

# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 1

# Life in the Early Church



c. 30

c. 43

Emperor Claudius begins the Roman conquest of Britain.

c. 48–58

The **Apostle Paul** makes at least four separate missionary journeys.

c. 60–130

**Papias**, likely a student of the Apostle John; an early Christian writer and bishop

64

Emperor Nero orders the first coordinated Roman persecution of the Christian church.



**68**

Nero commits suicide.

**70**

Titus, a Roman general that would later become emperor, besieges Jerusalem, destroying Herod's temple and looting the city.

**c. 70–155**

**Polycarp**, likely a student of John; notable Christian bishop, writer, and martyr

**c. 95**

The **Apostle John**, the last of the Twelve, dies of natural causes while in exile on the island of Patmos.

**c. 200s**

Christians throughout the Roman empire recite the **Apostles Creed**, a set of twelve statements summarizing the essential teaching of Christ's original followers.



Introduction:

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# The Work of Papias

For I imagined that what was  
to be got from books was not so  
profitable to me as what came  
from the living and abiding  
voice.

—Papias, *Exposition of the  
Sayings of the Lord*



# The Hope of Christ



# Divine Love (John 13)

Whose love should we imitate  
(v. 34)?

Jesus'

# Divine Love (John 13)

If we believers love each other  
this way, what will people  
understand (v. 35)?

**That we are disciples of Christ**

# Divine Unity (John 17)

Whose unity should we imitate  
(v. 21)?

**The Father and the Son**



# Divine Unity (John 17)

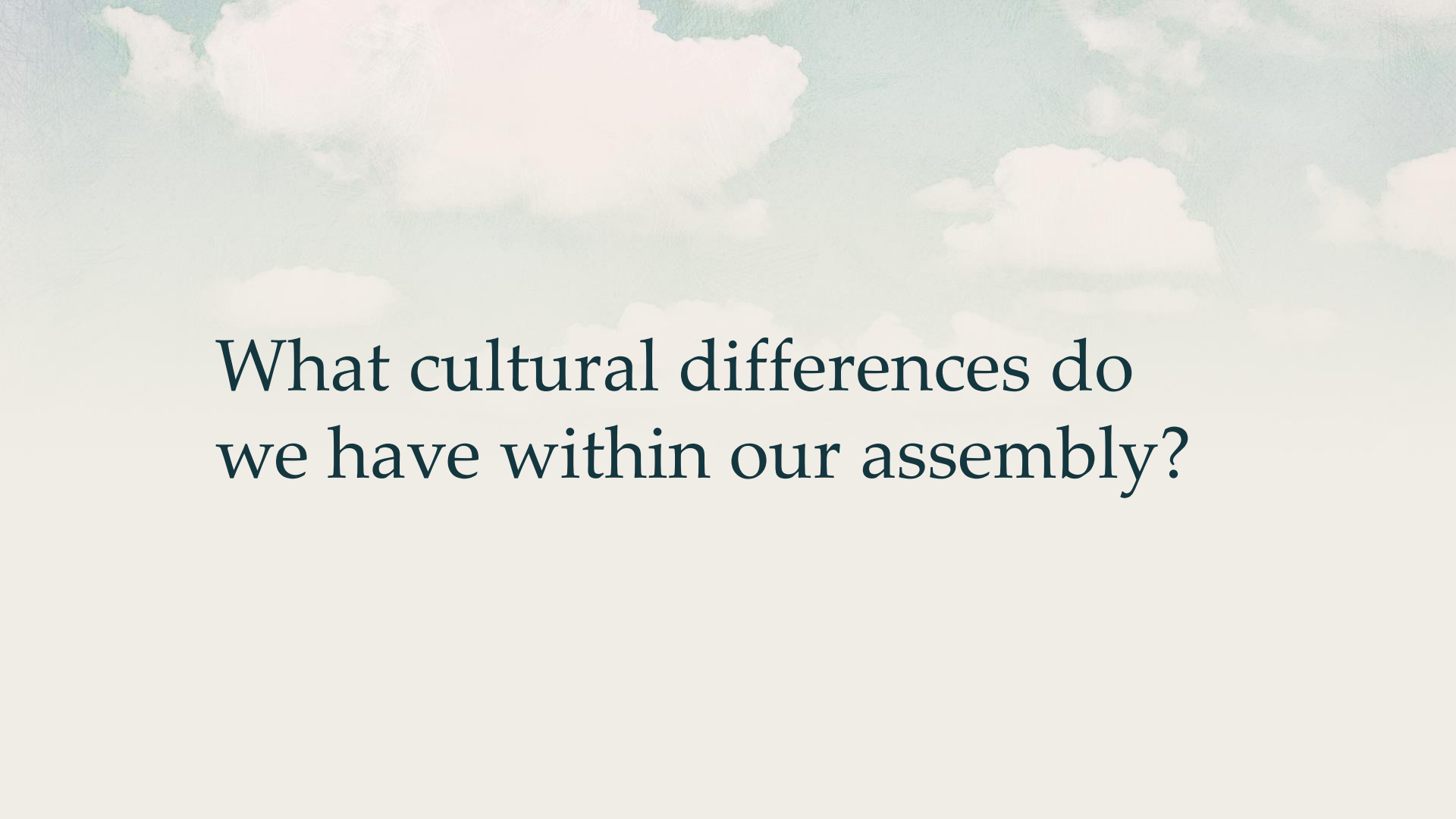
And if we pursue such godly unity, what will we help people see (vv. 21, 23)?

**That the Father sent Jesus to the world; that God loves us**

Discussion:

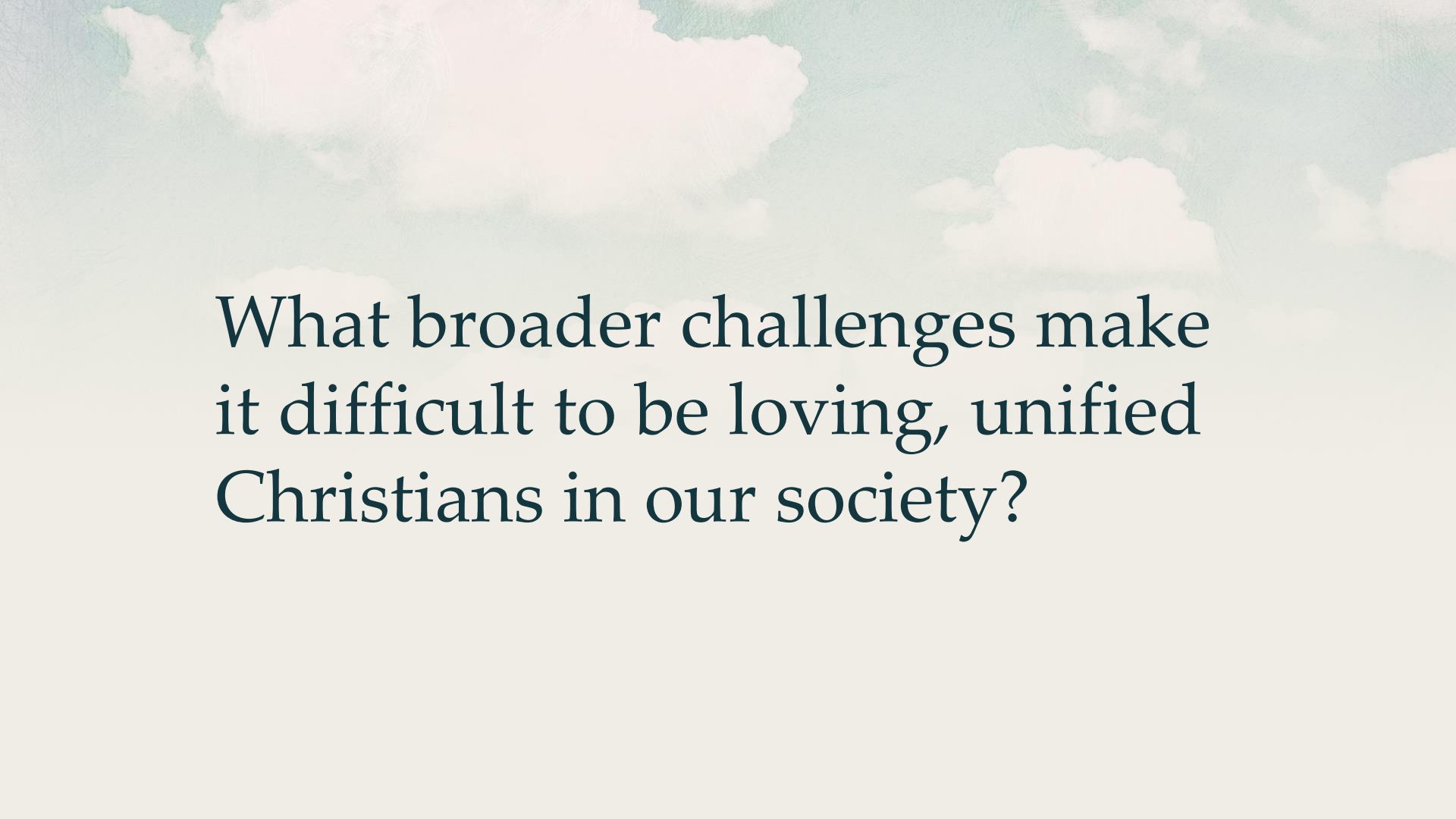
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# Cultural Differences



What cultural differences do  
we have within our assembly?





What broader challenges make it difficult to be loving, unified Christians in our society?



# The Central Practices of the Early Church

Context:

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# Pentecost



# Acts 2

Verse 42: What did the believers do?

1. The apostles' teaching
2. The fellowship of believers
3. The breaking of bread
4. Prayer

# Acts 2

How did people outside the church react to this new movement (v. 43)?

**With awe/fear**

How else did the believers show love to each other (vv. 44–47)?

1. **Sharing possessions (v. 44)**
2. **Selling possessions for charity (v. 45)**
3. **Worship and fellowship (vv. 46–47)**
4. **God added daily to the church (v. 47)**



# The Apostles' Teaching

History:

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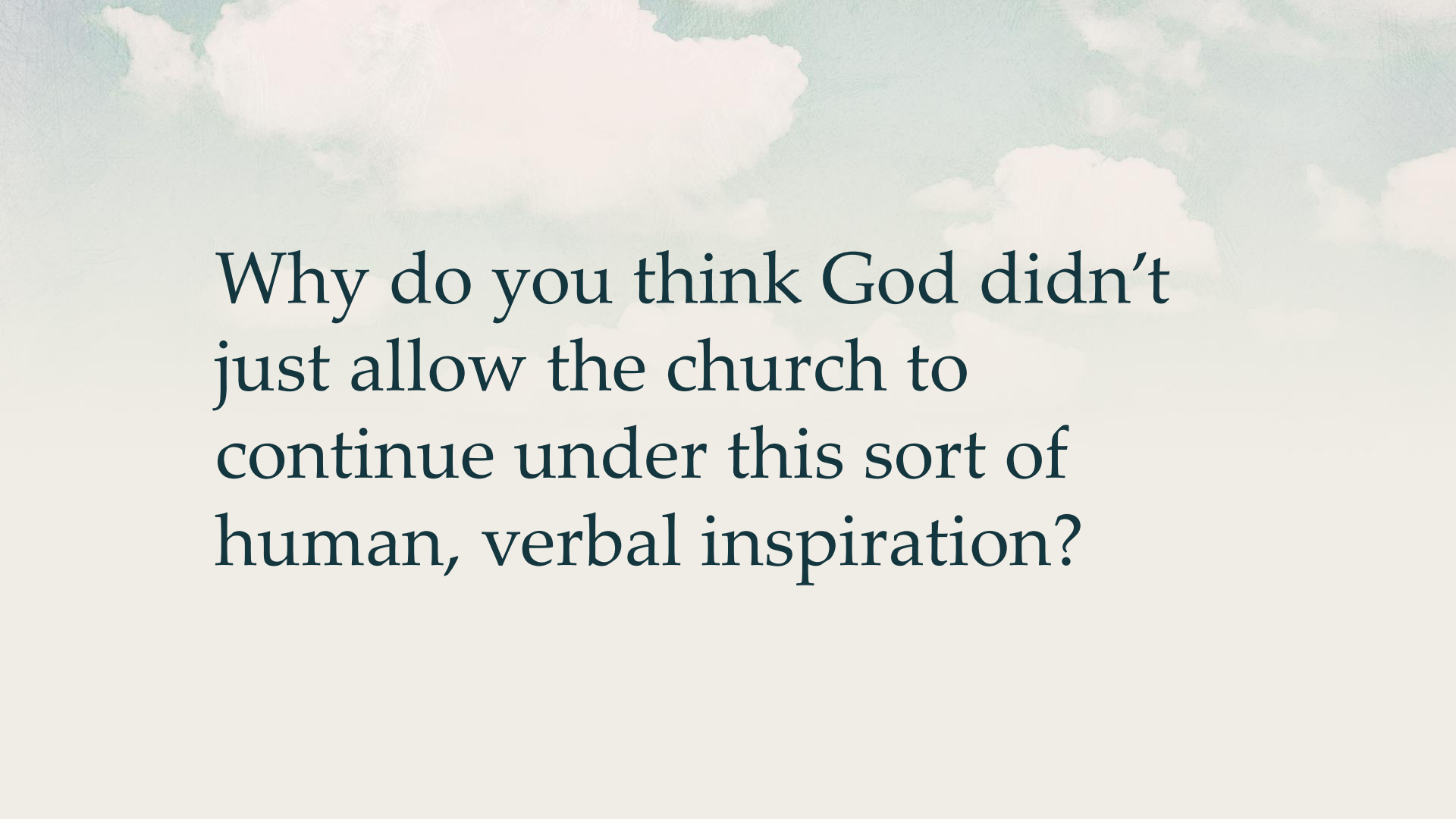
# The Canon



Discussion:

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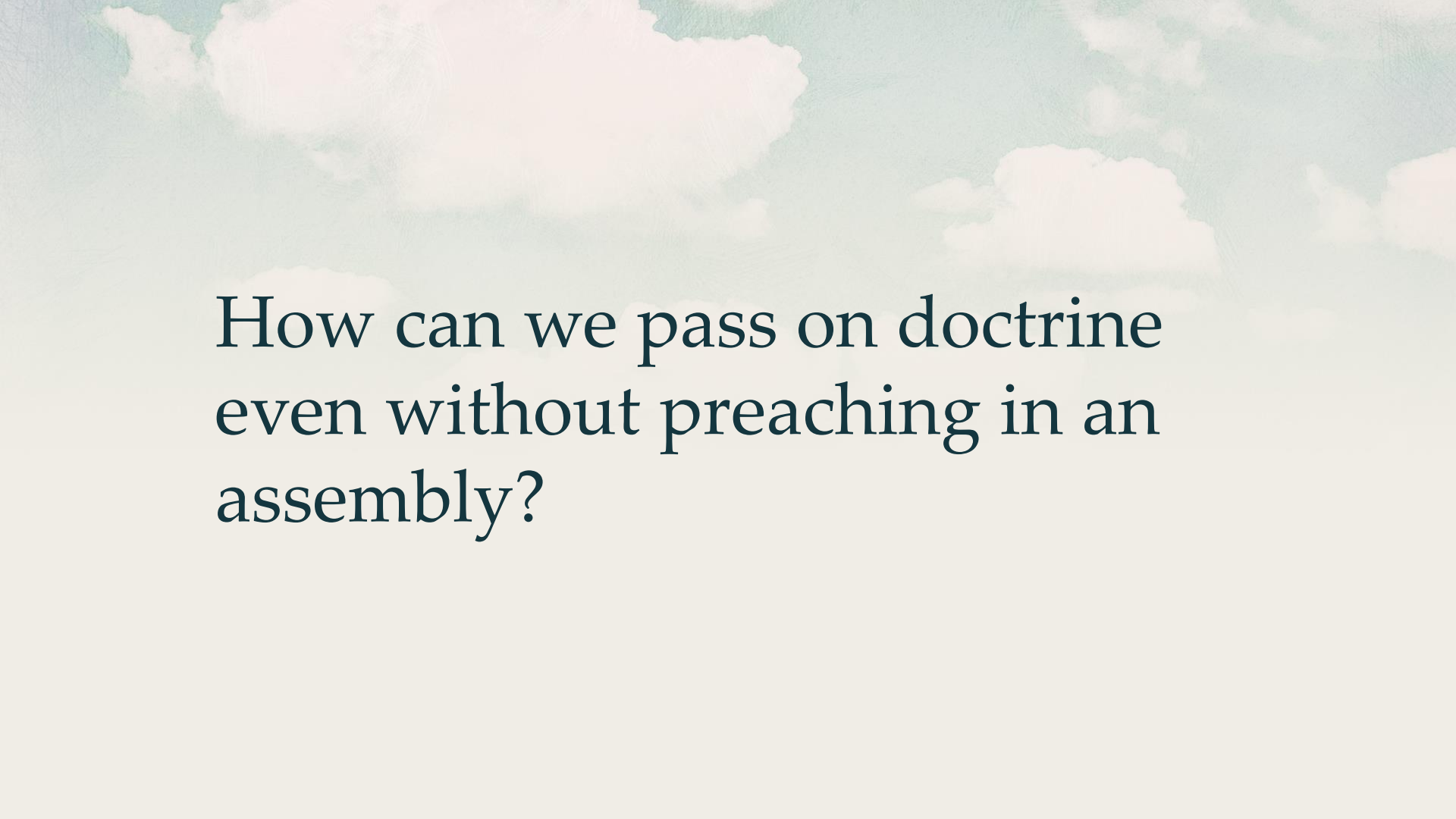
# The Apostles and Discipleship



Why do you think God didn't  
just allow the church to  
continue under this sort of  
human, verbal inspiration?



Who has disciplined you?



How can we pass on doctrine  
even without preaching in an  
assembly?



**Fellowship**

# What do we share?

Acts 2:44–45; 1 John 3:17

**Material needs**



# What do we share?

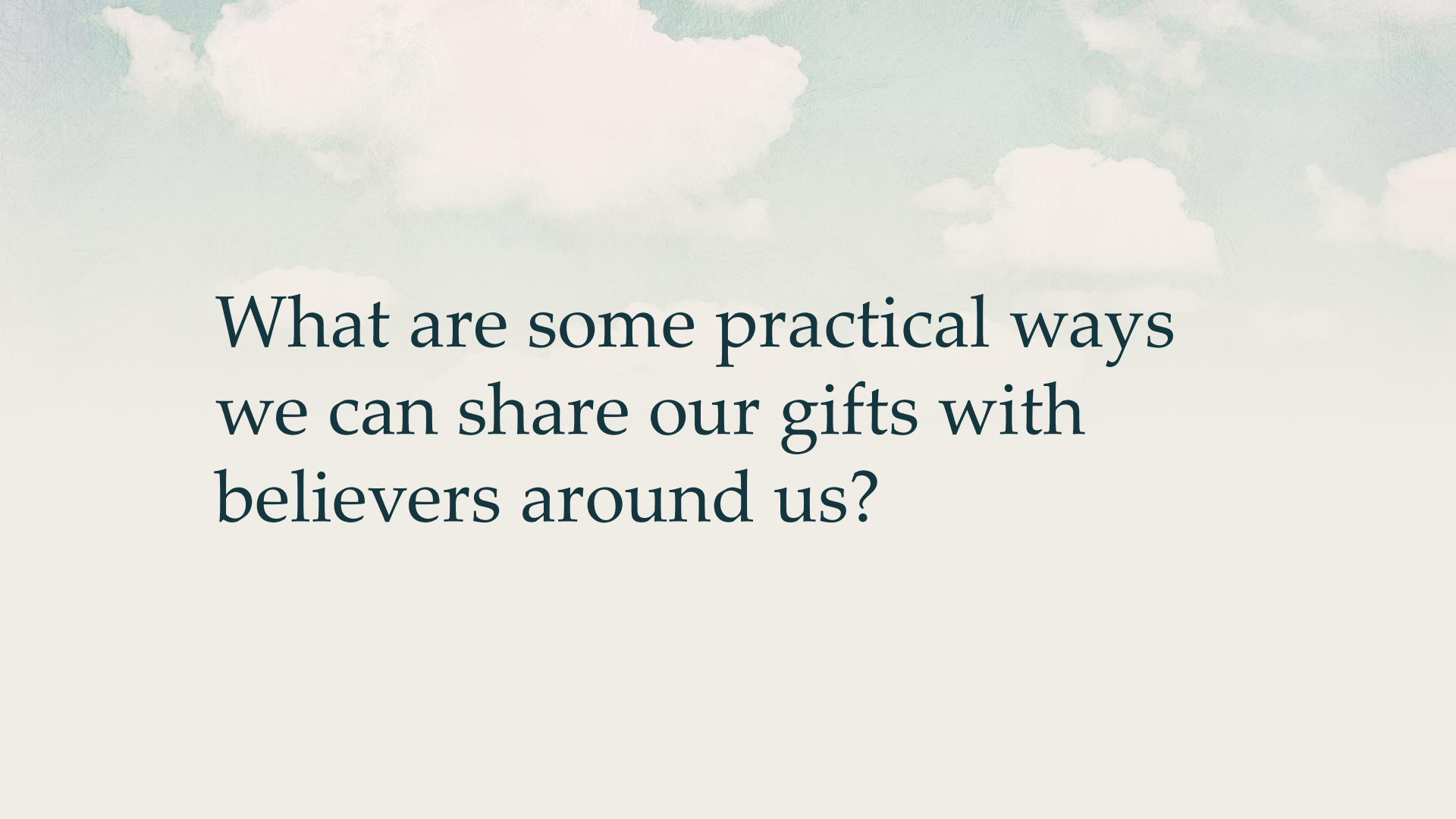
Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:1–2

- Times of happiness and sorrow
- Rejoicing and weeping
- Emotional or spiritual burdens

# What do we share?

Ephesians 5:18–21

- **Worship**
- **Song**
- **Praise**
- **Gratitude**
- **Mutual service**



What are some practical ways  
we can share our gifts with  
believers around us?



# The Breaking of Bread

# 1 Corinthians 11

How did these believers fail to nurture communion (vv. 18–21)?

**They promoted divisions (vv. 18–19); some began eating before everyone arrived (v. 21); some went hungry while others even got drunk (v. 21).**

# 1 Corinthians 11

Briefly list the steps your assembly takes to observe the Lord's Supper.

Explain how one or more of these steps can promote a sense of unity.





# Prayer

# Why did they pray?

Acts 1:23–25

To ask for guidance

# Why did they pray?

Acts 14:21–23

To encourage others and  
commit them to God

# Why did they pray?

Colossians 1:9–12

Out of a desire for believers to . . .

- Know God's will with wisdom and understanding
- Please God
- Learn more about God
- Have strength, endurance, and patience

And out of gratitude

# Why did they pray?

Colossians 4:12–13

To struggle/labor on behalf of  
other believers

# Why did they pray?

James 5:14–16

To request healing for the sick



# Why did they pray?

1 Thessalonians 3:11–13

To request that God make us  
increase and abound in love

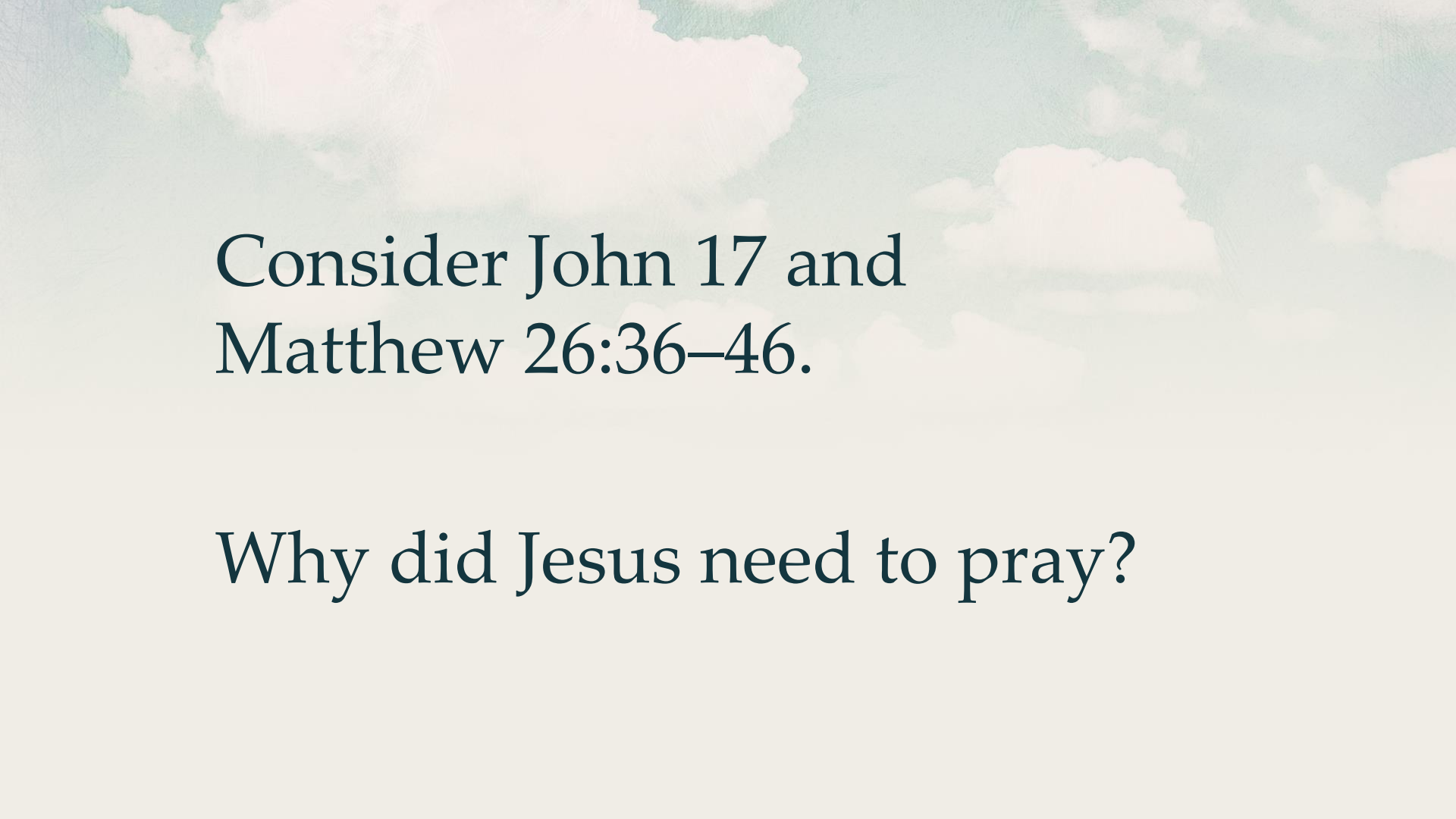
# Why did they pray?

1 Timothy 2:1–2

To request that authorities  
allow us to live peacefully



What things should we ask  
God to give our assembly?



Consider John 17 and  
Matthew 26:36–46.

Why did Jesus need to pray?

Further Reading:

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# A Glimpse of the Early Church



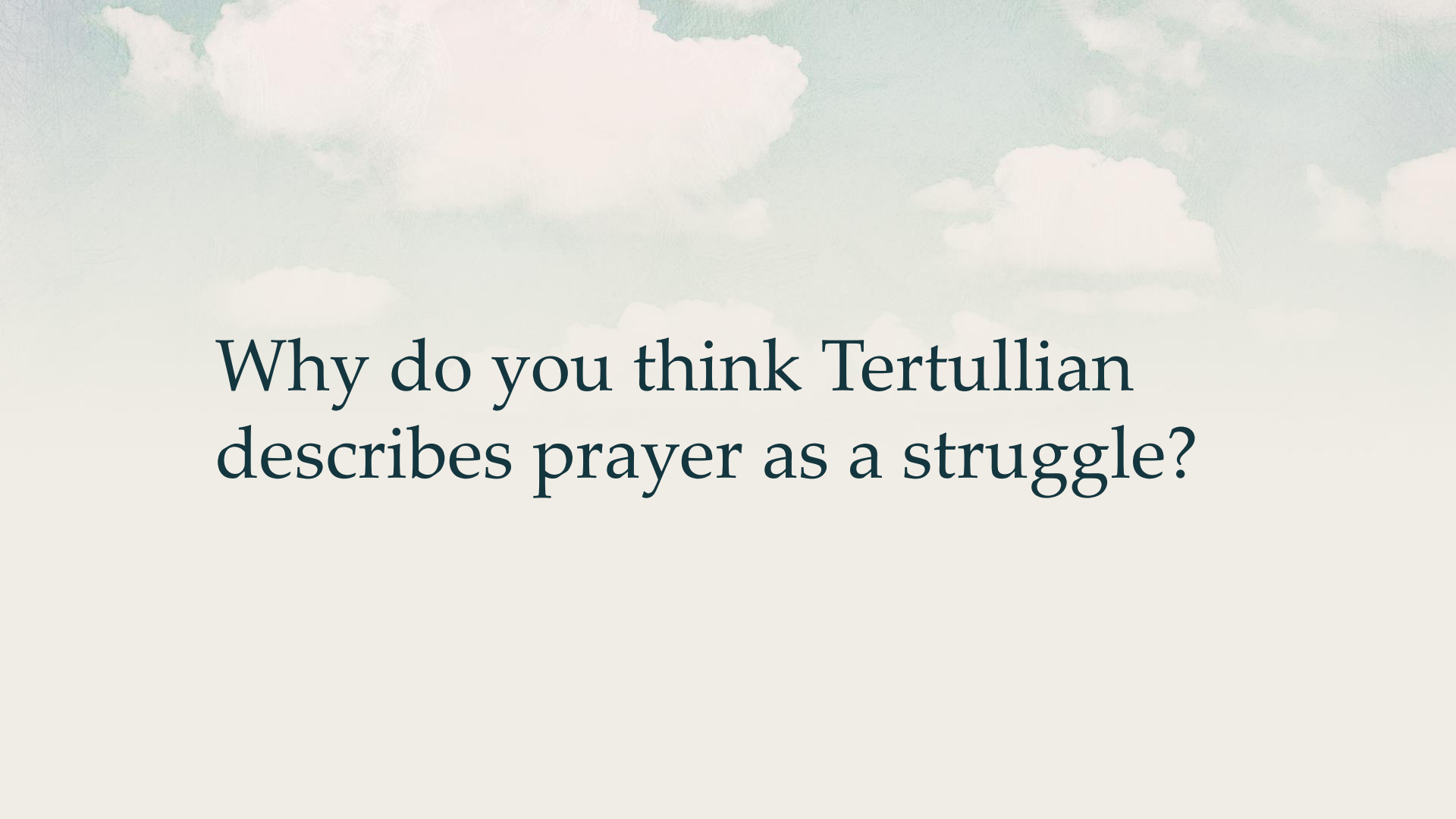
# Tertullian's *Apology*

What did you find similar between your assembly and the assembly described in this passage?

