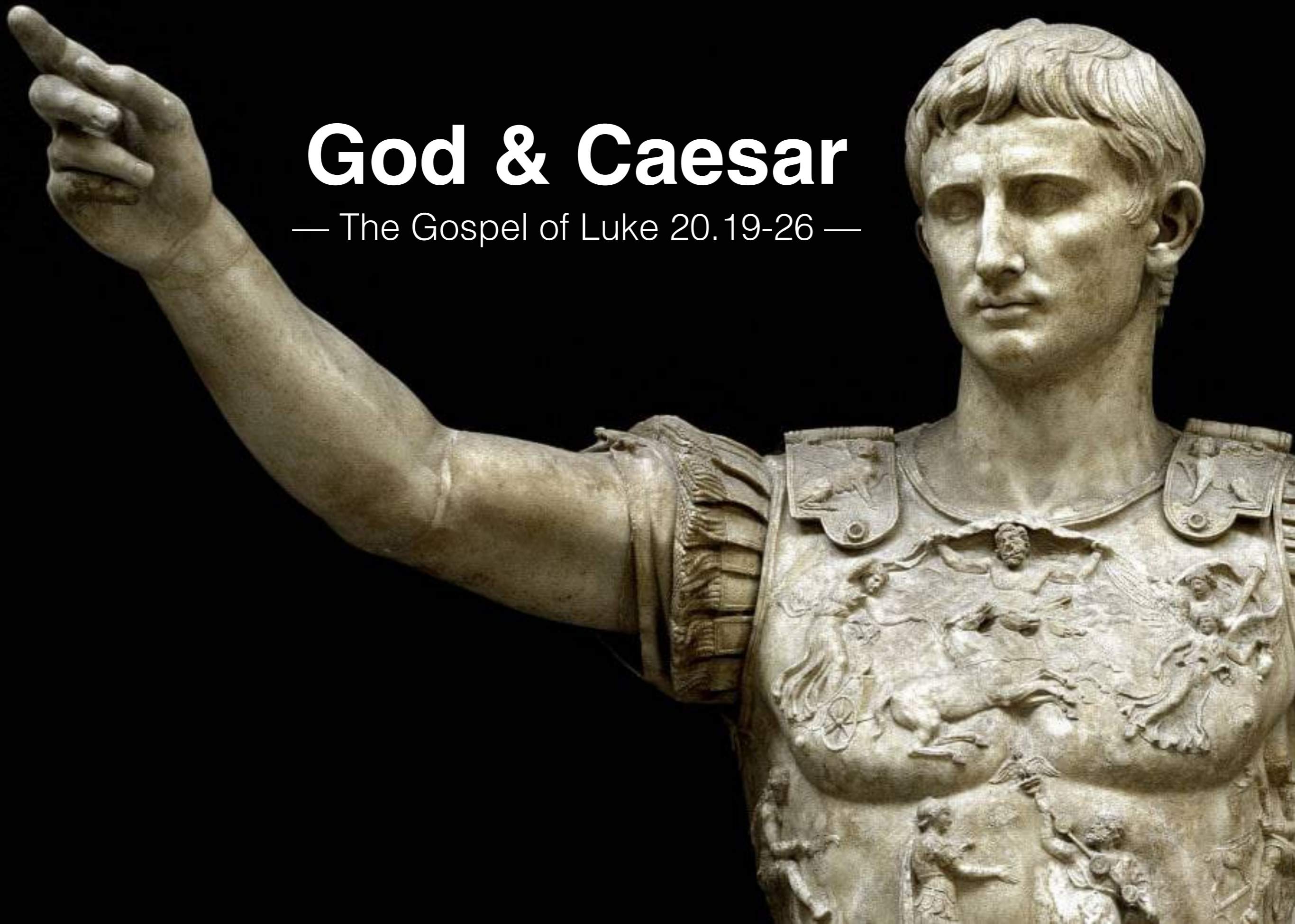


# God & Caesar

— The Gospel of Luke 20.19-26 —







# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY FOR ALL PEOPLE





**If you want to start a good argument,  
start talking about religion or politics—  
either one. But if you want to start a war,  
then bring your religion into politics.**

— Phillip Ryken —



**Blessed is the King who comes  
in the name of the Lord!**





— “ ” —

**Therefore I tell you, the  
kingdom of God will be taken  
from you and given to  
a people producing its fruit.**

—Matthew 21:43; cf. Luke 20:16 —



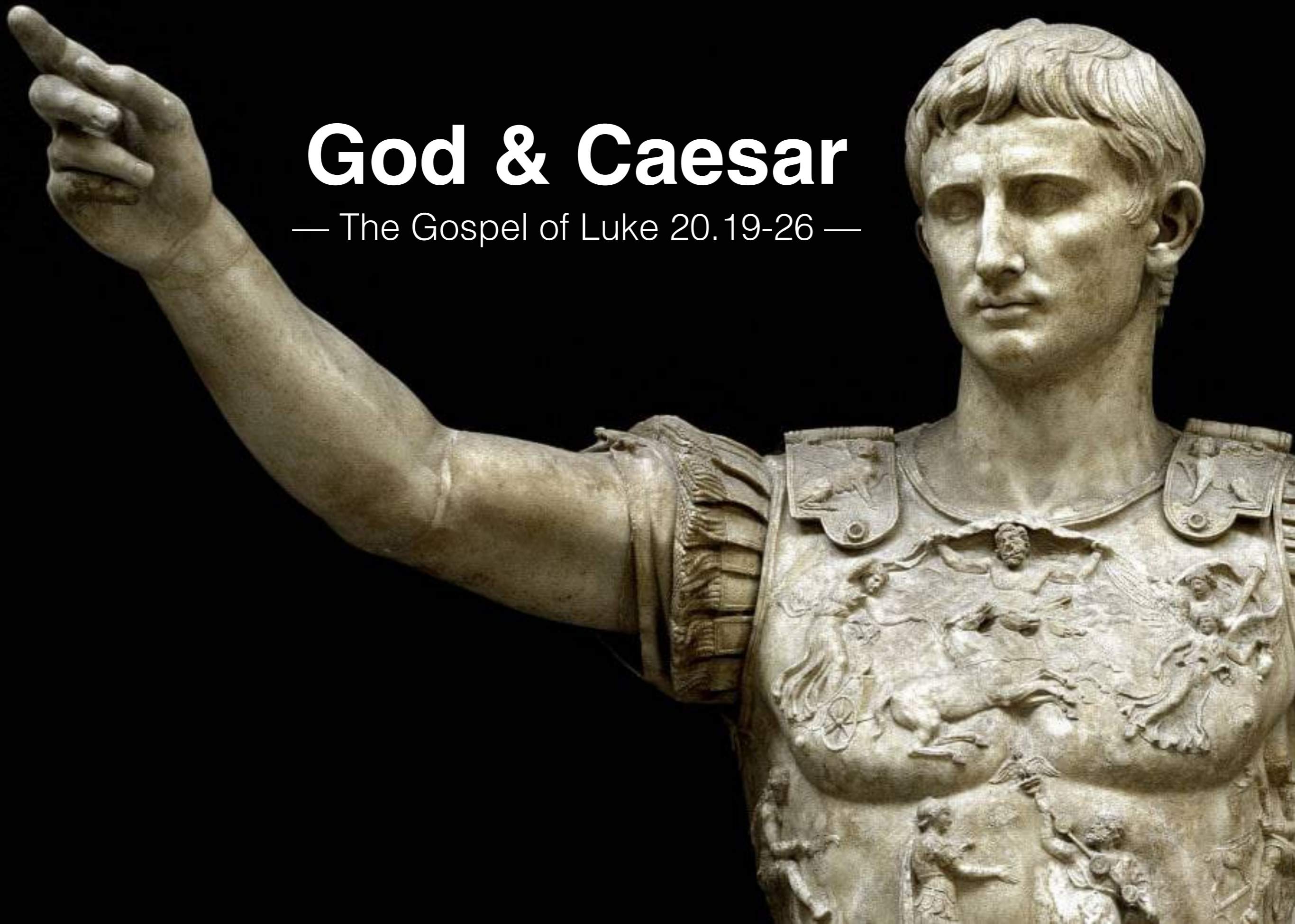


**When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!”**



# God & Caesar

— The Gospel of Luke 20.19-26 —





## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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19 The **scribes** and the **chief priests**  
**sought to lay hands on him at that very**  
**hour....,**



The chief priests were the official spiritual leaders of Israel who served in the Temple at Jerusalem. Scribes were the highly trained experts in the OT, transcribing the Scriptures and teaching them.



## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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**19 The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.**

