



Making Sense of Life When Life Doesn't Make Sense

— A Four Week Exploration of Psalm 73 —



“Hallelujah”

— Leonard Cohen —



**Now I've heard there
was a secret chord
that David played
and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really
care for music, do you?**



**It goes like this
The fourth, the fifth
The minor fall
The major lift
The baffled king
composing Hallelujah**



**Maybe there's
a God above
But all I ever
learned from love
was how to shoot
at someone who
outdrew you**



**It's not a cry
you can hear at night
It's not somebody
who's seen the light
It's a cold and it's a
broken Hallelujah**



**I did my best
it wasn't much
I couldn't feel
so I tried to touch
I've told the truth
I didn't come
to fool you**



**And even though
it all went wrong
I'll stand before
the Lord of Song
with nothing on my
tongue but Hallelujah**



**Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah**

**“The Beautiful,
Broken Song
of Leonard Cohen”**

— Thomas G Casey —



**How did a song with
so many biblical
references...become
ubiquitous? How did a
lyrical, slow-moving
tune become popular
in an era when aggres-
sive percussion and
insistent drum-beats
power pop songs?**



**Why has the song been
used to create atmo-
sphere and mood in the
soundtracks of many
movies and TV shows?
Why can't people get
enough of it?**



**Precisely because
it embodies a real
and gritty spirituality.
It is not afraid to
embrace the tragedy
of human life.**

— Thomas G Casey —

“The Beautiful, Broken Song
of Leonard Cohen”



“

A REAL & GRITTY
SPIRITUALITY

”



A Broken Hallelujah

— Psalm 73 (Part 1) —

Psalm 73

A Psalm of Asaph.