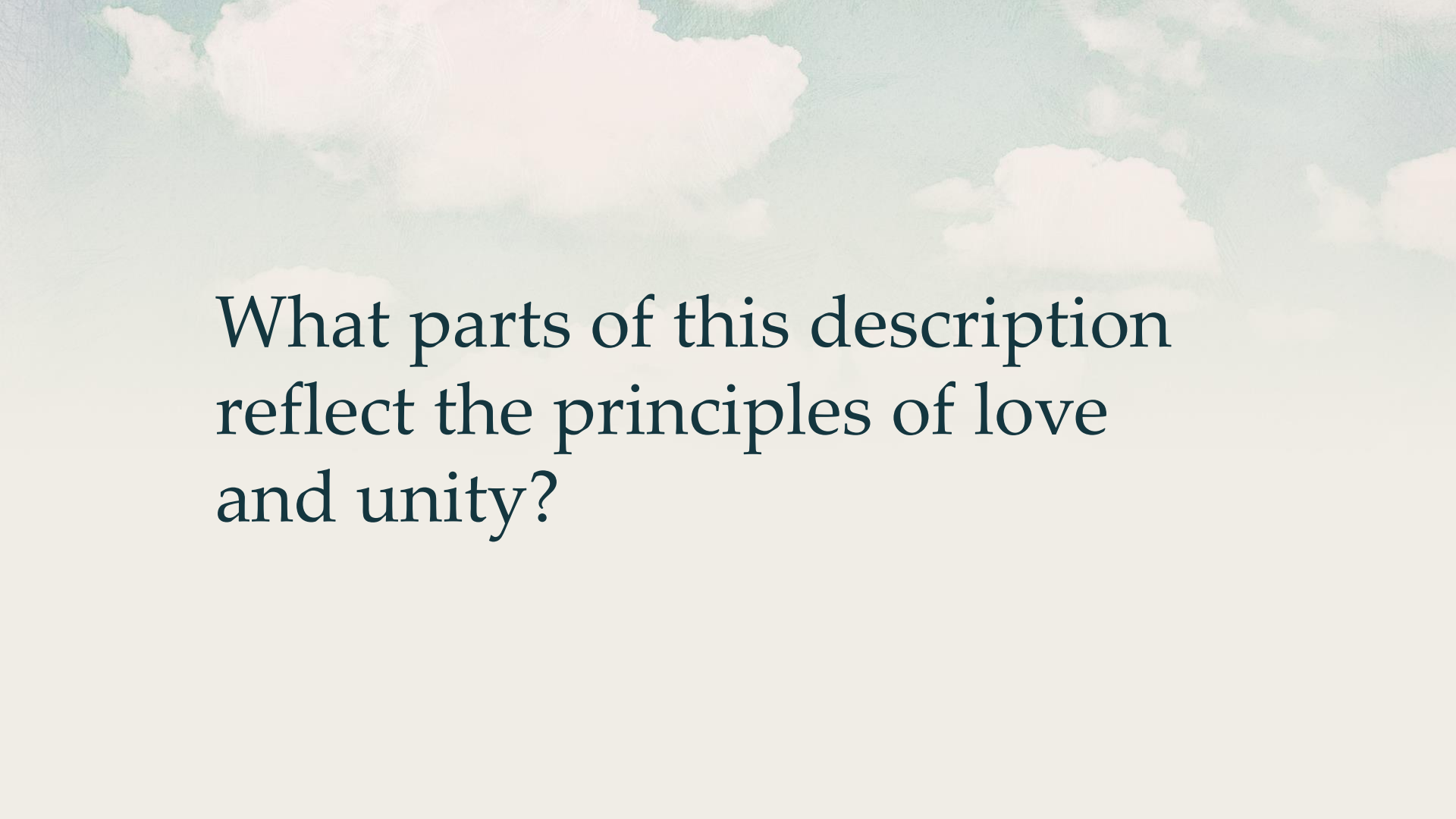
# Tertullian's *Apology*

What surprised you about  
Tertullian's description?

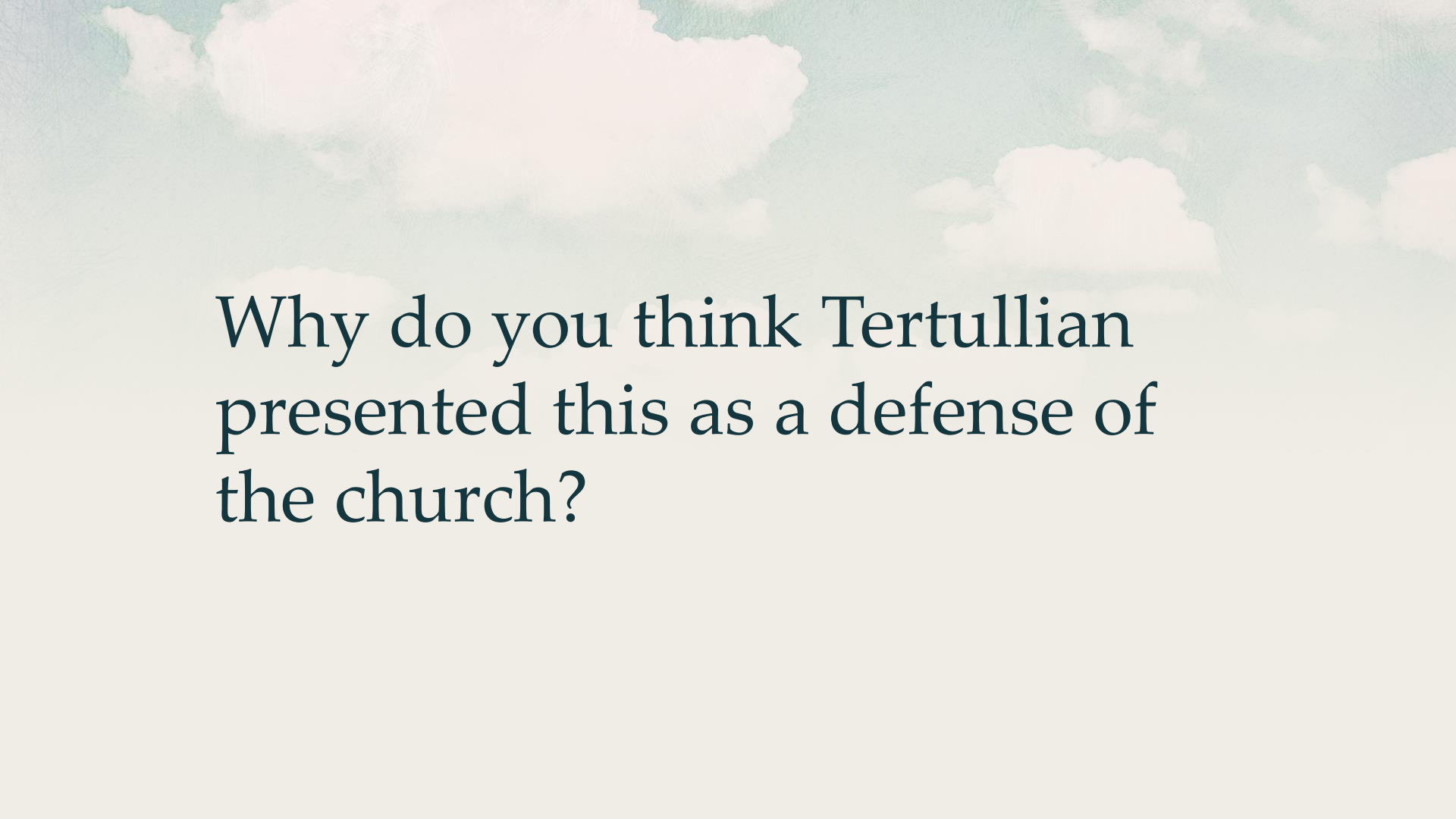




Why do you think Tertullian  
describes prayer as a struggle?



What parts of this description  
reflect the principles of love  
and unity?



Why do you think Tertullian  
presented this as a defense of  
the church?



  
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# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 2

# The Persecuted Church



c. 30

The Apostle Paul is martyred.

c. 67

64

**The First Persecution** – Emperor Nero orders the first coordinated Roman persecution of the Christian church.

c. 95

The Apostle John dies of natural causes.

c. 155

**Polycarp**, friend of Papias and leader of the church in Smyrna, is martyred.

c. 165

Justin, a Christian philosopher, is martyred along with his students. Followers would later call him Justin Martyr.



**203**

The Christian noble Perpetua is martyred along with a group of other Christians. Her prison diary would be widely read in the early church.

**258**

The North African bishop Cyprian is martyred after refusing to recant his faith.

**c. 255**

**The Valerian Persecution** – Emperor Valerian I restricts Christian worship, eventually banning assemblies, executing leaders, and confiscating property.

**303**

**The Great Persecution** – Diocletian orders all Scripture and places of worship burnt, later requiring that Christians worship state-approved gods or be executed.

**c. 303**

After refusing to sacrifice to Roman gods, many Christians are executed—including legendary martyrs Felix, Adauctus, Marcellinus, Peter, and Euphemia.

Introduction:

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# The Arrest of Polycarp



# The Blessing of Christ

# Matthew 5

What is the final beatitude repeated in verses 10 and 11?

**Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness' sake.**

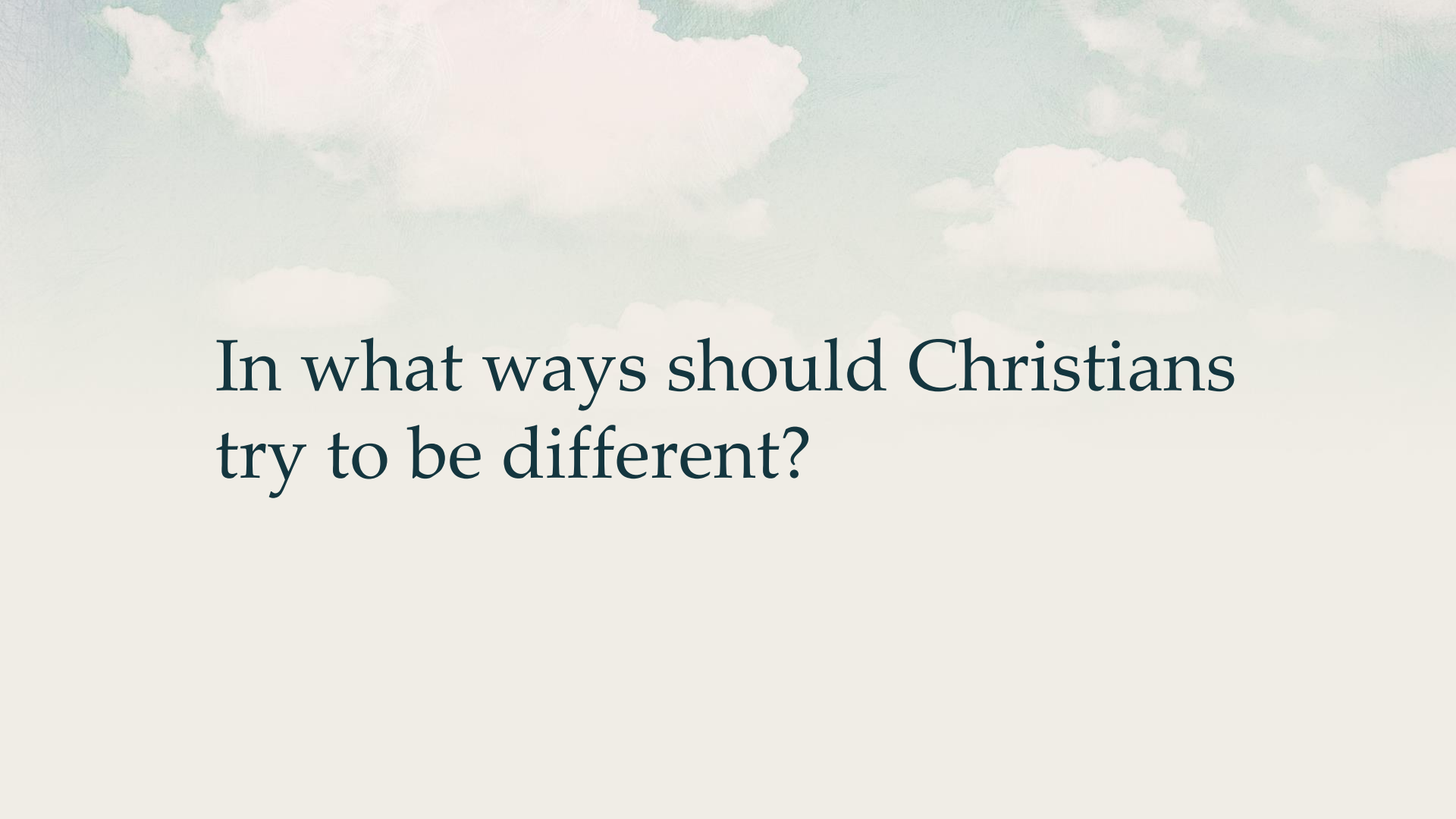
# What does Christ offer?

Verse 10:

The kingdom of heaven is for them.

Verse 12:

Their reward is great in heaven.



In what ways should Christians  
try to be different?



# Persecution: A Natural Conflict



# John 15

How does Jesus describe our relationship with “the world” (v. 19)?

**We are not of the world. We don't belong to it. Rather, Christ chose us out of the world.**

# John 15

Why shouldn't we be surprised when "the world" hates us (vv. 20–21)?

**If they persecuted Christ, and we serve Him, they'll persecute us, as well.**

Context:

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# 1 John 3:11–18



# Early Persecutions of the Church



Britannia

Gallia

Moesia

Hispania

Rome

Asia

Ephesus

Carthage

Antioch

Syria

Alexandria

Judea



Discussion:

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# Tacitus, *The Annals*

History:

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# Felicitatis & the Early Martyrs



History:

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**John Foxe's**  
*Book of Martyrs*



**Responses:**  
Avoiding Conflict by  
Denying Christ

History:

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# Opportunities to Deny Christ

History:

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# Rome and State Religion



How do people avoid being  
identified as Christian today?

# Matthew 10

What does Jesus promise those who openly identify with Him (v. 32)?

**Christ will acknowledge / confess them before God the Father.**

# Matthew 10

But what will happen to those who deny Christ (v. 33)?

**Christ will deny them before the Father.**



Discussion:

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**Luke 22:54–62**



# Responses: Viewing Suffering as Virtue

History:

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# Examples of Self-Martyrdom

# Matthew 10

How would you resolve the teaching of verses 23 and 39?

**Christians can and should avoid some persecution, but we must be willing to give our lives for the gospel.**



In what context would it be wrong for a Christian to escape persecution?



**Responses:**  
Accepting Persecution  
with Joy

Context:

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# A Great Reward

Discussion:

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# Hebrews 11:36–38



# Responses to Suffering

Jesus, on the night before His crucifixion (Matt. 26:36–39)

Jesus prayed in Gethsemane with His disciples (v. 36–37). He was extremely upset (v. 38), but He submitted to the Father (v. 39).

# Responses to Suffering

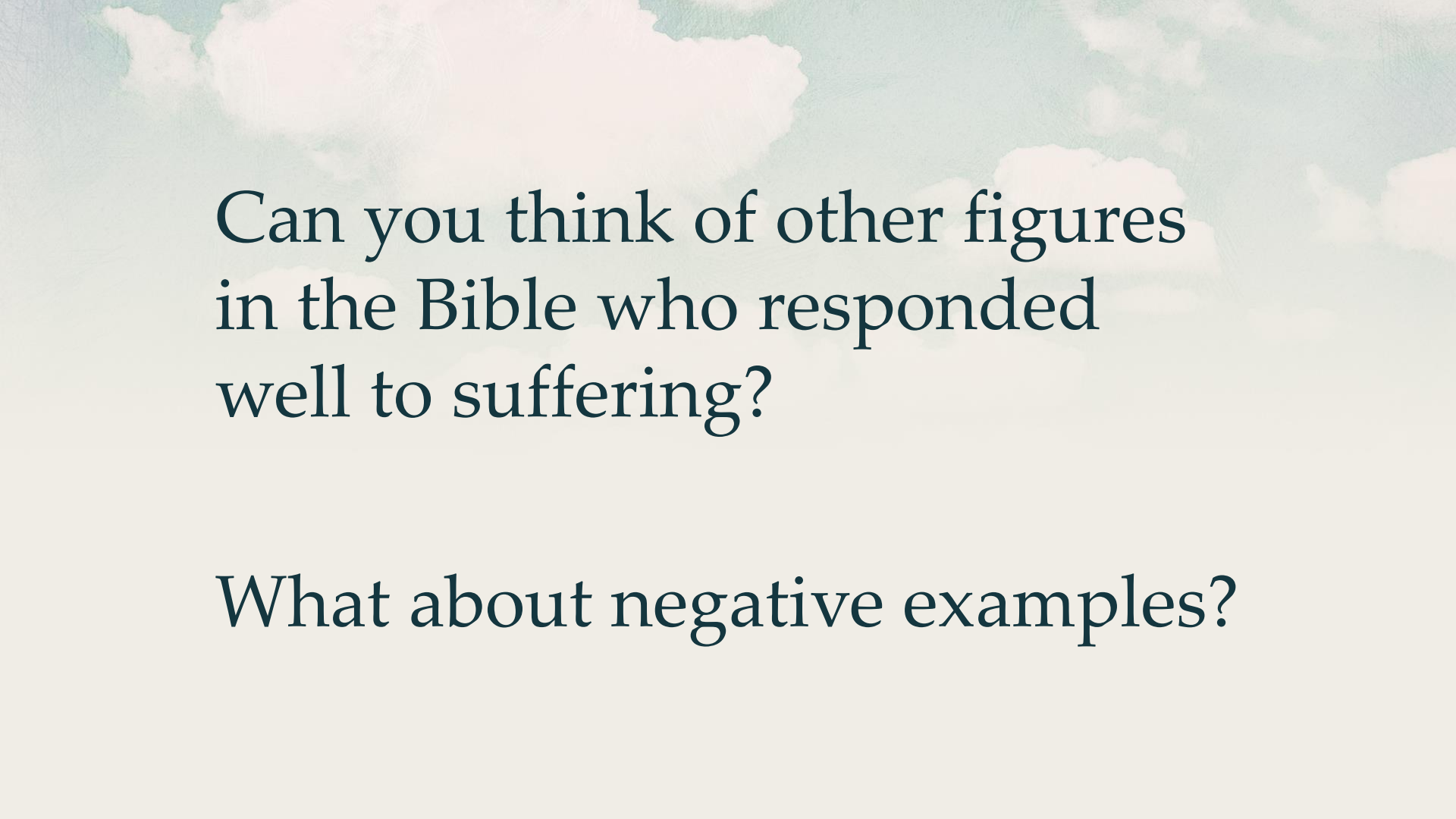
The Apostles, after being whipped and reprimanded (Acts 5:40–41)

**They rejoiced at being counted worthy to suffer shame/disgrace for their association with Christ.**

# Responses to Suffering

Barnabas and Paul, after being thrown out of a city (Acts 13:50–51)

**They shook the dust off their feet and left, moving on to the next opportunity for ministry.**



Can you think of other figures  
in the Bible who responded  
well to suffering?

What about negative examples?



# The Prevailing Work

Discussion:

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# The Suffering of Others



# A Testimony to the World



# Imagery in Matthew 5

Verse 13:

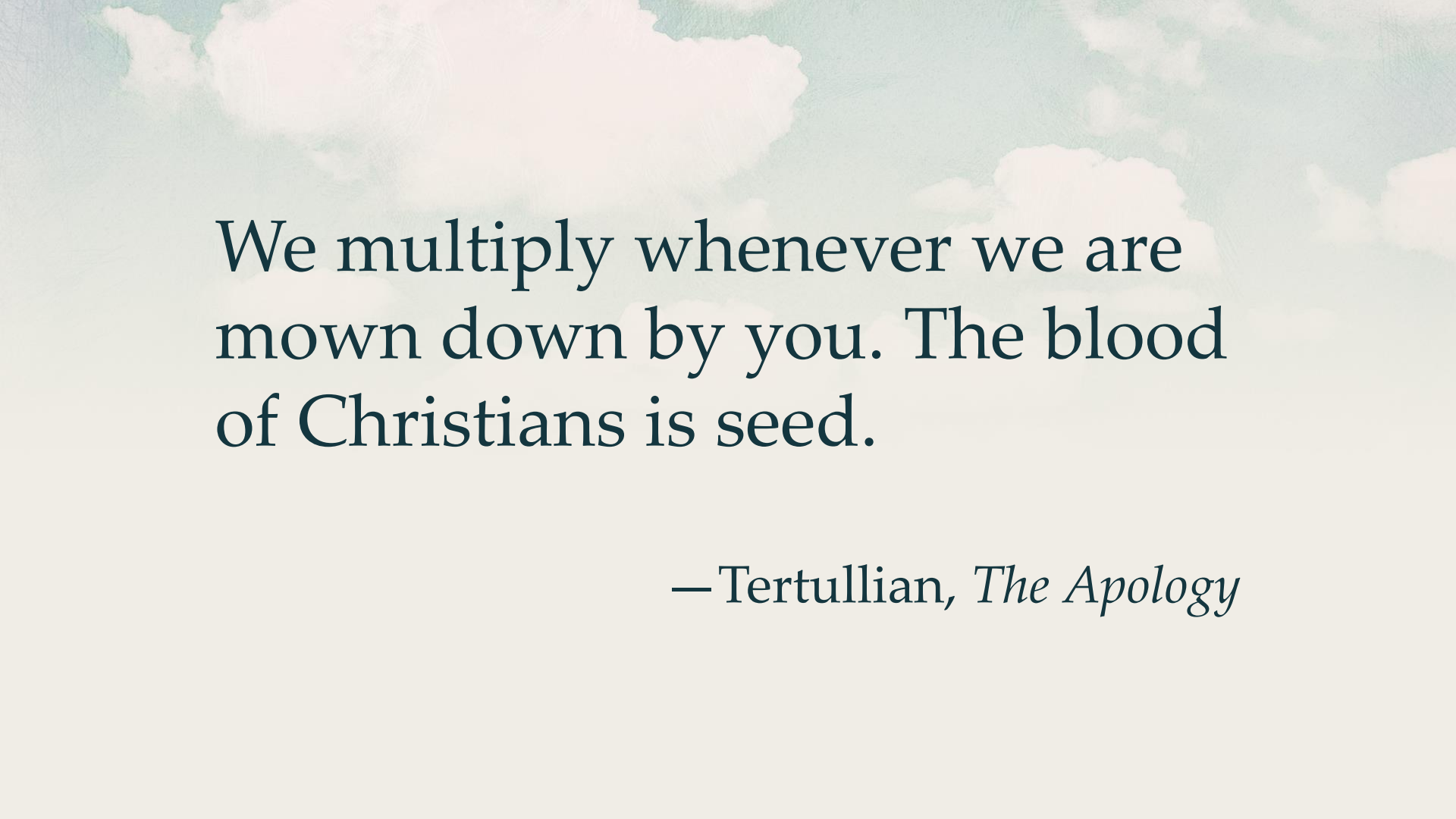
**Salt**

Verse 14:

**A light / a city on a hill**

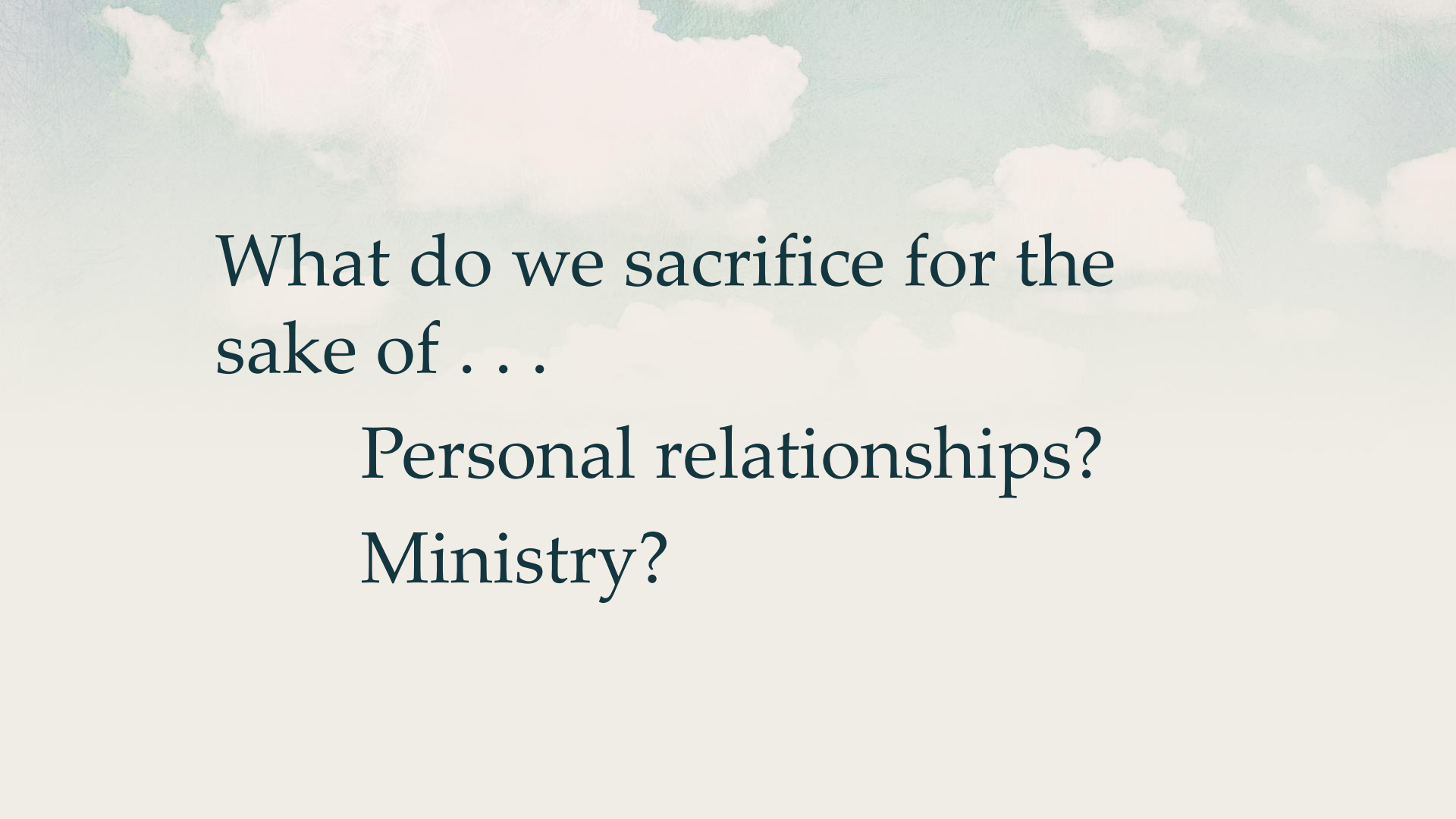
Verse 15:

**A light / lamp / candle**



We multiply whenever we are  
mown down by you. The blood  
of Christians is seed.

—Tertullian, *The Apology*



What do we sacrifice for the  
sake of . . .

Personal relationships?

Ministry?

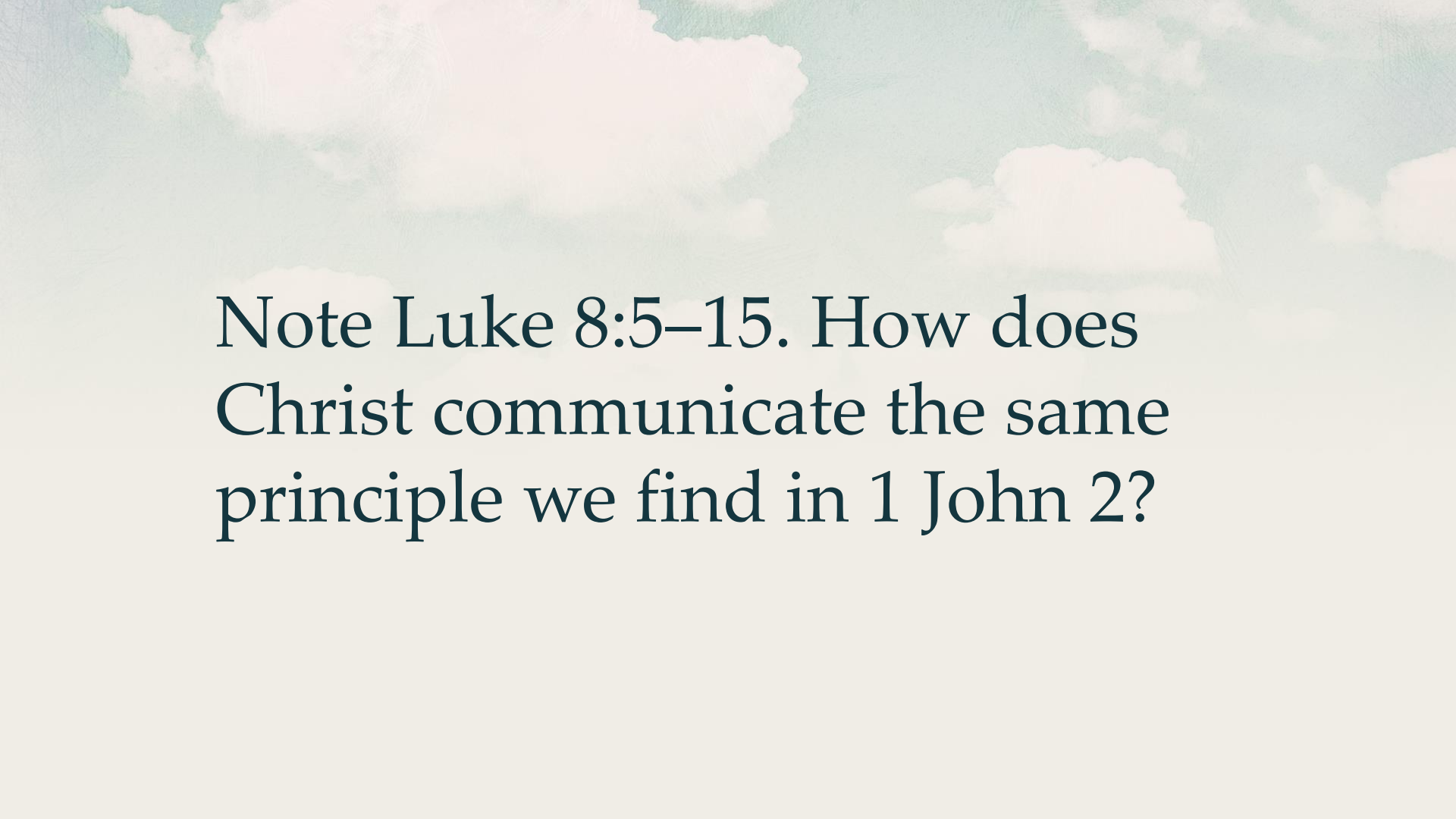


# **A Refinement of the Church**

Context:

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# Anti-Christ



Note Luke 8:5–15. How does Christ communicate the same principle we find in 1 John 2?