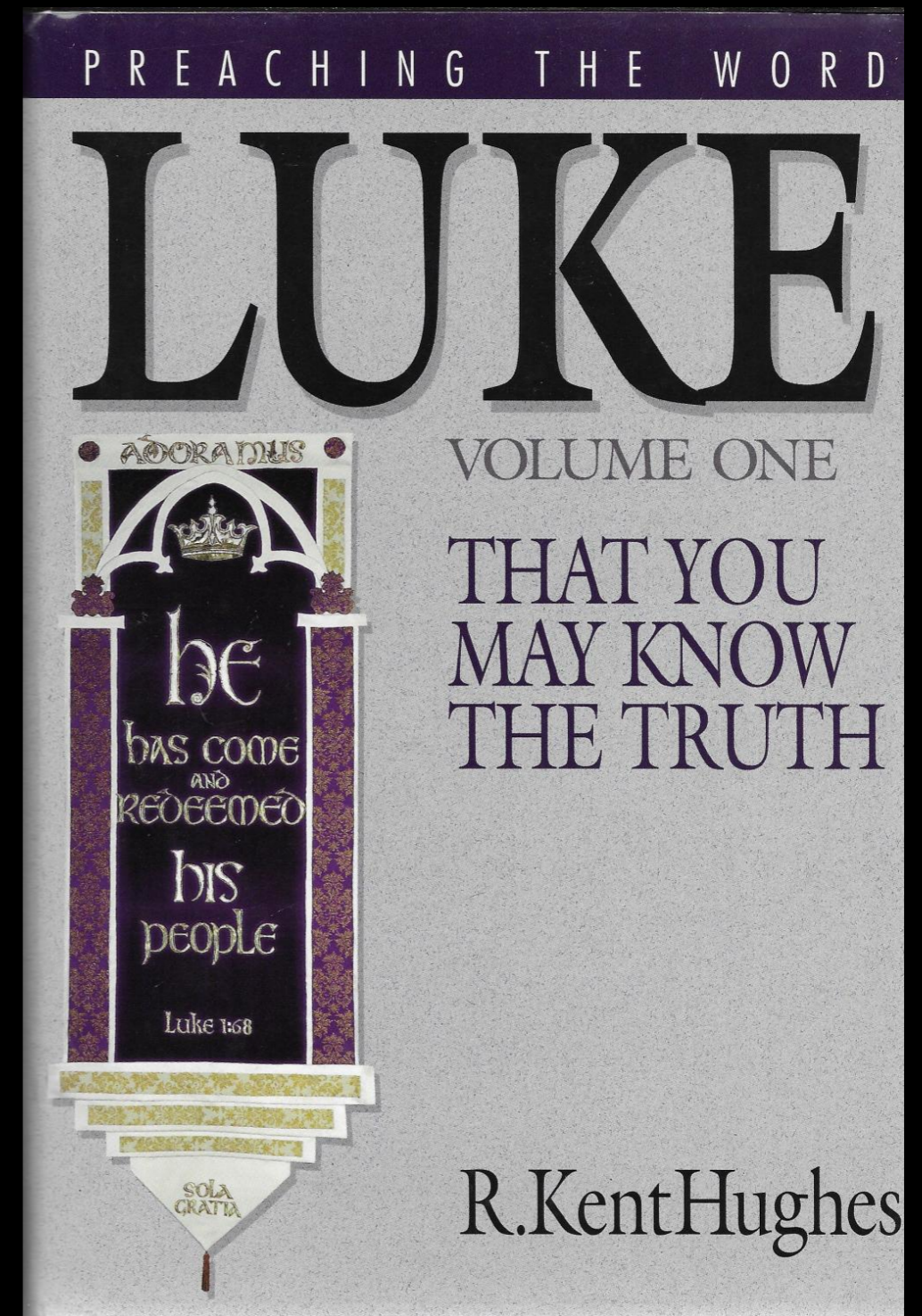


**And they sent to him  
some of the Pharisees  
and some of the  
Herodians, to trap  
him in his talk.**

— The Gospel of Mark 12:13 —

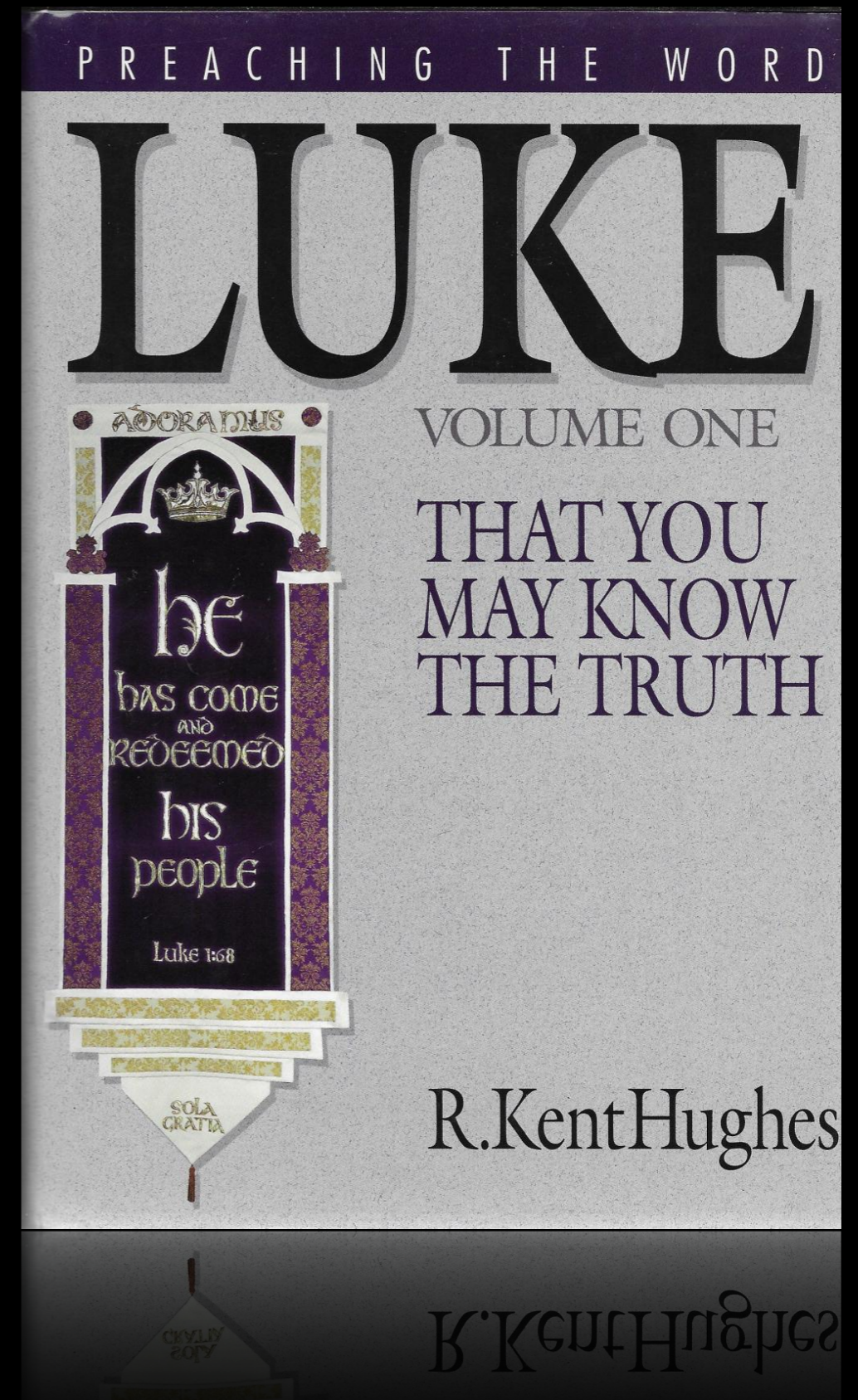


**There could hardly be two groups with such opposing outlooks. The Pharisees were nationalistic. They longed for the messianic kingdom and the overthrow of the Romans. The Herodians had sold themselves out to the Romans....**



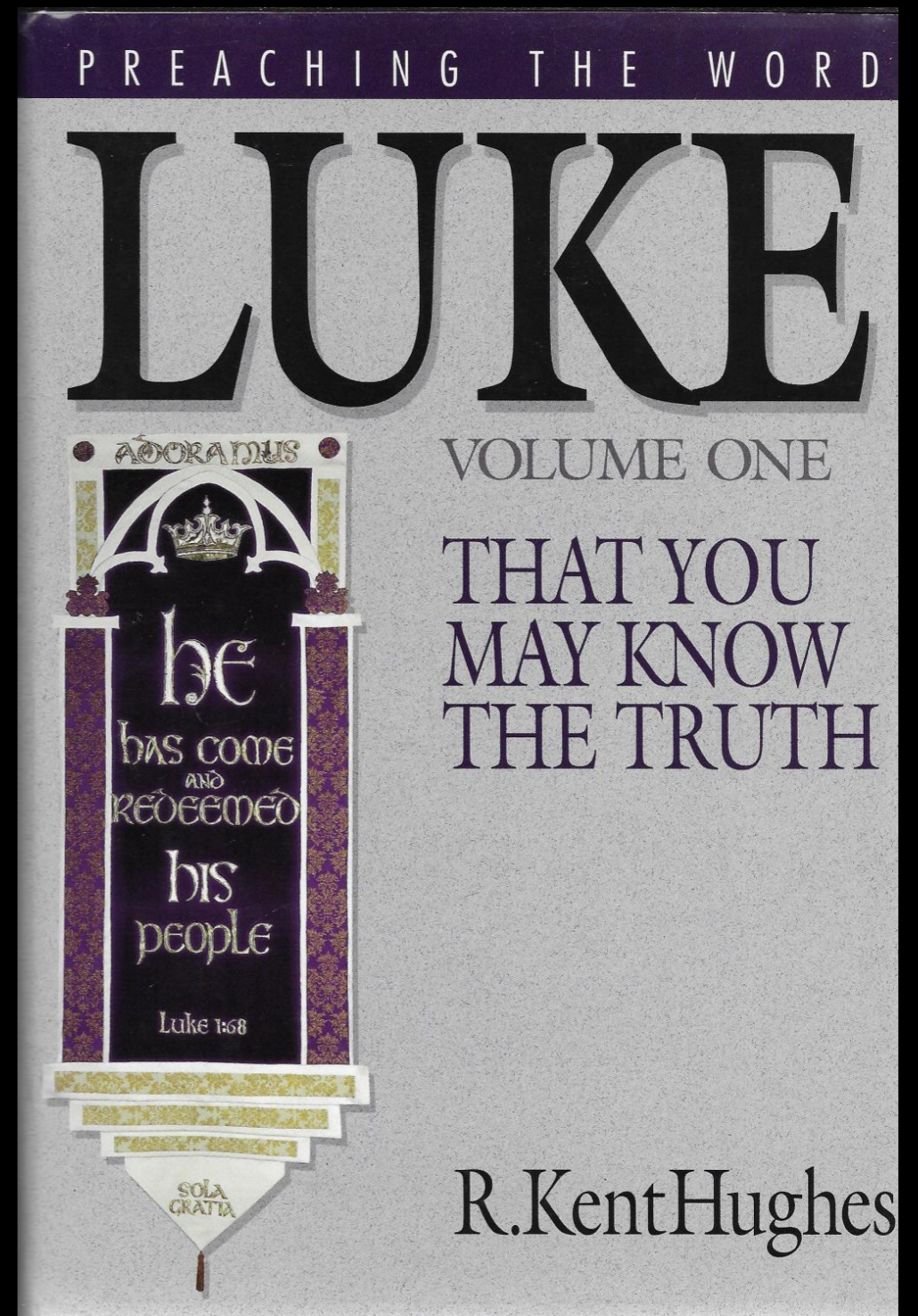


**The Pharisees represented conservative Judaism, whereas the Herodians were liberal and syncretistic in their convictions... The Pharisees represented cautious resistance to Rome, the Herodians wholesale accommodation.**





**But they were  
cemented together  
by their mutual  
hatred for Jesus....  
They both wanted  
him dead.**



R. Kent Hughes



## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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**20 So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, **so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.****







## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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**21 So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God....”**





**Flattery is the reverse mirror-image of gossip. Gossip involves saying behind a person's back what you would never say to his face. Flattery is saying to a person's face what you would never say behind his back.**

**R Kent Hughes**



**His speech was smooth as butter,  
yet war was in his heart;  
his words were softer than oil,  
yet they were drawn swords.**

— Psalm 55:21 —



## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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21 **So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. 22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not?”**

**...a certain Galilean,  
whose name was  
Judas, prevailed with  
his countrymen to  
revolt, and said they  
were cowards if they  
would endure to pay  
a tax to the Romans  
and would after God  
submit to mortal men  
as their lords.**



