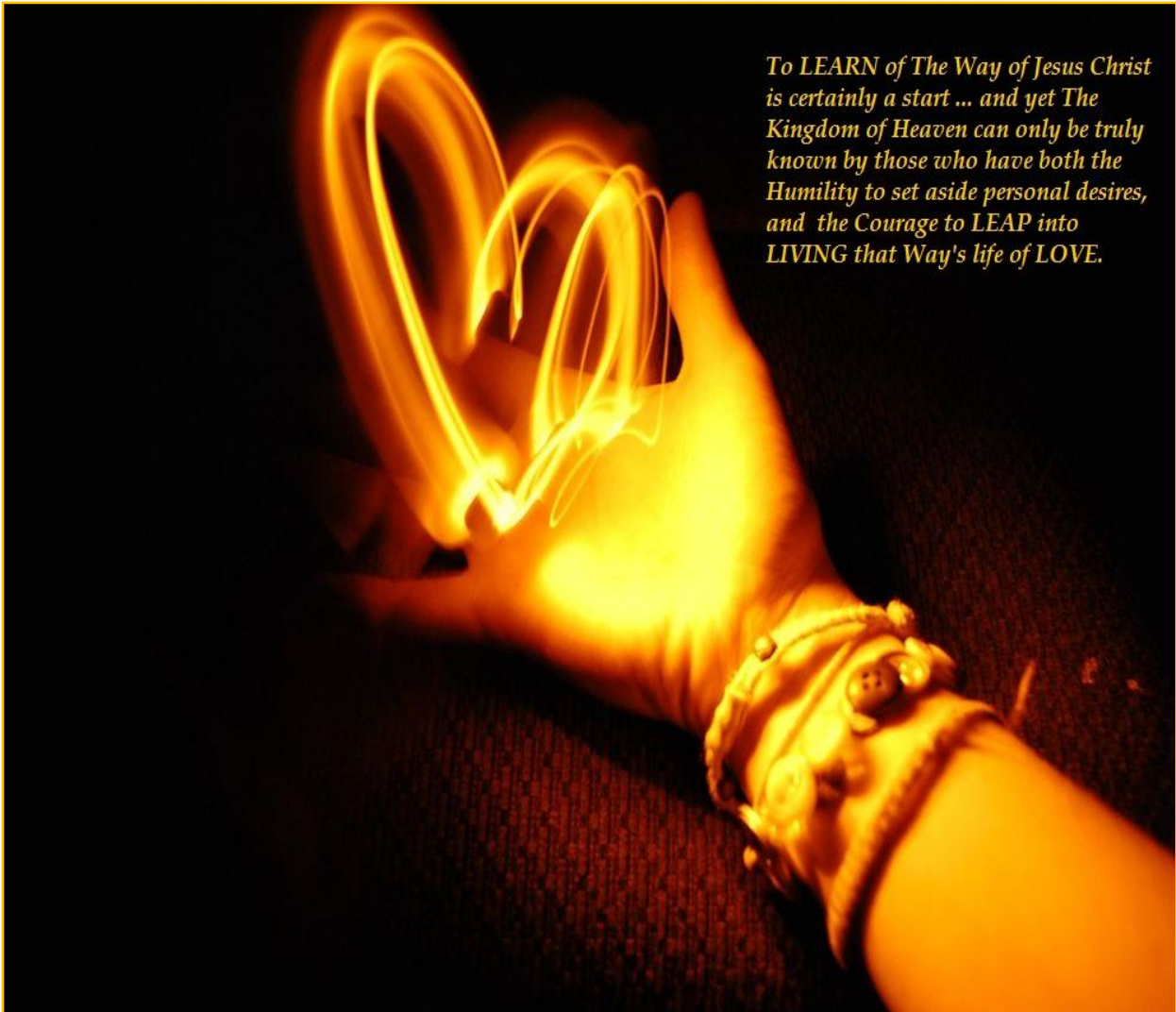


"And on that day you will know that I am in my Father, and that you are in me, and that I am in you." ~ Jesus (John 14:20)



"It is accomplished."
~ Jesus Christ (John 19:30)

Chapter 12) on Heaven & Bliss



To LEARN of The Way of Jesus Christ is certainly a start ... and yet The Kingdom of Heaven can only be truly known by those who have both the Humility to set aside personal desires, and the Courage to LEAP into LIVING that Way's life of LOVE.



The Kingdom of Heaven resides ever within you ... *and yet* it can only be deeply felt & truly known while acting accordingly.

HOW CAN HEAVEN AND HELL COEXIST? HOW CAN ANY SANE AND LOVING HUMAN BEING BE HAPPY IN HEAVEN KNOWING THAT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, INNOCENT OR NOT, ARE BEING TORTURED FOR ETERNITY? THIS HEAVEN IS A PLACE VOID OF all EMPATHY, AN ASYLUM FOR PSYCHOPATHS or those lacking a basic sense of decency and justice.





"The dog is a being of true Love & Honor. When my time comes, I hope to go to his Heaven, and not man's." ~ via Mark Twain

An illustration of two Egyptian deities, Anubis and Thoth, standing and holding hands. Anubis is on the left, wearing a blue and red kilt, and Thoth is on the right, wearing a white and red kilt. They are both wearing their characteristic animal heads. The background is a textured, golden-brown color.

The kingdom of
heaven
is within you;
and
whosoever shall know
himself shall find it.

*Egyptian proverb**

"The Kingdom of God is not coming in the future with happenings that can be observed; nor will they be able to say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'Look, there it is!' For, in fact, the Kingdom of God is already within you."

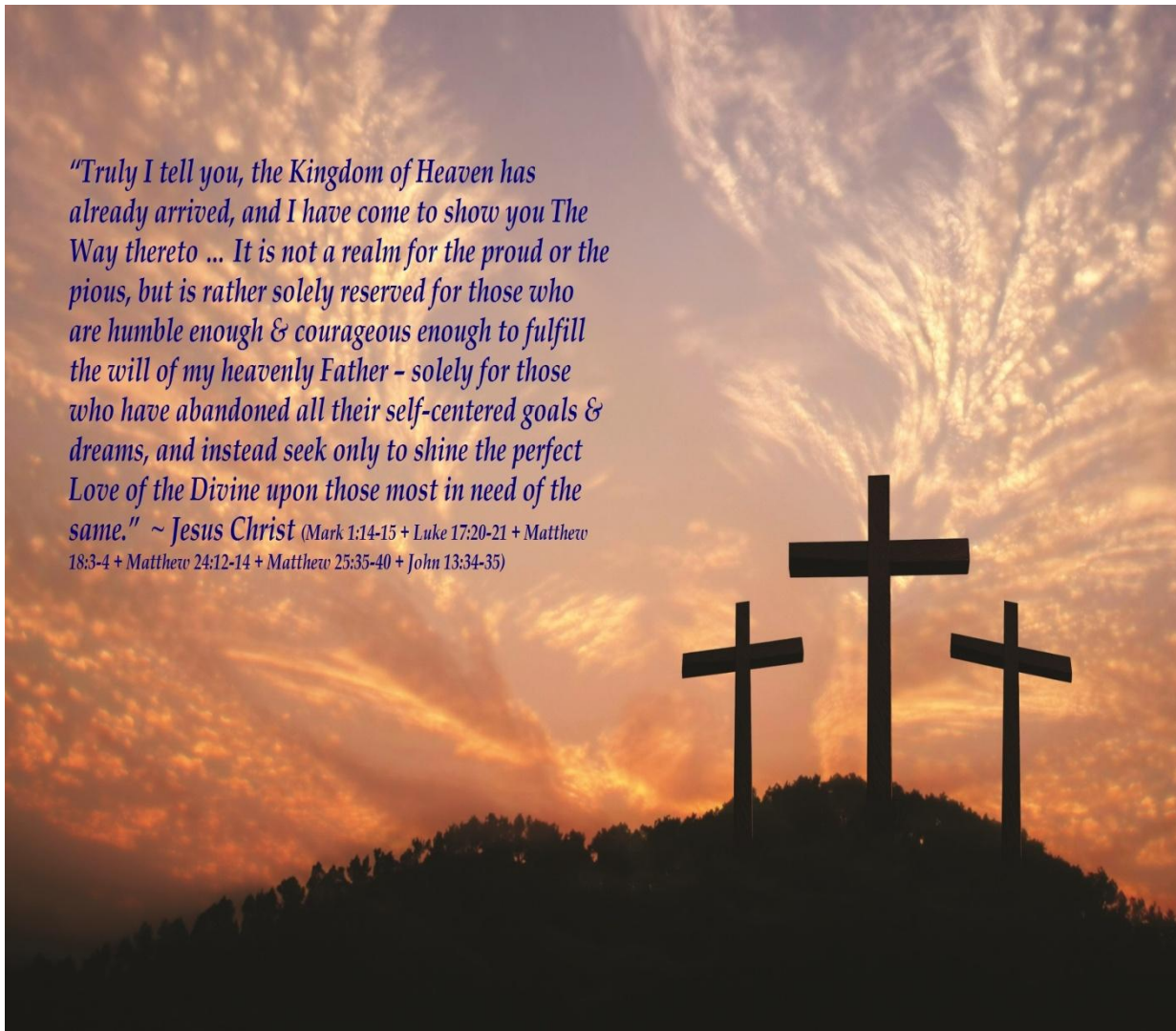
~ **Jesus Christ** (Luke 17:20-21)

(*Jesus and his family spent part of his childhood in Egypt -- see Matt 2:13-23)

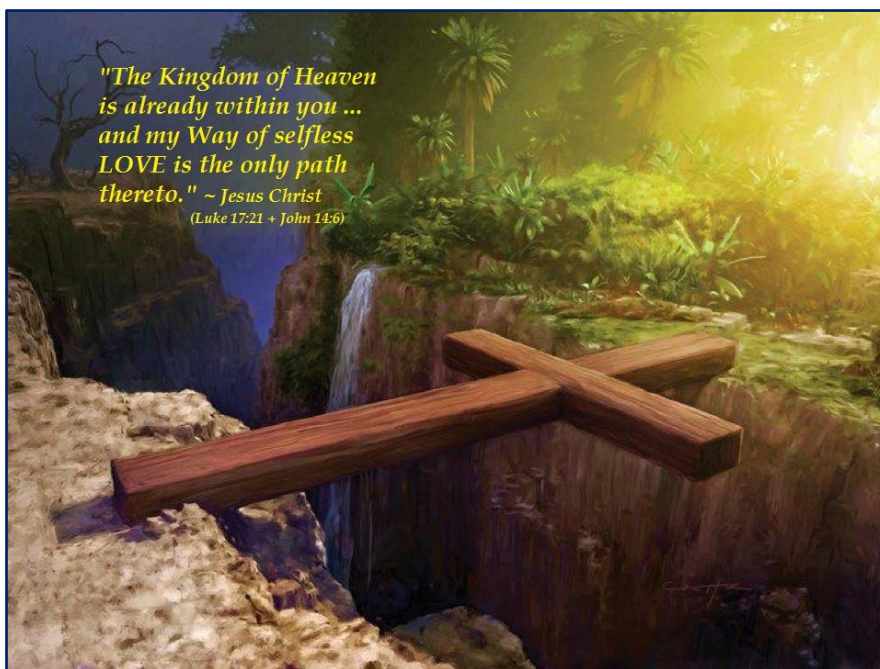


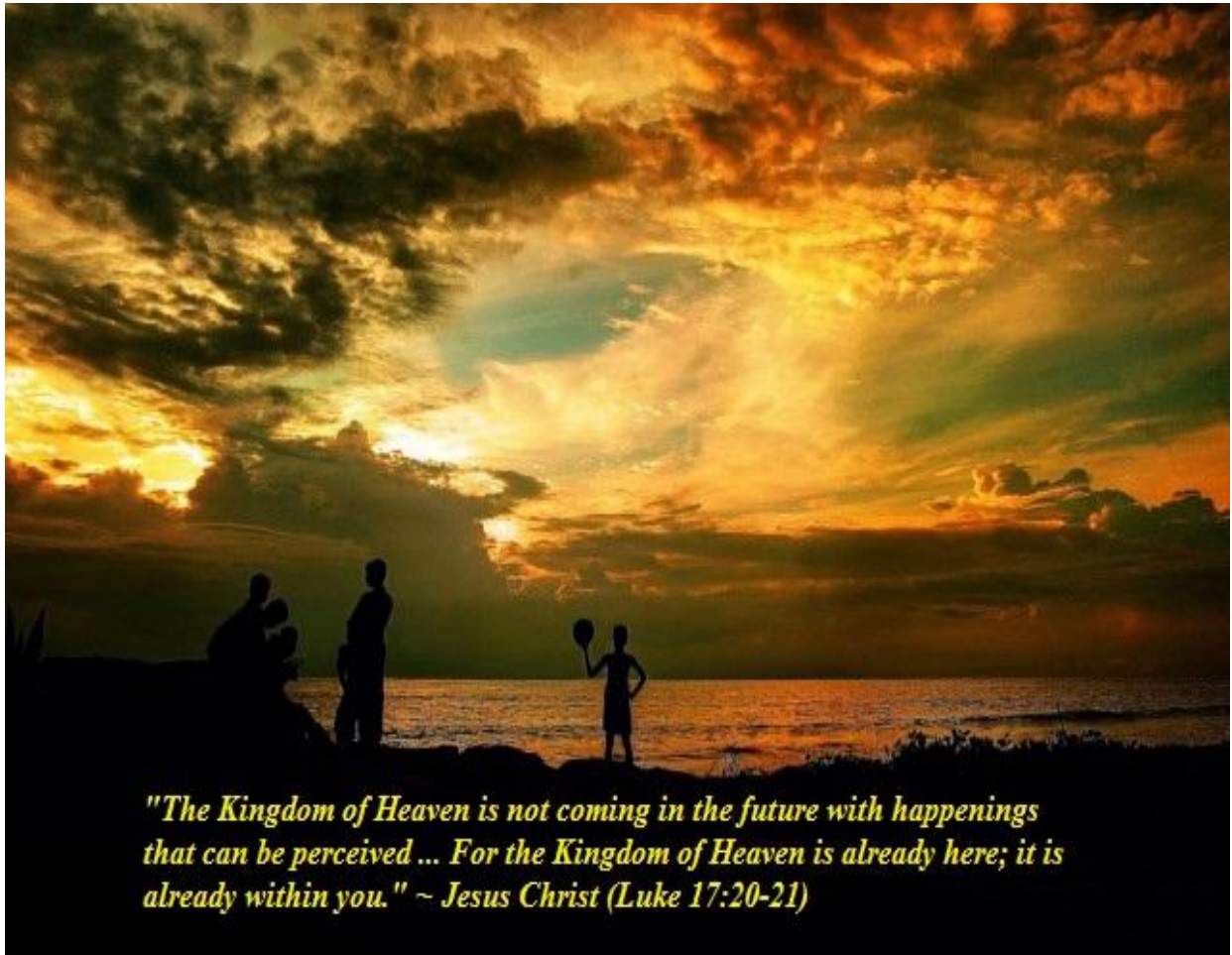
“It is true that I do not especially like the idea that one day I shall be tapped on the shoulder and informed, not that the party is over, but that it is most assuredly going on — only henceforth in my post-mortem absence. And yet much more horrible to me, would be the wicked announcement that the party was continuing forever, *and* that I was forbidden to leave. It would matter not whether it was a hellishly bad party or a party that was perfectly heavenly in every respect; the moment that it became both eternal and compulsory would be the precise moment that it would begin to grate and pall.” ~ via Christopher Hitchens

"Truly I tell you, the Kingdom of Heaven has already arrived, and I have come to show you The Way thereto ... It is not a realm for the proud or the pious, but is rather solely reserved for those who are humble enough & courageous enough to fulfill the will of my heavenly Father - solely for those who have abandoned all their self-centered goals & dreams, and instead seek only to shine the perfect Love of the Divine upon those most in need of the same." ~ Jesus Christ (Mark 1:14-15 + Luke 17:20-21 + Matthew 18:3-4 + Matthew 24:12-14 + Matthew 25:35-40 + John 13:34-35)



"The Kingdom of Heaven is already within you ... and my Way of selfless LOVE is the only path thereto." ~ Jesus Christ (Luke 17:21 + John 14:6)





"The Kingdom of Heaven is not coming in the future with happenings that can be perceived ... For the Kingdom of Heaven is already here; it is already within you." ~ Jesus Christ (Luke 17:20-21)



*"On the other side of your fears,
the Kingdom of Heaven awaits."
~ Jesus Christ (Luke 12:32)*

*"The Kingdom of God is not coming at some point in the future with happenings that can be observed ... For in Truth, the Kingdom of God is already fully alive within you."
~ Jesus Christ (Luke 17:20-21)*



"Practice Kindness all day to every being and you will realize that we are all already residing in Heaven." ~ via Jack Kerouac

Chapter 13) on Hell & damnation

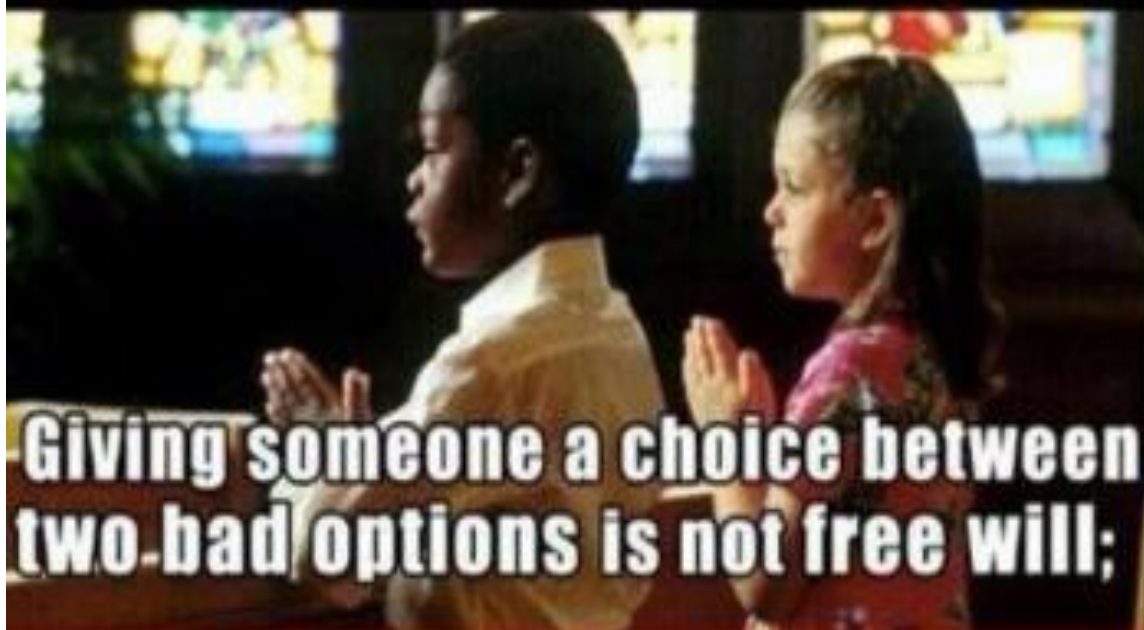




"Have no fear for your Souls, no matter what you might do or where you might one day find yourselves, for your heavenly Father is a God of perfect LOVE -- and just as perfect LOVE knows no fear, perfect LOVE metes out no punishment."

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:44-48 & John 6:36 + 1 John 4:18)

"Honor me & worship me & adore me; or burn in Hell forever ... The choice is yours." ~ God



Giving someone a choice between two bad options is not free will;



It's blackmail.



The Question: How can a truly
LOVING GOD allow anyone to
suffer for eternity in Hell?

The Answer He can't.

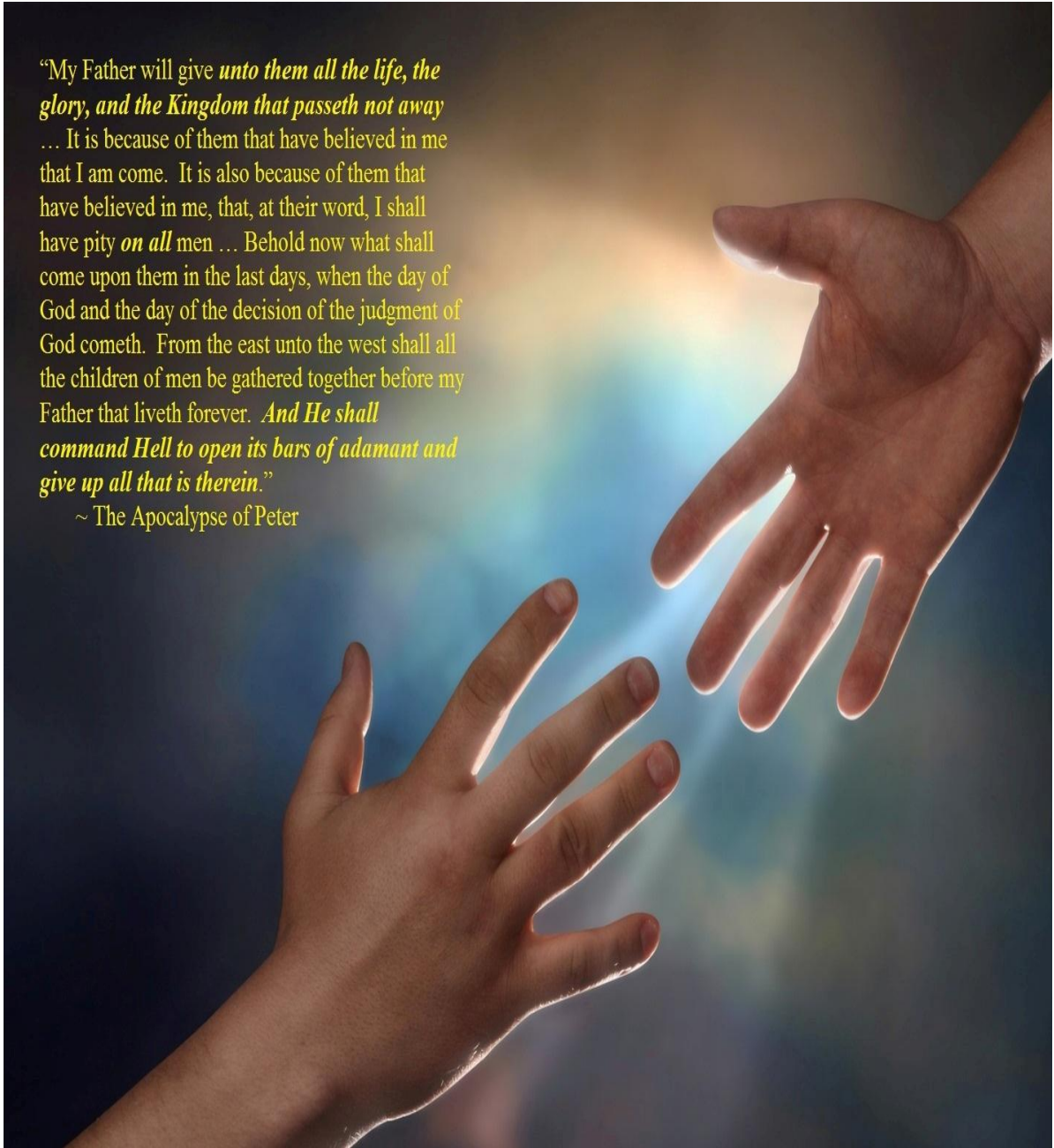
1 JOHN 4:18

LOVE

- * THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE
PERFECT LOVE DRIVES OUT FEAR ...
- * Fear has to do with punishment
(and thus all punishment comes at
least in part from fear) ...
- * God is the embodiment of
perfect Love (Matt 5:48) ...
- * As such, a God of perfect Love can
have nothing to do with fear, and
thus nothing to do with punishment.

“My Father will give unto them all the life, the glory, and the Kingdom that passeth not away ... It is because of them that have believed in me that I am come. It is also because of them that have believed in me, that, at their word, I shall have pity on all men ... Behold now what shall come upon them in the last days, when the day of God and the day of the decision of the judgment of God cometh. From the east unto the west shall all the children of men be gathered together before my Father that liveth forever. And He shall command Hell to open its bars of adamant and give up all that is therein.”

~ The Apocalypse of Peter





The most important consideration of *Hell*:
What kind of God would ever create such a prison in the first place, much less allow even the most disobedient of His children to endure its torments for even a few instants, much less for all of eternity?!?

"No person who is truly humane or soundly just can believe in -- much less defend -- the notion of eternal punishment." ~ via Bertrand Russell

Always a fine day for a picnic in Hell ...



How Gehenna probably looked in Jesus' day



How Gehenna looks today

While it is true that Jesus did speak about judgment in the Bible, and while it is also true that he spoke a handful of times about a place called *Gehenna* -- often translated in English Bibles as "Hell," it turns out that neither his idea of judgment nor his idea of *Gehenna* even remotely match those propagated by the modern-day Christian church. Indeed, Jesus' entire ministry was quite clearly founded on a Father of unconditional Caring who knew no judgment whatsoever (John 5:22) -- a God full of never-ending Mercy (Luke 6:36) and infinite Forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-22) and perfect Love (especially given to sinners and our enemies -- Matthew 5:39-48) that knew neither fear nor punishment (1 John 4:18) ...

And indeed, if the traditional inferno of Hell is a literal place where the unworthy are tortured for eternity, then such a place must exist somewhere in God's creation -- and God must have at some point looked upon it and claimed it was somehow "deeply beautiful" (Genesis 1) ... But what is in any way "Good" about torture -- eternal or otherwise? And how could any God worth worshiping even passively allow such torment to take place? So if Jesus was not a liar and if Jesus was not a hypocrite, what could he have actually meant when he mentioned *Gehenna*?

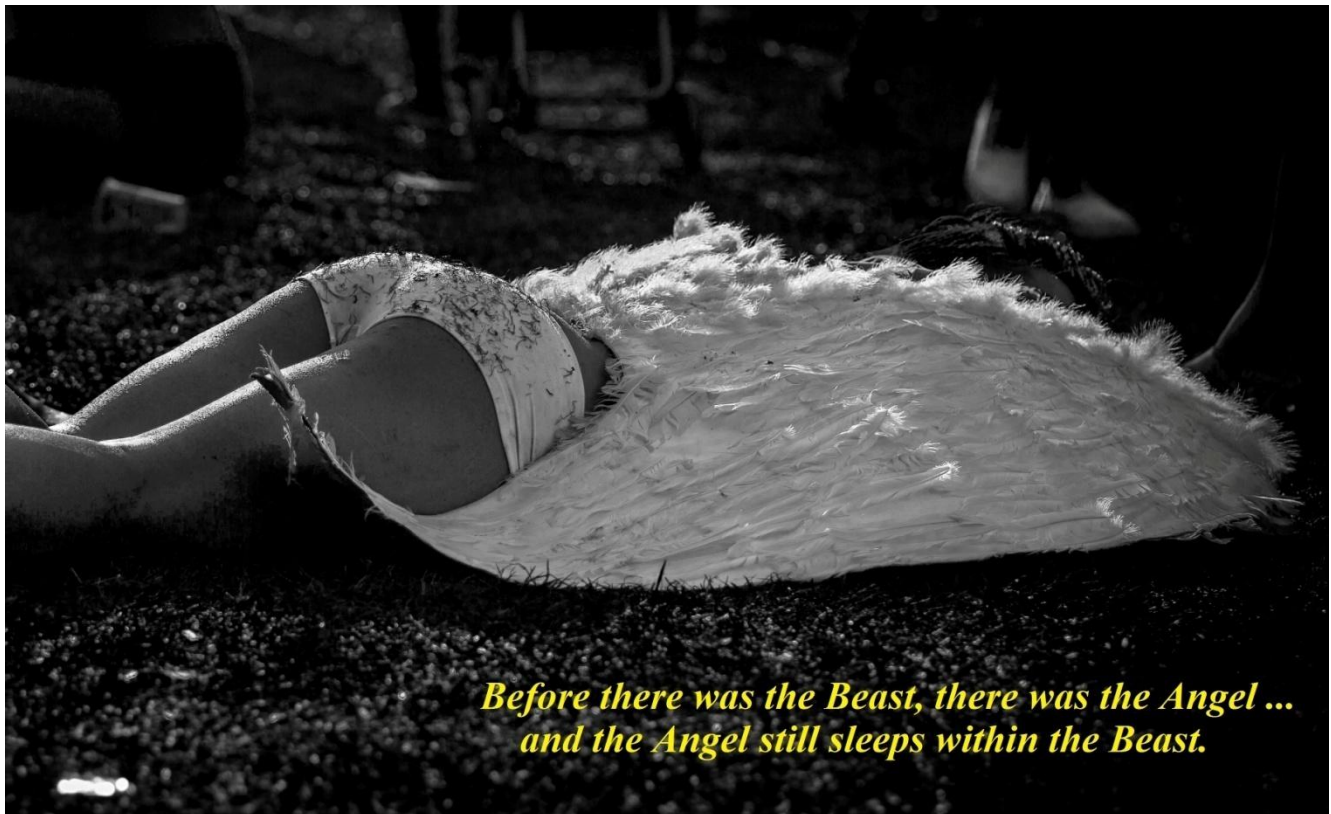
Well, as it turns out, there was an actual place called *Gehenna* in Jesus' day -- a place that happened to be a huge, stinking, ever-burning, maggot-infested garbage dump located on the outskirts of Jerusalem; a place that perfectly symbolized the spiritual filth of selfishness & arrogance & wickedness, and a place that perfectly represented the suffering that all of us do indeed endure whenever we choose such less-than-noble, sin-ridden, and judgment-laden paths through life.

For Jesus, *Gehenna* was the place to which we all send ourselves when we love ourselves instead of tending to the needs of others, and the fires of *Gehenna* were the pain all of us experience in those moments when we recognize the same; as well as the suffering we all come to know while repenting -- while shedding those same sins in favor of choices that align with the self-sacrificially caring Way of Christ instead.

As such, turning Jesus' Gospel of perfect Love into a "gospel" of fear, damnation, and eternal punishment is either alarmingly short-sighted or disturbingly manipulative. And either way it is very bad news -- indeed, the absolute worst news -- and needs to stop. For the message of Jesus Christ in the Gospels was never about a rapturous escape from this life or living in an eternal paradise in the next. Instead, it was always about the fact that the Kingdom of God has already arrived -- that it is right here, right now; both within & all around us (Matthew 10:7 & Luke 17:20-21) -- and that we are all invited to enter that state of sheer Bliss whenever we wish -- by simply reaching out to Care for others (Matthew 24:12-14 & John 13:15-17); especially when we least wish to do so, and especially for those "least deserving" of the same.

Amen ... Lert it be so.

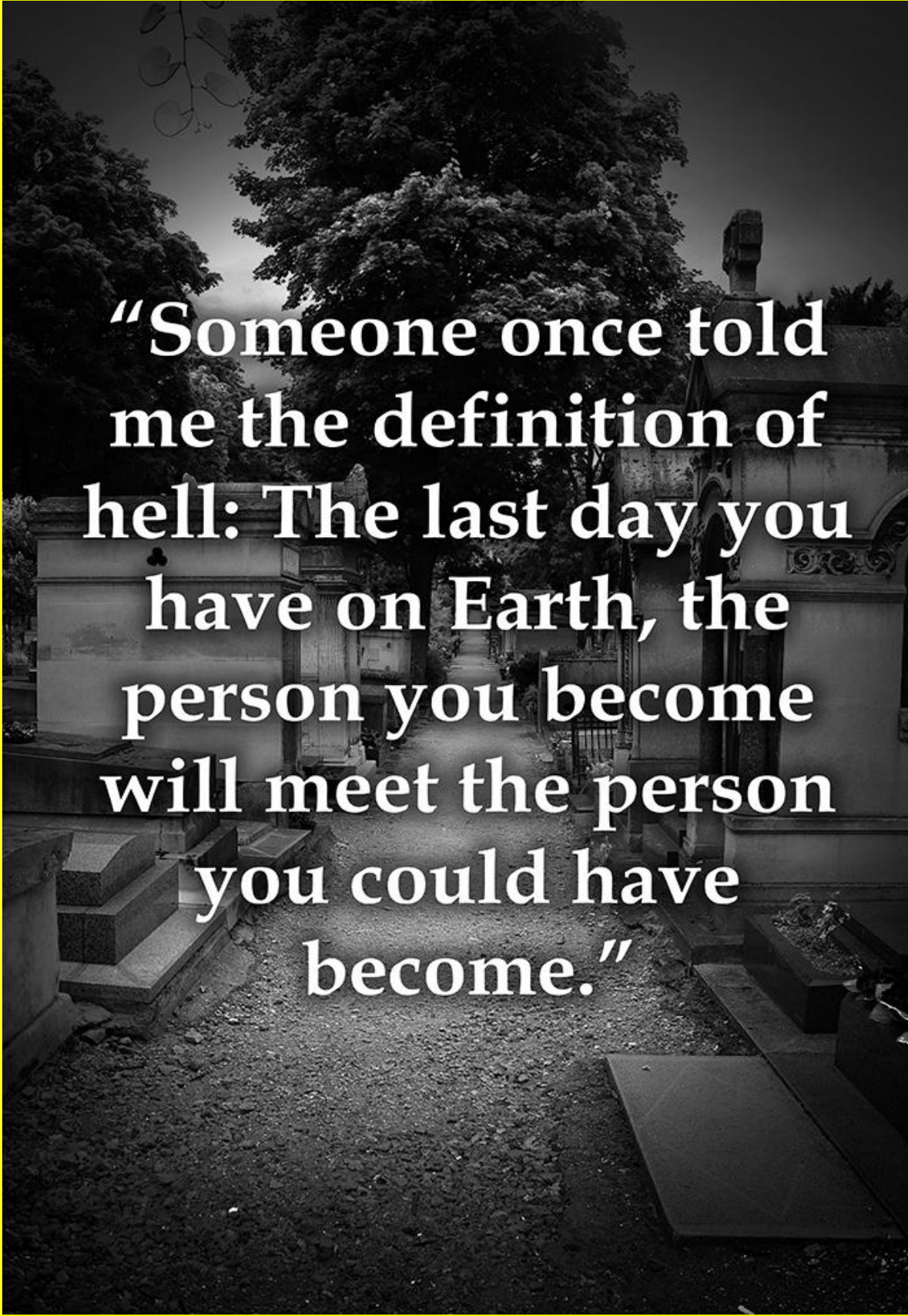
(inspired by Dan Wilkinson & Benjamin Corey)



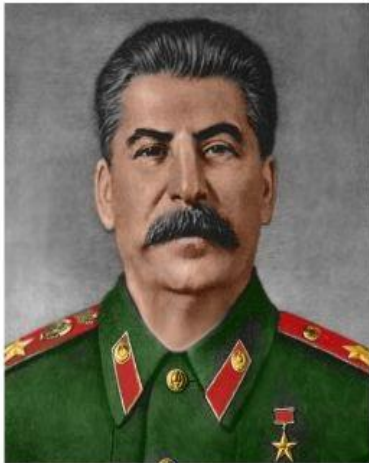
*Before there was the Beast, there was the Angel ...
and the Angel still sleeps within the Beast.*

The Truth beneath "The Number of the Beast" ...

In Revelation 13:18, the Bible notes the following: "Let anyone with Understanding calculate the Number of the Beast, for *it is the number of a person*. Its number is **666**." Read literally, this verse has had many a conservative Christian looking for an actual branding of "666" upon the head of an imminent earthly "Anti-Christ". While this phenomenon might indeed one day come to pass, reading this verse in this way denies the deeper meaning within its words. For at the time of its writing, a system of interpretation was common among the more mystically inclined in the Middle East – a system called "Gematria". This system attached numerical values to letters and used those values to access the archetypal meanings of certain words or phrases. It just so happens that John was a Hebraic author and that "**666**" in Hebraic gematria is the numerical value of the name "**Caesar Neron**" – Nero, who happened to be the first Roman Emperor to persecute Christians. Even more intriguing, the earliest manuscripts of Revelation list this number not as 666 but as **616** -- which happens to be the gematrian value of "**Caesar Nero**" as well! ... Both Rome (in 70 CE) and Babylon (in 586 BCE) destroyed Jerusalem's Temple – hence the author's later naming of the "great whore" as "Babylon" (see Revelation 17:5-18). Thus, the author of Revelation seems to be making a rather poignant political statement in opposition to Roman rule, and *not* to be forecasting the imminent (or not so imminent) arrival of Satan on Earth.



“Someone once told me the definition of hell: The last day you have on Earth, the person you become will meet the person you could have become.”



***“Obey and worship ME,
or freeze in the Gulags”***

People have free will. They could choose to obey Stalin’s commands, or not.

Stalin didn’t send people to the Gulags. People sent themselves there by choosing to disobey Stalin.

***“Obey and worship ME,
or burn in Hell”***

People have free will. They can choose to obey God’s commands, or not.

God doesn’t send people to Hell. People sent themselves there by choosing to disobey God

NOTE: Any morally sound person would resist Stalin by choosing the Gulags over obeying him. And in the same vein, any morally sound person should defy such a God as well; courageously & without question choosing Hell over worshiping such a wicked tyrant.

P.S. If we are ever forced to choose between supporting an evil dictator like Hitler and dying in a concentration camp, we clearly must choose to die in the concentration camp ... Similarly, if after we die we are forced to either worship a cruel God or burn forever in the Hell that He created for unbelievers, we are to stand calmly before Him and willingly choose the latter.