# A Portent of Judgment



# Revelation 6

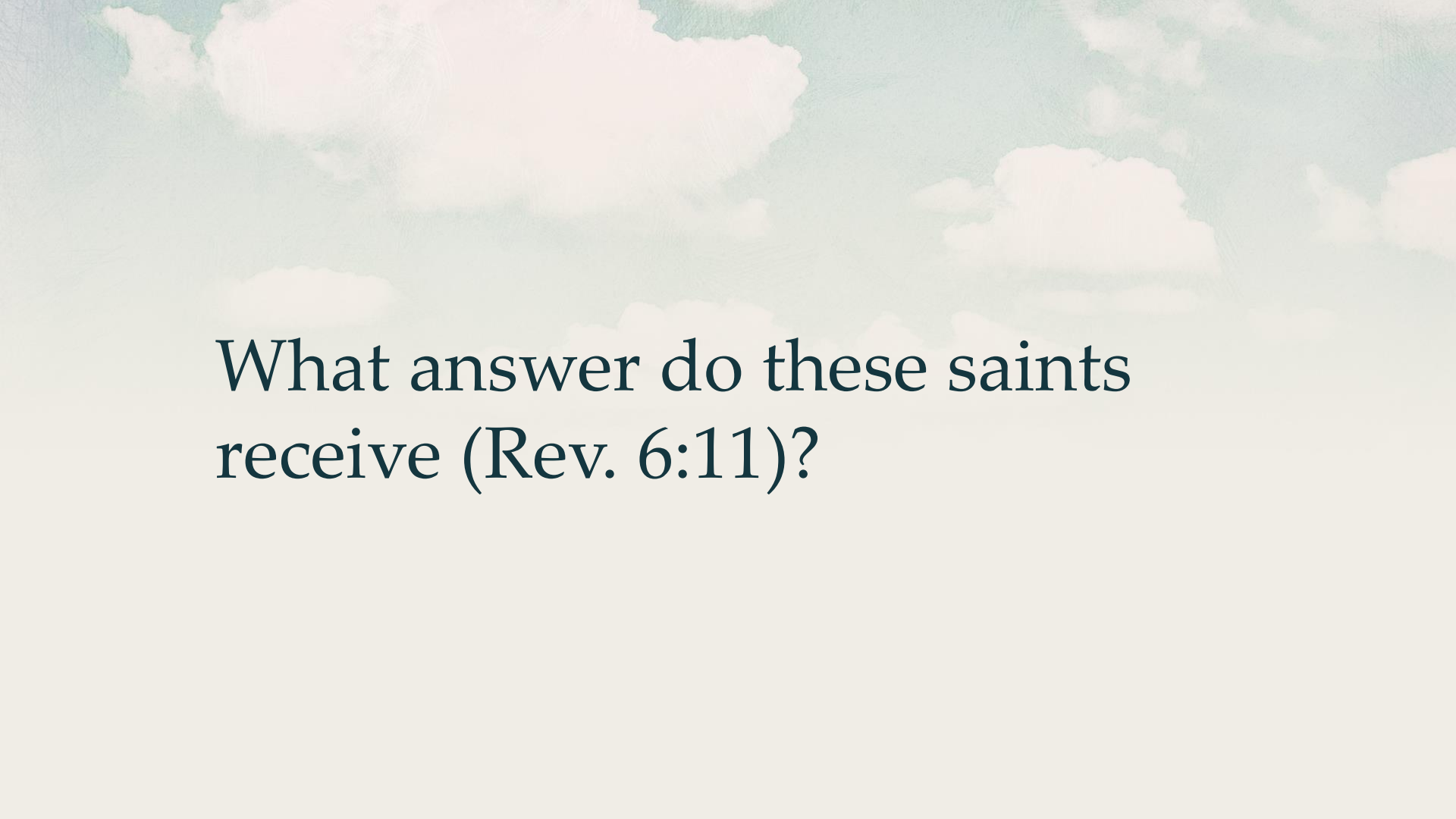
Who are these believers (v. 9)?

**People killed for the Word of  
God and for bearing witness  
for Him**

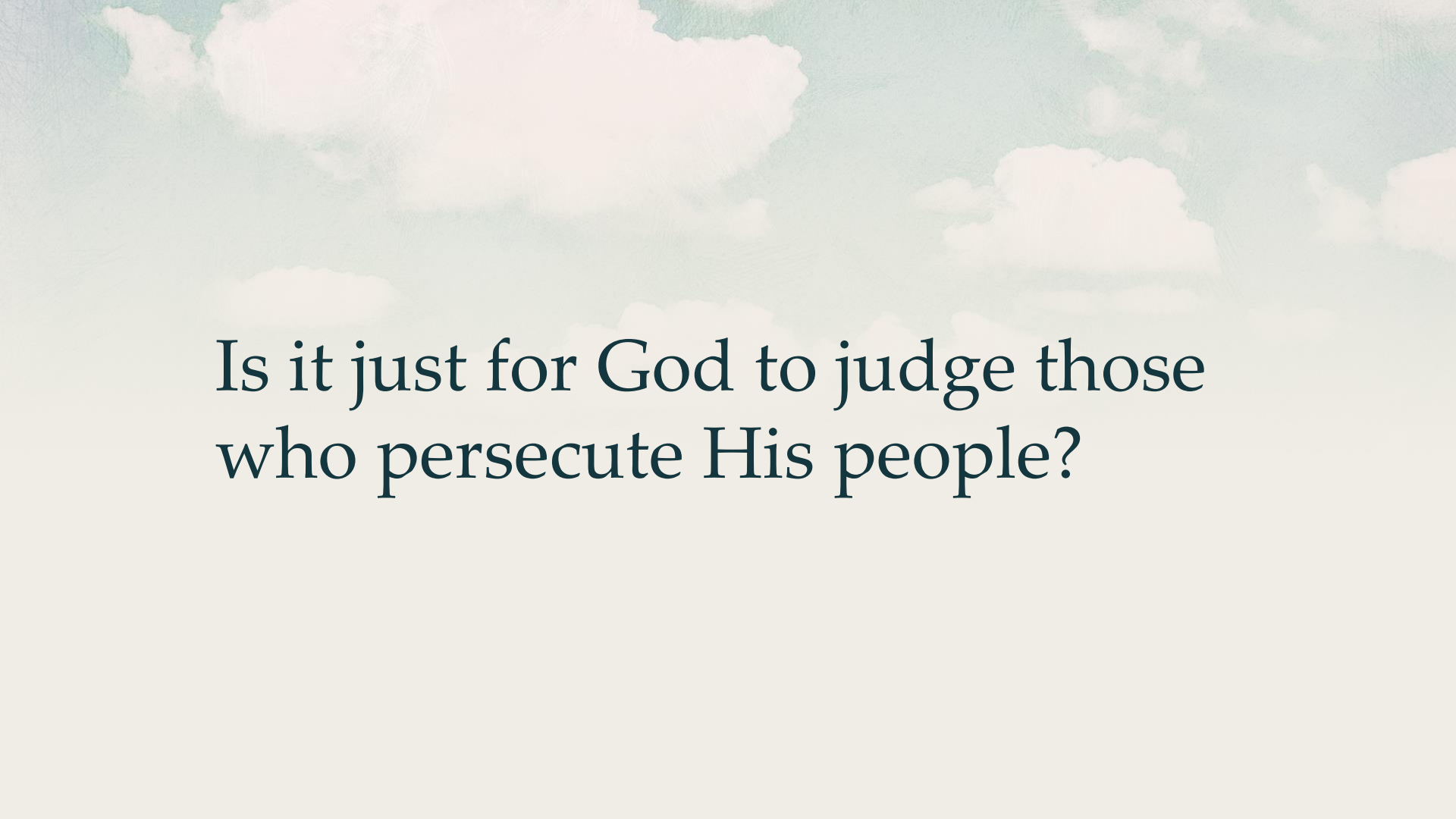
# Revelation 6

What do they ask God (v. 10)?

**How long before You judge  
and avenge our blood?**



What answer do these saints  
receive (Rev. 6:11)?



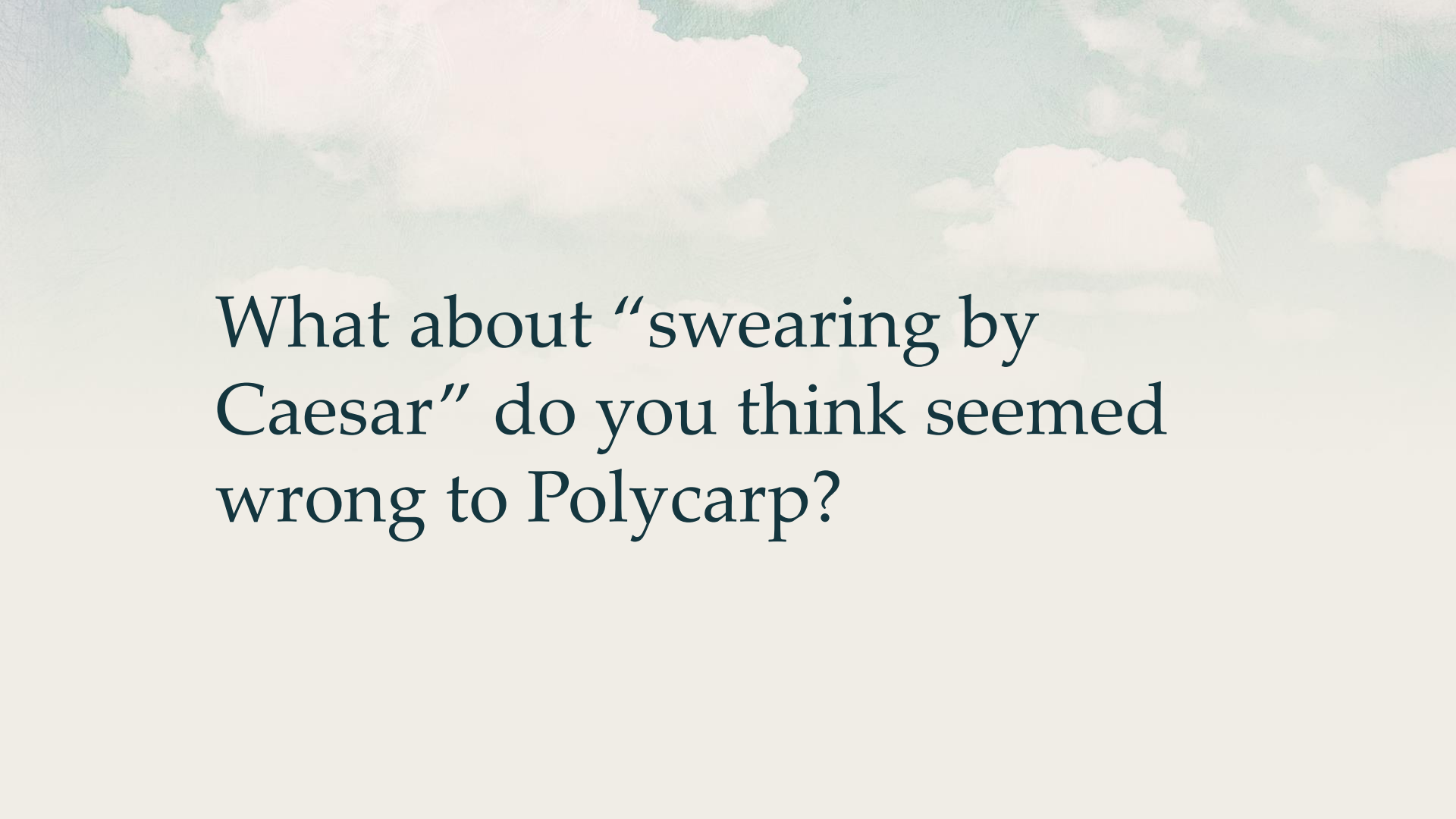
Is it just for God to judge those  
who persecute His people?

Further Reading:

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# Polycarp's Stand





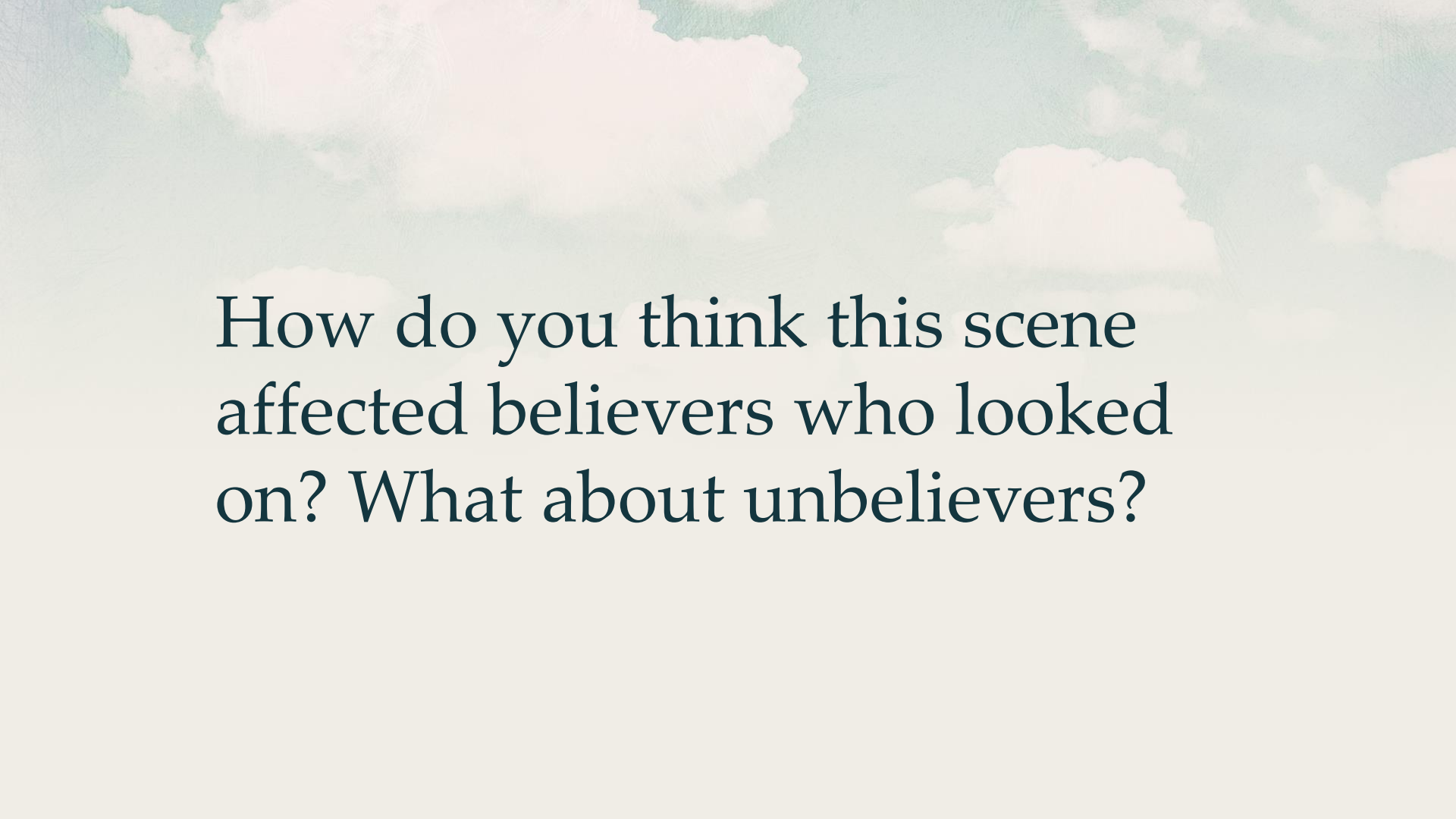
What about “swearing by  
Caesar” do you think seemed  
wrong to Polycarp?

# *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*

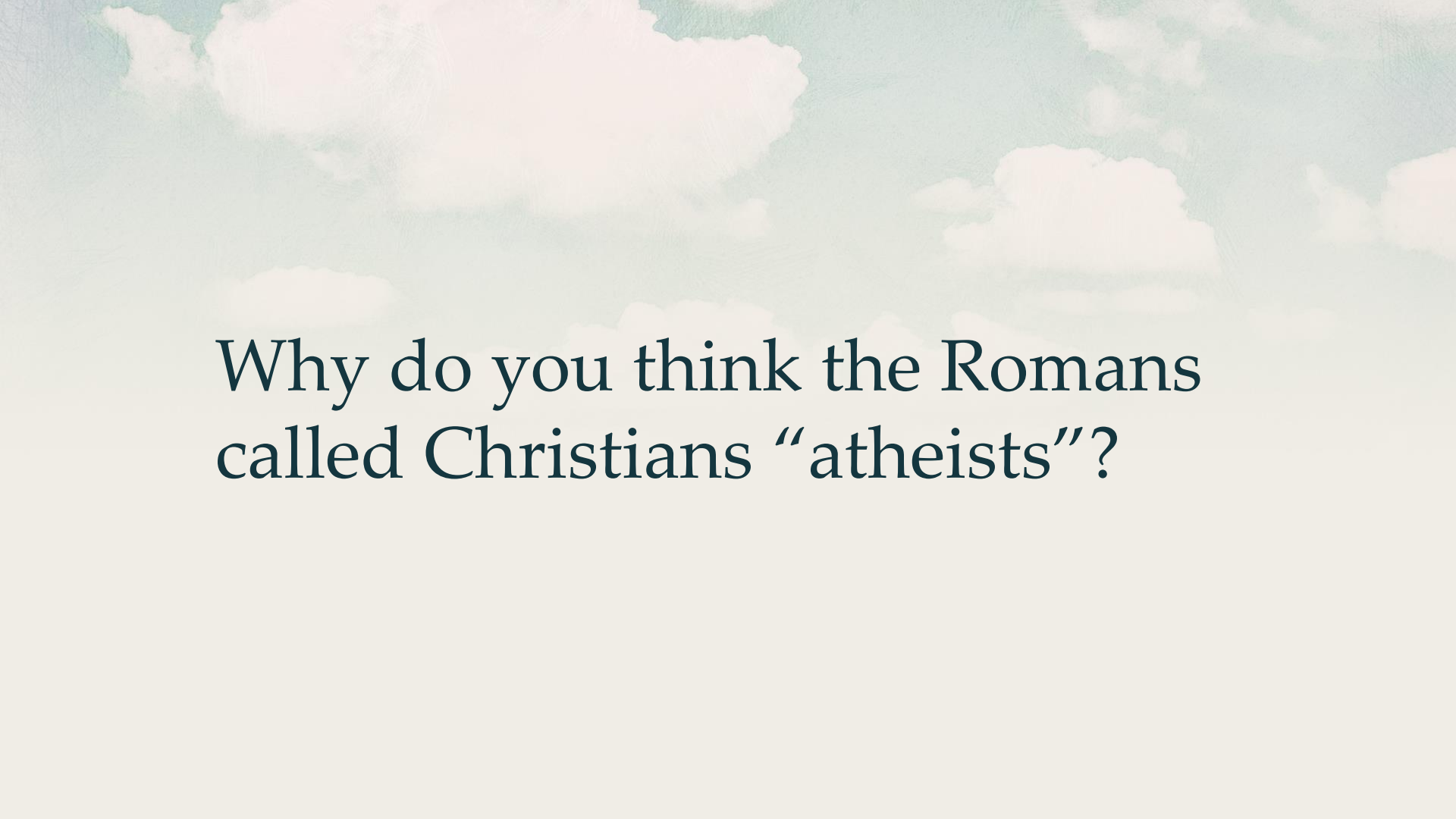
What reason did Polycarp offer for refusing to deny Christ?

**The faithfulness of God; the value of the eternal over the temporal**





How do you think this scene affected believers who looked on? What about unbelievers?



Why do you think the Romans  
called Christians “atheists”?



  
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# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 3

# Living in the World



c. 30

The First Persecution under Emperor Nero

64

c. 35–110

Ignatius of Antioch, a bishop of Antioch in Palestine, and possibly a student of the Apostle John

c. 100–165

**Justin Martyr**, a Christian philosopher and teacher

122

Emperor Hadrian begins building a wall to keep barbarians out of Roman territory in Britannia.

c. 150–215

**Clement of Alexandria**, a leader and teacher of the church in Alexandria, Egypt

c. 200s

Christians throughout the Roman empire recite the **Apostles Creed**.



**c. 255**

The Valerian Persecution under Emperor Valerian I

**c. 251–356**

**Anthony the Great**, a hermit-teacher who lived in the desert west of Alexandria; an early Christian monk

**303**

The Great Persecution under the western emperors Diocletian and Galerius

**311**

Suffering from what is likely a form of cancer, Galerius issues an edict of religious tolerance one month before his death.

**312**

After the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine marches into Rome and establishes himself as ruler of the western part of the Roman empire.

**313**

Constantine issues the Edict of Milan, which legalizes Christian worship.



Introduction:

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*The Life of  
St. Anthony*

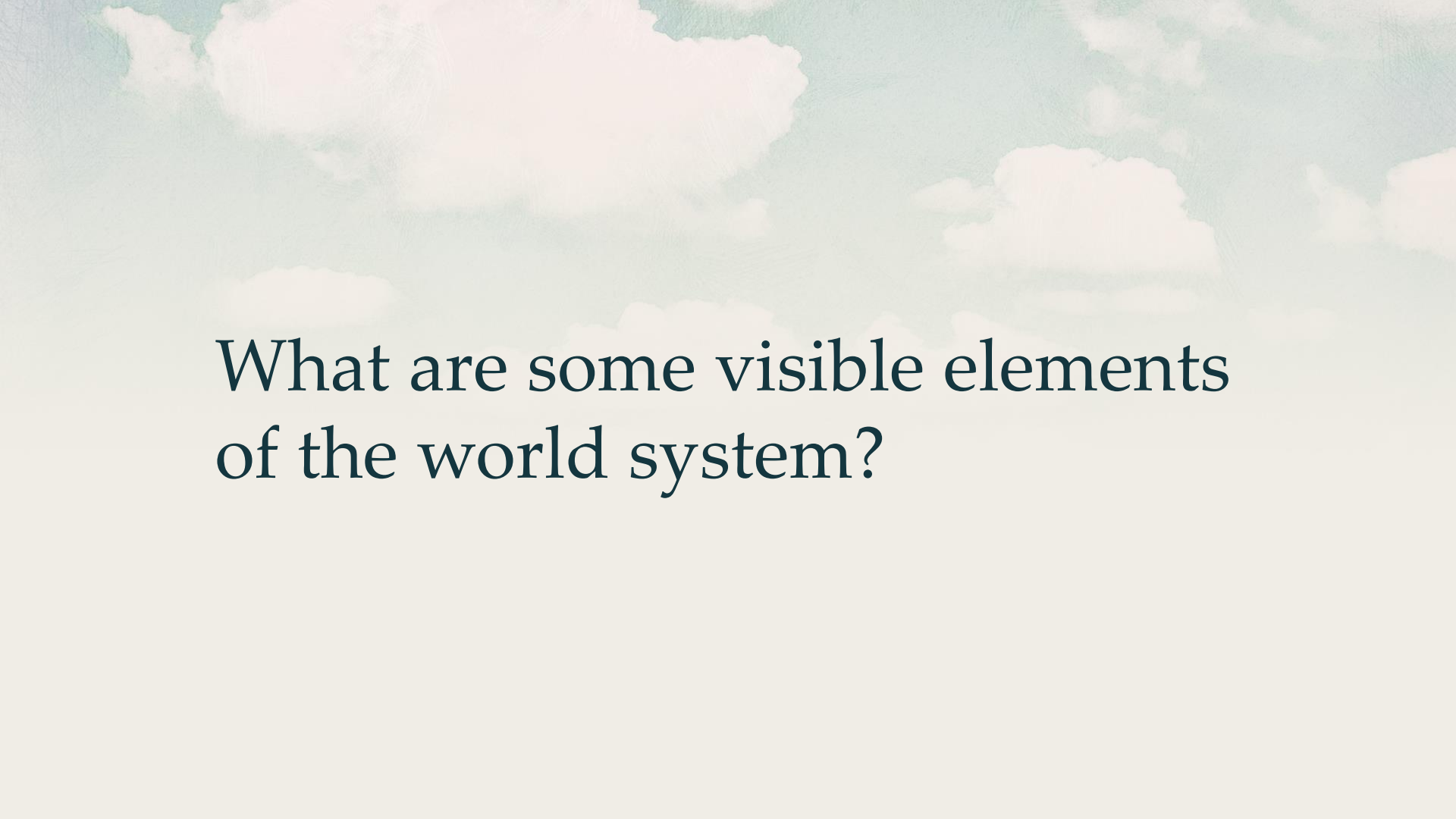


Do you think Anthony  
interpreted Christ's teaching in  
Matthew 6:25 correctly?


Discussion

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# Asceticism



What are some visible elements  
of the world system?



# Avoiding the World

# John 17

What did Jesus ask the Father to do for us (v. 15)?

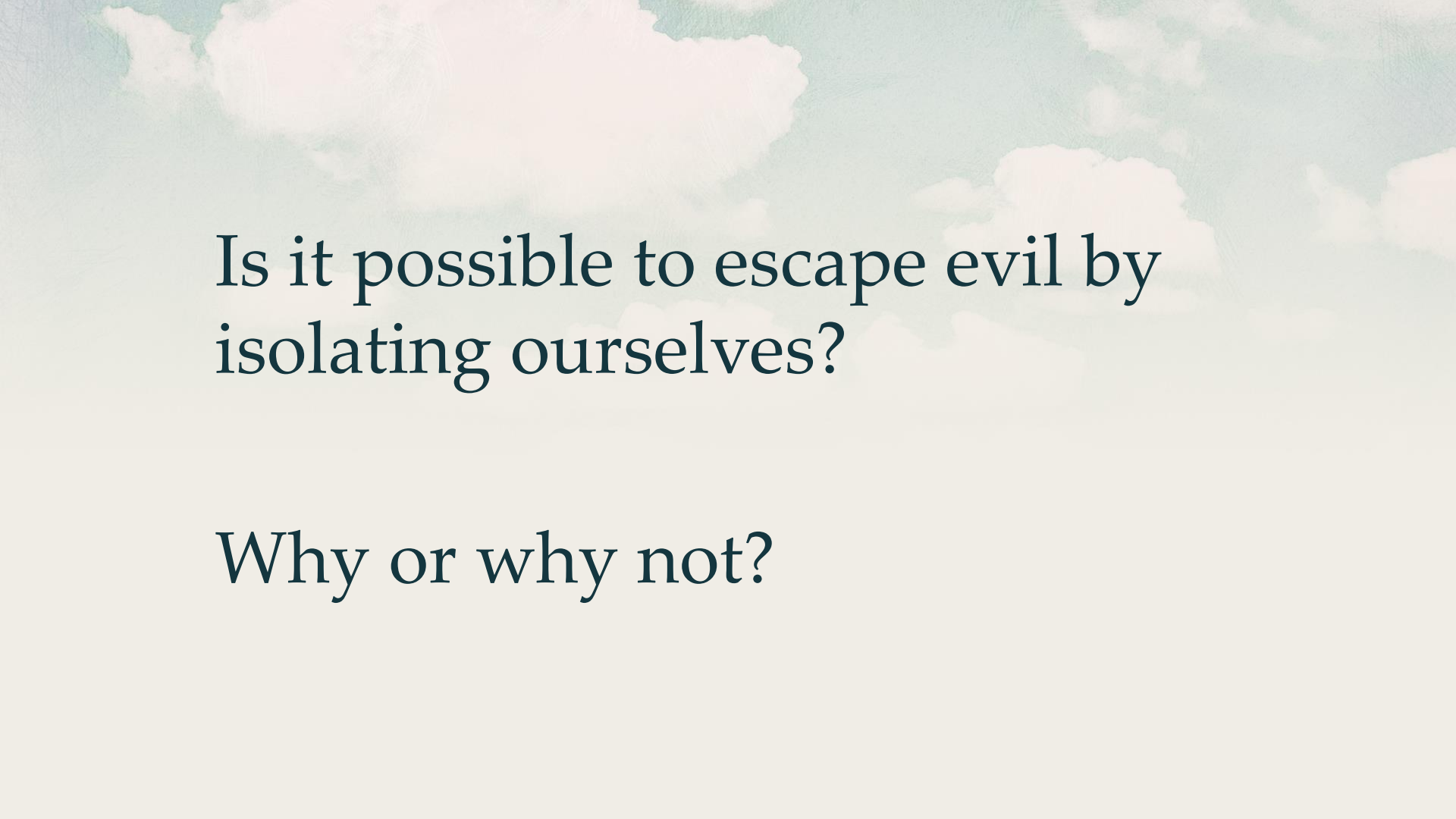
**Not to remove us from the world, but to protect us from evil / the evil one**

# Romans 7

What lives inside Paul, opposing him (vv. 20–21)?

**Sin/evil**





Is it possible to escape evil by  
isolating ourselves?

Why or why not?

Context:

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# Jeremiah & Peter

Discussion:

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# The Physical vs. Spiritual



# Engaging the World

# Colossians 3

What phrase in verse 1 indicates that Paul is writing to fellow Christians?

**He addresses those who have been raised with Christ.**

# Colossians 3

In verse 2, what does Paul tell the Colossian believers to do?

**Set their minds/affections on things above, not on earthly things**

# Colossians 3

When Christ finally reveals Himself at the end of time, what will happen (v. 4)?

**We will also appear/be revealed in glory.**



Context:

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# Focus and Attraction

Context:

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*Apologia*



# Be a Living Testimony

# 1 Peter 3

In verse 8, what does Peter challenge the believers to be?

**Terms will vary by translation. Christians should be unified, compassionate, loving, kind, and humble.**

History:

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# Justin Martyr





# Respond with Blessing

# 1 Peter 3

Peter writes that we shouldn't repay evil for evil—because believers are called to something higher. What are we called to both give and receive (v. 9)?

**A blessing**



# 1 Peter 3

List every instruction from verses 10–11 that can help us avoid unnecessary trouble.

1. We should avoid evil and deceptive speech (v. 10).
2. We should turn from evil and do good (v. 11).
3. We must pursue peace (v. 11).

# 1 Peter 3

In verse 12, what blessing does God promise the righteous?

**That He watches over them  
and hears their prayers**

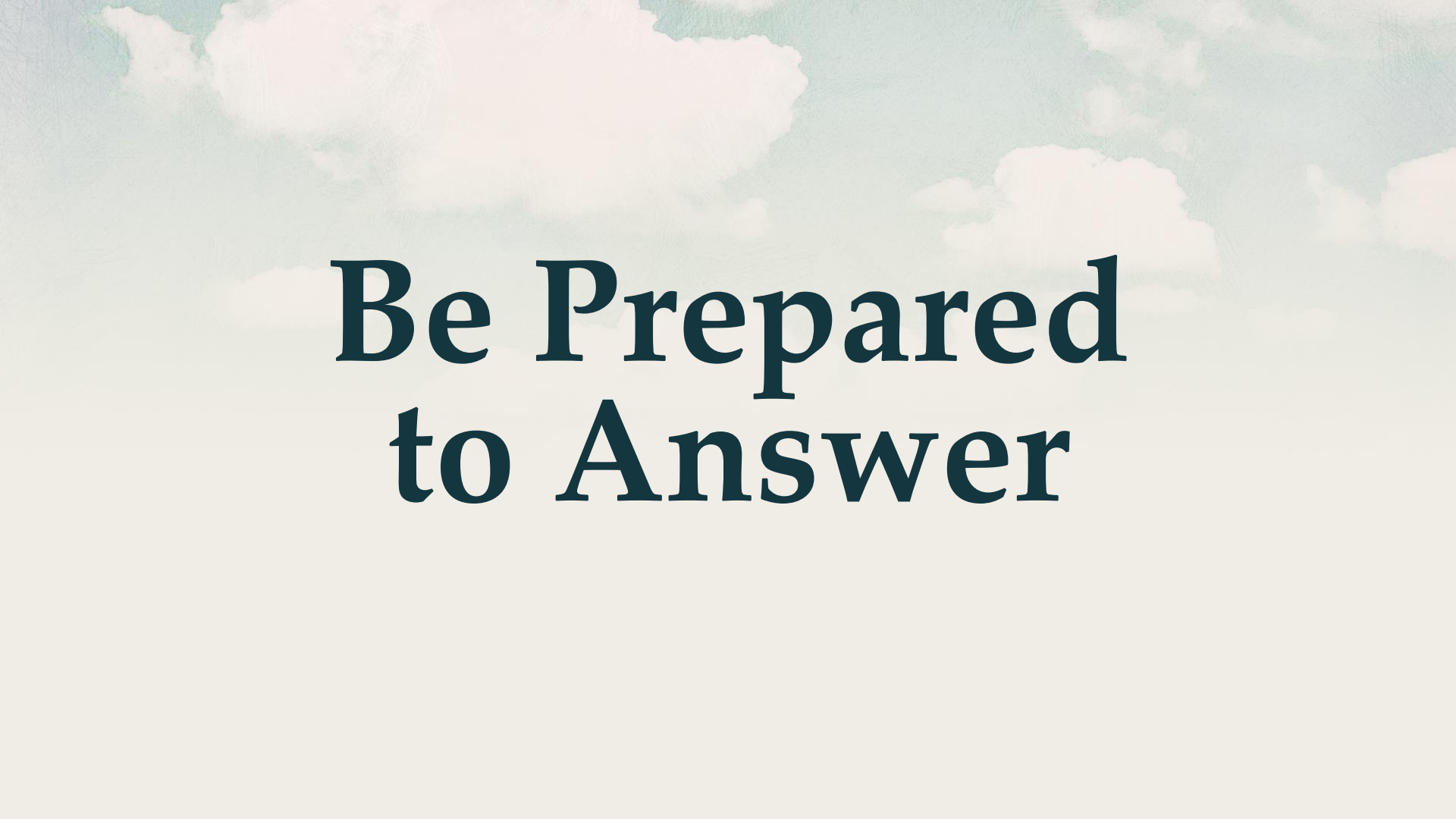
Context:

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# Blessing for Blessing



How can Christians be  
expected to respond to  
mistreatment and persecution  
with blessing?



