


A close-up photograph of a hand holding a lit sparkler. The sparkler is bright and glowing, with many sparks flying out. The background is dark and blurry, with a faint circular light source visible in the upper left. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

God Is Working
All Things for Good
— Philippians 1:12-18 —

A hand holding a lit sparkler against a dark background. The sparkler is bright and glowing, with many sparks flying out. The hand is wearing a dark, textured glove. The background is dark and out of focus.

Finding Joy

PHILIPPIANS

Right Where You Are

AMAZON ORIGINAL

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

THE

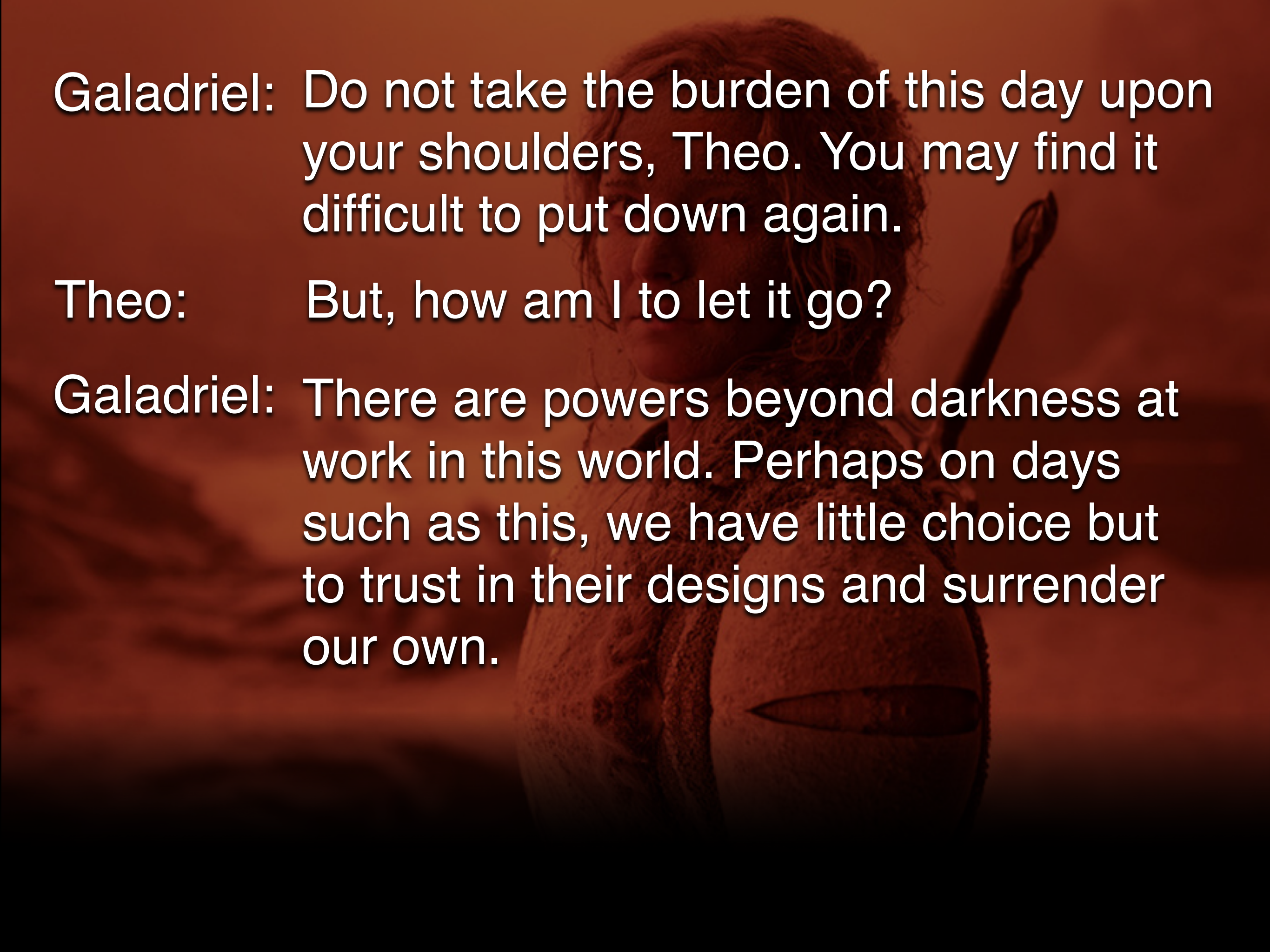
RINGS

OF

POWER







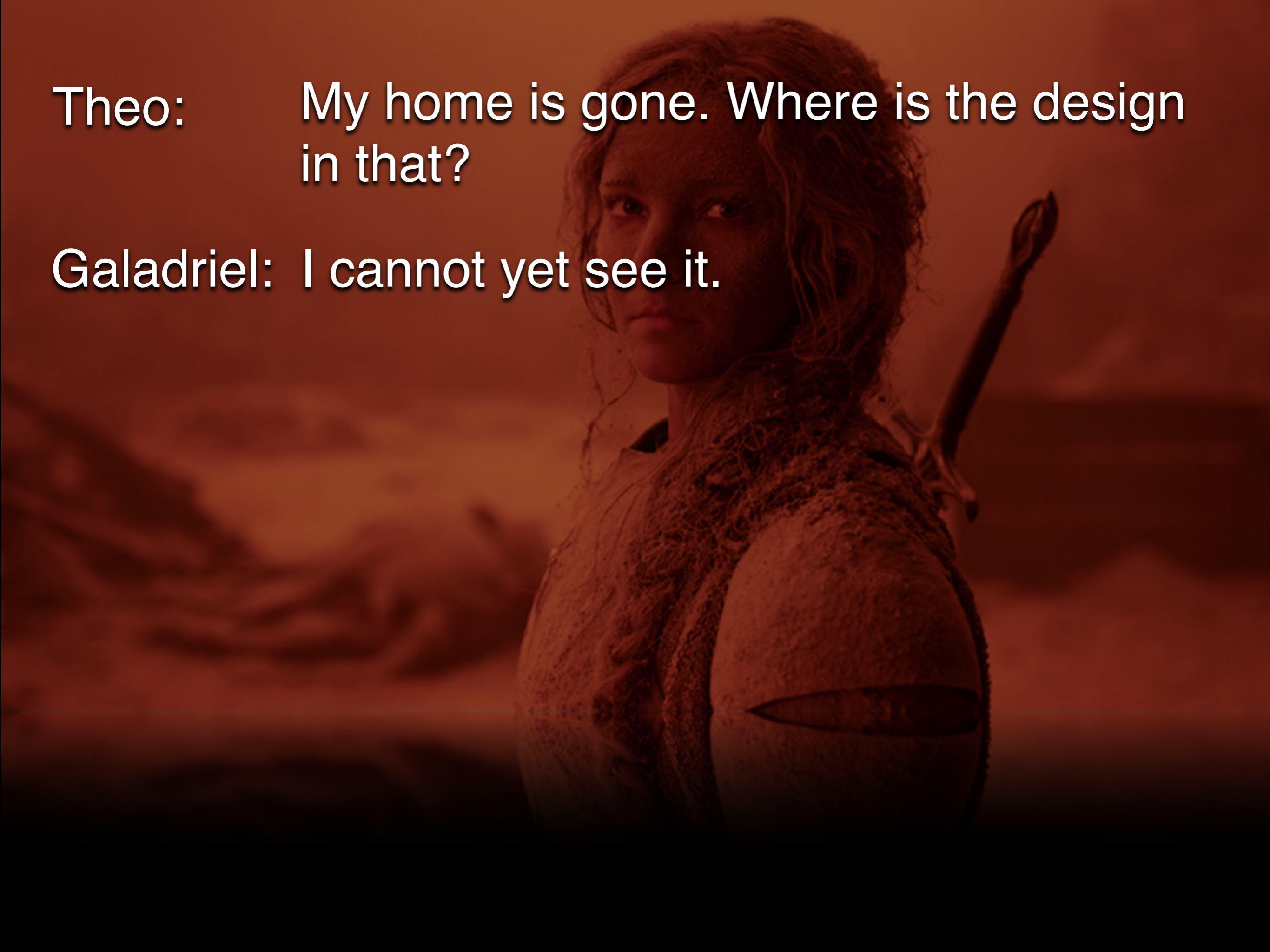
Galadriel: Do not take the burden of this day upon your shoulders, Theo. You may find it difficult to put down again.

Theo: But, how am I to let it go?

Galadriel: There are powers beyond darkness at work in this world. Perhaps on days such as this, we have little choice but to trust in their designs and surrender our own.

Theo: My home is gone. Where is the design
in that?

Galadriel: I cannot yet see it.