**1 Truly God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.**



Playground: yanil2309

— ASAPH —

The Tribe of Levi

**Poet & Leader of
David's Musicians
Charged with
Raising Sounds
of Joy**

Prophet / Seer

Psalms 50, 73-83

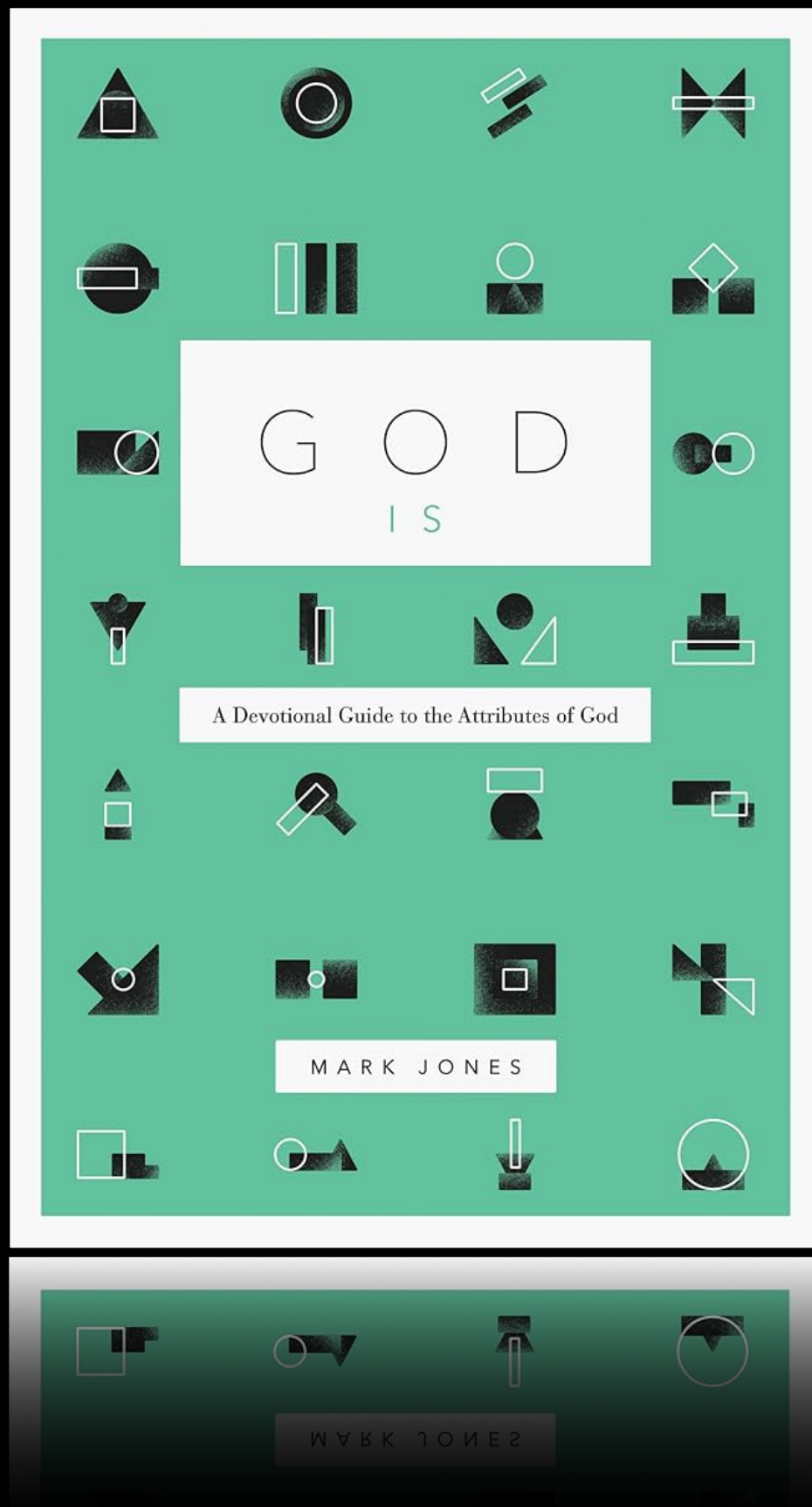
Psalm 73

**1 Truly God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.**

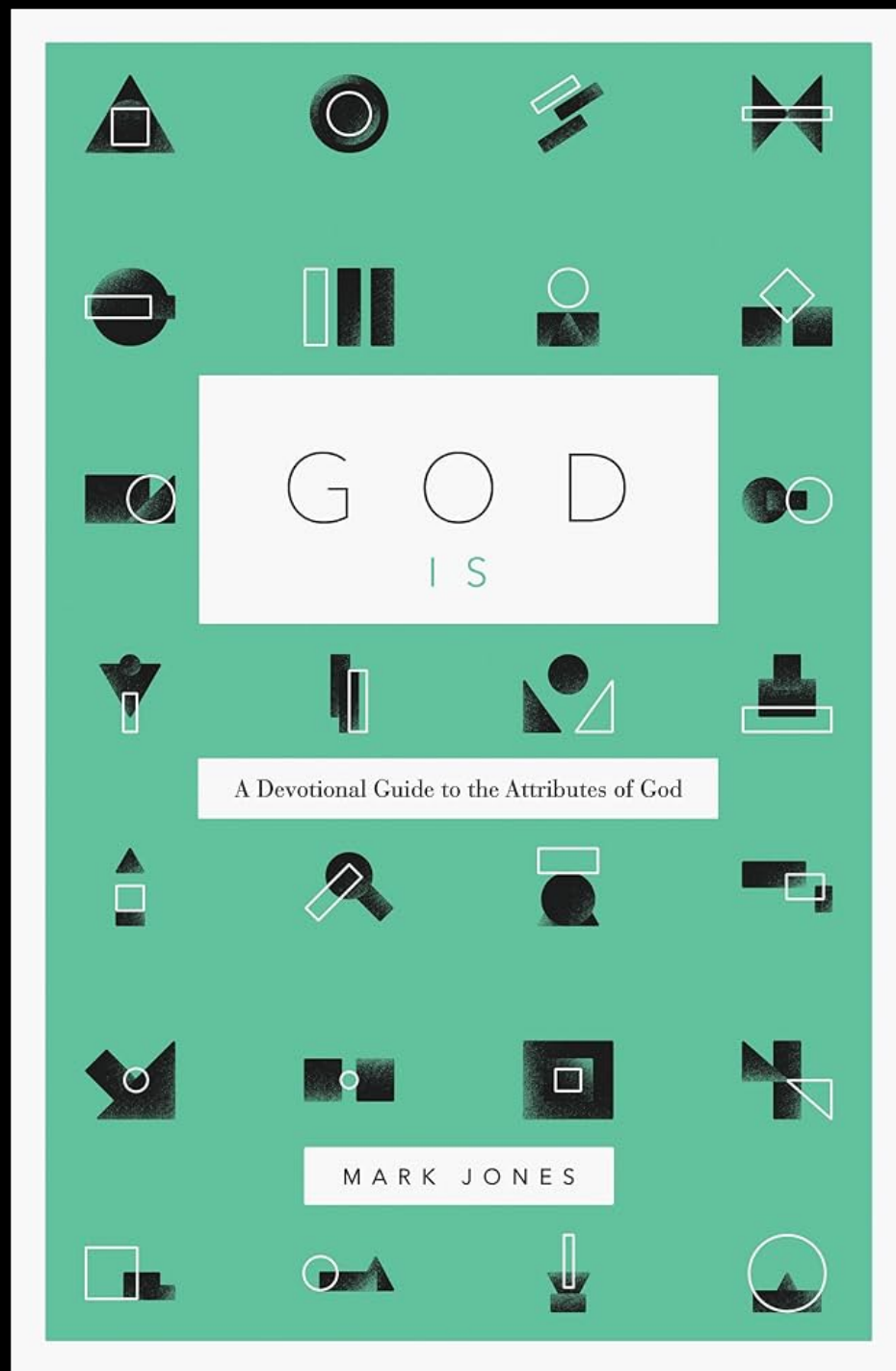


**You are good, and
You do what is good.**

— Psalm 119:86 —



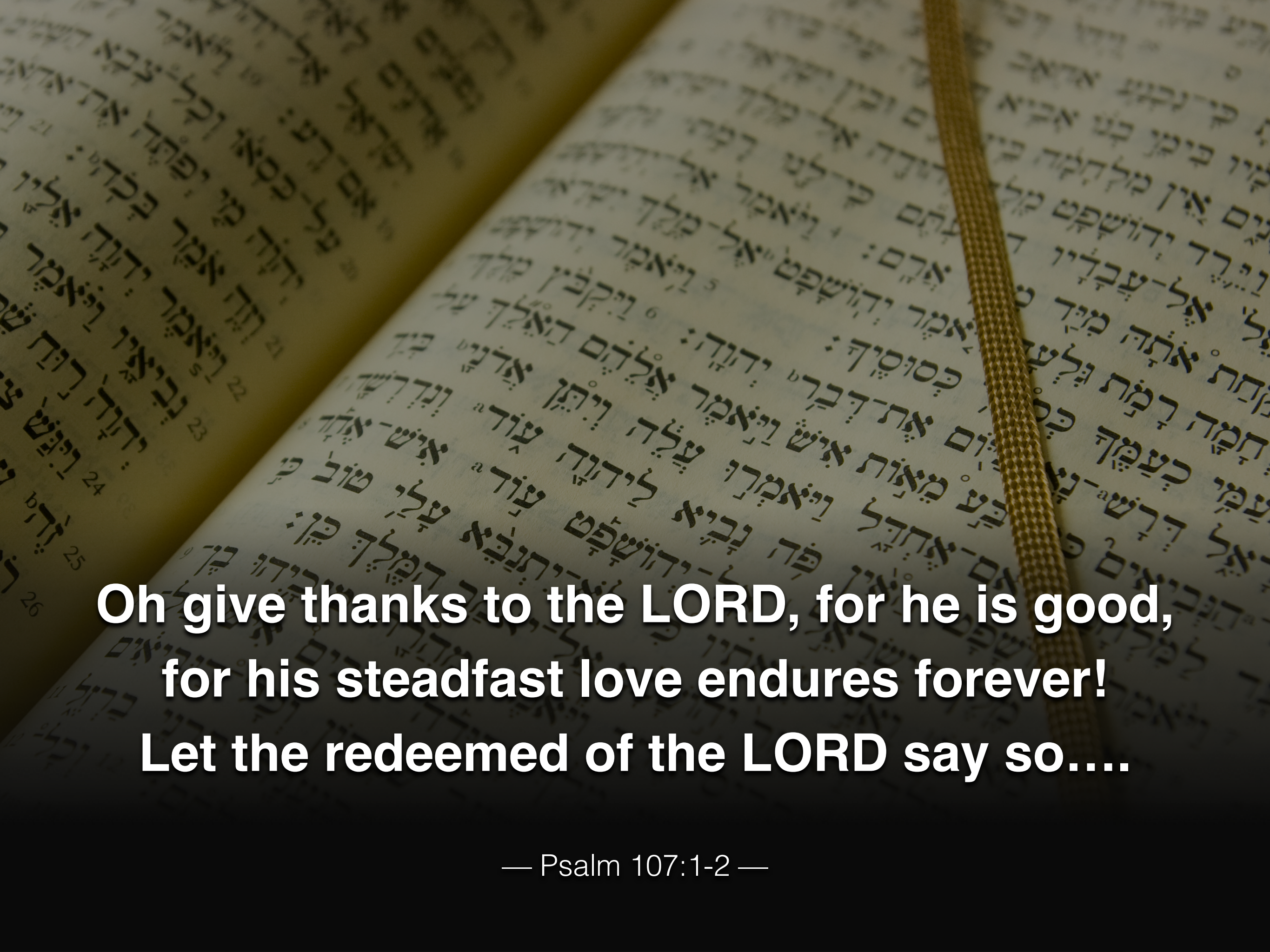
God is good and necessarily so. God's essence does not conform to some external standard of goodness. This essential attribute of God means that his other attributes (eg. power, wisdom) are aspects of his goodness.



His essence is good,
so that he cannot do
anything that is not
good. Perfect good-
ness belongs to God
alone: “And Jesus
said to him, ‘Why do
you call me good?
No one is good
except God alone’”
(Mark 10:18).

**Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!
For the Lord is good....**

— Psalm 100:4-5 —



**Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!
Let the redeemed of the LORD say so....**

— Psalm 107:1-2 —



**O taste and see
that the Lord is good.**

— Psalm 34:8 —


Psalm 73

1 **Truly** God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.

When you utter these words,
you are speaking as truly and
as truthfully as you possible can.



**God is good
all the time.
All the time,
God is good.**

A person wearing a dark suit and a light-colored shirt is holding a white rectangular sign with both hands. The sign contains the text "What would it take to shatter your confidence that God is good all the time?". The person's hands are visible on the left and right sides of the sign, and their torso is visible in the background.

**What would it take
to shatter your
confidence that God
is good all the time?**

Psalm 73

**1 Truly God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.**

Psalm 73

**2 But as for me, my feet had almost
stumbled,
my steps had nearly slipped.**



**my feet had
almost stumbled**



**my steps had
nearly slipped**

**Once standing firm on the ground, “God is good,”
Asaph uses two ways to describe the disorientation
he felt as he began to lose his footing on this truth.**

Psalm 73

**3 For I was envious of the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the
wicked.**

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DIGGING DEEPER IN HEBREW

shalom (שָׁלוֹם)

WHOLENESS SOUNDNESS

WELLBEING HARMONY

PEACE PROSPERITY

**— Flourishing —
“the way it’s supposed to be”**

Psalm 73

**3 For I was envious of the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the
wicked.**

I envy....