**Be Prepared  
to Answer**

# 1 Peter 3

What question should we be ready to answer (v. 15)?

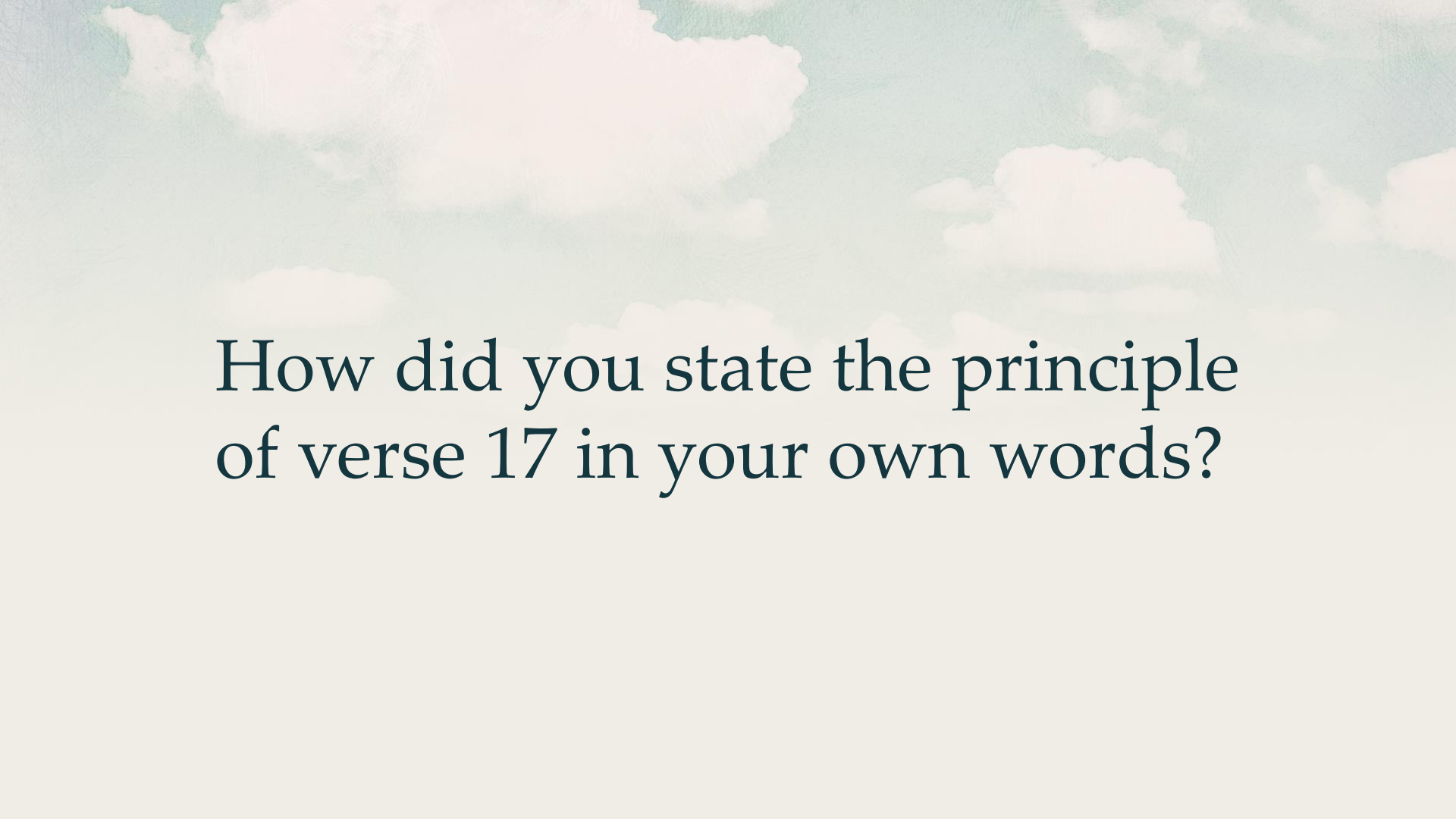
**What is the reason for the hope in us?**

# 1 Peter 3

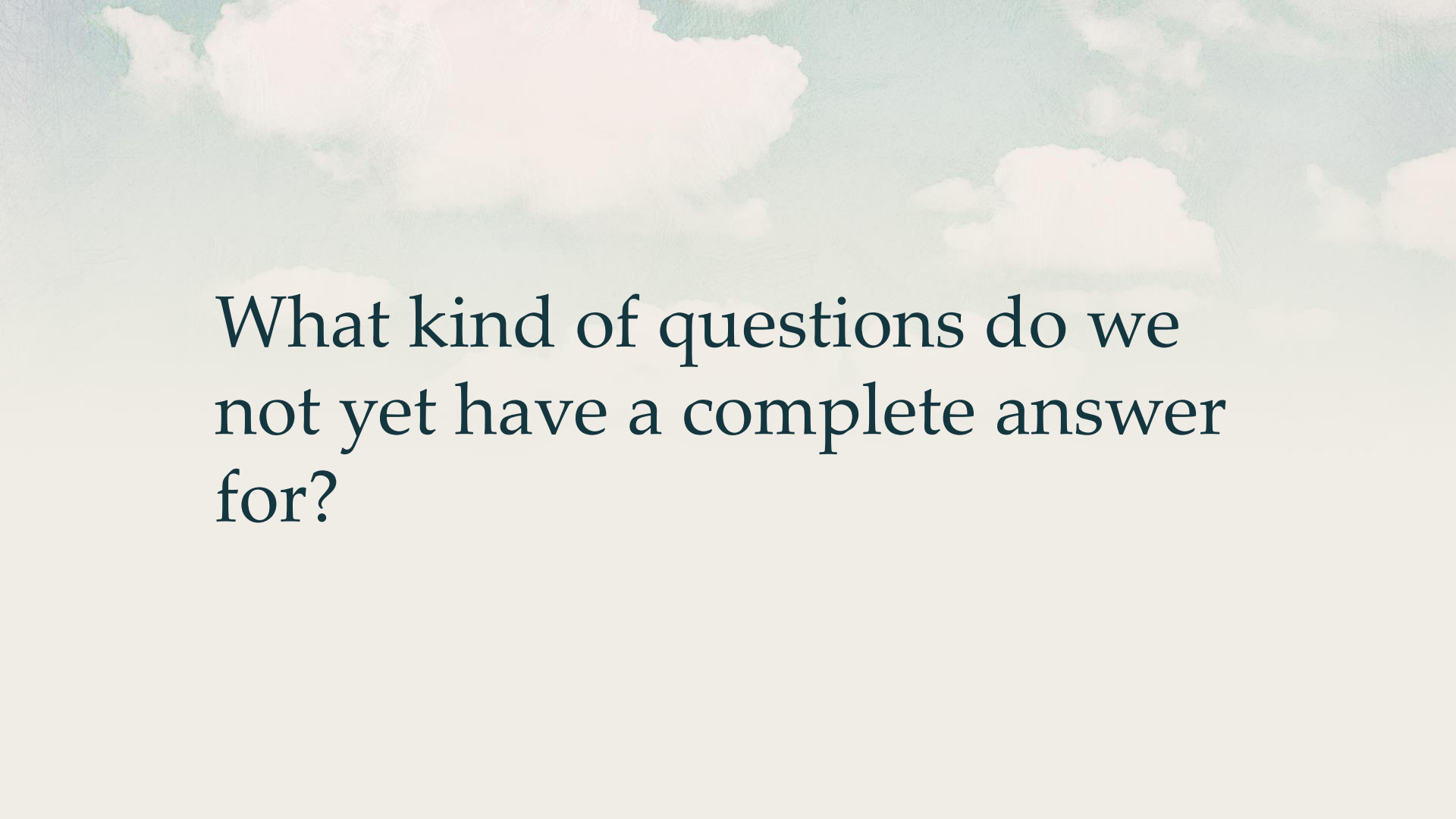
According to the end of verse 15,  
how should we speak to anyone  
questioning us about this?

**With meekness/gentleness  
and fear/respect**

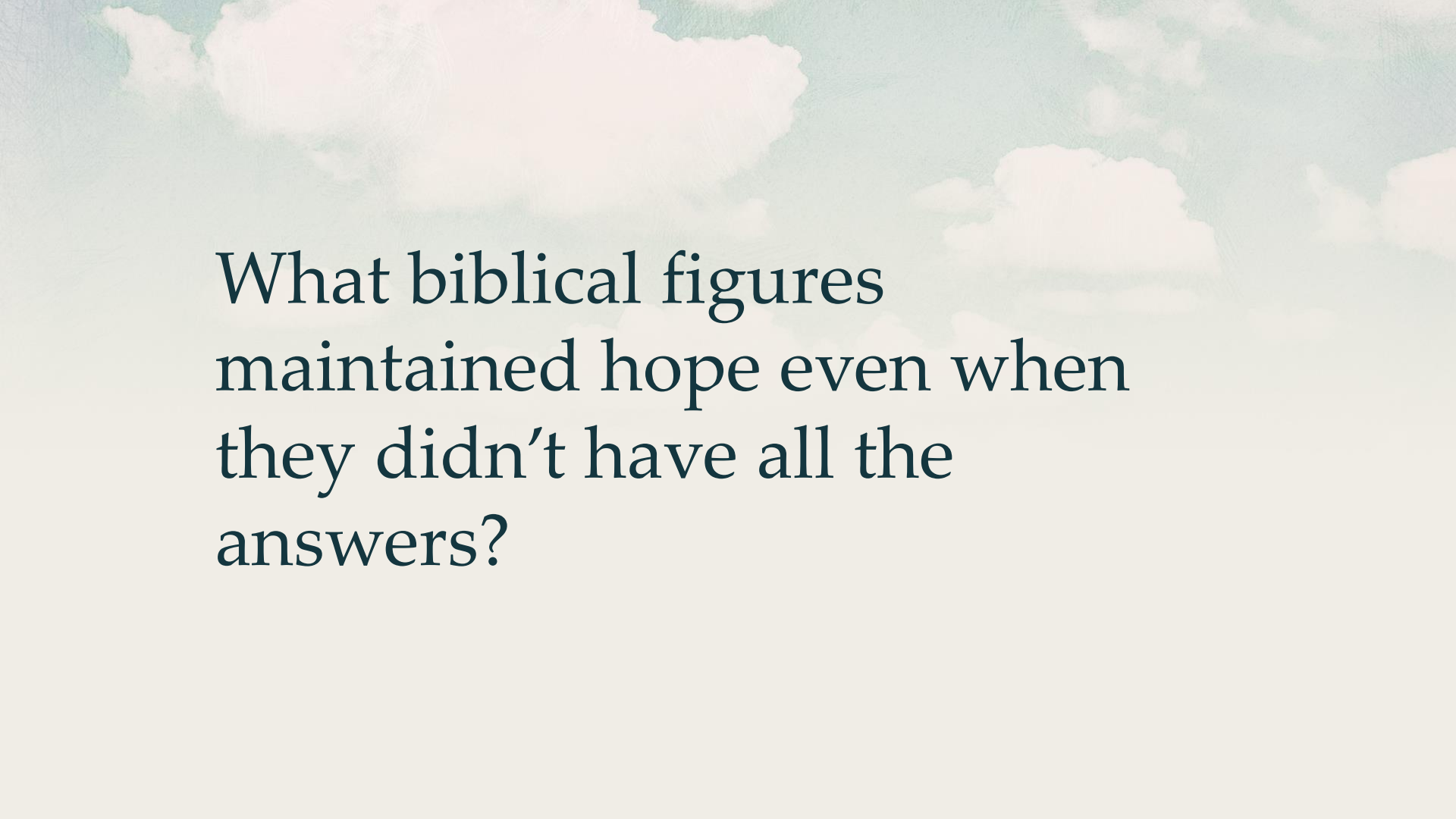




How did you state the principle  
of verse 17 in your own words?



What kind of questions do we  
not yet have a complete answer  
for?



What biblical figures  
maintained hope even when  
they didn't have all the  
answers?

Further Reading:

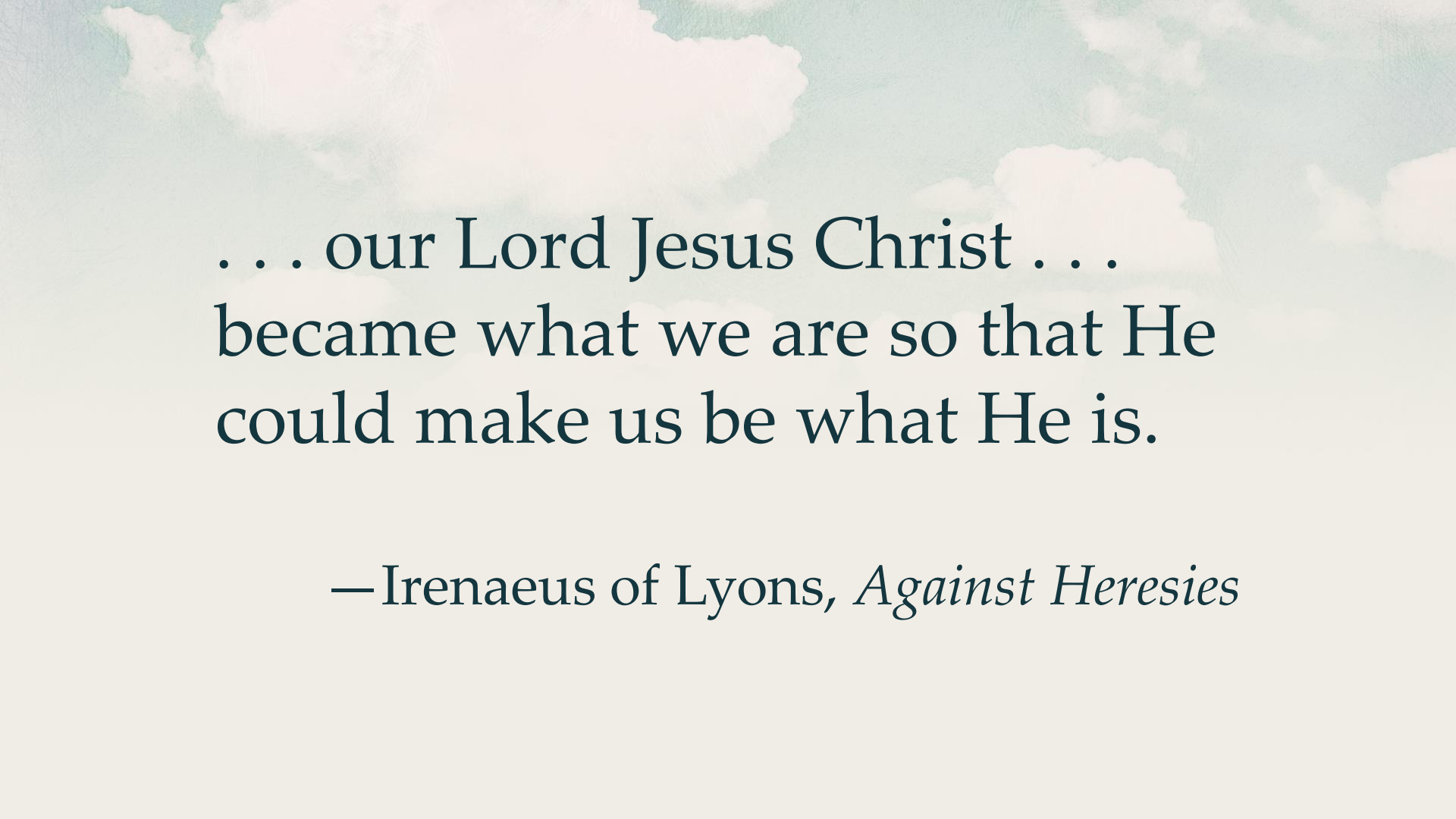
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# Beliefs of Second Century Christians



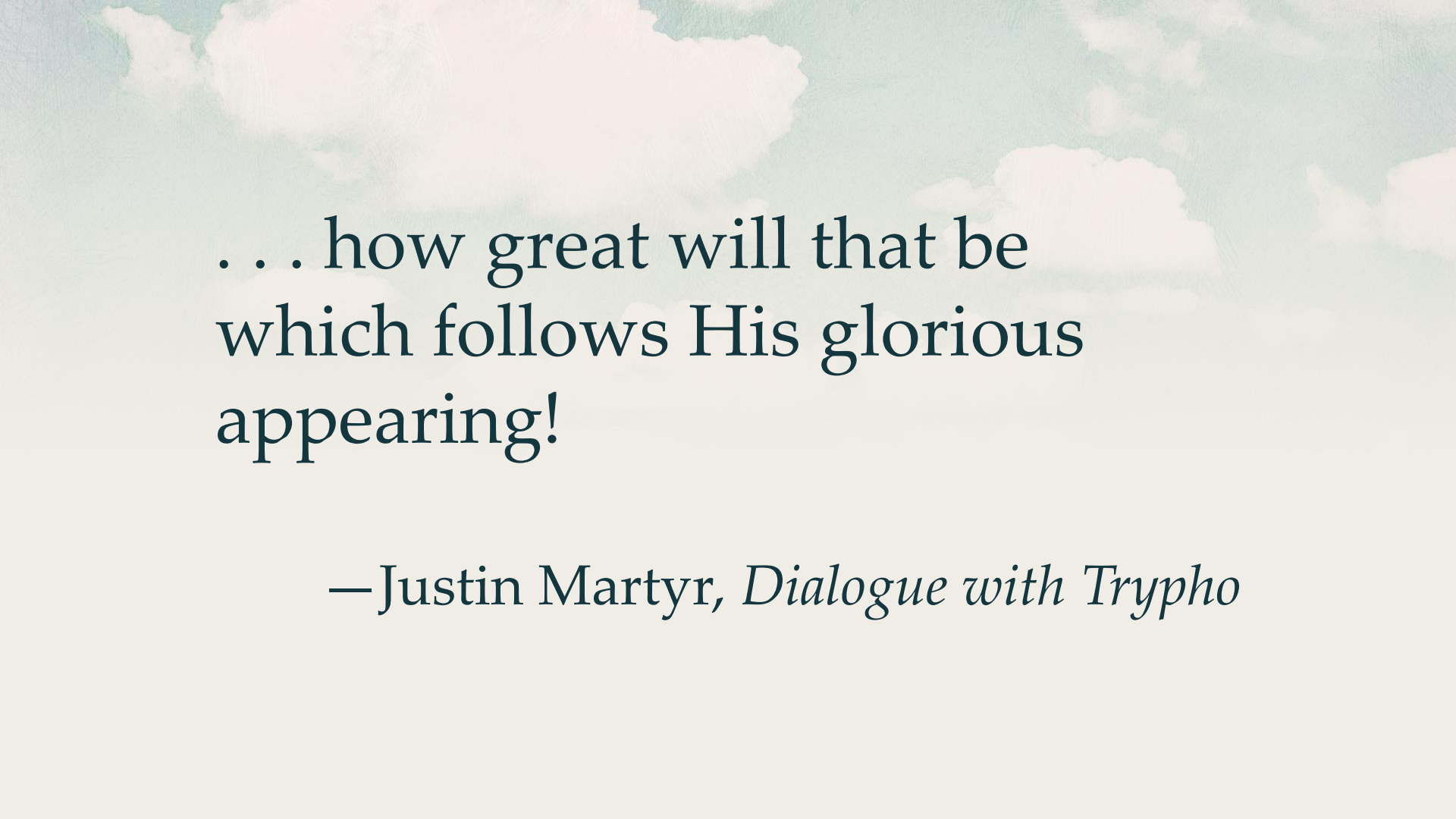
All our life is a [holy] festival.

—Clement of Alexandria



. . . our Lord Jesus Christ . . .  
became what we are so that He  
could make us be what He is.

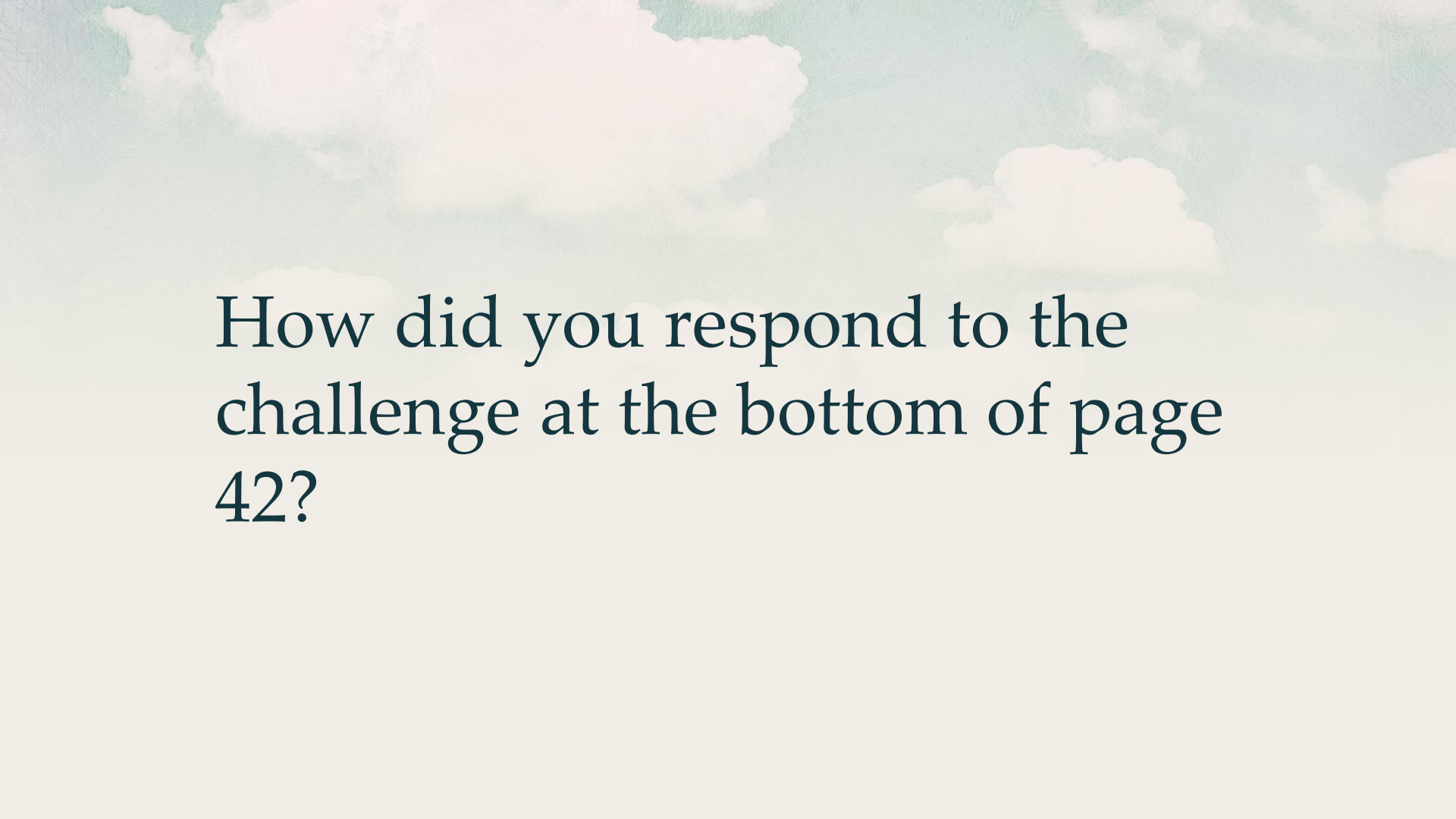
—Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*



. . . how great will that be  
which follows His glorious  
appearing!

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*



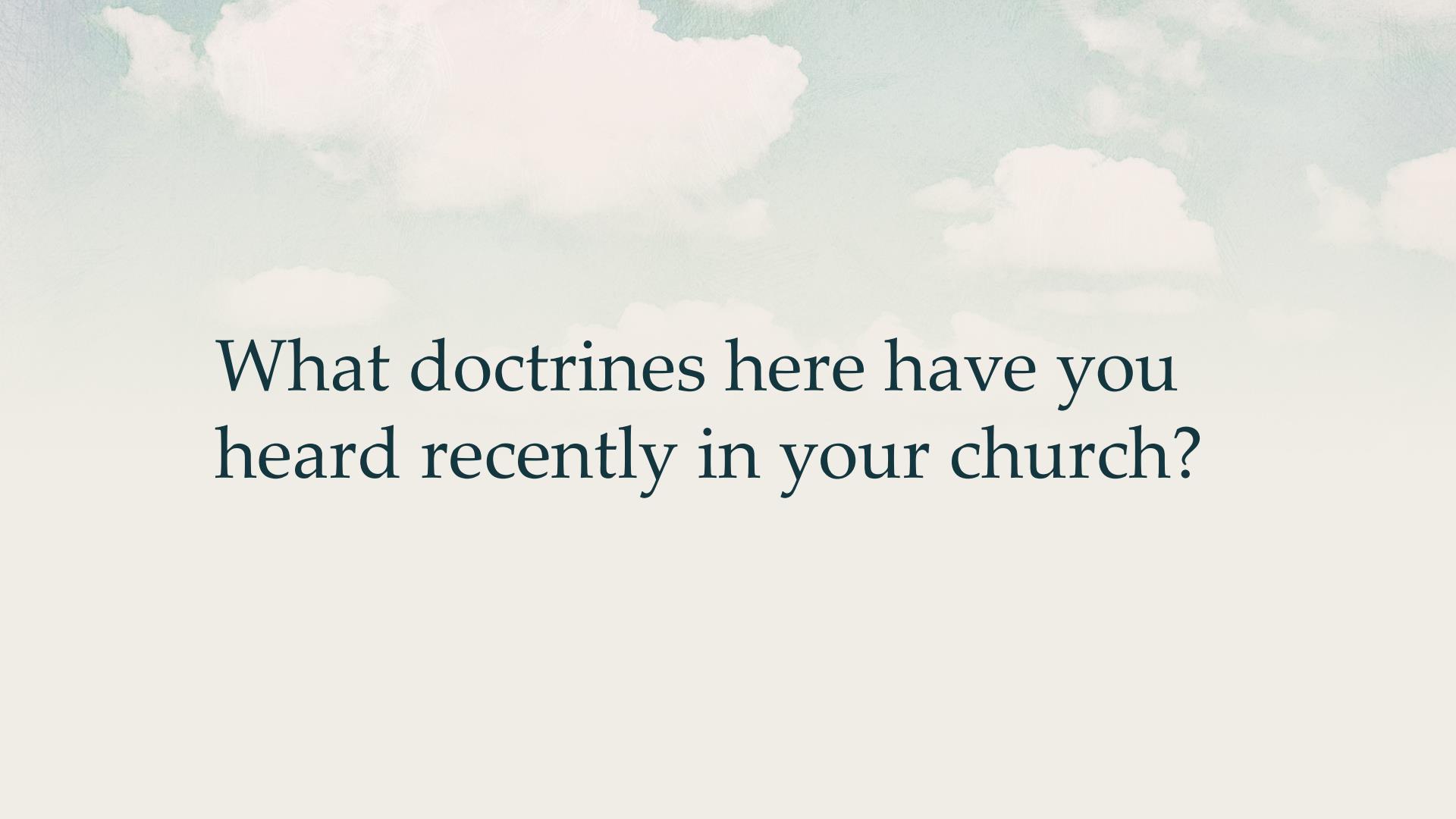


How did you respond to the challenge at the bottom of page 42?

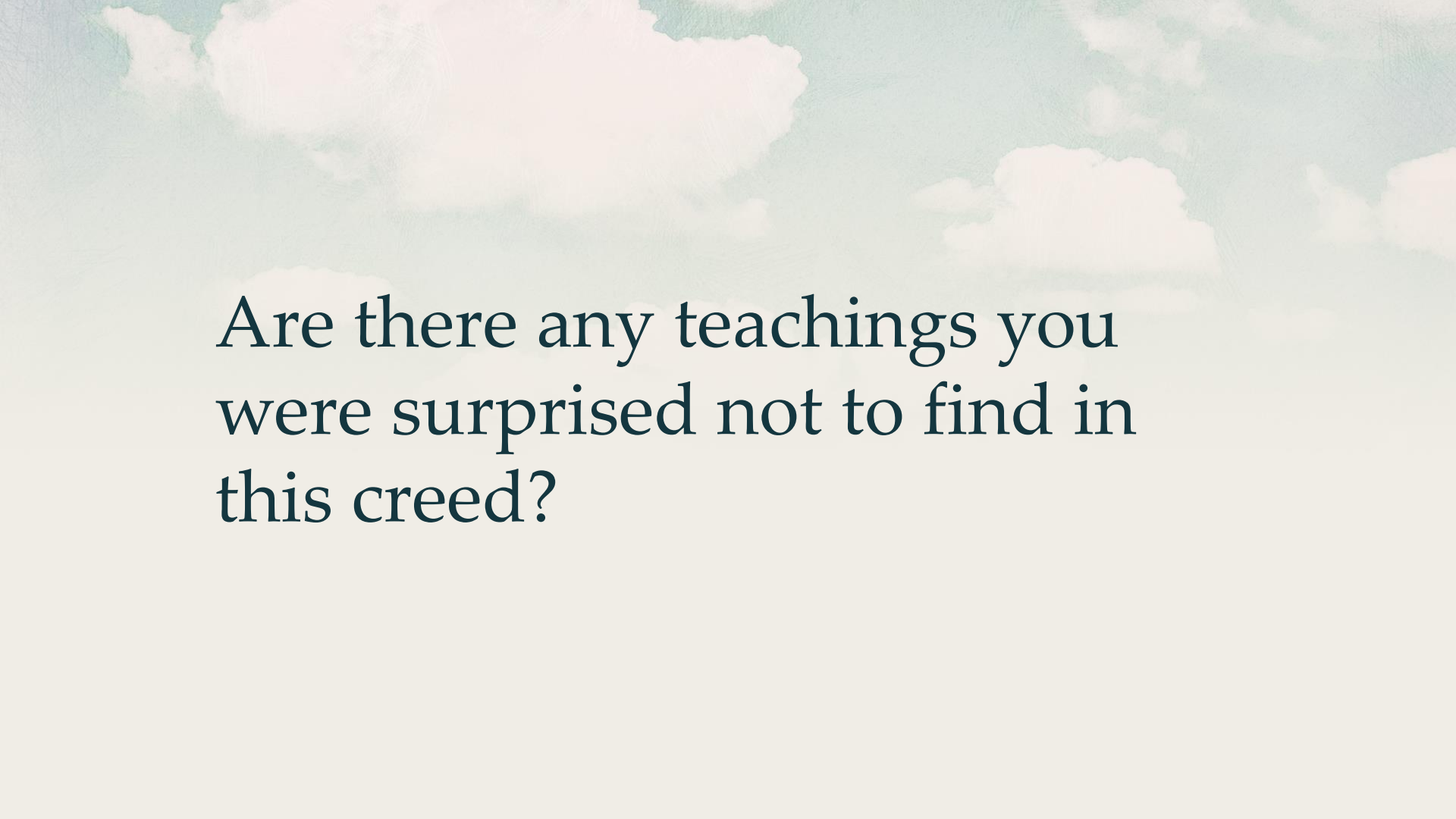
Discussion

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# The Apostles' Creed



What doctrines here have you  
heard recently in your church?