**You meant it for evil,
but God meant it for good.**

— Genesis 50:20 —

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God Is Working
All Things for Good
— Philippians 1:12-18 —

Surprise #1

Philippians 1

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance **the gospel....**

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*Paul refers to 'the gospel' 9x
in his letter to the Philippians*

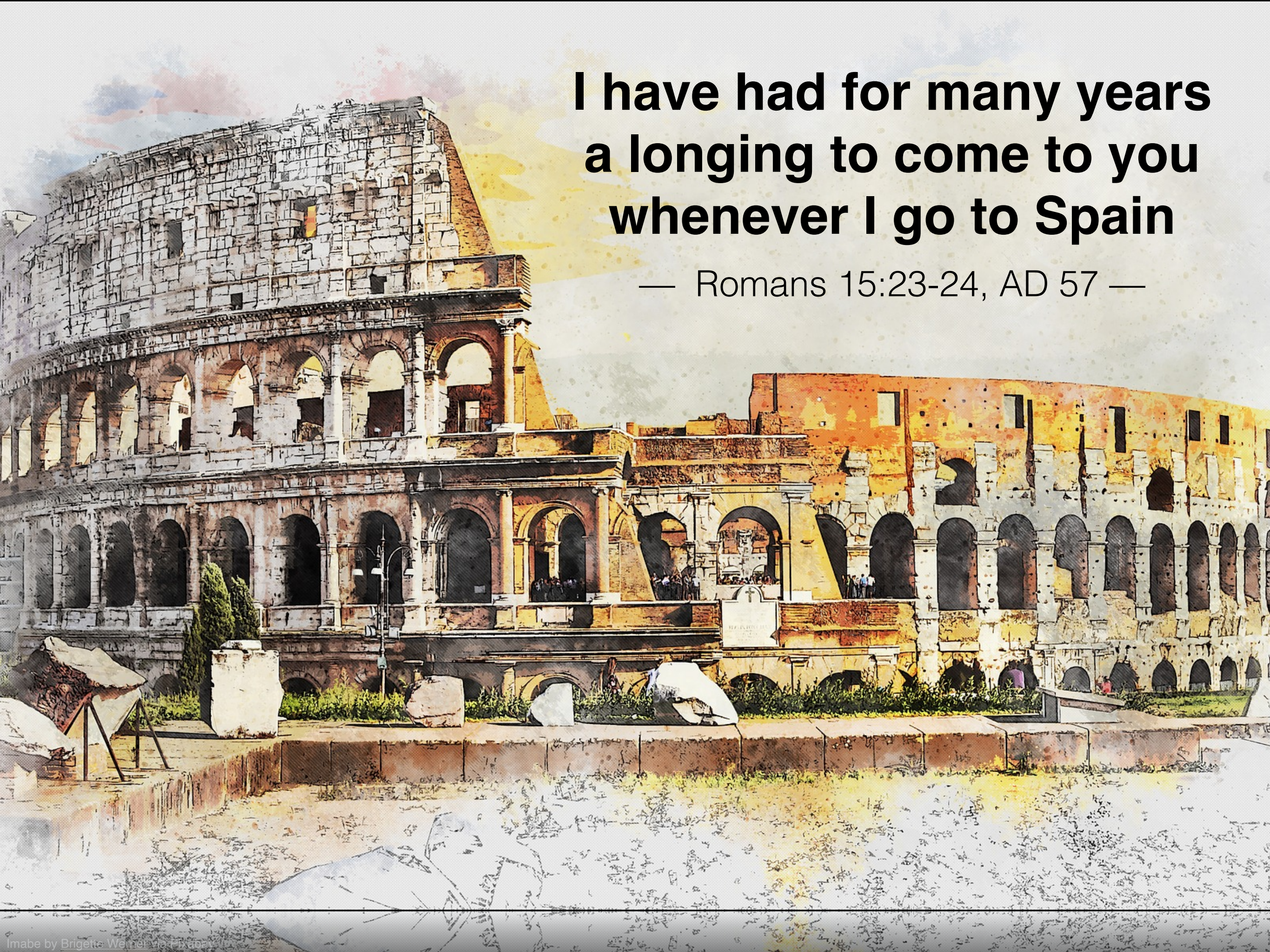
The Gospel is “Good News!”

**It's news about what
Jesus has done in his life,
death, & resurrection to
offer us both the forgiveness
of sins & eternal life.**



Philippians 1

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel....



**I have had for many years
a longing to come to you
whenever I go to Spain**

— Romans 15:23-24, AD 57 —



Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” — Acts 21:13-14



**After these days we...
went up to Jerusalem....
Then all the city was
stirred up...and they
seized Paul and dragged
him out of the temple,
and at once the gates
were shut. And...they
were seeking to kill him.**

— The Book of Acts 21-22 —



But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.”

— The Book of Acts 23:11 —



**Felix...sent for Paul and heard him
speak about faith in Christ Jesus.**

— The Apostle Paul before Felix, Governor of Caesarea, Acts 24:24 —



Paul before Festus: “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.... I appeal to Caesar.”

— The Apostle Paul before Festus, Governor of Caesarea, Acts 25:8ff —

Cruce subiectioni dedit, et Spes Ipsi Iudaeos

Ne statim coram petisset Caesare Paulus

Acto 25: 25

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)



Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

— Acts 26:32 —



And when it was decided that we should set sail for Italy, they delivered Paul...to centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius.... Julius treated Paul kindly...

— Acts 27:1 & 3 —



— Paul's Shipwreck, Acts 27 —



He lived there two years whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hinderance. — Acts 28:30-31



**Paul has now spent at least 4 YEARS in prison,
and now he is awaiting Caesar's decision.
Will he be executed or set free?**