the shalom of their trouble-free existence

verses 4-5

the shalom of their unrestrained lifestyle

verses 6-7

the shalom of their arrogant speech

verses 8-9

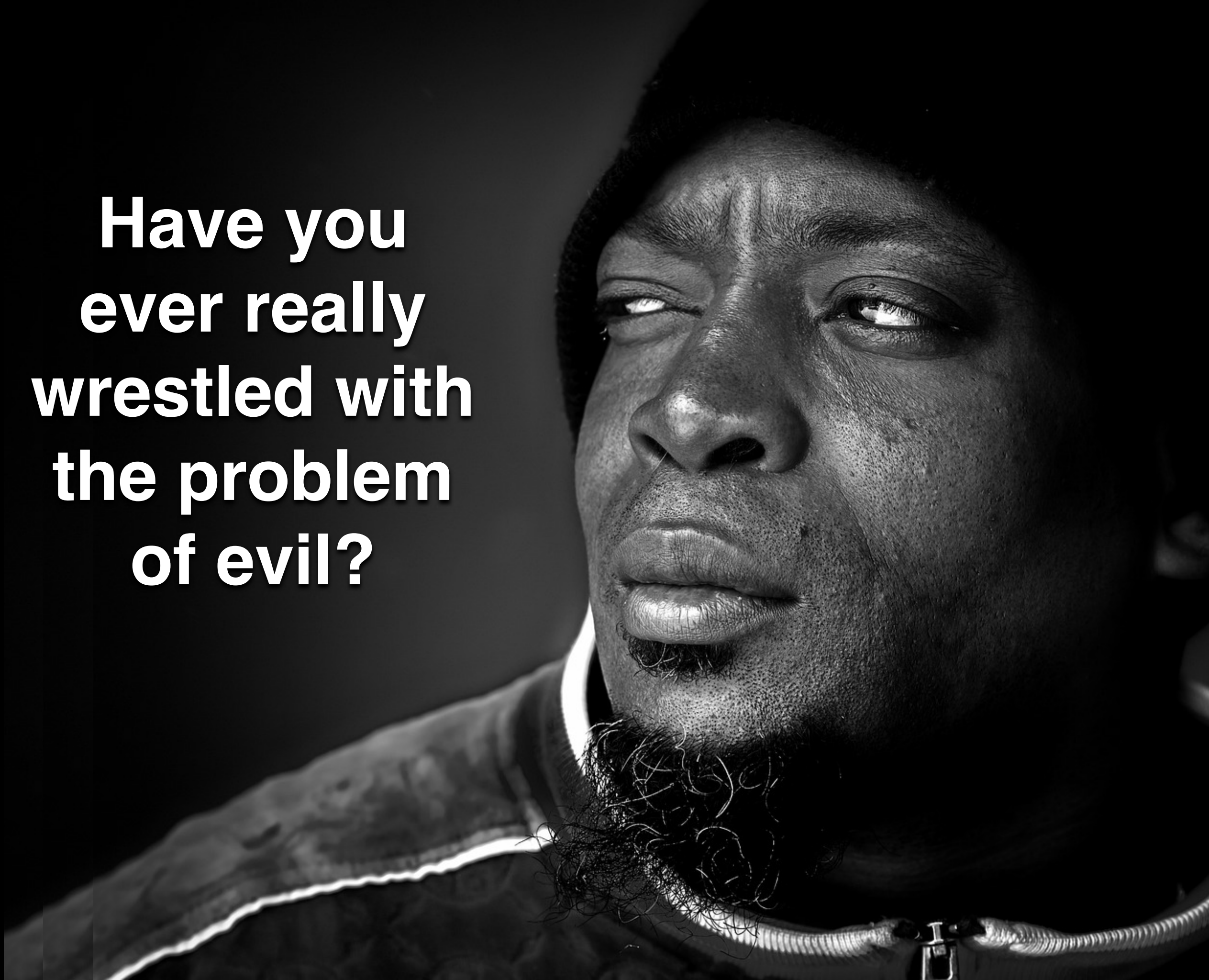
the shalom of their rebellious autonomy

verses 10-11



**If God is good
to Israel, to
those who are
pure in heart,
then why do
wicked people
prosper?**

**Have you
ever really
wrestled with
the problem
of evil?**






**The problem of evil has been called
the “Achilles’ heel” of Christianity.**



Asaph is indeed wrestling with the problem of evil, but it might be more accurate to say he is wrestling with “the problem of good,” —why do good things happen to bad people?



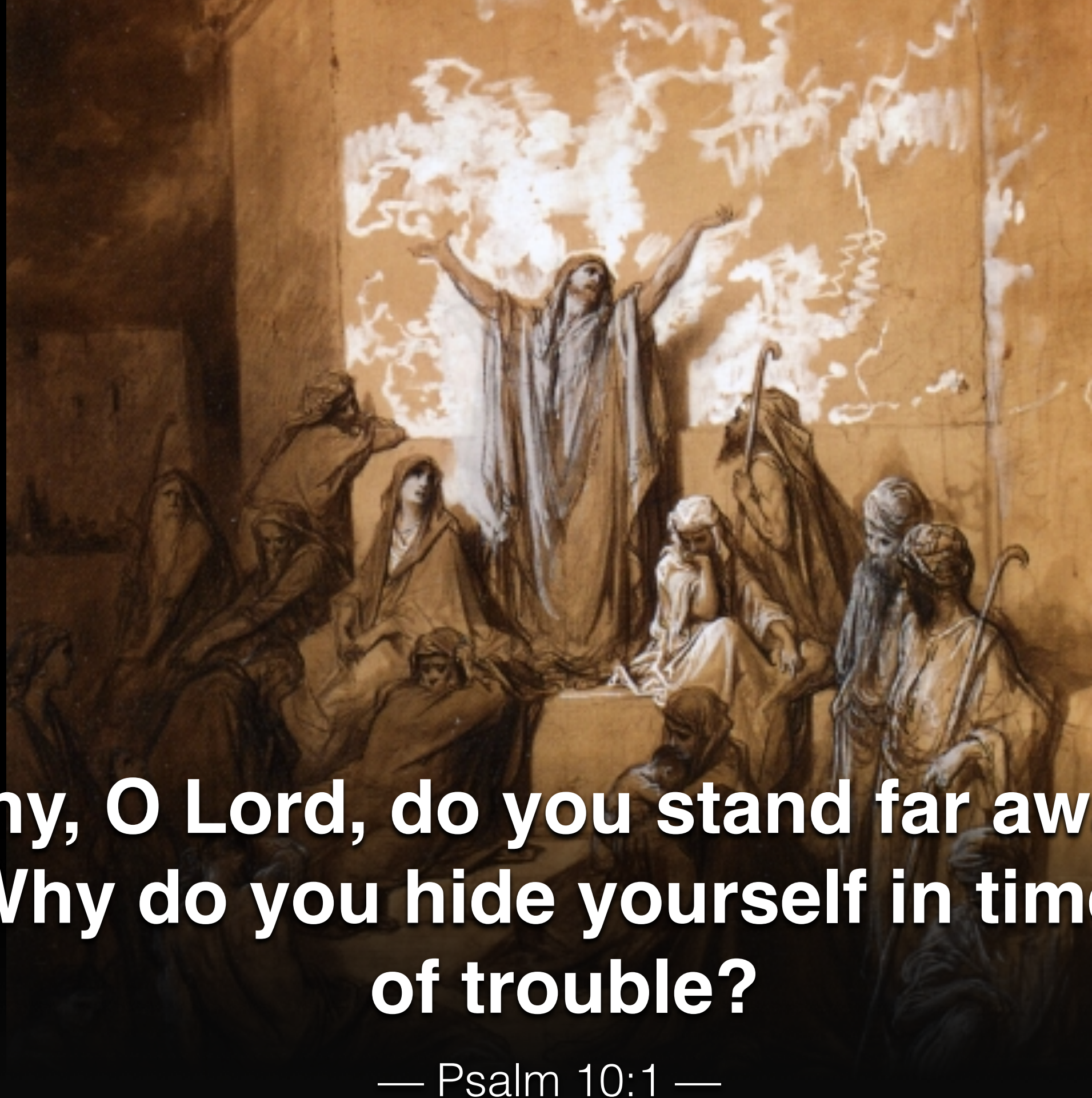
**Let's Embrace The Fact
That We Have Permission
To Voice Our Honest Questions
And Doubts Before God**

**Whoa, are you sure
about that, pastor?
I mean, surely you
don't mean we can
admit our deepest,
darkest doubts
before God.
That doesn't seem
very wise, or...safe?**



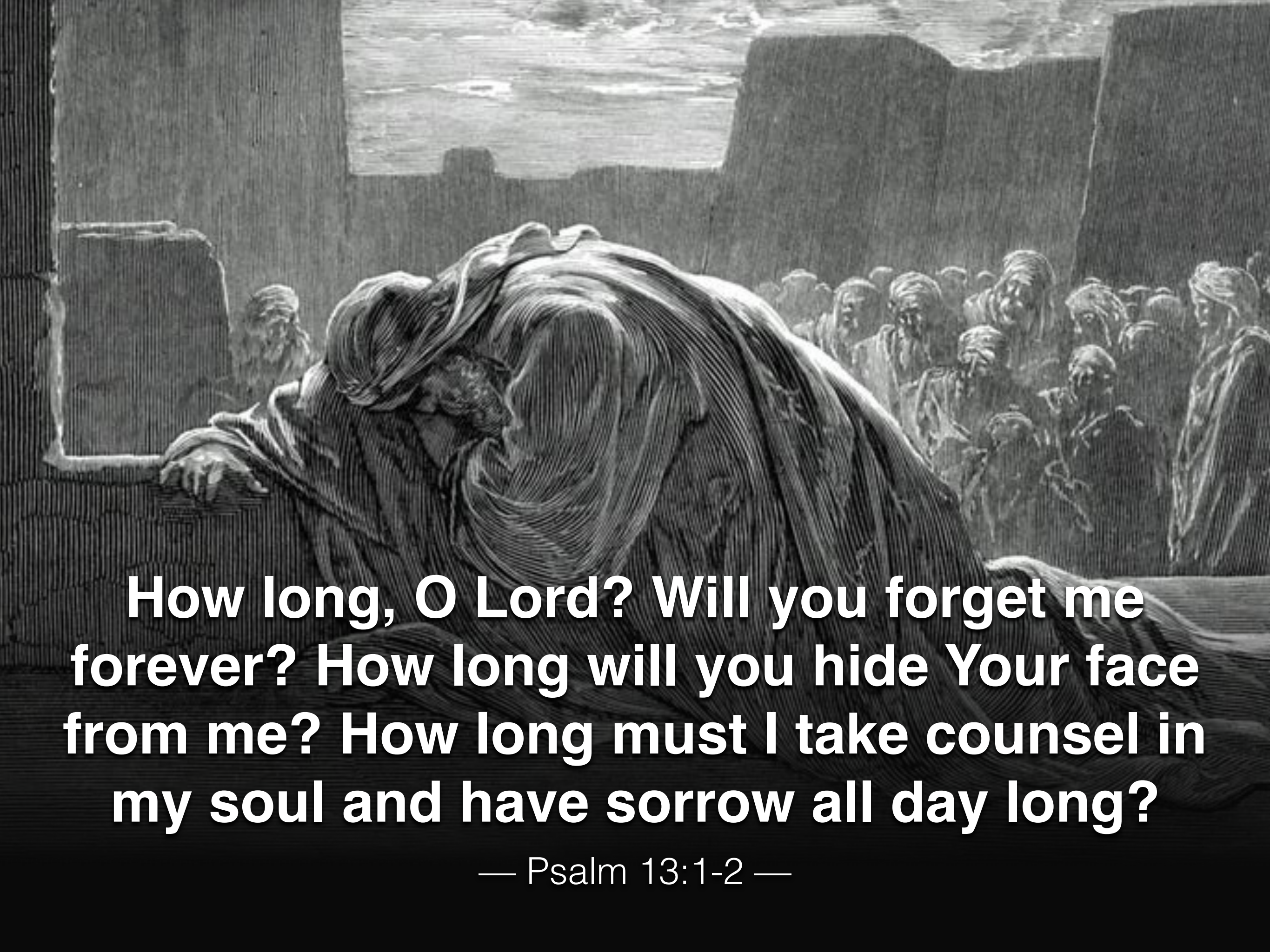
**Did you know that
the Bible actually
encourages us to
ask the hardest
questions about
our faith and God?**