Are there any teachings you  
were surprised not to find in  
this creed?

Teacher's Note:

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**Catholic vs. catholic**

Teacher's Note:

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*descendit ad inferos*

The logo features a circular icon with a stylized arrow pointing upwards and to the right, positioned above the text. The text "PositiveAction" is in a bold, sans-serif font, with "Positive" and "Action" joined together. Below it, "FOR CHRIST" is written in a smaller, all-caps, spaced-out sans-serif font.

**PositiveAction**  
FOR CHRIST



# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 4

# From Persecution to Privilege

**c. 263–339**

**Eusebius of Caesarea**, a Christian writer and historian

**303–311**

The Great Persecution under the western emperors Diocletian and Galerius

**312**

**Constantine I** becomes emperor of the Western Empire after the Battle of Milvian Bridge.

**313**

The **Edict of Milan**, issued by co-emperors Constantine and Licinius, promises religious freedom and reparations to Christians.

**324**

Constantine conquers the East, temporarily unifying the Roman Empire.



**d. 342**

**Eusebius of Nicomedia**, a bishop who promoted the teaching of Arius; spiritual advisor to Constantine

**337**

Constantine is baptized by Eusebius of Nicomedia shortly before dying.

**380**

The **Edict of Thessalonica**, championed by Emperor Theodosius, declares Nicene Christianity to be the state religion of the whole empire.

Introduction:

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# The Battle of Milvian Bridge

History:

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# The Tetrarchy

History:

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# Minervina and Fausta



History:

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# The *Chi-Rho*



History:

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# The Conversion of Constantine





# The Sovereignty of God

# Daniel 2

According to verse 20, what two things belong to God?

**Wisdom and power/might**

# Daniel 2

How does He use these things to shape history?

1. He changes times and seasons.
2. He removes and establishes kings.
3. He offers wisdom and knowledge.



Read Philippians 2:9–11 and  
1 Corinthians 15:24–28.

In your own words, describe  
what every human authority  
will one day do.

Discussion:

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# Insecurity





# The Benefits of Privilege



**The Dangers  
of Privilege:  
Appeasing the World**

# 1 John 2

If we choose to love the world system, what kind of love do we *not* have (v. 15)?

**The love of the Father**

# 1 John 2

What three things does John say the world offers (v. 16)?

1. **The desires (lusts) of the flesh**
2. **The desires (lusts) of the eyes**
3. **The pride of life**

# 1 John 2

How does John contrast the fate of the world and the fate of people who obey God (v. 17)?

**The world and its desires pass away, but people who do God's will live forever.**



What biblical truths are  
currently popular?

Which are unpopular?



**The Dangers  
of Privilege:  
Pursuing Wealth  
and Power**



Context:

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# Eusebius vs. Eusebius

# Using Religion

The Pharisees in Matthew 6:16

**They did good works to be  
seen and praised by others.**

# Using Religion

Simon in Acts 8:14–21

He tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit for money, apparently to bolster his own prestige.

# Using Religion

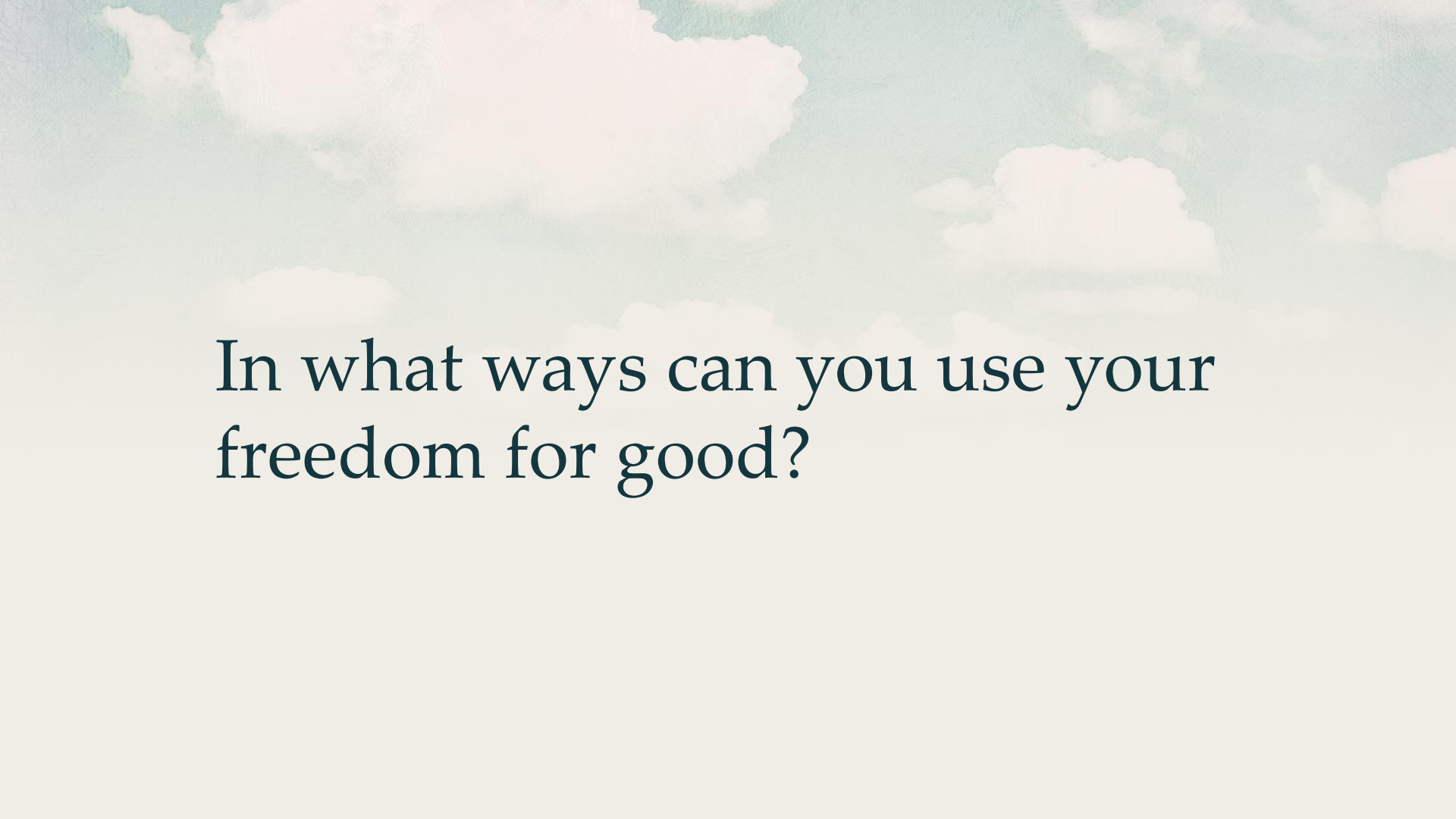
Divisive Teachers in Romans 16:17–18

They cause divisions and put obstacles/offenses in the way of others, contrary to good teaching. They serve their stomachs, deceiving the naïve with smooth rhetoric and flattery.

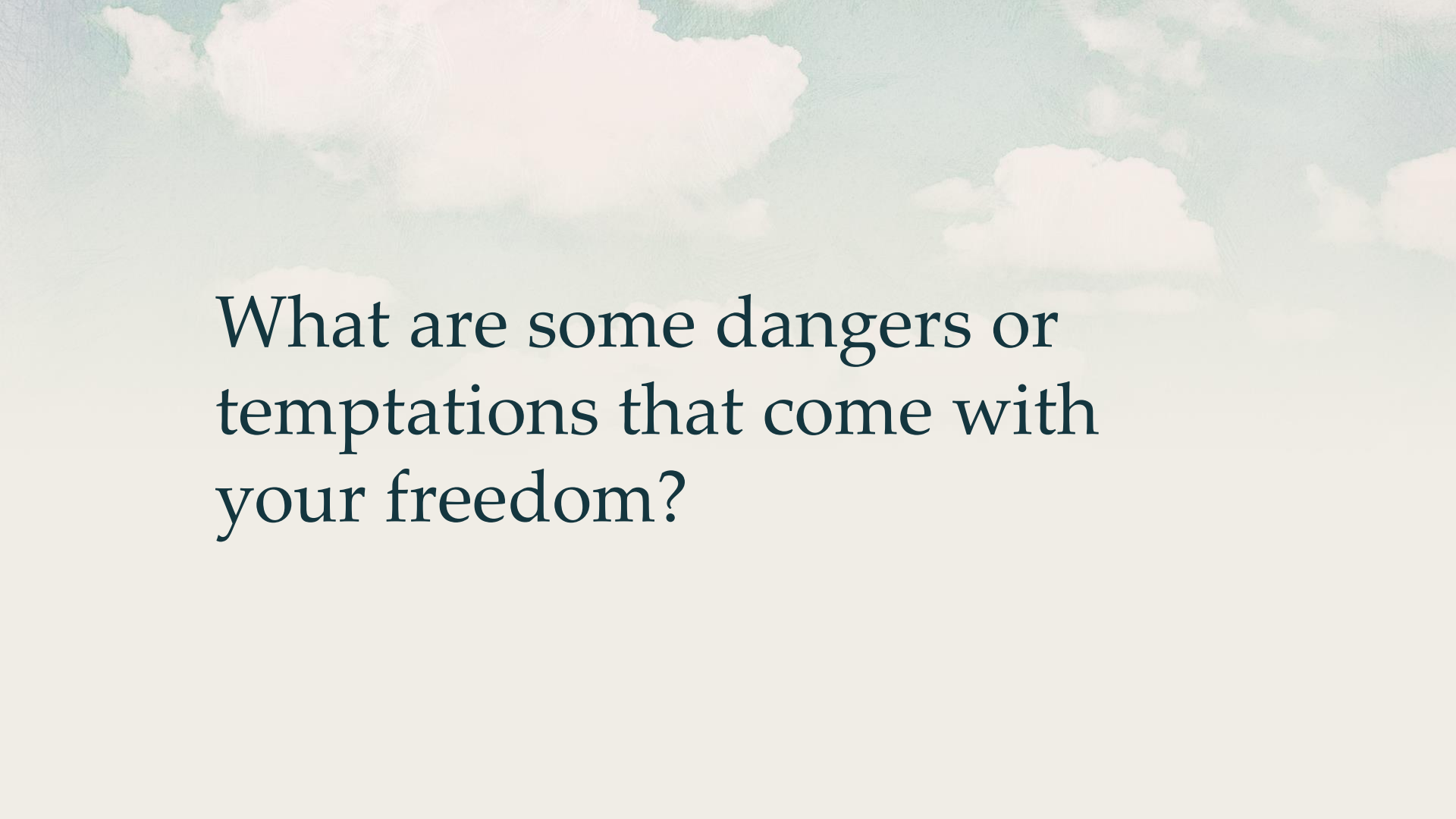
History:

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# Simony



In what ways can you use your  
freedom for good?



What are some dangers or temptations that come with your freedom?



Discussion:

---

# Freedom and Rights

Further Reading:

---

# The Edict of Thessalonica

# The Edict

What specific doctrine is mentioned as essential to Christianity?

**The deity and equality of all three members of the Trinity**

# The Edict

What does this edict call people who deny this doctrine?

**Insane, raving, heretical teachers; un-Christian**

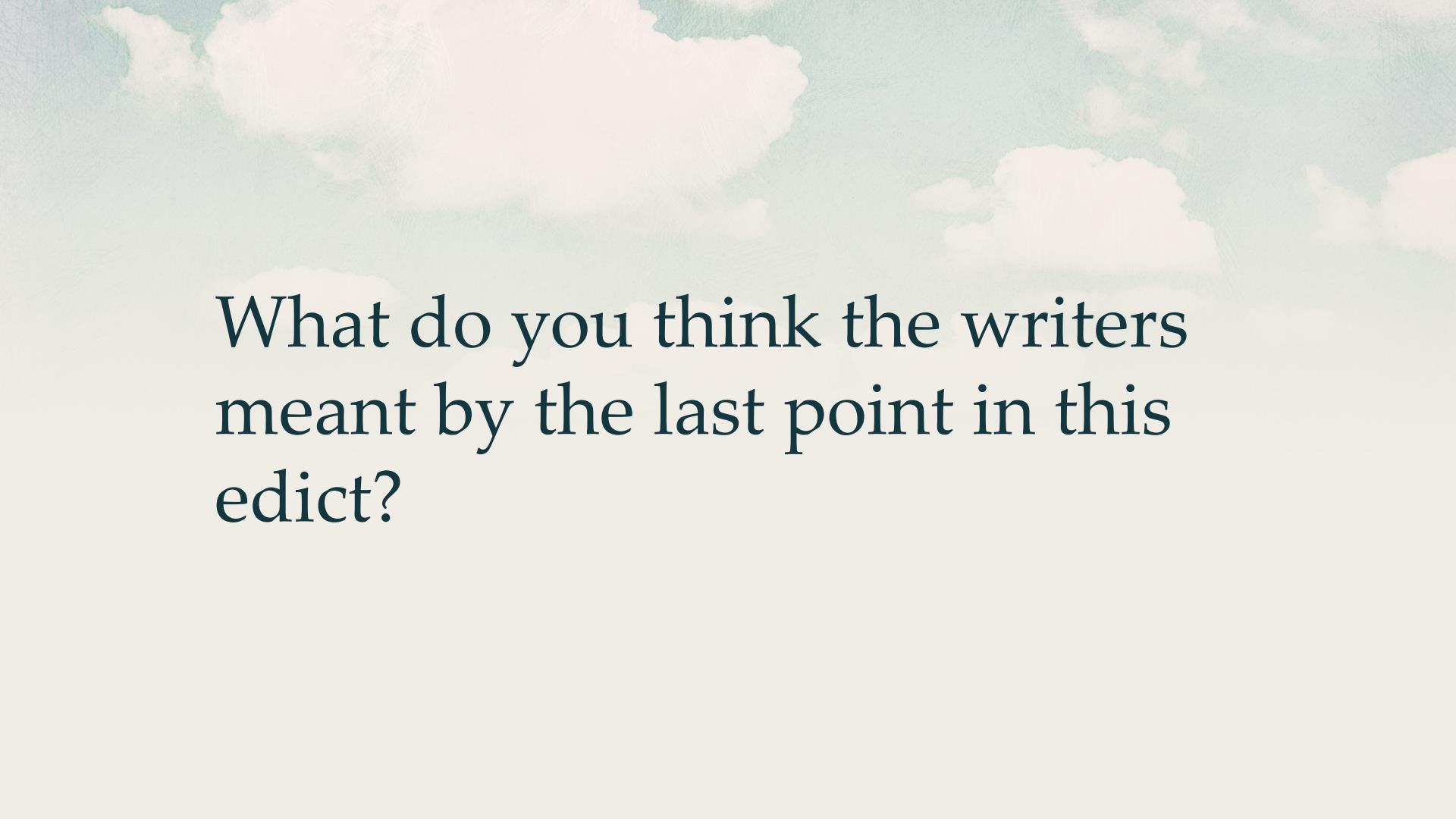
○ *Rome*

*Constantinople*  
(AD 381) ○

○ *Chalcedon*  
(AD 451)

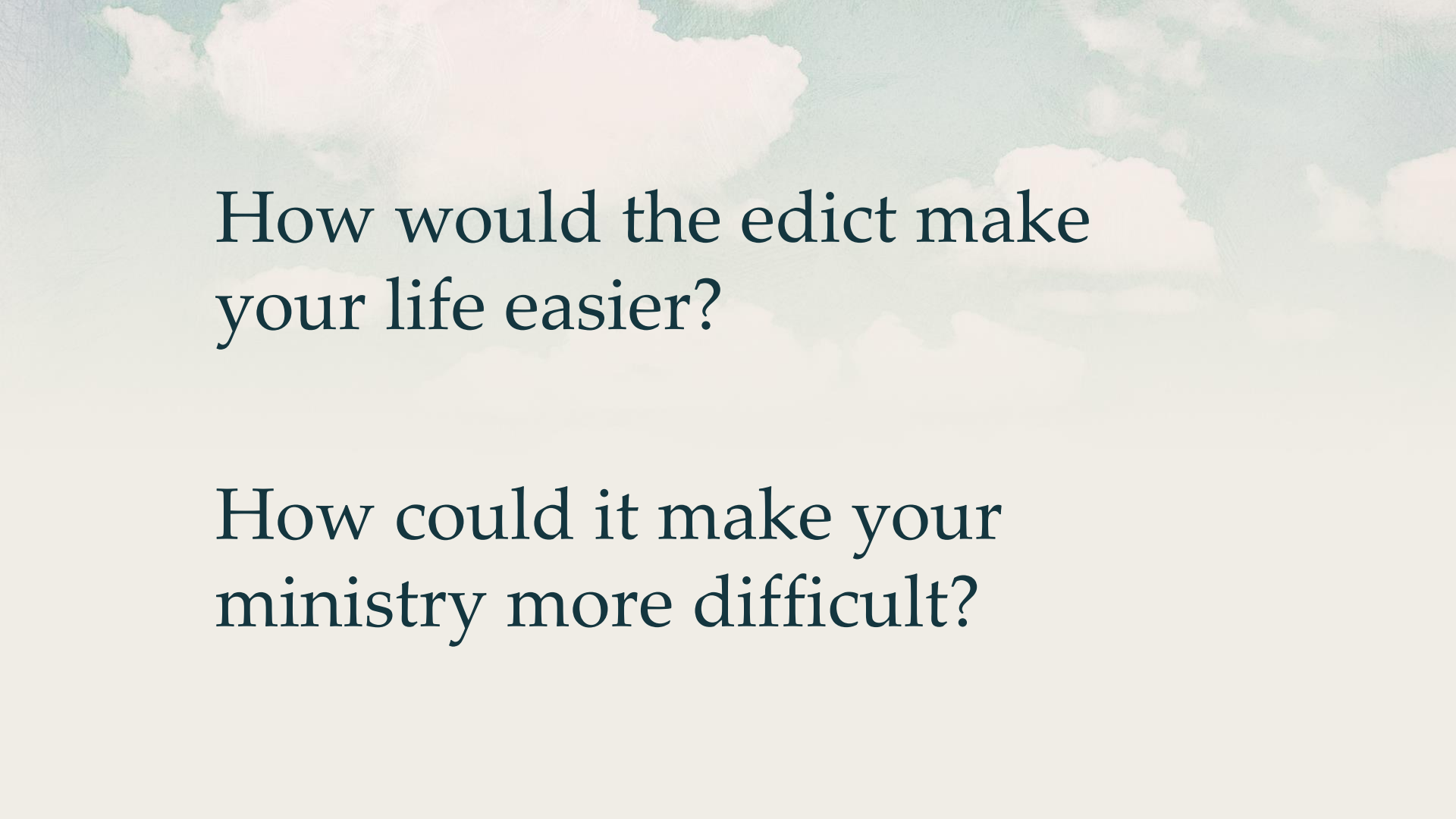
○ *Nicea*  
(AD 325)

○ *Ephesus*  
(AD 431)



What do you think the writers  
meant by the last point in this  
edict?





How would the edict make  
your life easier?

How could it make your  
ministry more difficult?





  
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# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 5

# Heresies





**325**

**The First Council of Nicea**

Produces the Nicene Creed, which affirms the deity of Christ

**381**

**The First Council of Constantinople**

Expands the Nicene Creed to emphasize the equality of all three Persons of the Trinity

**431**

**The First Council of Ephesus**

Condemns the teaching of Nestorius and Pelagius

**451**

**The Council of Chalcedon**

Affirms Christ's two natures—human and divine

**553**

**The Second Council of Constantinople**

Explains that Christ's two natures exist in one unified Person

**680–81**

**The Third Council of Constantinople**

States that Christ has two wills, one human and one divine; in the process, condemns Pope Honorius I as a teacher of heresy

**787**

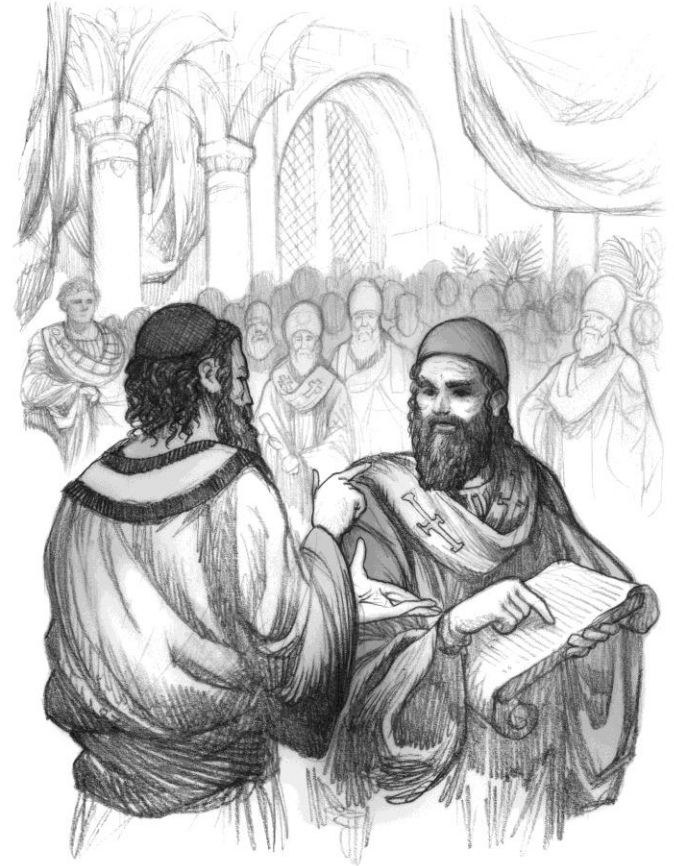
**Second Council of Nicea**

Approves the veneration of *icons*, or images of Christ and the saints; the last council recognized by both Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches

Introduction:

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# The Council of Nicea



History:

---

# Constantine and the Council



History:

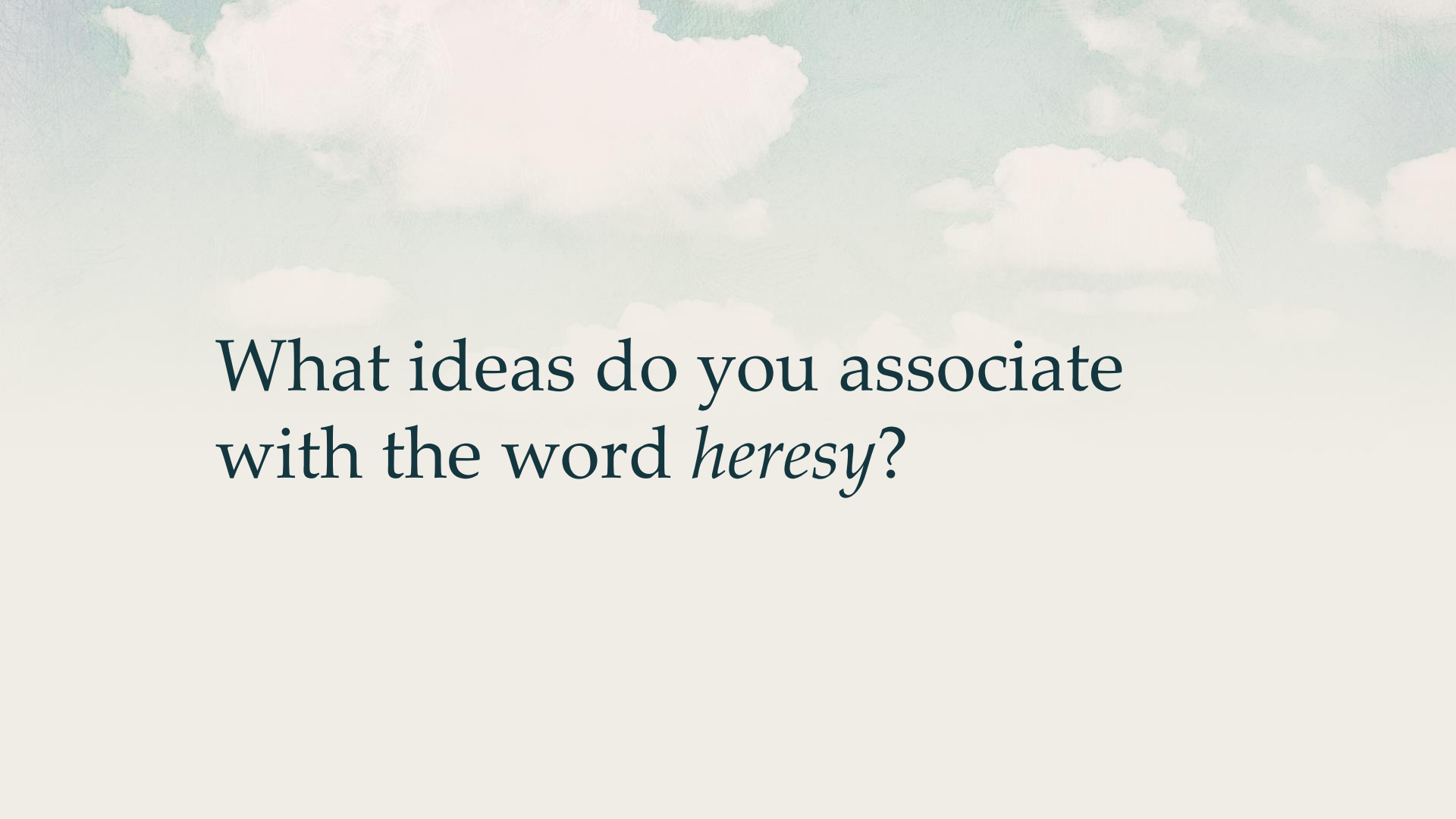
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# Saint Nicholas

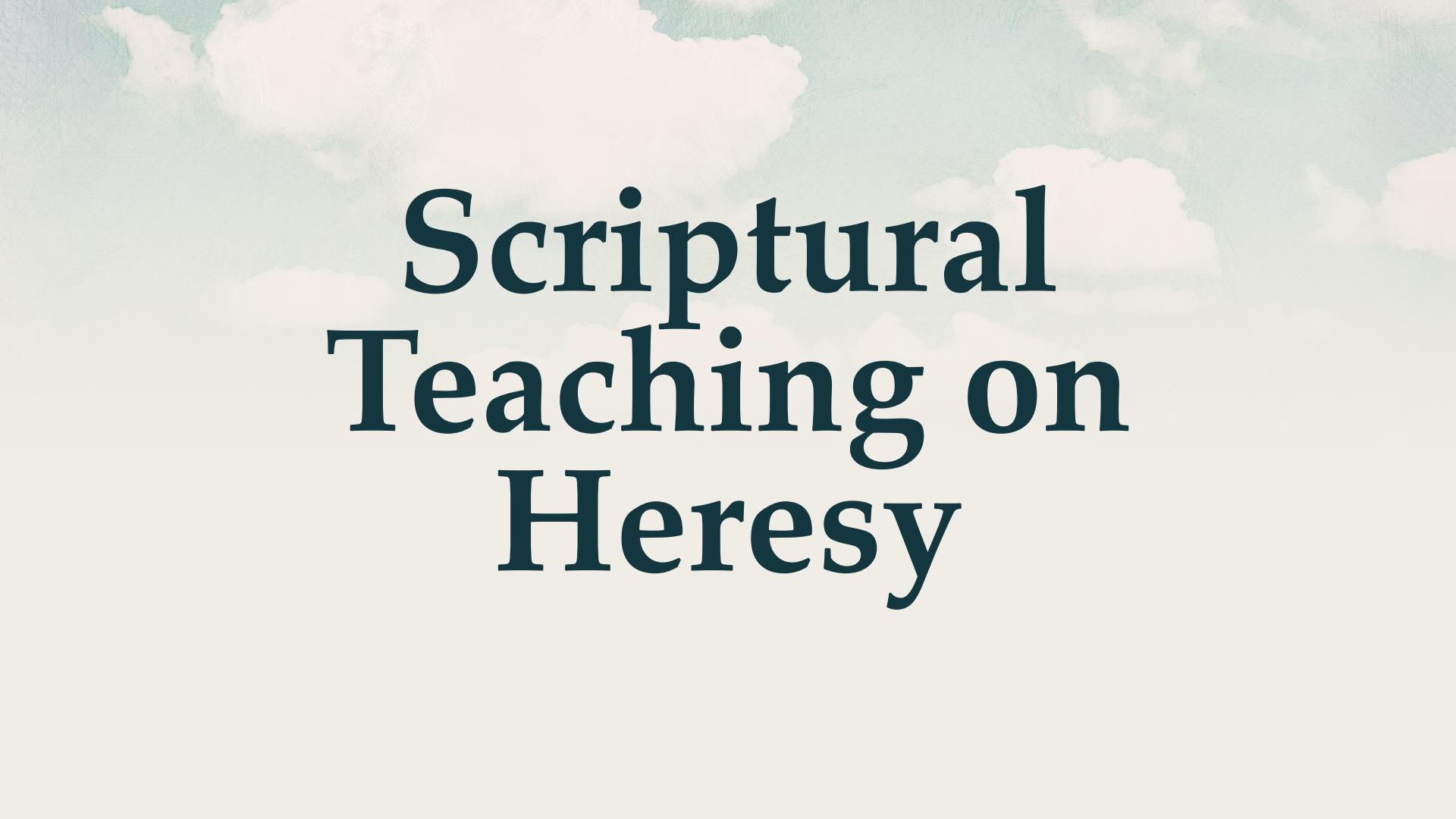
History:

---

# Expansion of the Nicene Creed



What ideas do you associate  
with the word *heresy*?



# Scriptural Teaching on Heresy

# 2 Peter 2

Are these teachers open and honest about their doctrine (v. 1)?

**No, they bring in heresies secretly.**

# 2 Peter 2

What is the ultimate heresy?

Who do heretical teachers deny  
(v. 1)?