Nero

Reigned from
AD54-AD68

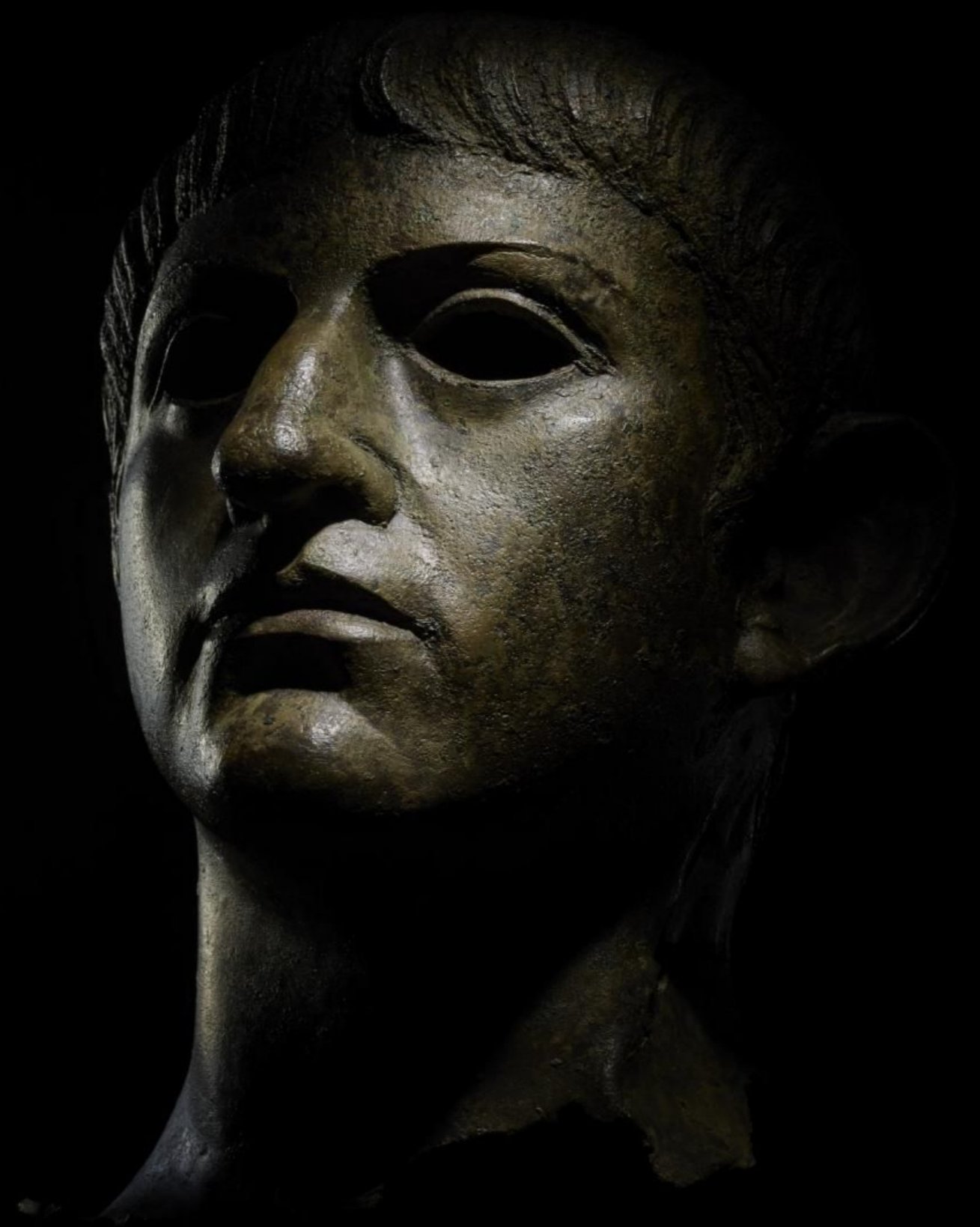
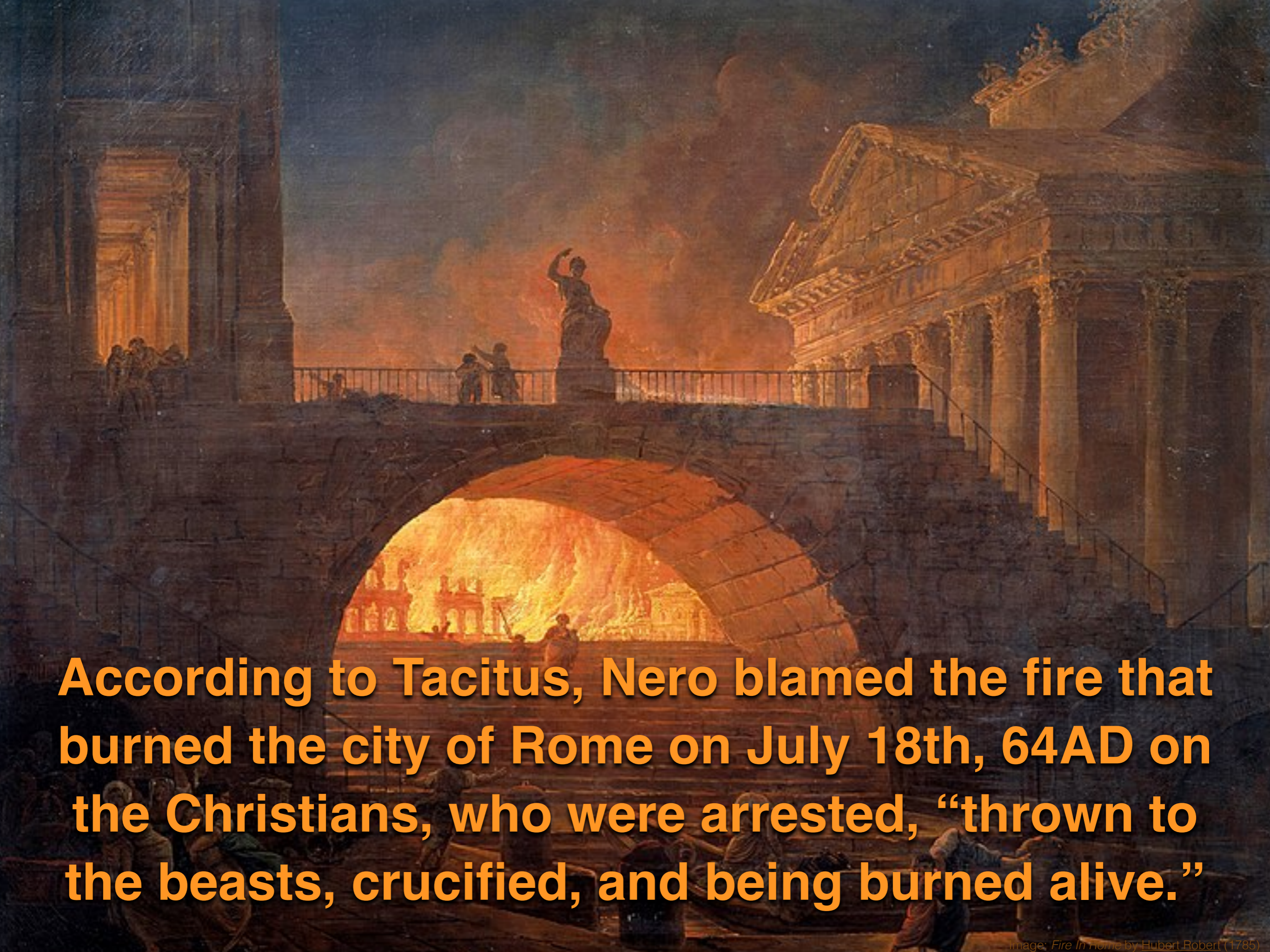


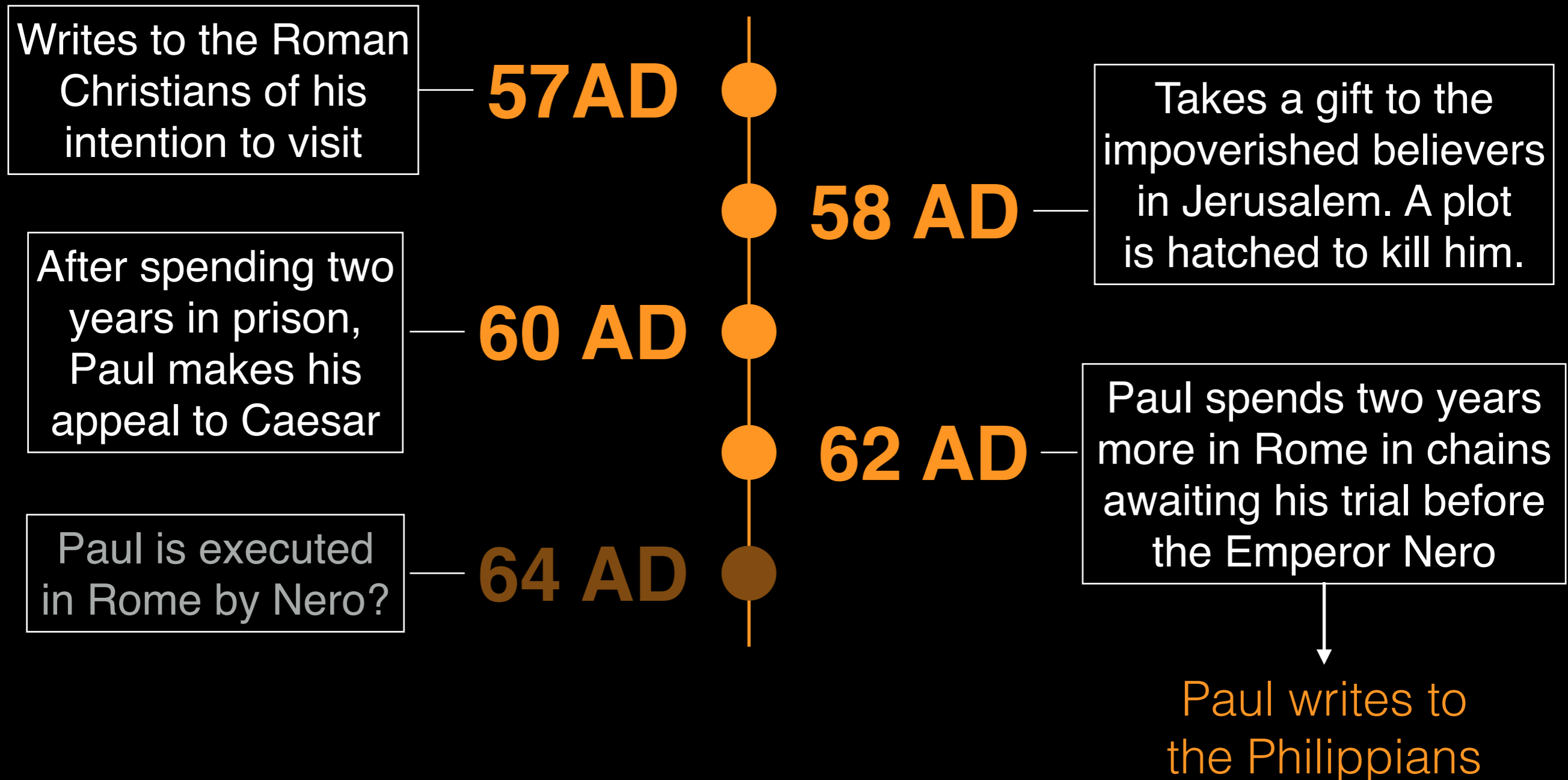


image: *Fire in Rome* by Hubert Robert (1785)



According to Tacitus, Nero blamed the fire that burned the city of Rome on July 18th, 64AD on the Christians, who were arrested, “thrown to the beasts, crucified, and being burned alive.”

A Quick Timeline of “What Happened” to the Apostle Paul





Philippians 1

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel....

Paul is talking crazy!