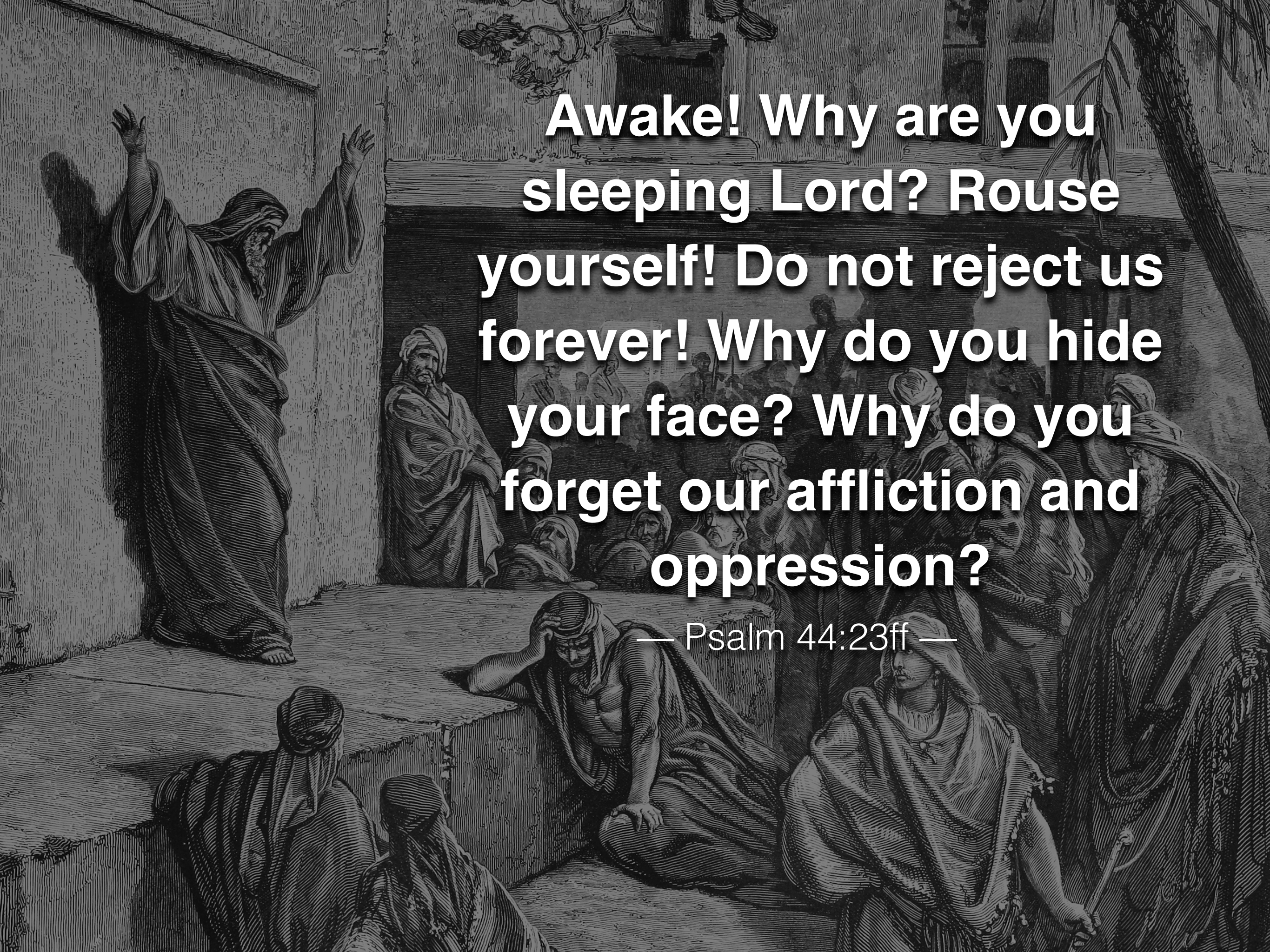
**Why, O Lord, do you stand far away?
Why do you hide yourself in times
of trouble?**

— Psalm 10:1 —



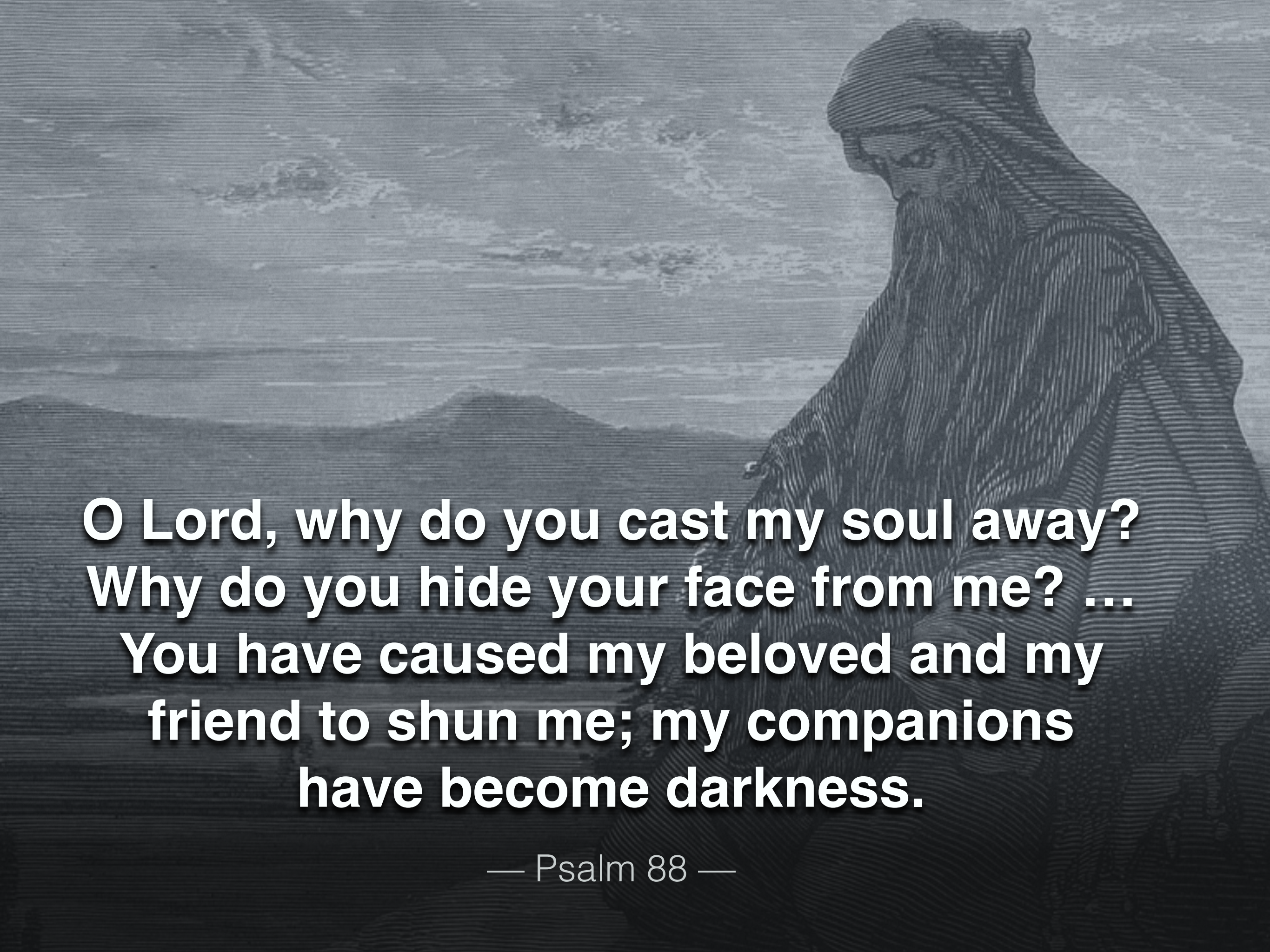
**How long, O Lord? Will you forget me
forever? How long will you hide Your face
from me? How long must I take counsel in
my soul and have sorrow all day long?**

— Psalm 13:1-2 —



**Awake! Why are you
sleeping Lord? Rouse
yourself! Do not reject us
forever! Why do you hide
your face? Why do you
forget our affliction and
oppression?**

— Psalm 44:23ff —



**O Lord, why do you cast my soul away?
Why do you hide your face from me? ...
You have caused my beloved and my
friend to shun me; my companions
have become darkness.**