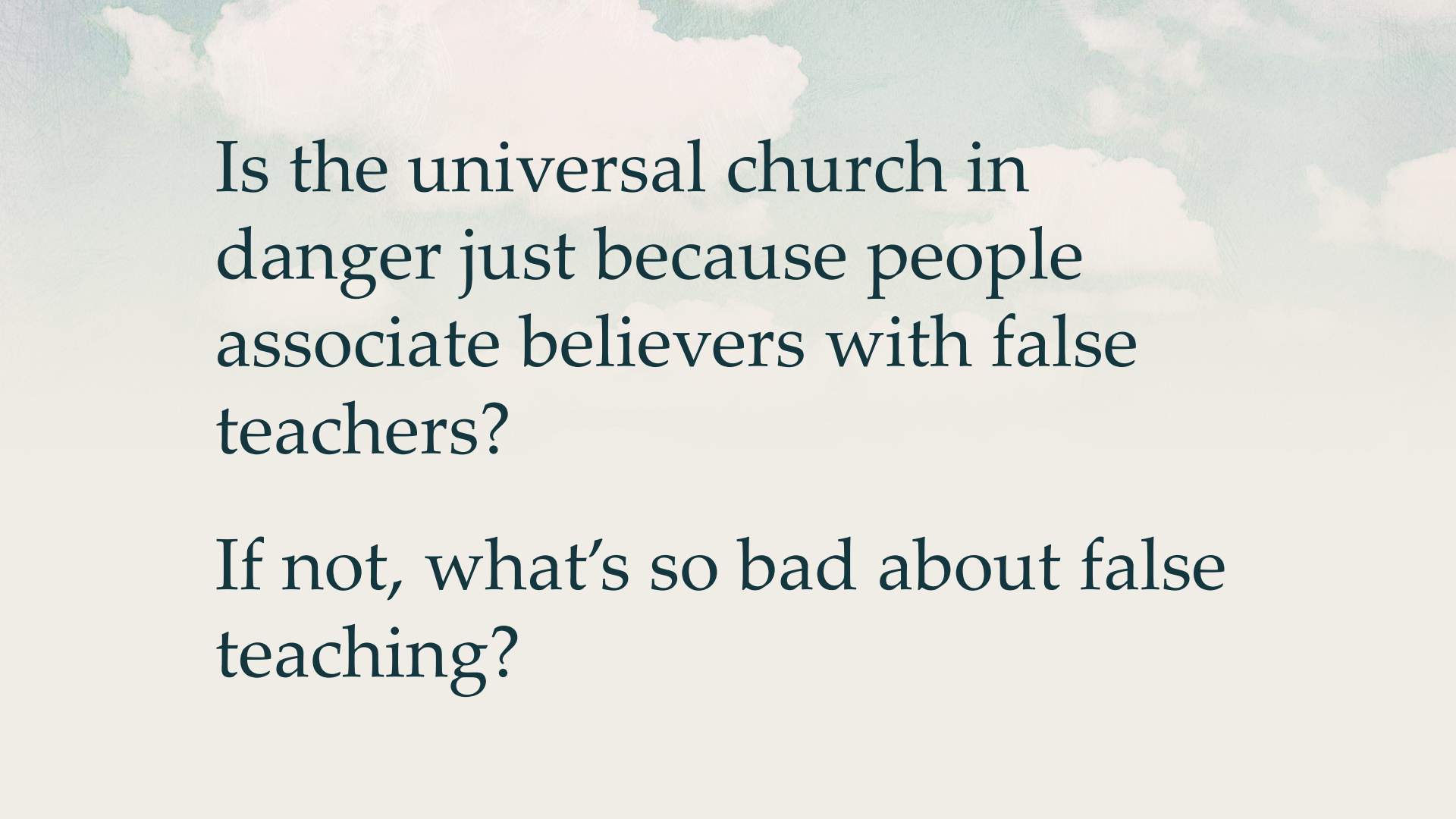
**The Lord/Master (Jesus  
Christ)**

## 2 Peter 2

According to verse 2, what happens when people see so-called Christian teachers following evil?

**People malign the way of truth.**





Is the universal church in danger just because people associate believers with false teachers?

If not, what's so bad about false teaching?

# 2 Peter 2

Verse 4—The rebellious angels  
that God imprisoned until the  
final judgment

# 2 Peter 2

Verse 5—The old / ancient world  
destroyed by the Flood

# 2 Peter 2

Verse 6—The cities of Sodom  
and Gomorrah, which burned to  
ash

Context:

---

# Ezekiel 16:49–50

Discussion:

---

# Spotting a False Teacher



# Early Christian Heresies



History

---

# Demi-Gods

○ *Rome*

This map shows the Eastern Roman Empire in a light beige color against a darker beige background. Five locations are marked with small white circles and labeled with their names and the dates of the councils held there. The locations are Rome, Constantinople, Chalcedon, Nicea, and Ephesus. The map also shows the outlines of the Italian Peninsula, the Balkans, and the Eastern Mediterranean coast.

*Constantinople*  
(AD 381)

○ *Chalcedon*  
(AD 451)

○ *Nicea*  
(AD 325)

○ *Ephesus*  
(AD 431)



# Significant Early Heresies of the Christian Church

# Gnosticism

## Primary Heresy

- Physical = Evil
- Jesus couldn't have been a physical man.

## Scriptural Response

- New Testament Canon
- The humanity of Christ

# Montanism

## Primary Heresy

Montanus claimed direct revelation.

## Scriptural Response

Unique authority of God through Scripture

# Monarchianism

## Primary Heresy

God appears through different modes.

## Scriptural Response

The Trinity of Three Persons



# Arianism

## Primary Heresy

Jesus is the first created being, and therefore not fully God.

## Scriptural Response

The equality of the Father and Son



# Monophysitism

## Primary Heresy

Jesus was a divine spirit occupying a human body.

## Scriptural Response

The *hypostatic union*, or dual nature

# Pneumatomachianism

## Primary Heresy

The Holy Spirit was created by God, and therefore not fully divine.

## Scriptural Response

The Spirit's eternal equality with the Father and Son

# Pelagianism

## Primary Heresy

Pelagius denied original sin and implied that we have the chance to work our way to righteousness.

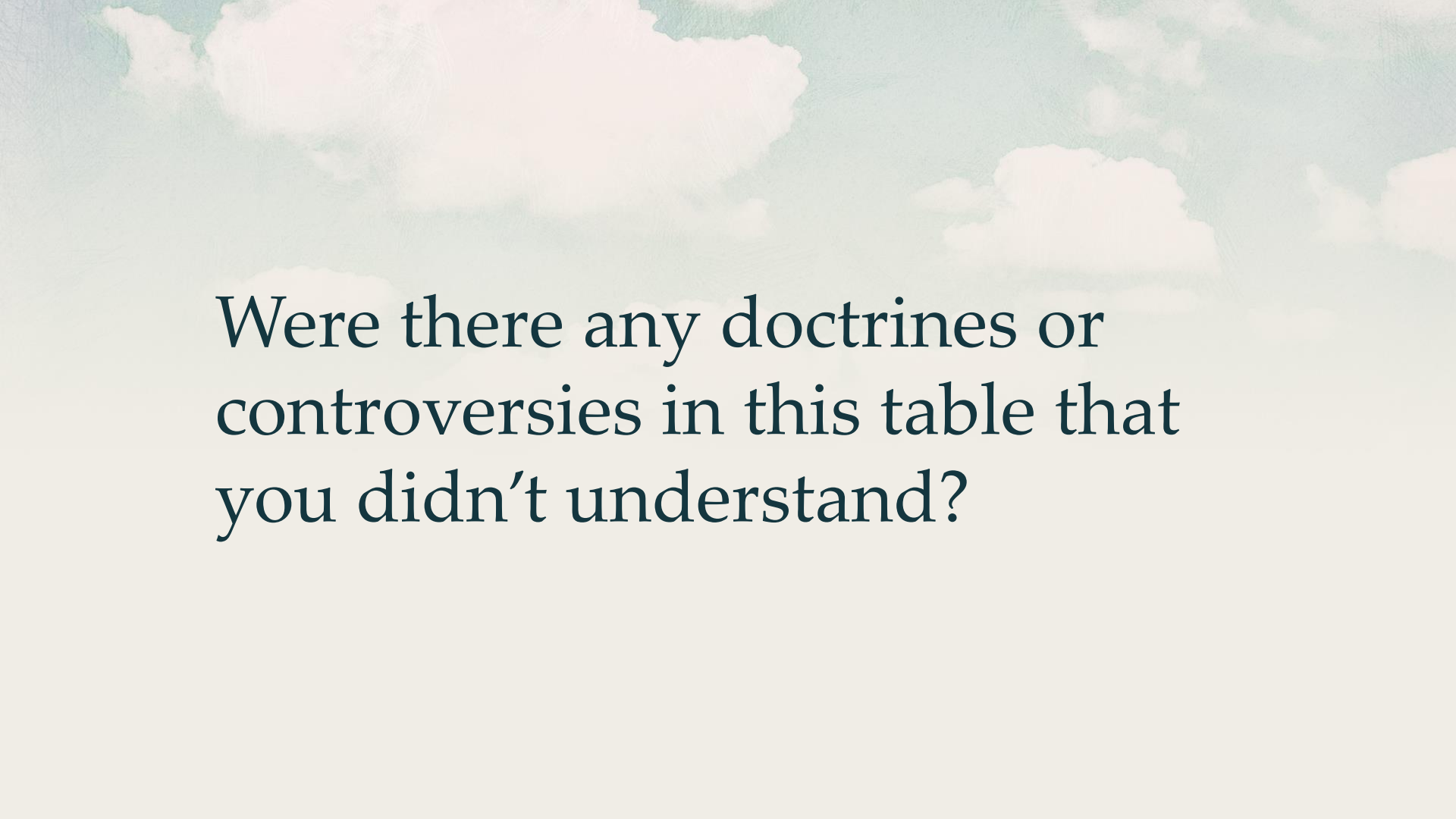
## Scriptural Response

Salvation by grace alone

# Early Heresies

What doctrine did most of these heresies target?

**The nature of Jesus Christ**

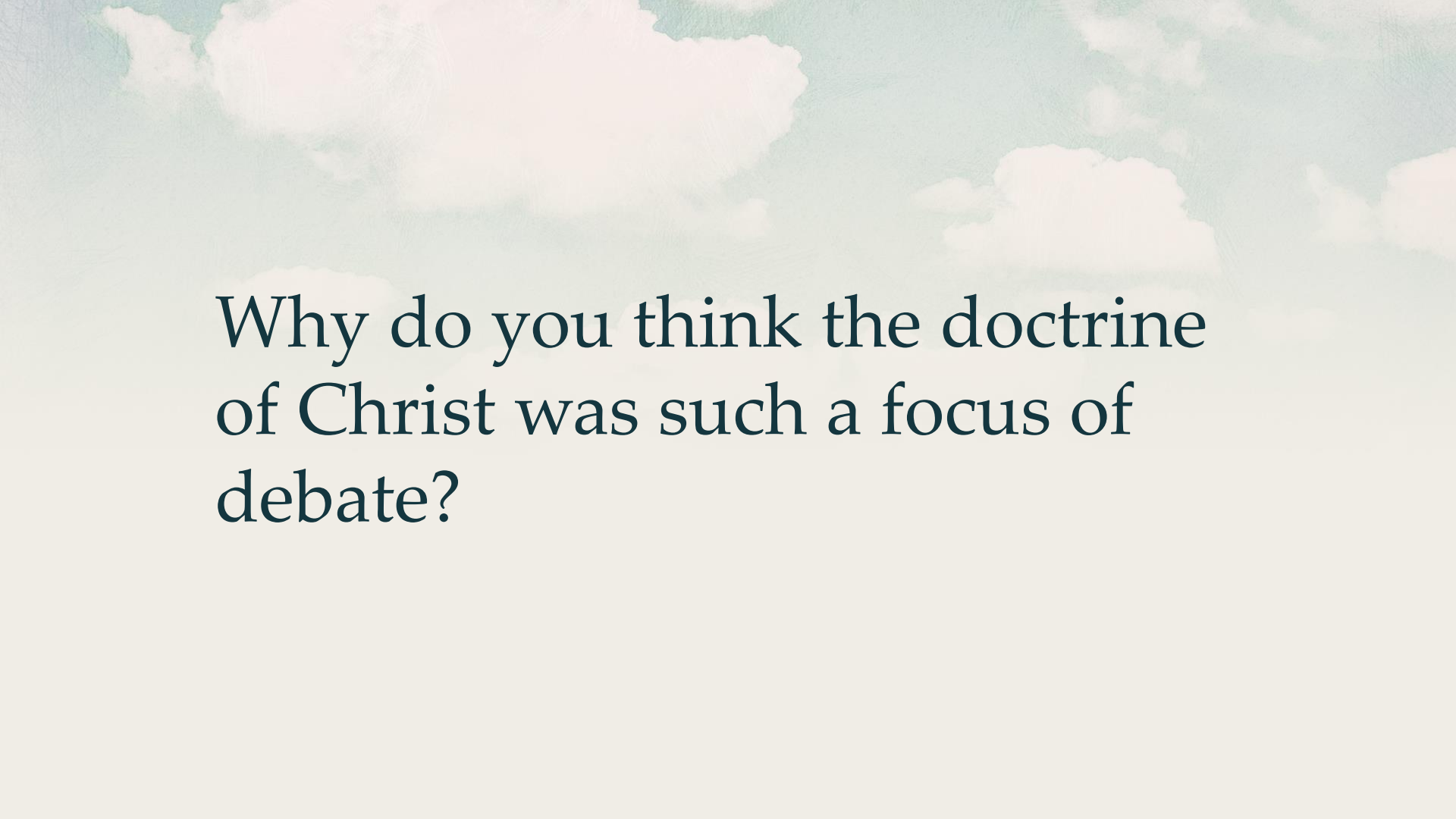


Were there any doctrines or controversies in this table that you didn't understand?

History:

---

# Arianism



Why do you think the doctrine of Christ was such a focus of debate?



Further Reading:

---

# The Expanded Nicene Creed

Context:

---

**“catholic” and  
“baptism”**

# The Constantinopolitan Creed

Which member of the Trinity  
receives the longest treatment?

**The Son**

# The Constantinopolitan Creed

What heresy does this creed correct by emphasizing the physical incarnation, crucifixion, and burial of Christ?

**Likely docetic gnosticism**

# The Constantinopolitan Creed

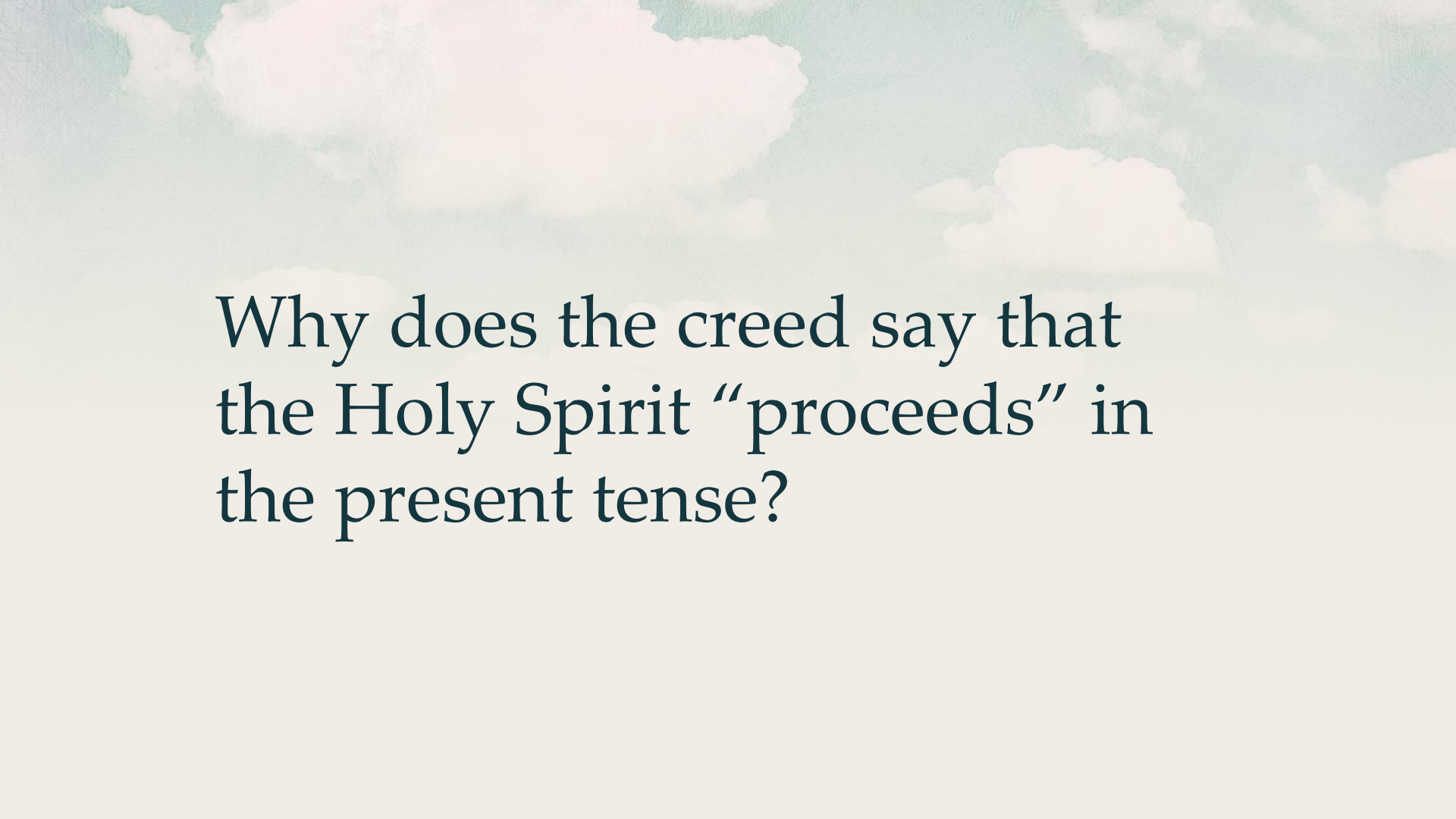
What functions or roles does the creed associate with the Holy Spirit?

Lordship/authority

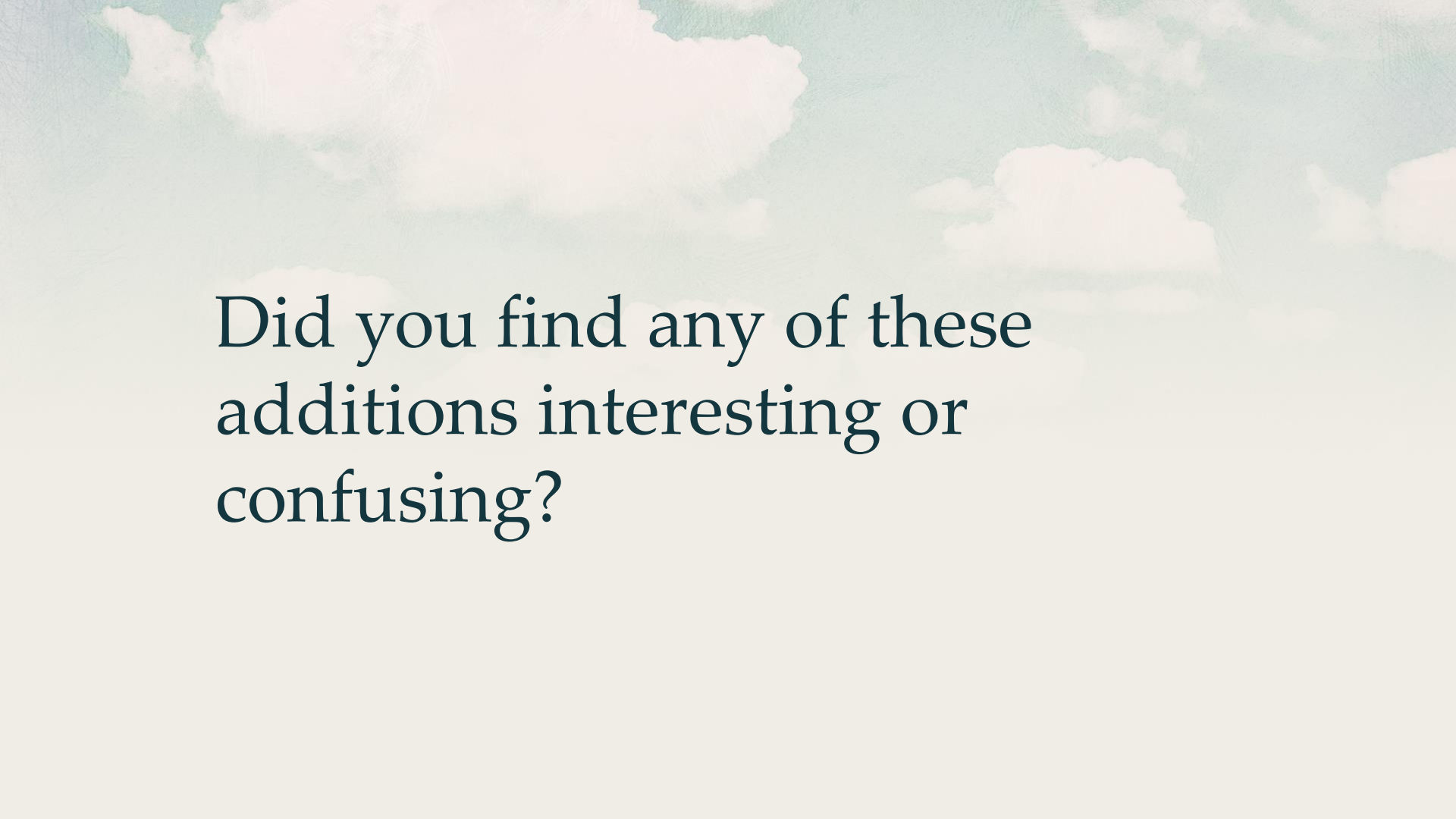
The giving of life

The acceptance of worship

Prophetic guidance



Why does the creed say that  
the Holy Spirit “proceeds” in  
the present tense?



Did you find any of these  
additions interesting or  
confusing?





  
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# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 6

# No Earthly City





**313**

The Edict of Milan legalizes public Christian worship.

**325**

The Council of Nicea affirms the full deity of Christ.

**322**

Construction of the first Church of Saint Peter is completed in Rome on the site once occupied by Nero's Circus.

**c. 345–419**

**Jerome**, a Christian scholar who translated Hebrew and Greek Scripture into a near-complete Latin Bible, the Vulgate

**361–363**

After the death of Constantius II, Julian the Apostate briefly becomes emperor, outlaws Christianity, and re-opens war with Persia. His successors quickly reverse his decisions.

**381**

The Council of Constantinople expands the Nicene Creed to include a robust doctrine of the Trinity.

**380**

The Edict of Thessalonica establishes Nicene Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

**386**

**Augustine** converts to Christianity. Through his *Confessions* and *The City of God*, he became one of the most influential theologians in Western history.

**410**

Rome is attacked and ransacked by the Visigoth King Alaric I. The Western Roman Empire would fall within seventy years.

**430**

Augustine dies while serving as bishop of Hippo in North Africa.

Introduction:

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# The City of God



History:

---

# Constantinople

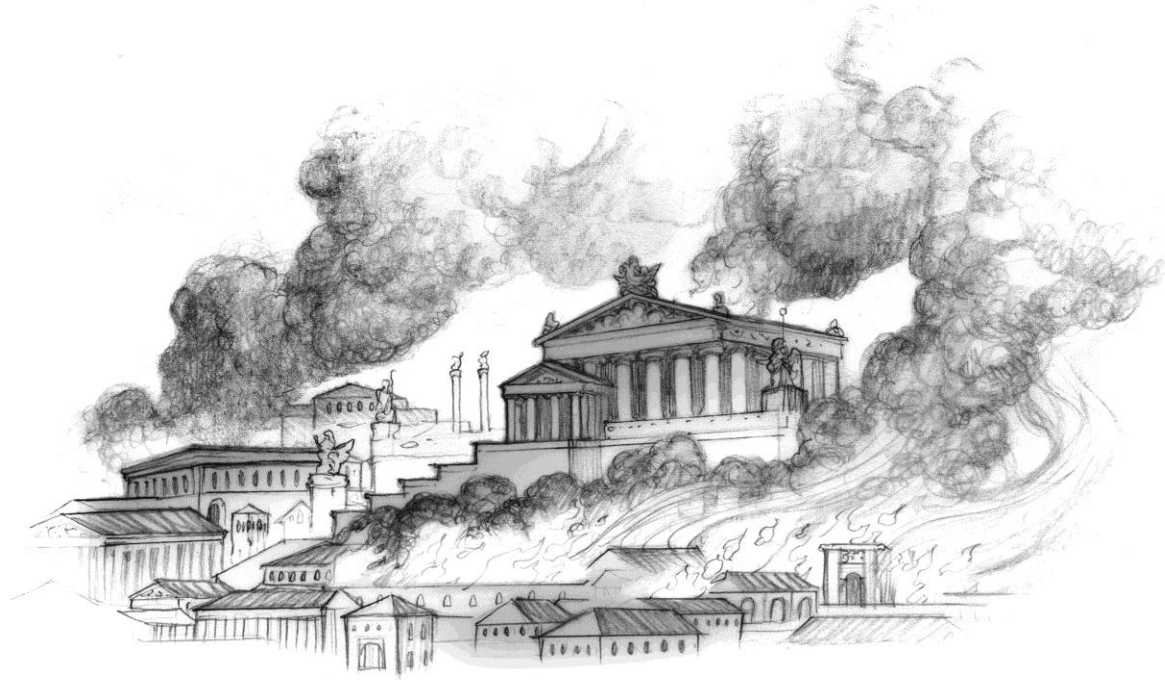


For He has promised it, and cannot lie, and has already performed many of His promises, as well as many unpromised kindnesses to those whom He now asks to believe that He will do this, also.

—Augustine,  
*The City of God*, 22.1

# Leaving the Earthly City

---



# Galatians 4

In this allegory, what does Hagar represent (vv. 24–25)?

**Slavery; bondage; Sinai;  
present Jerusalem**

# Galatians 4

But how does Paul describe the heavenly Jerusalem (v. 26)?

**Free; and our mother**

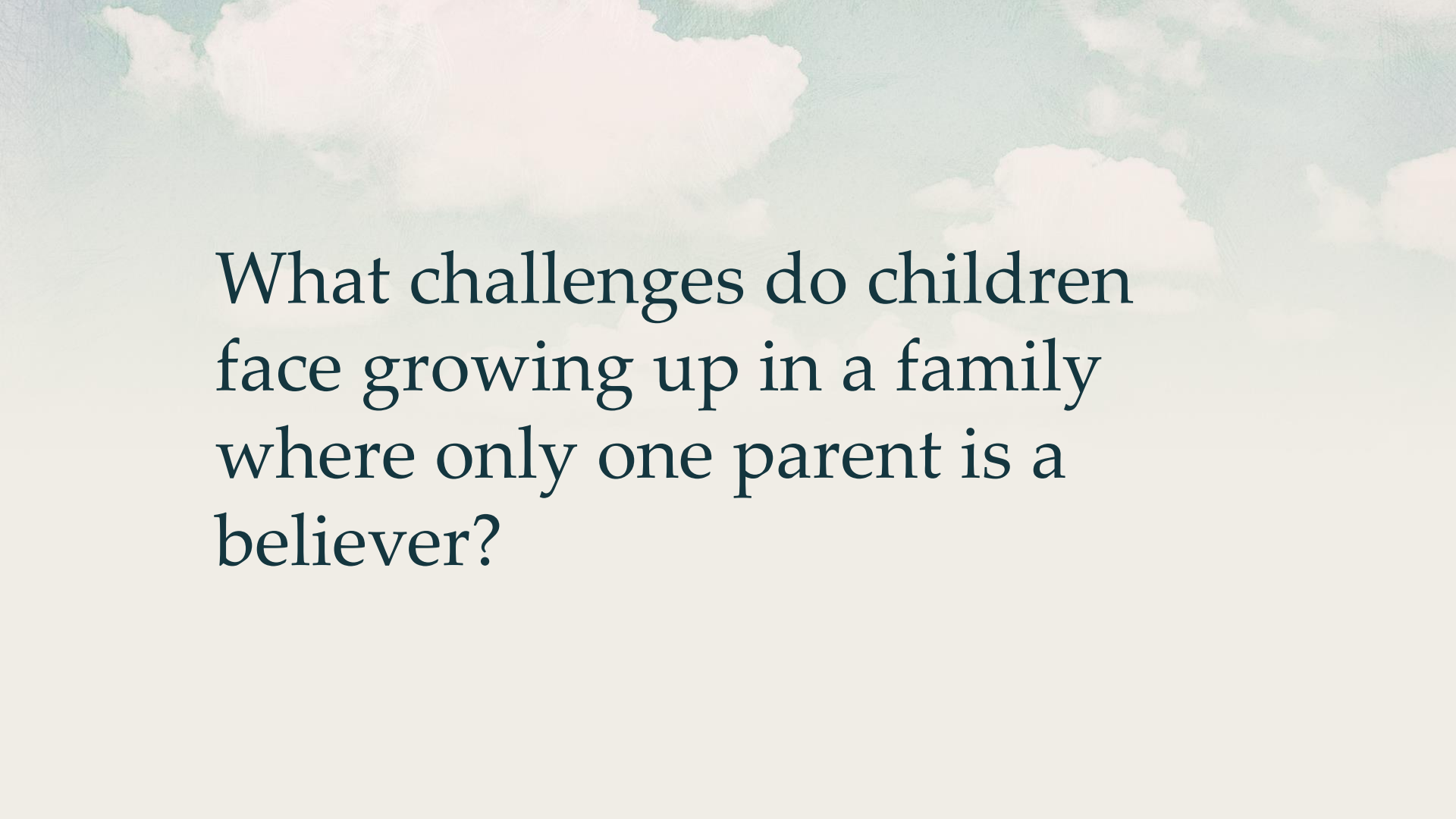
Context:

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# Old vs. New



# Finding the City of God



What challenges do children face growing up in a family where only one parent is a believer?





How might Romans 13:11–14  
have convicted Augustine?

# Hebrews 11

How did Abraham first display this faith (v. 8)?

He obeyed when God called him to leave his home [the city of Ur] and go to a place he didn't yet know.

# Hebrews 11

When he arrived, how did he live (v. 9, 13)?

He lived in tents, like a stranger, a foreigner, pilgrim, or exile.

# Hebrews 11

Why did he live this way (v. 10)?

**He looked forward to a city  
designed and built by God.**

# Hebrews 11

Likewise, what promise did Sarah accept in faith (vv. 11–12)?

**That she would conceive and bear a child, the first of many descendants**

# Hebrews 11

Did Abraham and Sarah get to see all of God's promises fulfilled during their lifetime (v. 13)?

**No.**

# Hebrews 11

Hebrews 11 describes people of faith. Instead of the places they leave behind, what do faithful believers desire (v. 16)?