Flavius Josephus, c.37-97AD

— *The Jewish Wars* 2, 8, 1—





**Is it lawful for us to give  
tribute to Caesar or not?**

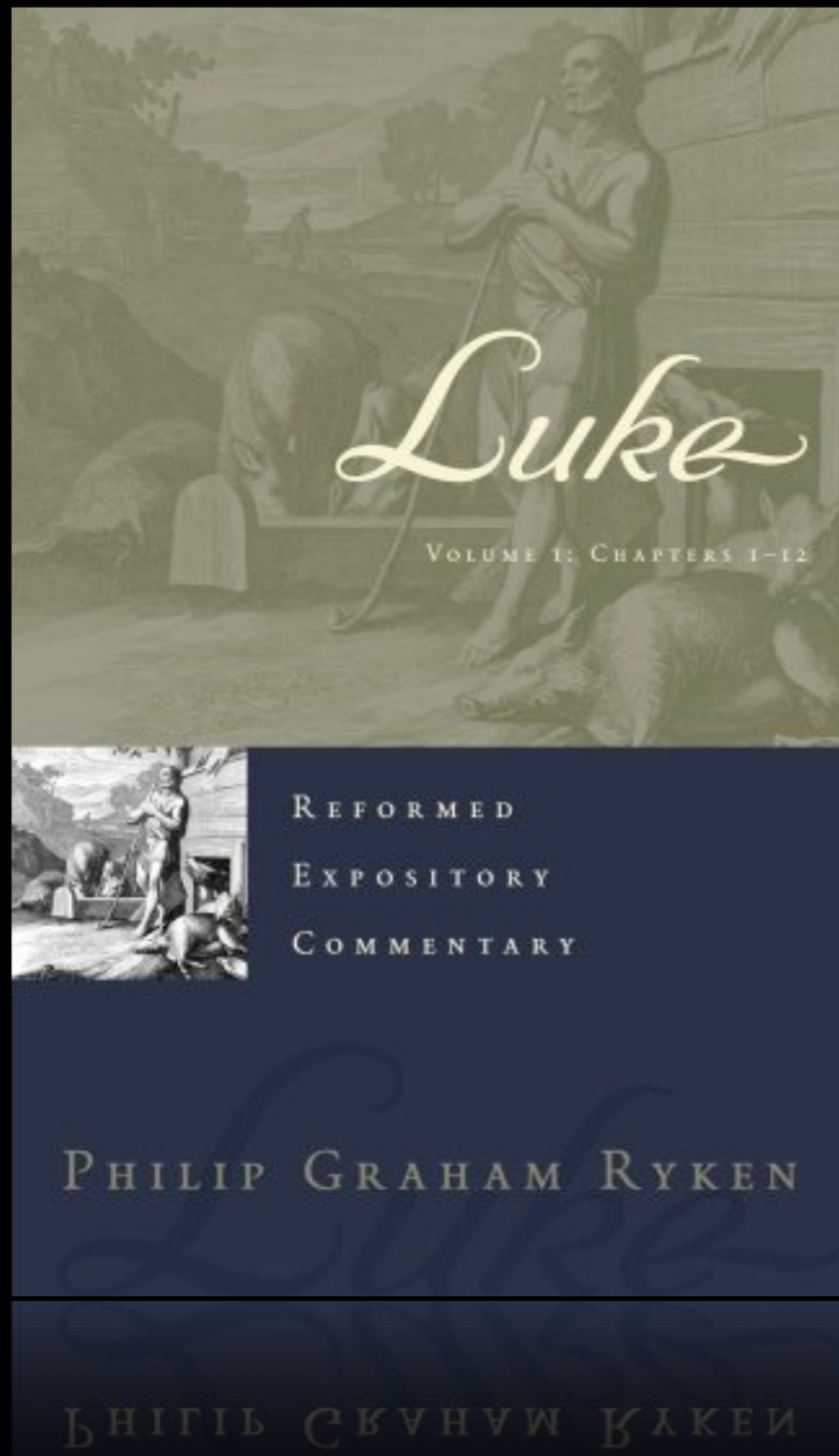
— Luke 20:22 —

# The Horns of a Dilemma

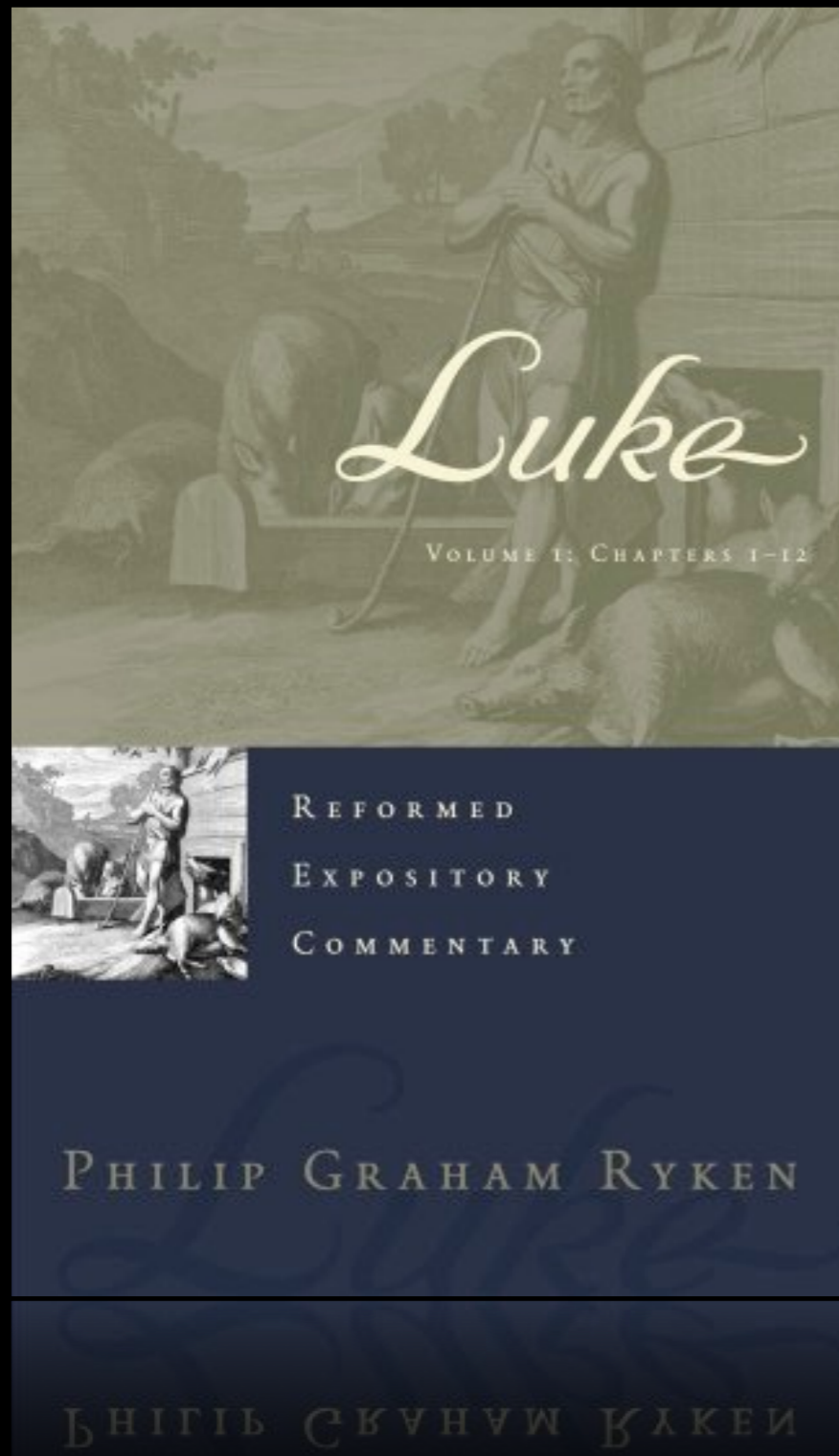
A choice between two options, either of which gets you gored by the consequences of your choice.





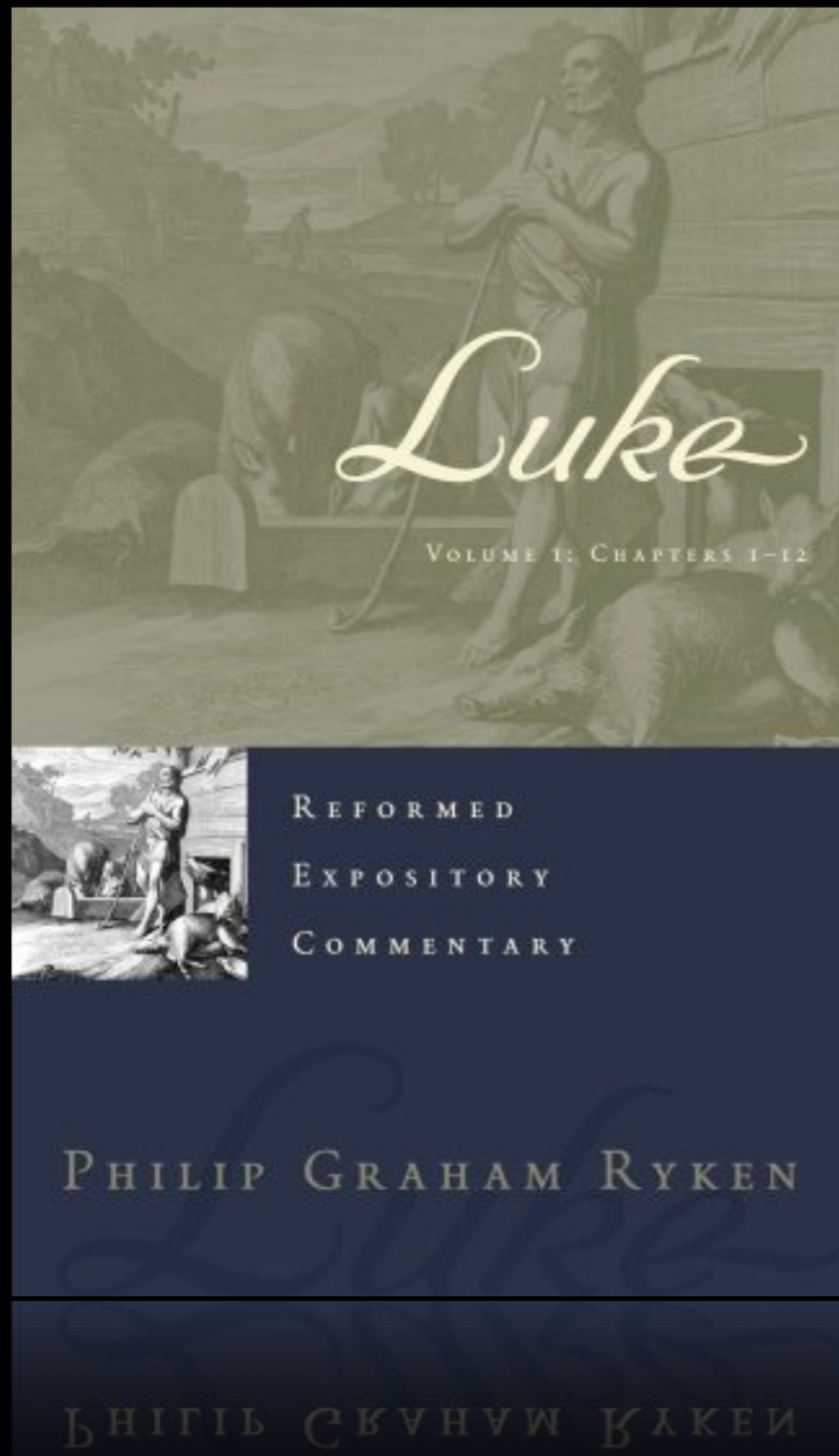


**If Jesus told people to go ahead and pay the tax, many of the Jews would consider him a traitor to the cause of his people. Remember, they were expecting the Messiah to liberate them from their oppressors, not keep people under Roman rule.**