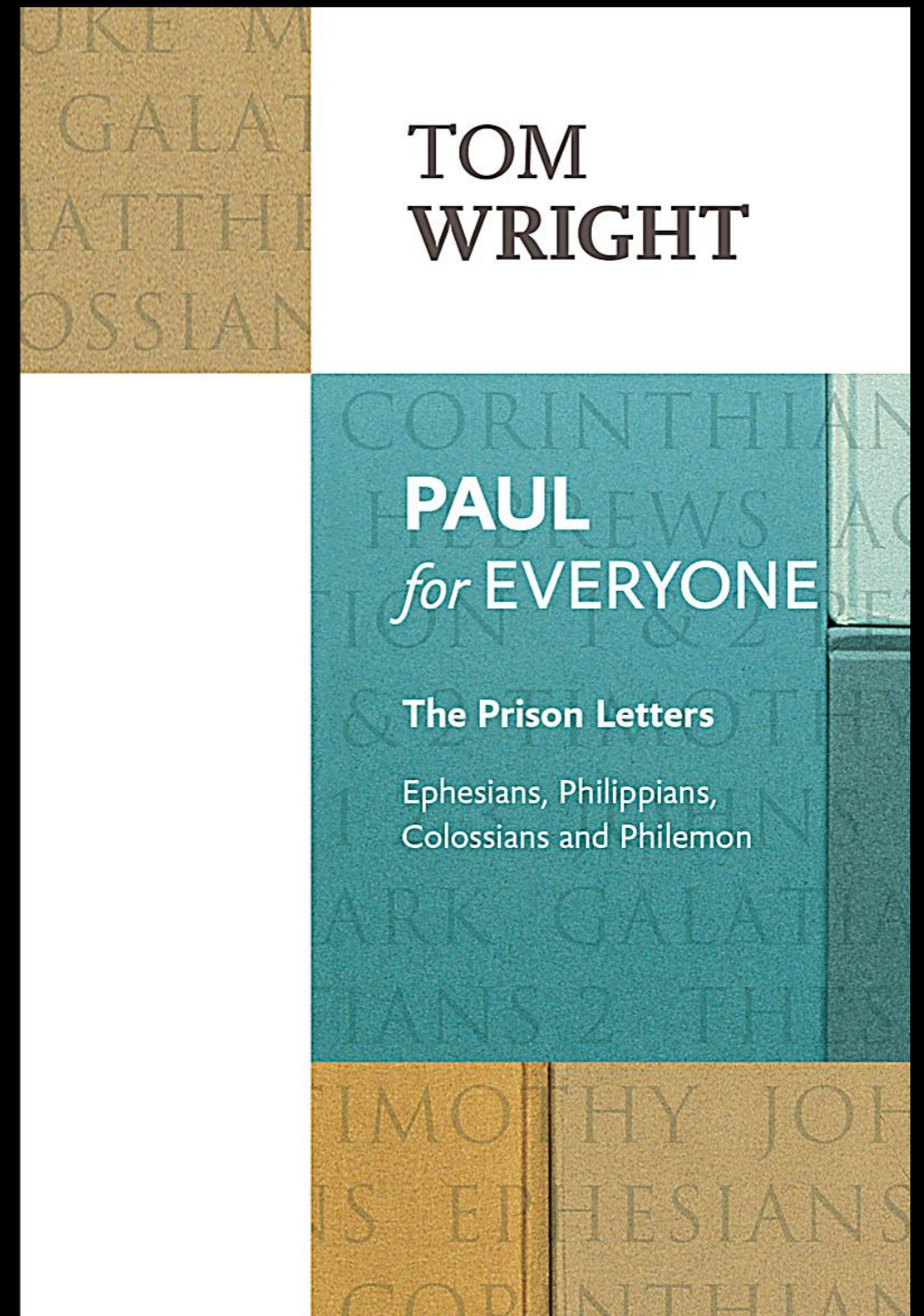
Philippians 1

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

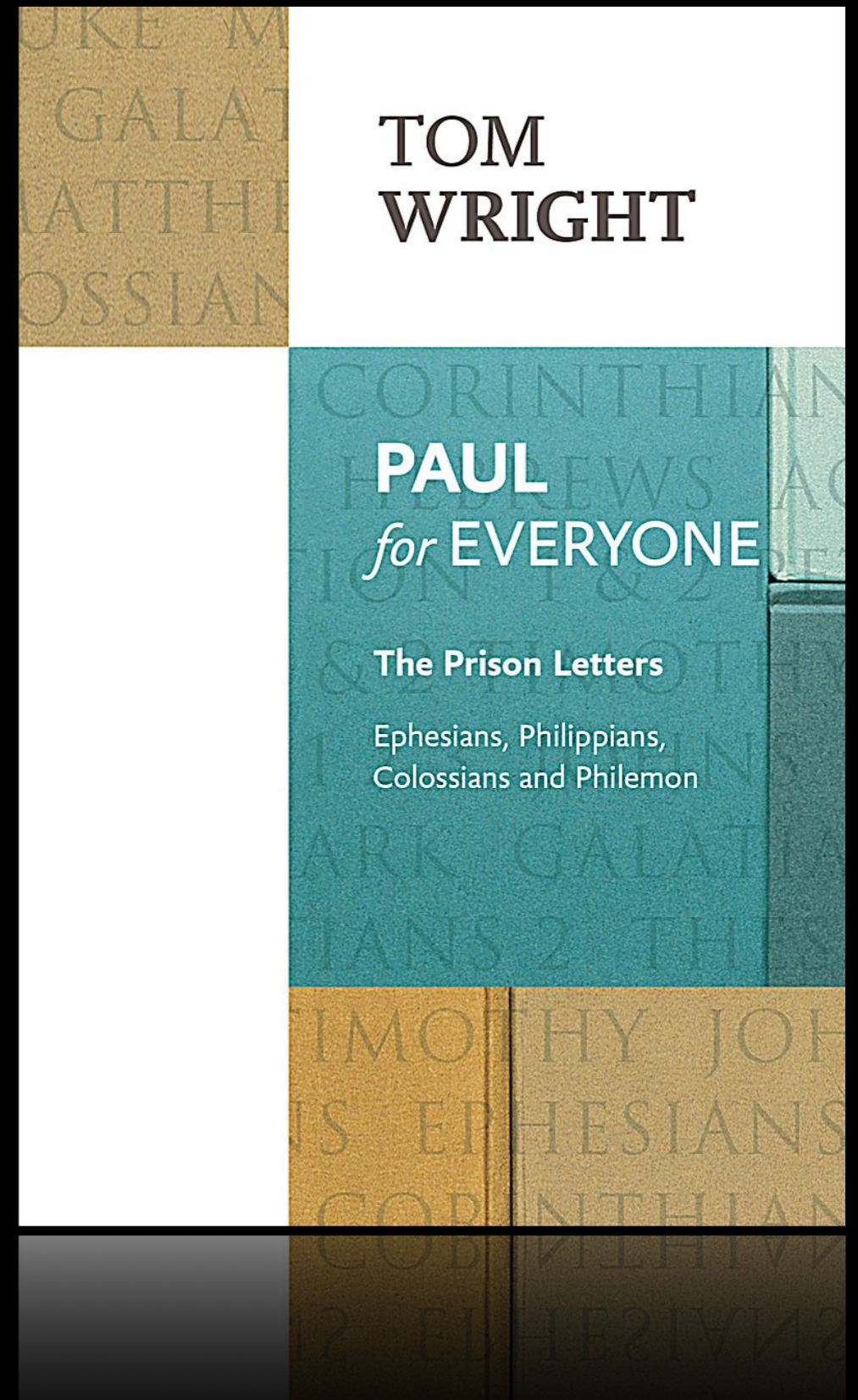


The Imperial Guard was a unit of some 9,000 soldiers trusted with the task of guarding the Roman Emperor & his palace.

**The soldiers were used,
of course, to the
‘gospel’ of Caesar —
the supposed ‘good
news’ that a new
emperor had taken the
throne, bringing (so he
claimed) peace and
justice to the world.**



Now here was someone out of the blue announcing that there was a different 'gospel': that Jesus of Nazareth had taken the throne of the world, and was summoning every man, woman and child to bow the knee to him.



The
Story of God
Bible Commentary

PHILIPPIANS |

Lynn H. Cohick

Tremper Longman III & Scot McKnight
General Editors

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LYNN H. COHICK

Imagine a Roman soldier's discussion with Paul and his subsequent astonishment when he hears Paul declare that his physical chains are not indicative of Caesar's hold on his life. Instead, those chains establish Christ's victory in spreading the gospel to all.

The
Story of God
Bible Commentary

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Likely some guards shook their heads in disbelief, confident in the superior power of Caesar. Others laughed at Paul's "fairy tale." But perhaps a few went away pondering, seeing something in Paul that they had not seen in a prisoner before. Paul would identify that "something" as Christ.

Philippians 1

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.



**The brothers who are with me greet you.
All the saints greet you, especially
those of Caesar's household.**

— Philippians 4:21-22 —



Paul had wanted to go to Rome to preach the Good News of Jesus in the heart of the empire. God answered Paul's prayers beyond his wildest of dreams. God is working all things for the good.

Surprise #2

Philippians 1

14 And most of the brothers, having become **confident in the Lord** by my imprisonment, are **much more bold to speak the word without fear.**

Most of the brothers in the Lord have gained confidence from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the message fearlessly.