— Psalm 88 —

FOREWORD BY JONI EARECKSON TADA

DARK
CLOUDS



DEEP
MERCY

DISCOVERING THE GRACE OF
LAMENT

M A R K
V R O E G O P

**Lament is the
language of a
people who believe
in God's sovereignty
but live in a world
of tragedy.**

FOREWORD BY JONI EARECKSON TADA

DARK
CLOUDS

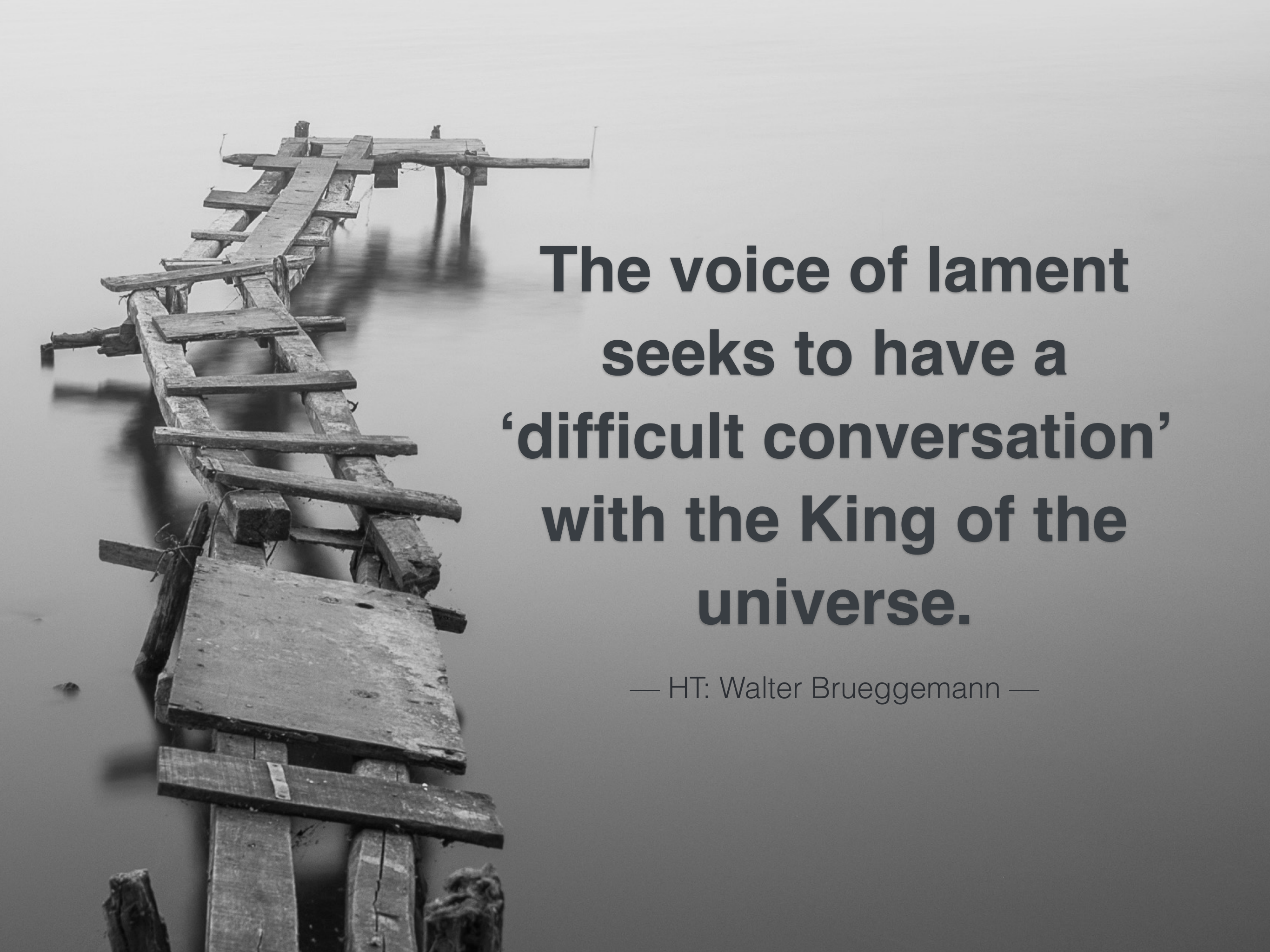


DEEP
MERCY

DISCOVERING THE GRACE OF
LAMENT

M A R K
V R O E G O P

**These psalms
give us permission
— even encourage-
ment — to lay
out our struggles,
even if they are with
God himself.**