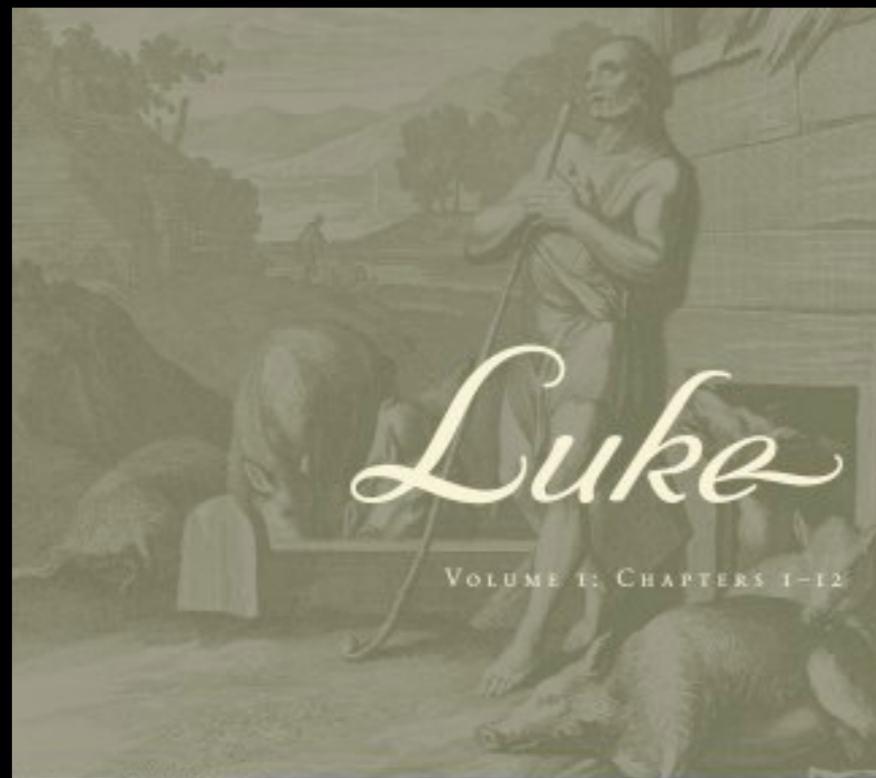


**If Jesus told people not to resist the empire, the masses would turn against, he would lose his popular following, and that would be the end of his influence—or so his enemies hoped.**





**If Jesus told people not to pay the tax, however —as the elders probably hoped—he would be guilty of subverting the Roman government. Then they would be able to haul him before the governor and accuse him of being an insurrectionist....**



REFORMED  
EXPOSITORY  
COMMENTARY

PHILIP GRAHAM RYKEN

ФІЛІП ГРАНАМ РІКЕН

**These men must have thought they finally had Jesus right where they wanted him. He seemed to be caught on the horns of a real dilemma. If he told people to pay their taxes, he was finished as a popular hero; if he told them not to, he was a dead man.**





**Is it lawful for us to give  
tribute to Caesar or not?**

— Jesus of Nazareth - Luke 20:22 —

## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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**23 But he perceived their craftiness, he said to them, 24 “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar’s.”**





CAESAR

AVGVSTVS



A marble bust of Octavian, the first Roman Emperor, shown from the chest up. He has short, wavy hair and is wearing a highly detailed military breastplate (cuirass) with various relief carvings. His right arm is raised, with his index finger pointing upwards. The background is dark.

**Octavian:  
“Caesar Augustus”**

First Roman Emperor  
27 BC - AD 14

**“The Son of God”**

**“King of kings,  
Lord of lords”**

**“The Savior of  
the whole world”**





**TI. CAESAR DIVI AVG. F. AVGVSTVS**

Tiberius Caesar Augustus  
Son of the Divine Augustus

## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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**23 But he perceived their craftiness, he said to them, 24 “Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar’s.”**





**He puts them on the defensive right away by asking them to produce one of the coins: what are they doing possessing such blasphemous objects?**



**His key question...gets them to admit that it is indeed Caesar's coinage they have about their persons, with its haughty image of Tiberius Caesar himself, and the inscription that proclaims him son of God.**



## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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**25 He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”**

# The Usual Interpretation

- 1 We should pay taxes.



**Pay to all what is  
owed them: taxes to  
whom taxes are owed,  
revenue to whom  
revenue is owed.**

**The Apostle Paul**  
— Romans 13:7 —





**Paying the *full* amount of our federal income tax and other taxes is an act of obedience to Jesus Christ.**

— Phillip Graham Ryken, Luke Vol. 2 —



# The Usual Interpretation

- 1 We should pay taxes.
- 2 We should pray for our rules.

**First of all, then, I urge  
that supplications,  
prayers, intercessions,  
and thanksgivings be  
made for all people, for  
kings and all who are in  
high positions, that we  
may lead a peaceful and  
quiet life, godly and  
dignified in every way.**



**The Apostle Paul**  
— 1 Timothy 2:1-4 —



**This is good, and  
it is pleasing in  
the sight of God our  
Savior, who desires  
all people to be  
saved and to come  
to the knowledge of  
the truth.**



**The Apostle Paul**  
— 1 Timothy 2:1-4 —

# The Usual Interpretation

- 1 We should pay taxes.
- 2 We should pray for our rules.
- 3 We should obey the law.



**Let every person be  
subject to the gov-  
erning authorities.  
For there is no  
authority except  
from God, and those  
that exist have been  
instituted by God.**

**The Apostle Paul**  
— Romans 13:1-2 —





**Render to Caesar the things  
that are Caesar's, and to God  
the things that are God's.**

— Jesus of Nazareth in Luke 20:25 —






If Caesar wants his image back,  
then give it to him. But give back  
to God what belongs to God.

**What  
belongs  
to God**







**The earth is the Lord's  
and everything in it,  
the world, and  
all who live in it.**


— Psalm 24:1 —



**Caesar's coins  
bear Caesar's  
image. But who  
bears the image  
of God?**







**Then God said, “Let us make man  
in our image, after our likeness....”  
So God created man in His own image,  
in the image of God he created Him;  
male and female He created them.**

— Genesis 1:26-27 —









A New Heaven  
and a New Earth



Reclaiming  
Biblical Eschatology

J. Richard Middleton

J. Richard Middleton

Reclaiming  
Biblical Eschatology

**It is not just some elite person (the king or a priest) who manifests God's presence on earth. Rather, the entire human race—and each person, male and female, no matter what their social standing—is made in the image of God.**





**Render to Caesar the things  
that are Caesar's, and to God  
the things that are God's.**

— Jesus of Nazareth in Luke 20:25 —

## The Gospel of Luke 20:19-26

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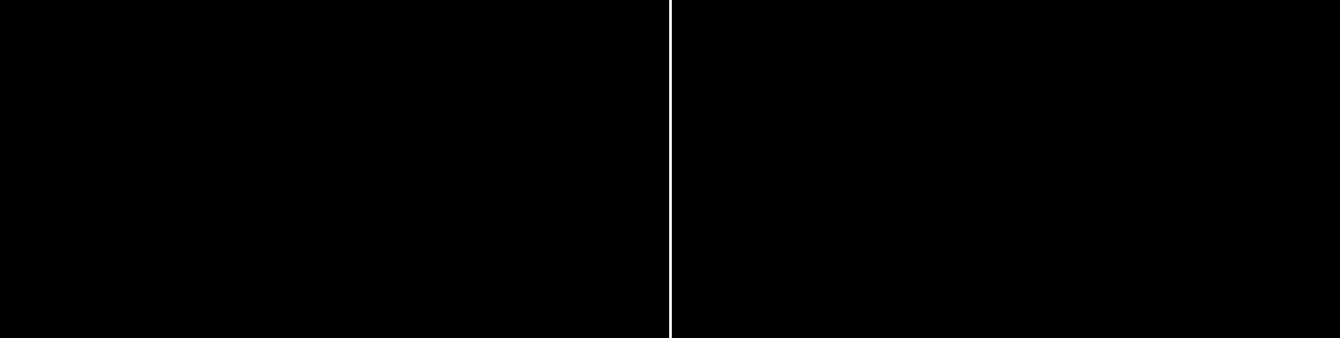
**26 And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.**



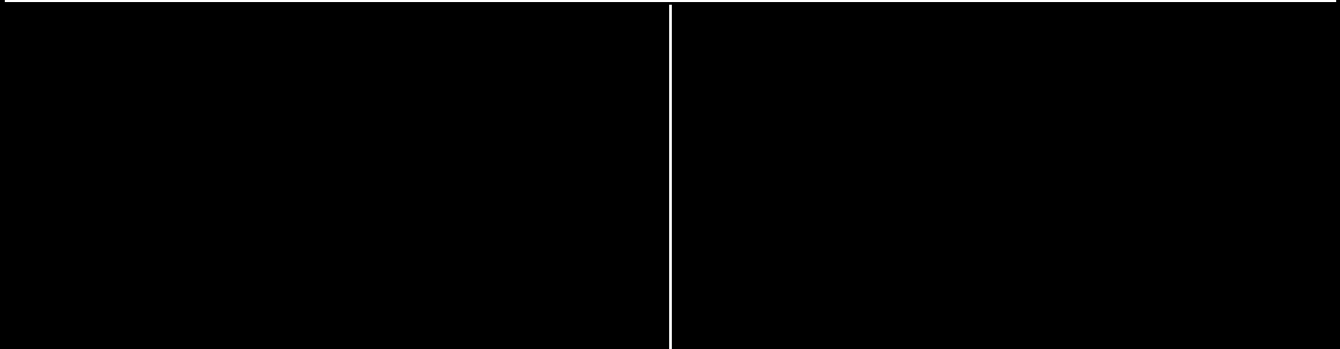
# Important Question

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**Why does Luke record this episode in his historical biography of Jesus?**