— Holman Christian Standard Bible —

Moreover, because of my imprisonment the Lord has caused most of the brothers to become confident to speak God's word more boldly and courageously than ever before.

— International Standard Version —

**Wait a minute.
That makes
no sense
whatsoever.
How is that
even possible?**



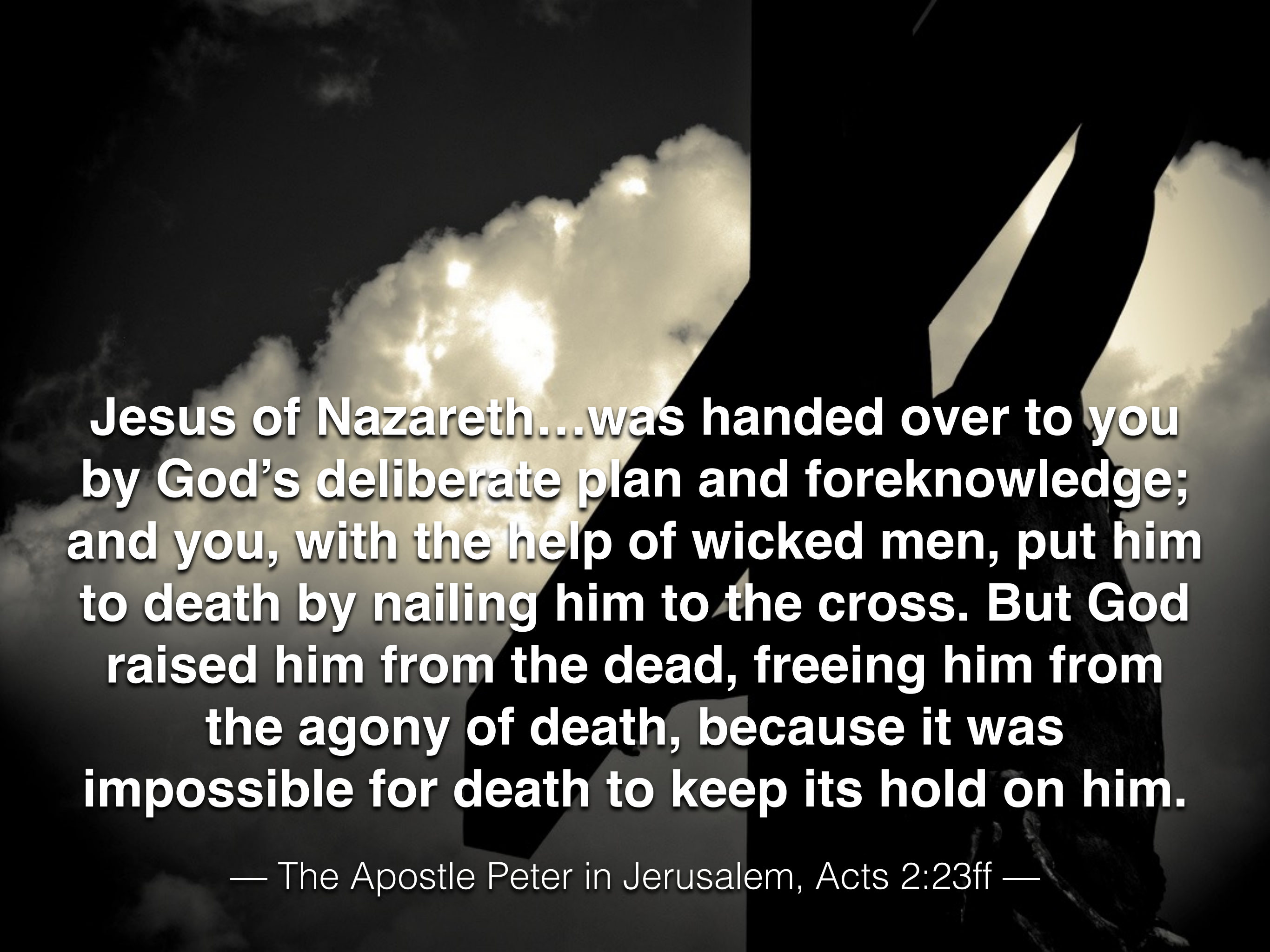


Strangely, seeing Paul in prison for the faith he believed and proclaimed has not had a chilling effect on the Christians in Rome. Rather, they've become more confident and more bold to speak the word without fear.

Philippians 1

14 And most of the brothers, having become **confident in the Lord** by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.





Jesus of Nazareth...was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

— The Apostle Peter in Jerusalem, Acts 2:23ff —



[The council] called in the apostles, they beat them, and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name.



— Acts 5:40ff —

Philippians 1

14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.



Paul seems to be telling this to the saints in the Roman colony of Philippi to encourage them to speak about Christ more fearlessly.

Surprise #3

Philippians 1

15 Some indeed **preach Christ** from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.

16 The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. **17** The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment.

Two Groups of Christians Preaching Christ

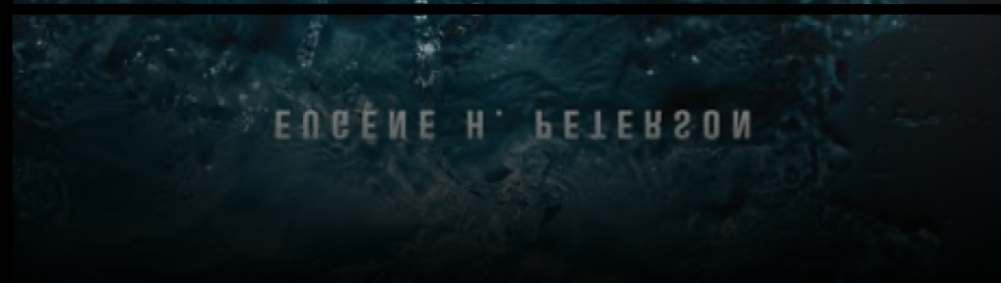
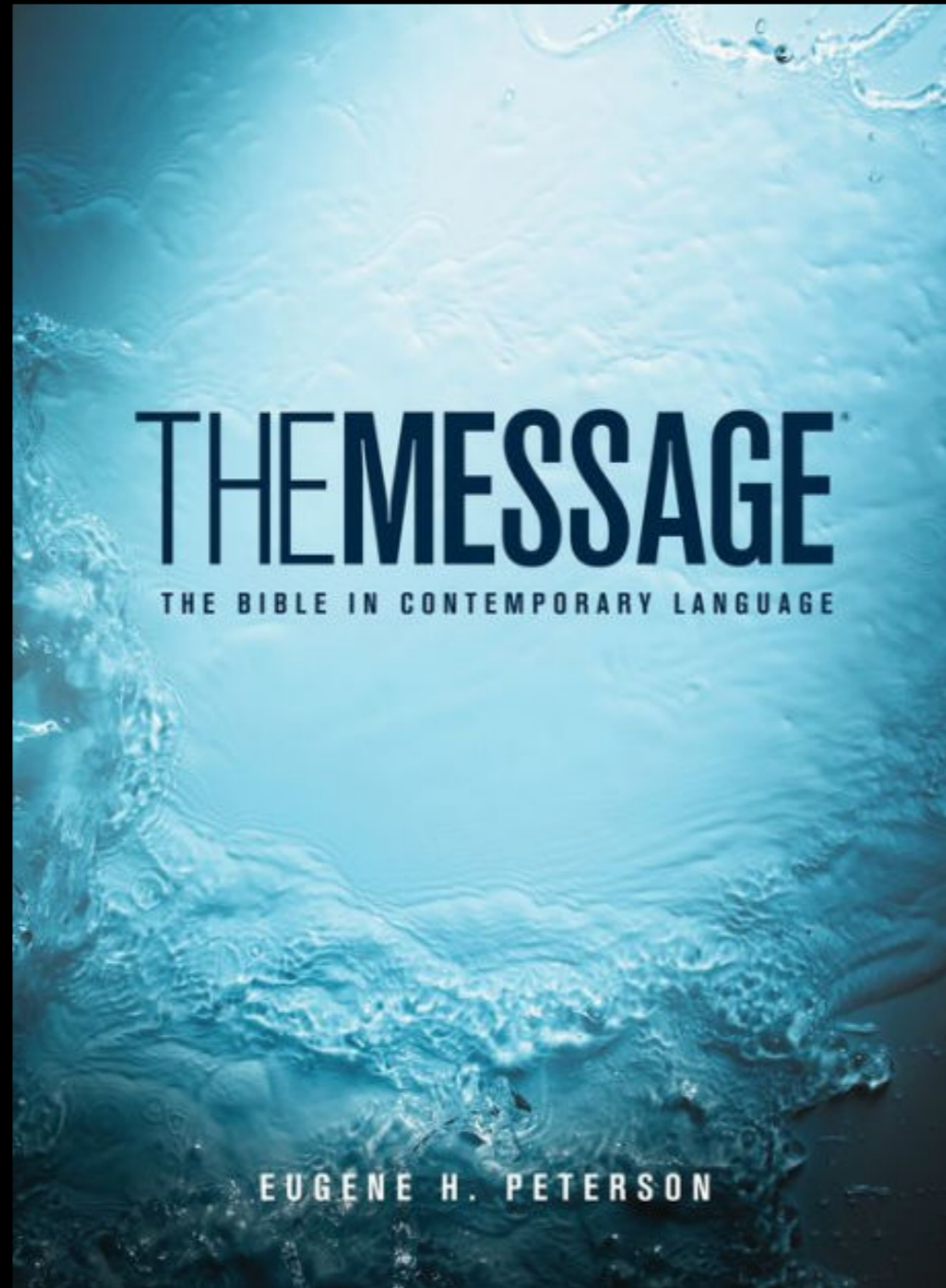


Some preach
out of love &
good will

knowing Paul
has been
imprisoned
for the defense
of the Gospel

Some preach
out of envy &
rivalry & selfish
ambition

thinking they
can afflict Paul
in prison



It's true that some here preach Christ because with me out of the way, they think they'll step right into the spotlight. But the others do it with the best heart in the world.

