

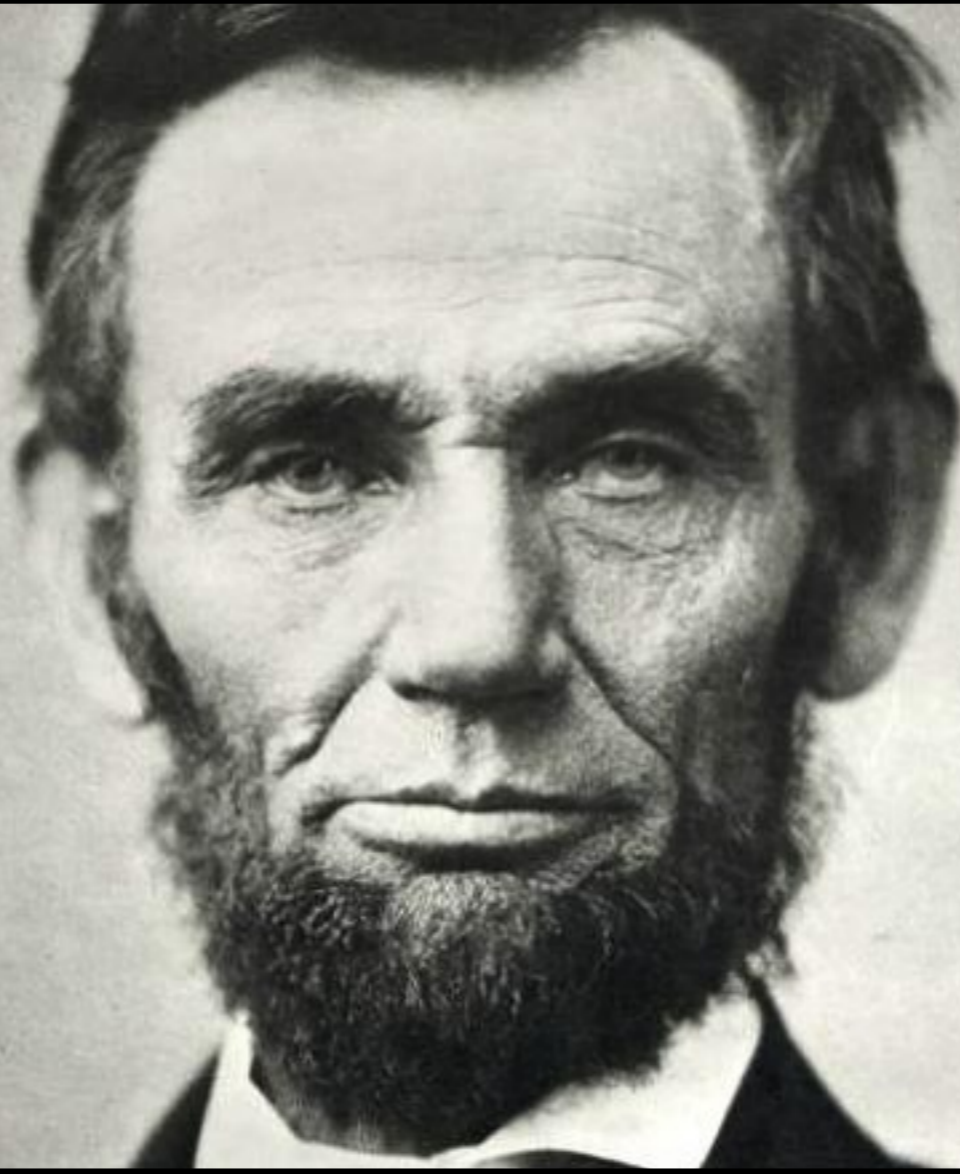
“We Were Eyewitnesses”

— Acts 2:22-36 —



**"People will
believe
anything they
read on
the internet."**

- Abraham Lincoln



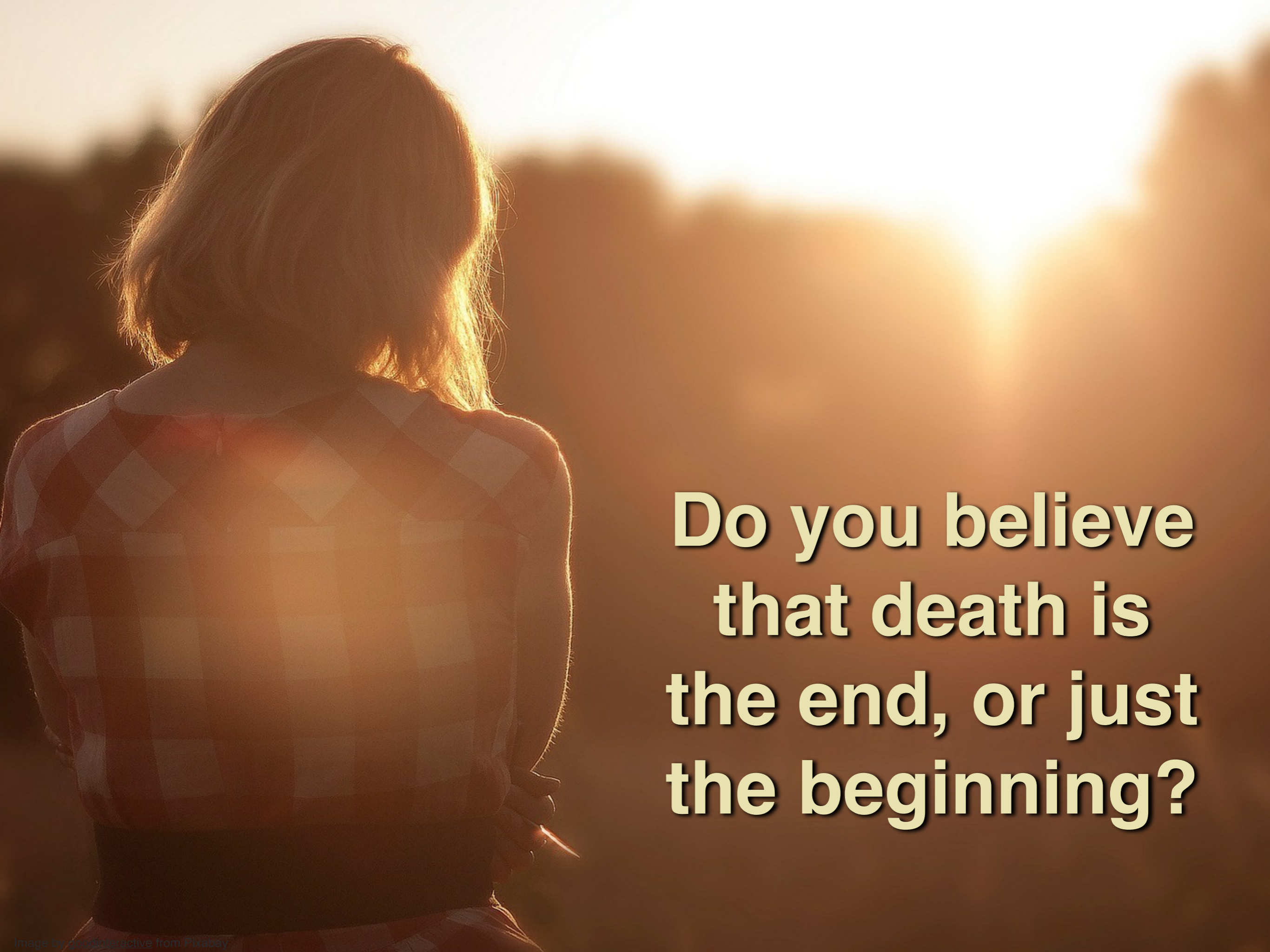
**“That piece of paper will hold
still and let you write any-
thing you want on it—
lies, truth, it doesn’t
matter to the paper.”**

— My Grandpa





WHAT do you believe about the most important questions of life, and WHY do you believe those things?

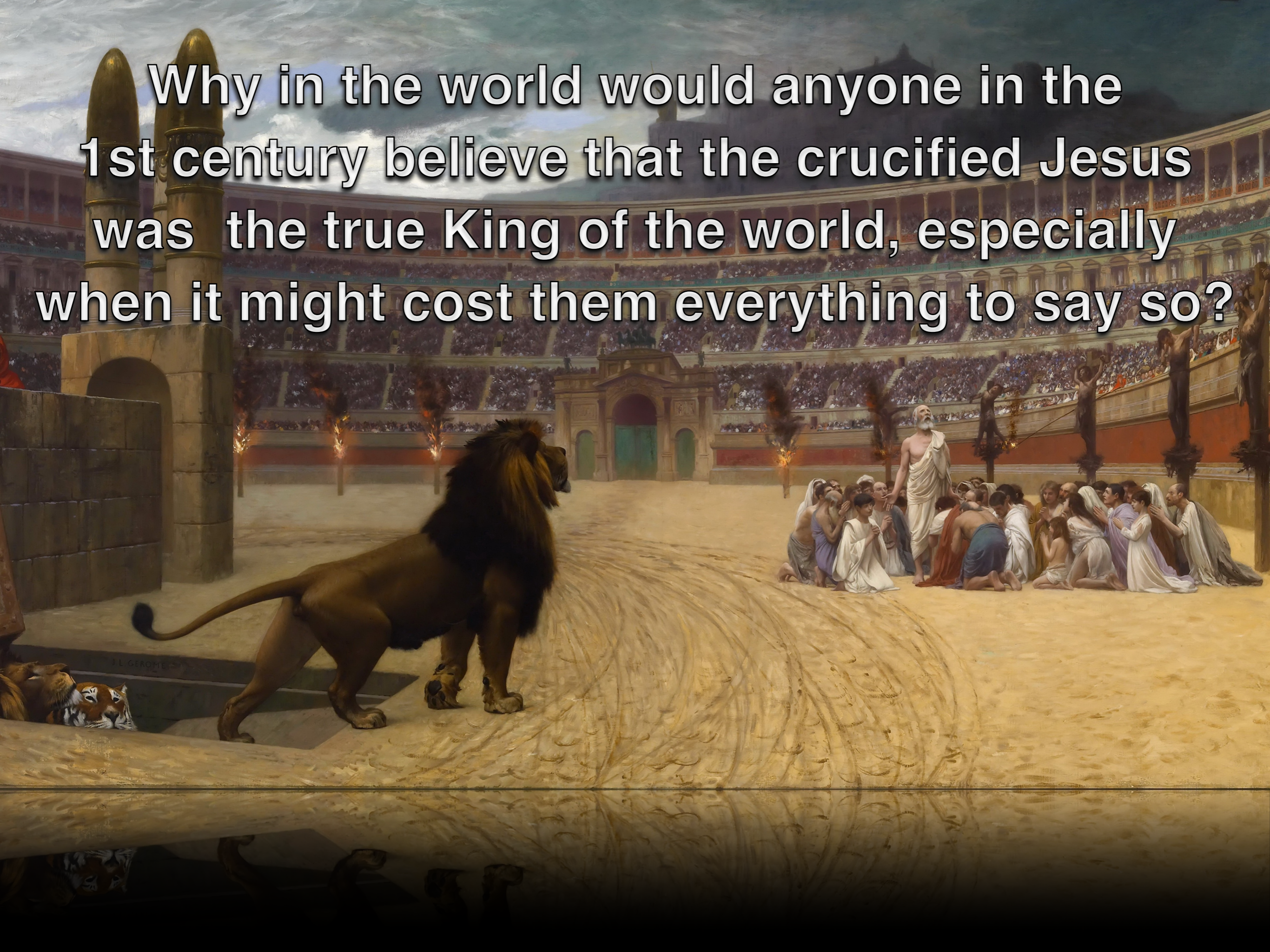


**Do you believe
that death is
the end, or just
the beginning?**

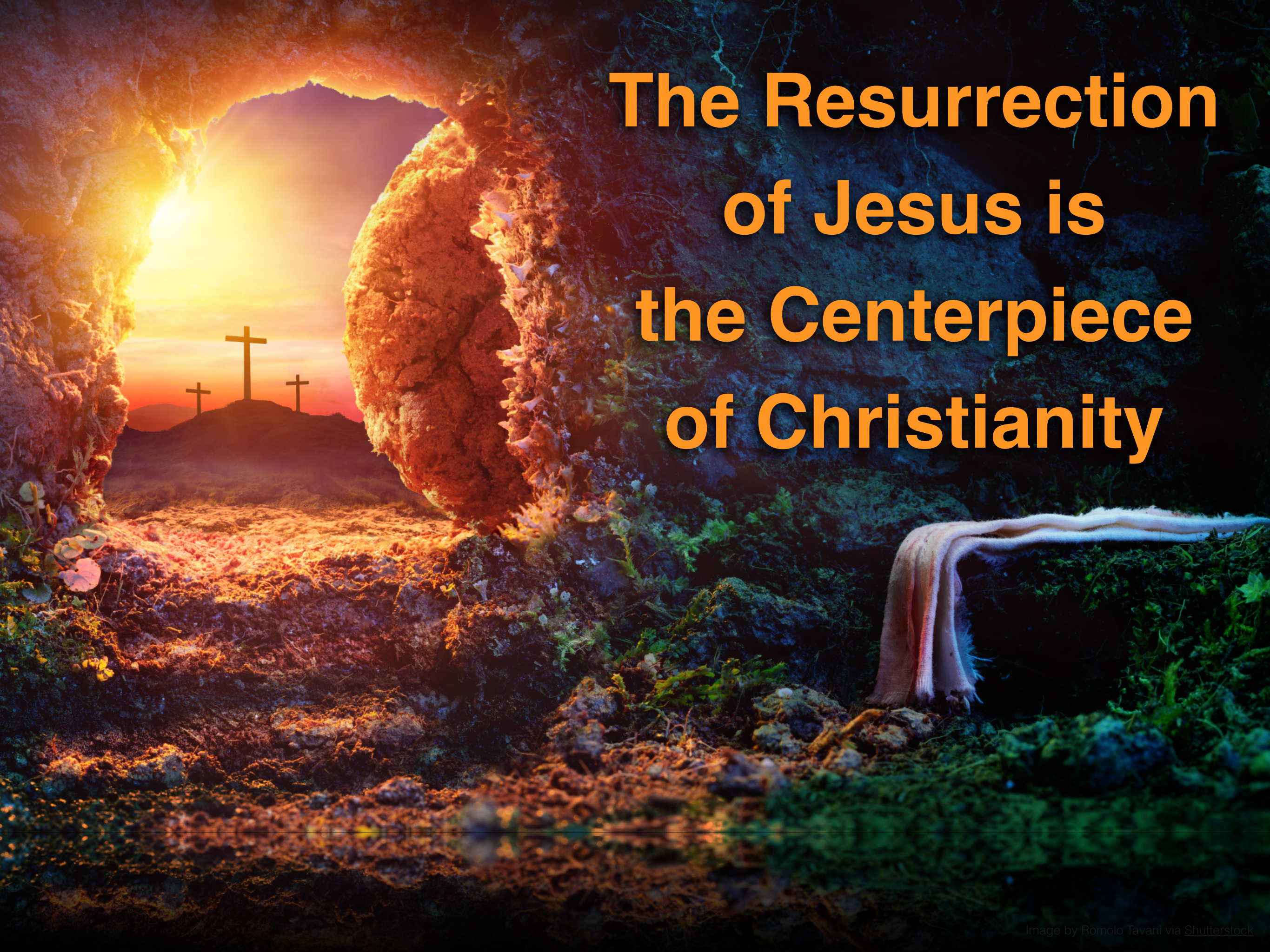
**WHY are
you a
Christian?**



Why in the world would anyone in the 1st century believe that the crucified Jesus was the true King of the world, especially when it might cost them everything to say so?