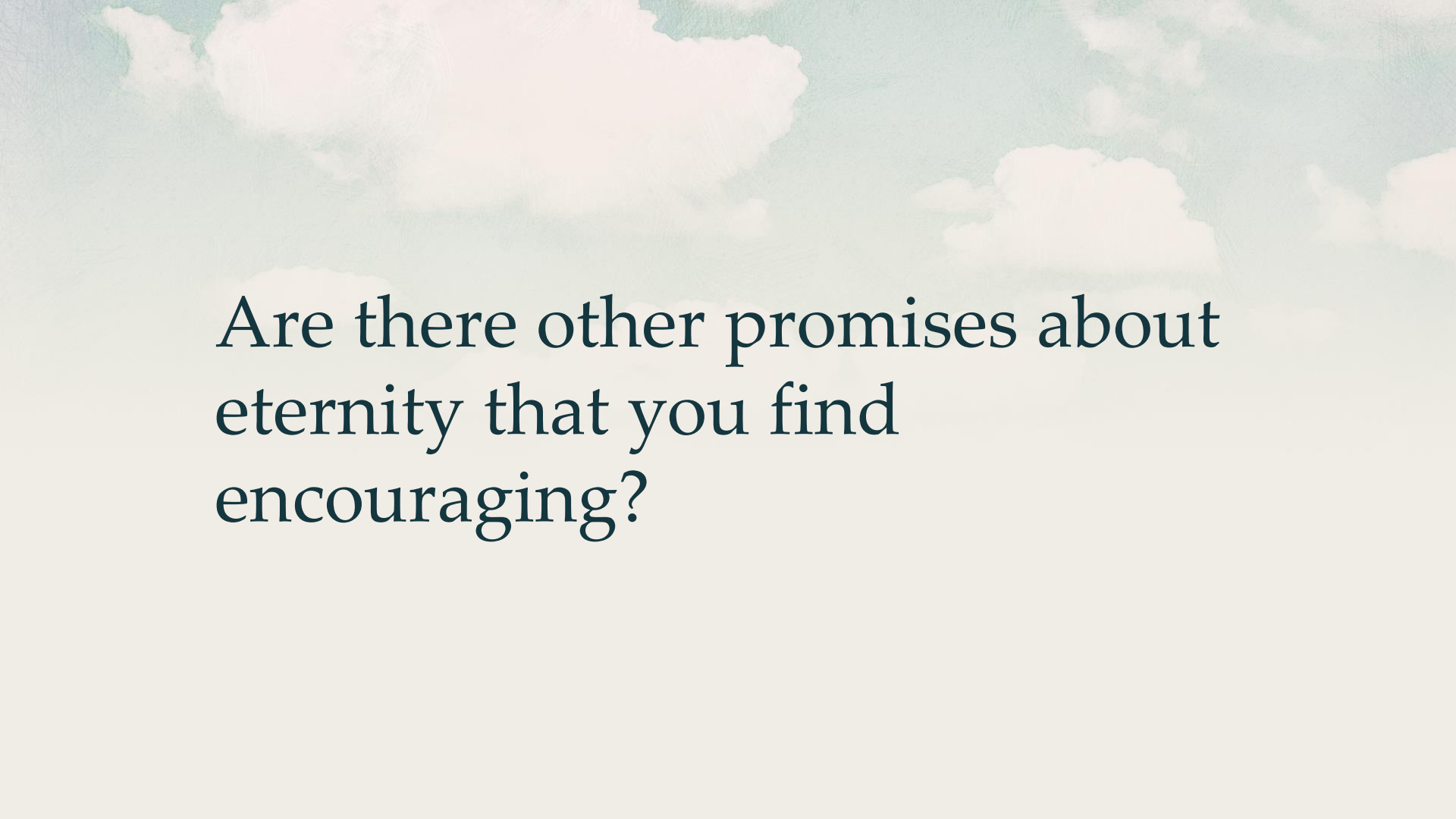
**A better, heavenly country; a city prepared by God**



# Hebrews 11

What does God prepare for these people (v. 16)?

**God prepares them an eternal city—heaven.**



Are there other promises about  
eternity that you find  
encouraging?

Discussion:

---

# Faith in God's City



# The Work of Augustine: Becoming a Minister

History:

---

# The Conversion Process

History:

---

# Jerome's *Vulgate*





○ *Milan*

○ *Rome*

○ *Hippo*

*Constantinople* ○





# The Work of Augustine: Addressing Controversies

Discussion:

---

# Forgiving Apostasy



# The Work of Augustine: Concluding His Ministry

History:

---

# The Legacy of Augustine

Discussion:

---

# Manichaeism, Donatism, and Pelagianism

Discussion:

---

# Ephesians 2:19–22

Further Reading:

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# Augustine's *Confessions*



# Augustine's *Confessions*

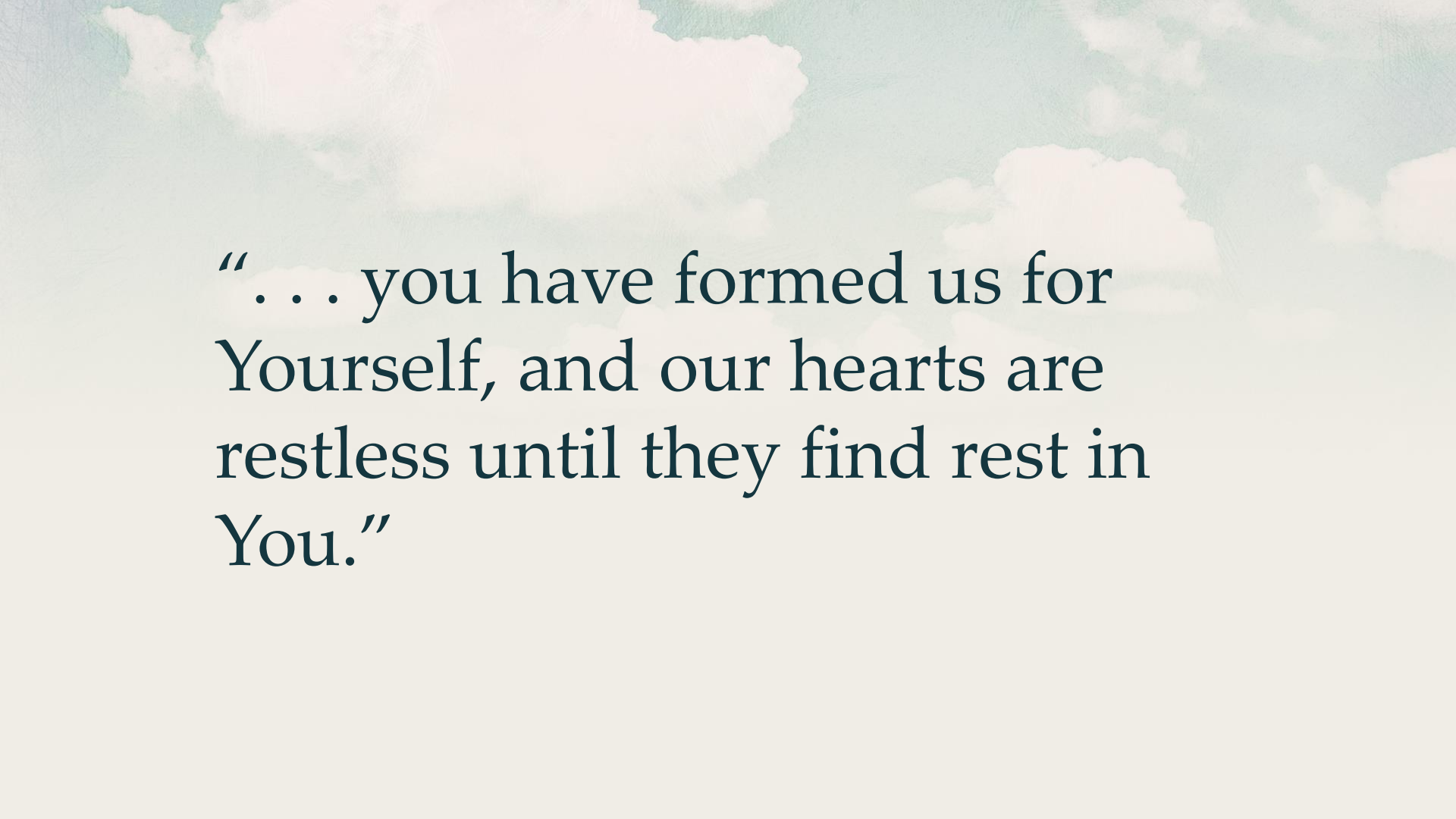
According to the first two paragraphs, what is humanity's true desire?

**To praise God**

# Augustine's *Confessions*

What phrase does Augustine use twice in the first paragraph to describe humanity?

**“A particle of Your creation”**



“ . . . you have formed us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You.”



  
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# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 7

# To the Regions Beyond

**381**

The Council of Constantinople expands the Nicene Creed to include a robust doctrine of the Trinity.

**410**

Rome is ransacked by the Visigoth King Alaric I.

**430**

Augustine dies during the siege of Hippo.

**c. 430**

**Patrick** returns to Ireland.

**476**

Romulus, the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire, is deposed by mercenaries from a Germanic tribe.

**622**

Muhammad and his followers flee Mecca to establish a theocracy in Medina under Islamic principles.



**c. 672–754**

**Boniface**, a missionary to Frankish and Saxon peoples in northern Europe

**711**

Led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, Muslim armies from North Africa begin to conquer much of modern-day Spain and Portugal.

**c. 862**

**Cyril and Methodius** begin missions work in Great Moravia, training church leaders and translating the Bible.

Introduction:

---

# Patrick



History:

---

**March 17**



# To the Ends of the Earth

# Matthew 28

Over what realms does Jesus  
claim power and authority  
(v. 18)?

**In heaven and on Earth**

# Matthew 28

Given that sovereignty, where  
does Jesus command His  
followers to go?

**To all nations**

# Matthew 28

What two things does Jesus command His followers to do as they go?

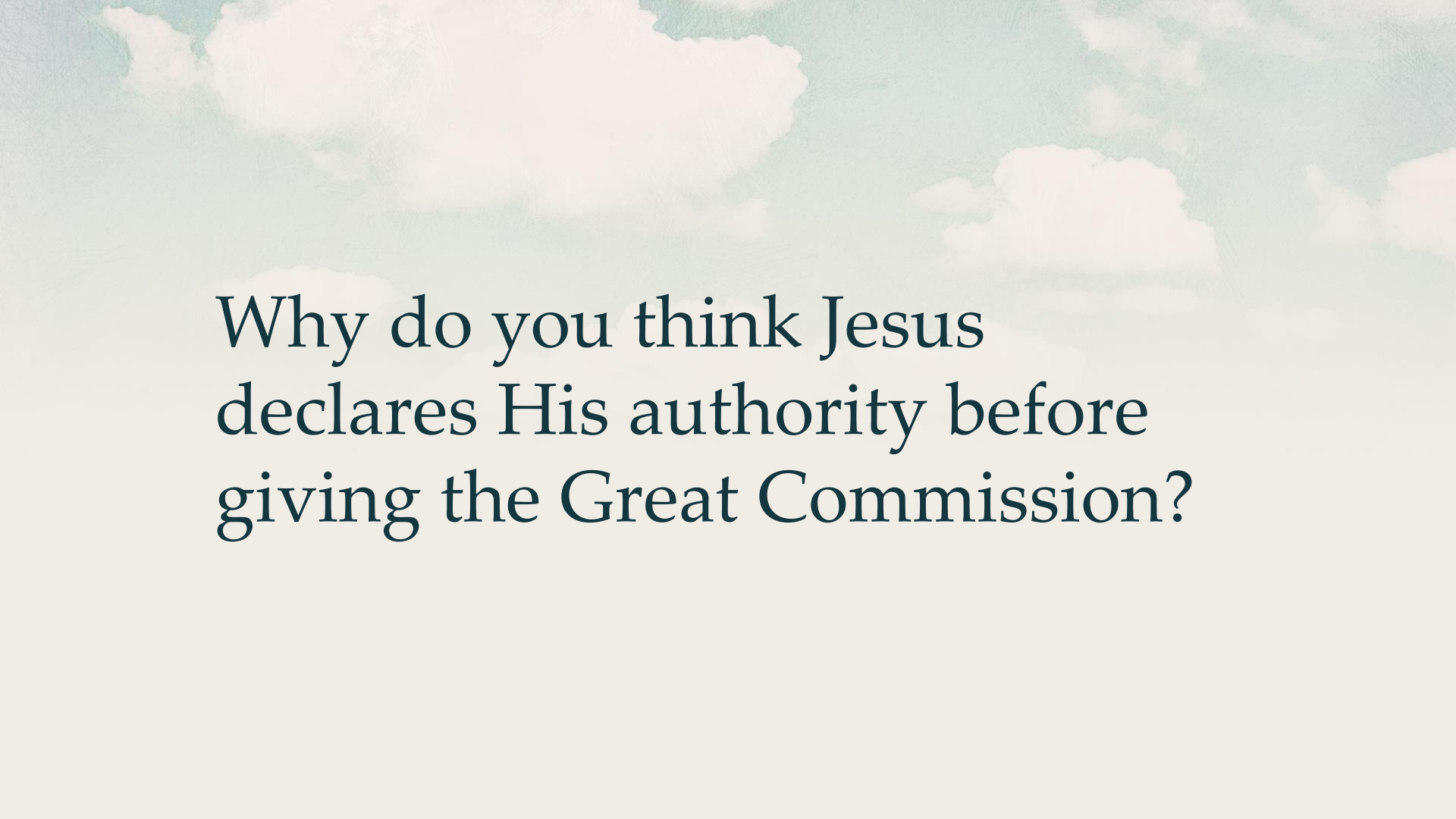
**They should teach/make disciples, and they should baptize believers.**



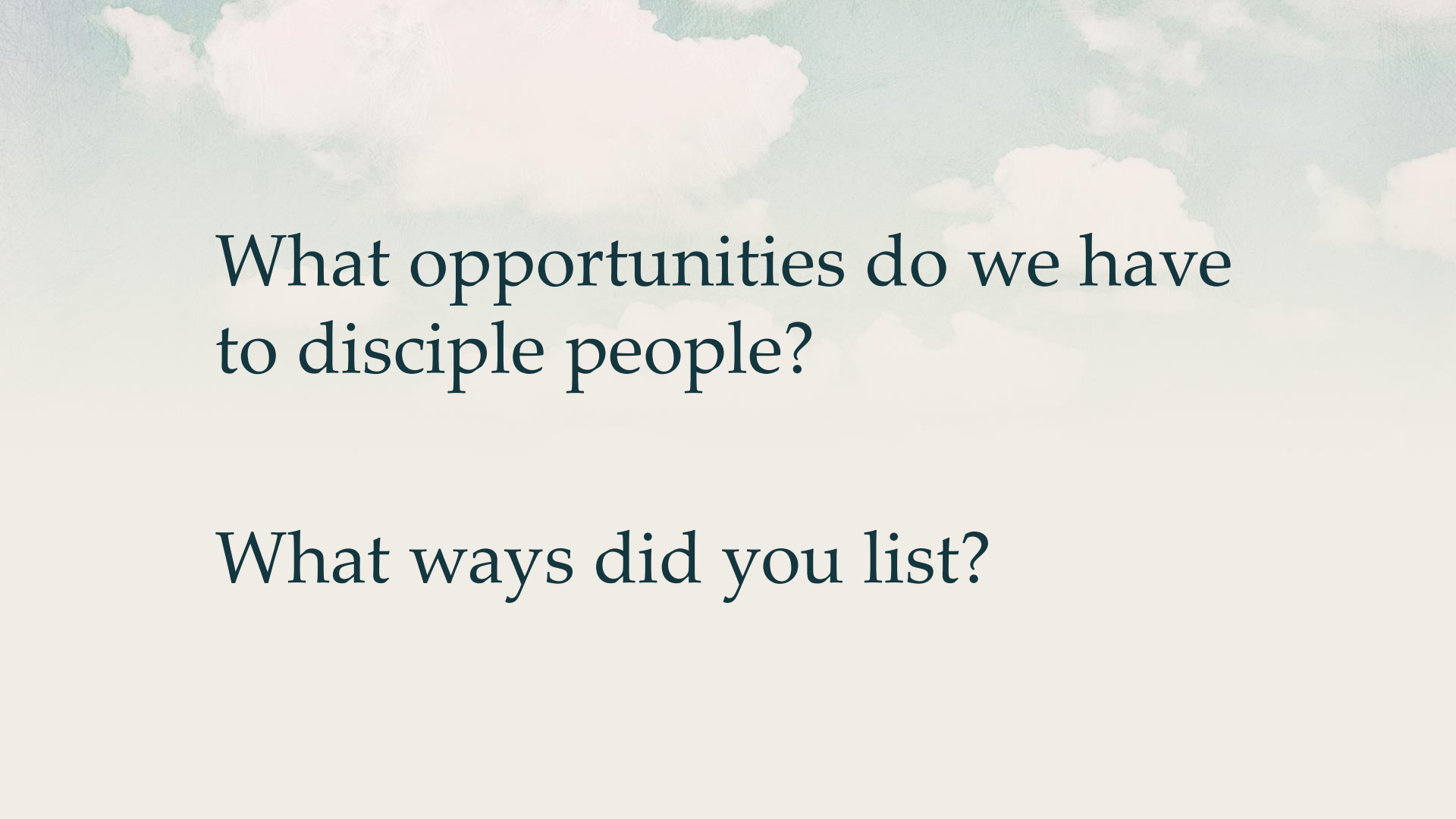
# Matthew 28

Note the first phrase in verse 20.  
How exactly do we disciple?

**We disciple by teaching others  
Christ's commands/doctrine.**



Why do you think Jesus  
declares His authority before  
giving the Great Commission?



What opportunities do we have  
to disciple people?

What ways did you list?

# The Teaching of Christ

Matthew 6:33

Seek God's kingdom above all  
else

# The Teaching of Christ

Matthew 22:36–38

**Love God completely— with  
all heart, soul, mind**

# The Teaching of Christ

Matthew 22:39

Love your neighbor like you  
do yourself

# The Teaching of Christ

Luke 9:23–24

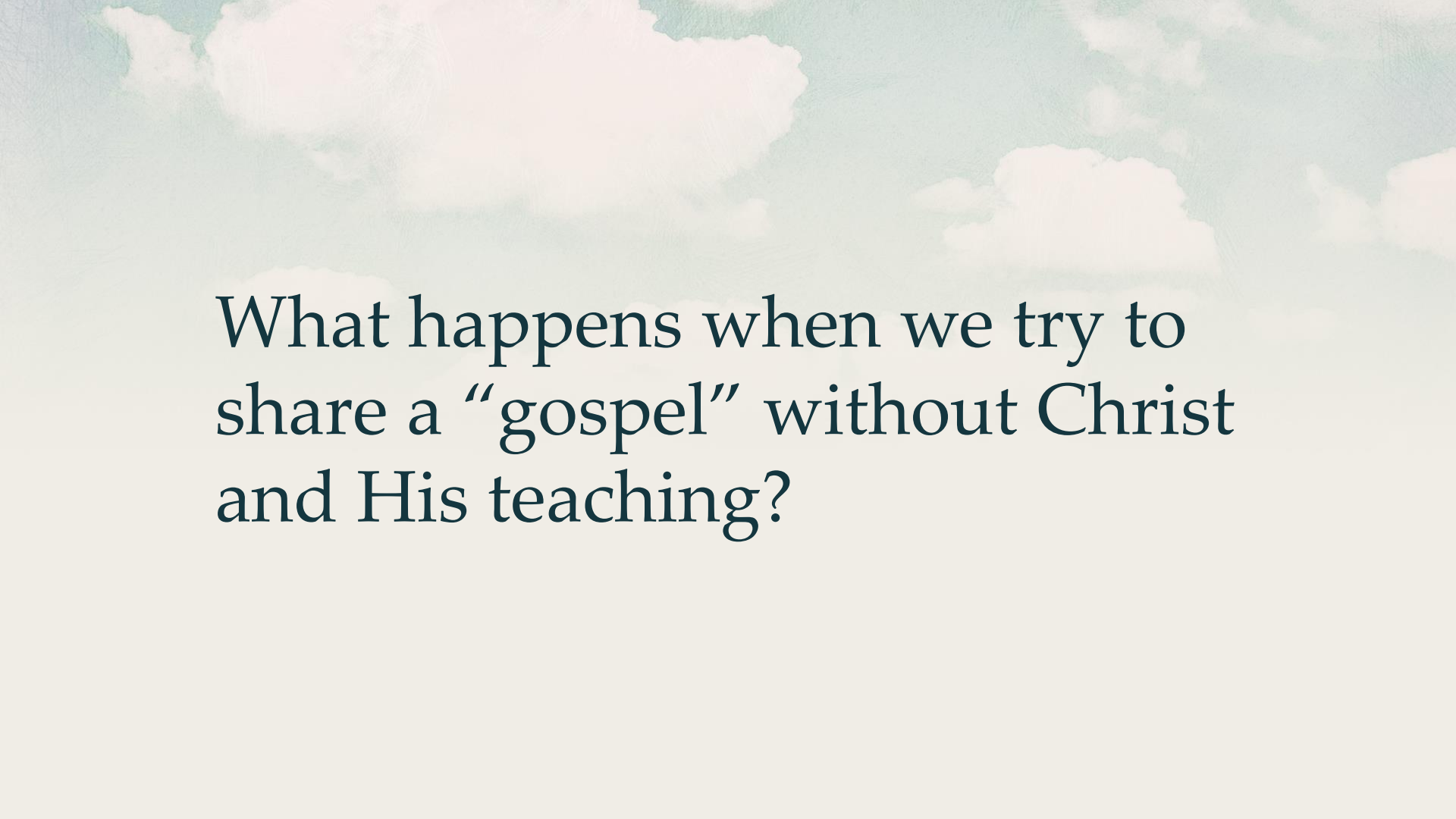
Deny yourself and follow  
Christ



# The Teaching of Christ

John 13:34–35

Love one each other as fellow  
disciples, just as Christ loves  
you



What happens when we try to share a “gospel” without Christ and His teaching?



# Disciples Making Disciples

Discussion:

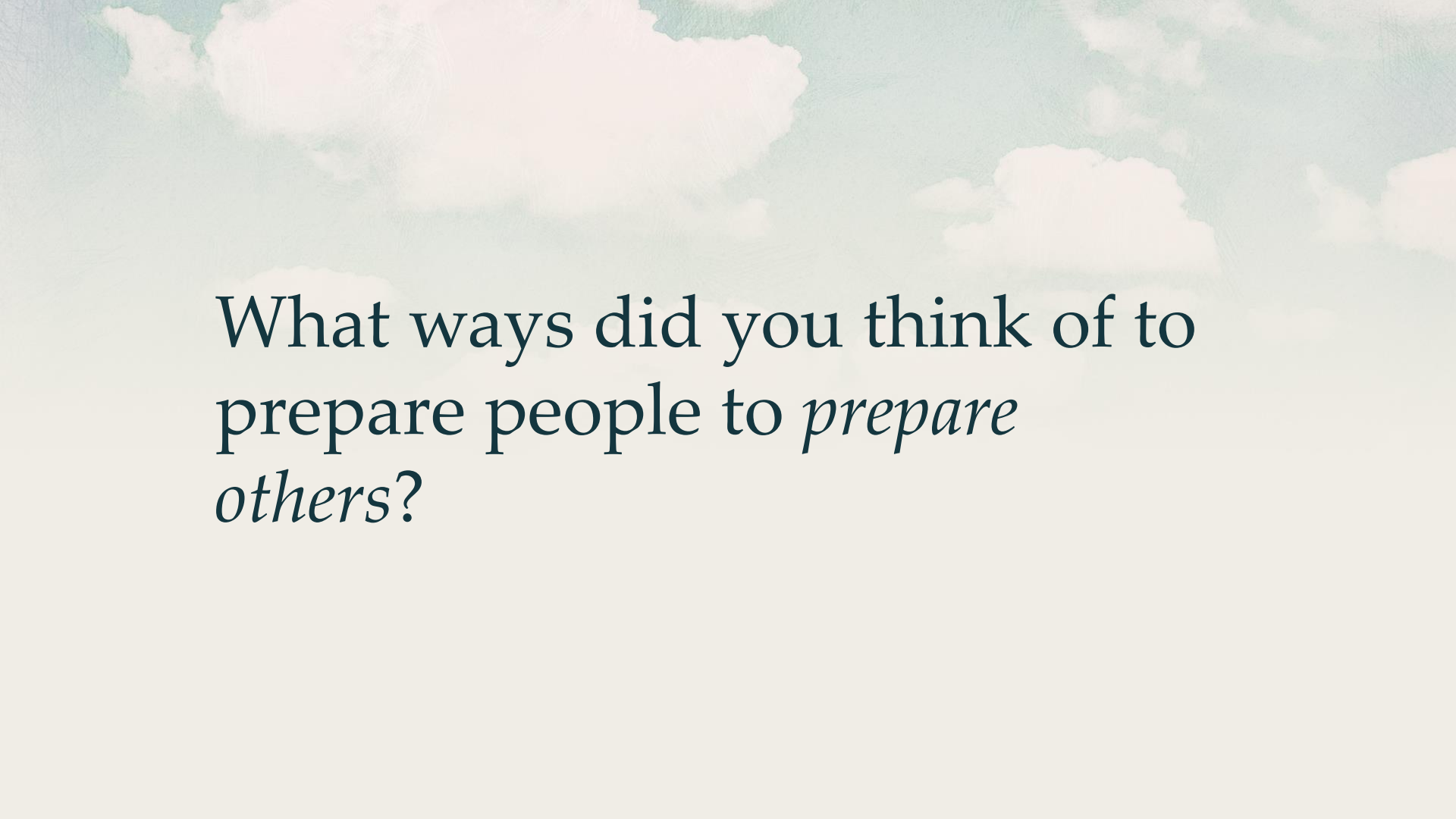
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# 2 Timothy 2




Would you like to share who  
led you to Christ?

Who are the people that have  
invested in you and disciplined  
you?



What ways did you think of to  
prepare people to *prepare*  
*others*?





Ireland

Britain

Saxony

**PATRICK**  
(c. 400–460)

**BONIFACE**  
(c. 675–754)

Land of the Franks

**CYRIL & METHODIUS**  
(c. 815–885)

Lombardy

The Slavs

Visigothic  
Kingdom

○ Rome





# Early Medieval Missions Work: Boniface



# Early Medieval Missions Work: Cyril and Methodius

Further Reading:

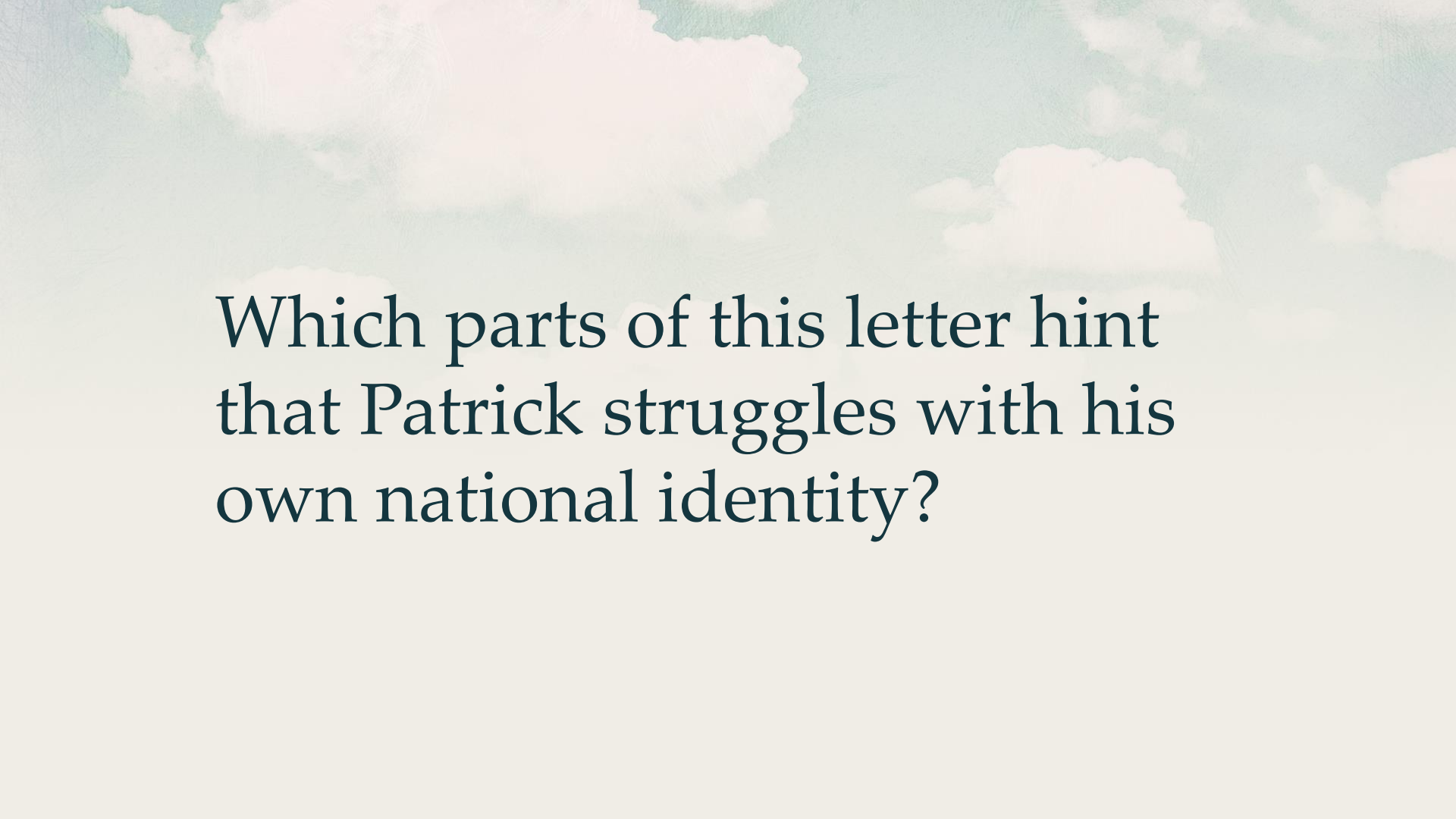
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# Writing in Crisis

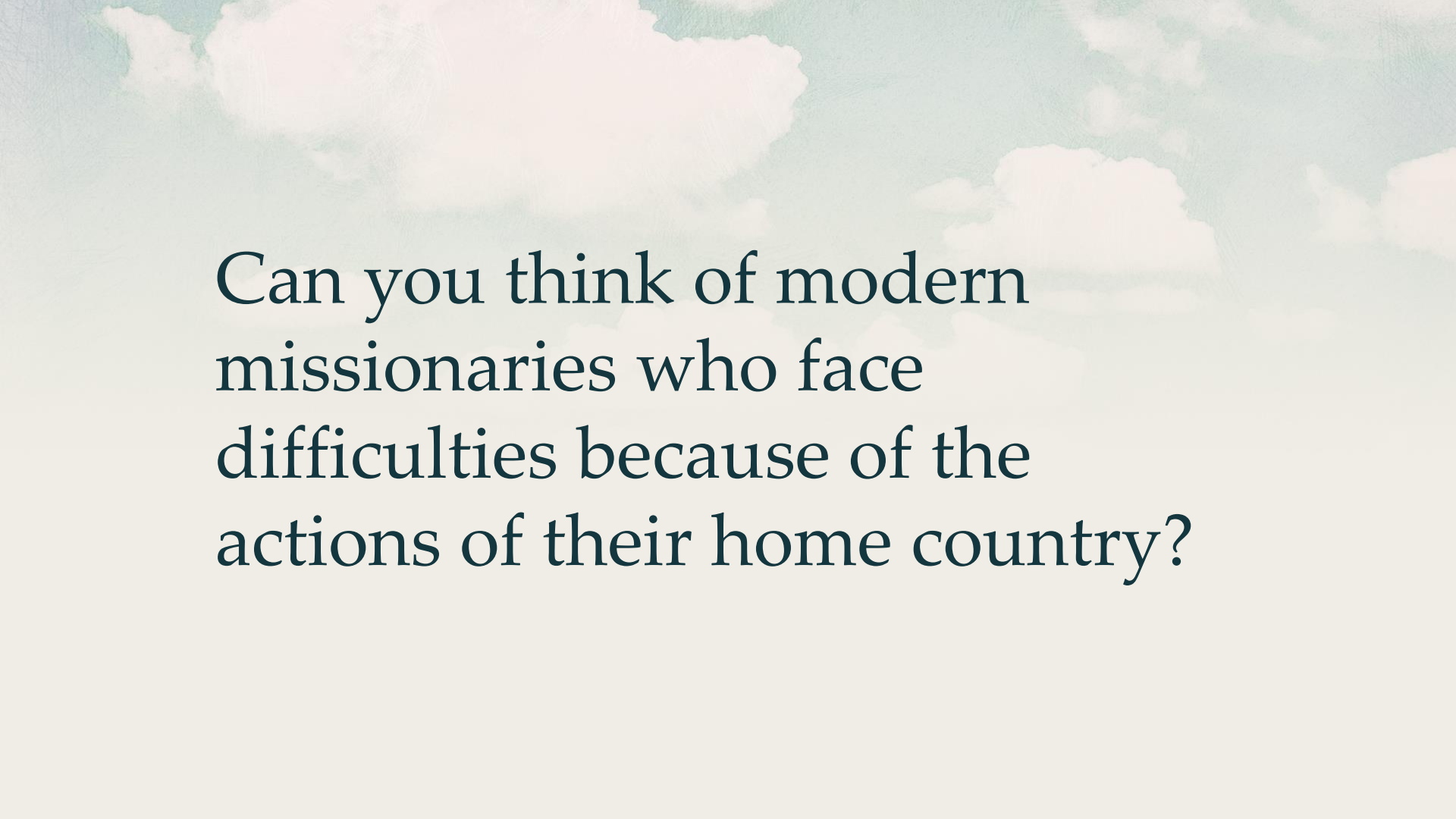
History:

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# Uncertain Outcome



Which parts of this letter hint that Patrick struggles with his own national identity?