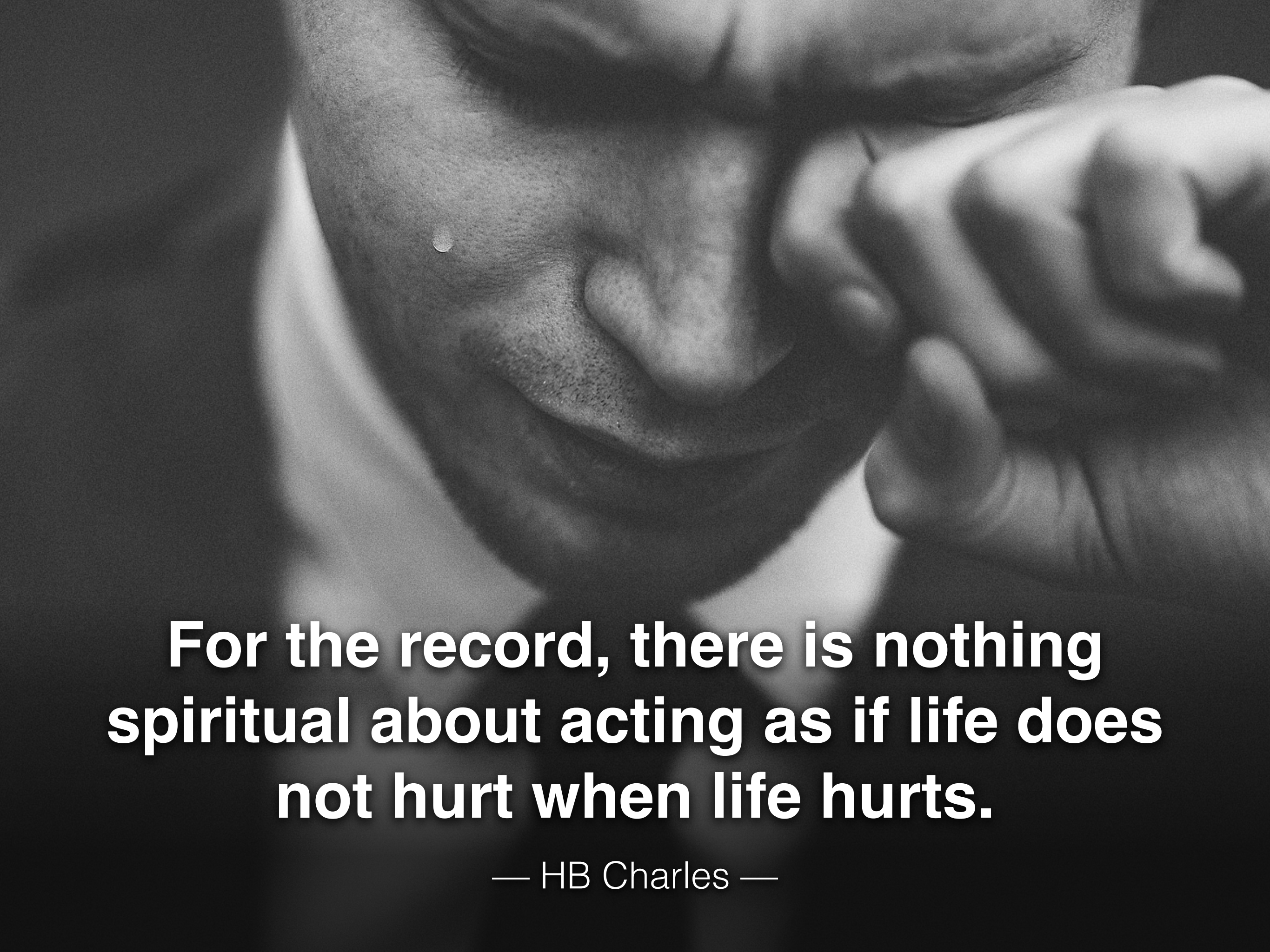


**The voice of lament
seeks to have a
‘difficult conversation’
with the King of the
universe.**

— HT: Walter Brueggemann —

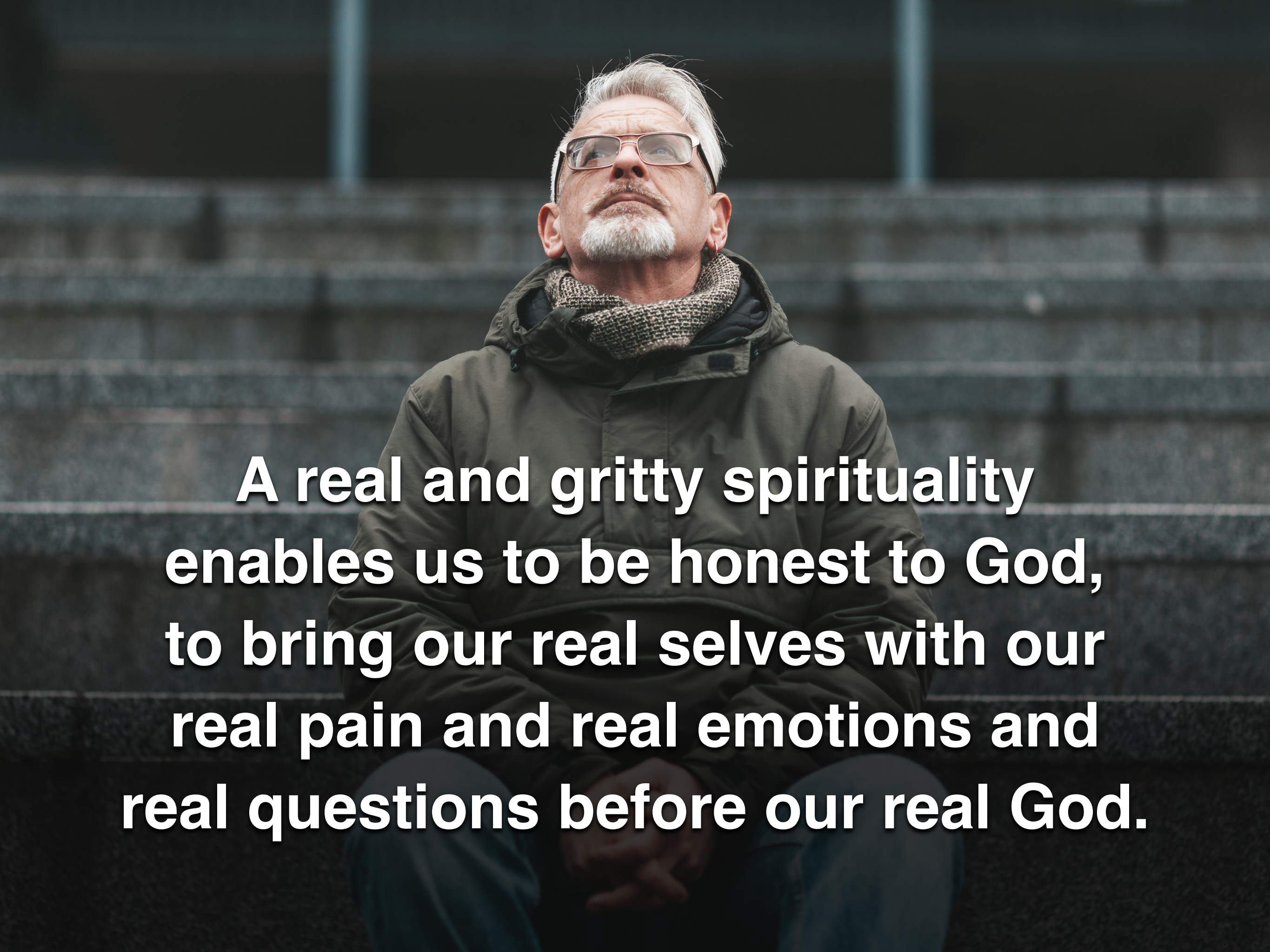


**Why do we
think we can't
pray this way?
Why do you
think we have
to hide our true
thoughts and
fake it before
God?**



**For the record, there is nothing
spiritual about acting as if life does
not hurt when life hurts.**

— HB Charles —



**A real and gritty spirituality
enables us to be honest to God,
to bring our real selves with our
real pain and real emotions and
real questions before our real God.**

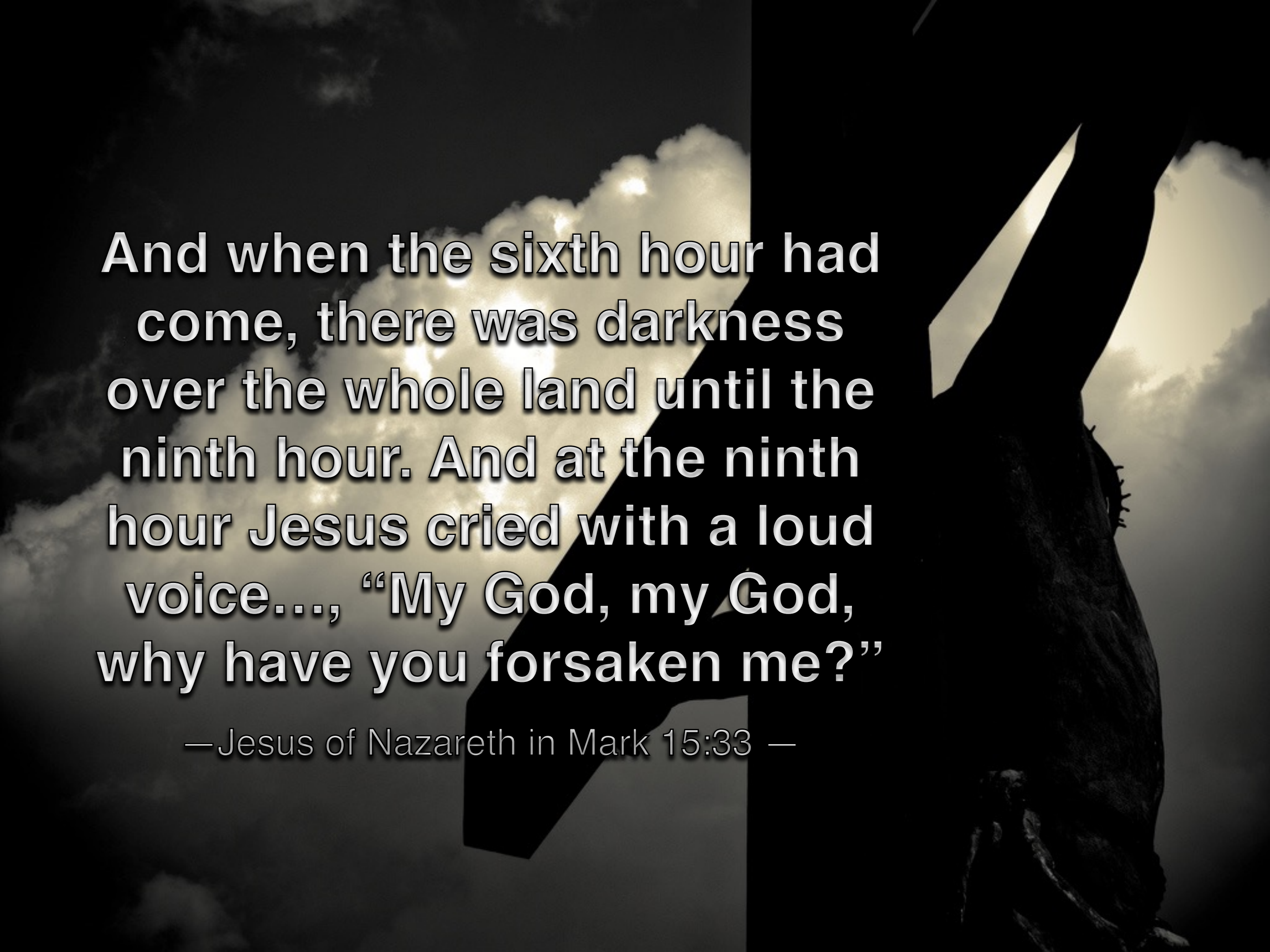
**To be honest,
to pray like
this feels like
I'm doubting
God's goodness.**



An artistic illustration of Anselm of Canterbury, a medieval philosopher and theologian. He is depicted as an elderly man with a long white beard and hair, wearing a red robe with ornate gold embroidery. He is seated and intently reading a large, open book. The setting is a dimly lit room with a large, ornate column to his right. In the background, there are stained glass windows and a vase of red flowers on a table. The overall mood is contemplative and scholarly.


“...faith seeking understanding...”

— Anselm of Canterbury —



And when the sixth hour had
come, there was darkness
over the whole land until the
ninth hour. And at the ninth
hour Jesus cried with a loud
voice...., “My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?”

—Jesus of Nazareth in Mark 15:33 —



**Let's Embrace The Fact
That We Have Permission
To Voice Our Honest Questions
And Doubts Before God**

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's hands holding an open book. The person is wearing glasses and a dark shirt. The background is dark and out of focus. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**Let's Let the Scriptures
Interpret Life For Us**

**We are natural
born interpreters,
but we don't always
get it right.**



Our thinking conditions our emotions, our sense of identity, our view of others, and our willingness to receive counsel from others. That is why we need a framework for generating valid interpretations that help us respond to life appropriately. Only the words of the Creator can give us that framework.