As a non-Christian, I have no choice but to humbly admit that fundamentalists might very well be right; that I indeed might not be 'saved' after my death -- that I indeed might spend the rest of eternity in their version of Hell ... And yet despite this possibility, as a fundamentally moral human being I can also state wholeheartedly that I am completely OK with this potential outcome ... After all, I have dedicated my life to Loving others unconditionally and Caring for them self-sacrificially – neither of which can be fully enlivened while in any way striving for (or even hoping for) my own salvation either thereafter or thereby ... And so it is that if I must choose between Loving fully in this life or reveling fully in the next, there really is no choice to make -- I opt for the former without pause or hesitation ... And how delightfully ironic it is that this path and this path alone is the one that truly embodies The Way of Jesus Christ!*

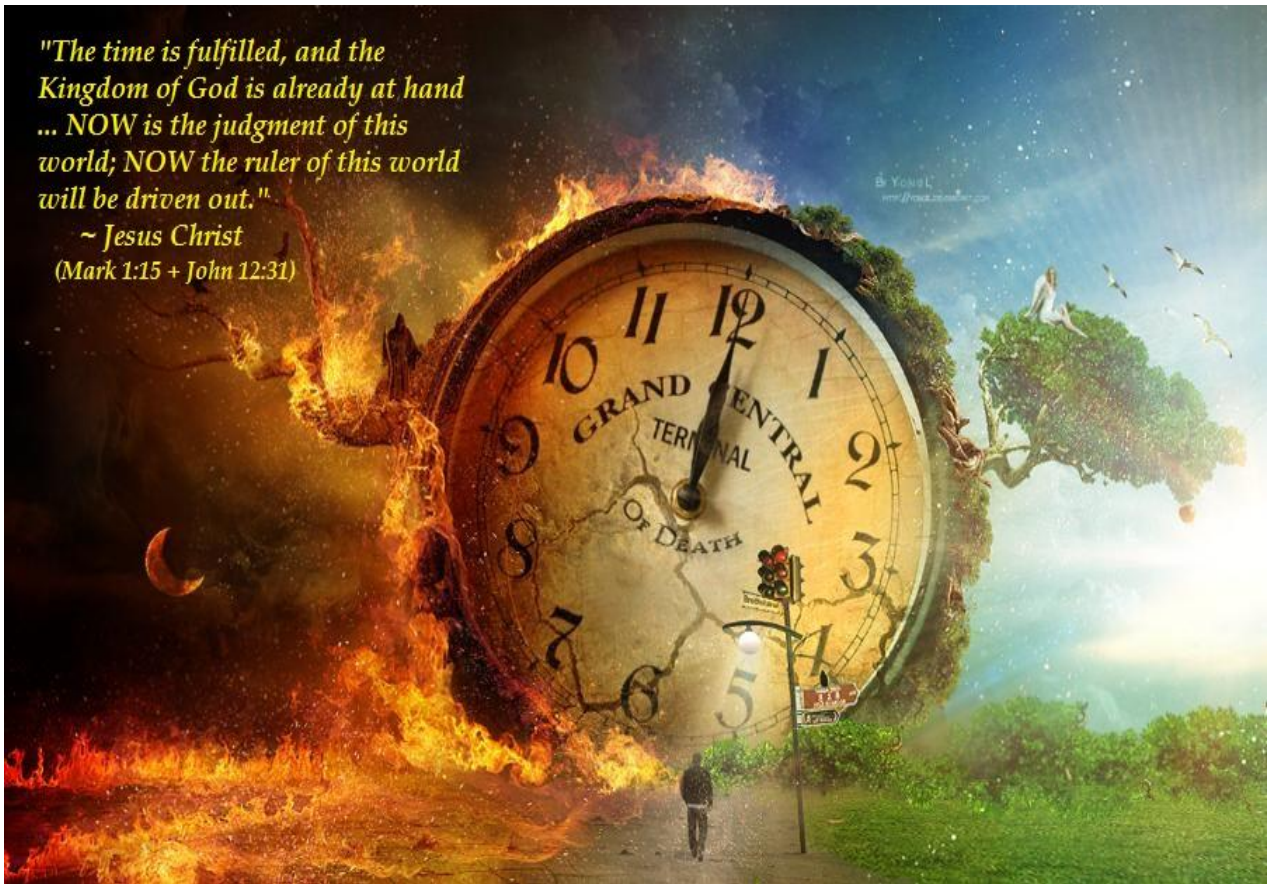
*see Mk 10:18, Matt 5:44-48, Matt 7:21-22, Luke 17:20-21, John 13:15-17, John 15:8-12

Chapter 14) on being Born Again



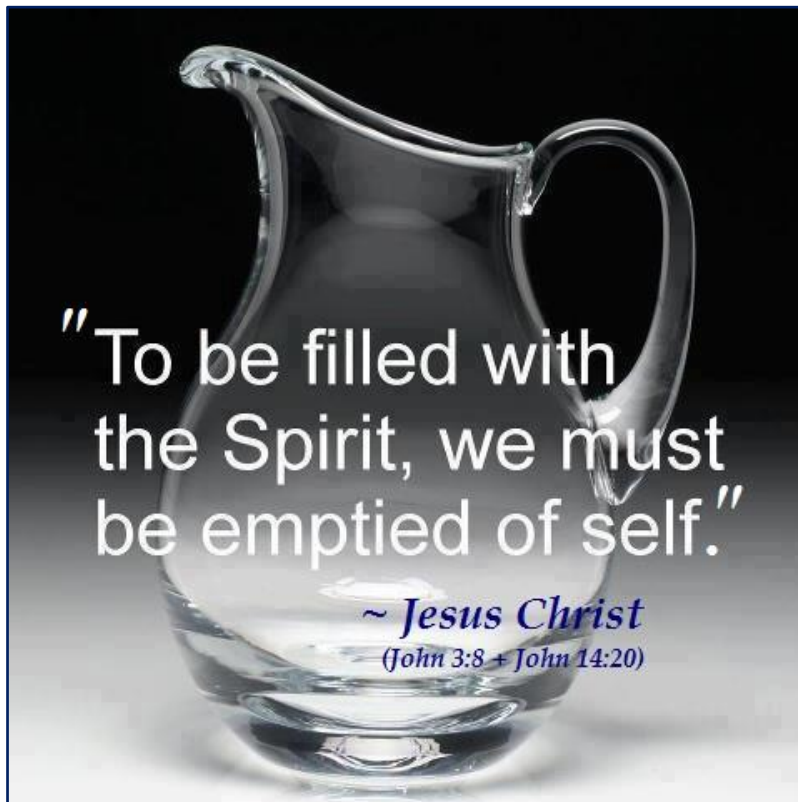
"Today, like every day, we awaken empty and frightened. And we find no answer to that emptiness in our reading, nor can our deepest fear be allayed by our prayers ... No, to find the **Peace** that we so desperately seek, something far greater is needed: We must stand -- We must care -- We must risk -- We must *act* ... Yes, to finally know real **Peace**, we must let Kindness reign again like it did in the days of our youth. We must let the Beauty we cherish most become what we Do.

There are thousands of chances to kneel and kiss the ground, my Friends. Go forth today, find the one nearest to you -- and kneel." ~ inspired by Rumi





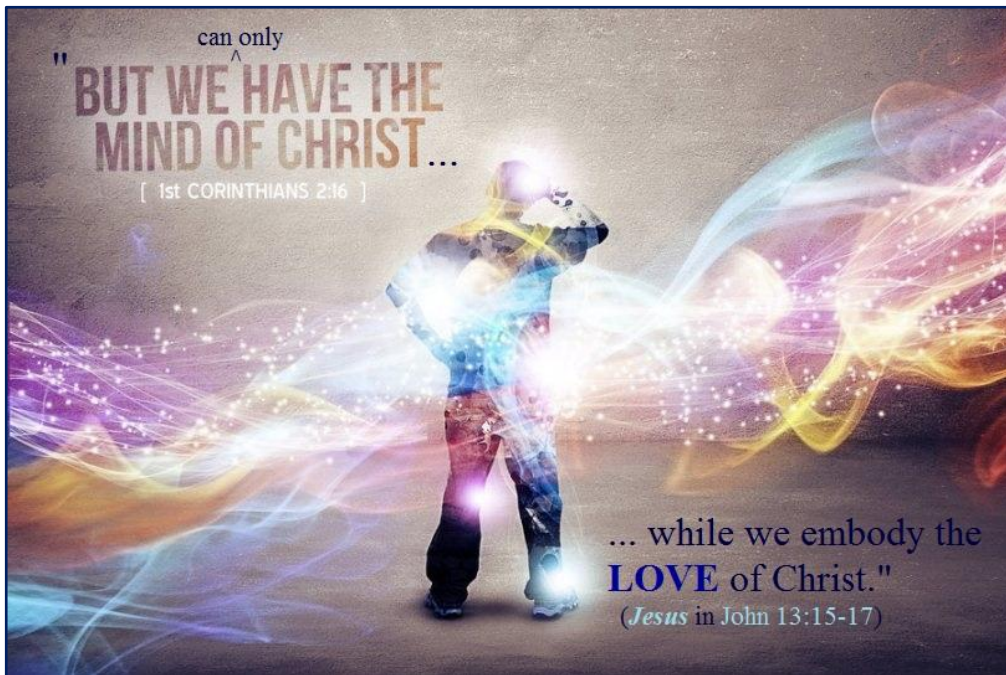
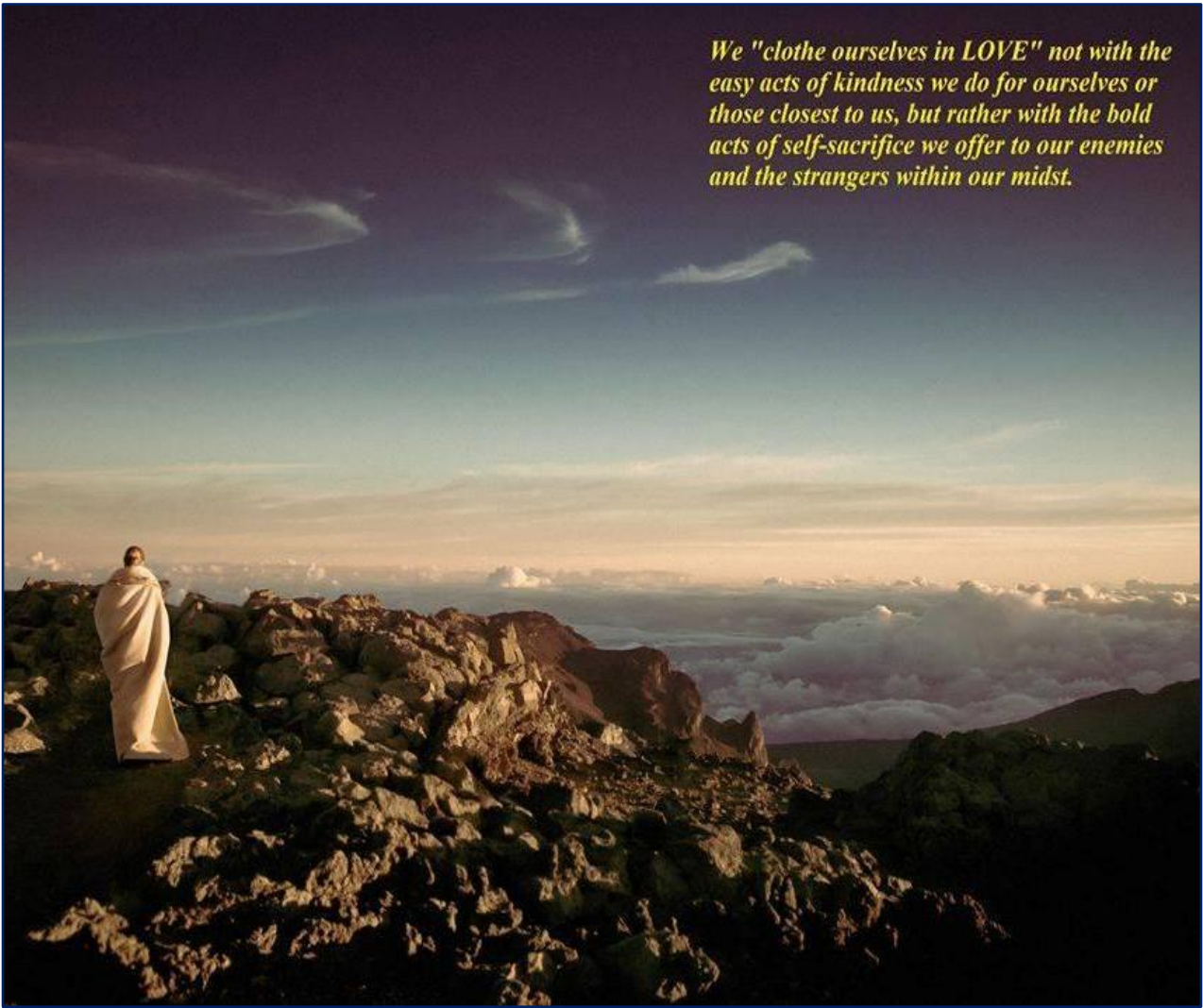
"The Church does not dispense the sacrament of baptism to consecrate a human being to God, but rather to acquire for herself an increase in membership and an enhancement of dominion ... Indeed, it is only via acts of selfless Love -- the 'fiery' transmutation of ego to Spirit (a la Matt 3:11) -- that the recurring baptism of the Soul (a la John 3:8 + John 13:15-17) is repeatedly reborn; forever purifying each moment so enlivened with a fully renewed version of the Child of God we have all always been." ~ anonymous





"The problem with Love these days is that society has taught the human race to stare at people with their eyes instead of to *See others* with their Soul." ~ via Christopher Poindexter

"For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have chosen to be eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let all who can fully accept this teaching." ~ Jesus Christ (Matt 19:12)



**Each morning we are born again.
What we do today is what
matters most.**

~ Buddha



"The wind simply flows wherever it chooses. We might hear the sound of it blowing in the trees, and yet we cannot truly know from whence it comes nor to where it ultimately travels ... And so it is with everyone who has been Born of the Spirit -- everyone who has been Born Again."

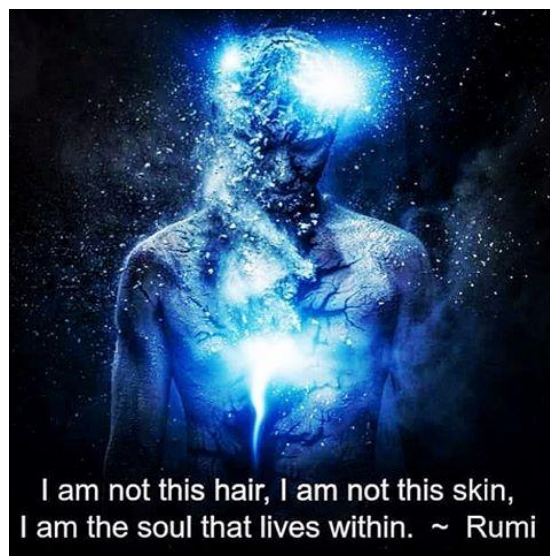
~ Jesus Christ (John 3:8)

*Chill, homie.
You need to let
that shit go.*

- Buddha



"So do not worry about the contents of yesterday or the happenings of tomorrow, for yesterday has already come & gone, and tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Indeed, today's challenges are more than enough for today" ~ via Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:34)

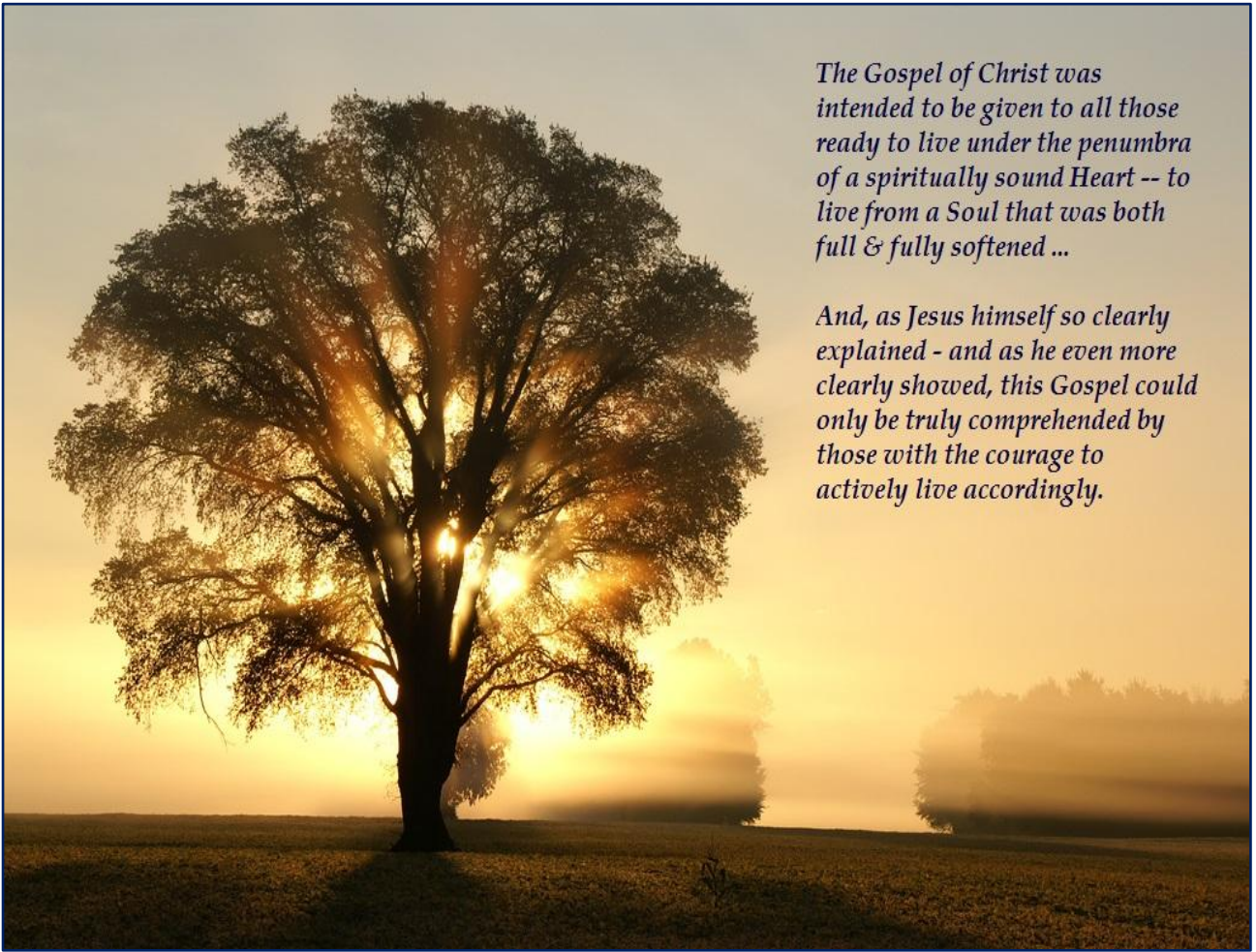


I am not this hair, I am not this skin,
I am the soul that lives within. ~ Rumi



"Truly, the Soul being united with Him -- and thereby transformed into Him -- is like fire consuming the dampness in wood. For once the logs are heated through and through, the fire burns with an intensity that changes them into itself; giving them its own color, its own warmth, and its own power." ~ via Catherine of Sienna





The Gospel of Christ was intended to be given to all those ready to live under the penumbra of a spiritually sound Heart -- to live from a Soul that was both full & fully softened ...

And, as Jesus himself so clearly explained - and as he even more clearly showed, this Gospel could only be truly comprehended by those with the courage to actively live accordingly.



and again."
and again ...
and again ...
and again ...
and again ...
and again ...
and again ...
and again ...

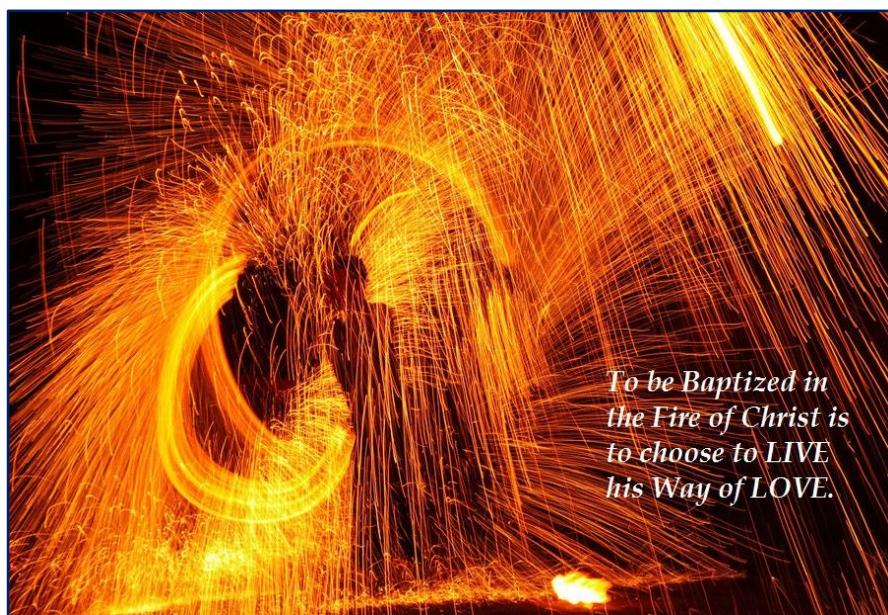
"You must be born again ...

~ Jesus Christ (John 3:7-8)



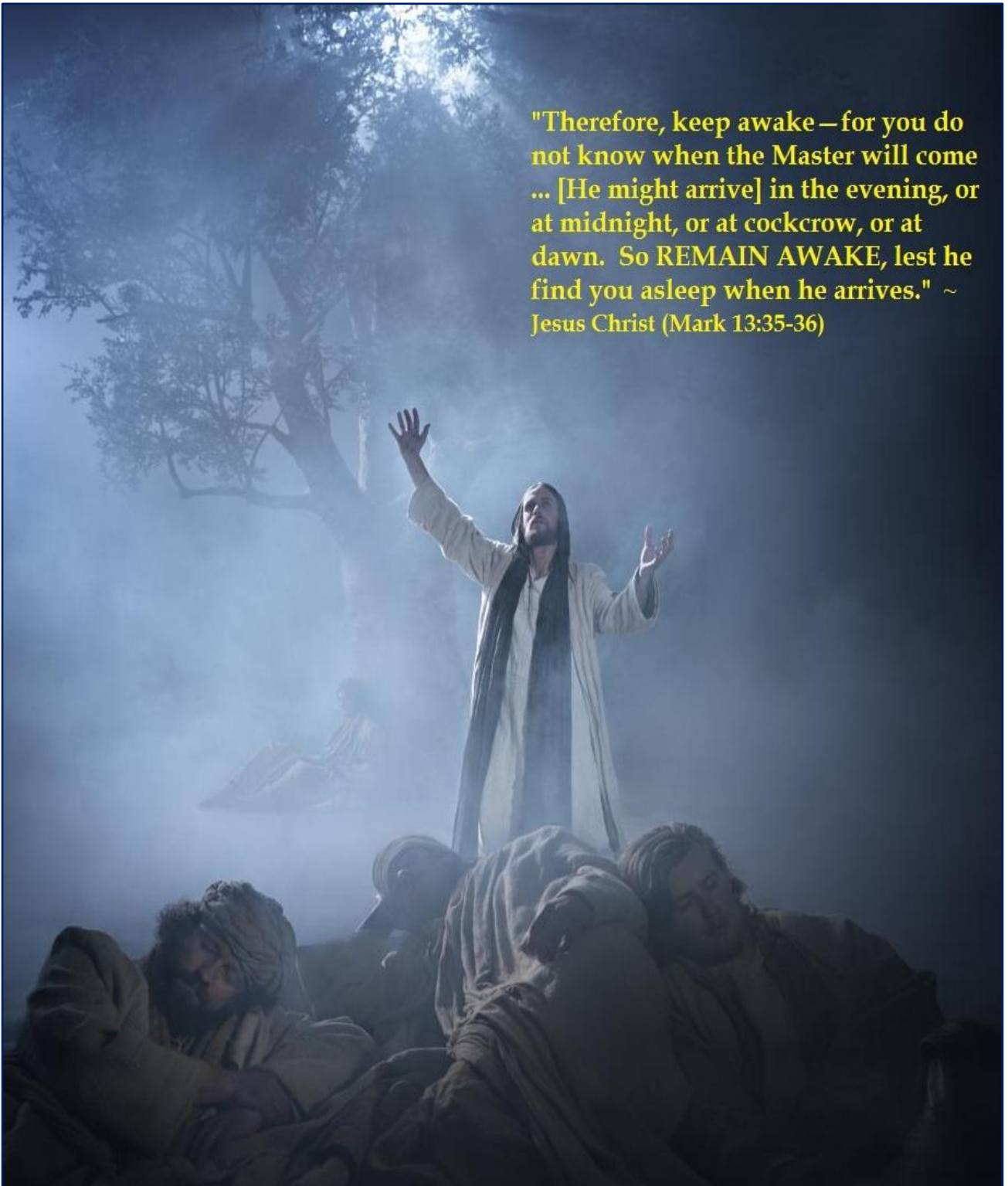
"Satori is to be with God before he cried out "Let there be light" ... It is to be with God when his spirit moved to give this great order ... It is to be with God and also with the light so created ... And it is to be God Himself, and also His firmament, His earth, His day, and His night."

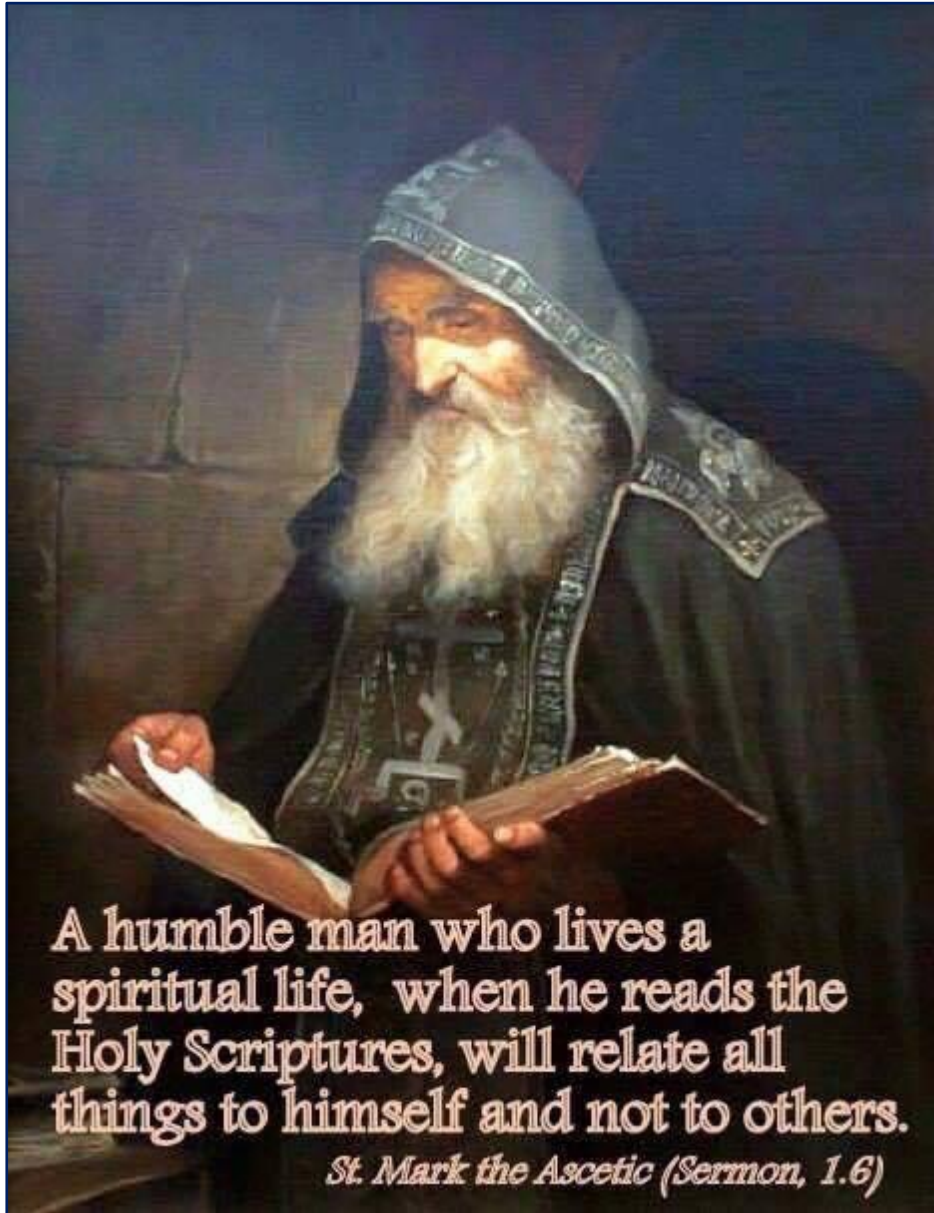
~ via Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki



*To be Baptized in
the Fire of Christ is
to choose to LIVE
his Way of LOVE.*

"Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the Master will come ... [He might arrive] in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn. So **REMAIN AWAKE**, lest he find you asleep when he arrives." ~ Jesus Christ (Mark 13:35-36)





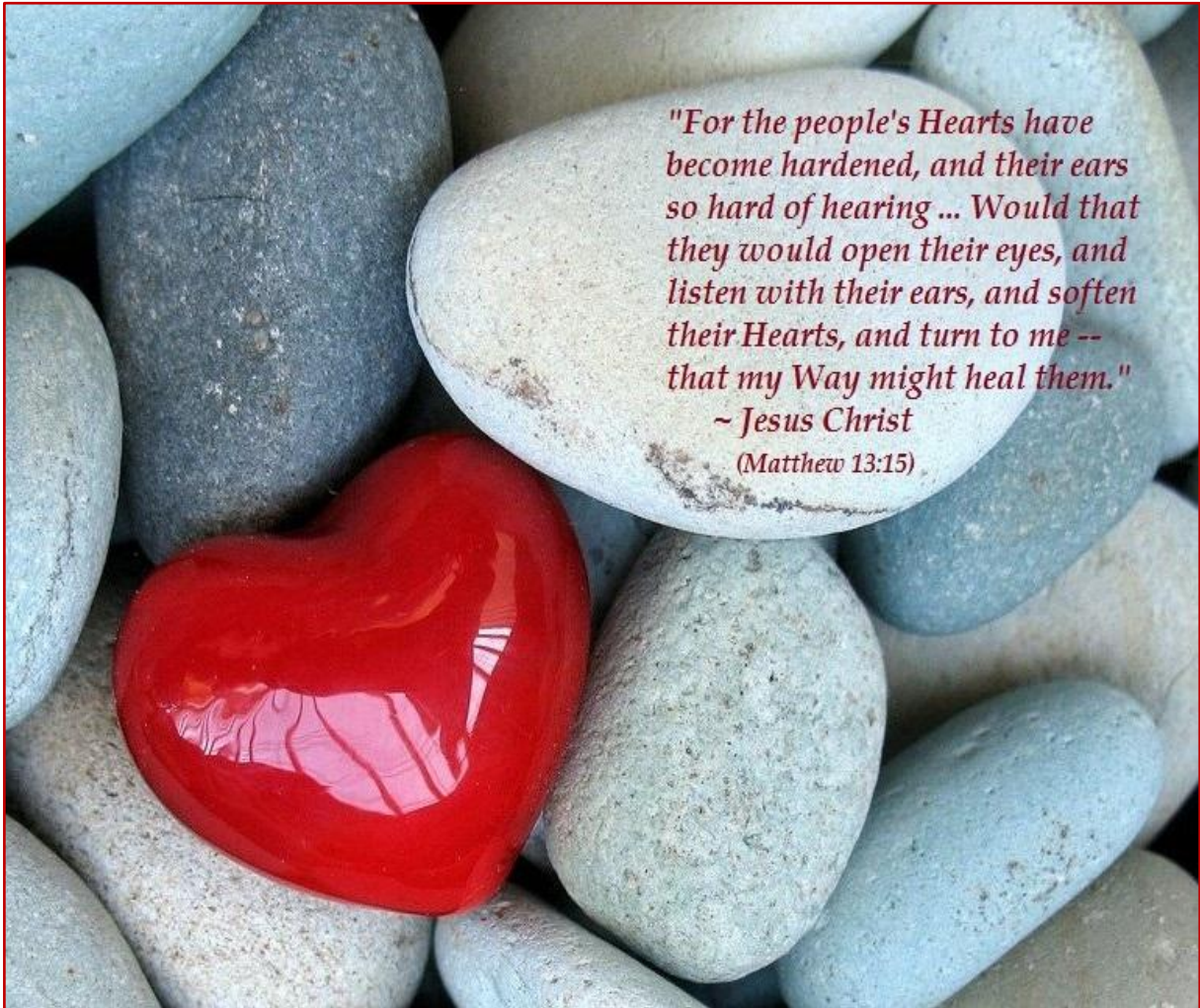
A humble man who lives a spiritual life, when he reads the Holy Scriptures, will relate all things to himself and not to others.

St. Mark the Ascetic (Sermon, 1.6)



We are baptized not by the Love we receive from God, but rather by the LOVE we give to others.

(Luke 2:16 • Mark 9:49 • Matthew 28:19-20)



"For the people's Hearts have become hardened, and their ears so hard of hearing ... Would that they would open their eyes, and listen with their ears, and soften their Hearts, and turn to me -- that my Way might heal them."

~ Jesus Christ

(Matthew 13:15)



"To renew your mind in Christ, you must refill your life with LOVE."

~ Jesus Christ (John 14)

*"We are all born to instinctively care primarily for ourselves ...
And yet we are also all born to one day choose differently – to one day
choose over & over & over again to be Reborn into lives of selfless LOVE."
~ Jesus Christ (John 3:8)*

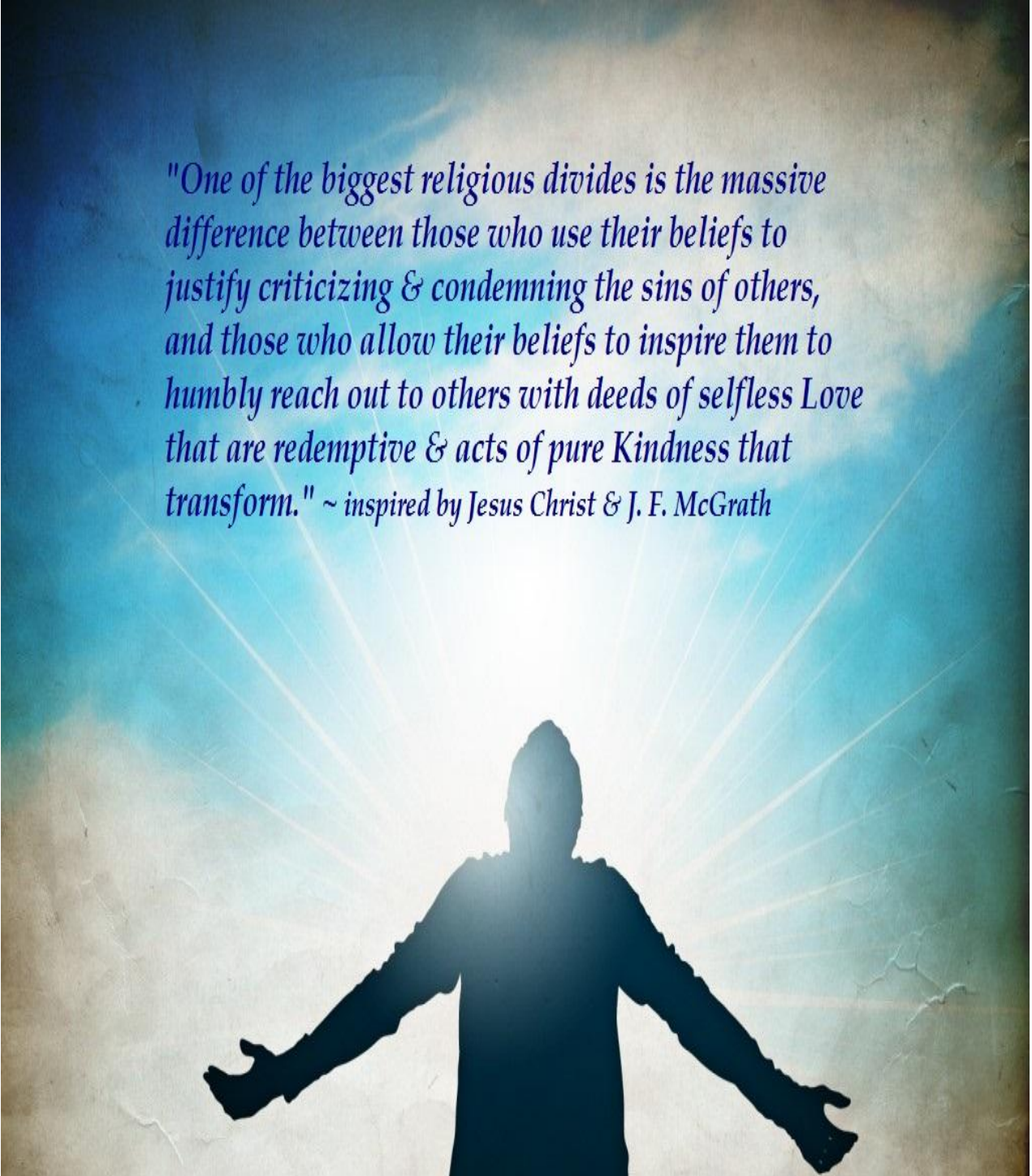


*What if -- after you die, God greets you,
sits down across from you, looks you in the
eye while smiling gently, and says:*

"So ... How was Heaven?"

Chapter 15) on Fundamentalism

"One of the biggest religious divides is the massive difference between those who use their beliefs to justify criticizing & condemning the sins of others, and those who allow their beliefs to inspire them to humbly reach out to others with deeds of selfless Love that are redemptive & acts of pure Kindness that transform." ~ inspired by Jesus Christ & J. F. McGrath



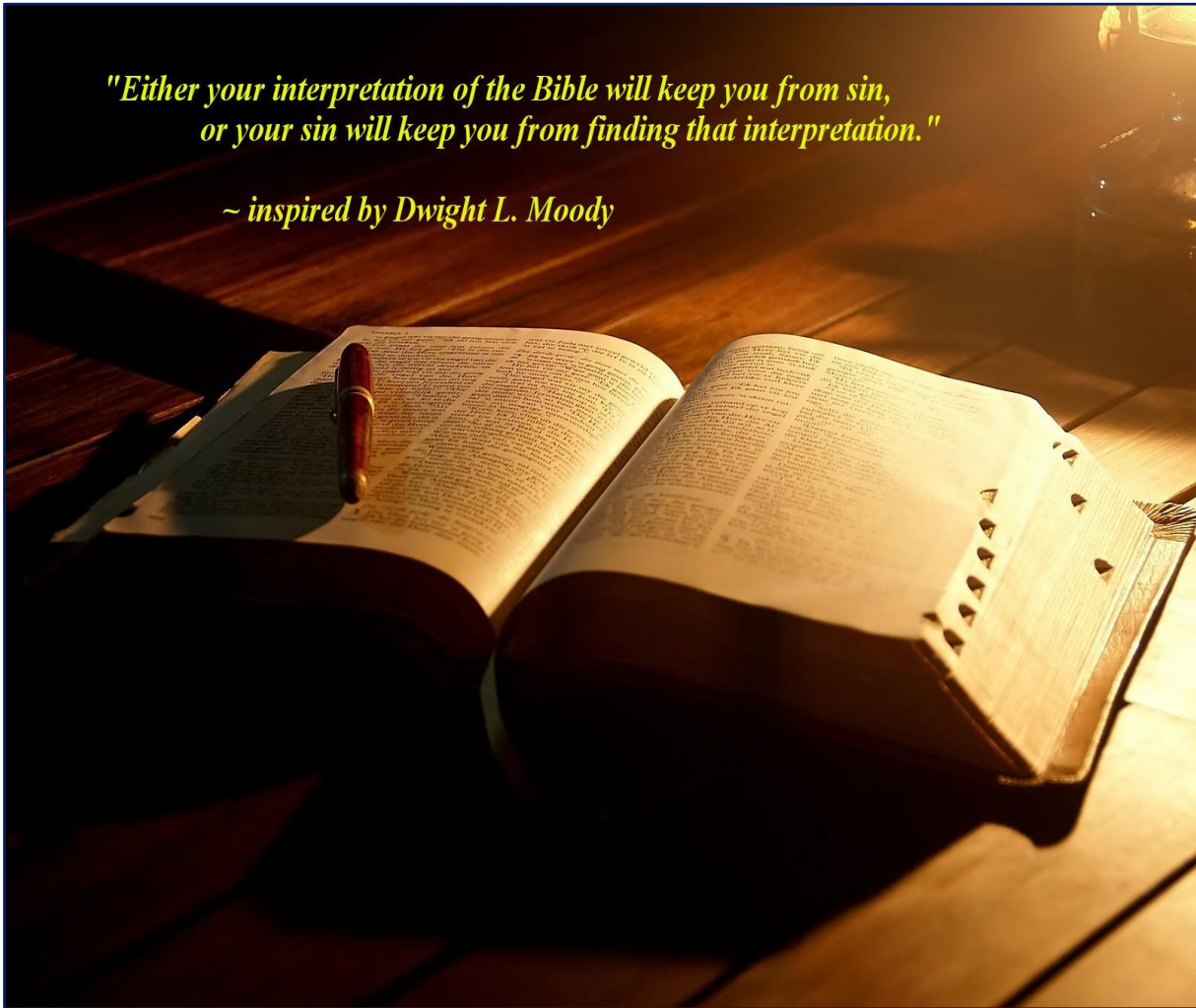
*He who uses the
Bible as a weapon,
destroys his own Soul
while doing so.*



"Biblical inerrancy is nothing more than the desire to have one's own religious views seen as inerrant by others ... Ironically, at the very heart of this belief rests the abject failure to recognize one's own innate proneness to err. As such, this doctrine is not only flat out wrong, but is also a direct assault on all the most profound teachings in the Bible -- those about Love & God (that the two are one), and those about God & humanity (that we can -- via Love -- become one as well)." ~ inspired by James McGrath

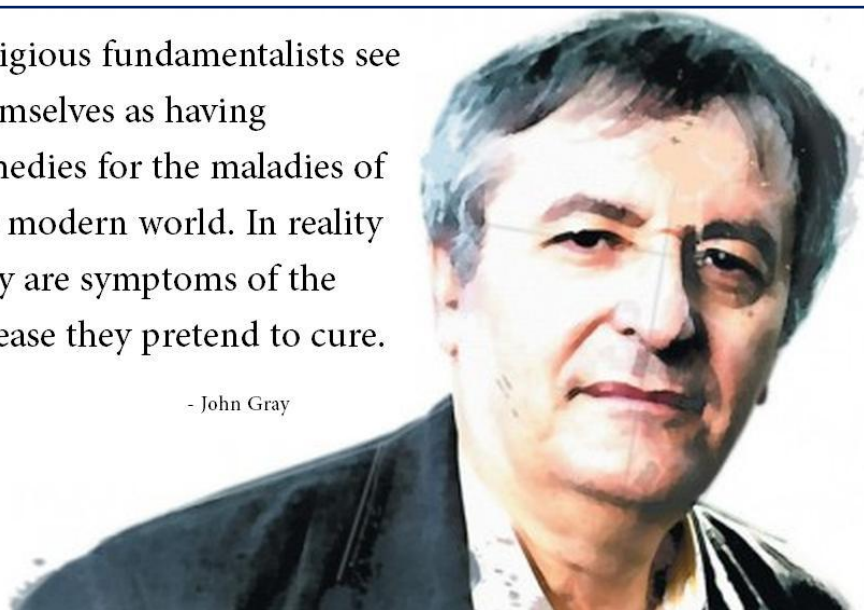
*"Either your interpretation of the Bible will keep you from sin,
or your sin will keep you from finding that interpretation."*

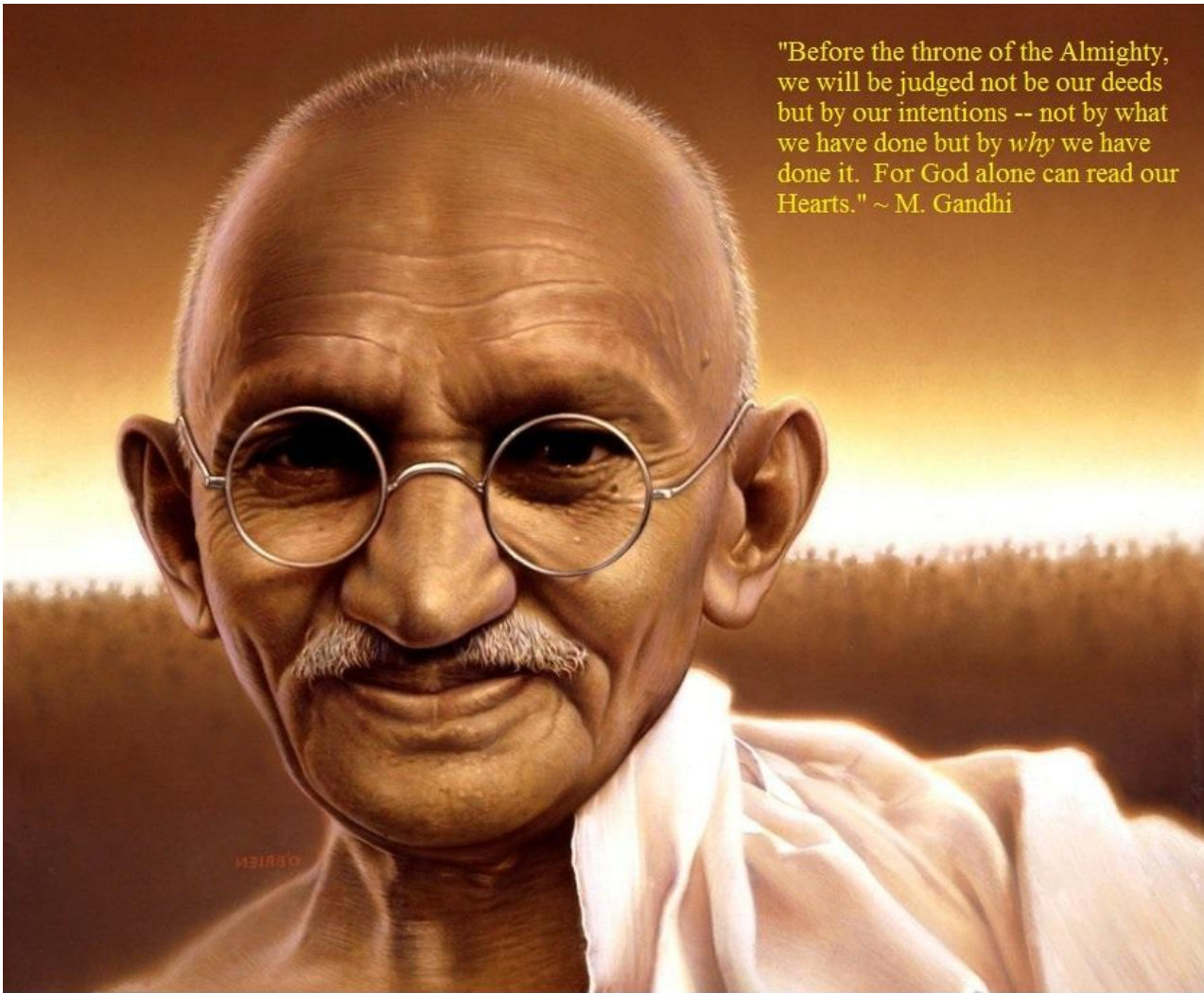
~ inspired by Dwight L. Moody



Religious fundamentalists see themselves as having remedies for the maladies of the modern world. In reality they are symptoms of the disease they pretend to cure.