**The Resurrection
of Jesus is
the Centerpiece
of Christianity**

“We Were Eyewitnesses”

— Acts 2:22-36 —



**22 “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—²³ this Jesus,
delivered up according to the definite
plan and foreknowledge of God,**

you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

Acts 2:22-41

**26 therefore my heart was glad,
and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.**

**27 For you will not abandon my
soul to Hades, or let your Holy
One see corruption.**

**28 You have made known to me
the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness
with your presence.'**

[Referring to Psalm 16:8-11]

29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne,

31 he foresaw and spoke about **the resurrection of the Christ**, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 **This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.**

33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

““The Lord said to my Lord,

‘Sit at my right hand,

35 until I make your enemies

your footstool.””

[Referring to Psalm 110:1]

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, **“Brothers, what shall we do?”**

38 And Peter said to them, **“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will**

Acts 2:22-41

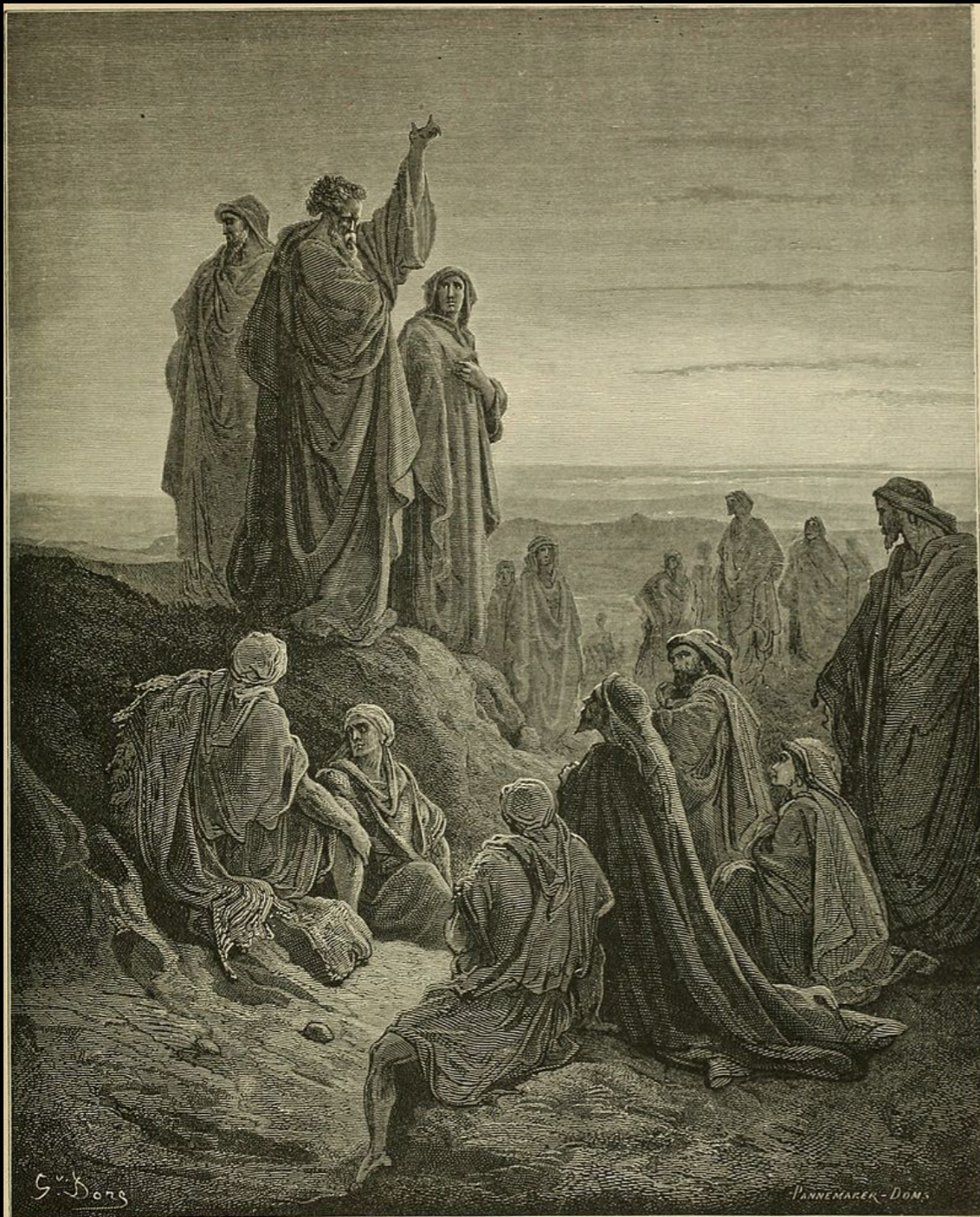
receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

...

41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

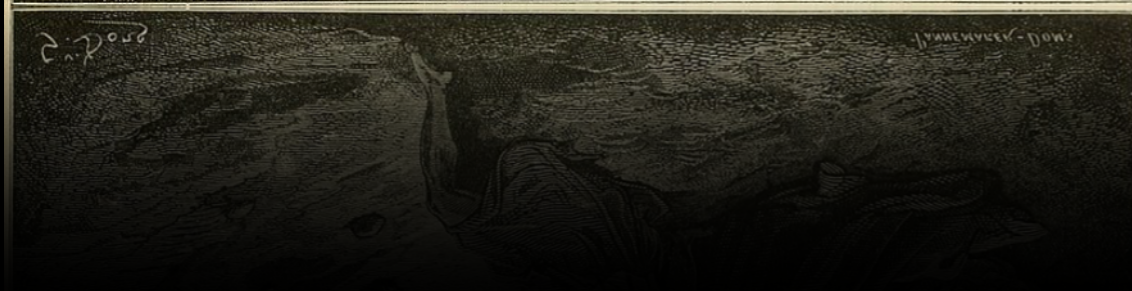


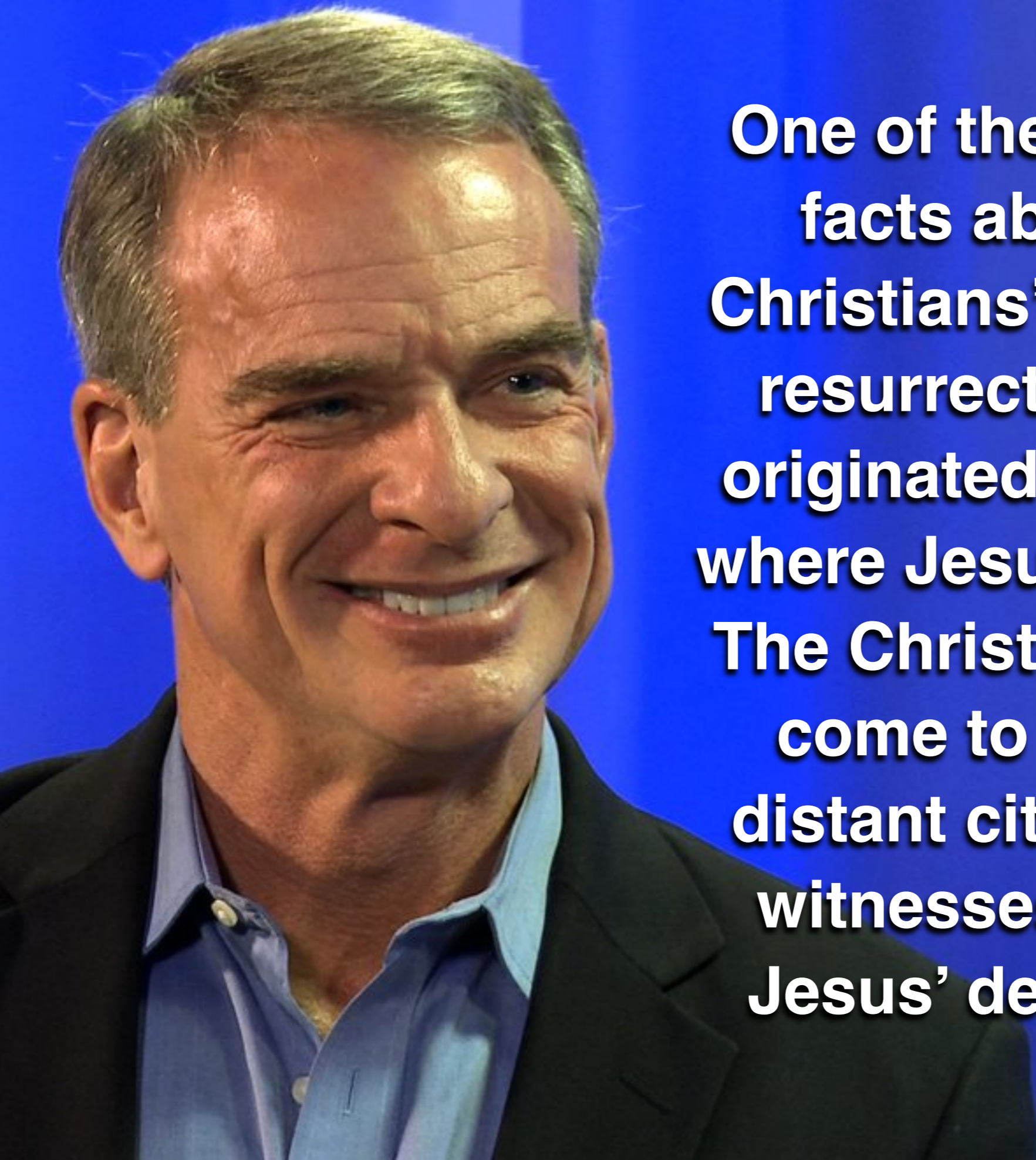
Peter's Preaching about the Resurrected Jesus Took Place in the Very City that Crucified Him



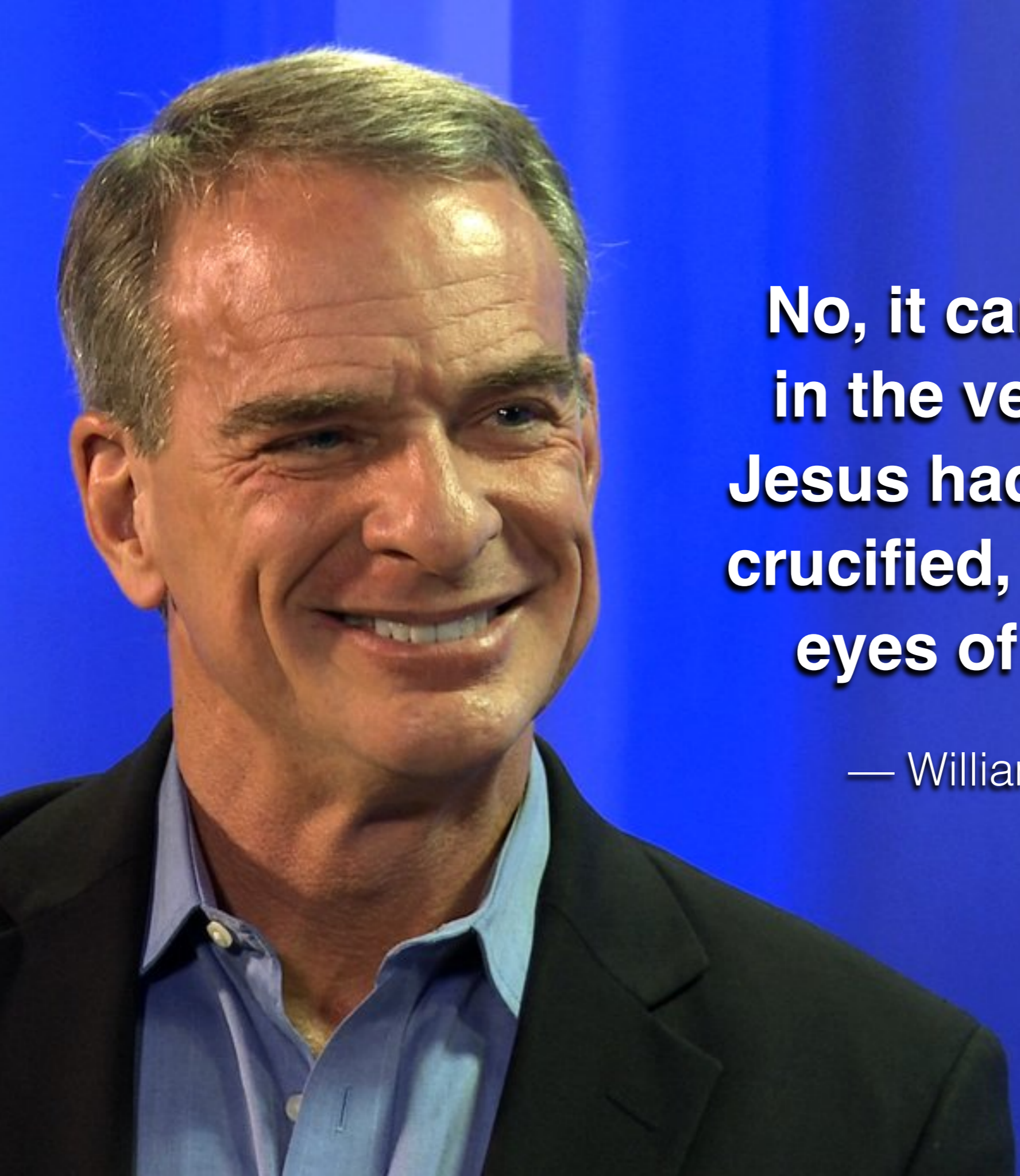
**Men of Israel...,
you killed the
Author of Life,
whom God raised
from the dead.
To this we are
witnesses.**

The Apostle Peter
— Acts 3:12 & 15 —





One of the most amazing facts about the early Christians' belief in Jesus' resurrection was that it originated in the very city where Jesus was crucified. The Christian faith did not come to exist in some distant city, far from eyewitnesses who knew of Jesus' death and burial.