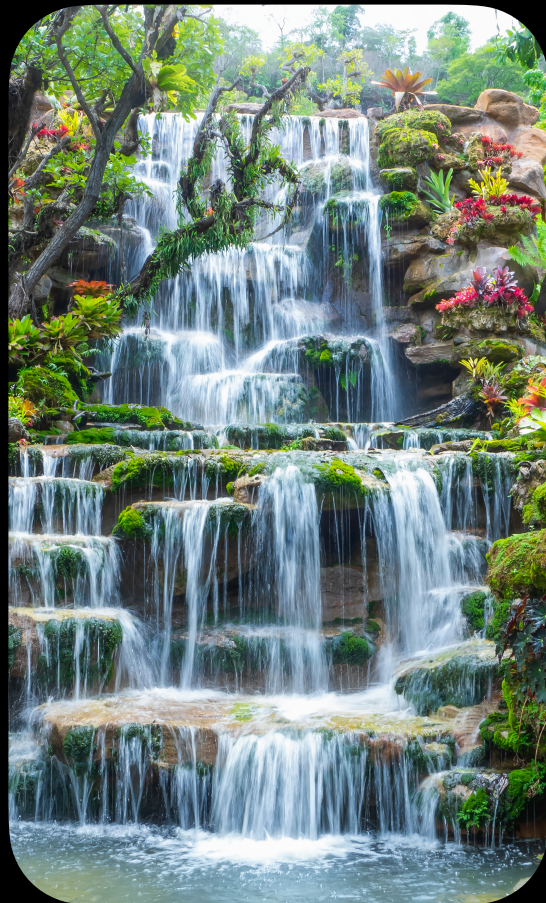
— Paul David Tripp —

Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands



— The Four Part Story of the World —

Part 1



Creation

Part 2



Rebellion

Part 3

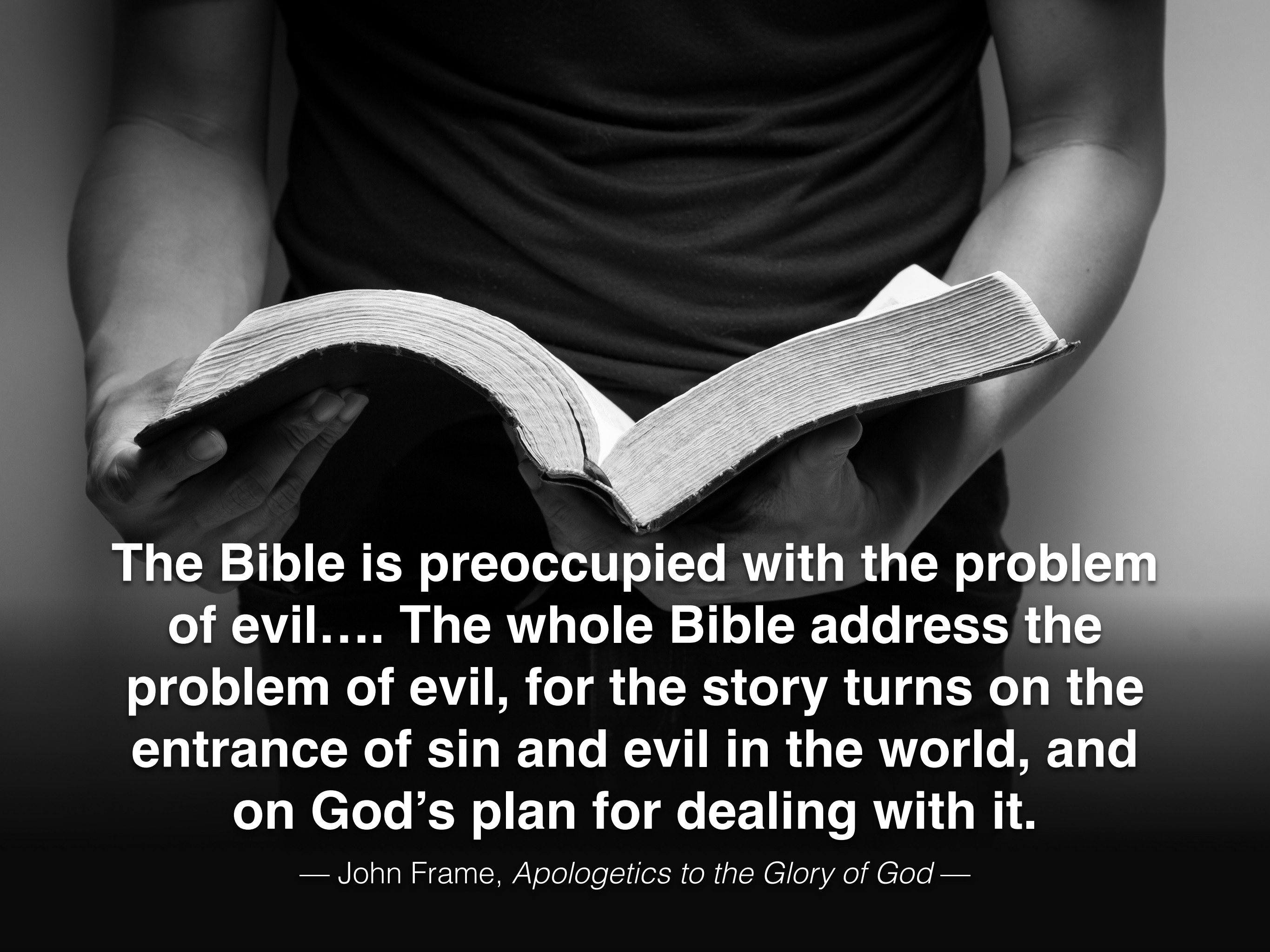


Redemption

Part 4



Restoration



The Bible is preoccupied with the problem of evil.... The whole Bible address the problem of evil, for the story turns on the entrance of sin and evil in the world, and on God's plan for dealing with it.

— John Frame, *Apologetics to the Glory of God* —



**When We See The Prosperity of
the Wicked, Let's Remember
Everything Is Not As It Appears**

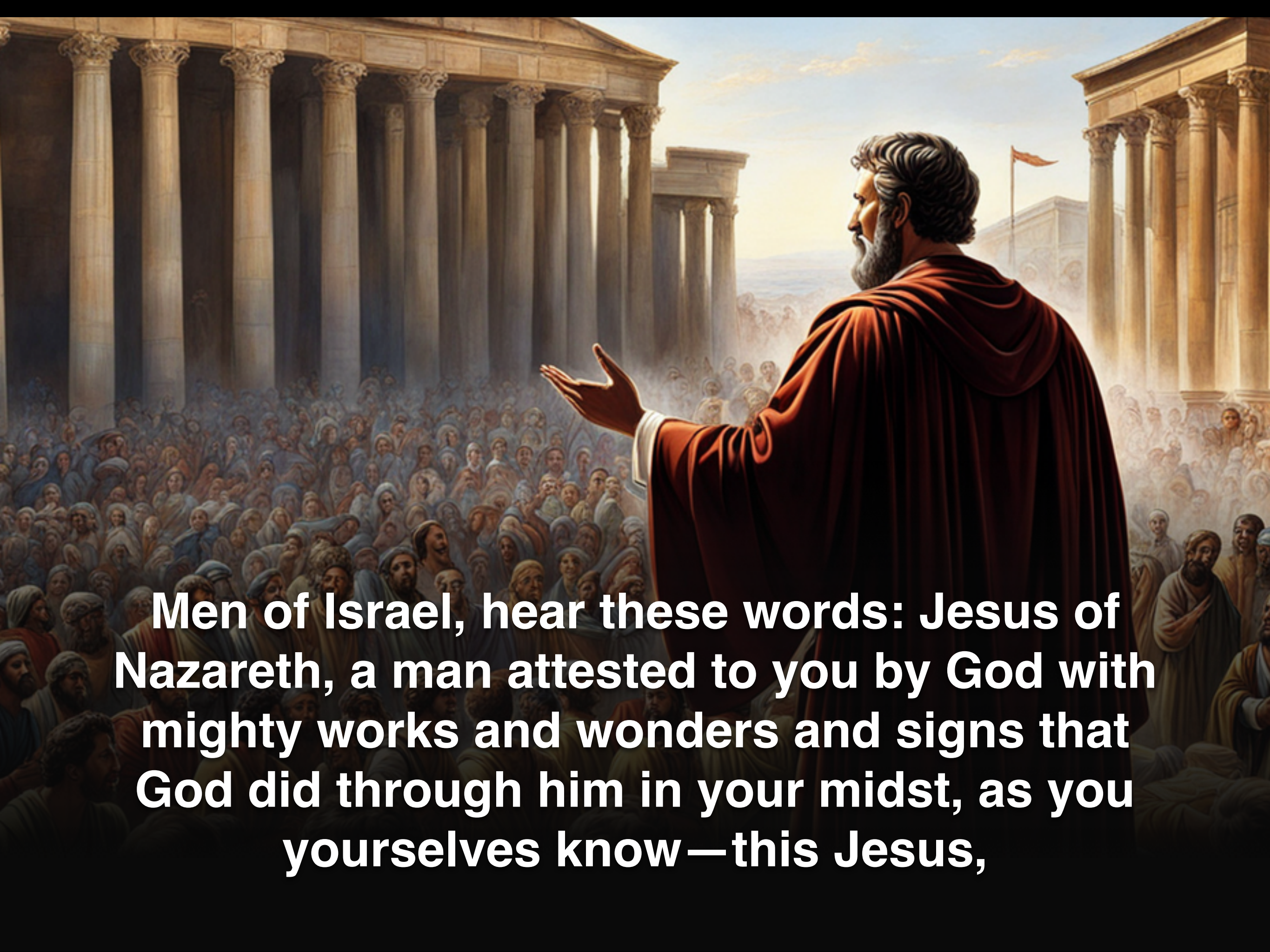
**When young the
Christians told me
how we pinned Jesus
like a lovely butterfly
against the wood,
and I wept beside
paintings of Calvary
at velvet wound and
delicate twisted feet.**