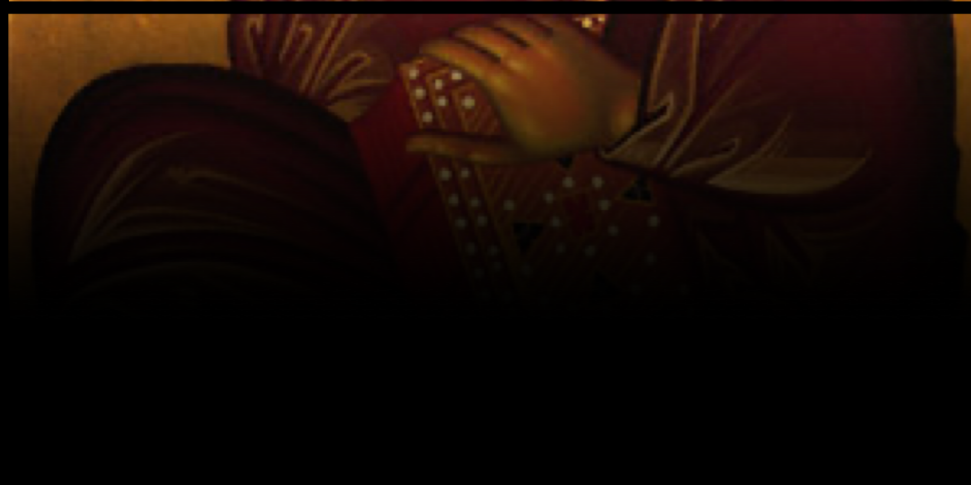
**Jesus has come on a search  
and rescue mission to reclaim  
that which is lost and restore  
it to its rightful owner:  
the Creator of heaven and earth.**



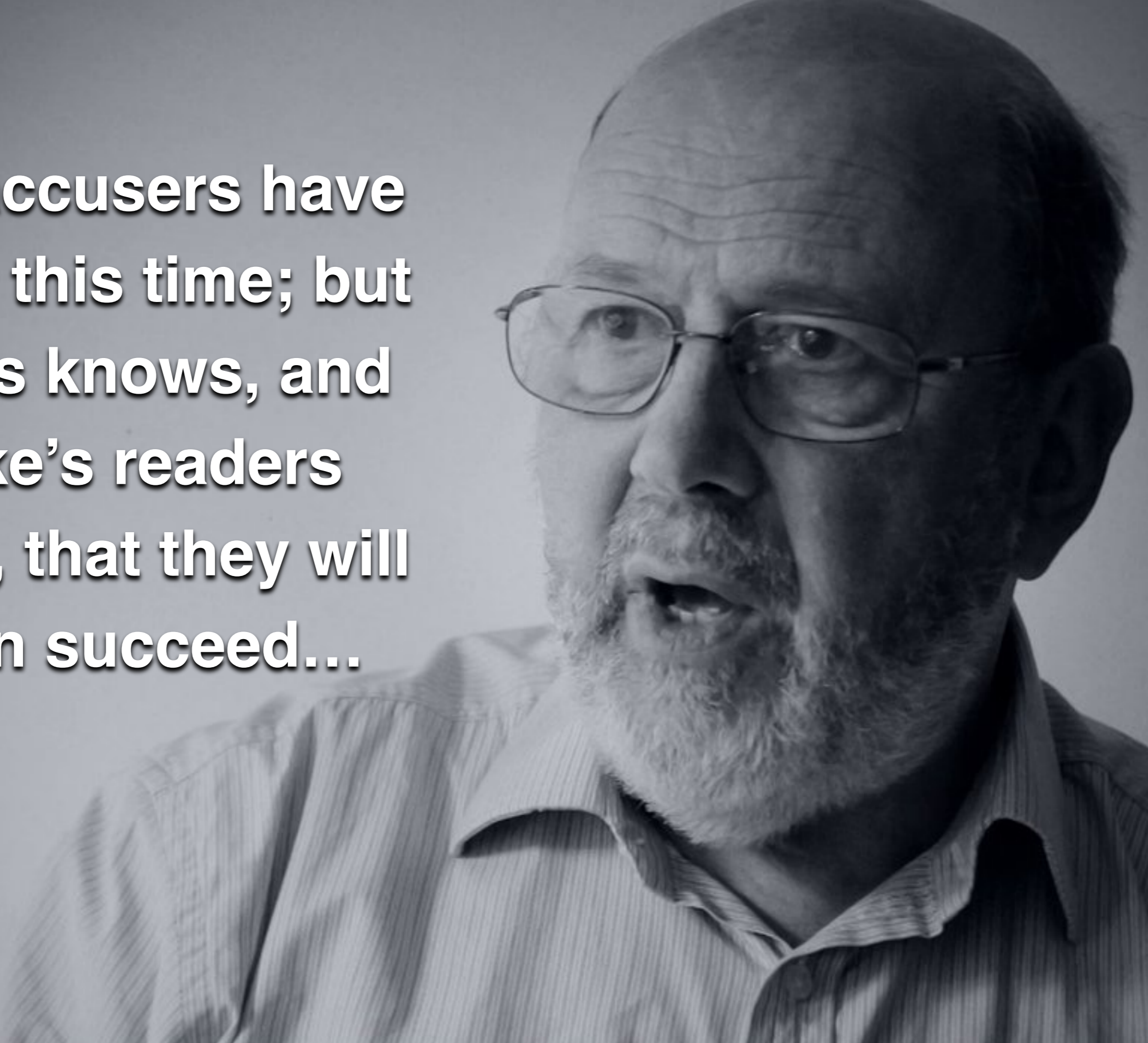




**It is this Creator God  
who has freely made  
Himself known in the  
person of Jesus  
of Nazareth.**



**The accusers have  
failed this time; but  
Jesus knows, and  
Luke's readers  
know, that they will  
soon succeed...**