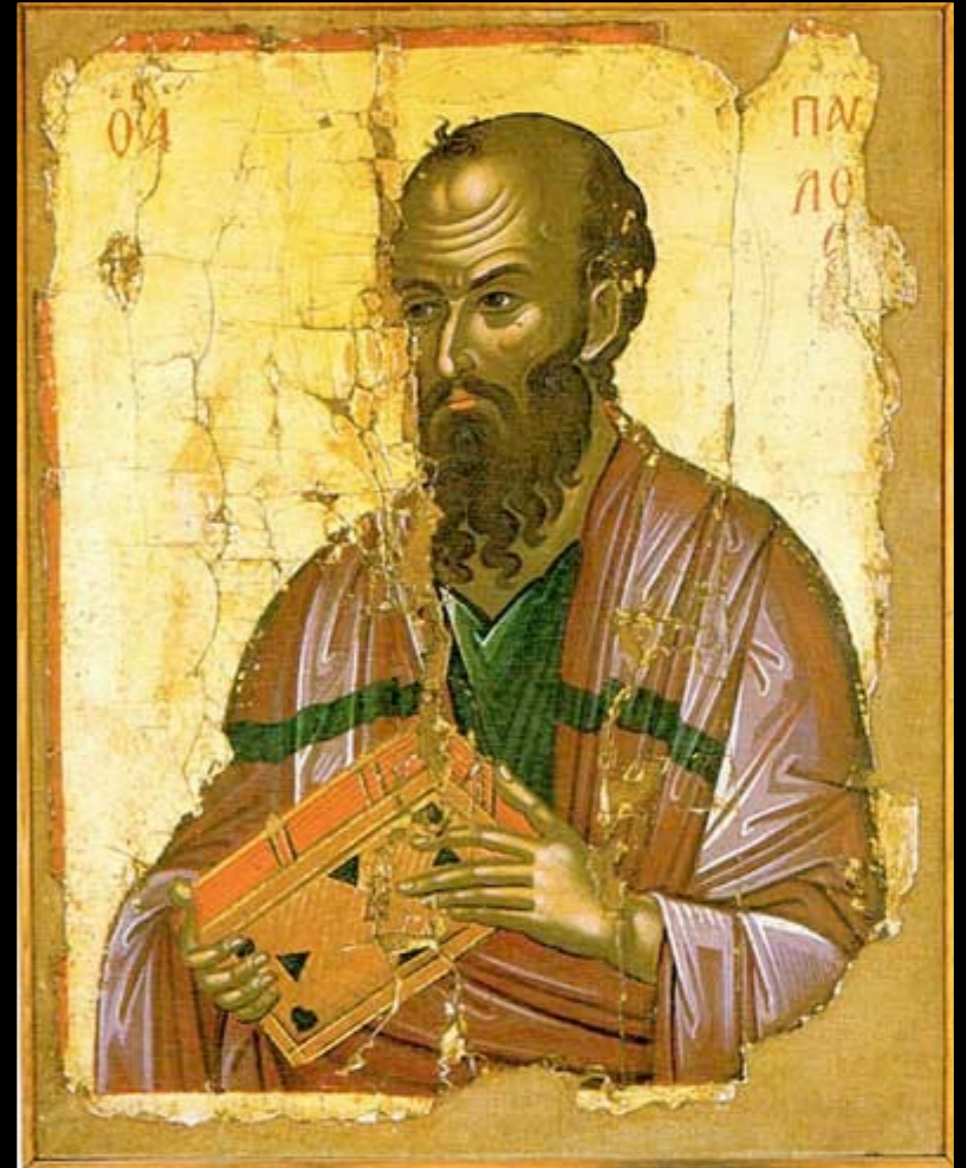
Philippians 1

18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Let's Engage in the Mission of Jesus

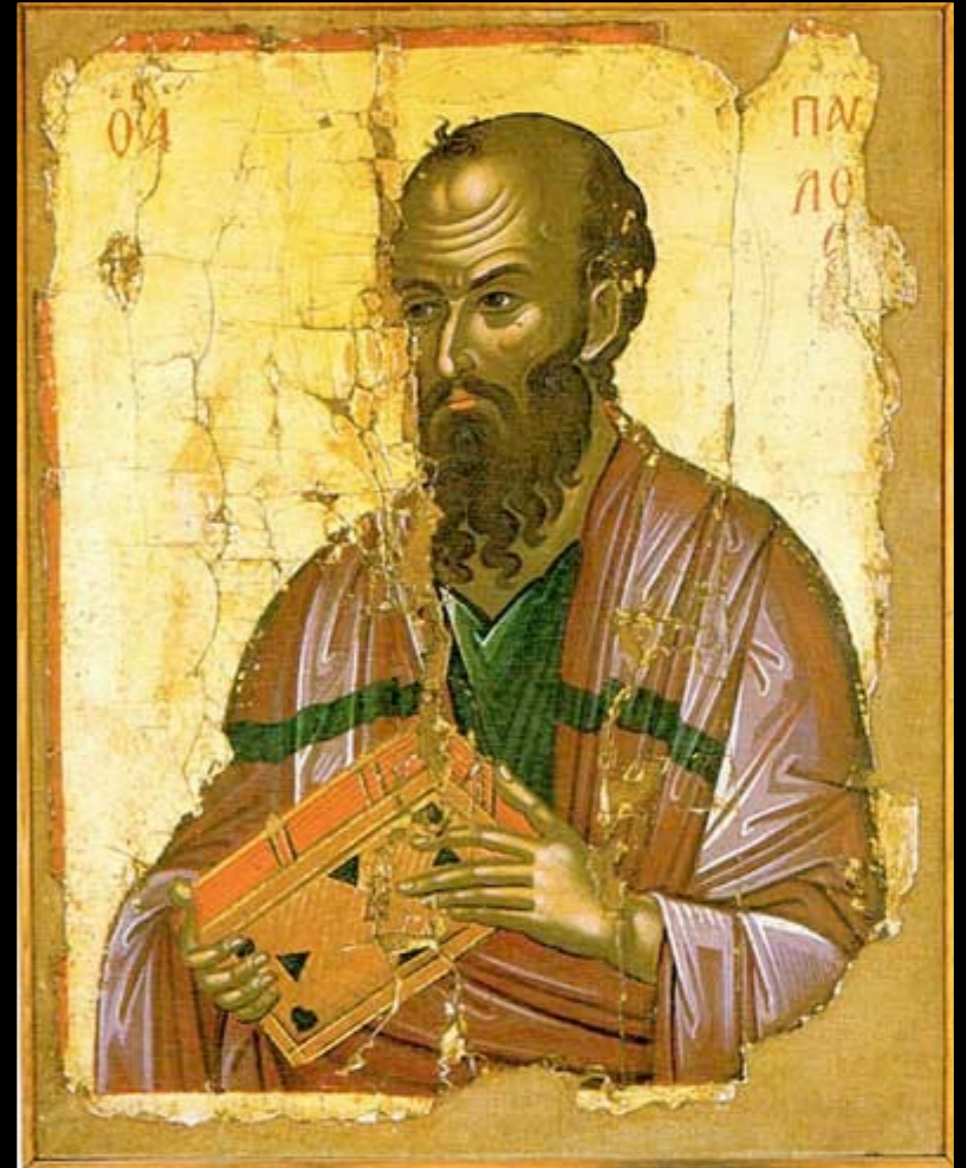


**Therefore, if anyone is
in Christ, the new
creation has come:
The old has gone, the
new is here! All this is
from God, who
reconciled us to him-
self through Christ
and gave us the minis-
try of reconciliation:**



The Apostle Paul
— 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NIV) —

**that God was
reconciling the world
to himself in Christ,
not counting people's
sins against them.
And he has committed
to us the message of
reconciliation.**



The Apostle Paul

— 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NIV) —

**We are therefore
Christ's ambassadors,
as though God were
making his appeal
through us. We
implore you on
Christ's behalf: Be
reconciled to God.**



The Apostle Paul

— 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NIV) —

**NEXT
STEP**

YOUR

WHAT'S





What's the worst case scenario that can happen if we dare to open our mouths and talk about the greatest human who has ever lived?