- John Gray





This man dedicated the majority of the heart of his life to advocating for the rights of the less fortunate -- to championing civil rights, to feeding the hungry, to illuminating injustice, to trouncing tyranny ...

And according to the words & teachings of the "apostle" Paul, this man is right now even as we speak still **burning in Hell**.

Needless to say, **this a problem** -- not a problem for Gandhi, mind you ... This a problem for Christianity.

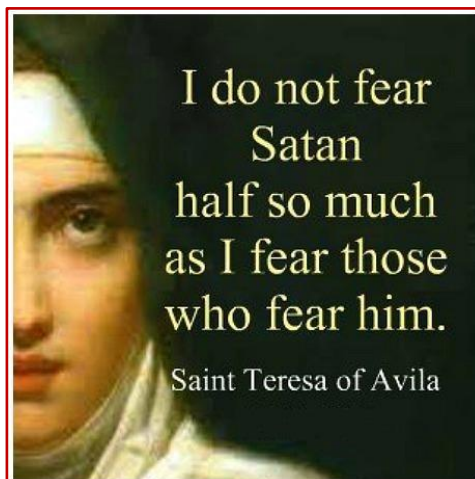
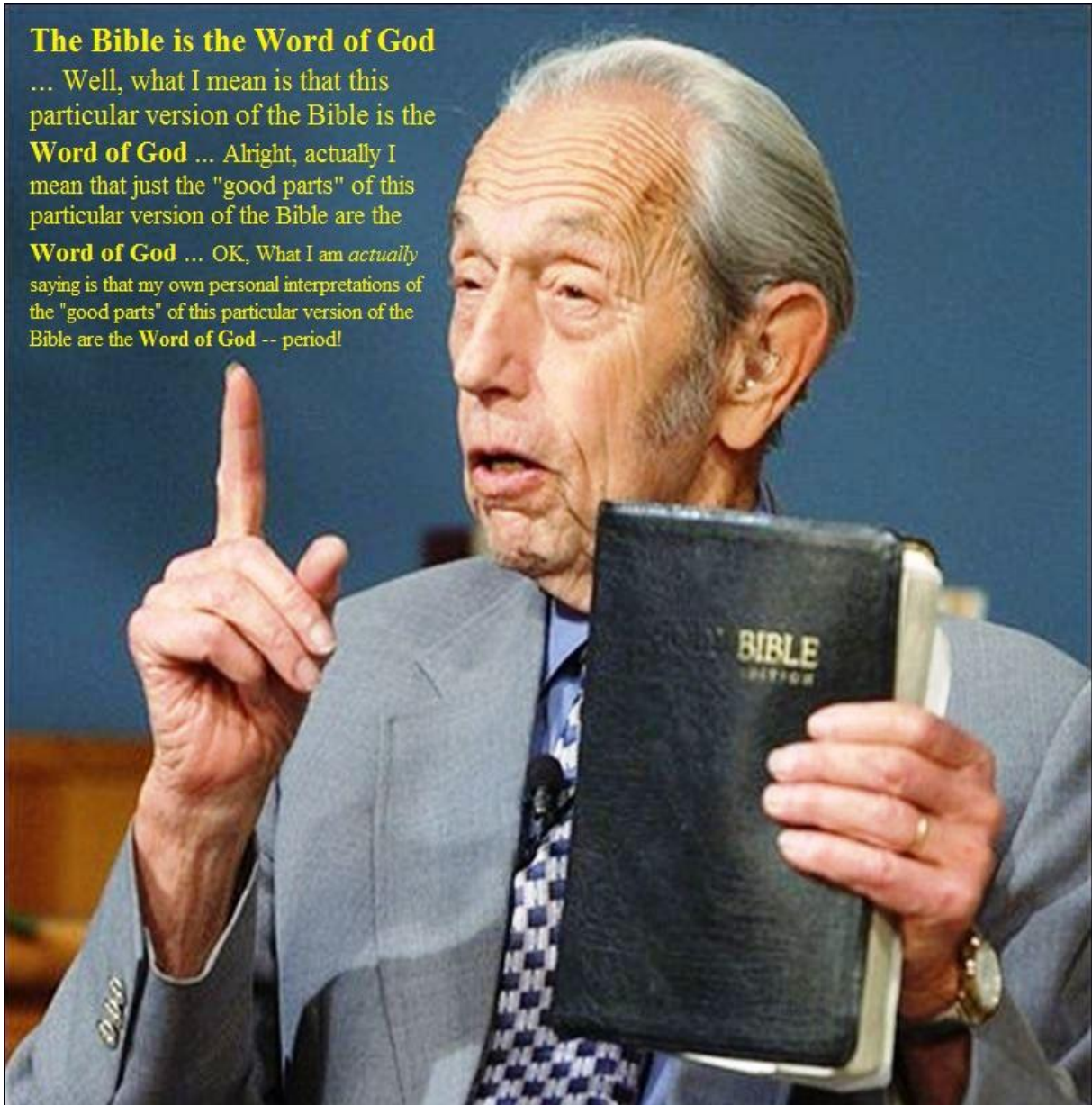


God
@TheGoodGodAbove

There's a special place in hell for people that threaten others with a special place in hell

The Bible is the Word of God

... Well, what I mean is that this particular version of the Bible is the **Word of God** ... Alright, actually I mean that just the "good parts" of this particular version of the Bible are the **Word of God** ... OK, What I am *actually* saying is that my own personal interpretations of the "good parts" of this particular version of the Bible are the **Word of God** -- period!




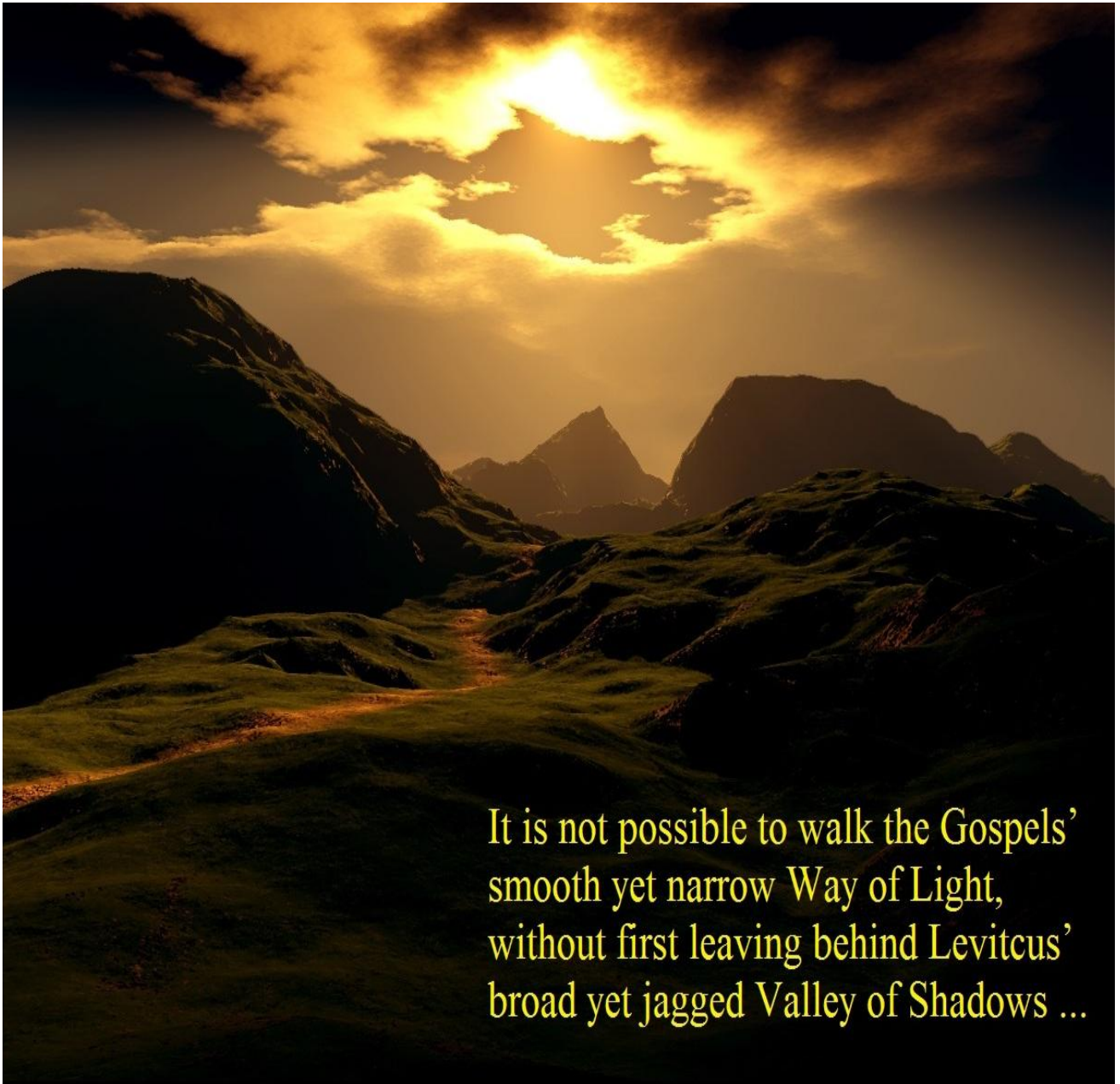


It would have been nice if this person could have spelled "unconditional" correctly, though it would have been far nicer had he or she first looked up what it actually means.

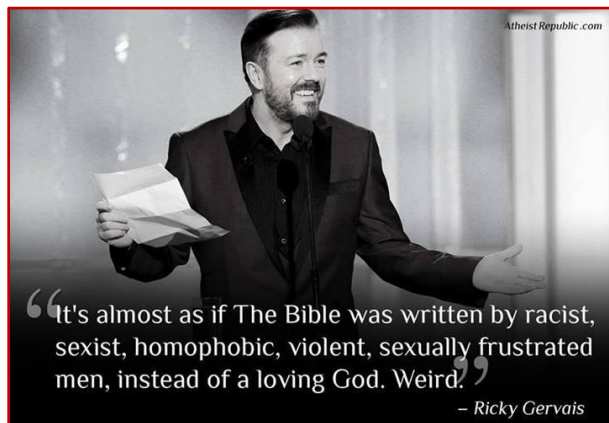
He that has
ears to hear,
let him hear.

-Matthew 11:15

 (Before the TRUTH can
set you free, you must
identify which lies are
holding your Heart
hostage.)



It is not possible to walk the Gospels' smooth yet narrow Way of Light, without first leaving behind Leviticus' broad yet jagged Valley of Shadows ...



“It's almost as if The Bible was written by racist, sexist, homophobic, violent, sexually frustrated men, instead of a loving God. Weird.”

– Ricky Gervais

Fundamentalism (a.k.a. Evangelicalism) is actually a glorified form of self-righteousness ...

As a fundamentalist, your salvation depends solely on believing the right thing. And since it is demanded that you have confidence in that salvation, you are also required to believe that you are 100% correct in having that confidence.

Of course, this is the most vacuous theology possible ... There is no justice, there is no humility, there is no sincere selflessness; just believe correctly and profess that belief zealously and you're all set.

*This is not a Triumph of Spirit ...
... this is a "triumph" of self.*



If your theology doesn't lead you to love people more, you should question your theology.



The critical judgment of sin inherent in the dogma of

Evangelicalism

always bears the rotten Fruit of fear & anger & sadness.

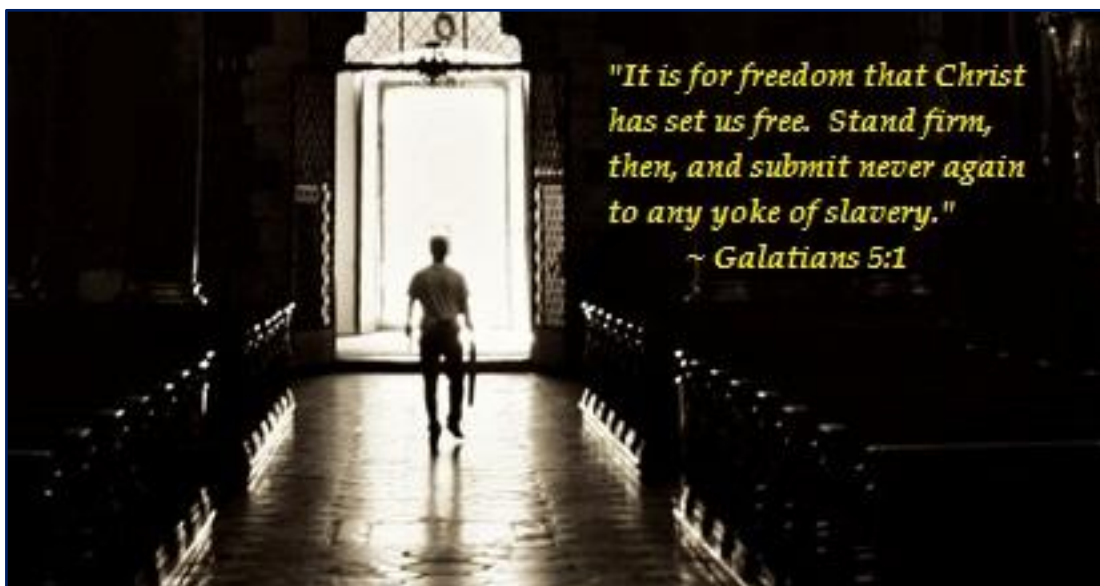
Evangelicals Cherry-picking the Bible ...

Deut 25:11-12	Cut off your wife's hand for touching a penis.....	OUT
Matt 6:5-6	Do not pray in public, pray in secret	OUT
Exodus 10	The Decalogue or Ten Commandments.....	IN
2Kings 2:23-24	Stone you children to death for disobedience.....	OUT
Deut 22:20-21	Stone your new wife to death if not a virgin.....	OUT
NOWHERE	Jesus claims he is sent to die for your sins.....	IN
Mark 16:17-18	A true believer in Christ can drink poison.....	OUT
NOWHERE	Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived.....	IN
Leviticus 18:22	No same gender sexual relations.....	IN
Matt 12:31	You shall love your neighbor as yourself.....	IN/OUT
Luke 16:17	The Old Testament Mosaic Laws are still valid.....	OUT
John 8:33	The Israelites were never slaves in Egypt.....	OUT
John 3:16	For God so loved the world, he gave his only son....	IN
Leviticus 19:28	Tattoos or any ink marks are forbidden.....	OUT
Leviticus 11:7	No ham, no bacon, no shrimp, no oysters.....	OUT
Matt 19:9	Can't get divorced from your spouse.....	OUT
Deut 22:28-30	Rape is not a sin, just give her dad 50 shekels.....	OUT



*It is indeed quite true
that only the Truth can
truly set us free ...*

*... which of course
means that anything
which binds us or
confines us or judges us
or constrains us -- is
clearly not the Truth.*



*"It is for freedom that Christ
has set us free. Stand firm,
then, and submit never again
to any yoke of slavery."
~ Galatians 5:1*



**Jesus didn't say
'follow Christians'
He said
'follow me'.**



**"WE WORSHIPPED JESUS INSTEAD OF
FOLLOWING HIM ON HIS SAME PATH.**

**WE MADE JESUS INTO A MERE RELIGION
INSTEAD OF A JOURNEY TOWARD UNION
WITH GOD AND EVERYTHING ELSE.**

**THIS SHIFT MADE US INTO A RELIGION
OF "BELONGING AND BELIEVING"
INSTEAD OF A RELIGION OF
TRANSFORMATION."**

RICHARD ROHR

"Whenever there is any tension between something Jesus said in the Bible and something from elsewhere therein, the tiebreaker always goes to Jesus."

~ Benjamin L. Corey



"You keep repeating that verse of Scripture over & over again ... and yet you might be surprised to learn that it actually means the exact OPPOSITE of what you think it means."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(John 5:39-40)*

(*see specifically Matthew 4:17 on repentance, John 3:8 on being Born Again, Matthew 25:46 on Hell, John 10:30 on the divinity of Jesus, & Matthew 28:19 on The Great Commission)



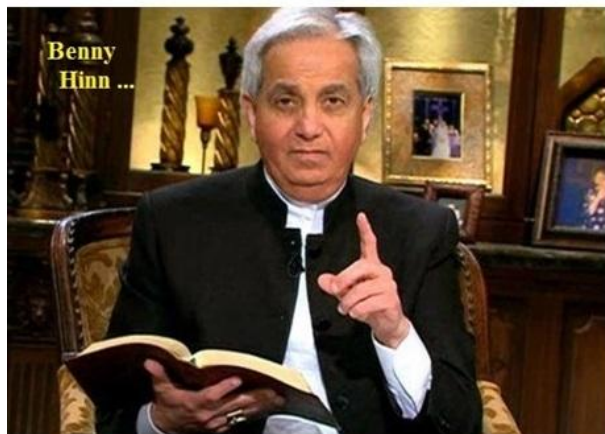
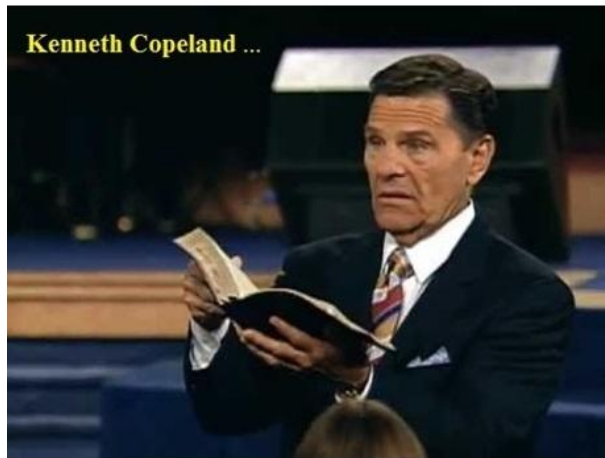
Chapter 16) on knowing False Prophets



"Be perfect in your Love of others, just as the Love of your heavenly Father is perfect ... Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. Instead store up for yourselves treasures in your dealings with others, where neither moth nor rust consume and where thieves cannot break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your Heart will be also ... No one can serve two masters; for a slave will be devoted to the one and despise the other. So it is that you cannot serve both Love and wealth ... So if you yearn for Salvation and thus wish to be perfect, go -- sell your possessions and give the money to the poor. Then you will have treasure in Heaven. Thereafter come, and follow my Way."

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:48 & Matthew 6:19-24 & Matthew 19:21)

Beware of False Prophets ...



NOTE: If your pastor or preacher earns or owns noticeably more than the poorest members of your community, then you can be sure that he or she is NOT a true "Man (or Woman) of God."

Here's an idea for all you Christian televangelists & devout evangelicals out there: How about instead of you & yours building more & more mega-churches ...



... maybe you could build a few hundred mega homeless shelters instead.

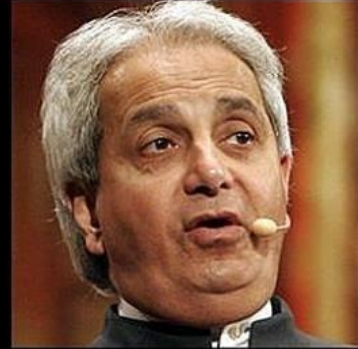
"Go and sell everything you own and give it to the poor, so you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come, and follow me." –Matthew 19:21



**Joel Osteen – Net Worth
\$40 Million**



**Creflo Dollar – Net Worth
\$27 Million**



**Benny Hinn – Net Worth
\$42 Million**



**T.D. Jakes – Net Worth
\$150 Million**



**Joyce Meyer – Net Worth
\$25 Million**



**Kenneth Copeland – Net
Worth Unknown; boasts
that he is a billionaire**

"The vile and unholy matrimony between Jesus and cash is becoming especially poignant with many Christian leaders, and even though this spiritual sickness is quite obviously infesting the Hearts of mega-rich televangelists who are all about 'Jesus bling' (while ignoring the substance of his teachings), this preacher poison is actually sickening churches of all sizes throughout the United States ... Even in small towns like mine, you have churches filled with African refugees without enough money to care for themselves or even purchase Bibles, while two miles down the road there are mega-churches with multimillion dollar building campaigns ... And yet let me be prophetically clear: ultra-rich pastors and mega-church budgets are not a sign of God's blessing but rather a sign of *our* own sinfulness. Indeed, the entire body of Christ in America is guilty. Sure, not all of us use our money to make pastors rich, and yet most of us do spend most of our money on ourselves -- *which is even worse*. And as a result, we are among the richest people in the world while being simultaneously oblivious to the way the rest of the world lives – oblivious to slums, oblivious to hunger, oblivious to despotic violence, oblivious to the fact that the leading cause of death around the world is a lack of clean drinking water ... And let me not mince words: your embrace of superfluous wealth is completely at odds with The Way of Jesus Christ. For Jesus is not the one who said 'donate to your church and you yourself will be financially blessed', nor is he the one who said 'Come, let me show you eight steps to attaining the life you want.' NO! Jesus was the one who said, 'Sell all your possessions and give them to the poor' (Mt 19:21) ... Jesus is the one who said, "If you want to follow me, you must first remember that I am homeless" (Mt 8:20) ... And Jesus is the one who said, "If money is what motivates you, it is impossible for you to follow God" (Mt 6:24) ... Admittedly, this meme is a tad misleading, because it is not so much about calling rich Christian pastors to repent, as it is about calling the members of their congregations to repent. Instead of continuing to embrace the hyper-rich, Americanized version of Christianity, we must reclaim a simple Truth – that owning more than we actually need is not a sign of God's blessing, but is instead a sign of our own sinfulness. For how are we supposed to show solidarity with the poor and the hungry and the oppressed while we flaunt lives of relative luxury? How are we supposed to bring healing to those who are sick and starving when our own Souls are starving and our own spirits are ill?" ~ inspired by Benjamin Corey

It takes a special kind of charlatan to get filthy rich by selling clients an invisible product that they cannot hope to see until after they die for 10% of their gross income -- all while paying no taxes.

Life Tip: If your preacher or pastor is significantly wealthier than the poorest member of your community, then he (or she) is definitely *not* a true Man of God.

Joel Osteen



Kenneth Copeland



Joyce Meyers



Paula White



"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal ... For where your treasure is, there your Heart will be also ... You cannot serve both God and money ... If you want to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and then you will have Treasure in Heaven."

~ *Jesus Christ* (Matthew 6:19-24 + Matthew 19:21)

"Most sermons sound to me like commercials, except that I still can't figure out whether God is the product or the sponsor." ~ Mignon McLaughlin



"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you tithe your mint, your dill, and your cummin, and yet have neglected to provide the weightier matters of justice and mercy and faith ... Do not store up for yourselves treasures on Earth ... For where your treasure is, there your Heart will be also." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:23 & 6:19-21)

FACTA NON
VERBA

*"The Truth is shown with actions,
not uttered with words."*

~ Jesus Christ (Matt 7:21-22 &
John 13:15-17)



Wait a minute ... If televangelists & mega-church pastors tell poor people that God will make them richer if they tithe, then why don't those same preachers simply get rich by giving their money to the downtrodden?



"Truth is the pearl without price. One cannot obtain truth by buying it -- all you can do is to strive for spiritual truth and when you are ready, it will be freely provided ... Nor should any spiritual truth be sold, lest the seller be injured spiritually. We lose all spiritual contact the moment we commercialize spiritual truth, and as such those who actually have that truth will not be packaging and selling it. This means that anyone who *is* selling it, doesn't really possess it." ~ via Peace Pilgrim

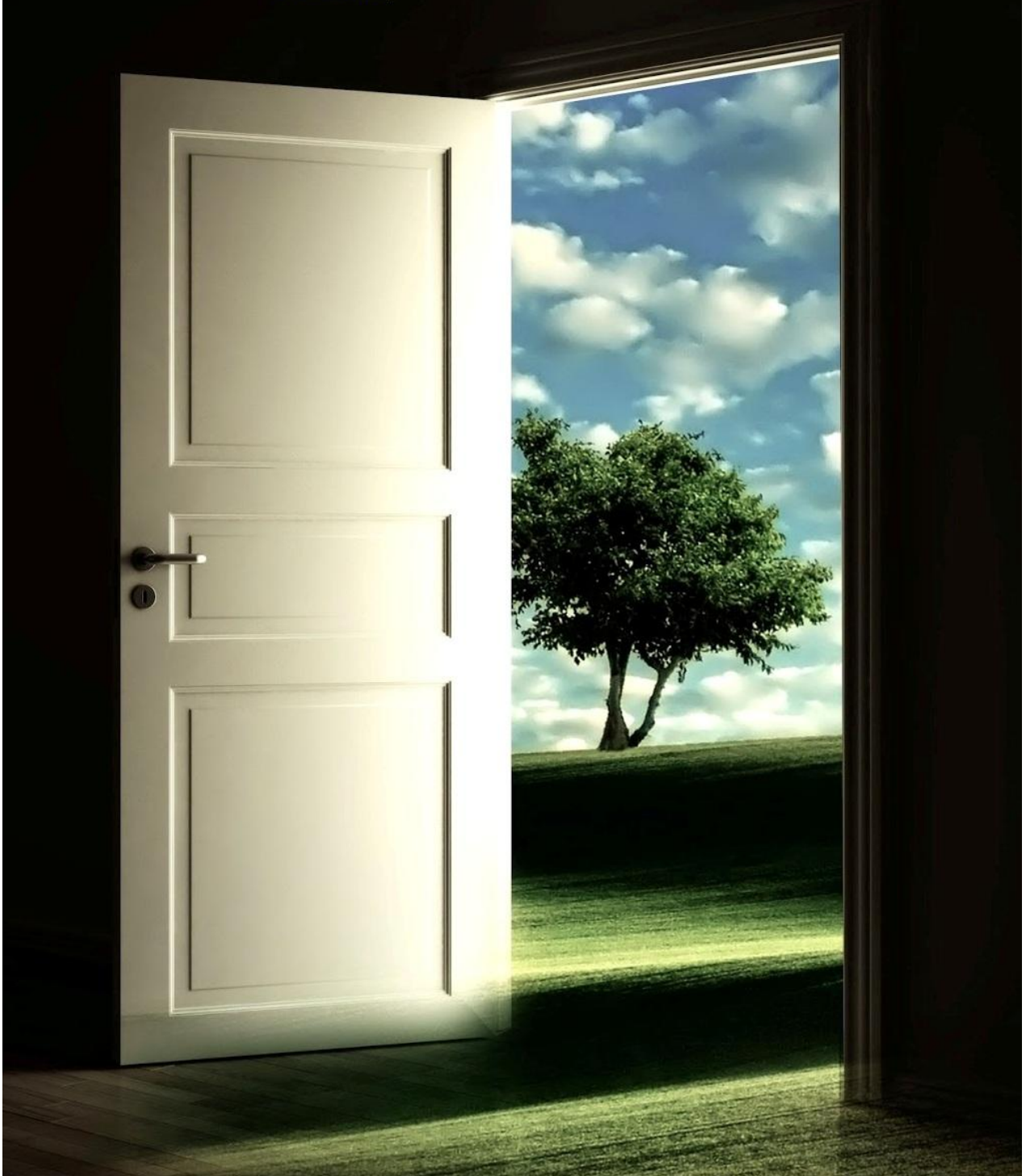


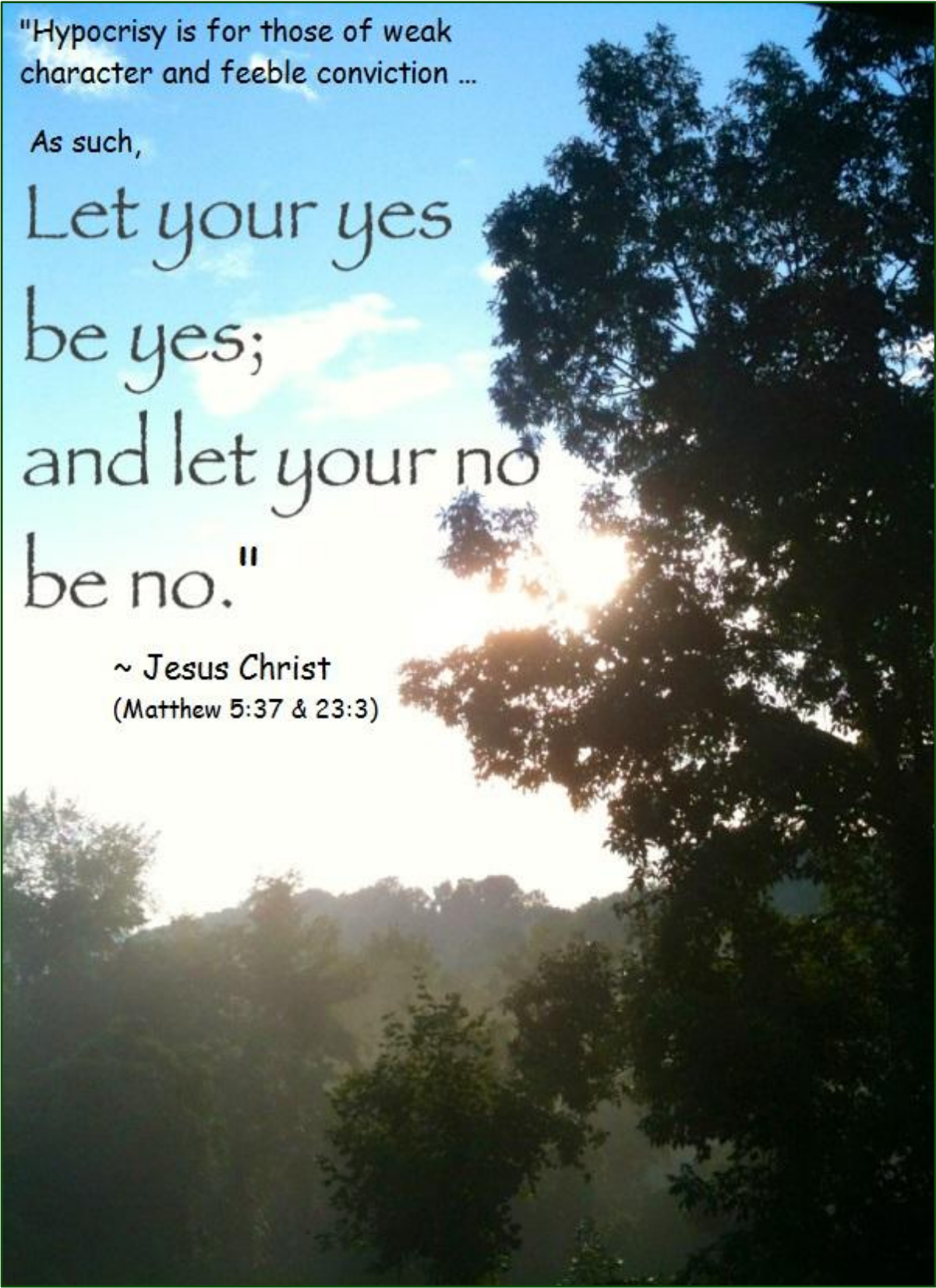
"But you are not to be called rabbi, for we have but one Teacher, and we are all His students. And you are to call no one else your father on Earth, for you have but one Father -- the One who is in Heaven. And neither are you to be called scholars or be treated as one who definitively knows, for we all have but one Instructor; the Christ who lives within us all" ~ Jesus Christ (Matt 23:8-10)

"Before you can hope to find my Way, you must humble yourselves enough to sincerely seek it. Oh, you false believers! How can you say that you have already found it, when you have not even begun to seek?"

~ Jesus Christ

***(Matthew 18:3-4 + 19:14
& John 10:1-9)***





"Hypocrisy is for those of weak character and feeble conviction ...

As such,

Let your *yes*
be *yes*;
and let your *no*
be *no*."

~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 5:37 & 23:3)

CHRISTIANITY...

The belief that the Universe was created by an all powerful dictator who will eternally reward or punish you based on your belief or disbelief in the premise of an ancient self contradictory book written by men.

"Just so you know; it doesn't have to be this way." ~ Jesus

(Matt 5:48+1 John 4:18 & John 13:15-17 et al)

Let your love for others be so *outrageous* that "the Pharisees" think you're what's wrong with the world today.



“Only God can
judge me”

-actual translation-

“shut up so I can
sin in peace”

A divine irony ...



This "Ark Encounter" shuttle bus runs on fossil fuels that take roughly 360 million years to develop, and uses those same fossil fuels to transport visitors to a museum that claims the Earth is only around 6000 years old.

"Peter, you do me no service by stopping me from serving."

~ Jesus (Matthew 16:23)

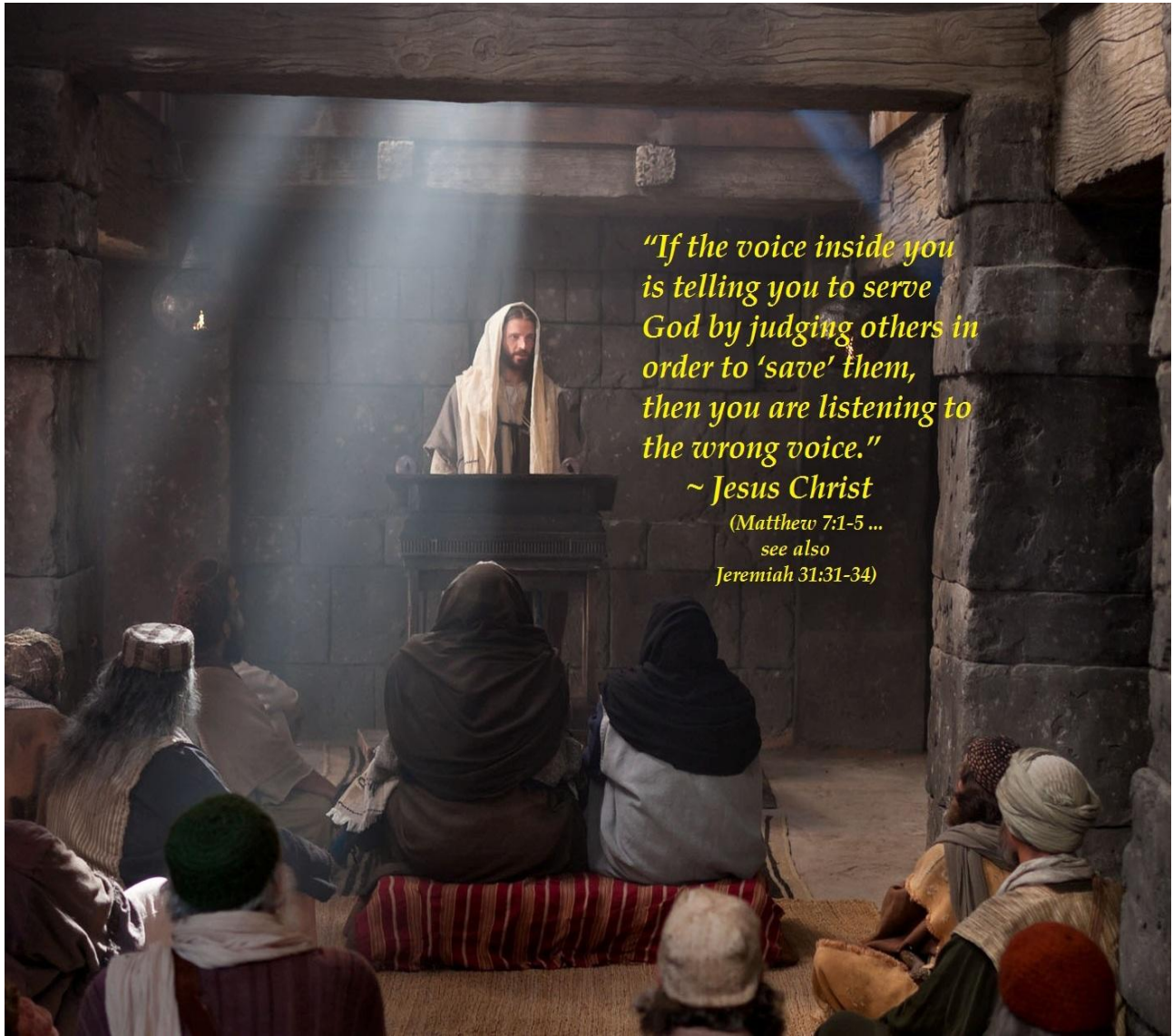


DON'T GO TO CHURCH,

"And this is my Commandment: That you Love one another in the same manner and to the same degree that I have Loved you ... For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done for you ... Very truly, if you understand these things, blessed are you while you do them."