— Leonard Cohen —
“For Wilf and His House”

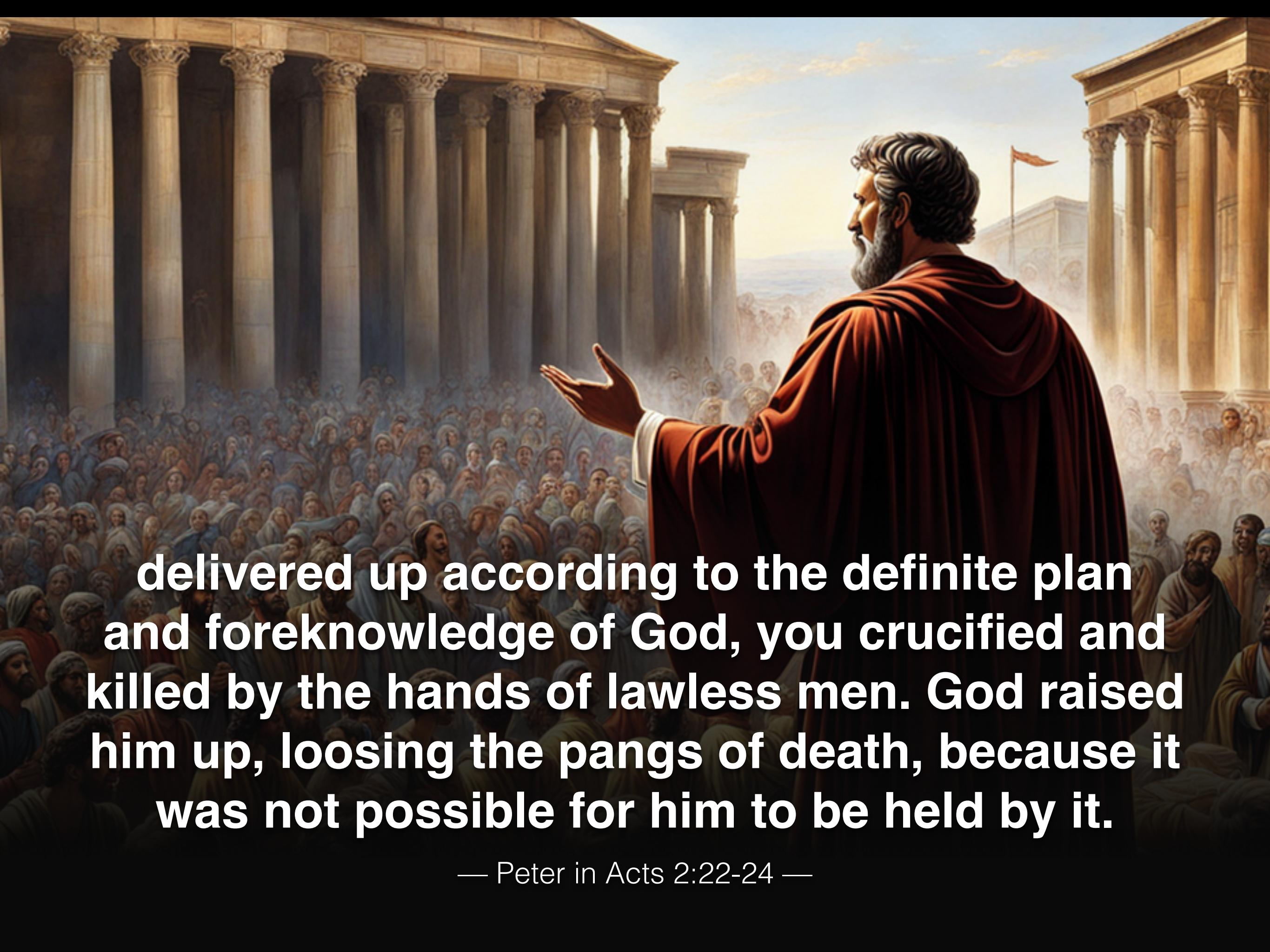








Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus,



**delivered up according to the definite plan
and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and
killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised
him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it
was not possible for him to be held by it.**

— Peter in Acts 2:22-24 —



**Asaph is right
about one thing,
God is good
to all, and does
good to all,
regardless of
their goodness.**

You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

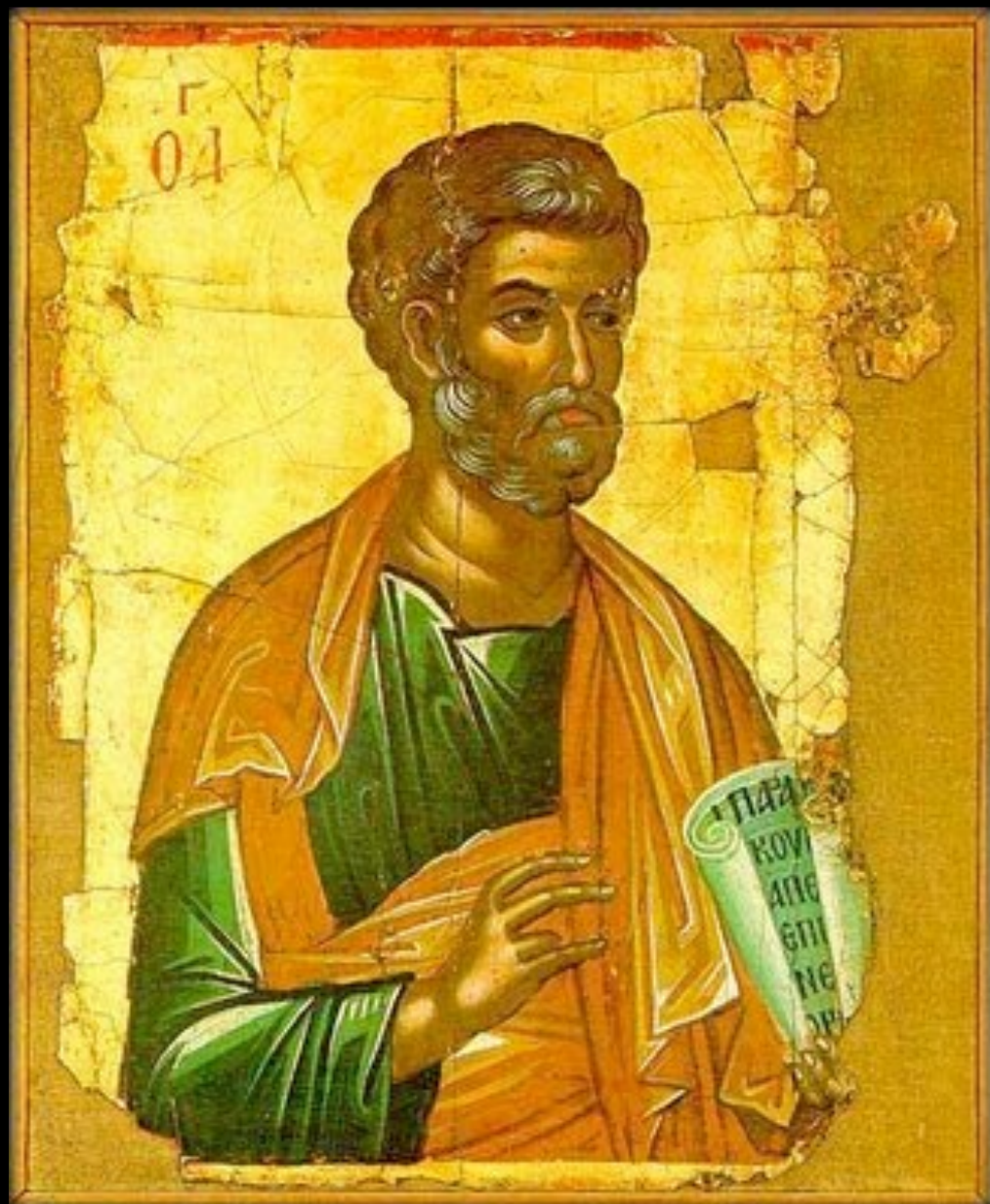
— Jesus of Nazareth in The Gospel of Matthew 5:43-44 —



**Do you presume on
the riches of his kind-
ness and forbearance
and patience, not
knowing that God's
kindness is meant
to lead you to
repentance?**



The Apostle Paul
— Romans 1:4 —



The Apostle Peter
— 2 Peter 3:9 —

**The Lord is not slow
to fulfill his promise as
some count slowness,
but is patient toward
you, not wishing that
any should perish, but
that all should reach
repentance. But the
Day of the Lord will
come....**

A blurred night city street with bokeh lights. The background is dark, with numerous out-of-focus lights in warm yellow and orange tones, and a few cooler blue and green lights. The lights appear to be reflections on a wet surface or distant city lights. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

**A broken Hallelujah
is still a Hallelujah.**

— Scott Sauls —