- ✓ Loss of reputation**
- ✓ Loss of income**
- ✓ Loss of freedom**
- ✓ Loss of life**



**I tell you, my friends, do not
fear those who kill the body,
and after that have nothing
more that they can do.**

Jesus of Nazareth
The Gospel of Luke 12:4



**O Father use
my ransomed life
in any way You choose
And let my song
forever be:
My Only Boast Is You**

— “All I Have Is Christ” —

LET'S FORTIFY OUR CONVICTION THAT
GOD WORKS ALL THINGS TOGETHER
FOR CHRIST'S GLORY AND OUR GOOD.



**And we know that for
those who love God
all things work
together for good,
for those who are
called according to
his purpose.**



The Apostle Paul
— Romans 8:28 —

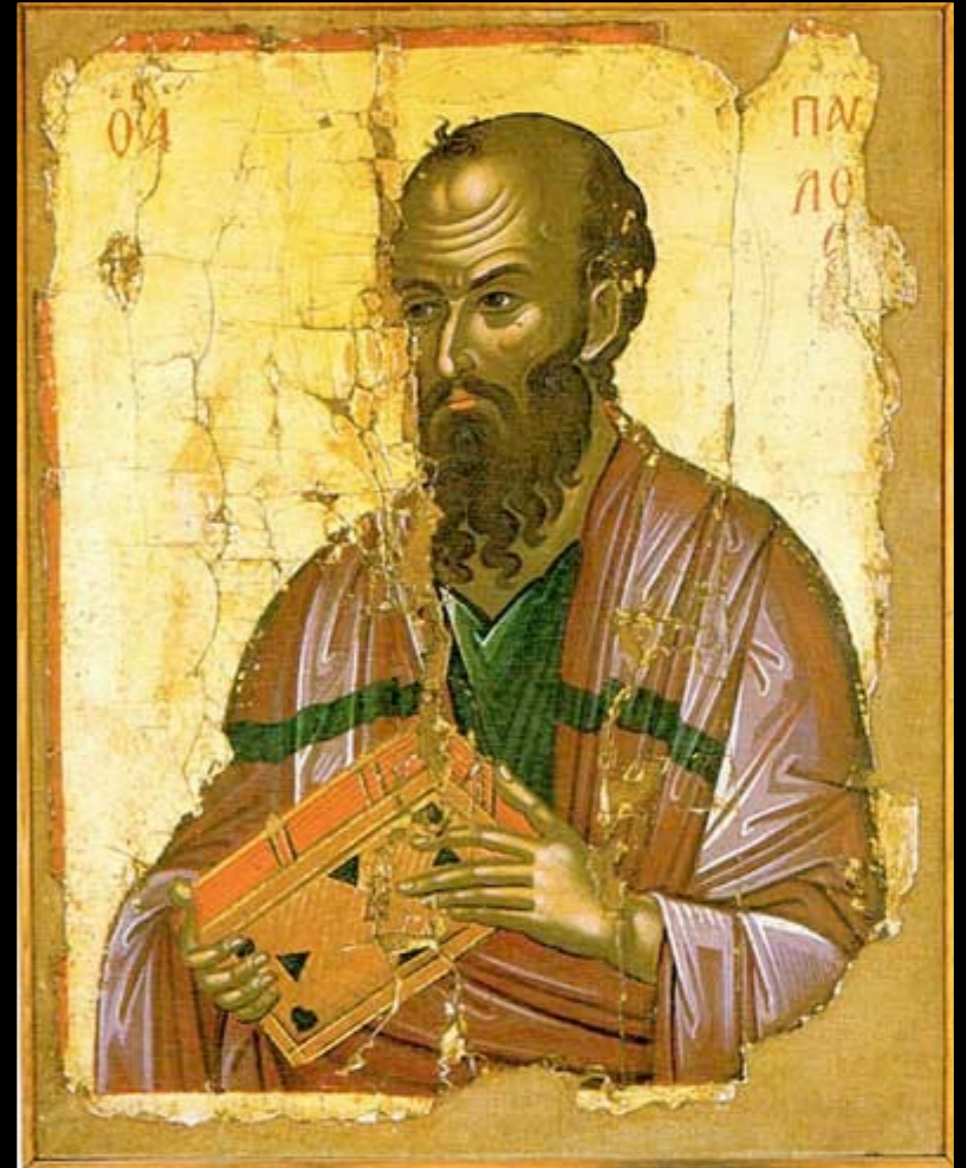
**If God is for us, who
can be against us? He
who did not spare his
own Son but gave him
up for us all, how will
he not also with him
graciously give us all
things?**



The Apostle Paul

— Romans 8:31-32 —

**Who shall separate us
from the love of
Christ? Shall tribula-
tion, or distress, or
persecution, or
famine, or nakedness,
or danger, or sword?**



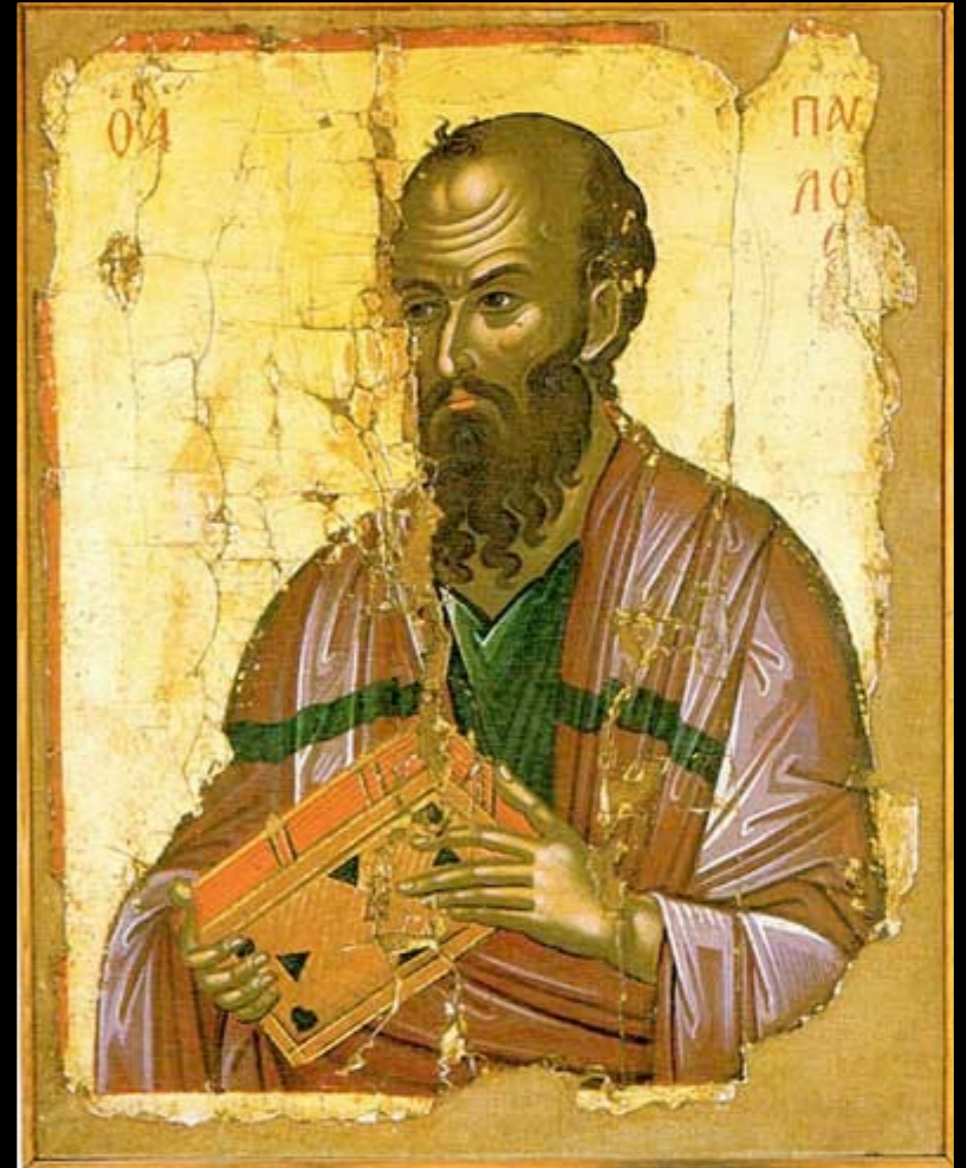
The Apostle Paul
— Romans 8:35 —

**As it is written,
“For your sake we are
being killed all the day
long; we are regarded
as sheep to be
slaughtered.” No, in
all these things we are
more than conquerors
through him who
loved us.**