**No, it came into being
in the very city where
Jesus had been publicly
crucified, under the very
eyes of its enemies.**

— William Lane Craig —

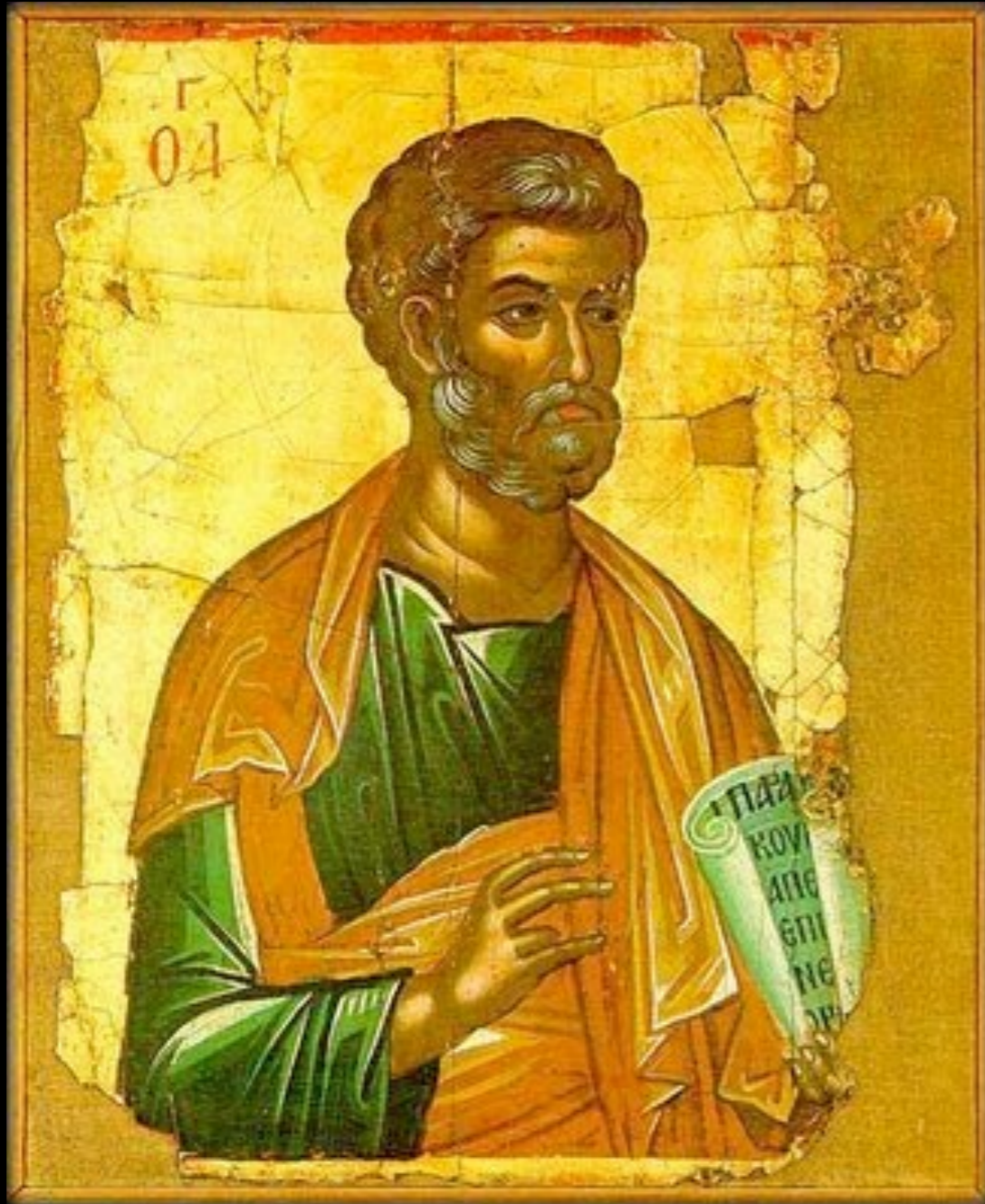
Who Were These Early Eyewitnesses Testifying to the Resurrection of Jesus?



1

**The Resurrection
Changed Peter,
the Disciple who
Denied Jesus**

Peter the Disciple of Jesus



- One of the Twelve Disciples & one of Jesus' closest friends
- Pledged his loyalty to Jesus & promised to die for him if needed
- Fled for his life when Jesus was arrested
- Denied ever knowing Jesus

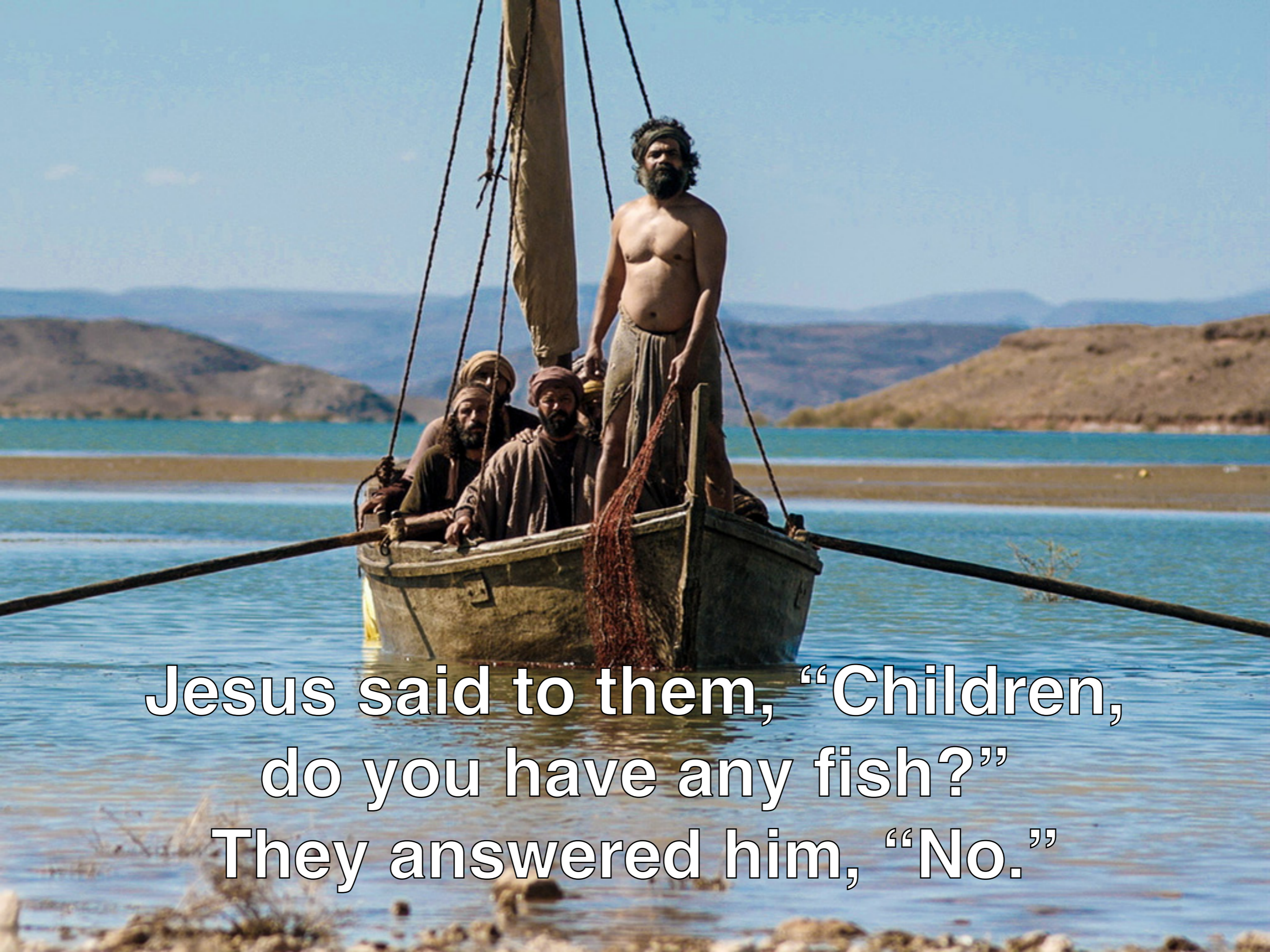


**What happened
that changed
Peter from a
frighted denier
into a fearless
proclaimer of
Jesus**

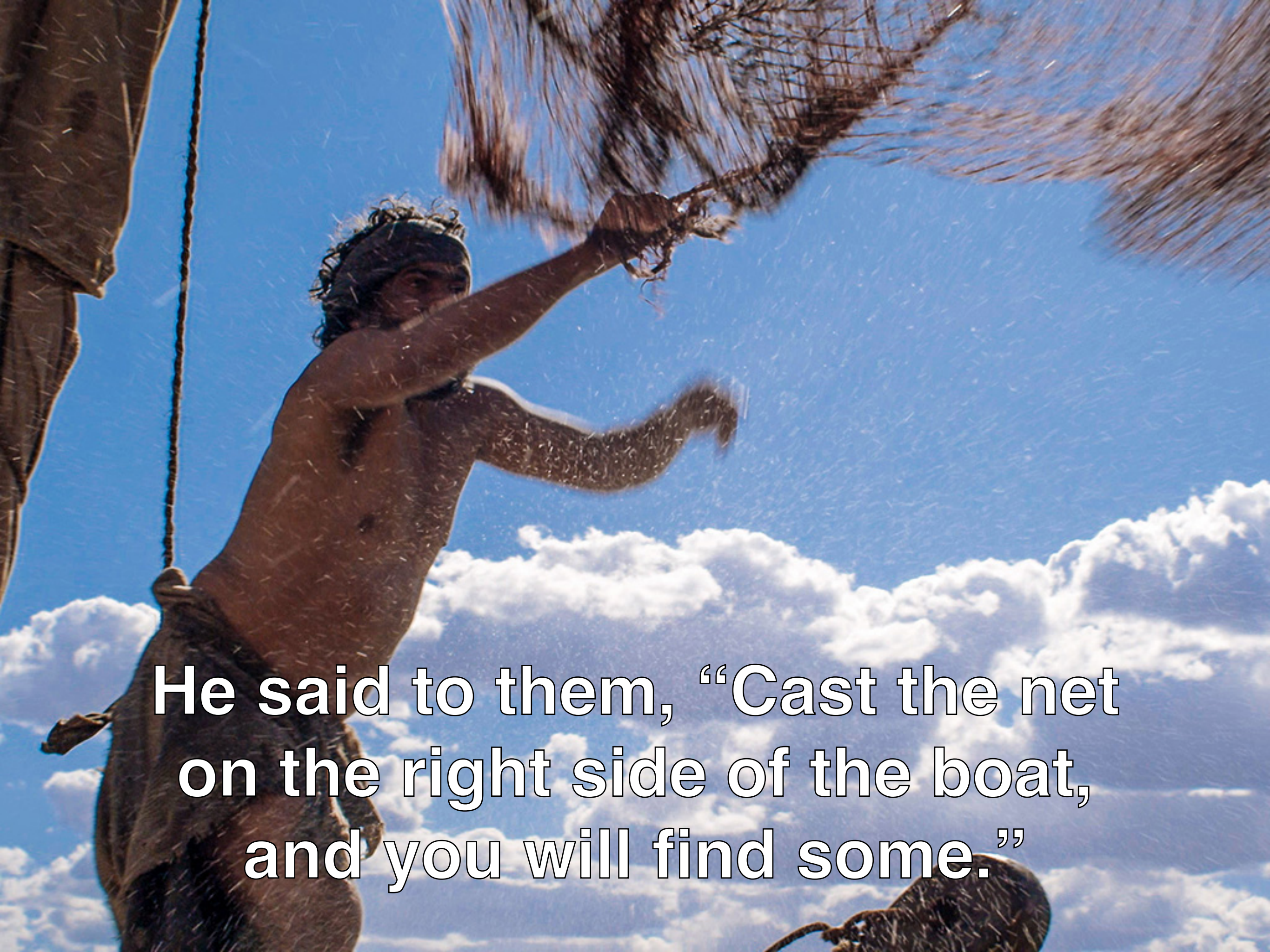


**“Christ died for our sins...,
was buried... [and] was raised
on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures, and that he
appeared to Cephas...”**