~ Jesus Christ (John 15:12 & John 13:15-17)

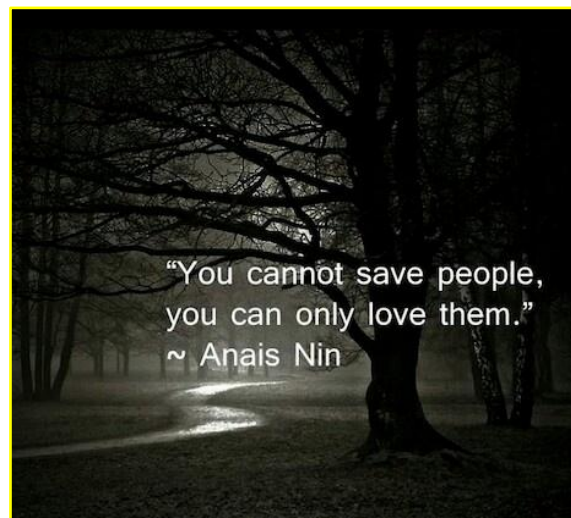
BE THE CHURCH.



*"If the voice inside you
is telling you to serve
God by judging others in
order to 'save' them,
then you are listening to
the wrong voice."*

~ Jesus Christ

*(Matthew 7:1-5 ...
see also
Jeremiah 31:31-34)*



*"You cannot save people,
you can only love them."
~ Anais Nin*



“Don Quixote measured his worth purely by battle, and yet the entire time he was really only fighting himself. His entire identity as ‘courageous warrior’ was merely a mirage he invented to justify the fight. And this is the story that so much of Christianity finds itself in today; people hopelessly trapped in the perpetual need for a holy war; desperate for victory via conflict; addicted to a perceived spiritual dangers that merit vigorous defense. And whether the *bad guys de jour* are Muslims or Gays or Feminists or Atheists, the raw-throated cries of the alarmists are all alarmingly similar: ‘These are the enemy of God and the bane of our righteous cause.’

Well frankly, I’m tired of such ridiculous religious war rhetoric – fake fighting stances and blowhard battle lines; ministries and churches that depend upon the urgency of imminent combat for their very existence. And I’m deeply concerned as well for a faith tradition that’s been hijacked from the strong & steady hands of Jesus and been commandeered instead by skittish soldiers fighting feebly in ‘the Army of the Lord’; pious zealots who would rather tilt at windmills than feed the poor, care for the sick, visit prisoners, or love their enemies.

No, my friends -- Christians and those who lead their churches need to stop rallying the troops by manufacturing cultural boogymen, sinister moral threats, and religious enemies. Instead, we all need to look deep into the mirror. We need to face our own personal mess without flinching, and live our individual lives in a way that best reflects the life of Jesus – for *that* is the only fight worth fighting ... Otherwise we’re just deluding ourselves and wasting time charging at windmills.”

~ inspired by John D. Pavlovitz

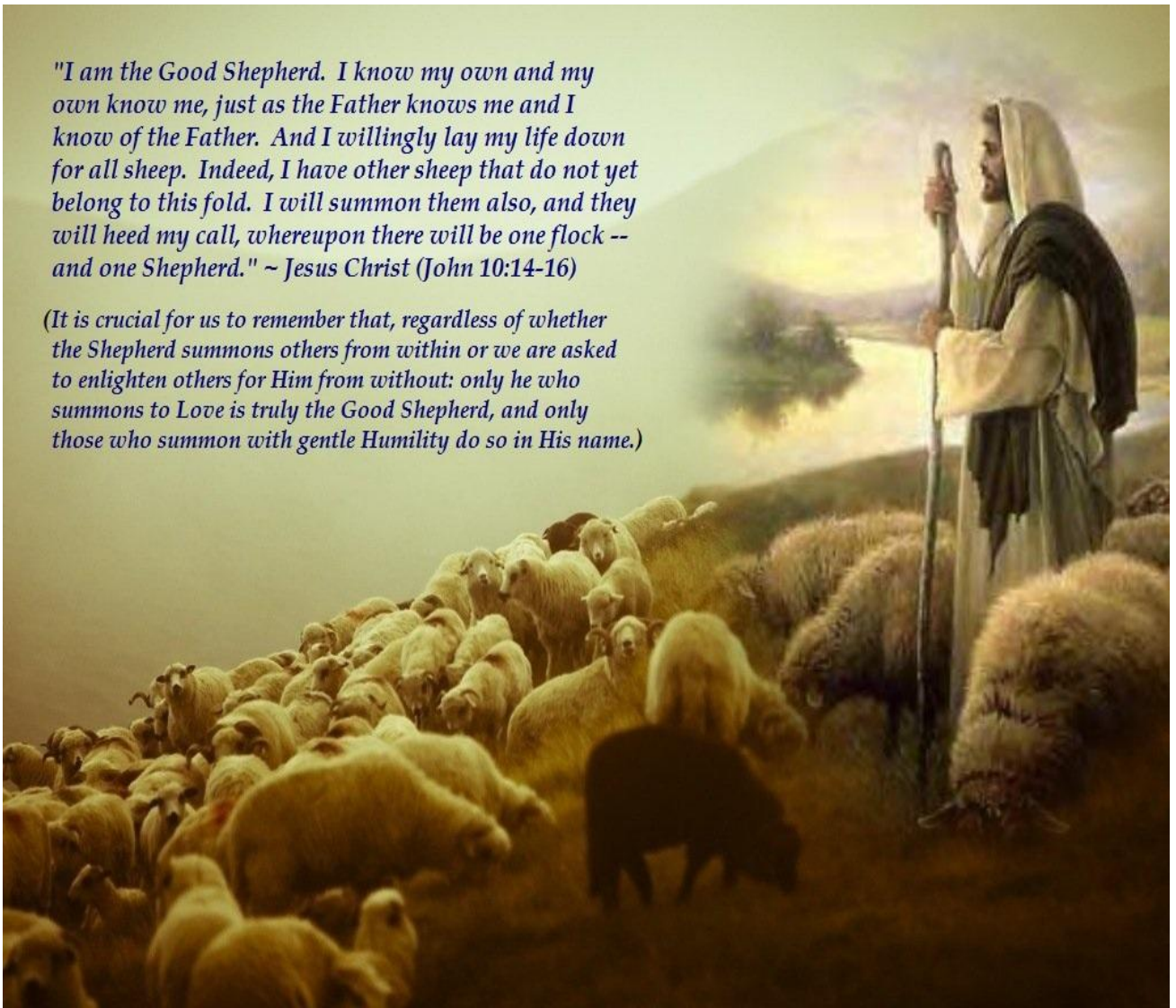


"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and yet make that new convert twice as much a child of Gehenna as yourselves!"

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:15)

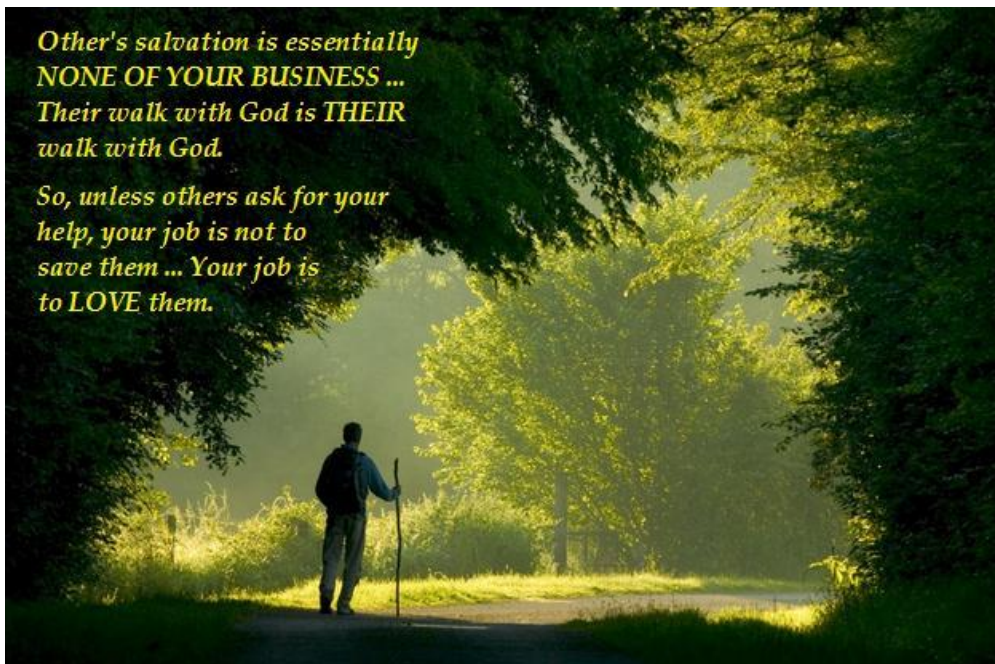
"I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know of the Father. And I willingly lay my life down for all sheep. Indeed, I have other sheep that do not yet belong to this fold. I will summon them also, and they will heed my call, whereupon there will be one flock -- and one Shepherd." ~ Jesus Christ (John 10:14-16)

(It is crucial for us to remember that, regardless of whether the Shepherd summons others from within or we are asked to enlighten others for Him from without: only he who summons to Love is truly the Good Shepherd, and only those who summon with gentle Humility do so in His name.)



*Other's salvation is essentially
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS ...
Their walk with God is THEIR
walk with God.*

*So, unless others ask for your
help, your job is not to
save them ... Your job is
to LOVE them.*





If your witnessing of The Way does not bring more Peace & Joy into the world, then you are definitely not witnessing The Way.

Chapter 17) on Paul “the Apostle”



"Beware the yeast of the Pharisees."

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:6)

§ The Pharisees were one of the more popular & more influential sects of Judaism in Jesus' day ...

§ They were highly judgmental of others (Matthew 23:15), and hypocritically emphasized strict obedience to the Law over sincere worship from the Heart (Luke 12:1) ...

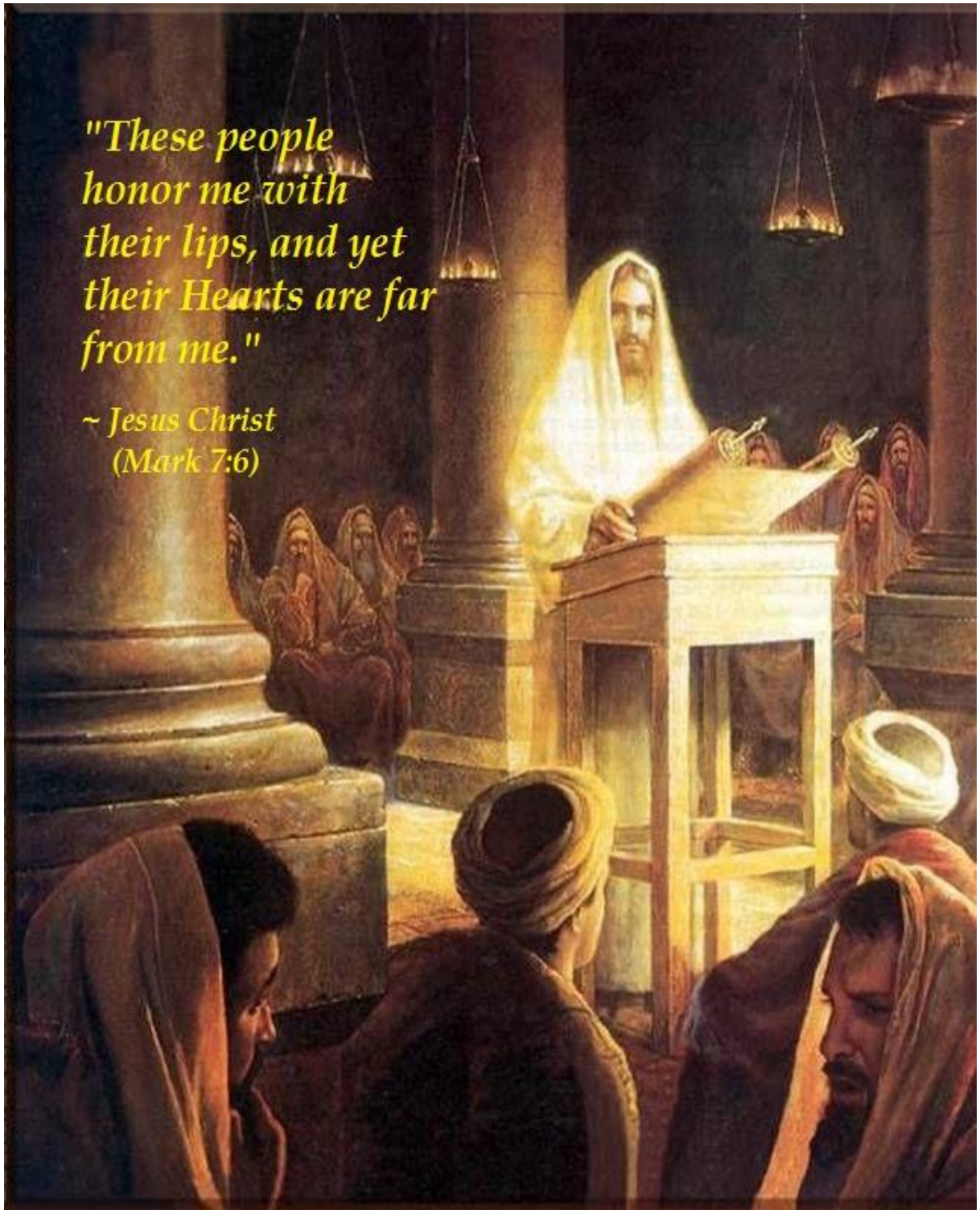
§ The Pharisees were conservatives through & through; valuing traditional interpretations of the Scriptures as highly as the Scriptures themselves ...

§ They were narrow-minded exclusivists — believing that they & they alone understood the "true" meaning of the biblical texts, and that anyone who disagreed with them was ignorant and "lost".

P.S. Paul was a self-proclaimed Pharisee. (Acts 23:6-8 & Acts 26:4-5)

*"These people
honor me with
their lips, and yet
their Hearts are far
from me."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(Mark 7:6)*



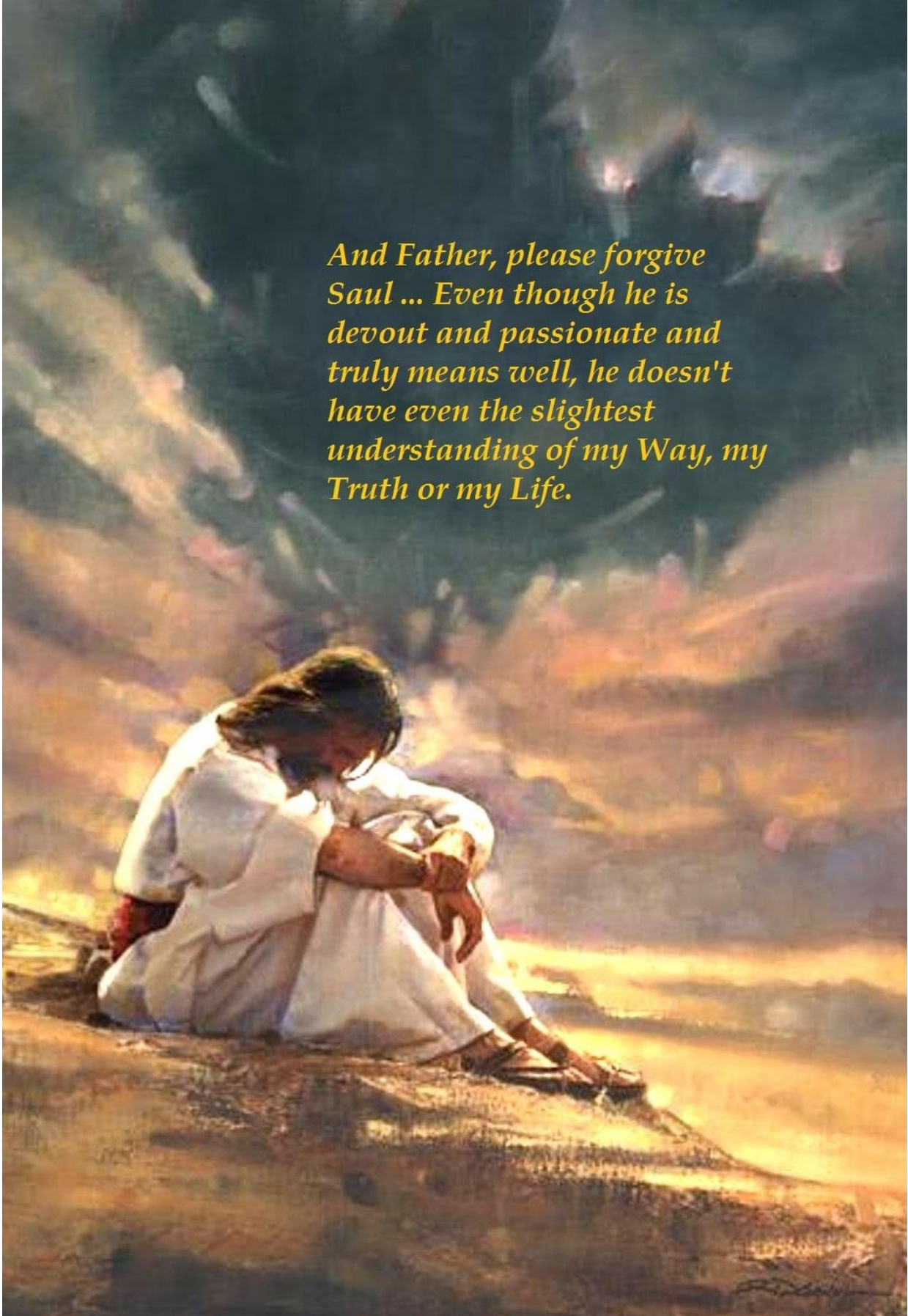


***"Paul, what the Hell
are you talking about?!?"***

~ Jesus Christ

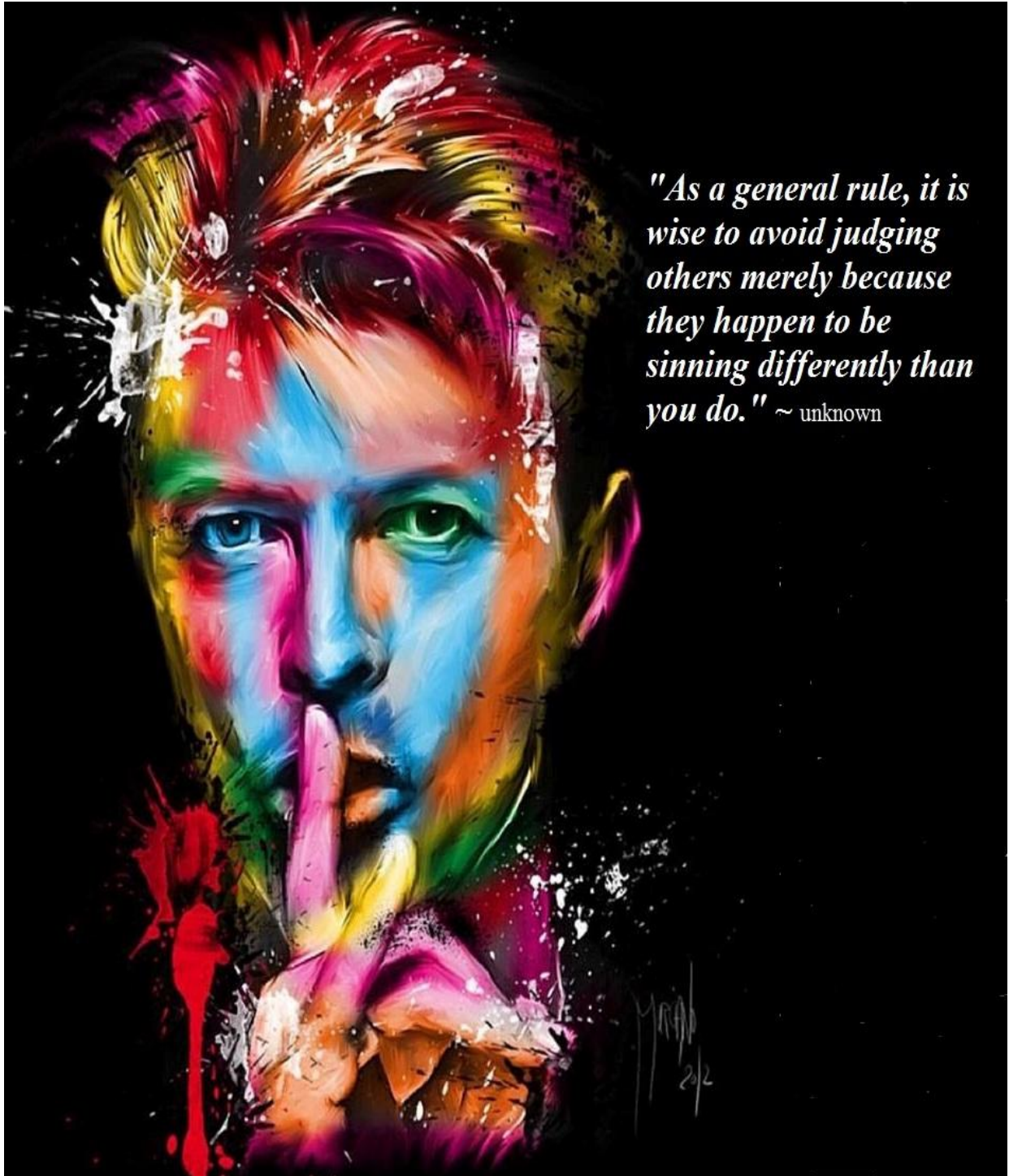
("No sooner had Jesus knocked over the dragon of mindless superstition than Paul had boldly picked it up again and set it upright in the name of Jesus." ~ G. B. Shaw)

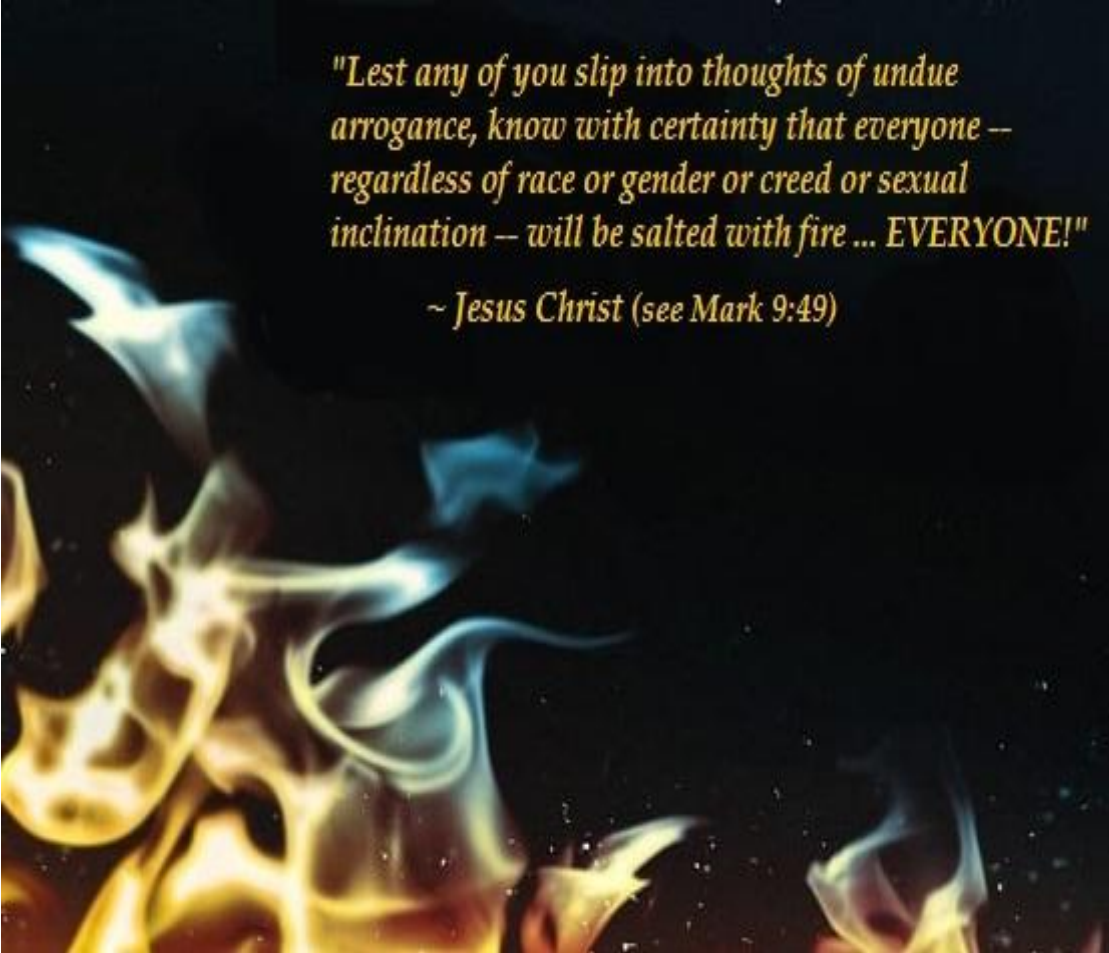
NOTE: For anyone undertaking the task of humbly & deeply delving into the New Testament scriptures will readily notice that Paul not only had no idea who Jesus was or what Jesus' ministry was all about, but also that Paul actually ended up (unwittingly, I presume) directly *opposing* the vast majority of what Jesus taught, said, and did.



*And Father, please forgive
Saul ... Even though he is
devout and passionate and
truly means well, he doesn't
have even the slightest
understanding of my Way, my
Truth or my Life.*

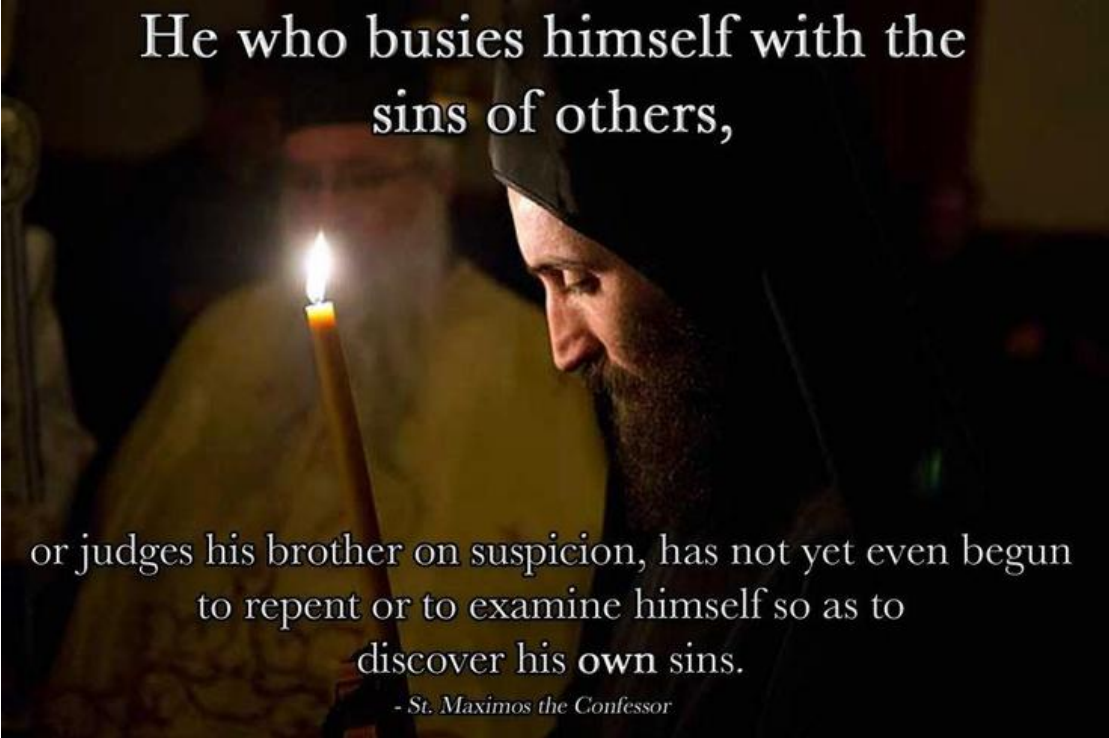
Chapter 18) on judgment & Judgment





"Lest any of you slip into thoughts of undue arrogance, know with certainty that everyone -- regardless of race or gender or creed or sexual inclination -- will be salted with fire ... EVERYONE!"

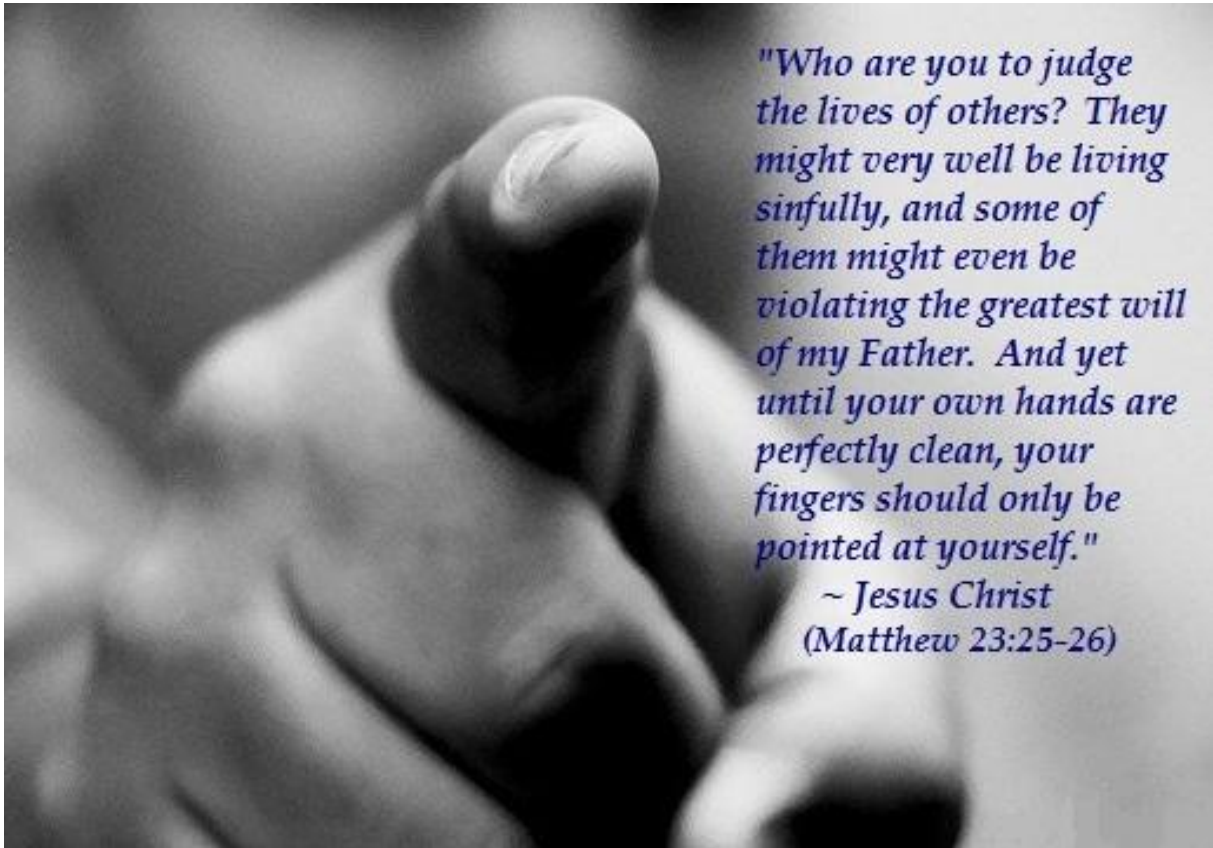
~ Jesus Christ (see Mark 9:49)



He who busies himself with the
sins of others,

or judges his brother on suspicion, has not yet even begun
to repent or to examine himself so as to
discover his **own** sins.

- St. Maximos the Confessor



"Who are you to judge the lives of others? They might very well be living sinfully, and some of them might even be violating the greatest will of my Father. And yet until your own hands are perfectly clean, your fingers should only be pointed at yourself."

*~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 23:25-26)*



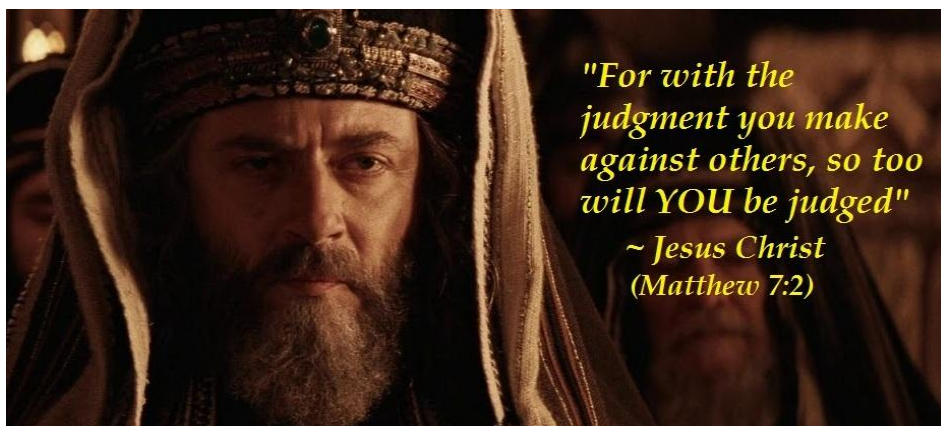
"I realize that it is very tempting to condemn others for their failings and openly criticize their sins ... Resist this temptation with everything you have, and FOLLOW ME and my Way of non-judgmental Love instead!" ~ Jesus Christ

*(see Matthew 7:1-2,
John 7:24 &
John 13:34-35)*



"It is literally impossible to be sincerely Kind or deeply Caring towards someone while you are calling them a 'sinner' -- much less while you are arrogantly (and quite hypocritically) pointing out their sins ... Try humbly Loving them instead."

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:25-26 & John 8:7 et al)



"For with the judgment you make against others, so too will YOU be judged"

*~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 7:2)*



"Woe to you who criticize the faults of others. For you are hypocrites; shining outwardly in appearance while inside being filled with greedy self-indulgence and arrogant callousness. Be not so blind of spirit! First make the inside of your cup perfectly clean, that the outside might then truly shine in deeds of heartfelt Love & sincere Kindness thereafter." ~ Jesus Christ (Matt 23:25-26)



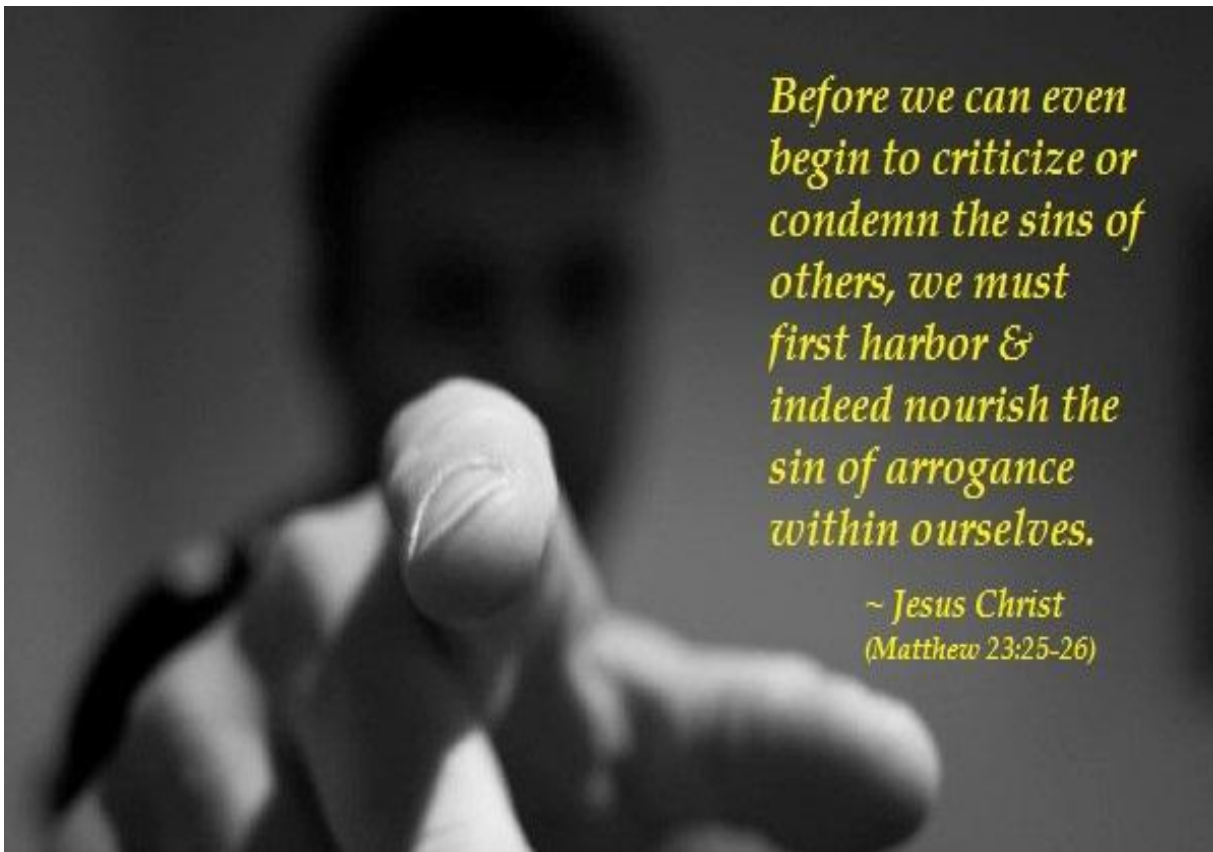
"Why is it always the ones with the dirtiest hands who are pointing the harshest fingers?" ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 23)





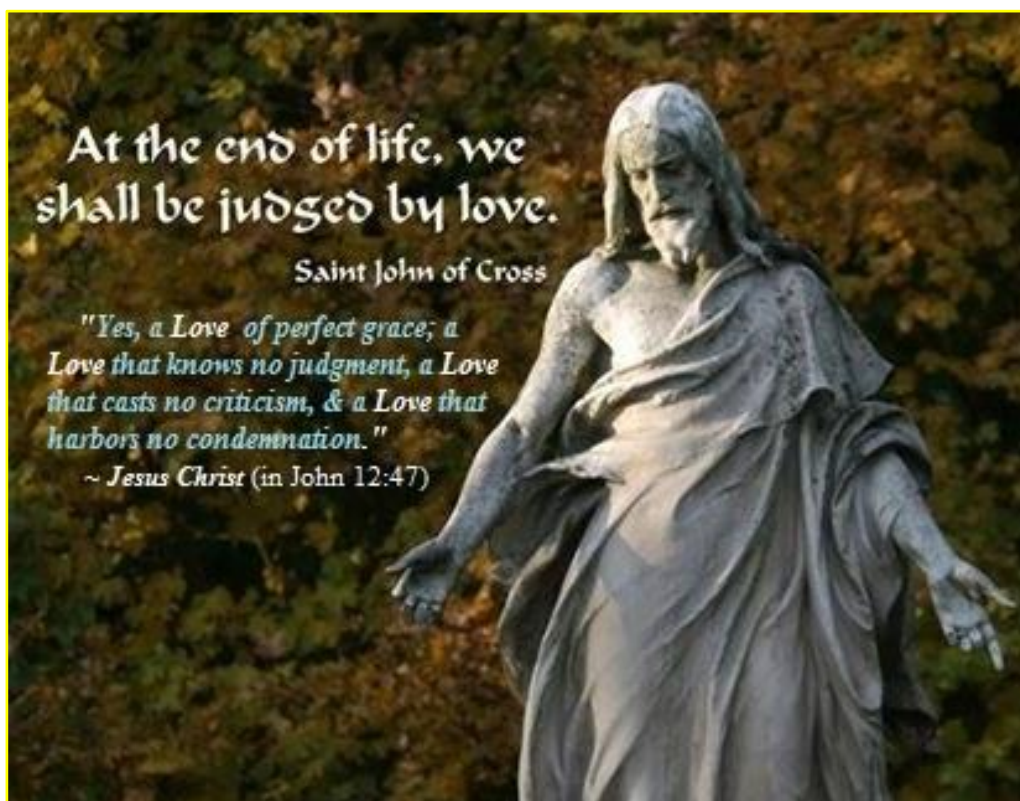
We judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their deeds, when it should be exactly the other way around.*

*Remembering that it is always impossible to accurately know others' true intentions, and thus that it is always impossible to ever judge them correctly -- which is why we should never judge them critically at all.