The Apostle Paul
— Romans 8:36-37 —

**No, in all these things
we are more than
conquerors through
him who loved us. For
I am sure that neither
death nor life, nor
angels nor rulers, nor
things present nor
things to come, nor
powers,**



The Apostle Paul
— Romans 8:38—

**nor height nor depth,
nor anything else in
all creation, will be
able to separate us
from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our
Lord.**



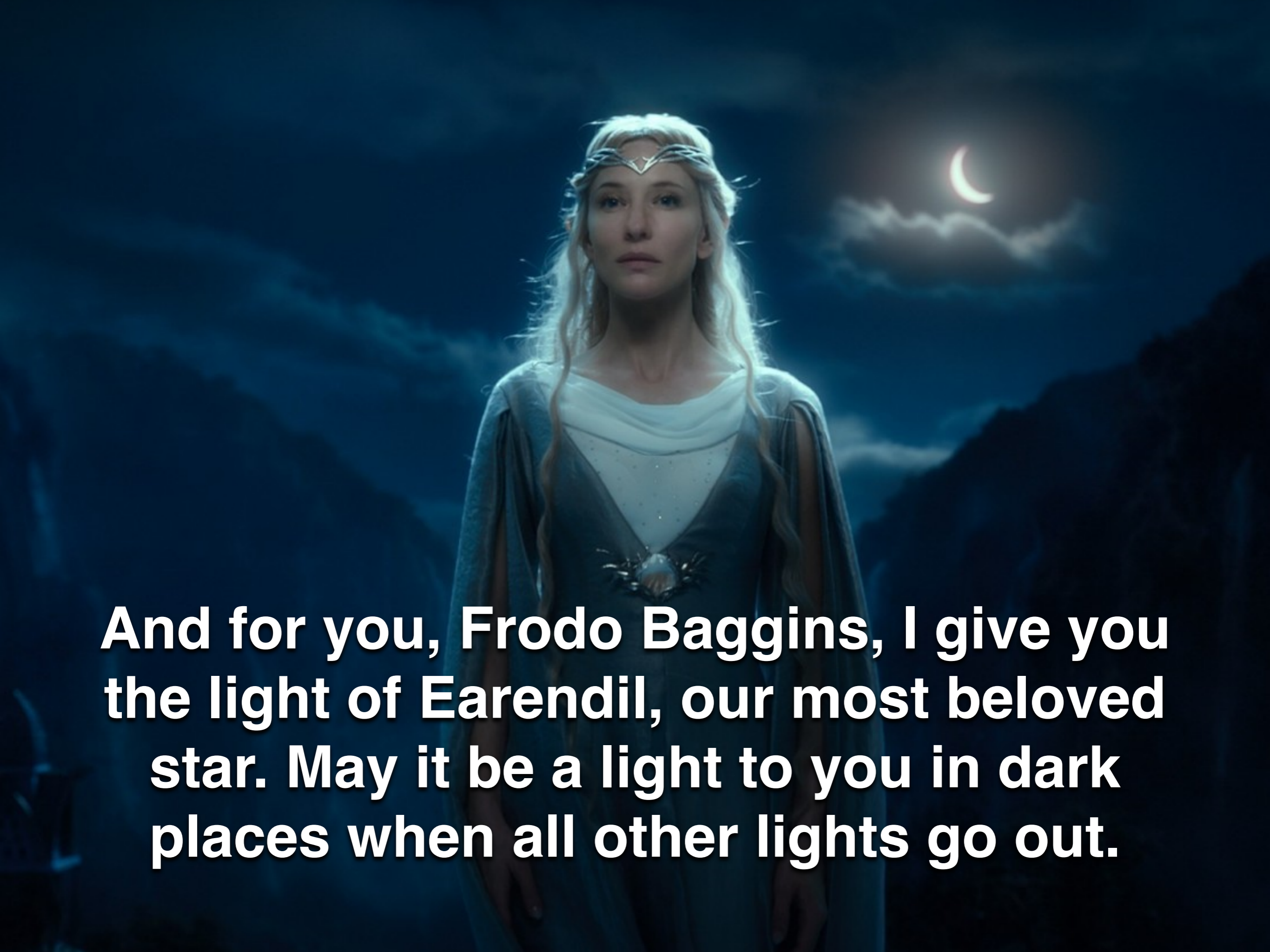
The Apostle Paul

— Romans 8:38 —



**There is no circumstance, no trouble,
no testing, that can ever touch me
until, first of all, it has gone past God
and past Christ right through to me. If
it has come that far, it has come with
great purpose, which I may not
understand at the moment.**

Alan Redpath (1907-1989)



And for you, Frodo Baggins, I give you the light of Earendil, our most beloved star. May it be a light to you in dark places when all other lights go out.

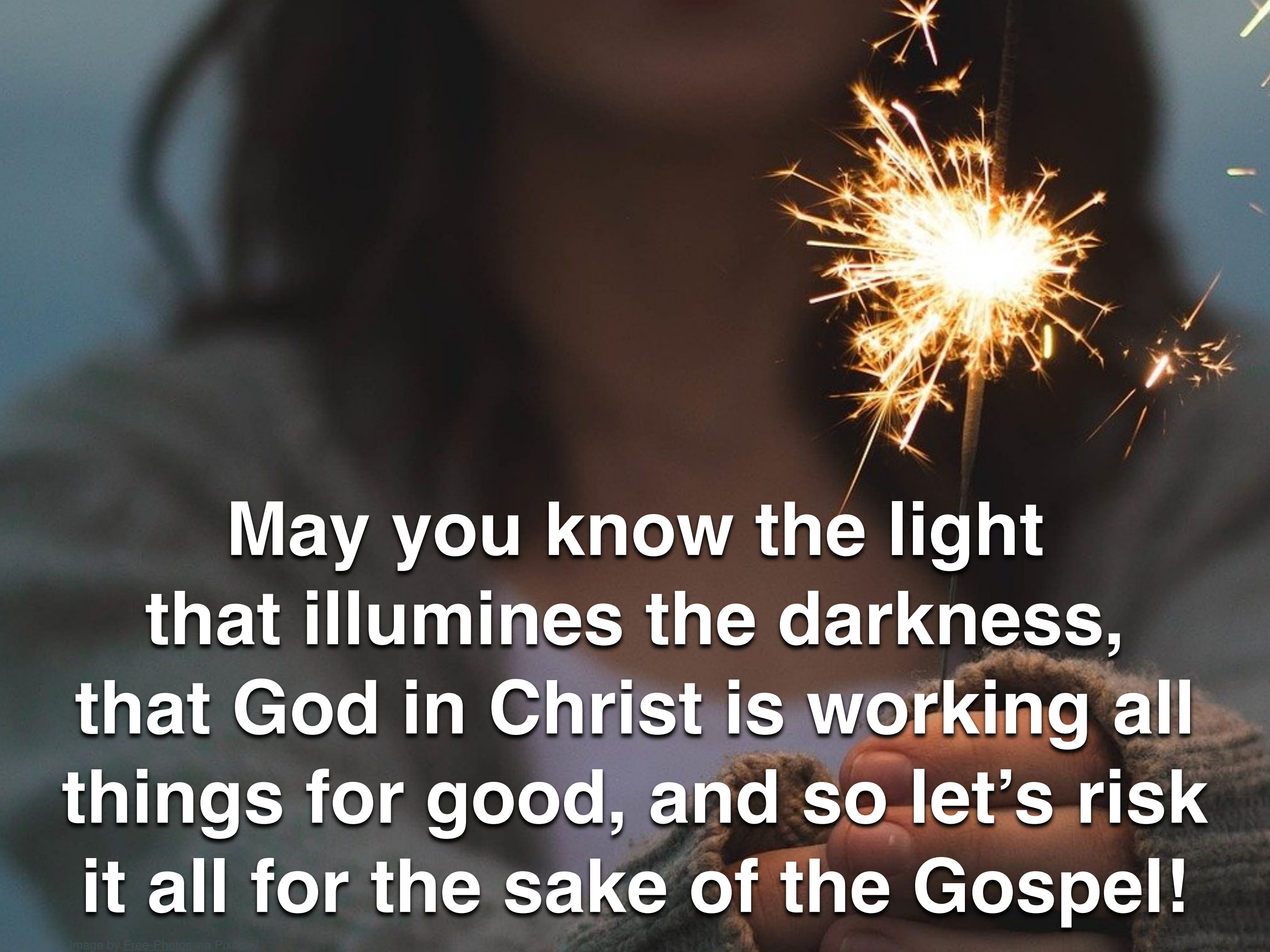




Heidelberg Catechism

Q#1: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

**That I belong—body and soul, in life and in death—
—not to myself, but to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has full paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven, not a hair can fall from my head; indeed that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation.**

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a lit sparkler. The sparkler is bright and glowing, with many sparks flying outwards. The background is dark, suggesting a night sky. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

**May you know the light
that illumines the darkness,
that God in Christ is working all
things for good, and so let's risk
it all for the sake of the Gospel!**