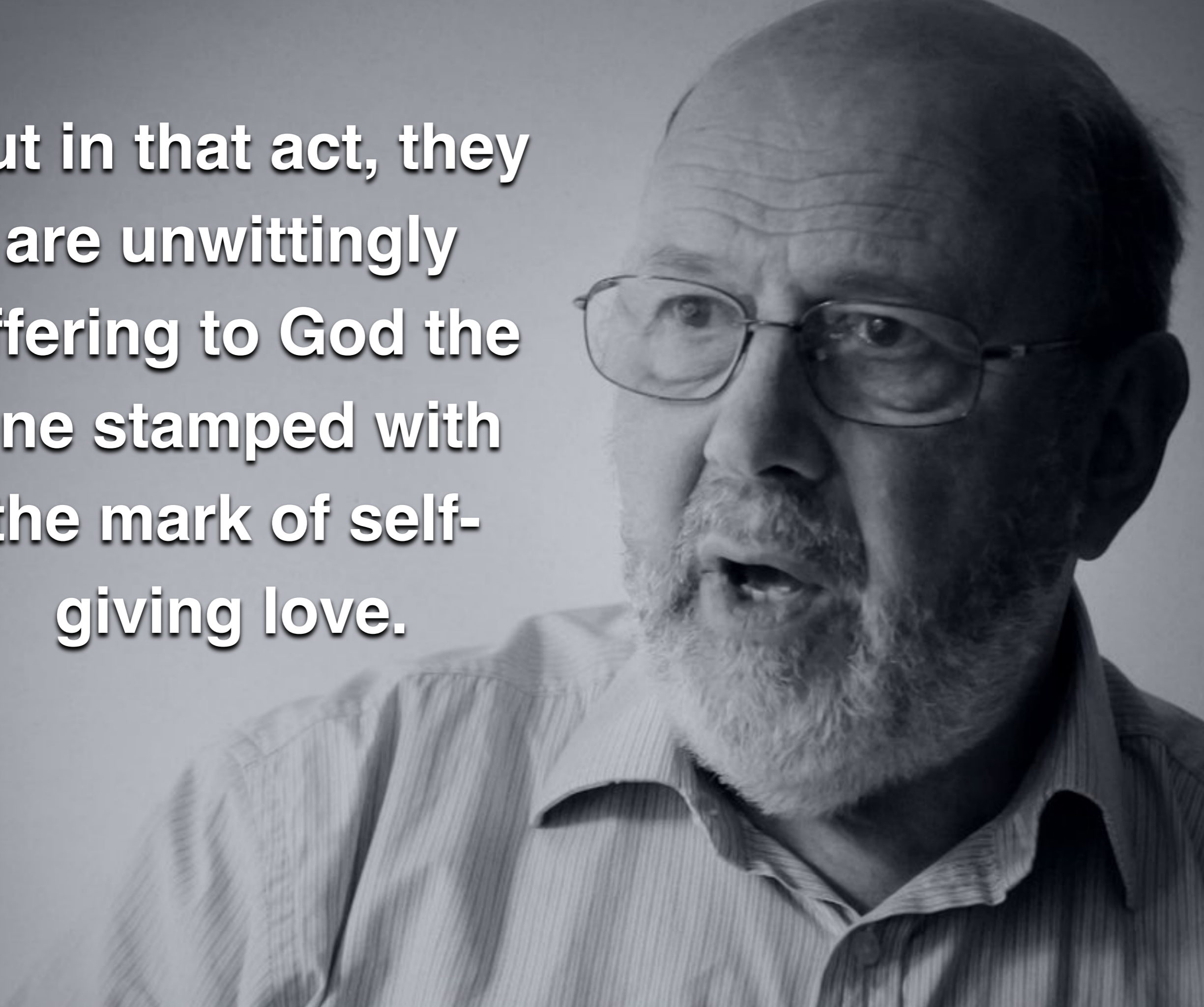




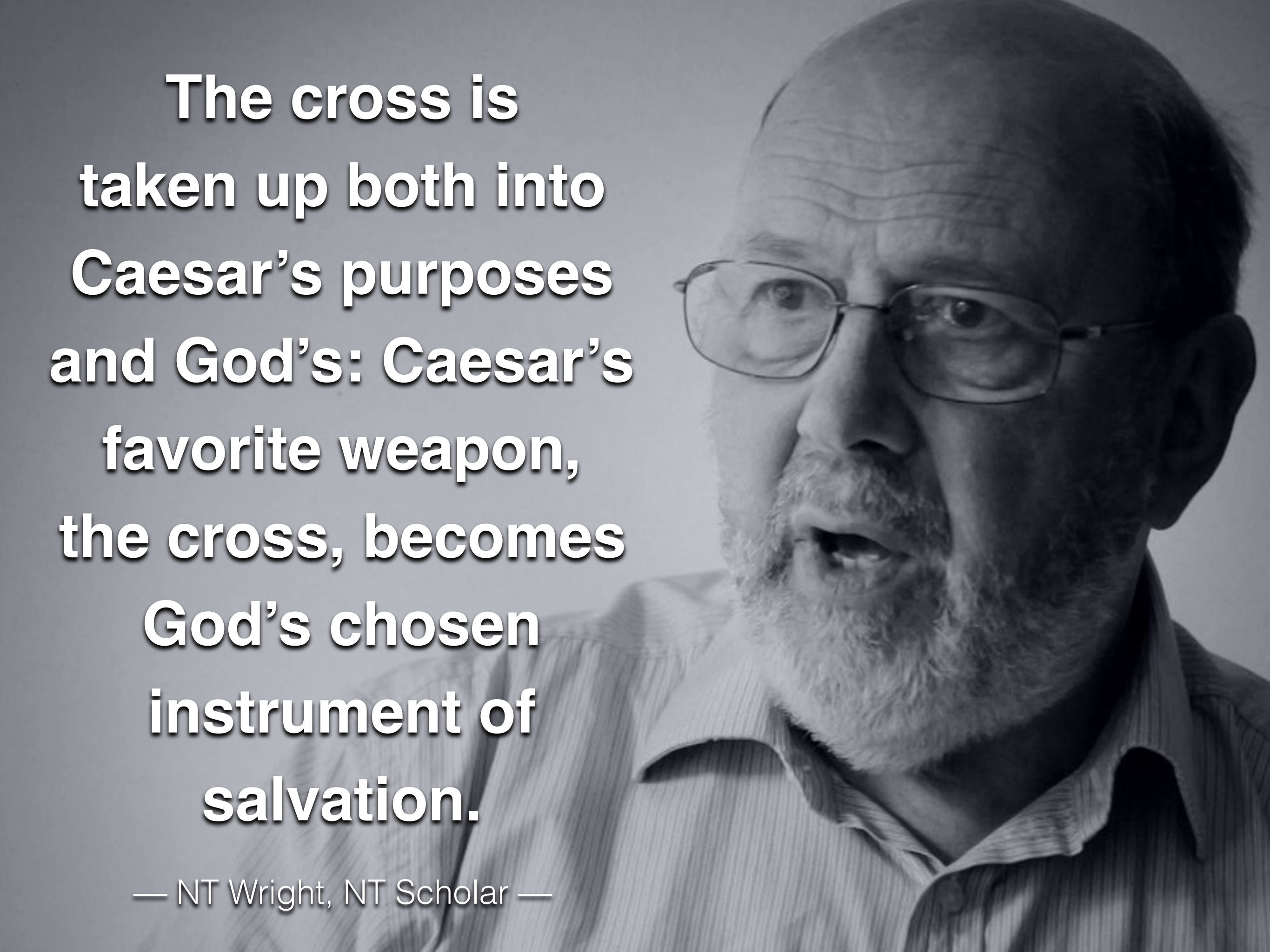
**The leading Jews are going to hand over to Caesar not only the coin that bears his image, and his false title of 'son of God', but the human being who truly bears God's image, and who truly bears that title.**



**But in that act, they  
are unwittingly  
offering to God the  
one stamped with  
the mark of self-  
giving love.**








**The cross is  
taken up both into  
Caesar's purposes  
and God's: Caesar's  
favorite weapon,  
the cross, becomes  
God's chosen  
instrument of  
salvation.**

— NT Wright, NT Scholar —

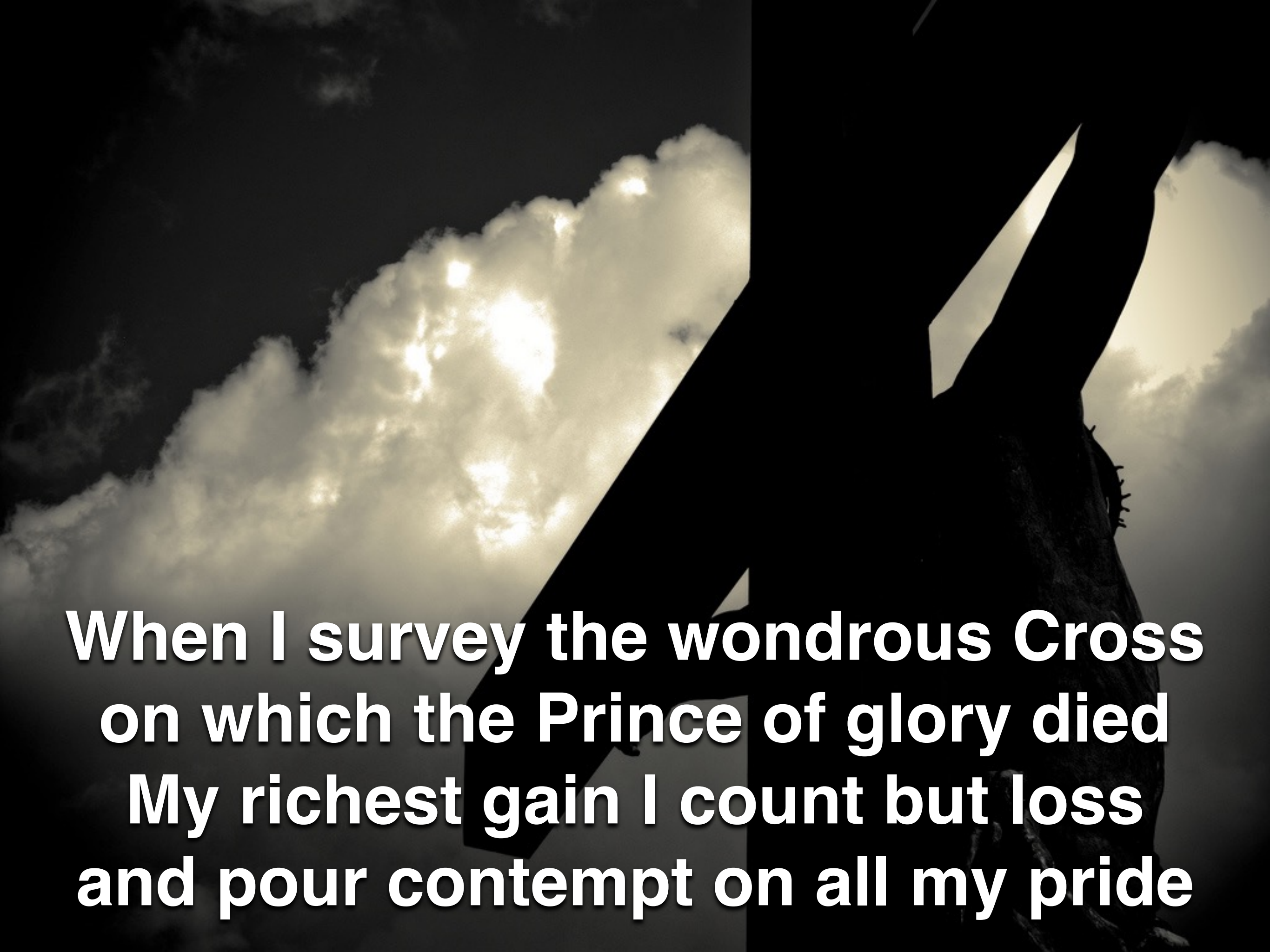






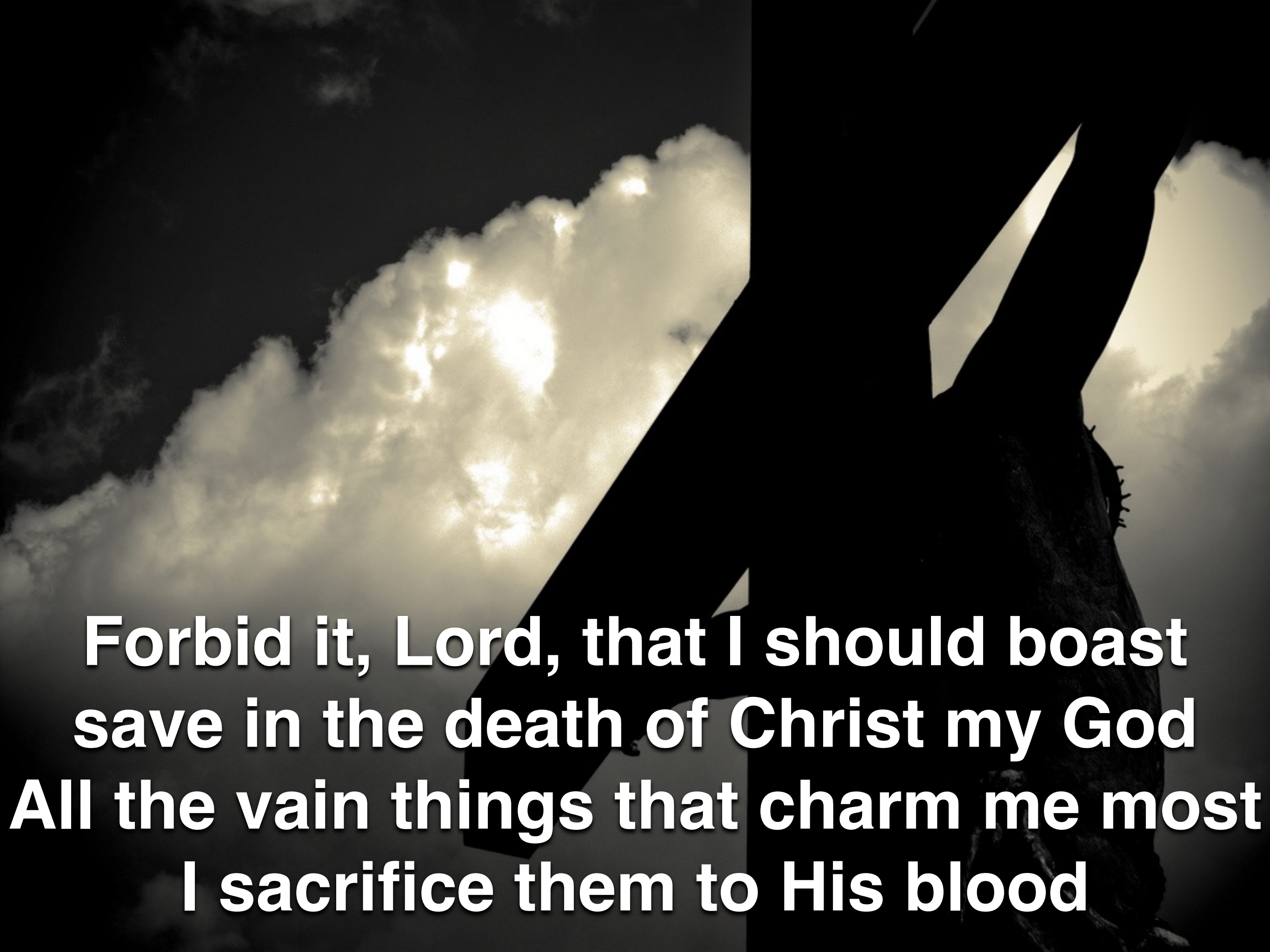
**Jesus embraced the cross  
precisely as a king  
embraces his scepter.**