Before we can even begin to criticize or condemn the sins of others, we must first harbor & indeed nourish the sin of arrogance within ourselves.

*~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 23:25-26)*

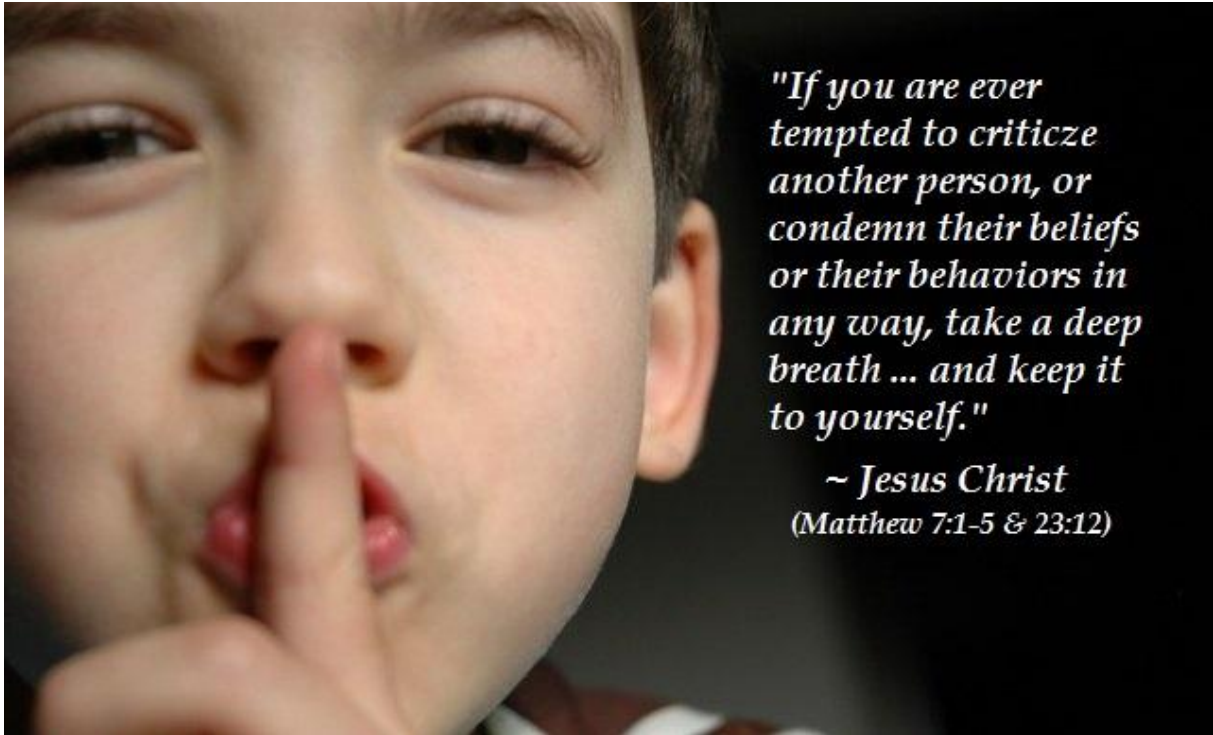


At the end of life, we shall be judged by love.

Saint John of Cross

"Yes, a Love of perfect grace; a Love that knows no judgment, a Love that casts no criticism, & a Love that harbors no condemnation."

~ Jesus Christ (in John 12:47)



"If you are ever tempted to criticize another person, or condemn their beliefs or their behaviors in any way, take a deep breath ... and keep it to yourself."

*~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 7:1-5 & 23:12)*



God
@TheGoodGodAbove

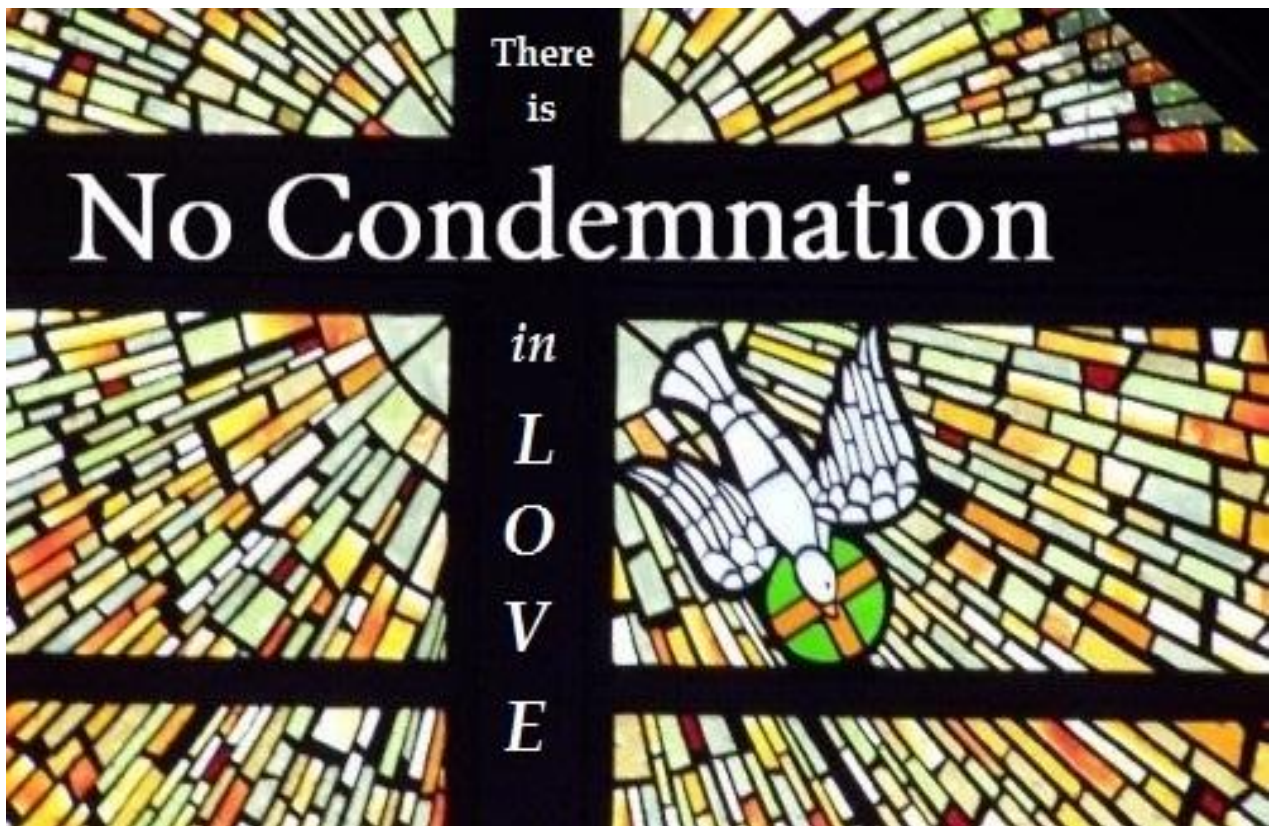
NEW COMMANDMENT:
Thou shalt keep thy religion to thyself.

7/28/14, 2:15 PM

88 RETWEETS 116 FAVORITES

"The days are surely coming,' says the LORD, 'when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel -- not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors ... And this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their Hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach one another or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall *all* know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful towards all their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more" ~ Hebrews 8:8-12

*Offer others your
loving open arms, not
a hardened &
judgmental Heart.*





(And even if you think you can ... DON'T!)



"But if you show partiality, you commit sin ... So speak & act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. Judgment will be without mercy for those who have shown no mercy. Remember then: mercy always triumphs over judgment."

~ James 2:9-13



Mercy

*Jesus stood up and said to her,
"Woman, where are they?
Has no one condemned you?"
She said, "No one, Lord."
And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you."*

— John 8:10-11



70 x 7 ...

A photograph of a dirt path leading through green foliage. A heart is drawn in the sand in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the path.

*Show
others
LOVE
instead of
judgment,
and your
Soul will
lead you back
to the Father.*

Chapter 19) on Sin & Service



*"And who was the Neighbor?" asked Jesus ...
"The one who showed Mercy." answered the
scribe ... "Go and **Do Likewise.**" said Jesus.*



"Thus says the Lord God: 'Ah, you shepherds who have been feeding yourselves! Should not you feed the sheep? ... You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them ... Thus I am against such shepherds; and no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, so that they may not be food for them ... And I myself will search for my sheep, and I myself will seek them out ... I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep ... I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak.'"

~ Ezekiel 34:03-16



"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me ... Truly I tell you, just as you did anything kind for one of the least of those who are members of my family, so too did you do it for me."

~ *Jesus Christ* (Matthew 25:35-40)

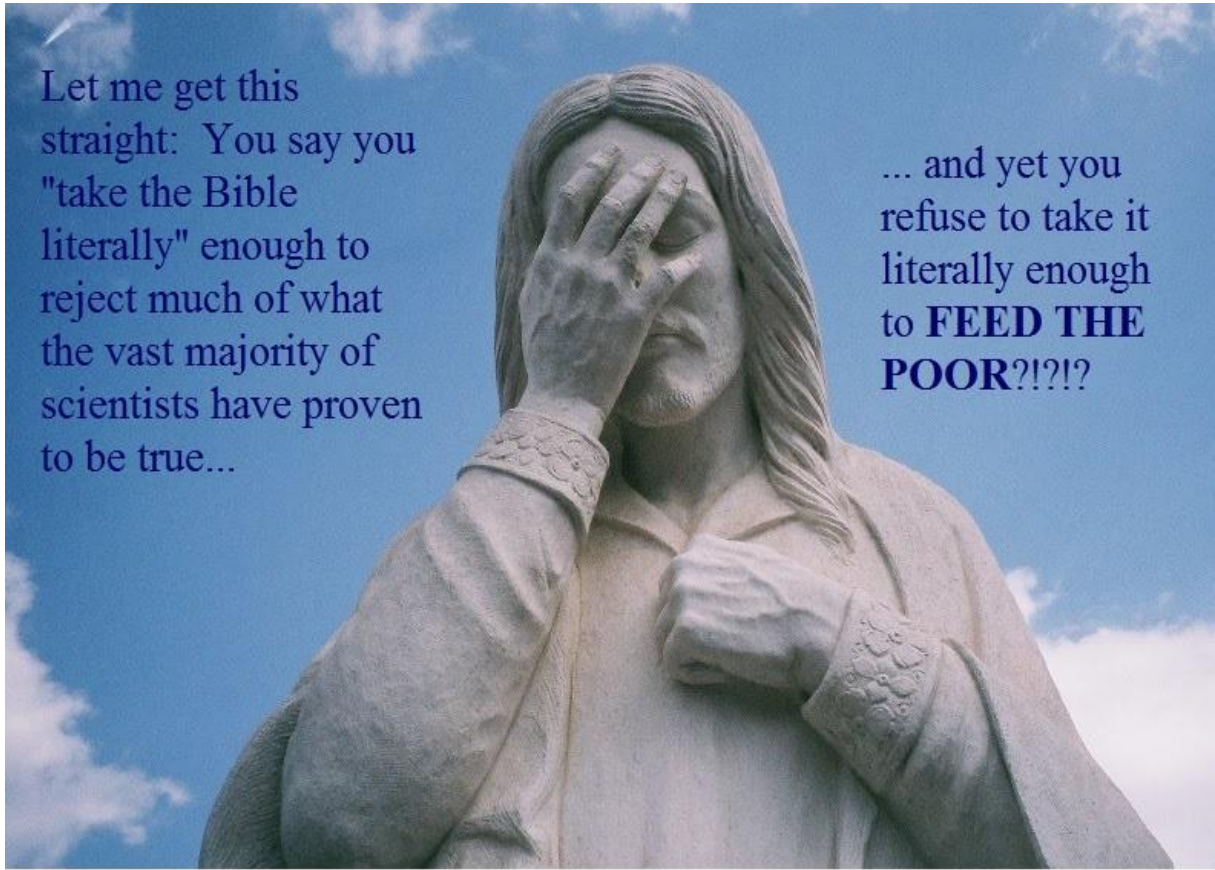
The Living Water of LOVE ...

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink ... As the scripture has said:
'Out of the Believer's Heart shall flow rivers of Living Water.'" ~ **Jesus** (John 7:37-38)



"No matter how hard we have it or how poor we might be, we all have more than enough 'water' (**Love**) in our 'cups' (**Hearts**) to bring at least a bit of Peace to a stranger in need of the same ... Remember my Friends, our truest Joy comes not from getting enough to drink ourselves, but rather from even briefly soothing the parched suffering of another." ~ anonymous

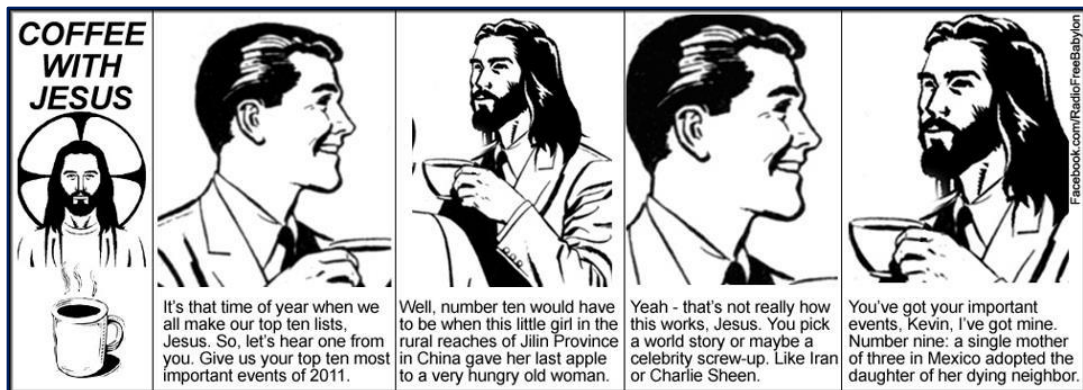




Let me get this straight: You say you "take the Bible literally" enough to reject much of what the vast majority of scientists have proven to be true...

... and yet you refuse to take it literally enough to **FEED THE POOR?!?!?**

"Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me ... Truly I tell you, just as you do it for one of the least of those who are members of my family, so too you do it for me." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:35-40)

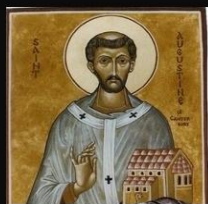


"An astoundingly overwhelming majority of the people who could be born never will be. As such, you are one of the tiny minority of those who are fortunate enough to be alive at all. Count yourself as appropriately lucky, and **show your gratitude** by first & foremost forsaking your presumptuous desire for a second life after this one is over, and then by going forth into your world to use what little time you do have to **do all the Good you can Do.**"

~ inspired by Richard Dawkins



Saint Augustine



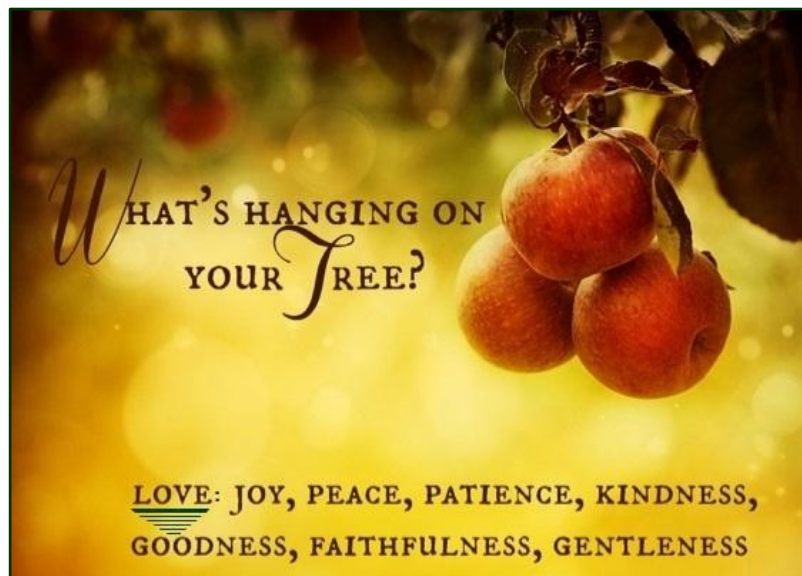
What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.



"Do not look on their appearance or on the height of their stature ... for the Lord does not see as mortals see. Humans look to the outward appearance of others, but the Lord looks to their Hearts." ~ 1 Samuel 16:7

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven ... So take care that you properly honor these little ones and all those like them. For I tell you, in Heaven their angels never cease in seeing the face of my Father." ~ Jesus Christ

(Matthew 18:3-10)



"How can we pray to God for mercy
if we ourselves have no mercy?"

~ Isaac Bashevis Singer



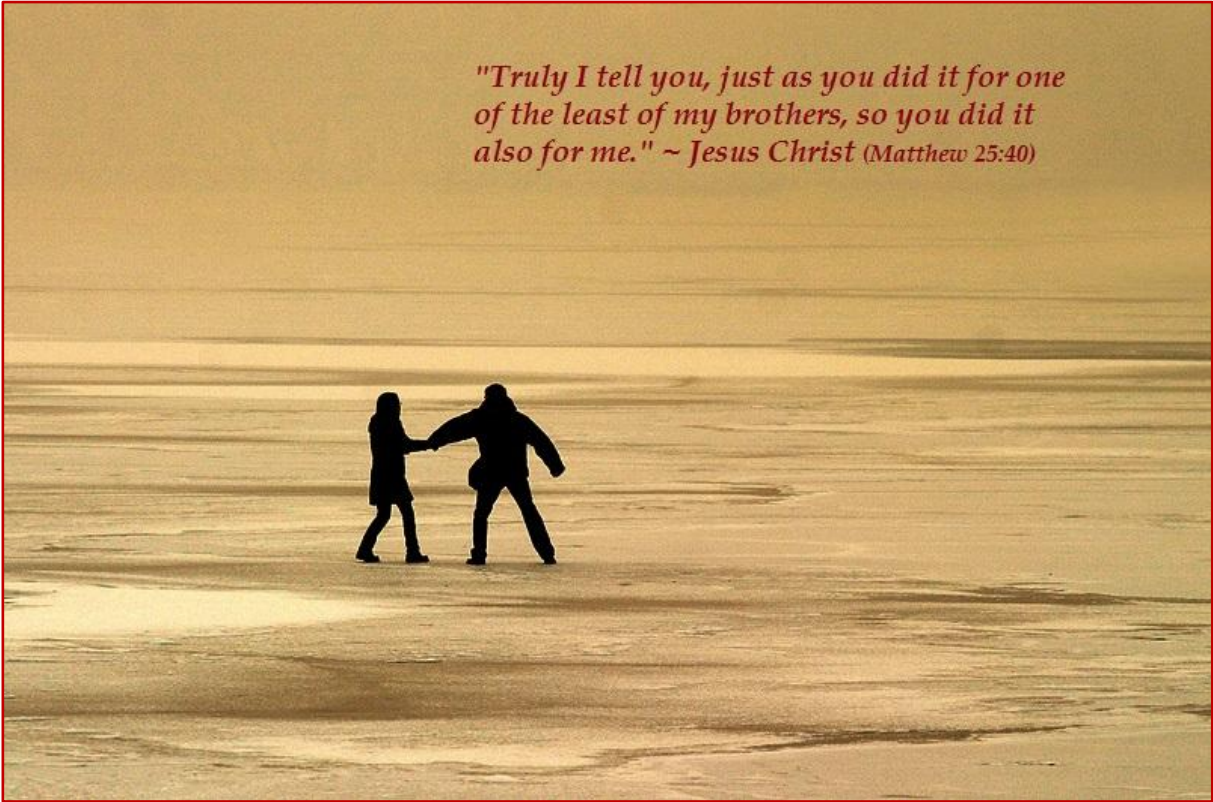
If "as Above, so below" is true ... then
"as below, so Above" is true as well.

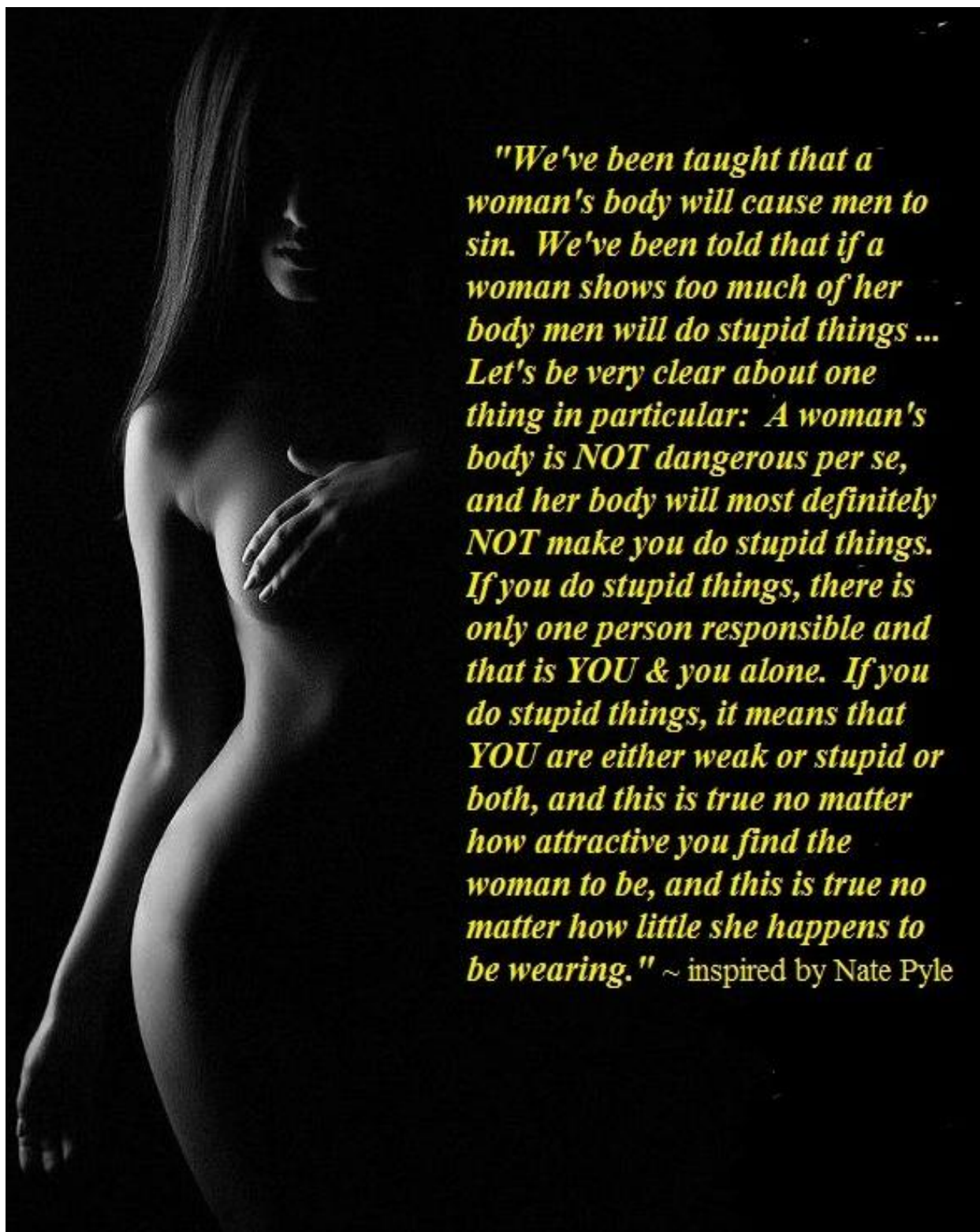
Think about this deeply, and then please
act accordingly ... Please **Go Vegan**.



Amor est mors mortis ...
(Love is the death of death)

"Truly I tell you, just as you did it for one of the least of my brothers, so you did it also for me." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:40)





"We've been taught that a woman's body will cause men to sin. We've been told that if a woman shows too much of her body men will do stupid things ... Let's be very clear about one thing in particular: A woman's body is NOT dangerous per se, and her body will most definitely NOT make you do stupid things. If you do stupid things, there is only one person responsible and that is YOU & you alone. If you do stupid things, it means that YOU are either weak or stupid or both, and this is true no matter how attractive you find the woman to be, and this is true no matter how little she happens to be wearing." ~ inspired by Nate Pyle



This was the **GUILT** of your sister **SODOM**:
she and her daughters had pride,
excess of food, and prosperous ease,
but did not aid the poor and needy.

EZEKIEL 16:49

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If you cannot find Christ in the
beggar at the church door, you
will not find Him in the chalice.

~ Saint John Chrysostom

**You don't have to live forever,
you just have to live.**

~ Natalie Babbitt



"And what does the Lord ask of you but to do Justice, and to love Kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? ... So give justice to the weak and the oppressed. Uphold the lives of those who are rejected and downtrodden. Rescue the poor and uplift those in despair ... By the grace of your Love deliver them from the hands of fear and wickedness."

(inspired by Micah 6:8 & Psalm 82:3-4)



"... and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and soothe the needs of the oppressed, then your Light will rise in the darkness, and even your night will become as midday." ~ Isaiah 58:10

*Let your **LIGHT** shine ...*

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Matthew 5:16



“FACTA
NON
VERBA”

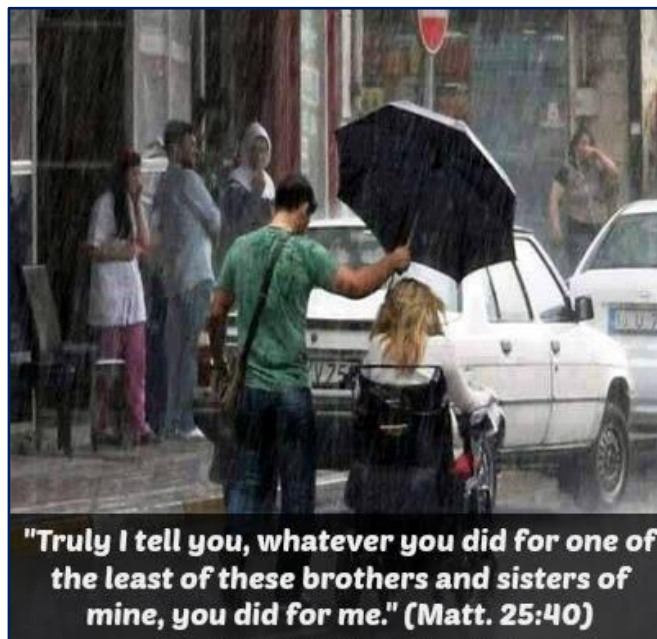
~ *Jesus Christ*
(John 13:15-17)

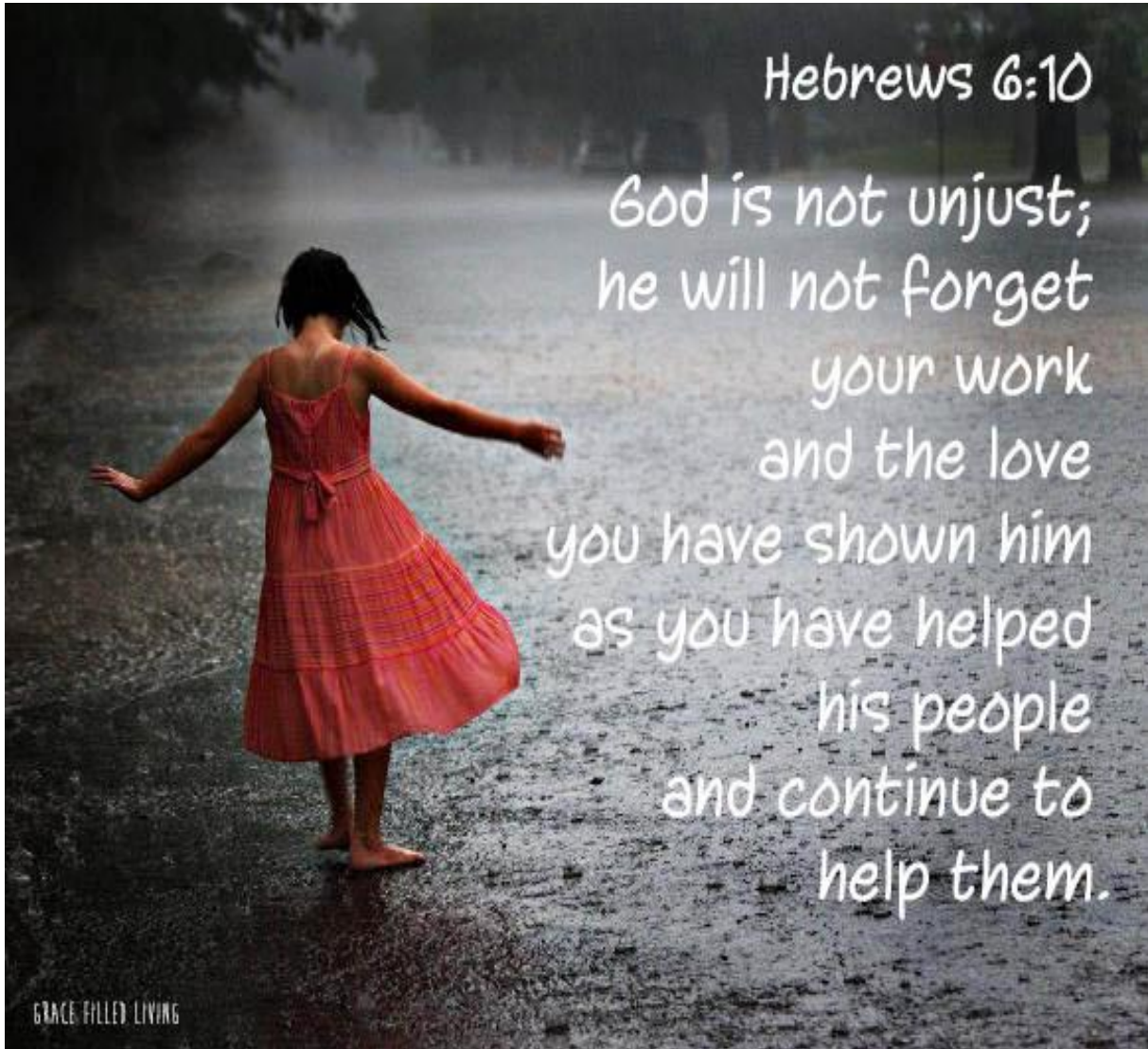


FOLLOW *Jesus...*
SERVE OTHERS.



"From whomever Believes in me shall flow rivers of living water from his or her Heart ... Indeed whoever Believes in me will do the works I do ... If you Love me, you will keep my Commandments ... And this is my ultimate Commandment: That you Love one another just as purely as I have Loved you." ~ Jesus (John 7:38, John 14:12-15 & John 15:12)





Hebrews 6:10

God is not unjust;
he will not forget
your work
and the love
you have shown him
as you have helped
his people
and continue to
help them.

GRACE FILLED LIVING

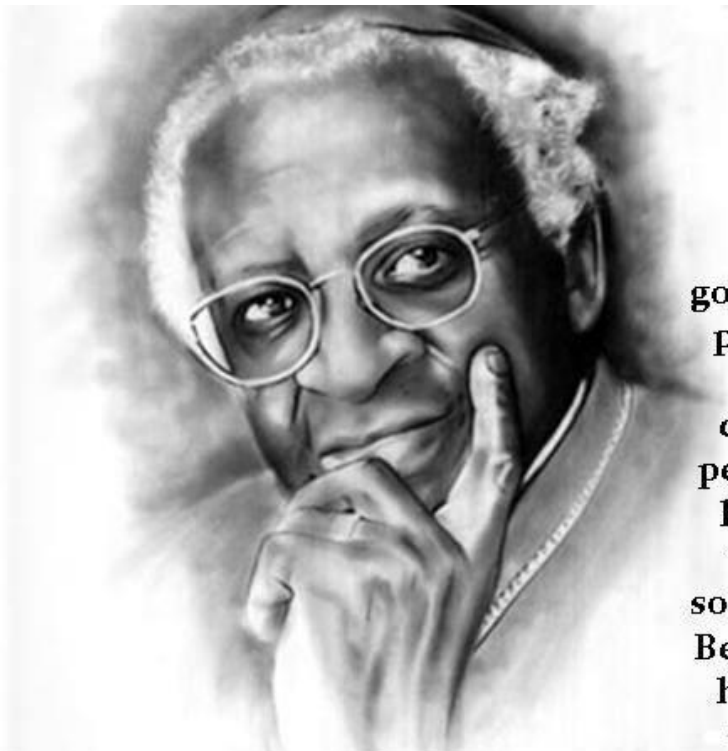
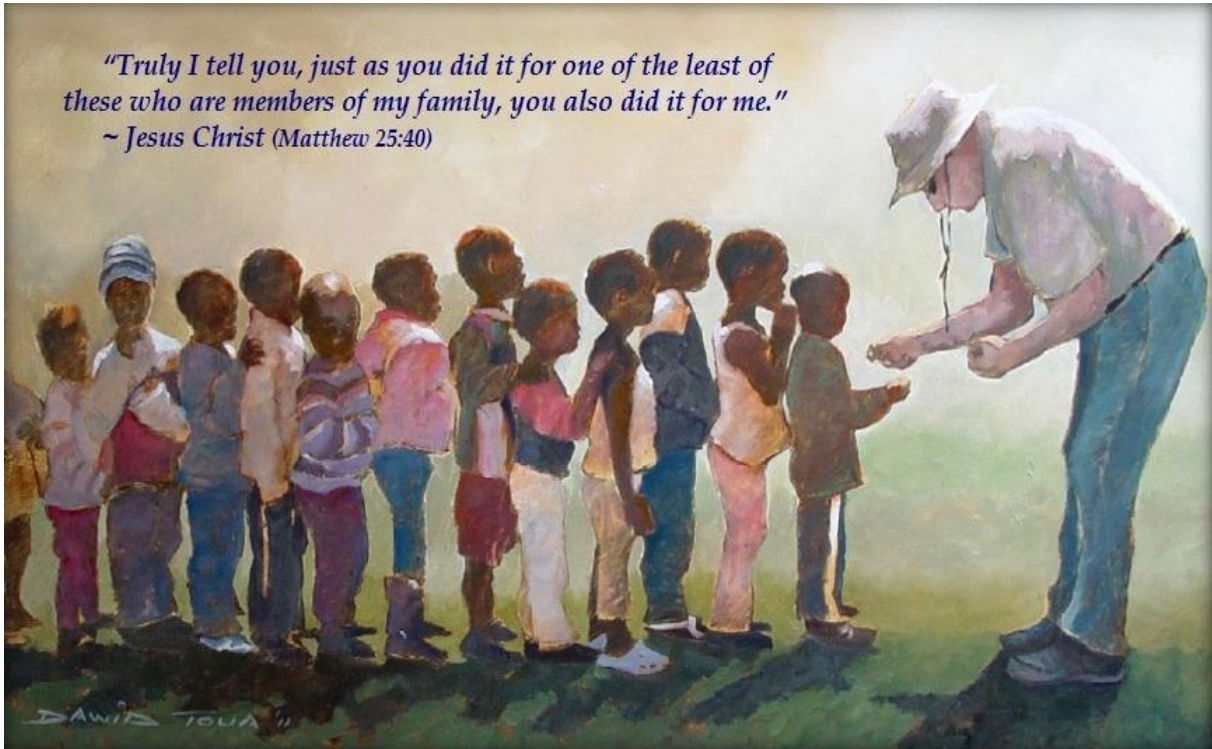


God

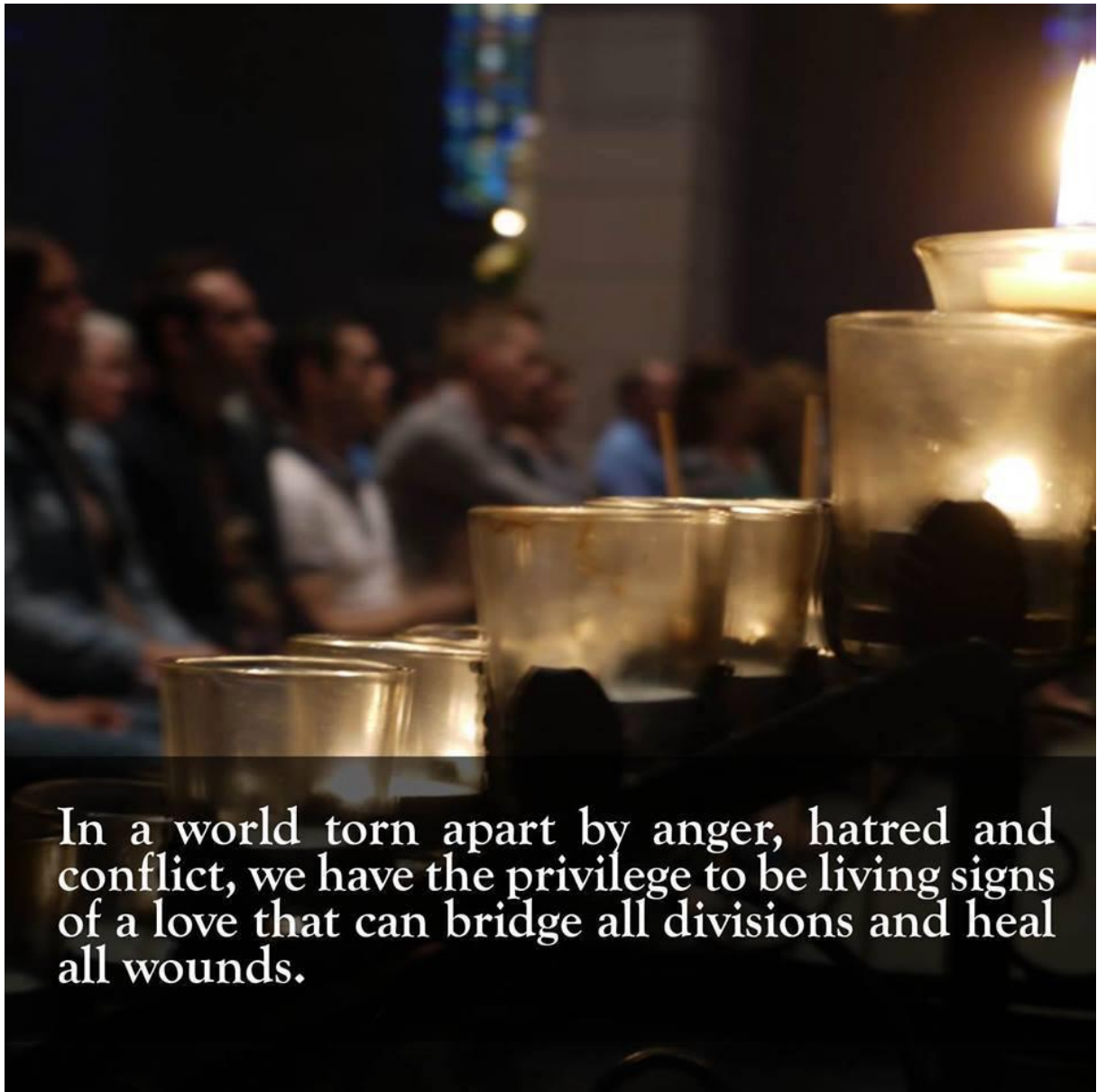
@TheGoodGodAbove

If you need the promise of heaven
to do good deeds, then you're
doing them for the wrong reason.