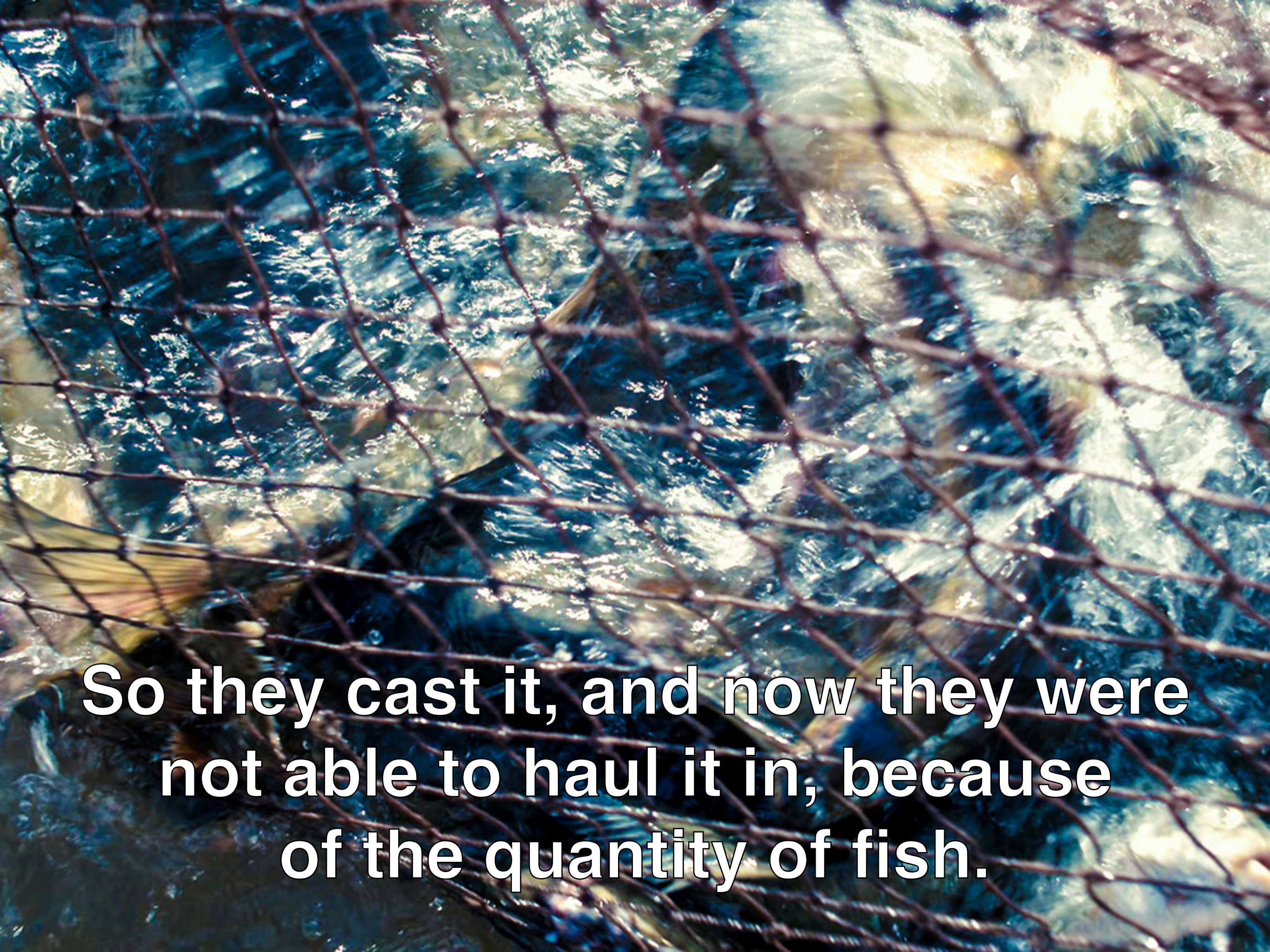
— 1 Corinthians 15 —



Jesus said to them, “Children,
do you have any fish?”
They answered him, “No.”

A low-angle shot of a man on a boat, shirtless and wearing a headband, casting a large net into the sea. The net is suspended in the air, creating a dynamic, blurred effect. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The man's expression is focused as he looks towards the net.

**He said to them, “Cast the net
on the right side of the boat,
and you will find some.”**

A top-down view of a large, dark brown fishing net filled with numerous fish. The fish are packed closely together, creating a dense, shimmering mass of blue and silver scales. The net's grid pattern is clearly visible, and the water's surface is reflected in the fish's scales.

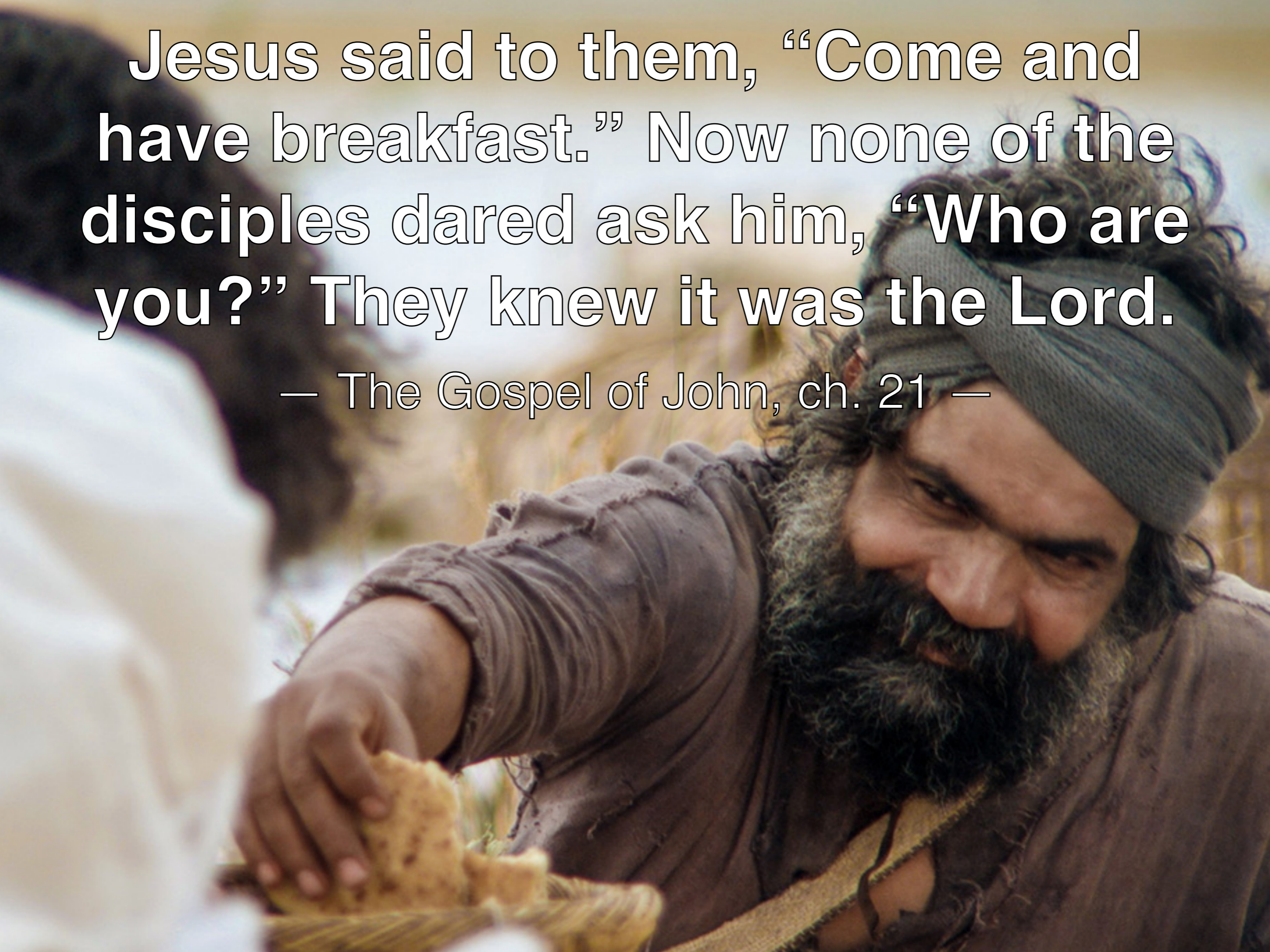
So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish.

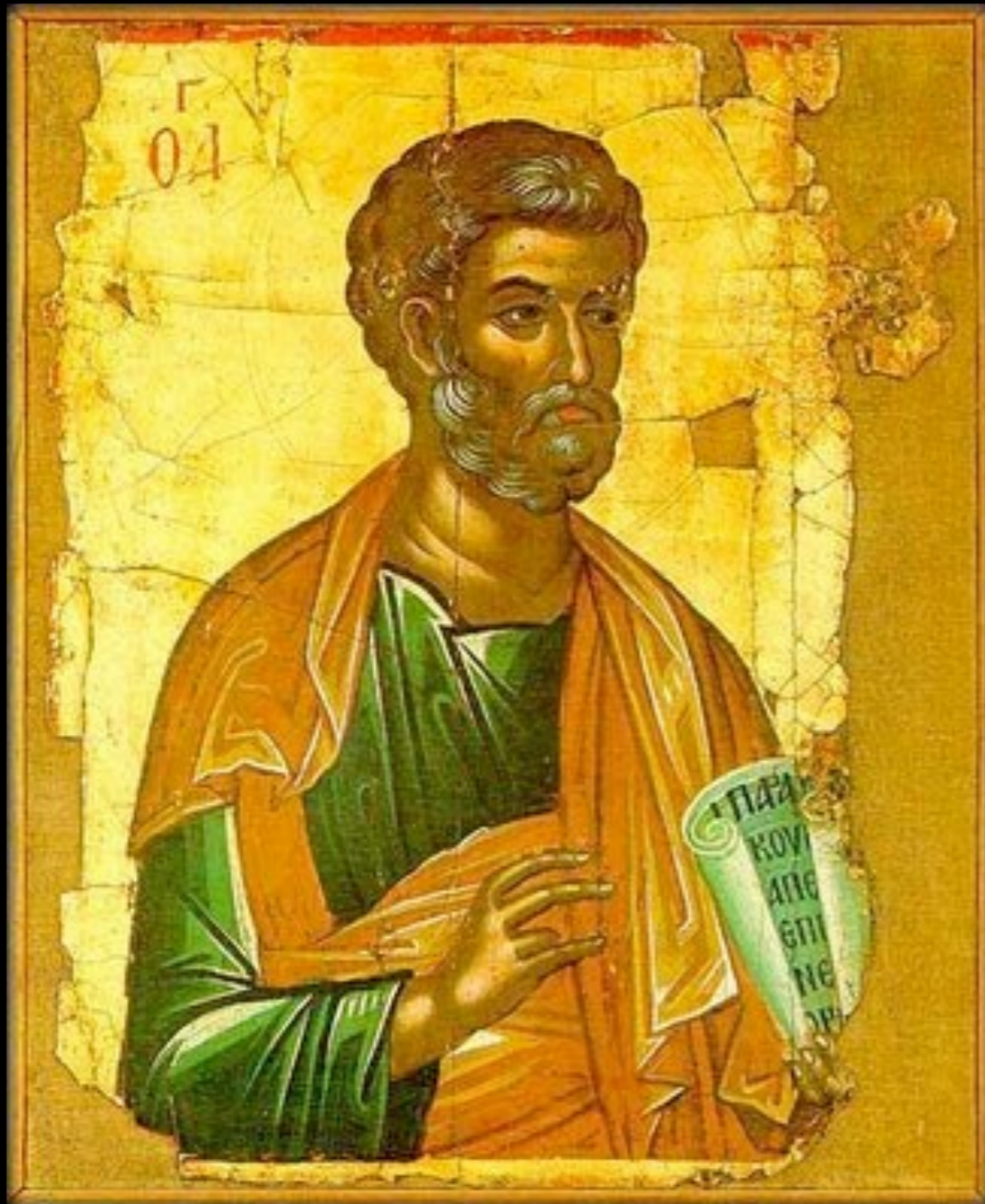


[John said,]“It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he...threw himself into the sea.

Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.

— The Gospel of John, ch. 21 —

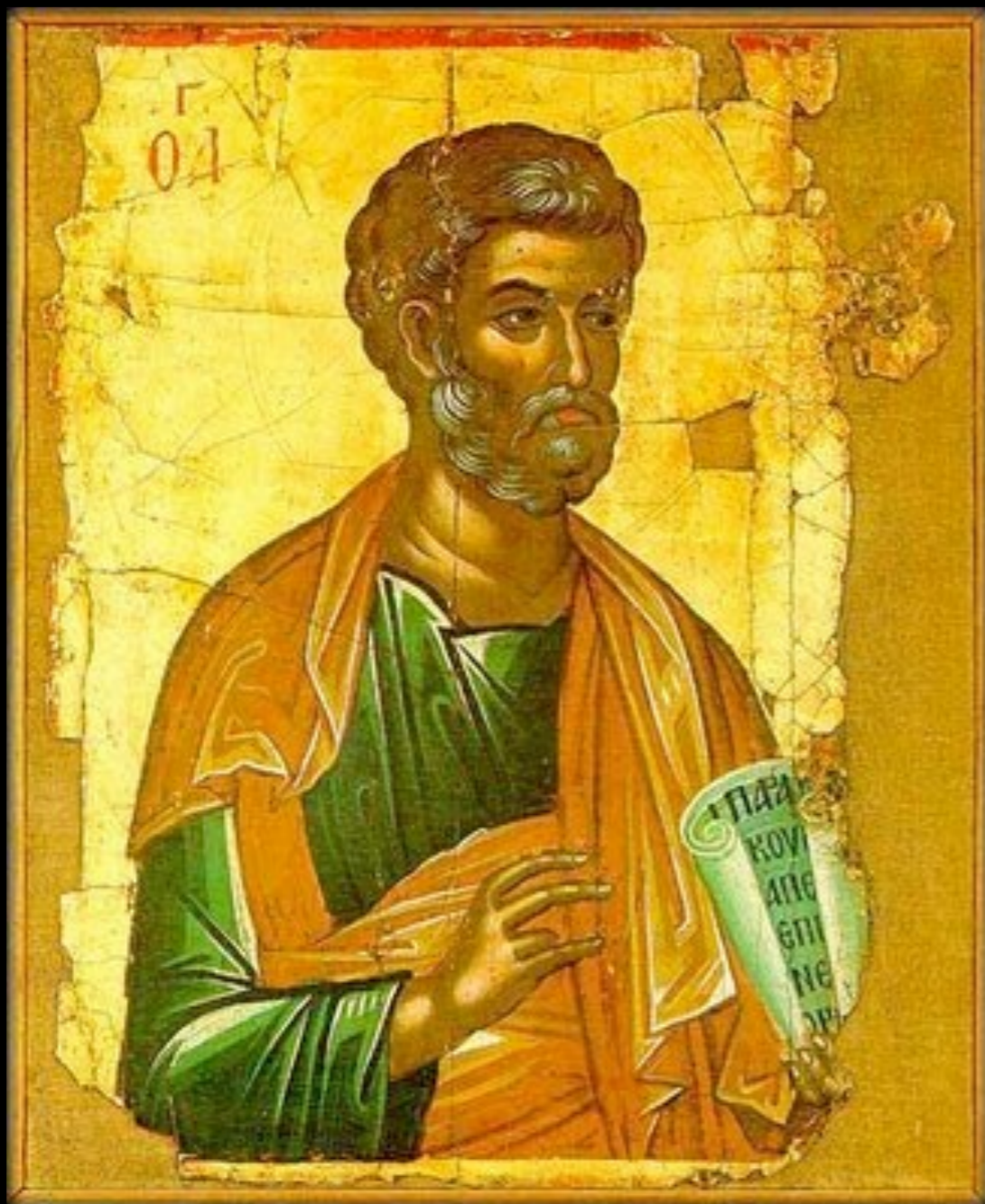




**This Jesus God
raised up, and of
that we are all
witnesses....**

The Apostle Peter

— Acts 2:33 —



**For we did not follow
cleverly devised
myths when we made
known to you the
power and coming
of our Lord Jesus
Christ, but we were
eyewitnesses....**