— Michael Horton —

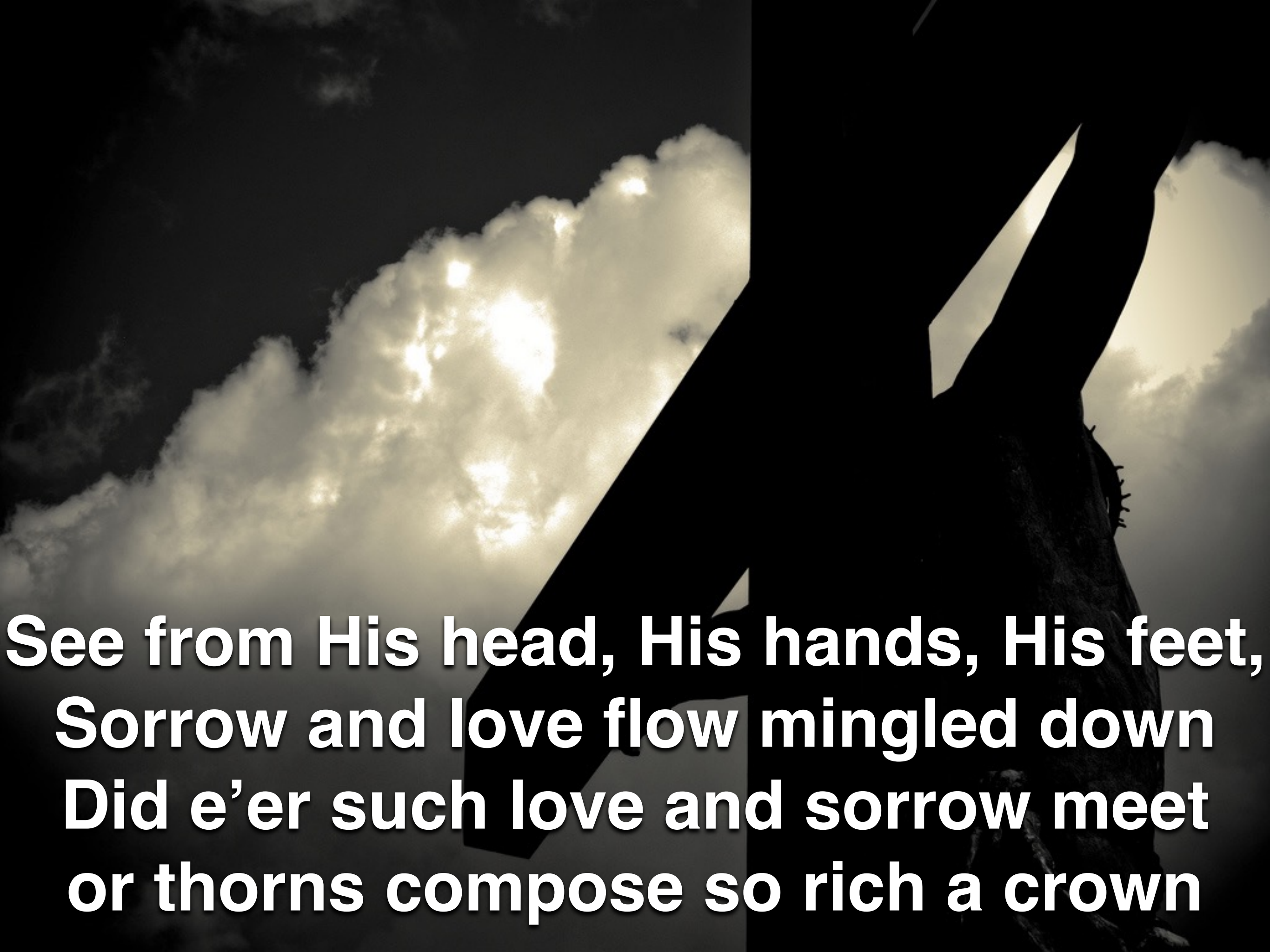


**When I survey the wondrous Cross  
on which the Prince of glory died  
My richest gain I count but loss  
and pour contempt on all my pride**





**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the death of Christ my God  
All the vain things that charm me most  
I sacrifice them to His blood**



**See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
or thorns compose so rich a crown**



**...the life I now live  
in the flesh I live  
by faith in the Son  
of God, who loved  
me and gave  
himself for me.**

— Galatians 2:20 —



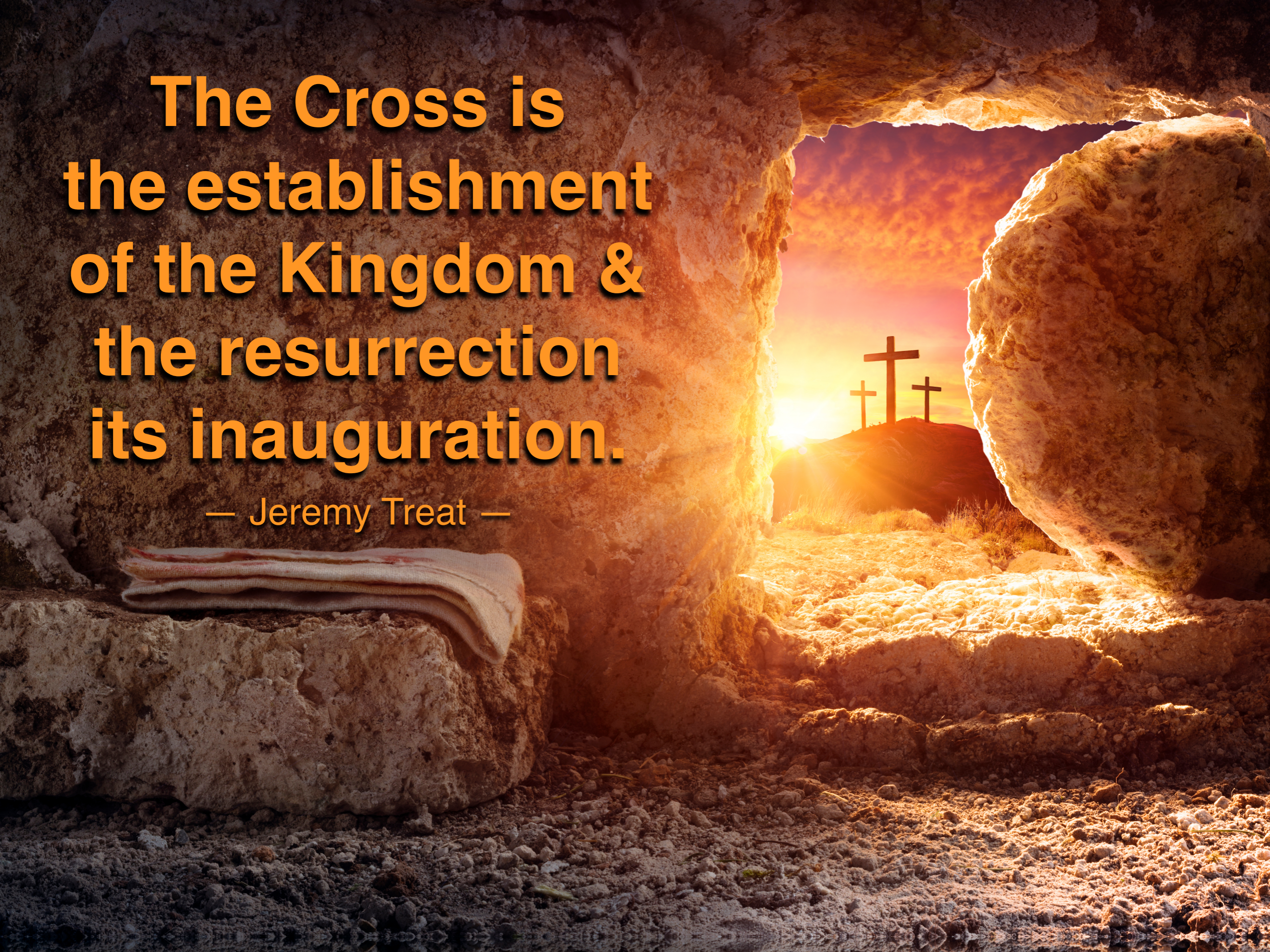
**Christ Jesus has made me his own.**

— Philippians 3:12



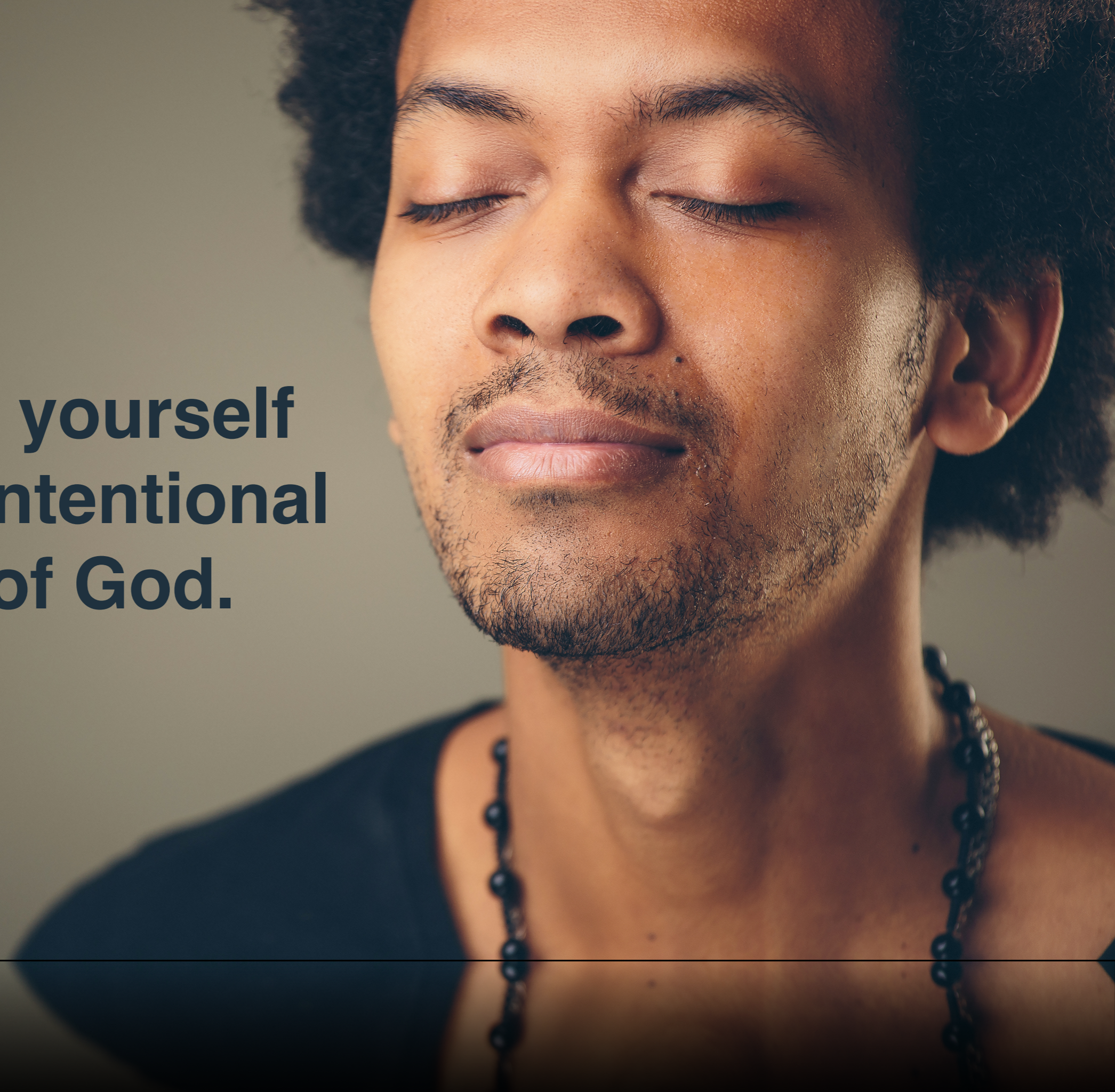
**The Cross is  
the establishment  
of the Kingdom &  
the resurrection  
its inauguration.**