*"Truly I tell you, just as you did it for one of the least of these who are members of my family, you also did it for me."
~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:40)*



**"I don't preach a social gospel; I preach the Gospel, period. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned for the whole person. When people were hungry, Jesus didn't say, 'Now is that political or social?' He said, 'I feed you.' Because the good news to a hungry person is bread."
~ Bishop Desmond Tutu**



In a world torn apart by anger, hatred and conflict, we have the privilege to be living signs of a love that can bridge all divisions and heal all wounds.



Actually, it is far more important to shake the dust from your feet *before* you serve others, not afterwards ...

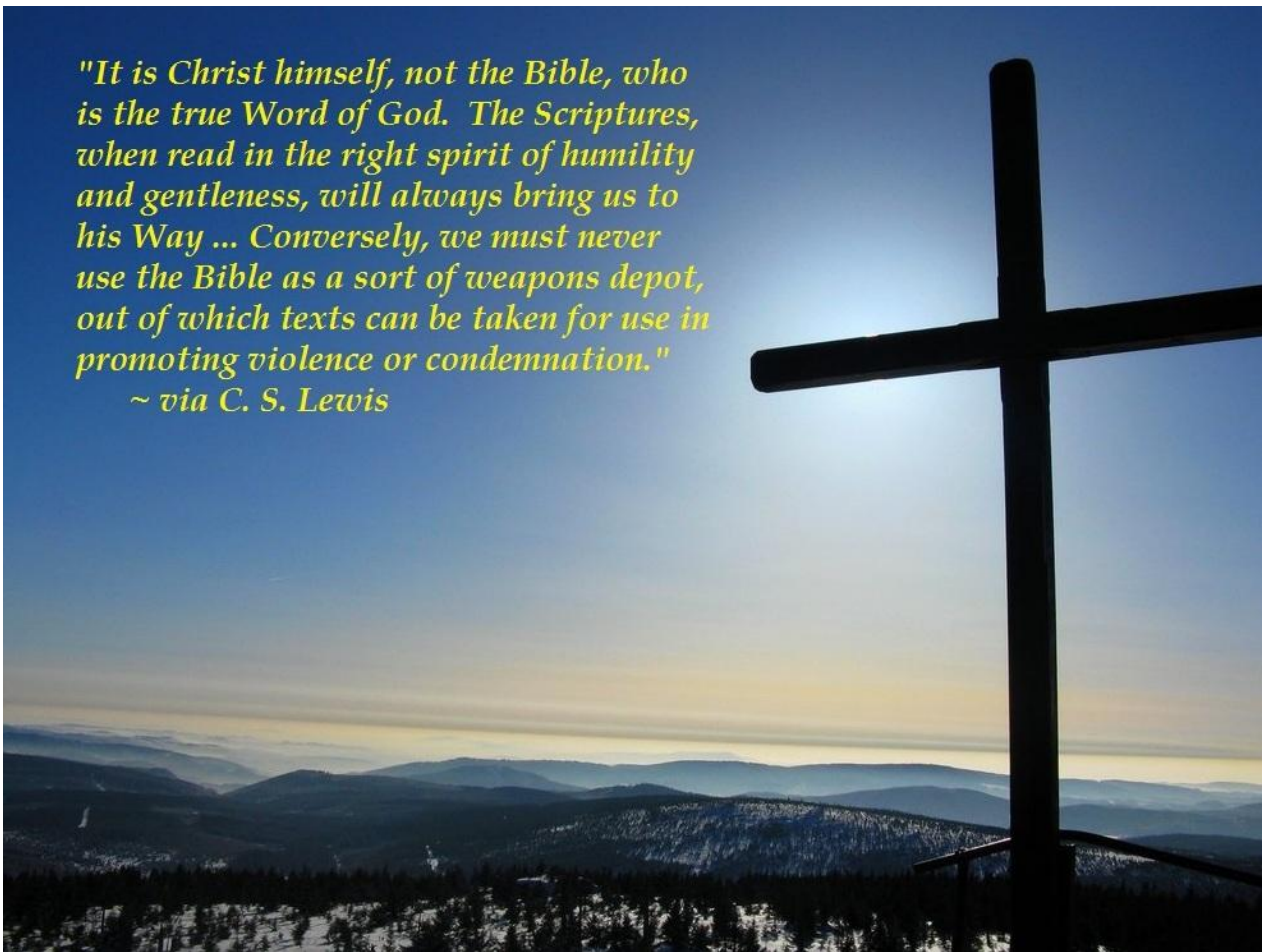
**“MY RELIGION IS
VERY SIMPLE. MY
RELIGION IS
KINDNESS.”**

– Dalai Lama XIV



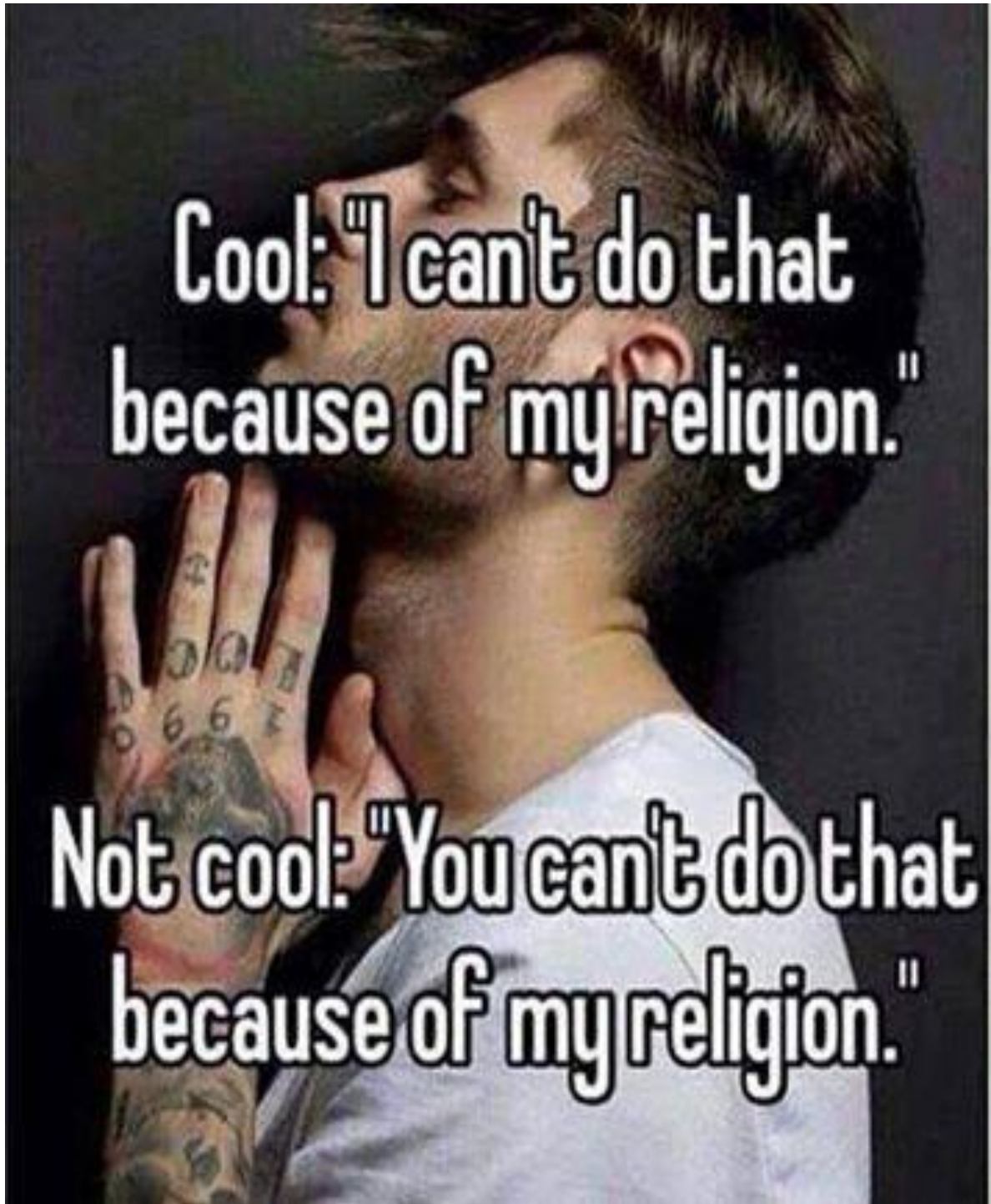
Chapter 20) on Bigotry & Exclusivism

*"It is Christ himself, not the Bible, who is the true Word of God. The Scriptures, when read in the right spirit of humility and gentleness, will always bring us to his Way ... Conversely, we must never use the Bible as a sort of weapons depot, out of which texts can be taken for use in promoting violence or condemnation."
~ via C. S. Lewis*



There are "Christians" who arrogantly preach judgment & intolerance & condemnation, and there are true Followers of The Way of Christ who humbly share Forgiveness & Acceptance & Love.

*Know the difference ...
... Choose the latter.*





Opposing religious bigotry is not bigotry.

~Lejla Kurić

"When we are too smug and content, we really have little need for the Gospel, so we make Christianity into mere pious devotions that ask nothing of us and do nothing for the world. We are never in need of forgiveness because we have constructed a world that allows us to always be right ... As such, we become insulated from the human situation. When we become self-sufficient in this way, our religion becomes corrupt because it ignores the vast majority of the Great Mystery -- how divine life is transferred from the wholehearted to the callous, how people can shift from lives of selfishness to those of service, how life flows from birth to death and back again, how we all inevitably become something more than who we were in our youth, and how we can thereby fall Grace-fully into the Great Compassion."

~ inspired by Richard Rohr

**IF YOU'RE USING THE BIBLE TO HURT OTHER PEOPLE,
YOU'RE USING IT WRONG.**



**"LOVE DOES NO HARM TO ITS NEIGHBOR,
THEREFORE LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW"
ROMANS 13:10**

As a Christian, you have
been called to free others
with your humble Love, not
imprison them with your
arrogant judgments.

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring
good news to the poor. He has sent me
to proclaim release to the captives, ...
to let the oppressed go free."*

~ Jesus Christ (Luke 4:18)



For ethics to count, they have to be consistent ...



"Why is it that whenever I ask a fundamentalist Christian why he or she opposes same-sex marriage they say 'Because it says so in the Bible', and yet whenever I ask that same person why their God allows some people to own other human beings as slaves I get a full-blown lecture about the social economics of the day, the cultural changes that have transpired, and the history of biblical language -- how certain meanings of certain words in the ancient texts don't translate well?" ~ anonymous

100%
BIBLICALLY
SANCTIONED
UNION:

ONE MAN & ONE WOMAN



& WOMAN'S SEXY YOUNGER SISTER

THESE TWO FACTS PROBABLY 15



& WOMAN'S HANDMAID



&

WOMAN'S SISTERS HANDMAID

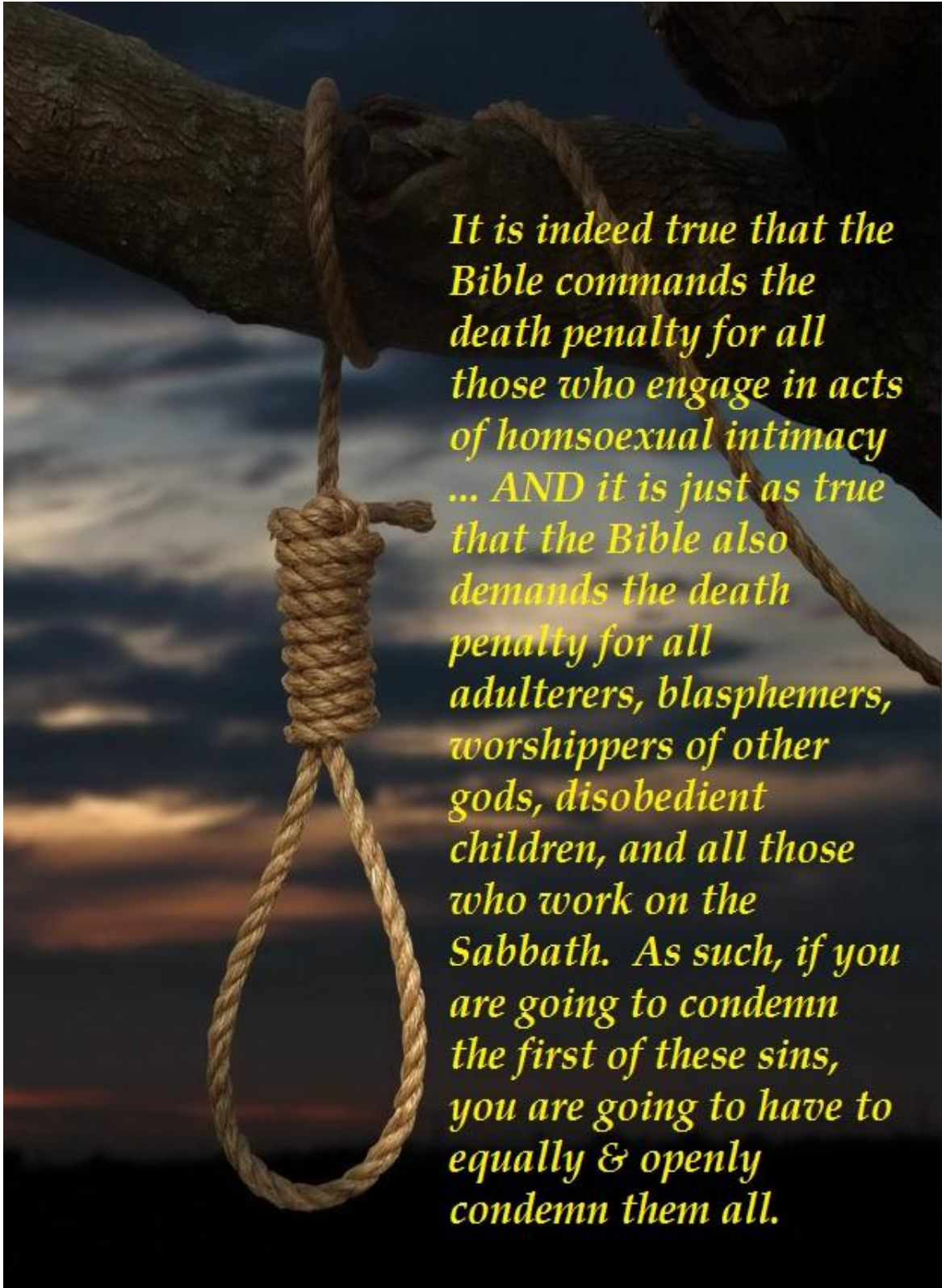


TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

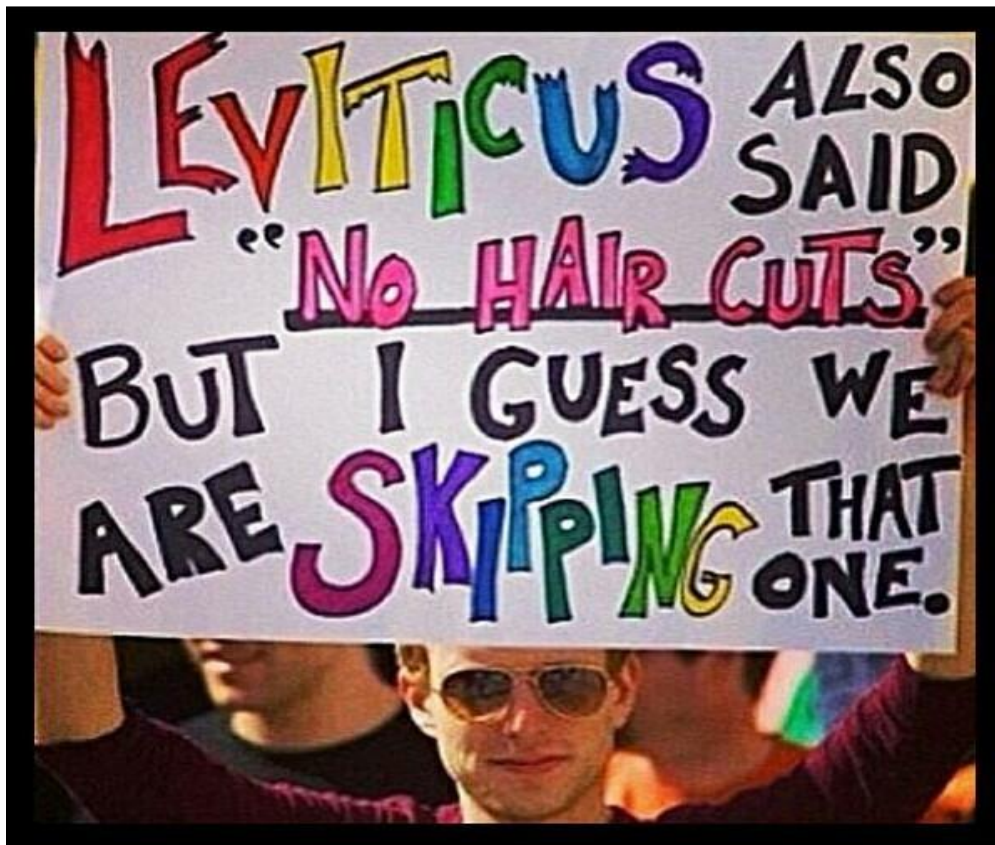
ACCEPT NO COUNTERFEIT!



"If there is LOVE in its foundation and LOVE in its expression, then every family fulfills the Will of God." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:50, John 14:23 & John 15:12)

A photograph of a noose made of thick, light-brown rope hanging from a dark, weathered wooden branch. The background is a dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise, with dark clouds and a warm glow of orange and yellow light near the horizon. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image in a yellow, serif font.

It is indeed true that the Bible commands the death penalty for all those who engage in acts of homosexual intimacy ... AND it is just as true that the Bible also demands the death penalty for all adulterers, blasphemers, worshippers of other gods, disobedient children, and all those who work on the Sabbath. As such, if you are going to condemn the first of these sins, you are going to have to equally & openly condemn them all.

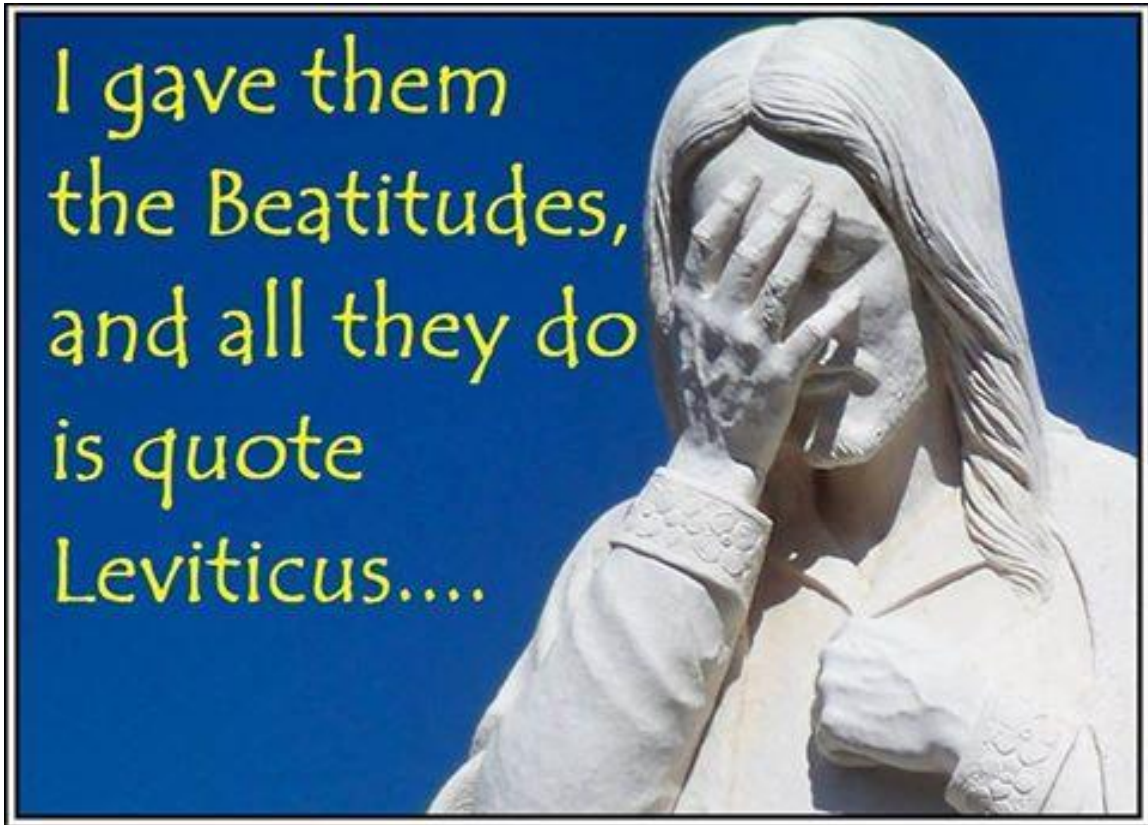


If you cite Leviticus to justify your condemnation of homosexuality, then have you ever broken any of these Levitical laws?

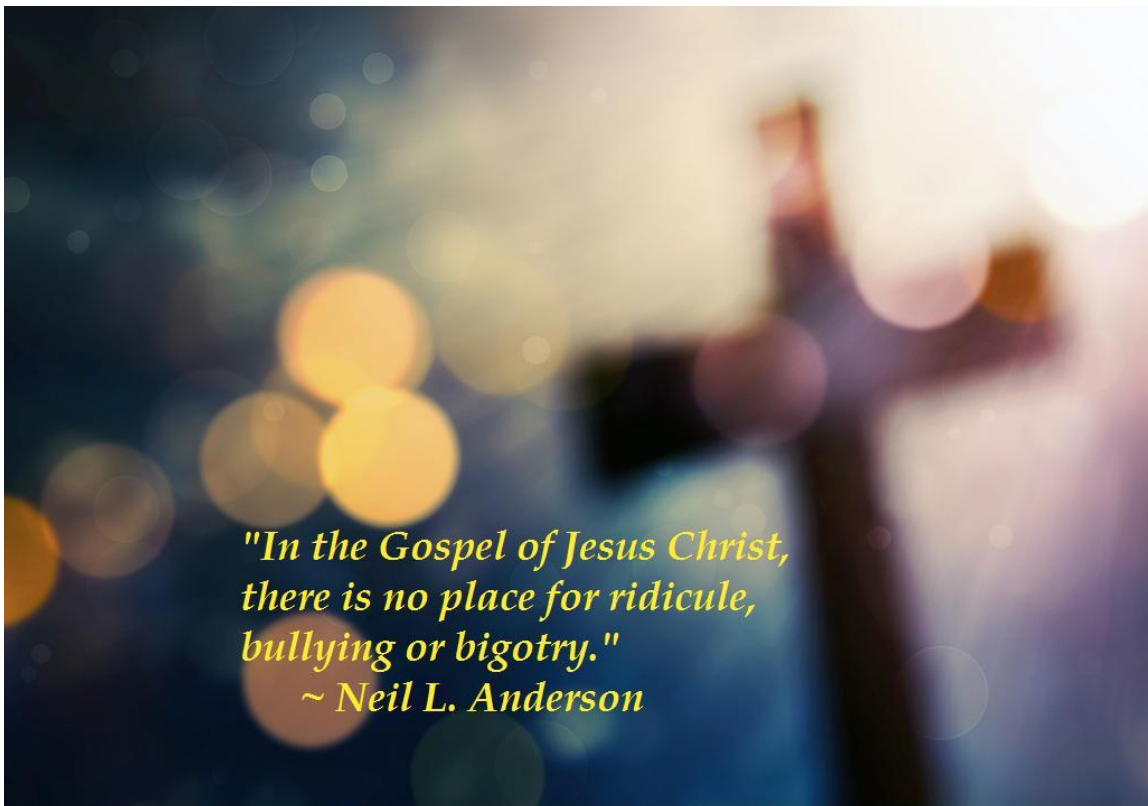
(Be honest ... Leviticus 19:11)

- Eating fat (3:17)
- Carelessly making an oath (5:4)
- Letting your hair become unkempt (10:6)
- Tearing your clothes (10:6)
- Eating an animal which doesn't both chew cud and has a divided hoof (cf: camel, rabbit, pig) (11:4-7)
- Eating any seafood without fins or scales (11:10-12)
- Going to church within 33 days after giving birth to a boy (12:4)
- Lying (19:11)
- Mixing fabrics in clothing (19:19)
- Trimming your beard (19:27)
- Getting tattoos (19:28)
- Mistreating foreigners – "the foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born" (19:33-34)
- Working on the Sabbath (23:3)
- Selling land permanently (25:23)

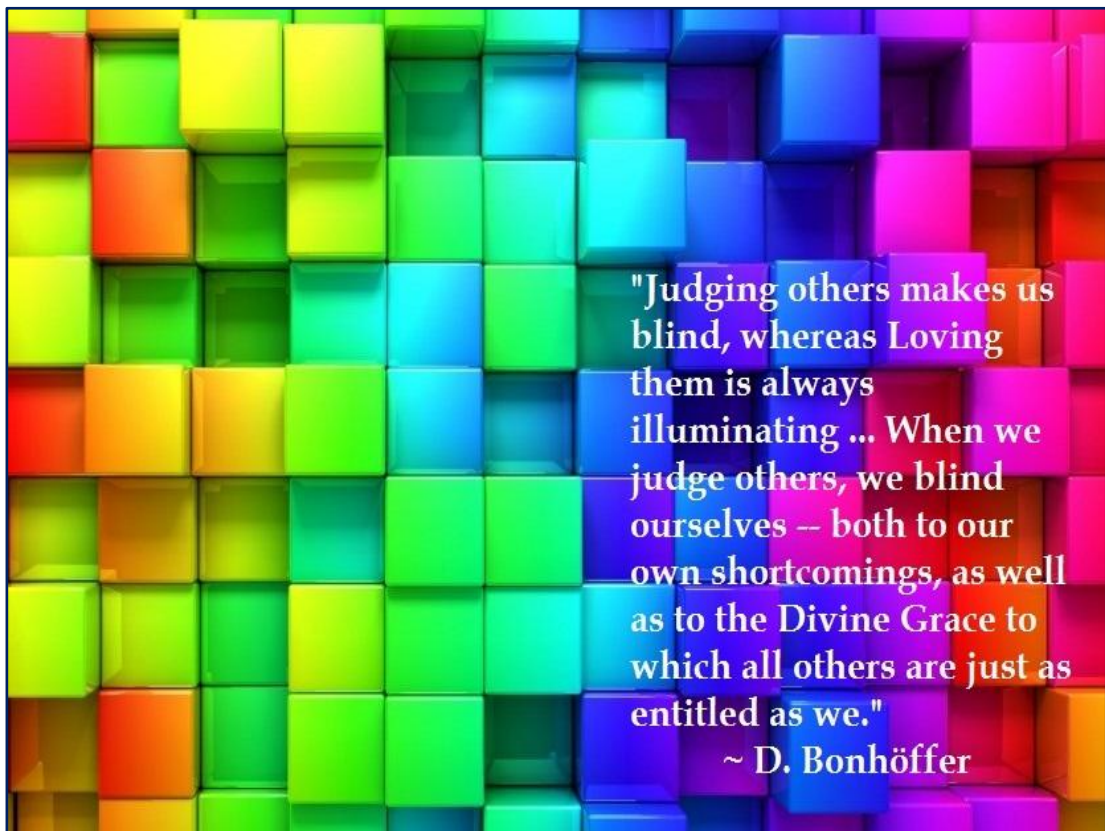
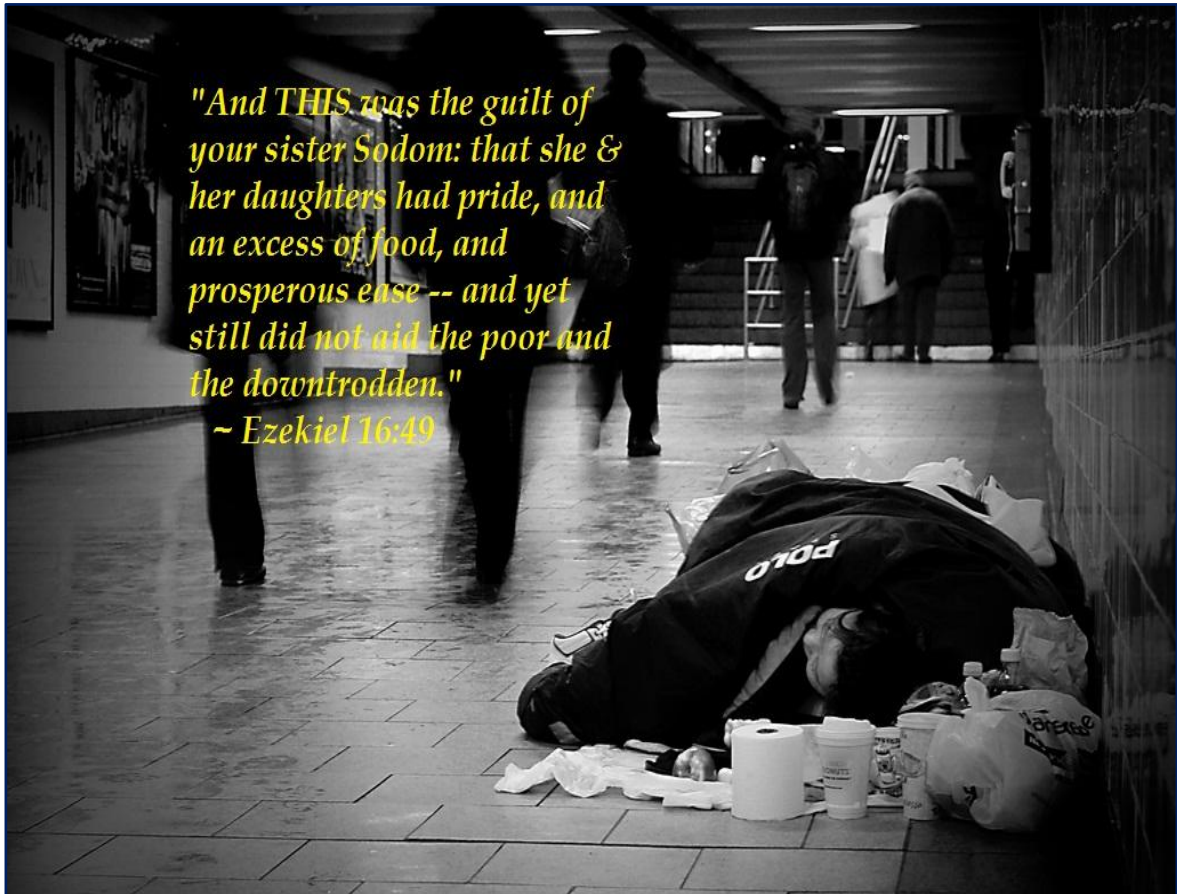
(If you have, &/or if you think that at least some of these rules are ridiculous, congratulations ... You finally understand.)



I gave them
the Beatitudes,
and all they do
is quote
Leviticus....



*"In the Gospel of Jesus Christ,
there is no place for ridicule,
bullying or bigotry."
~ Neil L. Anderson*



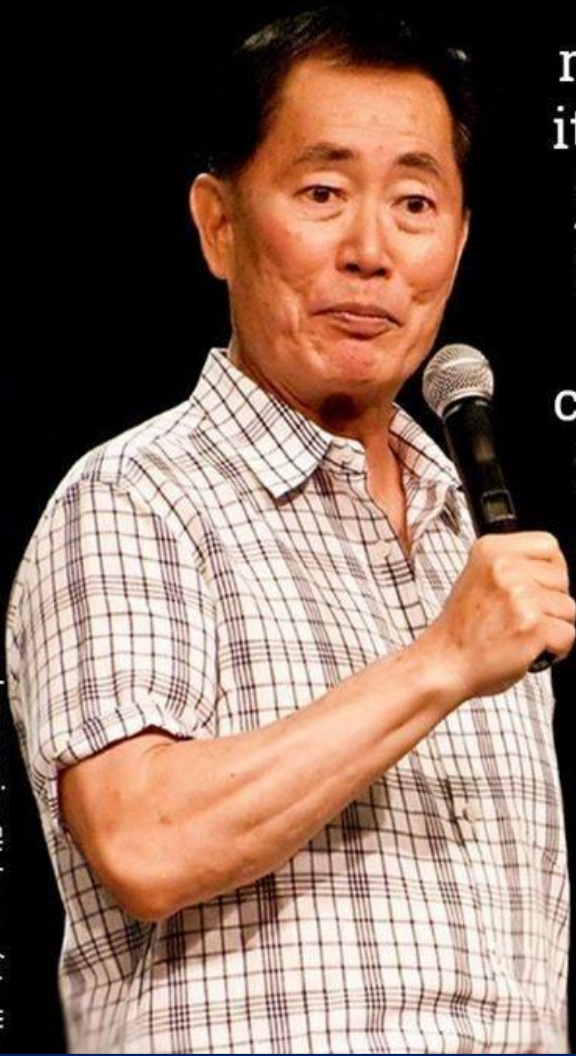
Truly I tell you, be sure and give your Love to others - especially to all the strangers you meet and to your enemies. Love them all just as I have Loved you ... Care for them tenderly, and avoid judging them or criticizing them.

But what if they are gay or transgender?

*Oh, I'm sorry ...
Was I unclear?
Did I just stutter?*

WWJD A?
WHO WOULD JESUS DISCRIMINATE AGAINST?

Image Via: Flickr.com/pixelle



Each of us bears a responsibility to reject hate, whatever its form, whatever its justification. A soul filled with hate can devastate a community. A nation filled with hate can devastate a people.

It must start and end with each of us.

- George Takei

*When you judge another person,
you do not define them ...
You **DEFILE** yourself!*

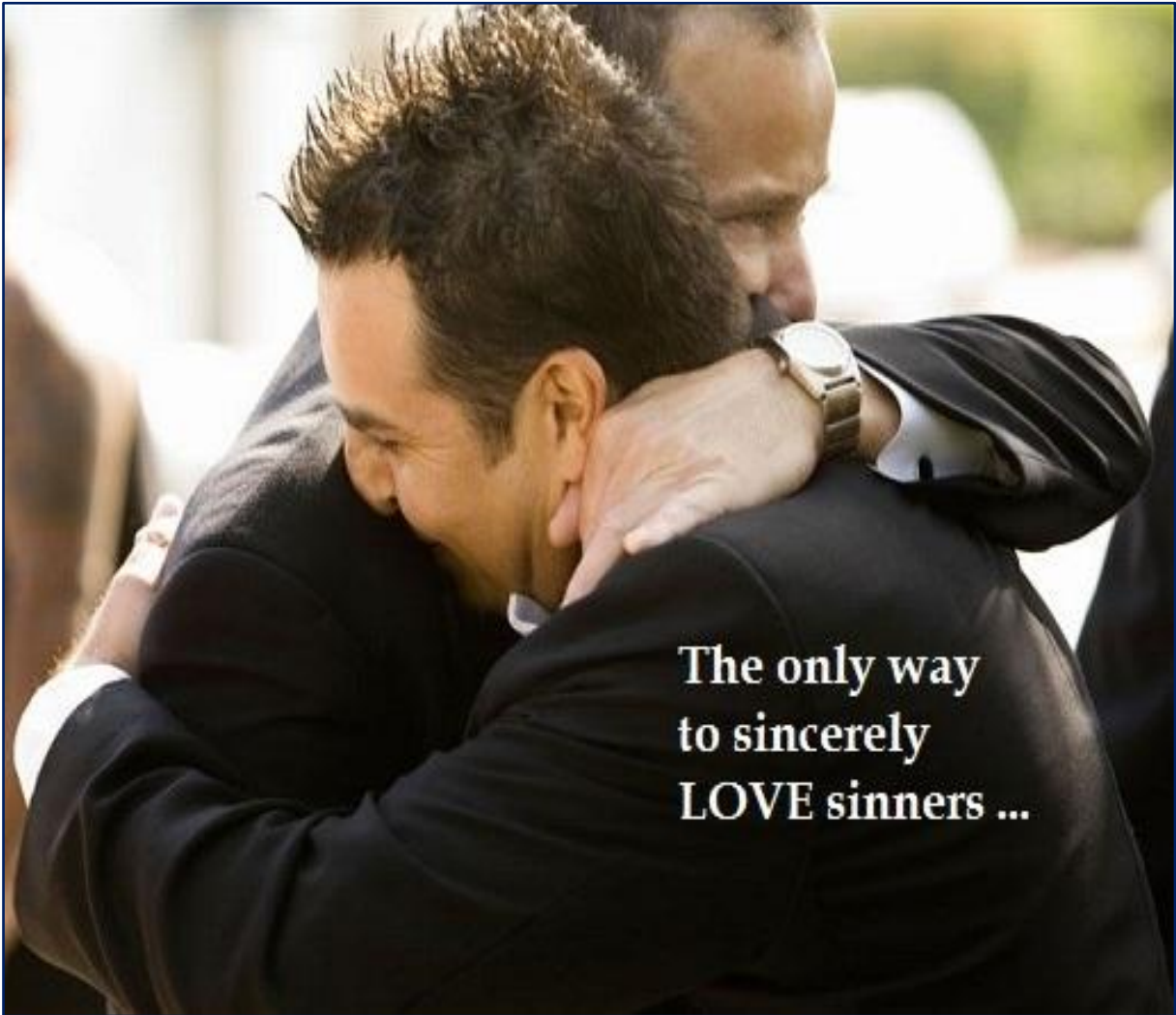


"You shall Love the LORD with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest Commandment, though a second is just as important: You shall Love your neighbor as yourself. On these two Commandments alone hang all the Law & the Prophets." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:37-40)



God
@TheGoodGodAbove

NEW COMMANDMENT:
Thou shalt stand up to people who
preach hate.



The only way
to sincerely
LOVE sinners ...



*The LOVE of Christ
does not judge ...*

**Do not judge by appearances, but judge
with right judgment.**

John 7:24



WHATEVER THINGS ARE

TRUE

HONORABLE

RIGHT

PURE

LOVELY

ADMIRABLE

EXCELLENT

AND

WORTHY OF PRAISE

THINK ON THESE THINGS

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Chapter 21) on Repentance
(Loving the enemy)

REPENT ...

(verb - biblical Greek: metanozo)

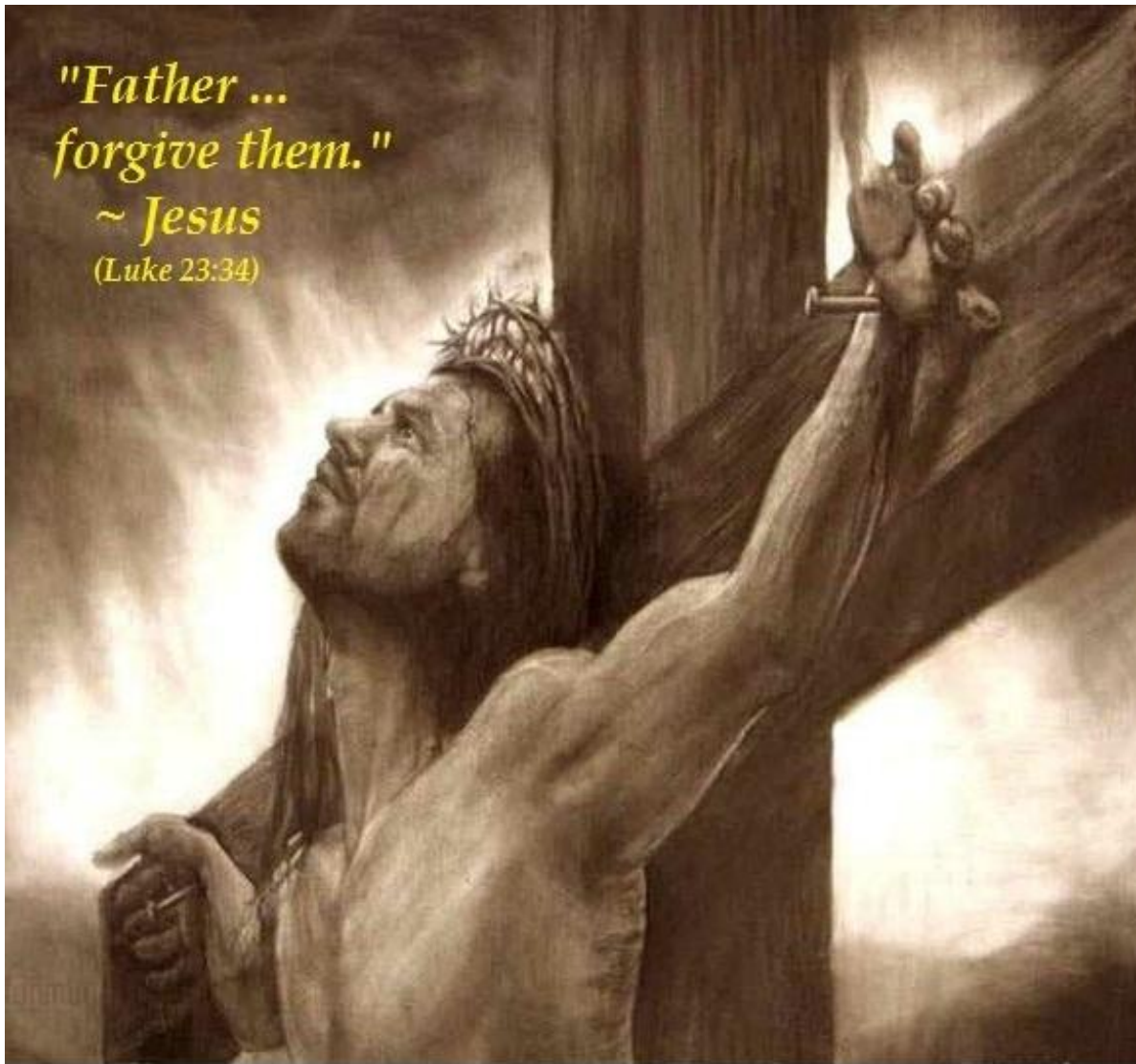
To awaken one's Self by altering one's heart & mind, via overhauling one's way of living, by altering one's motives for acting - shifting away from seeking the betterment of self, and towards seeking to bring Peace &/or Joy to others.