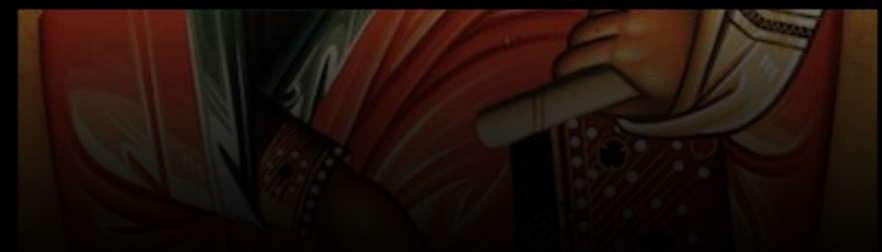
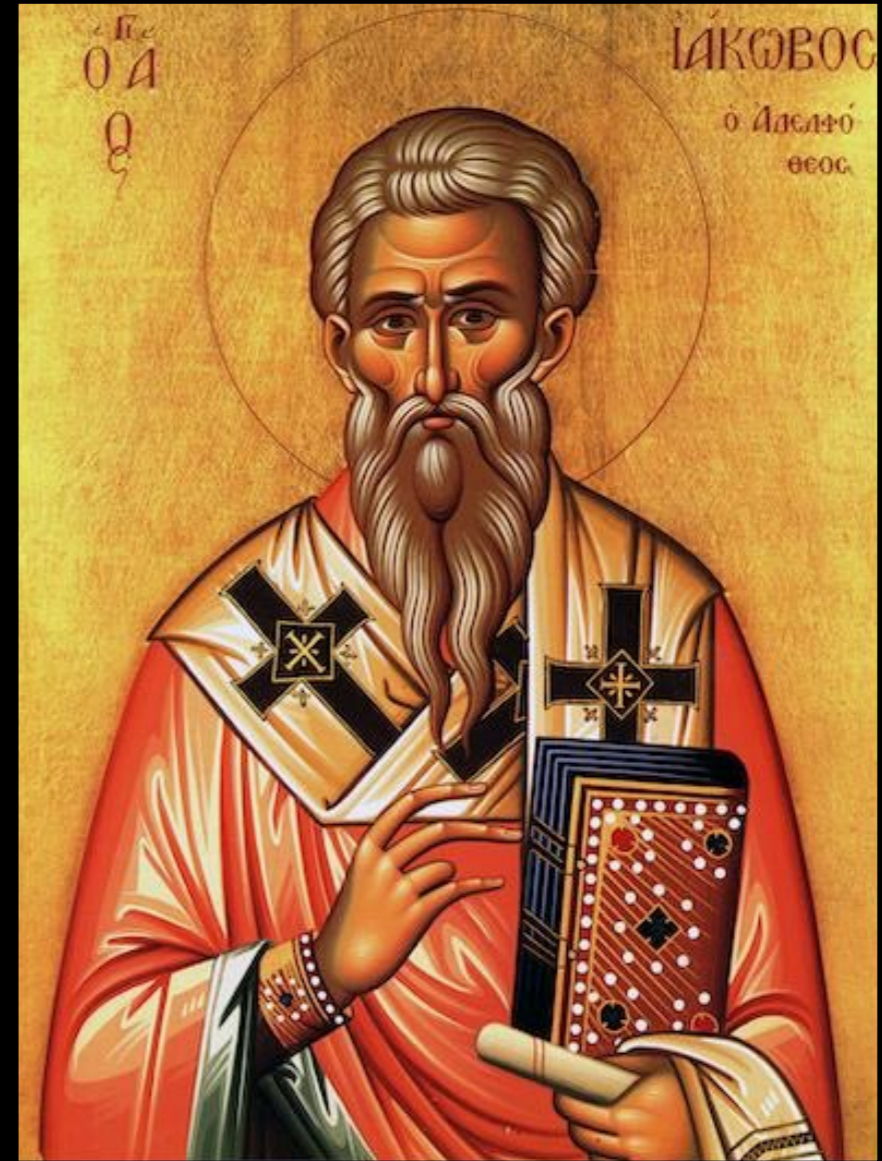
The Apostle Peter
— 2 Peter 2:16 —

2

**The Resurrection
Changed James,
the Brother who
Didn't Believe
in Jesus**

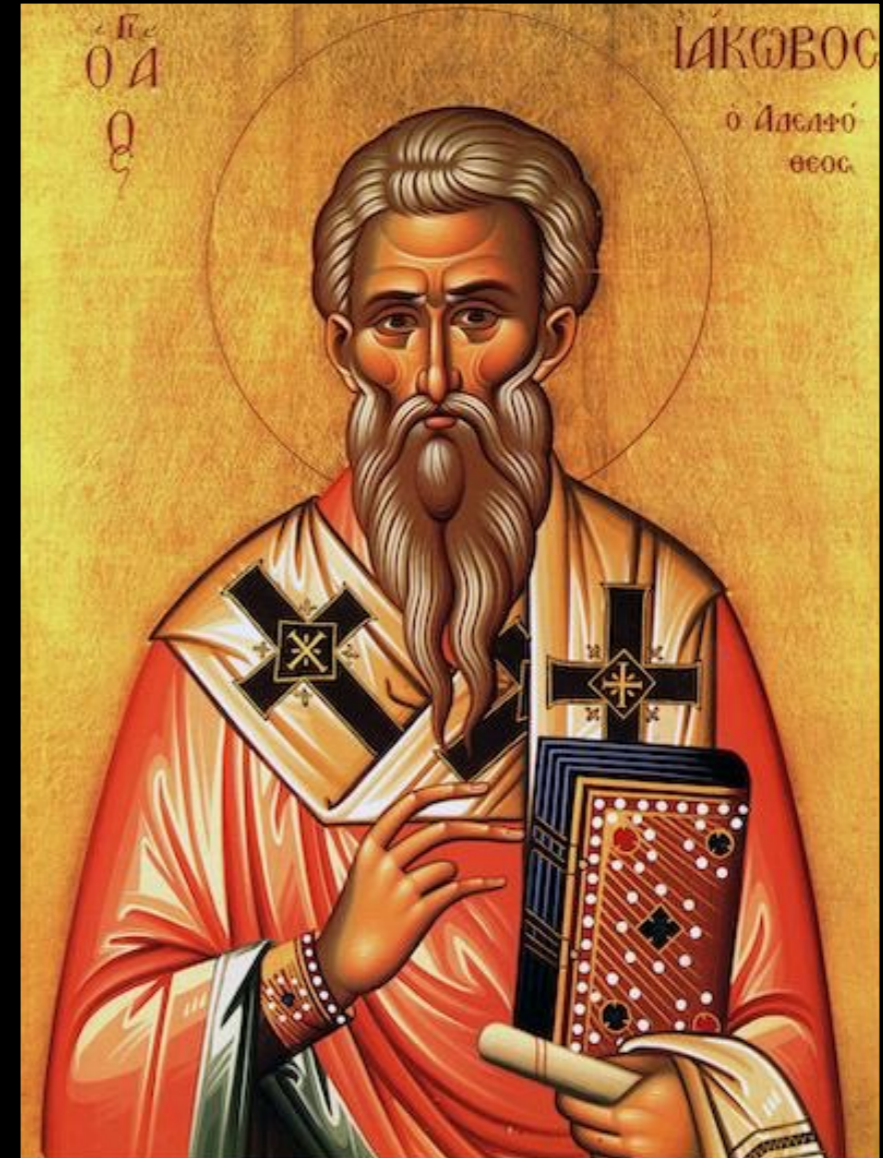
James the Unbelieving Brother of Jesus

- Did not follow Jesus during his public ministry
- Thought Jesus was crazy



**When his family heard
it, they went out to
seize him, for they
were saying, “He is
out of his mind.”**

— The Gospel of Mark 3:21 —

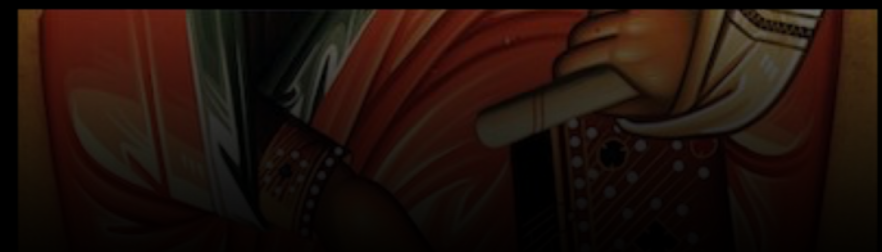
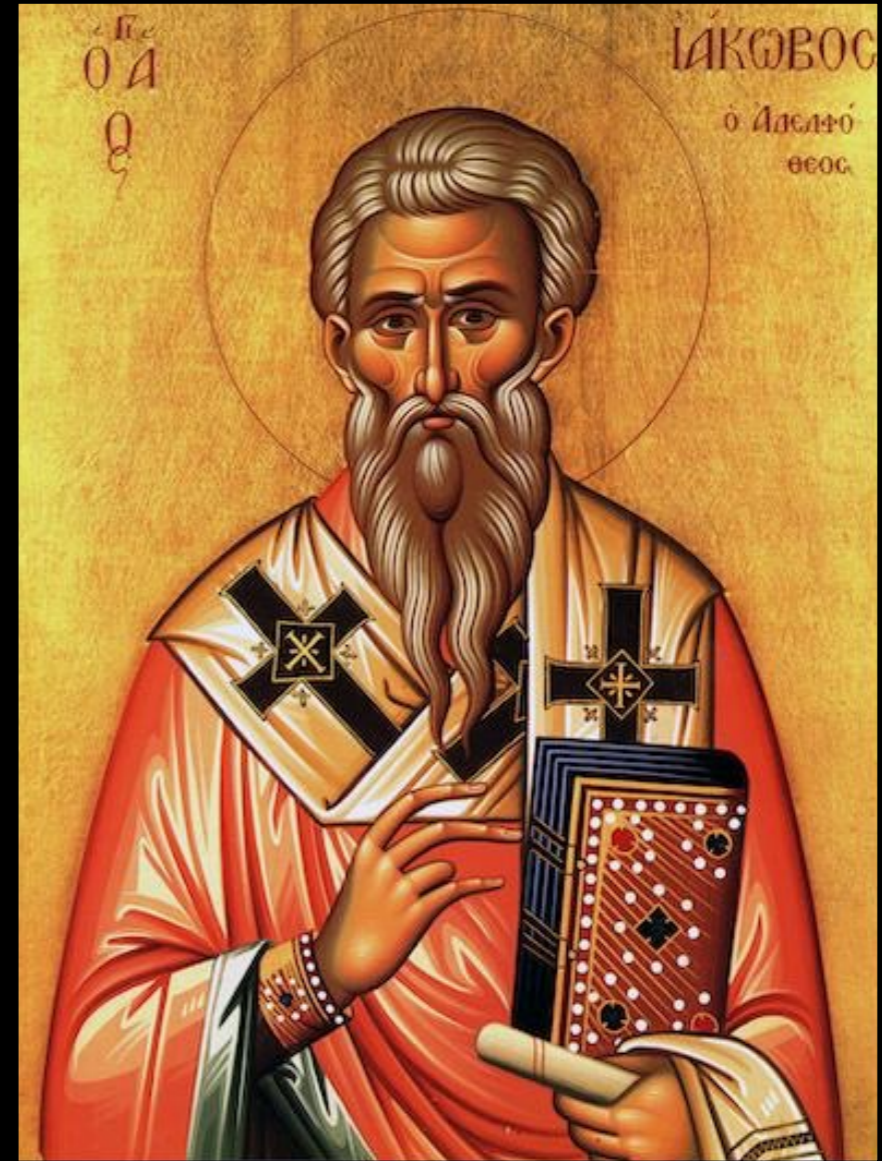


“Not even his brothers believed in him.”