— Jeremy Treat —





**Know yourself  
as an intentional  
act of God.**







**Let every man think  
himself an act of God.**

— Phillip James Bailey, Festus (1839) —

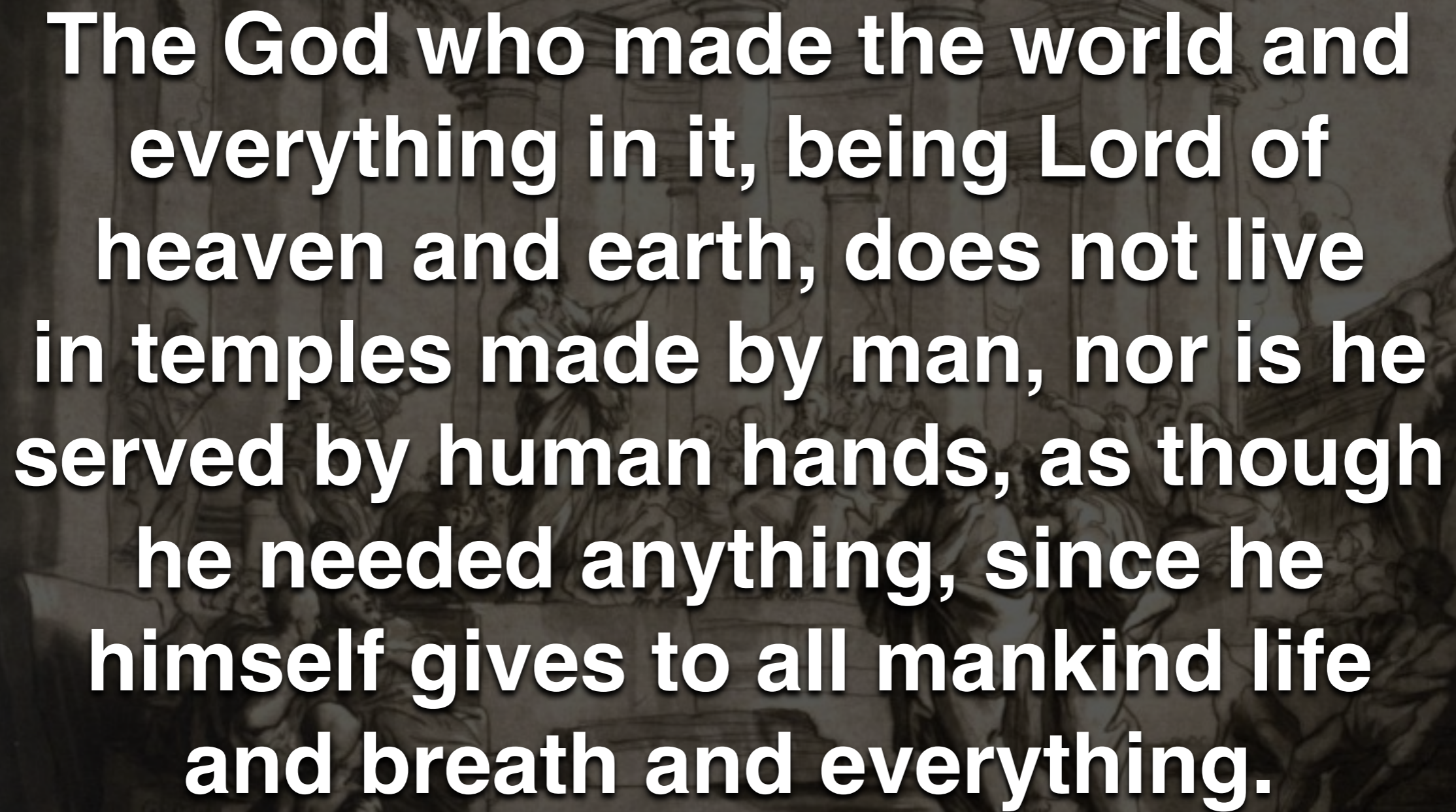






*E Museo Dni. Arthuri Pond.*





**The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.**

— Acts 17:24-25 —

*E. Museo Dni. Arthuri Pond.*



**O Love that will not let me go  
I rest my weary soul in Thee  
I give Thee back the life I owe  
that in Thine oceans depths  
it's flow may richer, fuller be**

— George Matheson's "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" —





**What would it look like for you  
to give back to God the life you owe?**



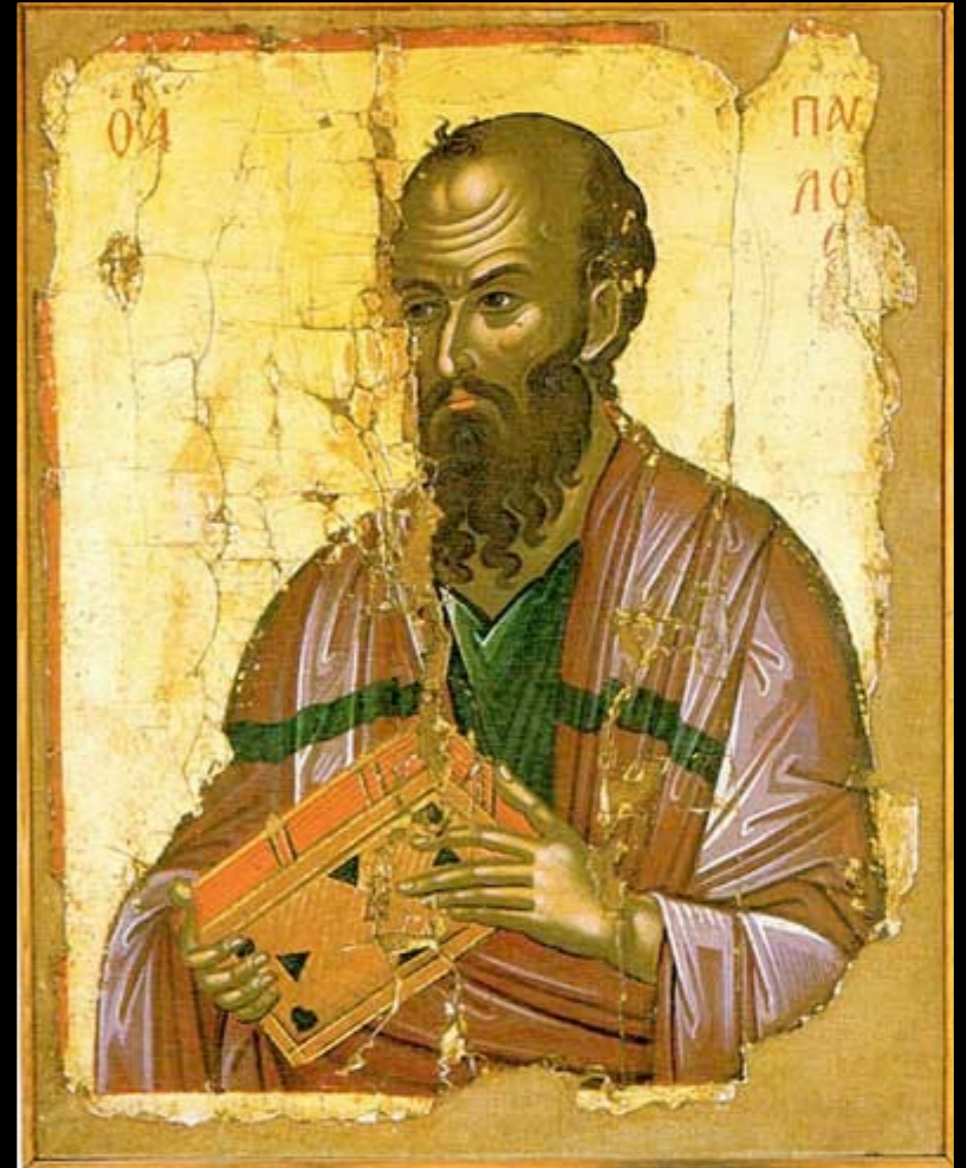




**Pledge your ultimate  
allegiance to Jesus,  
the King of kings**



**...he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient  
to the point of death,  
even death on a  
cross. Therefore God  
has highly exalted him  
and bestowed on him  
the name that is  
above every name,**



**The Apostle Paul**  
— Philippians 2:8-11 —



**so that at the name  
of Jesus every knee  
should bow, in heaven  
and on earth and  
under the earth, and  
every tongue confess  
that Jesus Christ is  
Lord, to the glory of  
God the Father.**



**The Apostle Paul**  
— Philippians 2:8-11 —



**If God has made  
Jesus His Son  
the King of kings,  
then what do we  
owe to Jesus?**





**Trust**  
**Allegiance**  
**Loyalty**  
**Fidelity**  
**Everything**







**Were the whole realm  
of nature mine  
That were an offering  
far too small  
Love so amazing,  
so divine  
Demands my soul,  
my life, my all**

— When I Survey the Wondrous Cross —