To repent is to re-turn to The Way of Christ ...

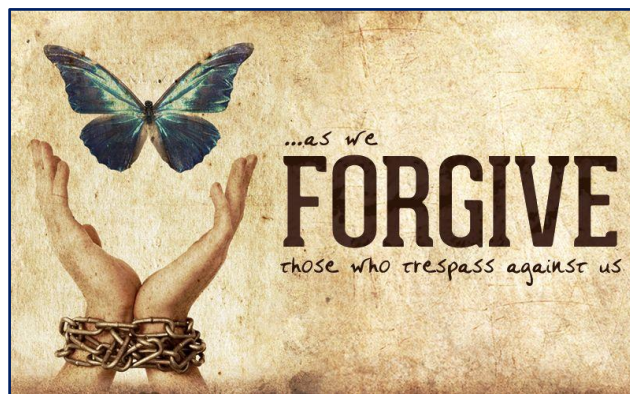
"The time has arrived for you to awaken from your slumber, and indeed the Kingdom of God is already at hand. As such, REPENT from your ways of selfish greed and arrogant judgment ... Live and share my gentle Gospel of selfless LOVE instead!" ~ Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15)



Forgiveness becomes real ...
when **Repentance** becomes a *verb*.



*Hmmm ... So what's that keeping you
from forgiving your enemies again?*





"I have come to bring cleansing fire of selfless Love to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ... In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven ... And thus I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven. For He makes his sun rise on both the evil and the good, and sends rain onto both the righteous and the unrighteous ... Be perfect in your Love, therefore, as the Love of your heavenly Father is perfect ... Look! I have cast this great fire upon the world, and I am tending it until it blazes."

~ Jesus Christ (Luke 12:49 + Matt 5:16 + Matt 5:44-48 + Thomas 10)

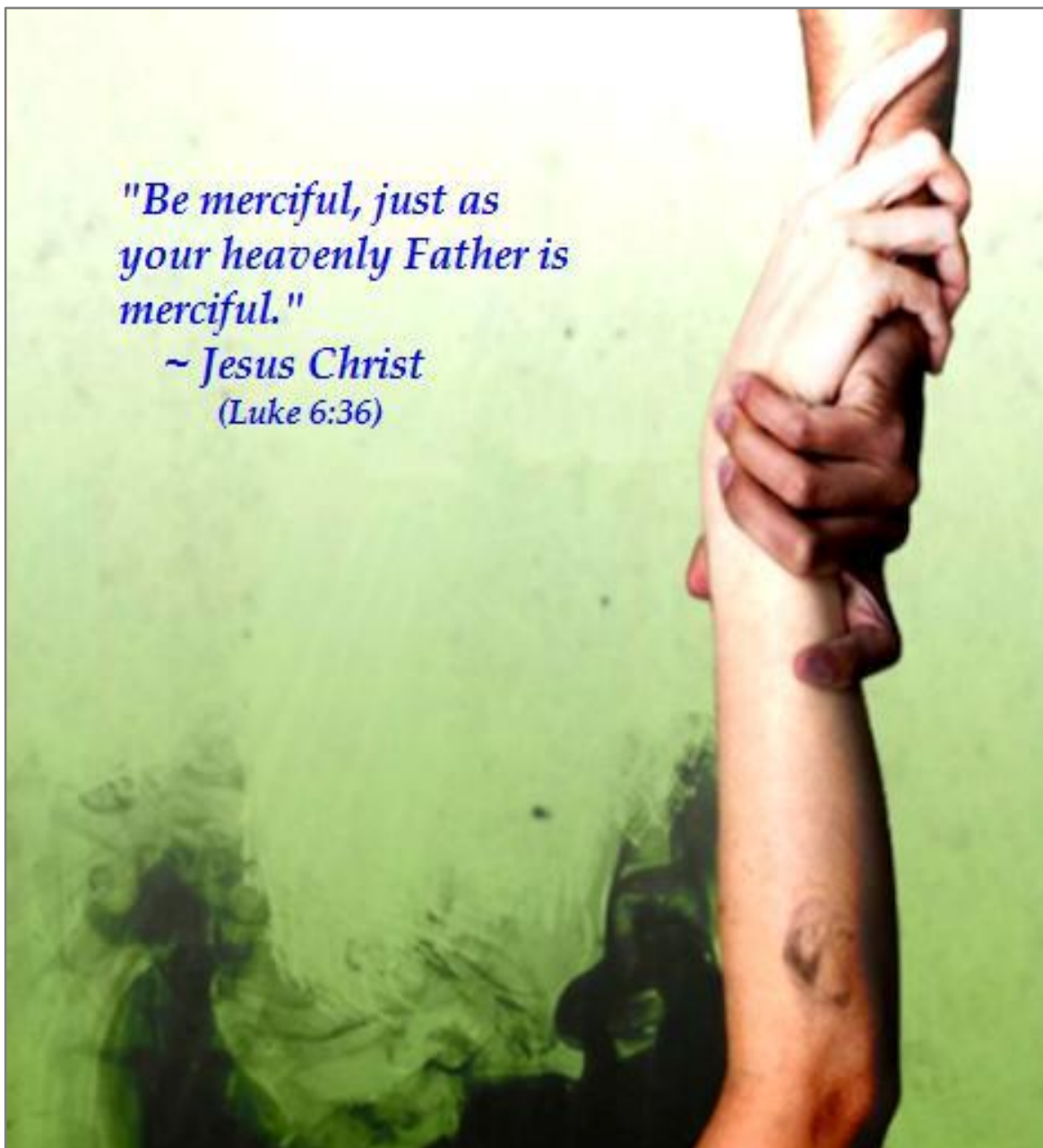


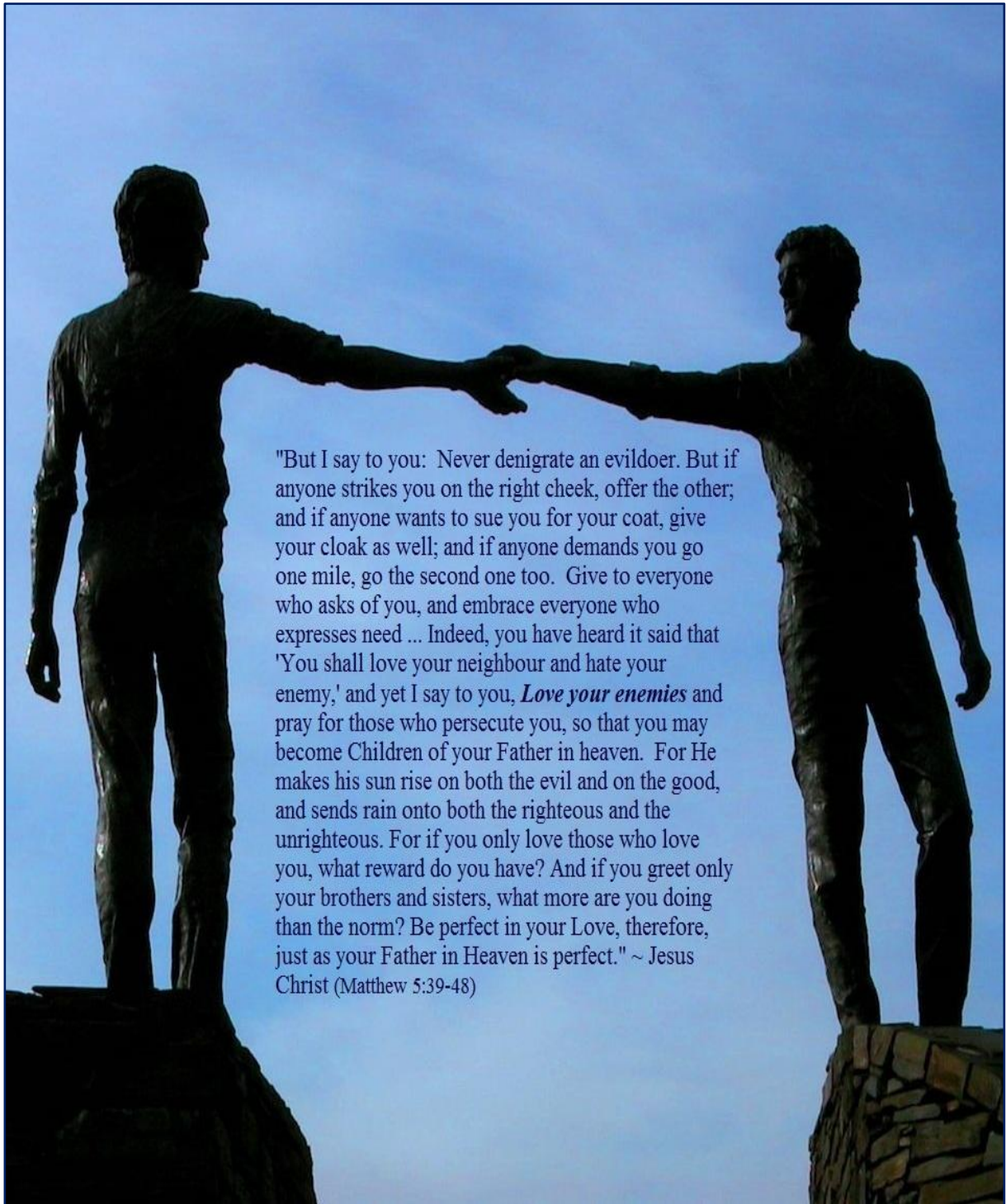
*Admirable indeed ... as long as
that LOVE is given in-Deed.*



*"Be merciful, just as
your heavenly Father is
merciful."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(Luke 6:36)*

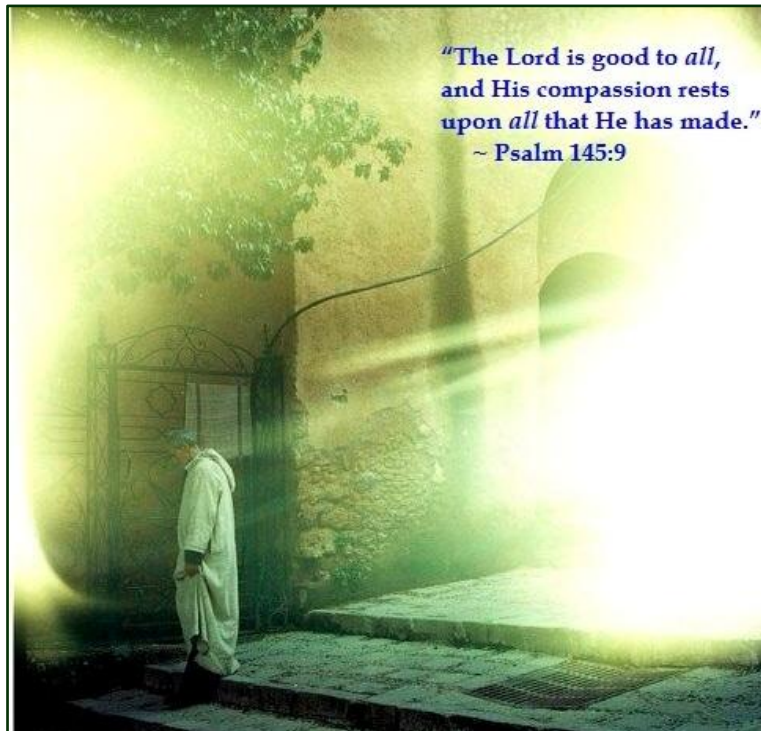




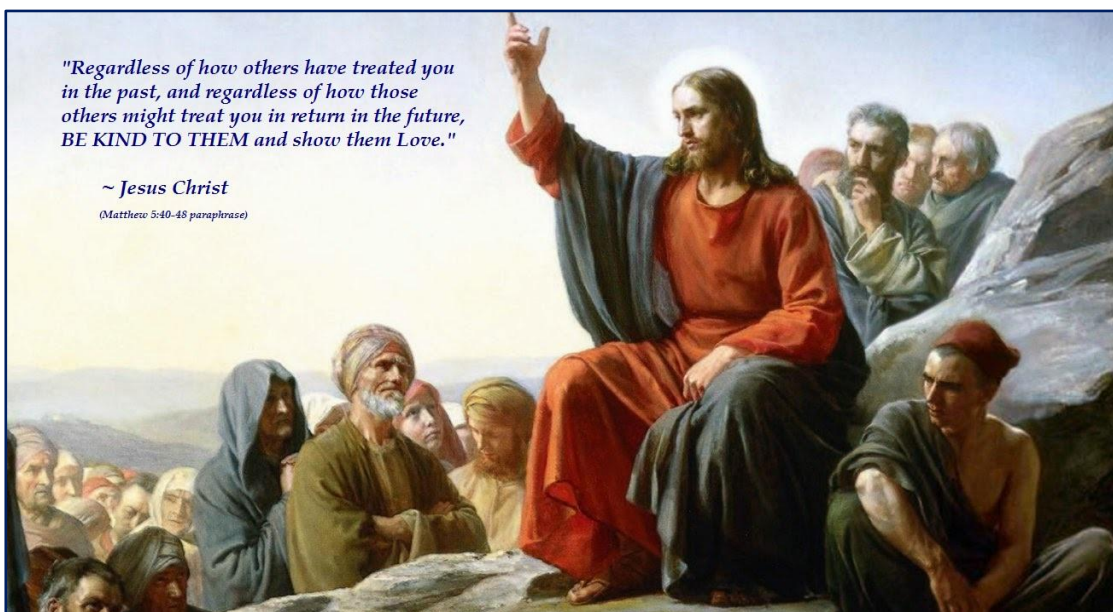
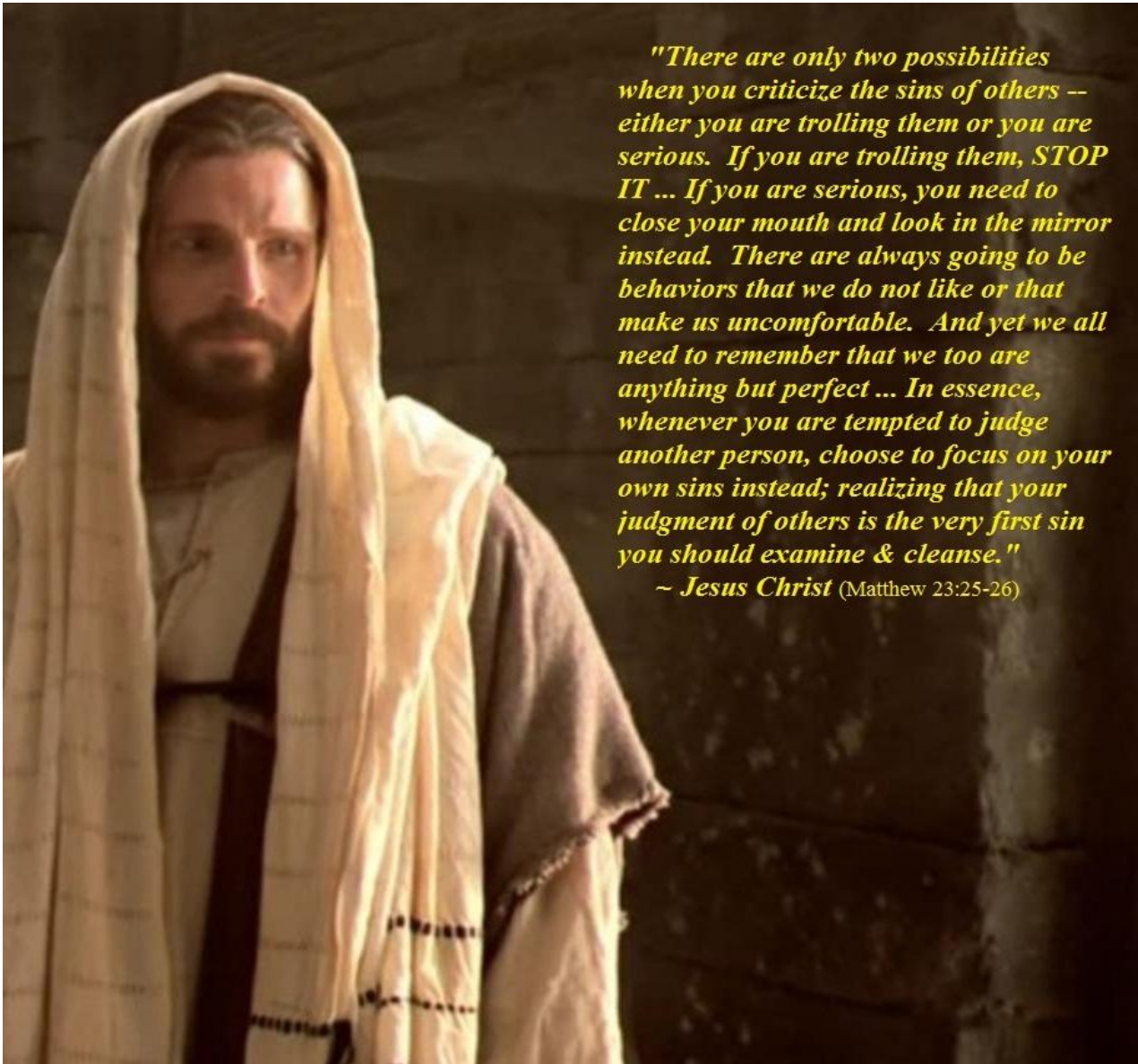
"But I say to you: Never denigrate an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, offer the other; and if anyone wants to sue you for your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone demands you go one mile, go the second one too. Give to everyone who asks of you, and embrace everyone who expresses need ... Indeed, you have heard it said that 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy,' and yet I say to you, *Love your enemies* and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become Children of your Father in heaven. For He makes his sun rise on both the evil and on the good, and sends rain onto both the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you only love those who love you, what reward do you have? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than the norm? Be perfect in your Love, therefore, just as your Father in Heaven is perfect." ~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:39-48)

MERCY

enmity dislike
 Prejudice
Judgment
 aggression
 Condemnation
 Bigotry
 Retribution
Discrimination Hatred
 Insult
 Intolerance
Gossip callousness
 Bias
 "Justice"
apathy Punishment Criticism



*"The Lord is good to all,
and His compassion rests
upon all that He has made."
~ Psalm 145:9*



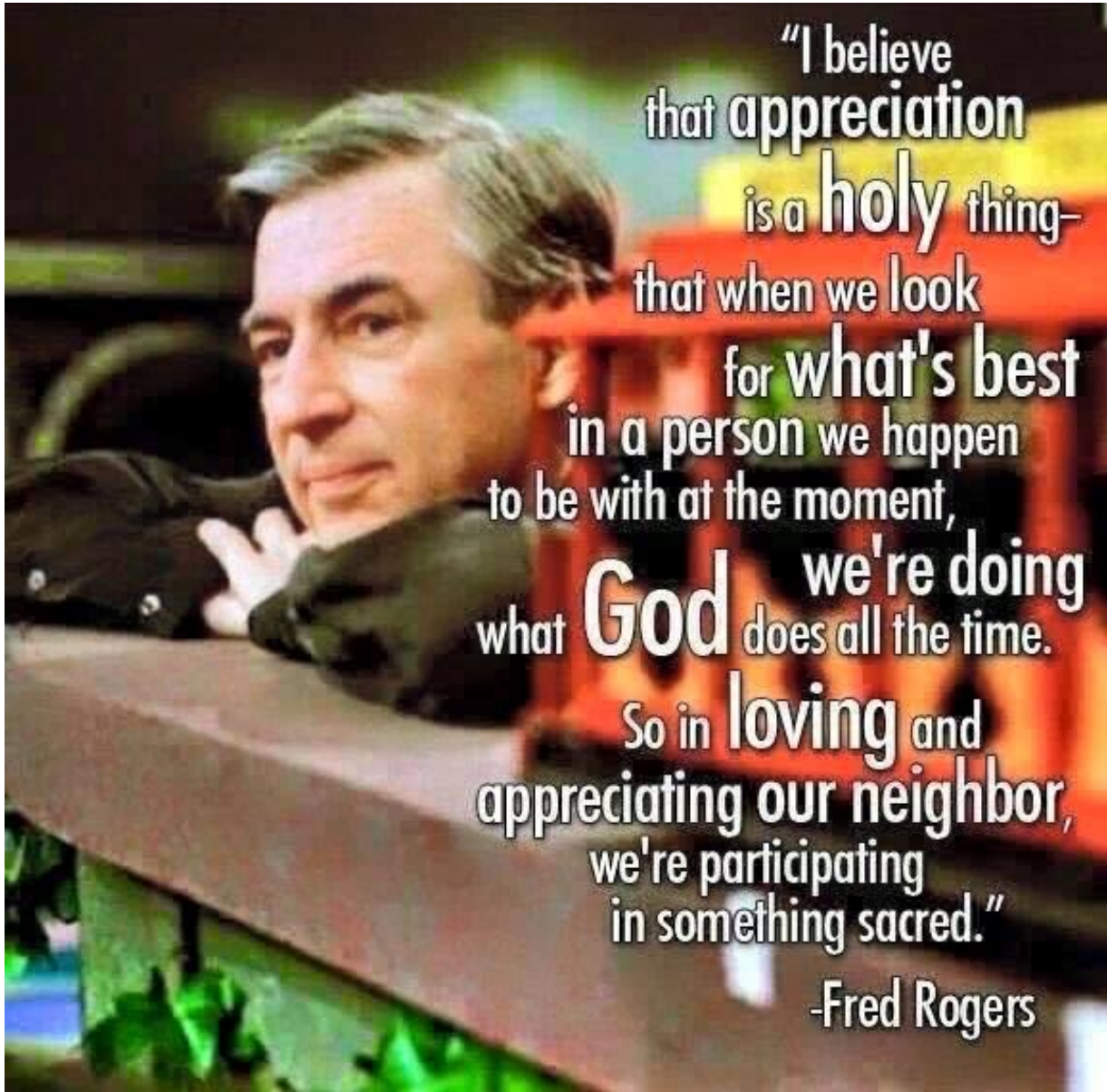
WHAT IS

EVIL?

"Evil is purposefully causing another to suffer ... Evil is also being given the opportunity to love an enemy, and refusing to do so."

~ Jesus Christ

(see Matthew 5:40-48)



"I believe that appreciation is a holy thing—that when we look for what's best in a person we happen to be with at the moment, what **God** we're doing does all the time. So in loving and appreciating our neighbor, we're participating in something sacred."

-Fred Rogers

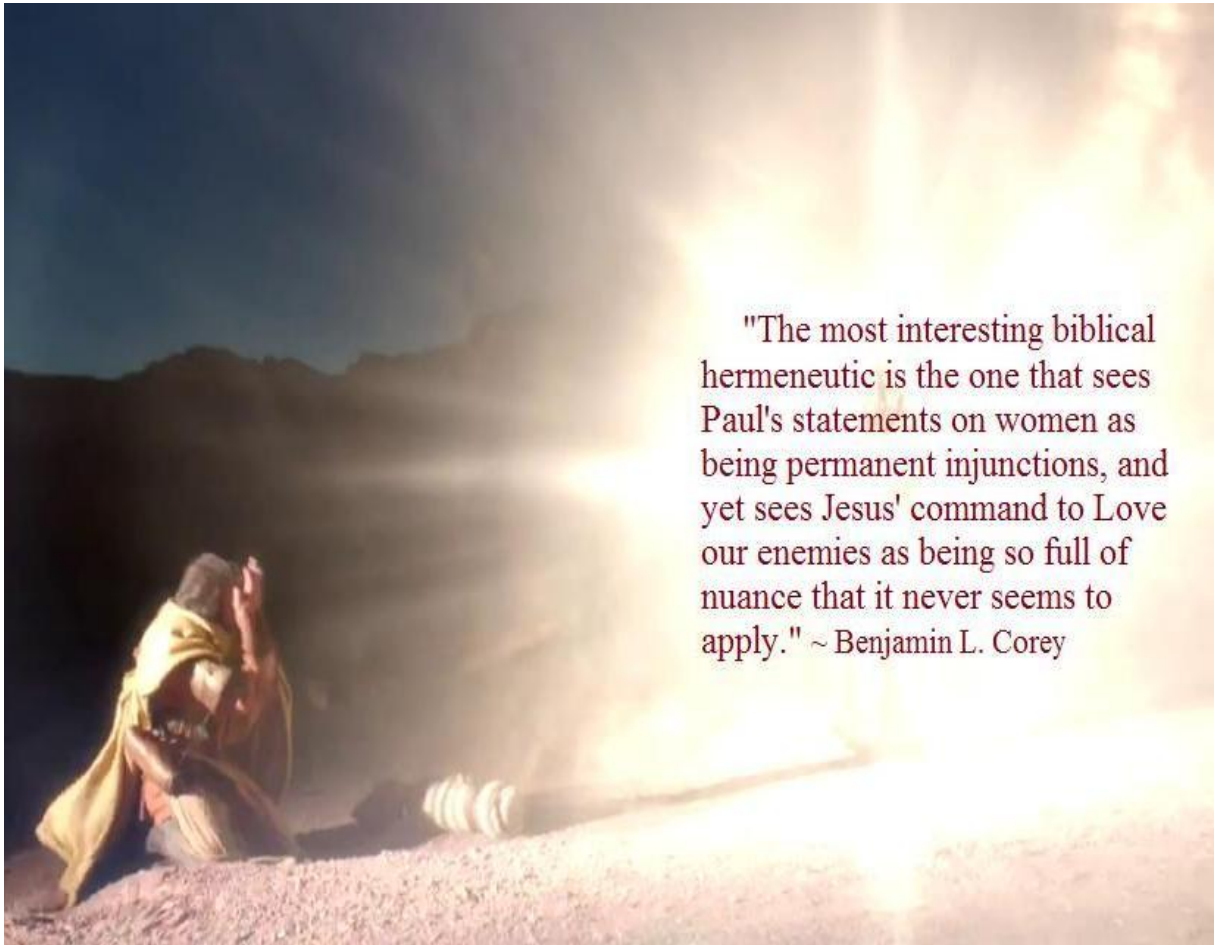


*The measure of LOVE ...
... is to Love without measure.*

Your job is not to judge.
Your job is not to figure
out if someone deserves
something. Your job is
to lift the fallen,
to restore the broken,
and to heal the hurting.

~ Jesus Christ

(Matthew 7:1-5 & John 13:34-35)



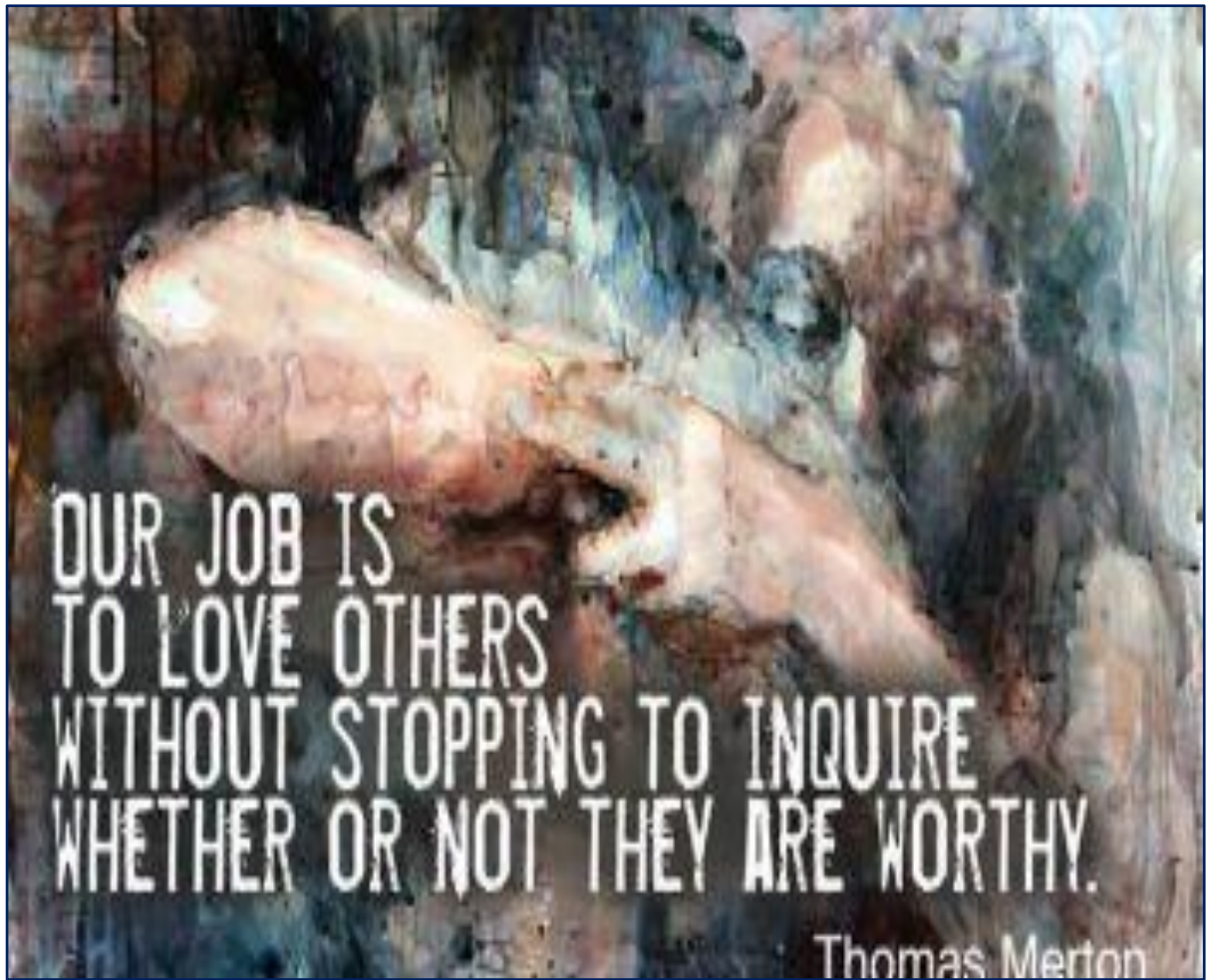
"The most interesting biblical hermeneutic is the one that sees Paul's statements on women as being permanent injunctions, and yet sees Jesus' command to Love our enemies as being so full of nuance that it never seems to apply." ~ Benjamin L. Corey

Dear evangelicals: Either God demands social bigotries and backwards-thinking misogyny, or He desires us to Love others without condition or limitation ... Which is it going to be?



*"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you yours."
~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 6:14)*





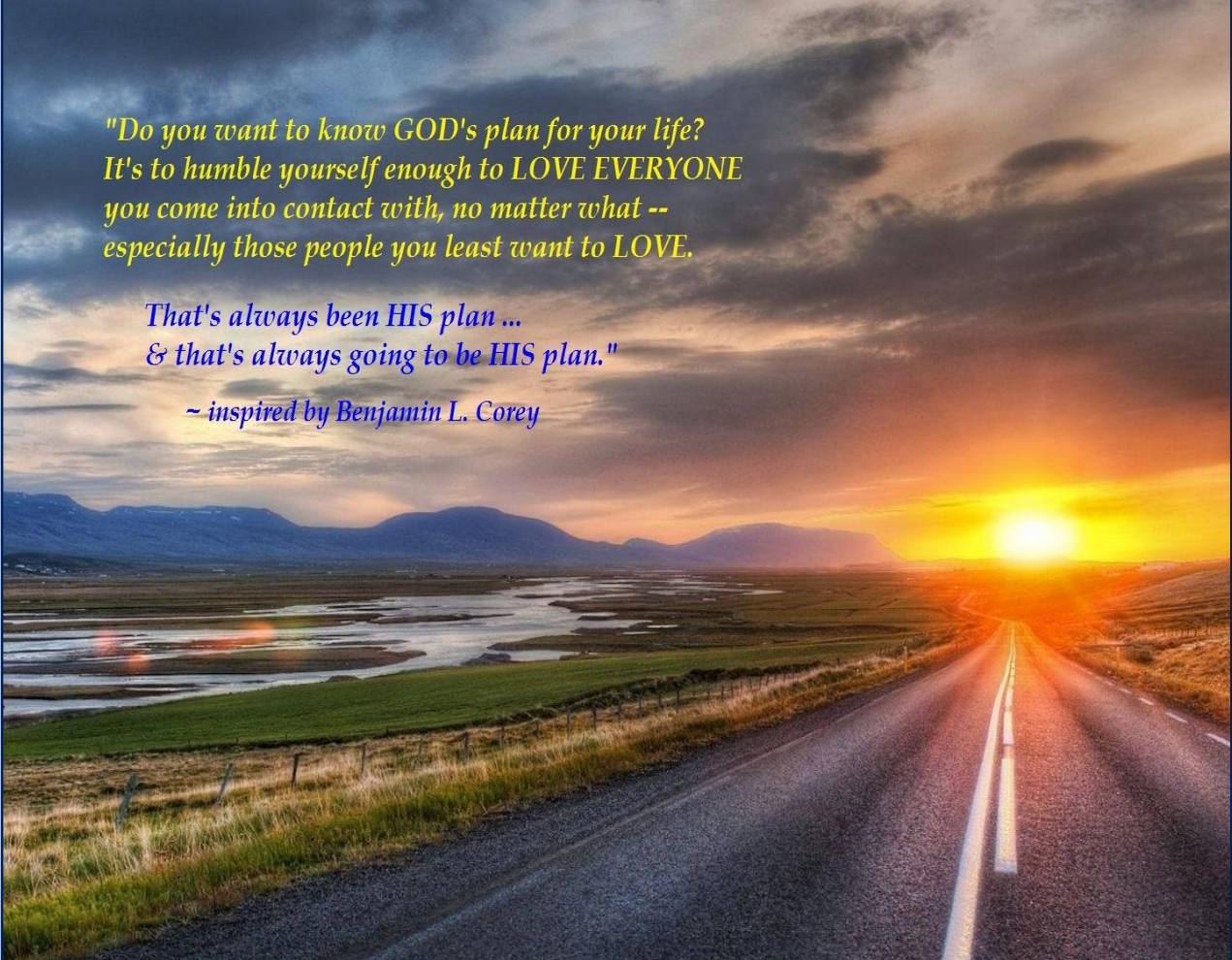
OUR JOB IS
TO LOVE OTHERS
WITHOUT STOPPING TO INQUIRE
WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE WORTHY.

Thomas Merton



Blessed are the
merciful,
For they shall obtain
mercy.

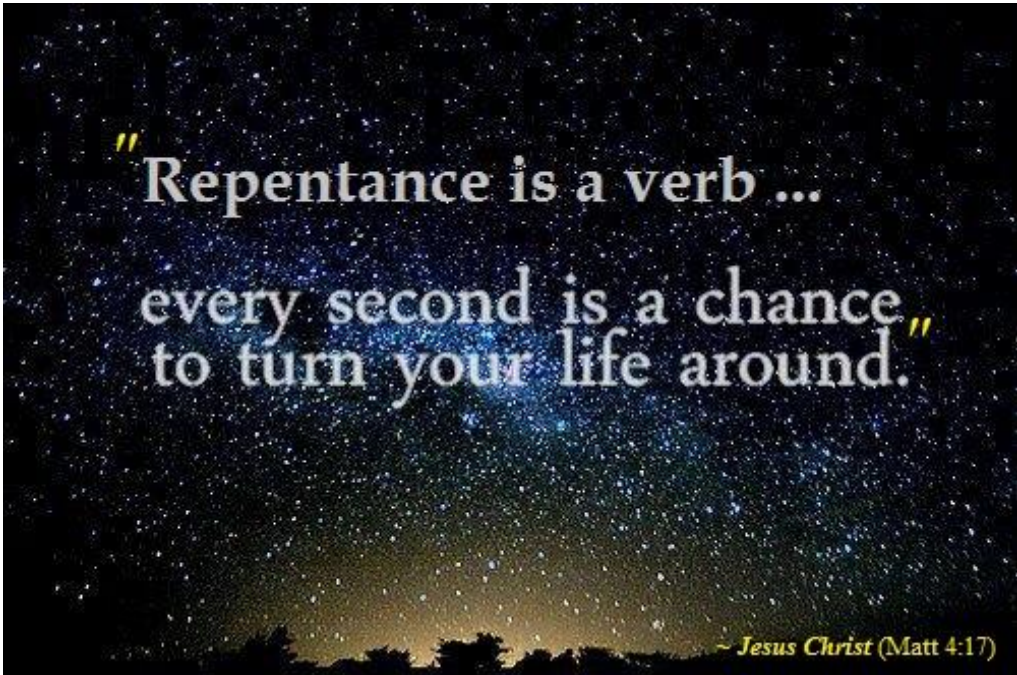
Matthew 5:7



*"Do you want to know GOD's plan for your life?
It's to humble yourself enough to LOVE EVERYONE
you come into contact with, no matter what --
especially those people you least want to LOVE.*

*That's always been HIS plan ...
& that's always going to be HIS plan."*

~ inspired by Benjamin L. Corey



*" Repentance is a verb ...
every second is a chance
to turn your life around."*

~ Jesus Christ (Matt 4:17)

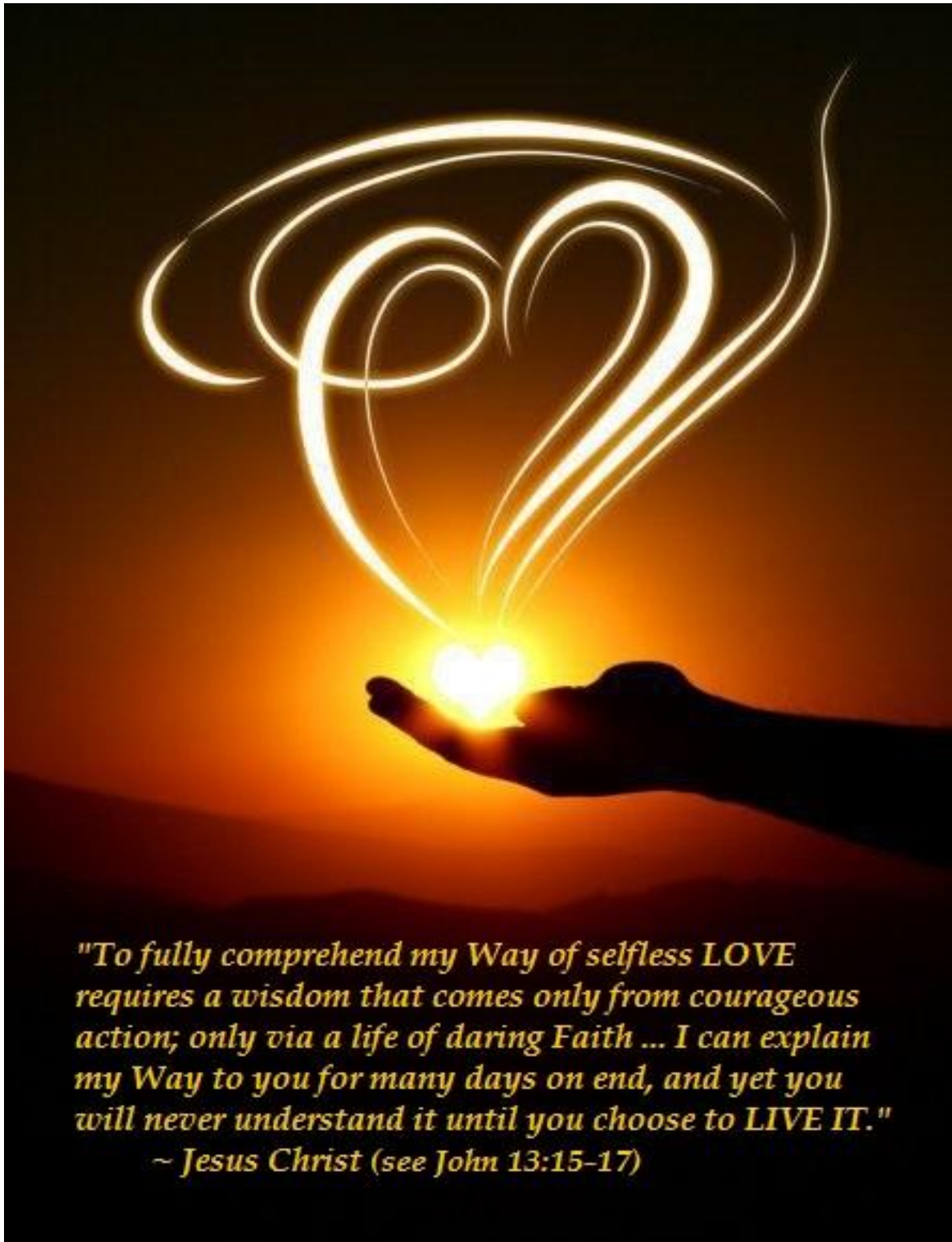


*"I will LOVE the Light, for it clearly illuminates my Way
... and I will also LOVE the Darkness, for it enables me to
See by starlight." ~ via Og Mandino*

Chapter 22) on Walking the Talk



"People would far rather debate church doctrine or spiritual beliefs or religious tradition or biblical interpretation than actually do what Jesus said ... It's not rocket science, people: ***Just go out and DO IT.*** Practice loving a difficult person or try openly forgiving someone. Give away what's left in your wallet. Compliment a stranger. Encourage a friend. Be kind to an enemy ... You already know way more than you need to know. The time has come to put it all in motion." ~ inspired by John Ortberg



*"To fully comprehend my Way of selfless LOVE requires a wisdom that comes only from courageous action; only via a life of daring Faith ... I can explain my Way to you for many days on end, and yet you will never understand it until you choose to LIVE IT."
~ Jesus Christ (see John 13:15-17)*

"LOVE IS A VERB"
~ *Jesus Christ* (Matt 25:35-40 & John 13:15-17)

LOVE is not a feeling
you have.
It's a decision to treat
others the way
JESUS
would treat them.