— The Gospel of John 7:5 —

James the Unbelieving Brother of Jesus

- Did not follow Jesus during his public ministry
- Thought Jesus was crazy
- Became the leader of the persecuted church in Jerusalem



**What happened
that changed
James from the
unbelieving
brother of Jesus
into a fearless
proclaimer of
Jesus**

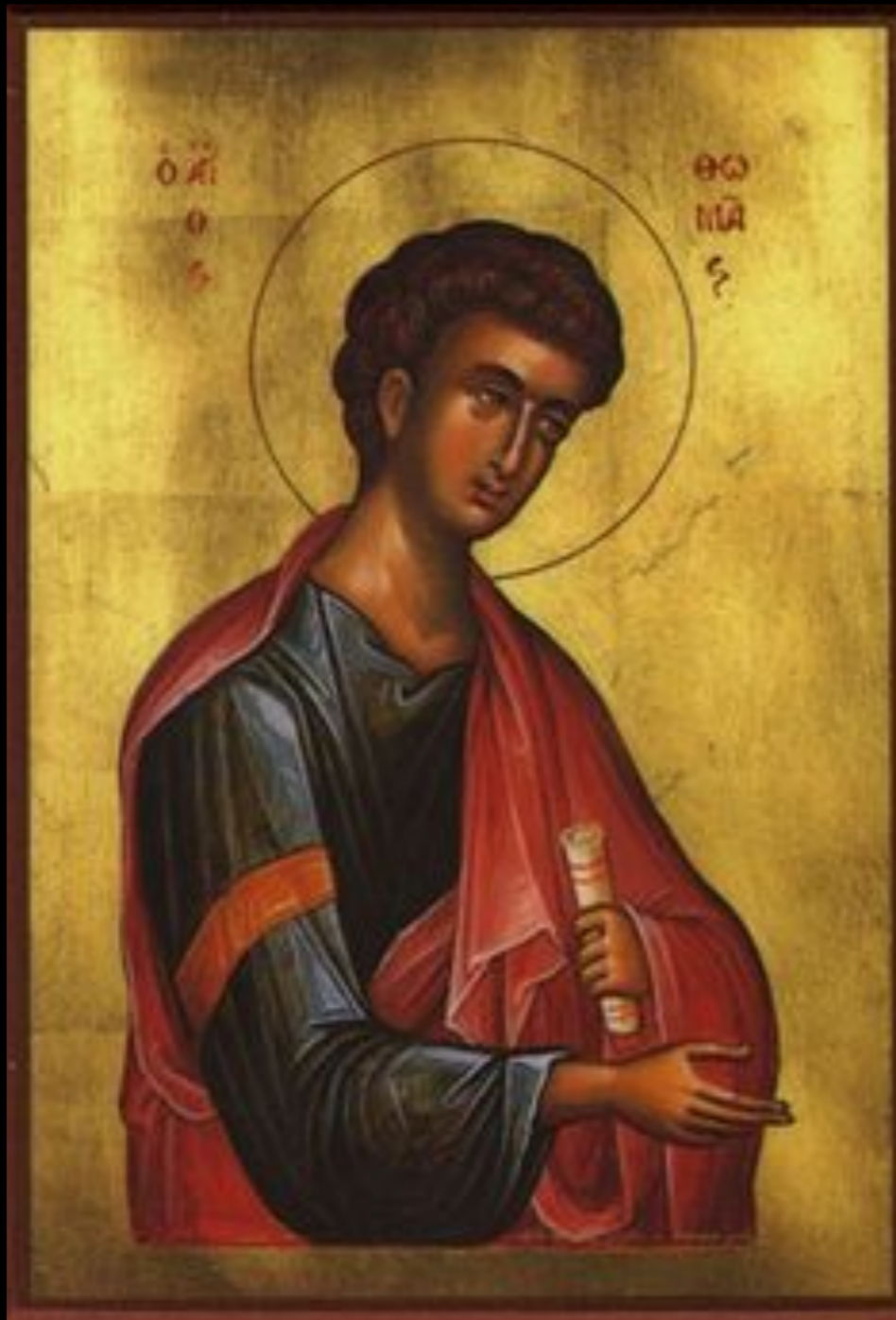


**“Christ died for our sins...,
was buried... [and] was raised
on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures, and that he
appeared to Cephas....
then he appeared to James....”**

— 1 Corinthians 15 —

3

**The Resurrection
Changed Thomas,
the Skeptical
Disciple of Jesus
Who Refused to
Believe in His
Resurrection
without Proof**



Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe...

— “Doubting Thomas” —

The Gospel of John 20:25-28



**Jesus came and
stood among
them and said,
“Peace be with
you.”**

— The Gospel of John 20:25-28 —



Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”

— The Gospel of John 20:25-28 —



**Thomas
answered him,
“My Lord
and my God.”**

— The Gospel of John 20:25-28 —

**What happened
that changed
Thomas from an
skeptical denier
of the resurrec-
tion into a fear-
less proclaimer of
the resurrected
Jesus**



Thomas the Skeptical Follower of Jesus



- Refused to believe in the resurrection of Jesus unless he could touch his wounds
- Saw the risen Jesus calling him “my Lord and my God”
- Spread the Gospel of Jesus as far as India

4

**The Resurrection
Changed Paul,
the Zealous
Adversary of Jesus**

Paul the Zealous Enemy of Jesus

- Member of the Pharisees, the party that conspired to put Jesus to death
- Violently persecuted the church of Jesus trying to destroy his movement



And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.



— Acts 8:1 —

Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.



— Acts 8:3 —

**Saul was still
breathing threats and
murder against the
disciples of the Lord.**



Acts 9:1-2

He went to the high priest and requested letters from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem.



Acts 9:1-2



**He who used to persecute us
is now preaching the faith
he once tried to destroy.**

— Galatians 1:23 —



**What happened
that changed
Paul from a
murderous
persecutor into
a fearless
proclaimer
of Jesus**



**“Christ died for our sins...,
was buried... [and] was raised
on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures, and that he
appeared to Cephas..... Then
he appeared to James....”**

— 1 Corinthians 15 —

**“Last of all, he appeared to me....
I am the least of the apostles,
unworthy to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church
of God.”**

— 1 Corinthians 15 —

Paul before King Agrippa (Acts 26)



Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

Paul before King Agrippa (Acts 26)



...I stand here today testifying to both small and great, saying...that nothing but what Moses said would come to pass:

Paul before King Agrippa (Acts 26)



...that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the nations.

Paul before King Agrippa (Acts 26)



I am speaking true and rational words. The king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly.

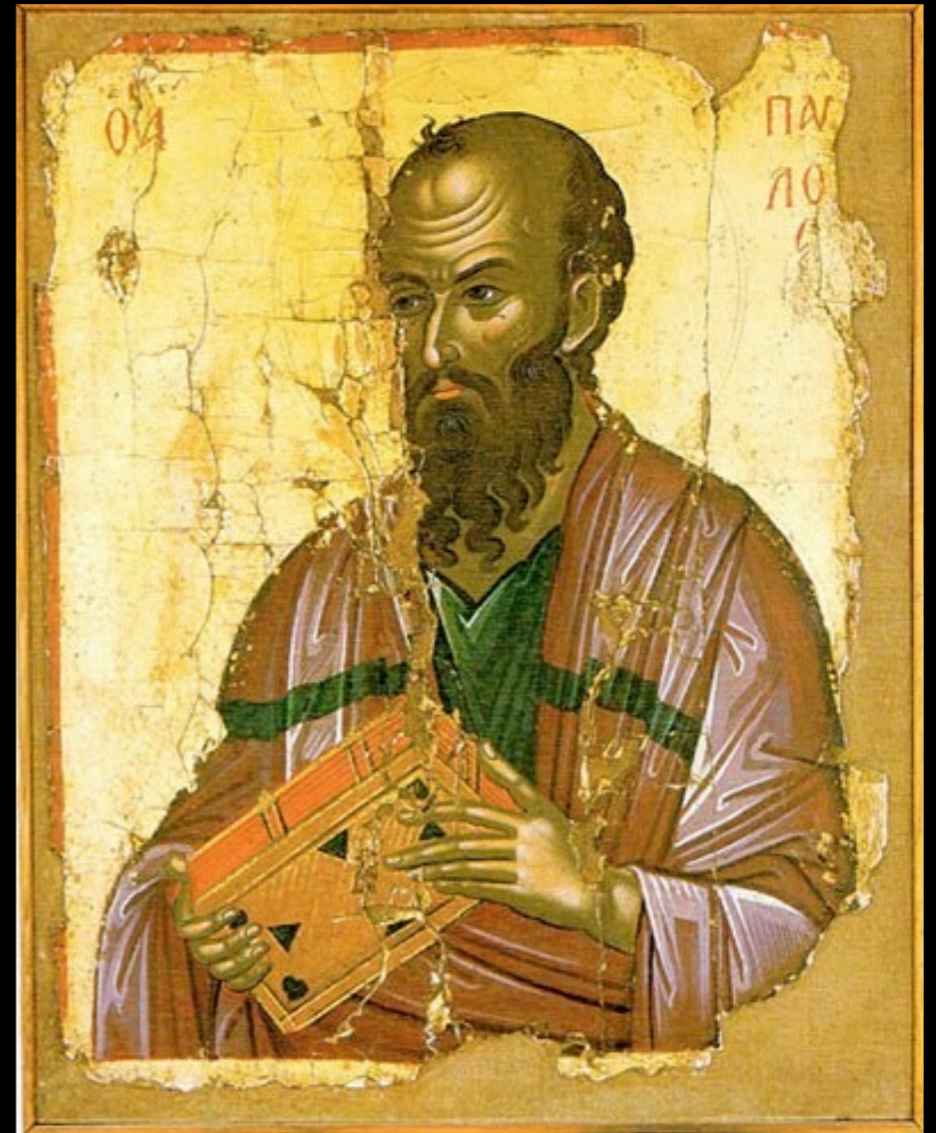
Paul before King Agrippa (Acts 26)

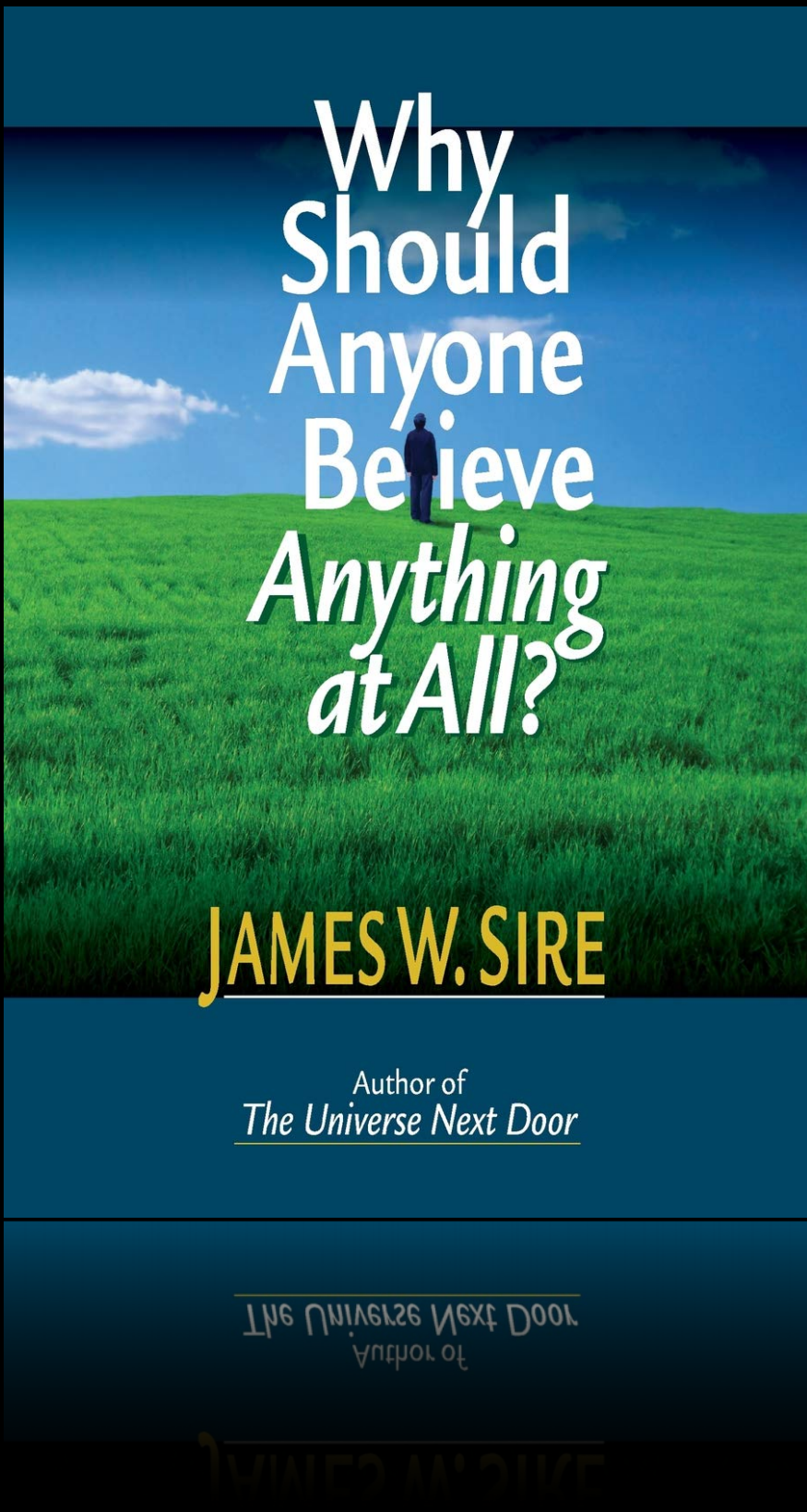


For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.

Paul the Zealous Enemy of Jesus

- Member of the Pharisees, the party that conspired to put Jesus to death
- Persecuted the church
- Suddenly converted by a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus
- Ambassador of Jesus to kings and paupers
- Repeatedly beaten by mobs & survived numerous plots on his life
- Presumed executed during the reign of Nero, the Emperor





Why
Should
Anyone
Believe
*Anything
at All?*

JAMES W. SIRE

Author of
The Universe Next Door

The Universe Next Door
Author of

JAMES W. SIRE

For a long time it has been my fascination with Jesus—his character, the brilliance and wisdom of his teaching, the depth of his compassion, the endlessness of his grace in forgiving sin—that has kept me in the faith.



Why
Should
Anyone
Believe
*Anything
at All?*

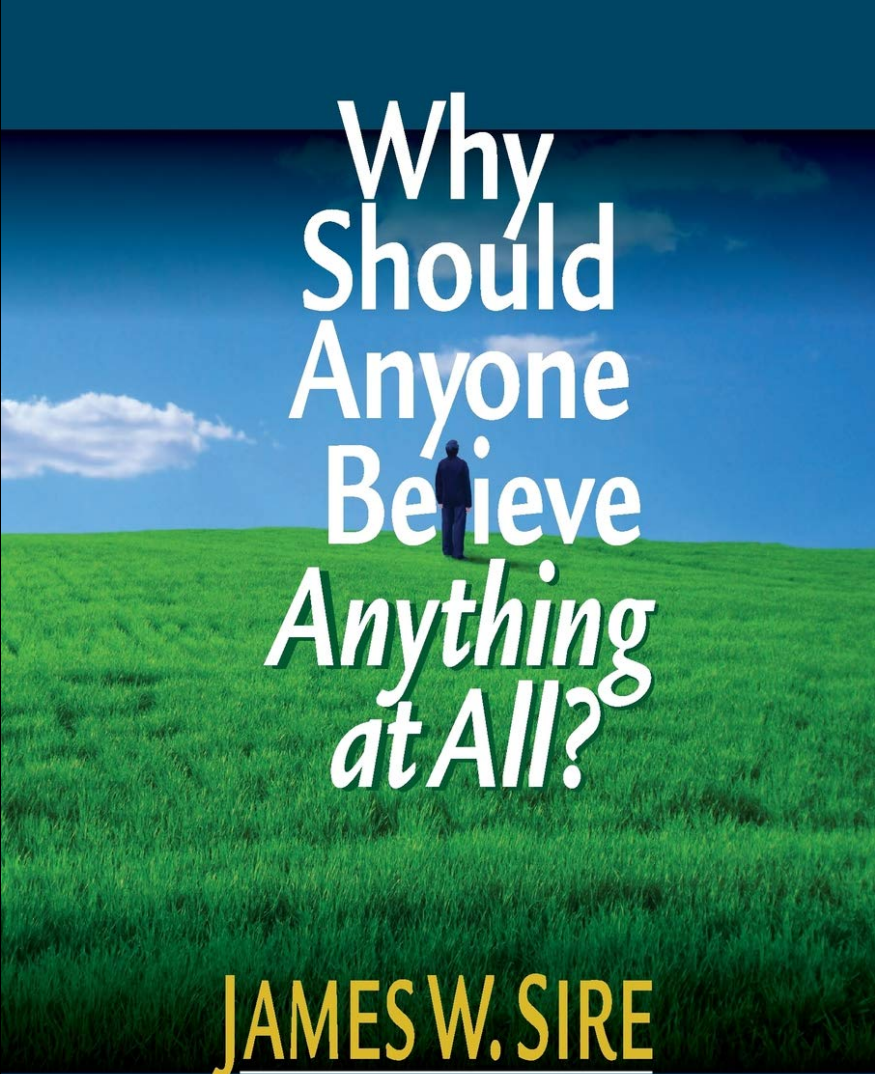
JAMES W. SIRE

Author of
The Universe Next Door

The Universe Next Door
Author of

JAMES W. SIRE

**“To whom shall we go?”
Peter once asked. “You
have the words of
eternal life. We believe
and know that you are
the Holy one of God
(John 6:66-68).”**



Why
Should
Anyone
Believe
Anything
at All?

JAMES W. SIRE

Author of
The Universe Next Door

The Universe Next Door
Author of

JAMES W. SIRE

Still, as is clear from the Gospels..., it took the resurrection to convince Peter and the other disciples that Jesus was Lord of lords and King of kings, worthy of being followed without reservation.



**So how about you?
What would it take
to convince you that
Jesus is worthy of
being followed with-
out reservation?**

**Hey, if believing
in the resurrection
helps you have
a better day,
then good for you!**

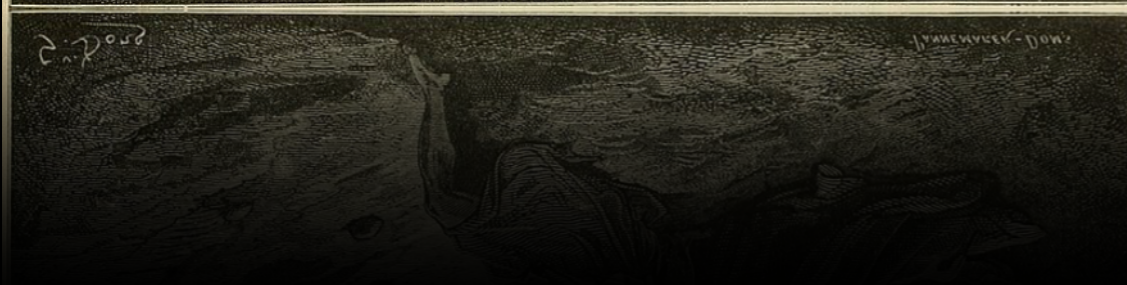
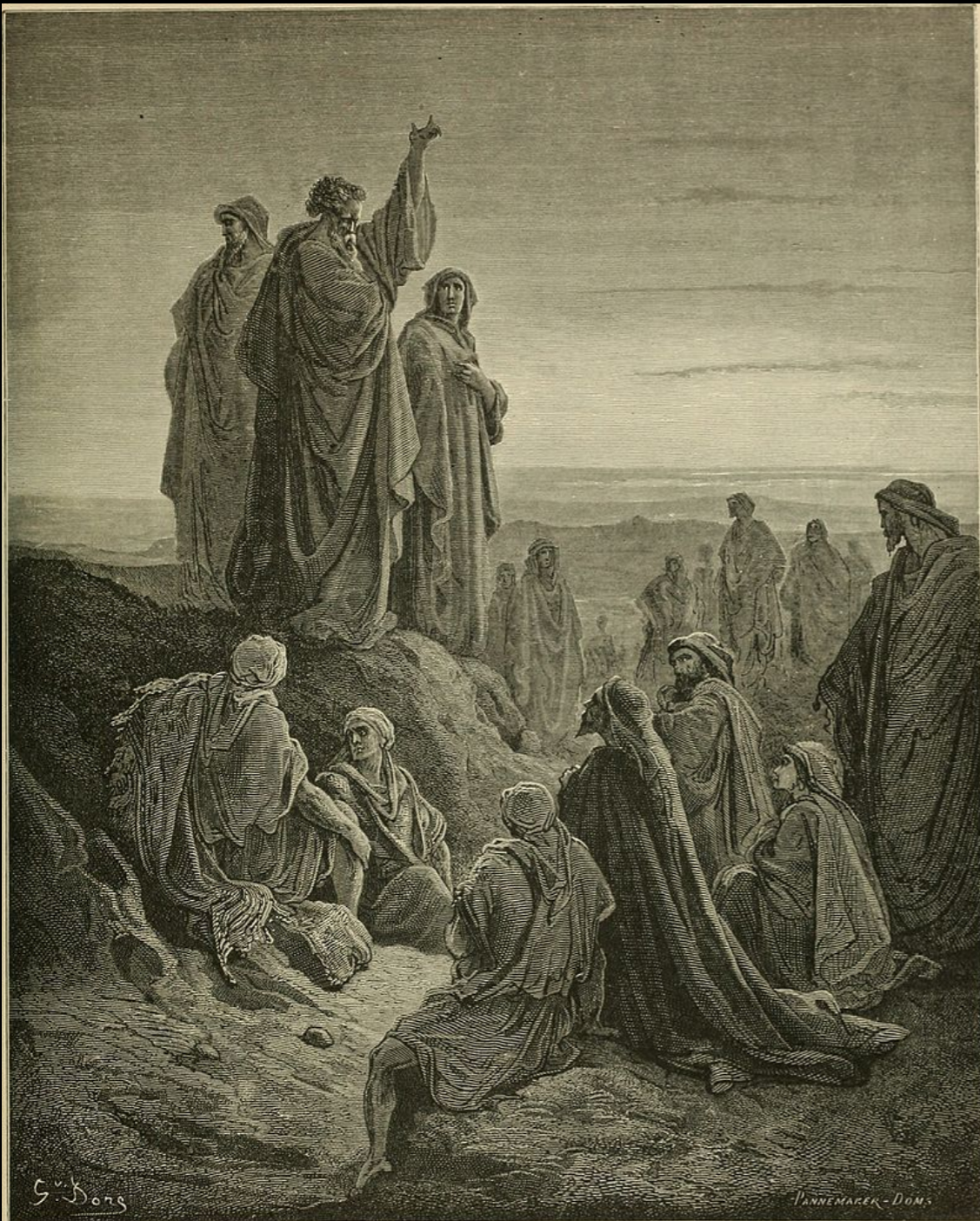


Three Undeniable Facts of History

1 Execution

2 Empty tomb

3 Eyewitness



**At this time there
was a wise man
called Jesus....
Pilate condemned
him to be crucified
and to die....**

Flavius Josephus, c.37-97AD

Antiquities XVIII



**One of the most
certain facts of
history is that
Jesus was crucified
on orders of the
Roman prefect of
Judea, Pontius
Pilate.**



— Professor Bart Ehrman —
Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

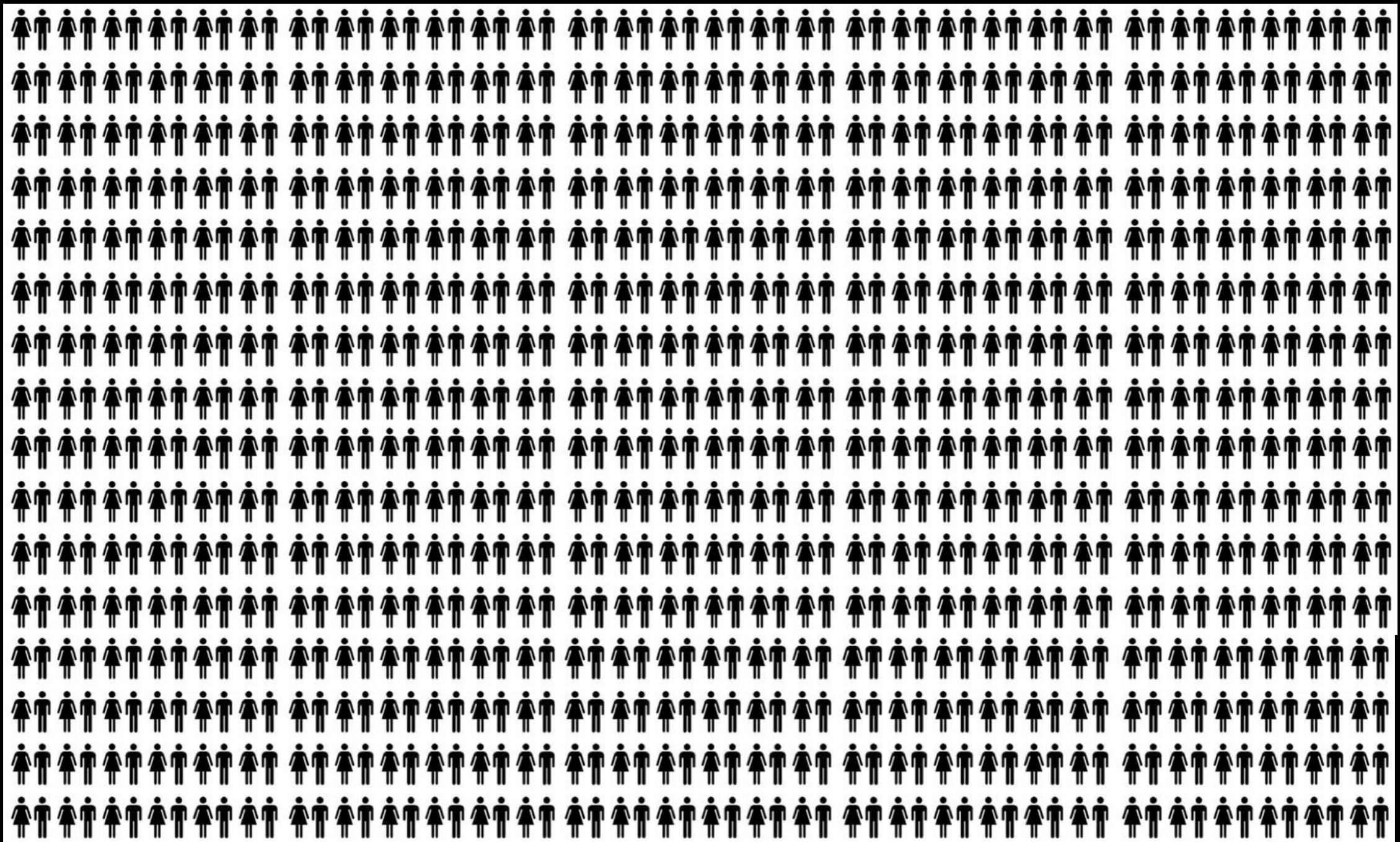
It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ.

Gerd Ludemann, Professor of History and Literature of Early Christianity at Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany



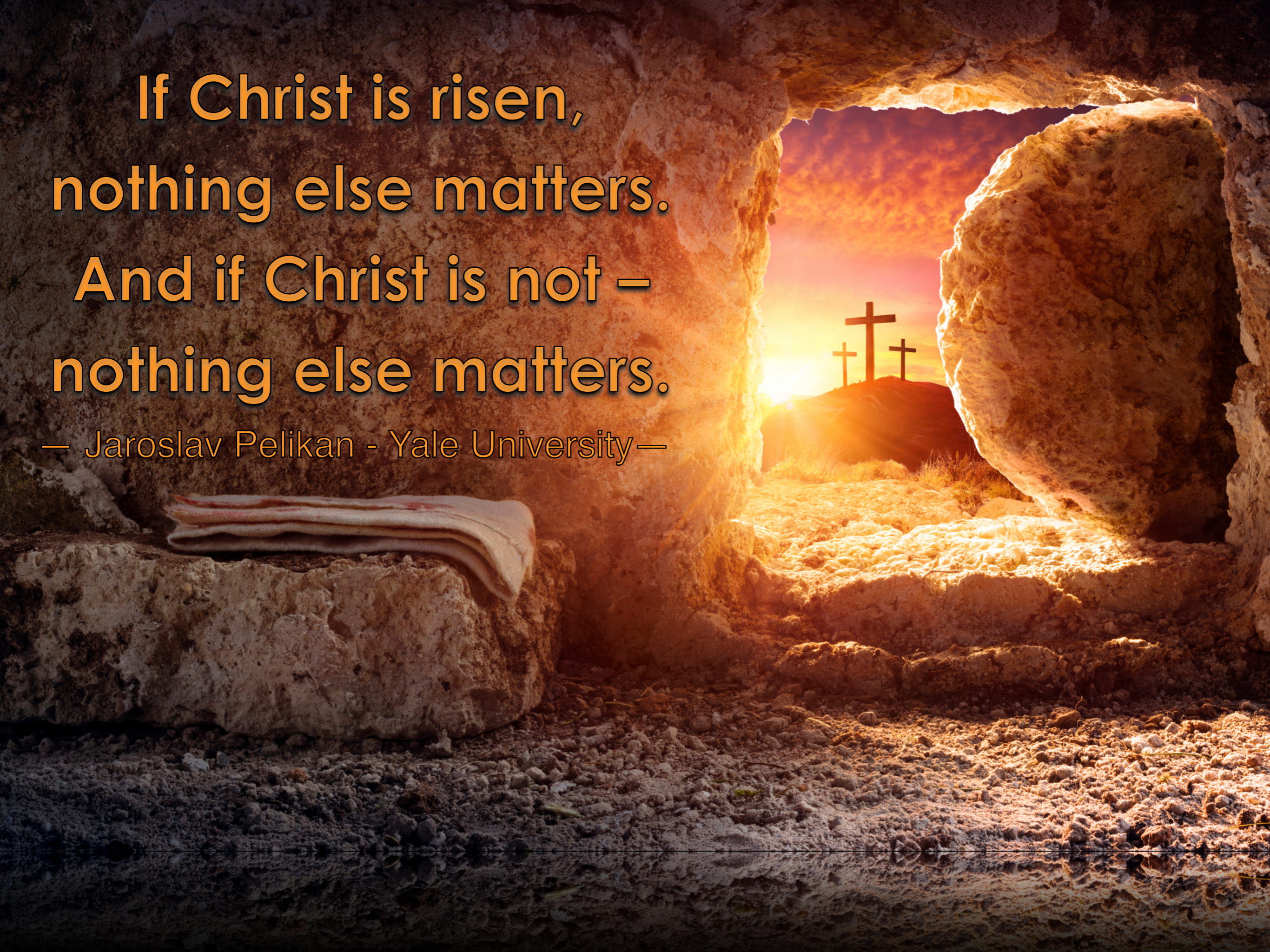
**“Christ died for our sins...,
was buried... [and] was raised
on the third day in accordance
with the Scriptures, and that he
appeared to Cephas, then to the
Twelve. Then he appeared to
more than five hundred brothers
and sisters at one time, most of
whom are still alive....”**

**...he appeared to over 500 people
at one time, most of whom are still alive....**



If Christ is risen,
nothing else matters.
And if Christ is not –
nothing else matters.