*It is impossible to "follow" Christ unless you know
what that term means ... For Jesus, to "follow"
didn't mean to worship, it meant to IMITATE!*

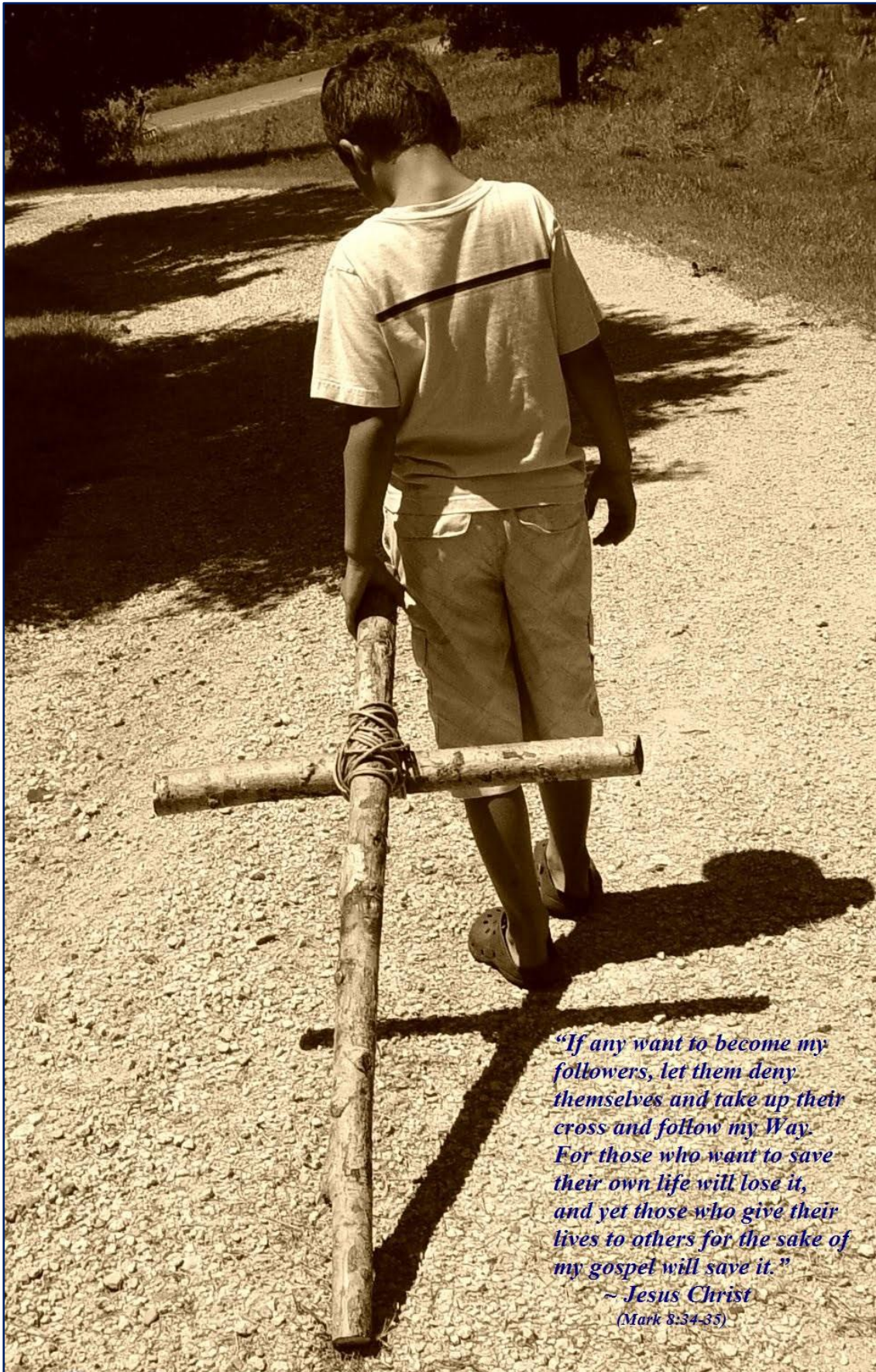
"Follow
Me."

*~ Jesus Christ
(Matthew 16:24)*



ACT IN
SUCH A
MANNER
THAT YOU
ARE LIVING
PROOF OF A
LOVING GOD.



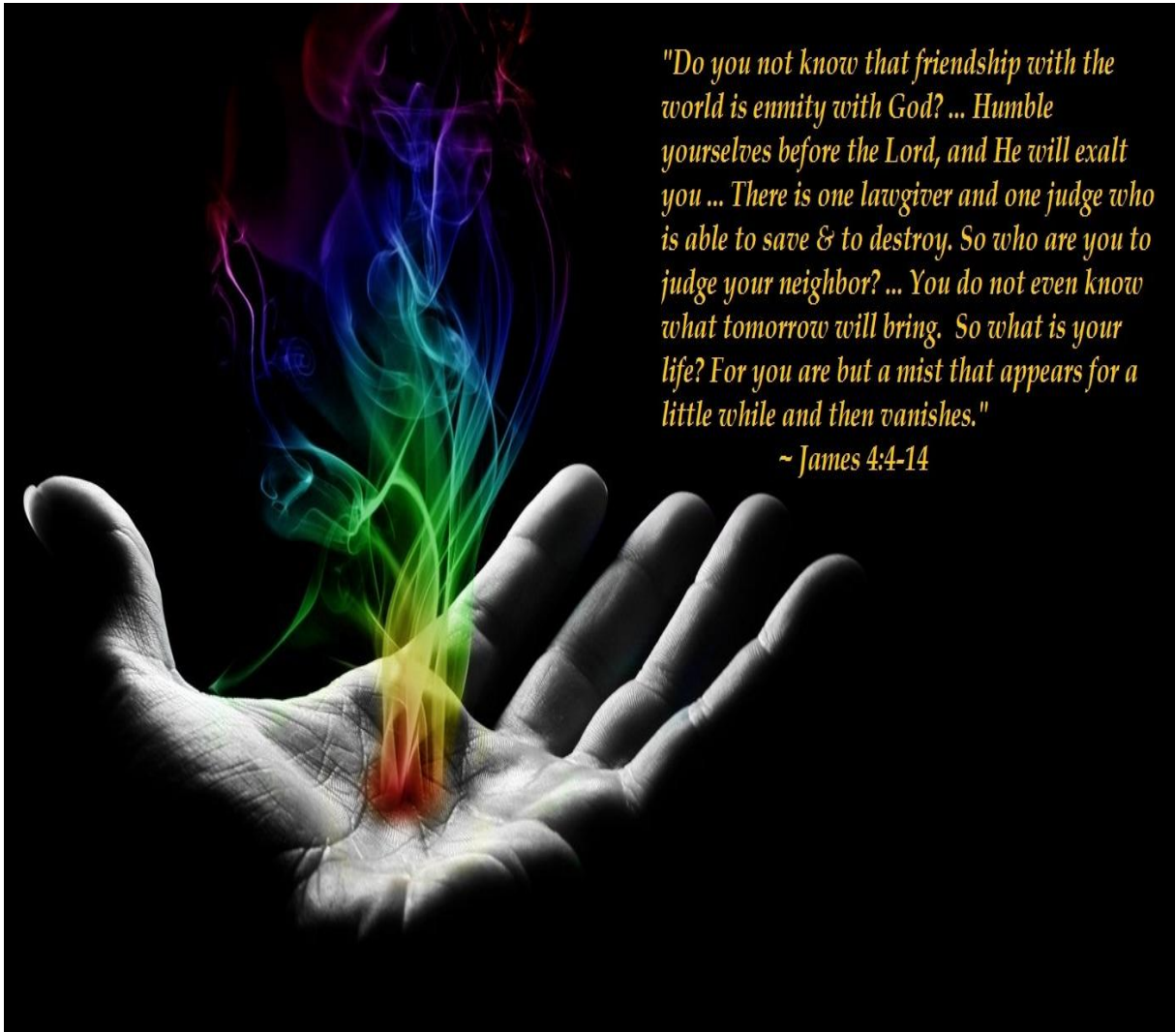


*"If any want to become my
followers, let them deny
themselves and take up their
cross and follow my Way.
For those who want to save
their own life will lose it,
and yet those who give their
lives to others for the sake of
my gospel will save it."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(Mark 8:34-35)*

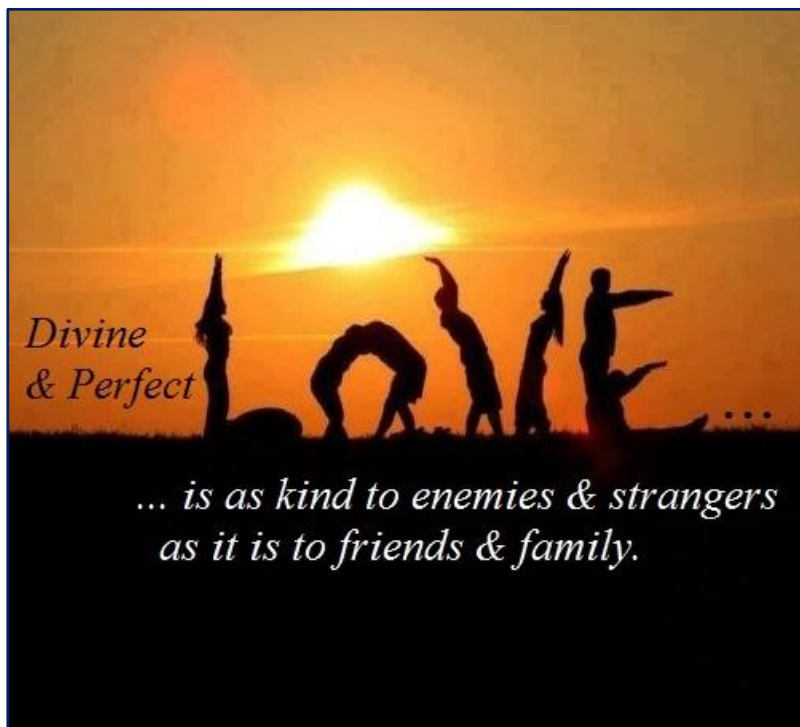
*"Father, if you are willing, remove this torment from me.
And yet, let not my will be done, but thine." ~ Luke 22:42*





"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? ... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you ... There is one lawgiver and one judge who is able to save & to destroy. So who are you to judge your neighbor? ... You do not even know what tomorrow will bring. So what is your life? For you are but a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes."

~ James 4:4-14



*Divine
& Perfect*

*... is as kind to enemies & strangers
as it is to friends & family.*



THE TRUTH OF LIFE

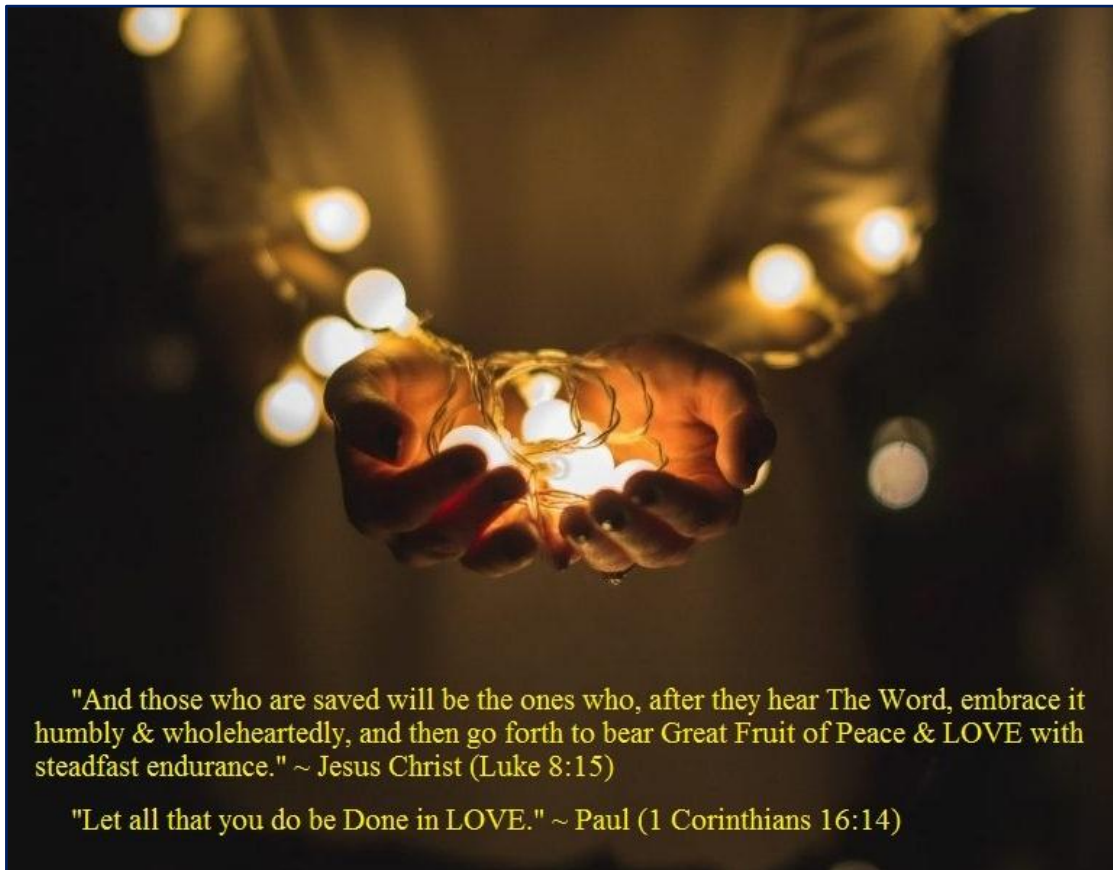
I tell you the truth, unless a grain of
wheat falls to the ground
and dies, it remains only a single seed.

But if it dies, it
produces many seeds.

John 12:24

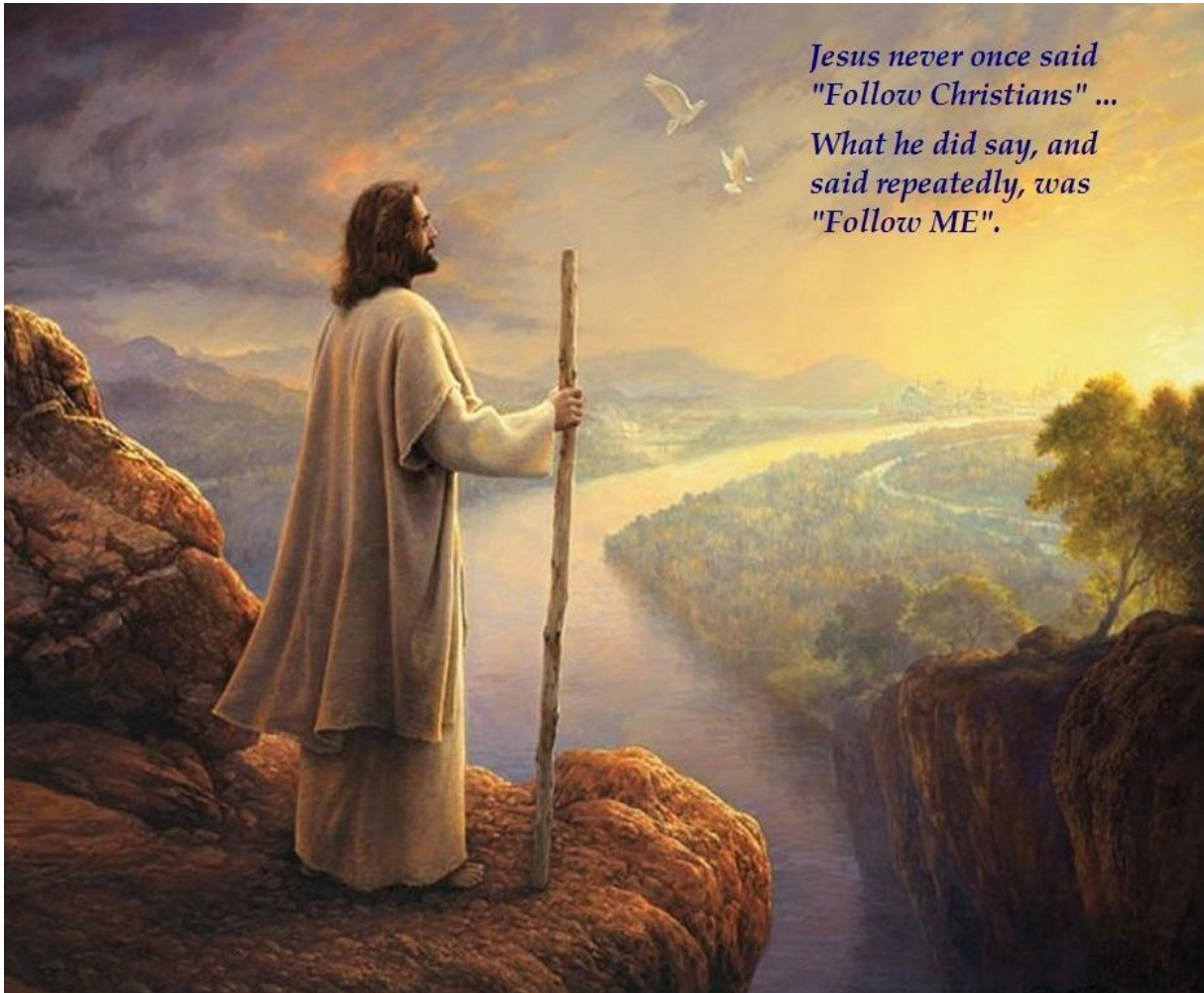


The Soul can only awaken for the one who is both humble enough to own her mind-business, and courageous enough to make Love her life's Work.



"And those who are saved will be the ones who, after they hear The Word, embrace it humbly & wholeheartedly, and then go forth to bear Great Fruit of Peace & LOVE with steadfast endurance." ~ Jesus Christ (Luke 8:15)

"Let all that you do be Done in LOVE." ~ Paul (1 Corinthians 16:14)

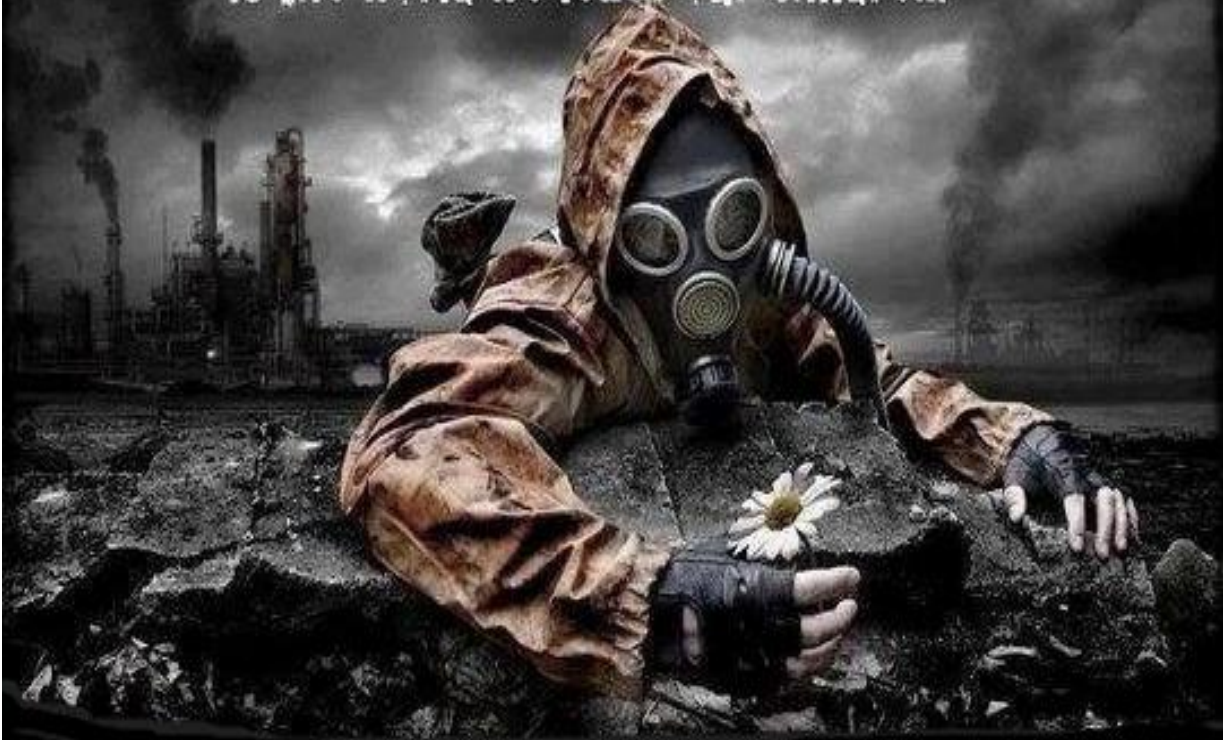


*Jesus never once said
"Follow Christians" ...
What he did say, and
said repeatedly, was
"Follow ME".*



If you think you can recite "correct theology"
but do not regularly express The Way of Christ
via humble acts of anonymous charity ... then
you are never reciting correct theology.

**The only afterlife we ought to be concerned about
is the world we leave our children.**

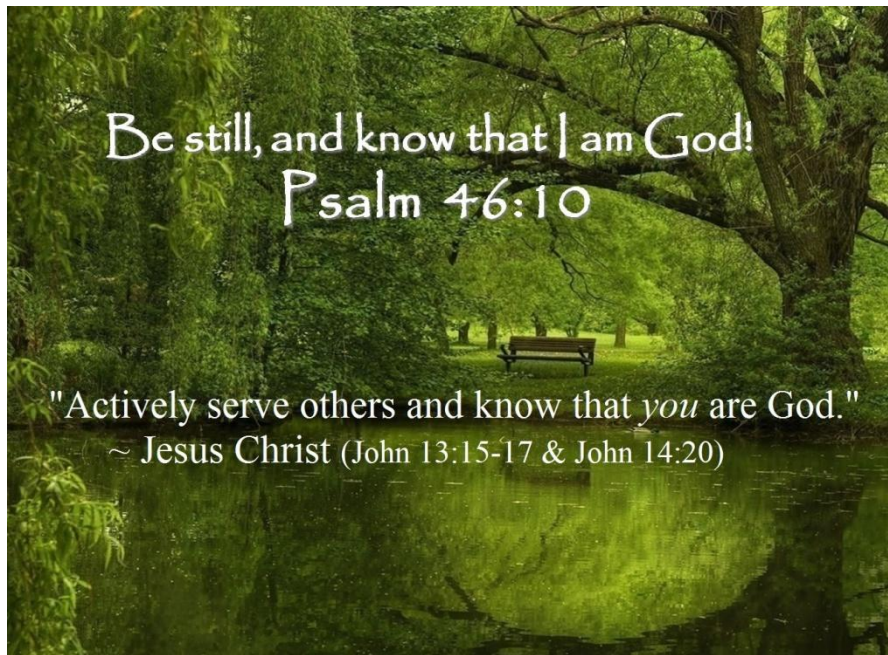


*And how can you do so? How can you do your part to leave
your children with a better and still-beautiful world?*

*You can dedicate your mind to discerning & then dismissing the demons
in your dogma (i.e. Replace arrogance with humility & religion with service).

*You can dedicate your life to saving &/or bringing solace to all the
sentient who are still suffering (i.e. Become a vegan activist).

*You can dedicate your days to caring for the downtrodden in your midst;
especially when least willing to do so -- and especially for those "least
deserving" of the same (i.e. Be Kind when least inclined).



If we want to fully embrace the Kingdom Jesus invites us into, we must enact principles of living that free us from the key things that keep us out of the Kingdom: self and possessions ... While there are several practices that can help us approach the level of selflessness required by The Way of Christ (e.g. purging superfluous possessions, ceasing to acquire needless acquisitions, delaying gratification, extended fasting etc), there are two practices that provide immediate entrance into Jesus' "Kingdom – two practices that douse the mundane with sacredness and that transform avarice into altruism ... Consider:

1. Radical Generosity ... Find opportunities to give money and possessions away, and do it with a good attitude. If this is hard for you, start small (like we learned in fasting) and let the satisfaction it brings spur you to be progressively more generous. Research some causes that you're passionate about and find ways that you can give to the cause. Find people in your local area who have a need you can meet, and go meet it. Challenge yourself each year to be more generous than the year before, and even become willing to sacrifice so that you can maintain a lifestyle of generosity. The want to be generous is the only want you'll never have to fight– just give into it. If you try this long enough you might actually discover that you enjoy giving your money away more than you enjoy spending it on yourself.

2. Radical Hospitality ... Hospitality is a form of generosity but goes a bit further. Hospitality is what generosity looks like in a relationship. Make your home a place where people can gather and where you serve them. Increase the frequency that you invite guests over, telling them that they don't have to bring anything "other than themselves". Through hospitality, you're not simply being generous but you're also developing meaningful relationships which are essential to Kingdom living. Furthermore, if you want to show hospitality the way Jesus describes, make sure you're inviting people over that you normally would not think to invite. One time Jesus told a story about the Kingdom and in the story he says to "go out into the streets and invite the excluded to come in and sit down at the table". So, be hospitable, but be hospitable with people who are often excluded.

~ via Benjamin L. Corey
(Amen ... Let it be so.)



This is Fred ... Fred was a Presbyterian minister who for 40 years taught thousands of children about Love & Respect & Compassion & Kindness without ever once mentioning the Bible, invoking God, or proselytizing Jesus Christ.

In short, all I wish to say is ... Be like Fred.

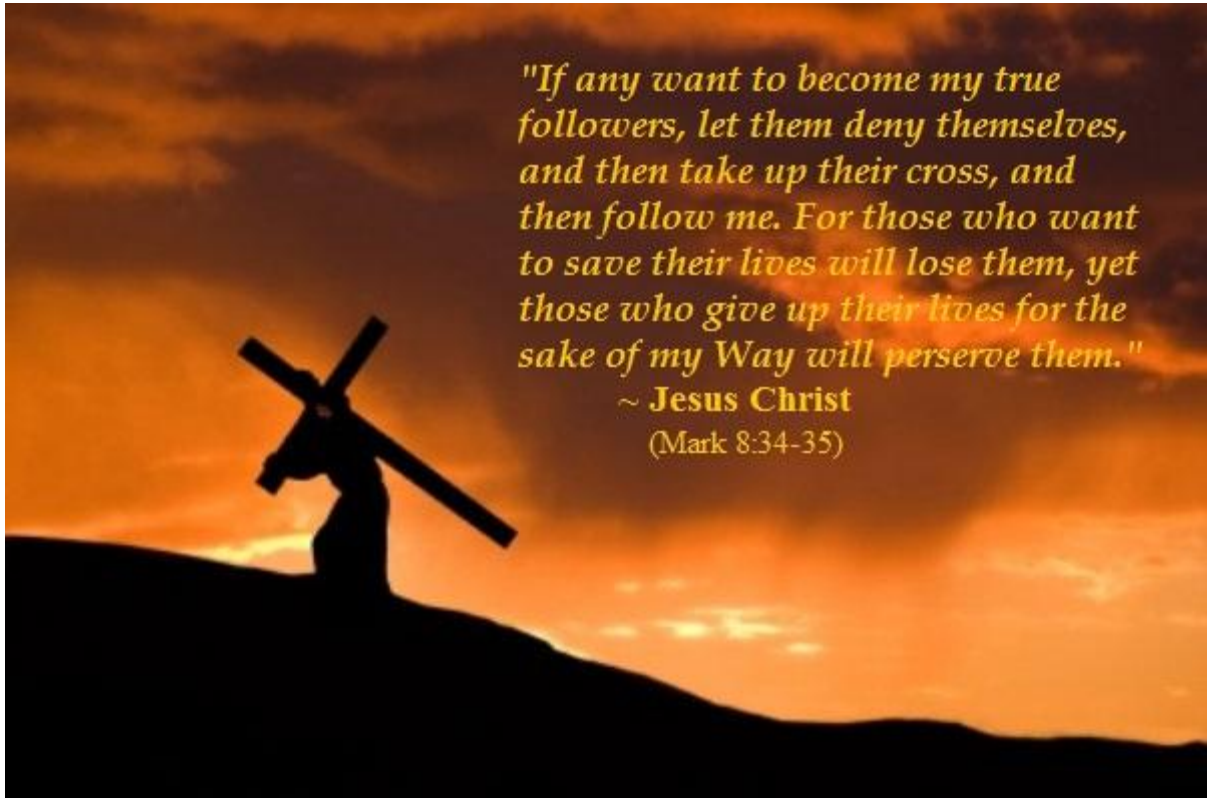
*"If any of you wish to become
my true followers, you must set
aside your selfish ways, take up
your cross of selfless service,
and FOLLOW ME."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(Luke 9:23)*



*The Great Commission can only be truly
fulfilled by proclaiming HIS Gospel -- doing
so always with actions humble & Caring, and
never with words haughty or hurtful.*





"If any want to become my true followers, let them deny themselves, and then take up their cross, and then follow me. For those who want to save their lives will lose them, yet those who give up their lives for the sake of my Way will persevere them."

~ Jesus Christ

(Mark 8:34-35)



*May the Peace of Christ be with you
... And may you remember each day
that the Peace of Christ is a verb.*



"The effectiveness of any spiritual practice is directly proportional to the intensity of one's selfless courage while involved therein." ~ anonymous



"Be like Jesus: Spend so much time with (and caring for) sinners that you ruin your reputation with religious people." ~ via Joshua Harris

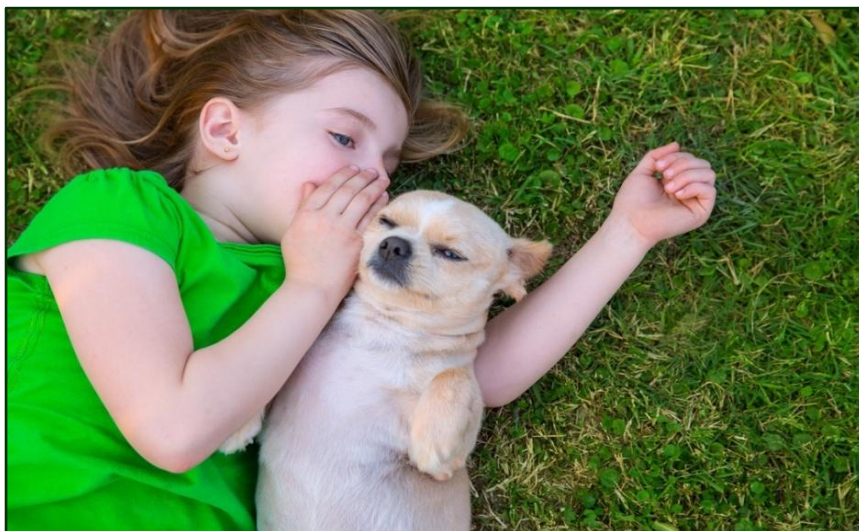
*"Why do you put own fawning airs before me but then refuse to go forth and do what I tell you? You quote the Scriptures boldly, and falsely think that it is your knowledge thereof that gives you eternal life, and yet you refuse to **follow my Way** in your dealings with others, and thereby come to know true Life."* ~ **Jesus Christ**

*(Luke 6:46 &
John 5:39-40)*



"Walk along the narrow way; for the broad path (taken by most) leads to destruction. The narrow trail is difficult and there are few who choose it, and yet it remains the only Way that leads to Life."

~ Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:13-14)



"Harsh and reckless words pierce like a sword, and yet the gentle tongue of the truly wise always soothes and heals." ~ from Proverbs 12:18



"But when Socrates was sentenced to death for his philosophical investigations, and for blasphemy for challenging the gods of the city — and he accepted his death — he did say, well, if we are lucky, perhaps I'll be able to hold conversation with other great thinkers and philosophers and doubters too. In other words, that the discussion about what is Good, what is Beautiful, what is Noble, what is Pure, and what is True could always go on. And why is that important? Why would I like to do that? Well, because that's the only conversation worth having. Whether it goes on or not after I die, I don't know. But I do know that that's the conversation I want to have while I'm still alive.

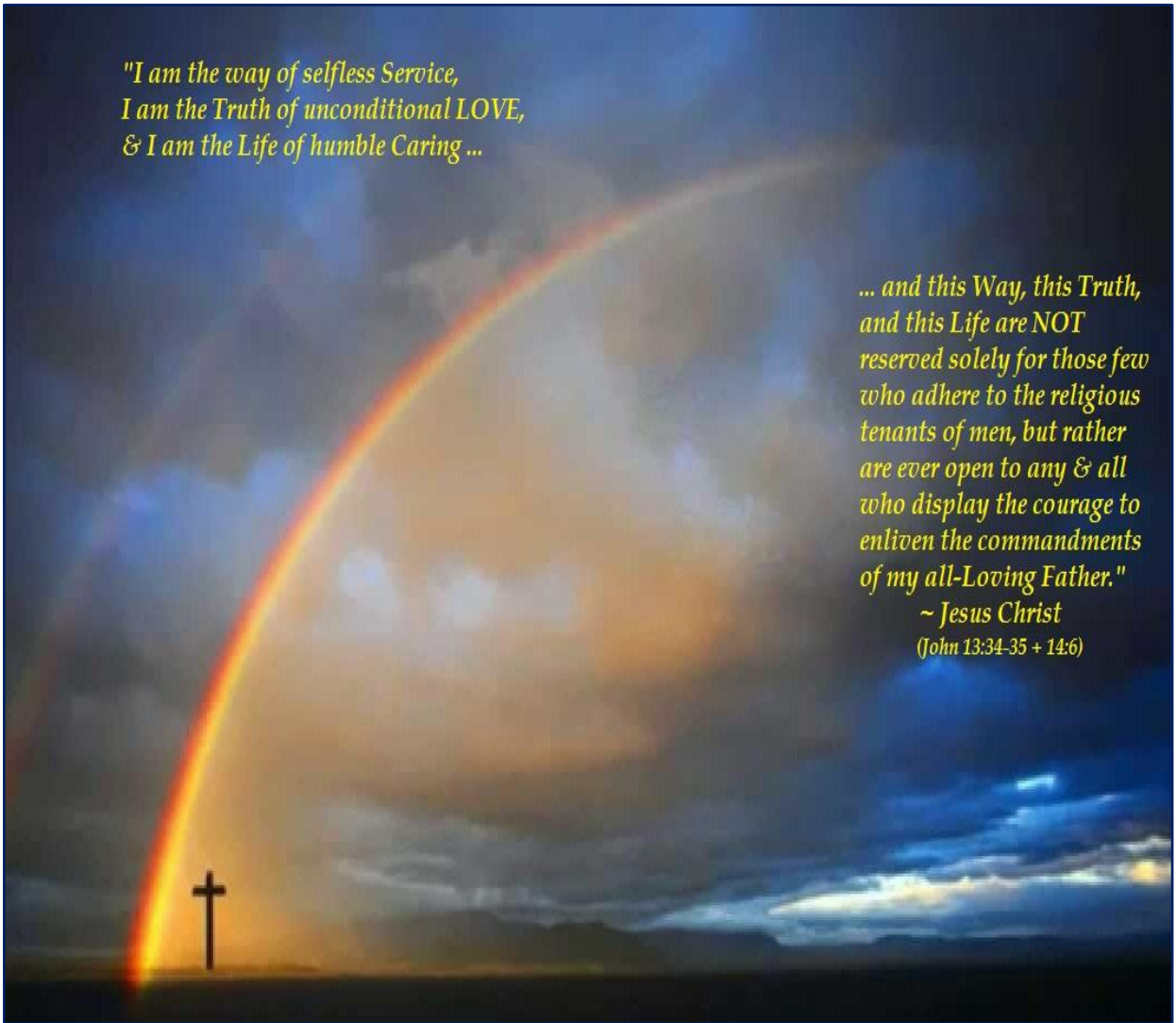
Which means that to me the offer of full certainty, the offer of complete security, the offer of an impermeable faith that can't ever give way, is an offer of something not worth having at all. I want to live my life taking the risk all the time that I don't know anything like enough yet; that I haven't understood enough; that I can't ever comprehend enough; that I'm always operating on the margins of a potentially great harvest of imminent Truth and Wisdom. Indeed, I wouldn't have it any other way.

And I'd urge you to look at those people who tell you that you're dead until you believe as they do -- that you can only live by accepting an absolute authority; *their* chosen absolute authority -- with the greatest skepticism. Don't think of such promises as a gift. Think of them instead as poisoned chalices. Push them aside, however tempting they are, and take the risk of thinking for yourself. So much more Truth, Beauty, Wisdom, and Joy will come to you that way." ~ inspired by Christopher Hitchens

*"I am the way of selfless Service,
I am the Truth of unconditional LOVE,
& I am the Life of humble Caring ...*

*... and this Way, this Truth,
and this Life are NOT
reserved solely for those few
who adhere to the religious
tenants of men, but rather
are ever open to any & all
who display the courage to
enliven the commandments
of my all-Loving Father."*

*~ Jesus Christ
(John 13:34-35 + 14:6)*



*"And I will take one from a thousand
and two from ten thousand,
and they shall Become a single One."
~ Jesus (Gospel of Thomas 23)*