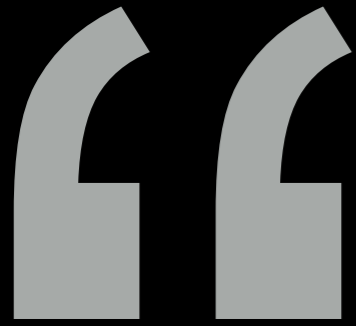
— Jaroslav Pelikan - Yale University —



If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead.

Timothy Keller,
— *The Reason for God* —



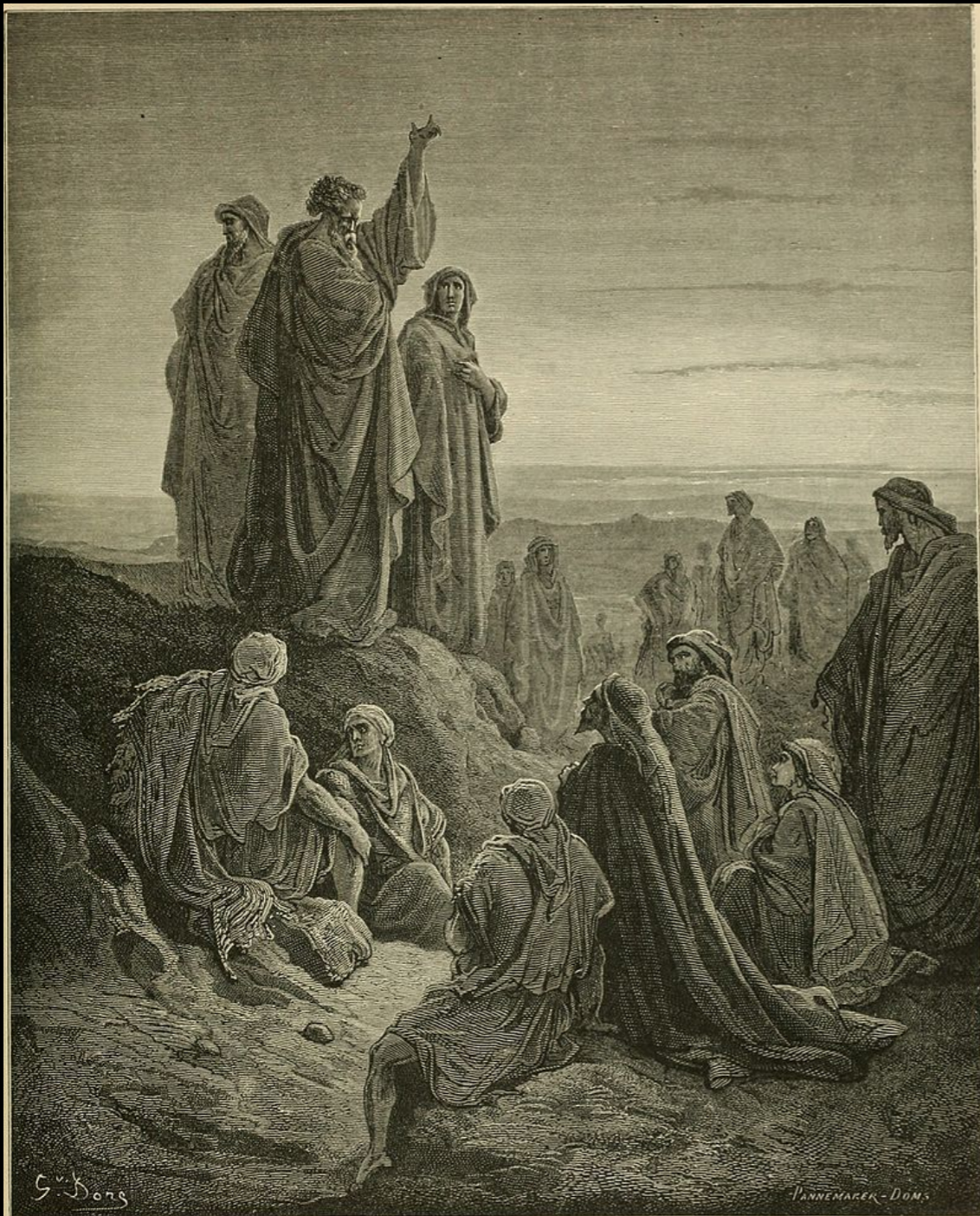


**...if you confess with your mouth
that Jesus is Lord and believe in
your heart that God raised him from
the dead, you will be saved.**

The Apostle Paul
in Romans 10:9



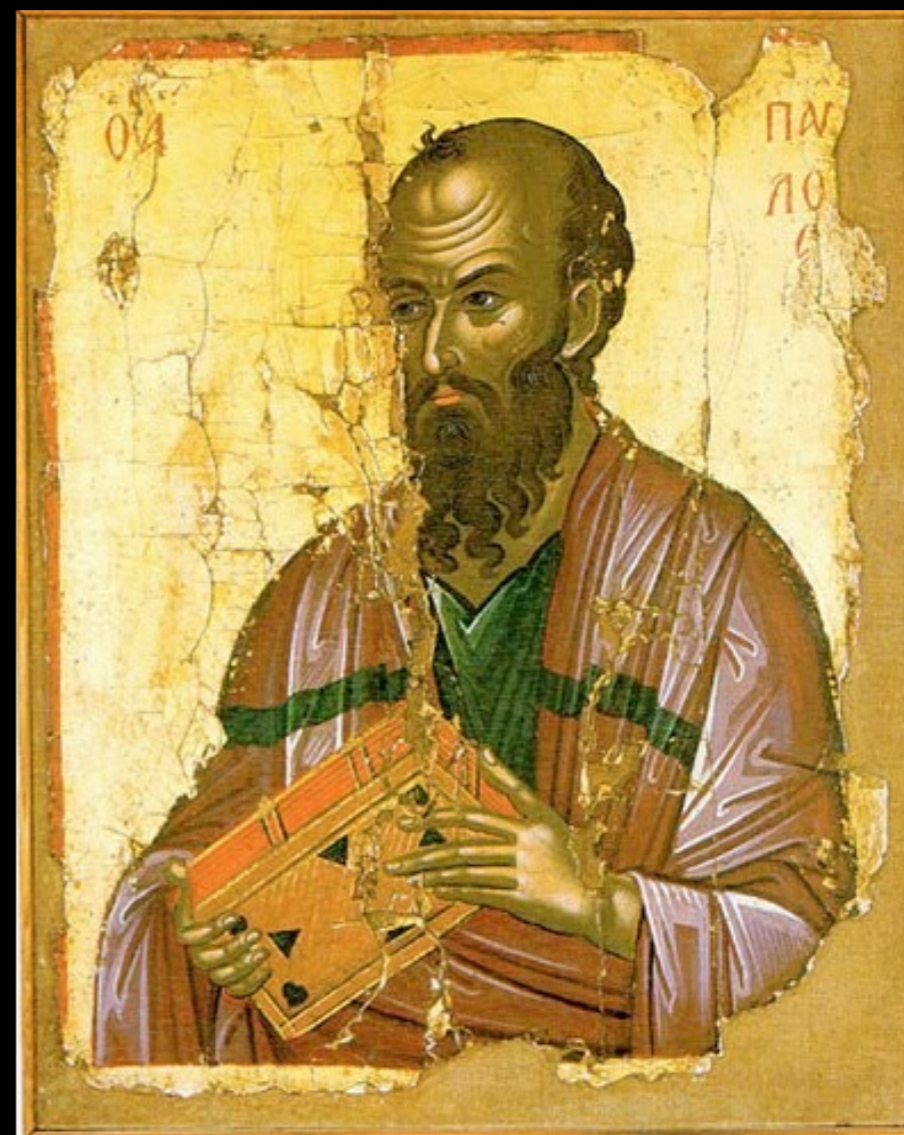
**They were
teaching the
people and
proclaiming
in Jesus the
resurrection
of the dead.**



— Acts 4:2 —

**By his power God
raised the Lord from
the dead, and he will
raise us also.**

**The Apostle Paul
— 1 Corinthians 6:14 —**



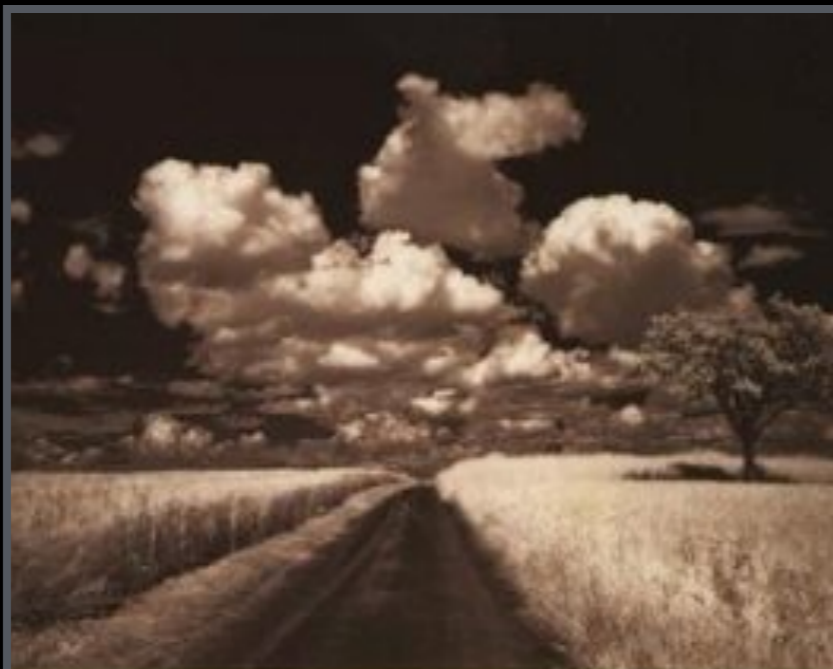


**Jesus has overcome
And the grave is
overwhelmed
The victory is won
He is risen from
the dead**



**And I will rise
when He calls my name
No more sorrow
No more pain
I will rise on eagle's wings
before my God fall on
my knees, and rise
I will rise**

— Chris Tomlin, “I Will Rise” —



SURPRISED BY
HOPE



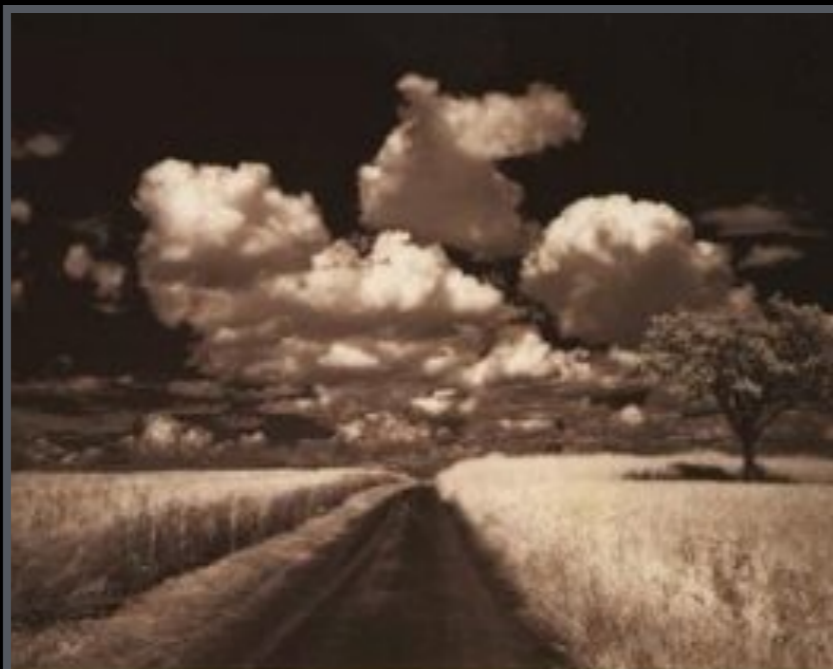
Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,
and the Mission of the Church

N. T. WRIGHT

The central Christian affirmation is that what the Creator has done in Jesus Christ, and supremely in his resurrection, is what he intends to do for the whole world...

N. T. WRIGHT

Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,
and the Mission of the Church



SURPRISED BY
HOPE



Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,
and the Mission of the Church

N. T. WRIGHT

**The early Christians...
believed that God was
going to do for the whole
cosmos what he had
done for Jesus at Easter.**

N. T. WRIGHT

Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,
and the Mission of the Church

“

**I tell you the truth,
at the renewal of all things,
when the Son of Man sits
on his glorious throne....**

Jesus of Nazareth
The Gospel of Matthew 19:28

”

**May the Resurrection of Jesus
Define Your Life, Anchor Your Soul,
and Strengthen Your Hope in
the Renewal of All Things to Come**