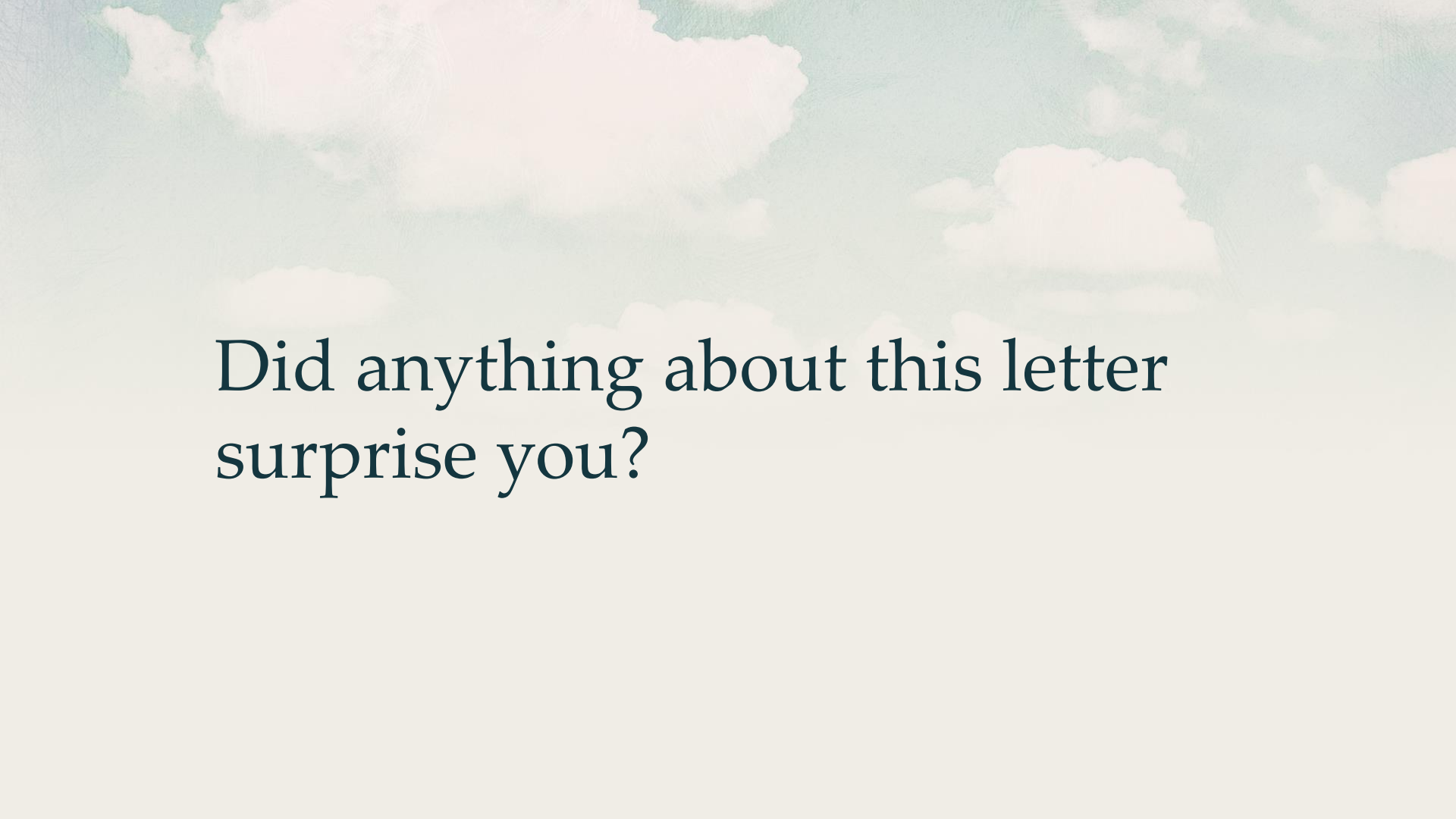


Can you think of modern missionaries who face difficulties because of the actions of their home country?



Do you think Patrick's tone was appropriate?





Did anything about this letter  
surprise you?



  
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# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*





## CHAPTER 8

# Light for the Dark Ages

**c. 430**

Patrick returns to Ireland.

**476**

Romulus, the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire, is deposed.

**711**

Led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, Muslim armies from North Africa begin to conquer much of modern-day Spain and Portugal.

**c. 716**

Boniface begins his first missionary expedition to Germanic lands.

**732**

In the Battle of Tours, the armies of Frankish prince Charles Martel halt invading forces from the Muslim Umayyad Caliphate.

**735**

Shortly before his death, the monk and historian Bede completes an Old English translation of the Gospel of John.

**754, 756**

**Pepin the Short**, son of Charles Martel and King of the Franks, twice defends the city of Rome against Lombard invasions.

**c. 782**

The Christian scholar **Alcuin** joins the court of Charlemagne as a teacher and advisor for religious matters.

**800**

**Charlemagne**, son of Pepin the Short, is crowned “Emperor of the Romans” by Pope Leo III.

**868**

Cyril and Methodius arrive in Rome. In a surprise gesture of good will toward the Eastern Orthodox Church, Pope Adrian II approves of their missions work among the Slavs.

Introduction:

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# Alcuin



History:

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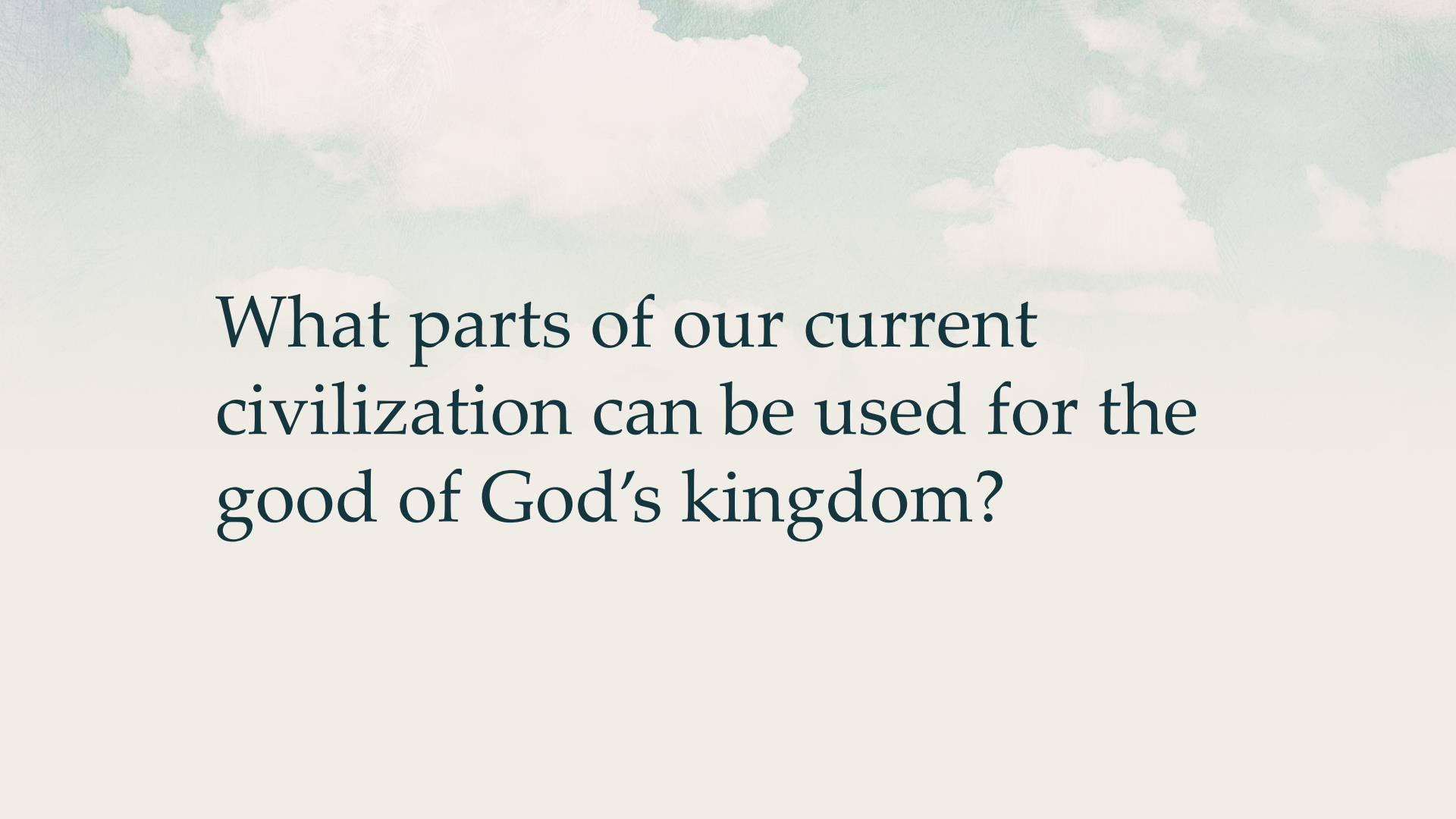
# Bede the Venerable



What responsibilities do we  
have toward civil authorities?



# The God Watching Over History



What parts of our current civilization can be used for the good of God's kingdom?

# Psalm 103

Why does God not immediately judge us (vv. 10–14)?

**He shows compassion, especially to those that fear Him. He understands our weakness.**

# Psalm 103

How does the psalmist picture the length of our lives (vv. 15–16)?

**Like grass and the flowers of the field**

# Psalm 103

But what remains forever (vv. 17–18)?

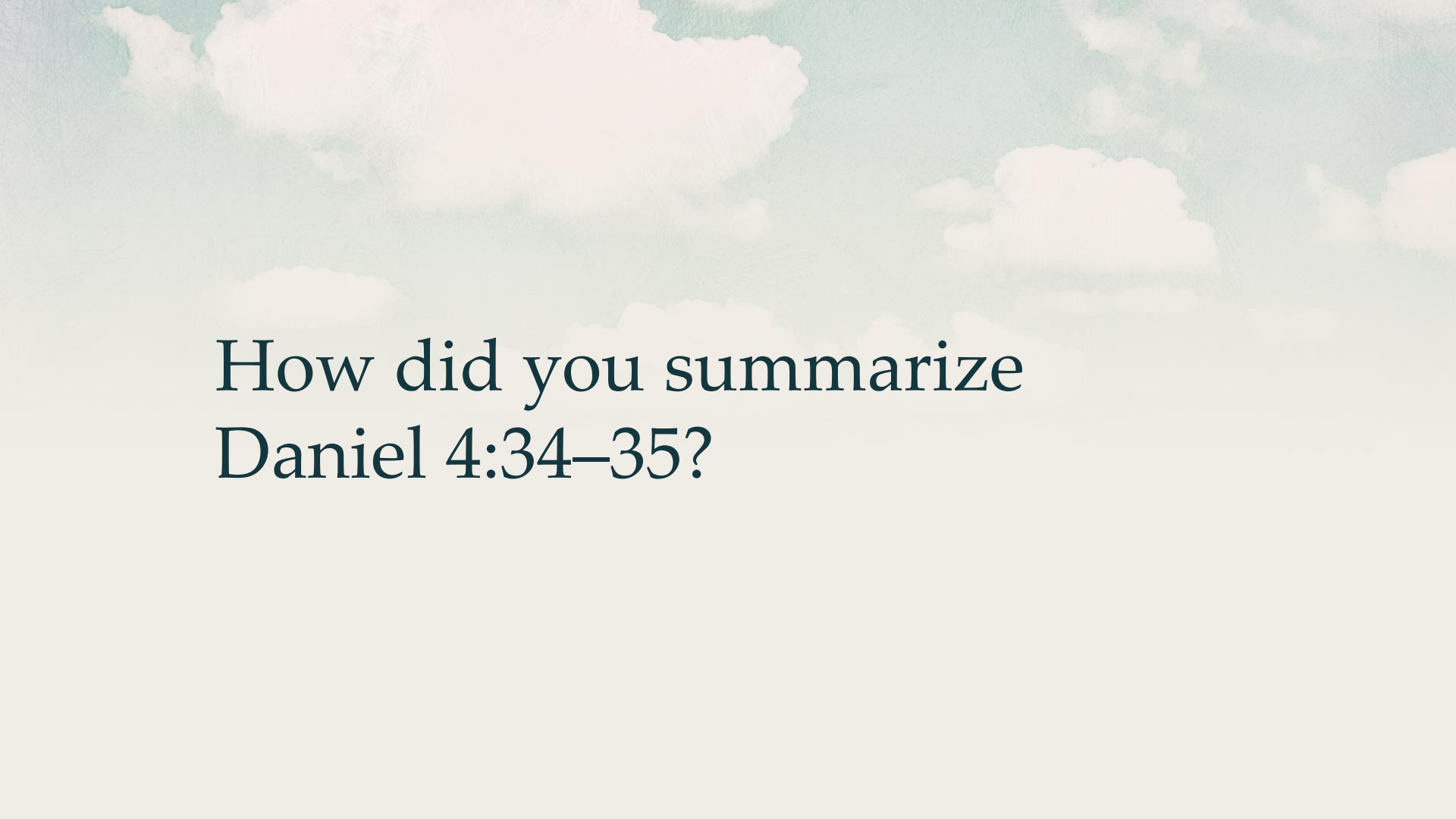
**God's love/mercy toward to  
those who fear Him**



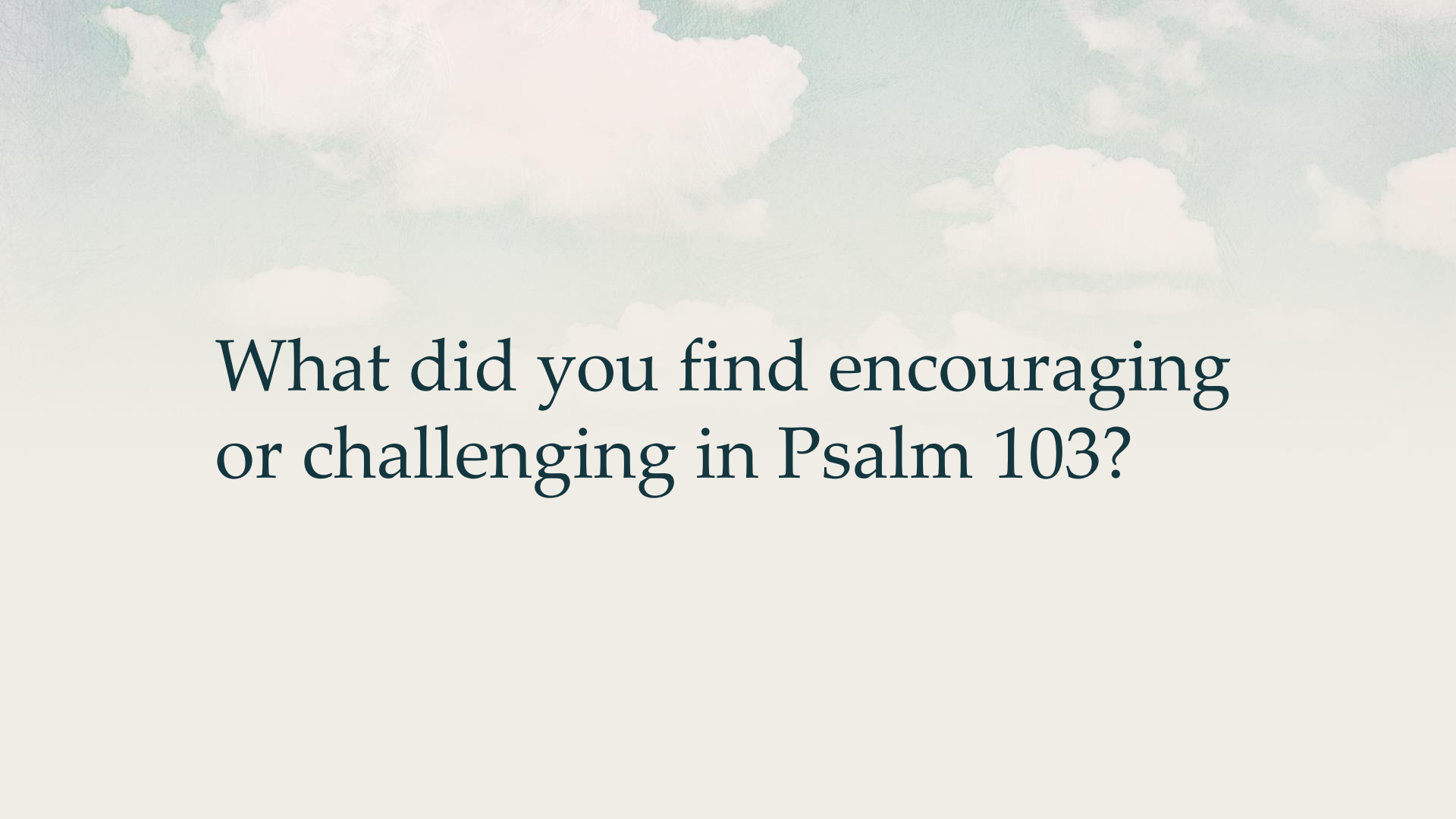
# Psalm 103

And what does God rule (v. 19)?

*All / everything*




How did you summarize  
Daniel 4:34–35?



What did you find encouraging  
or challenging in Psalm 103?



# The Fall and Rise of Rome



Western Roman  
Empire

○ Rome

Constantinople ○

Eastern Roman  
Empire  
(Byzantine Empire)



# Fall of the Old





Kingdom of the Franks

Old Lombard Kingdom  
Conquered by Franks, c. 774

Umayyad  
Emirate

Rome

Papal States

Constantinople

Byzantine Empire

Benevento  
(formerly of Lombardy)

Abbasid  
Caliphate





# Rise of the New

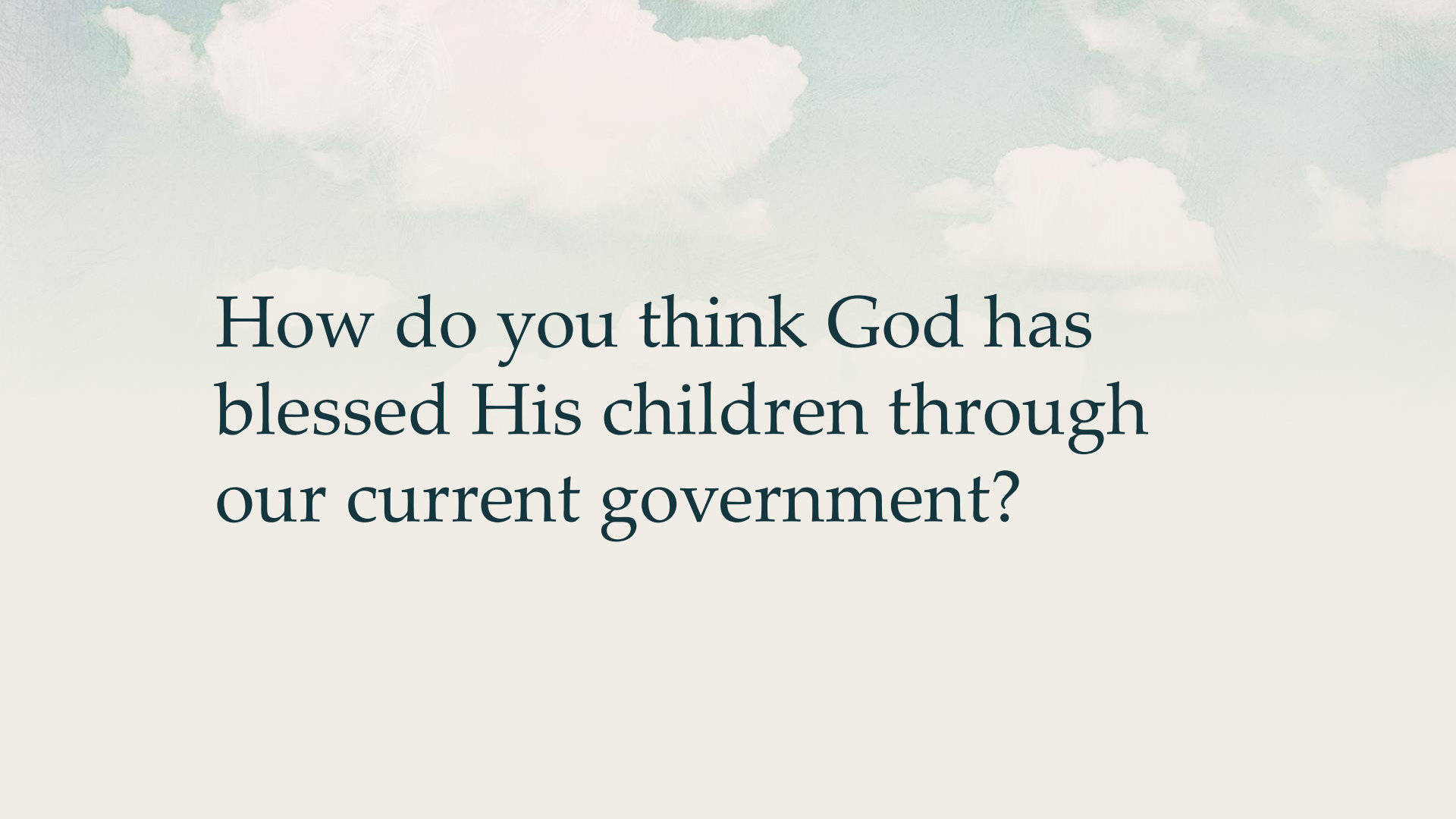


# **Saving the Books**

Discussion:

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# Proverbs 21:1



How do you think God has  
blessed His children through  
our current government?

Discussion:

---

# Romans 13:1–7

# Psalm 119:145–160

How would you describe the psalmist's attitude toward God's law?

**Confidence, hope, faith**

# Psalm 119:145–160

How do evil people react toward these same commands (vv. 150, 155)?

**They are far from the law/statutes.**



# Psalm 119:145–160

What does this psalm claim about God's Word (vv. 152, 160)?

**They are true, and they will endure forever.**

Context:

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# John 17:15–19



What do these passages teach us about God's power?

- Job 34:16–20
- Psalm 2:1–4
- Acts 2:22–24

Further Reading:

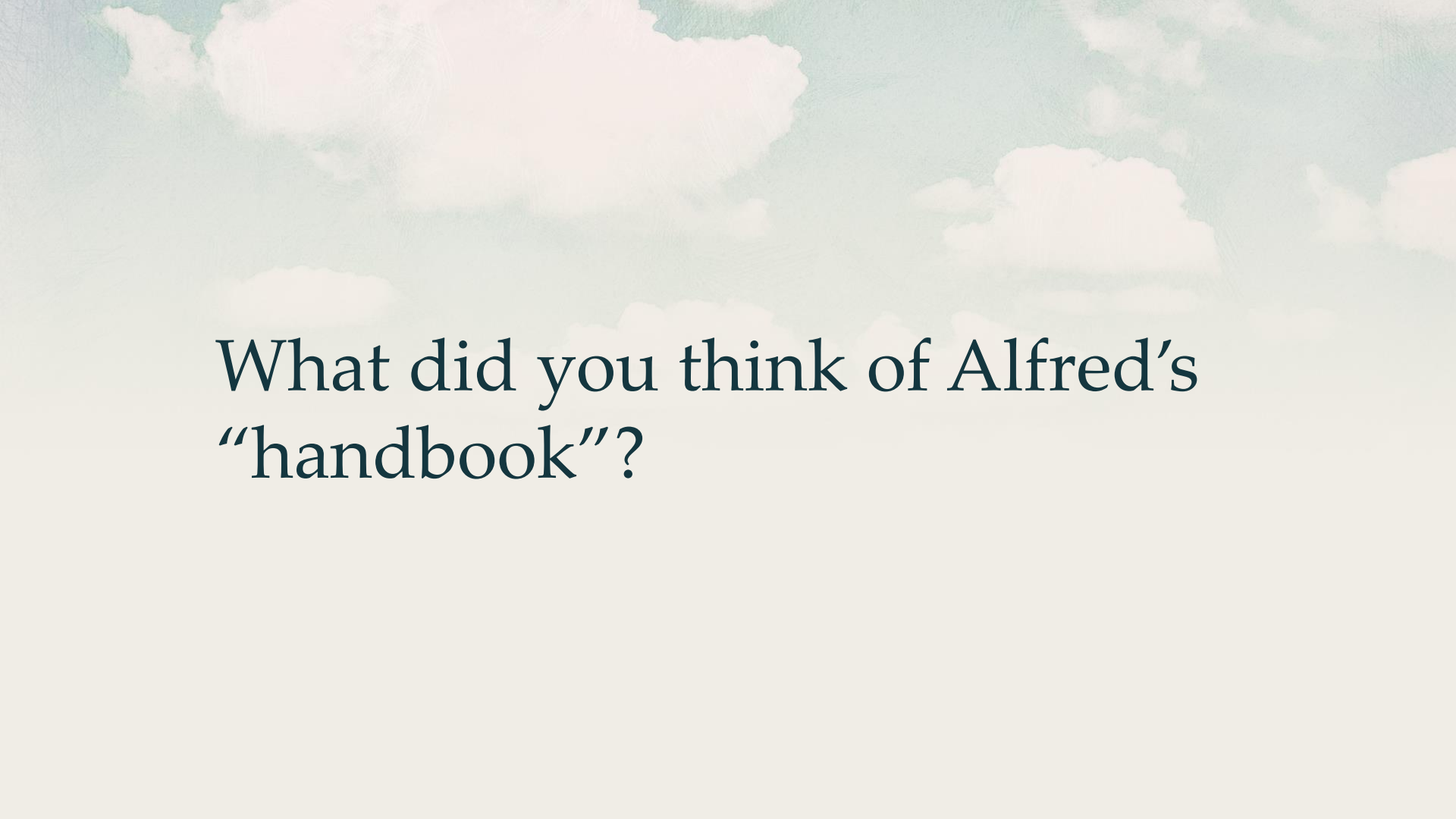
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# King Alfred's Handbook

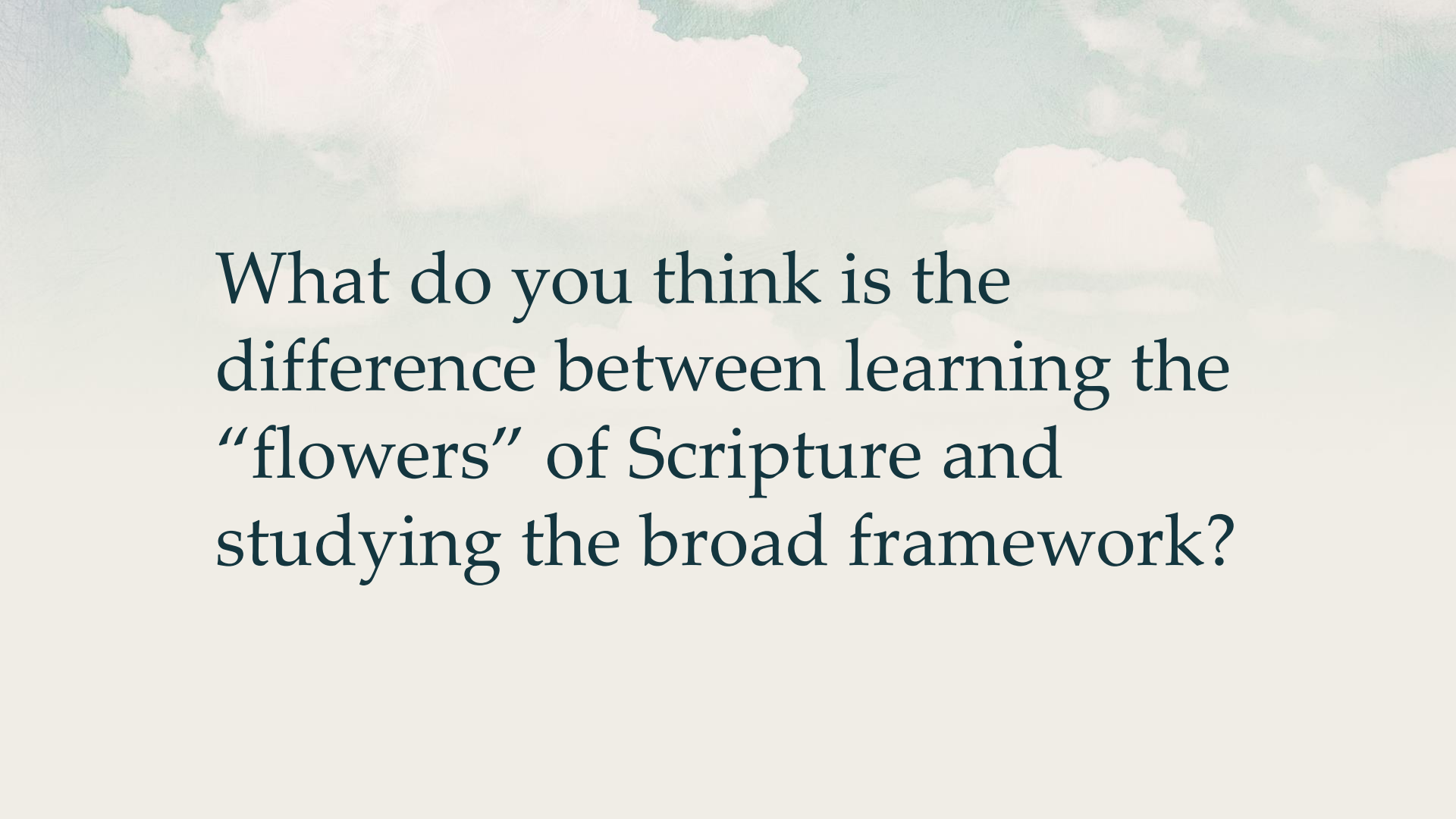
History

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# Alfred the Great

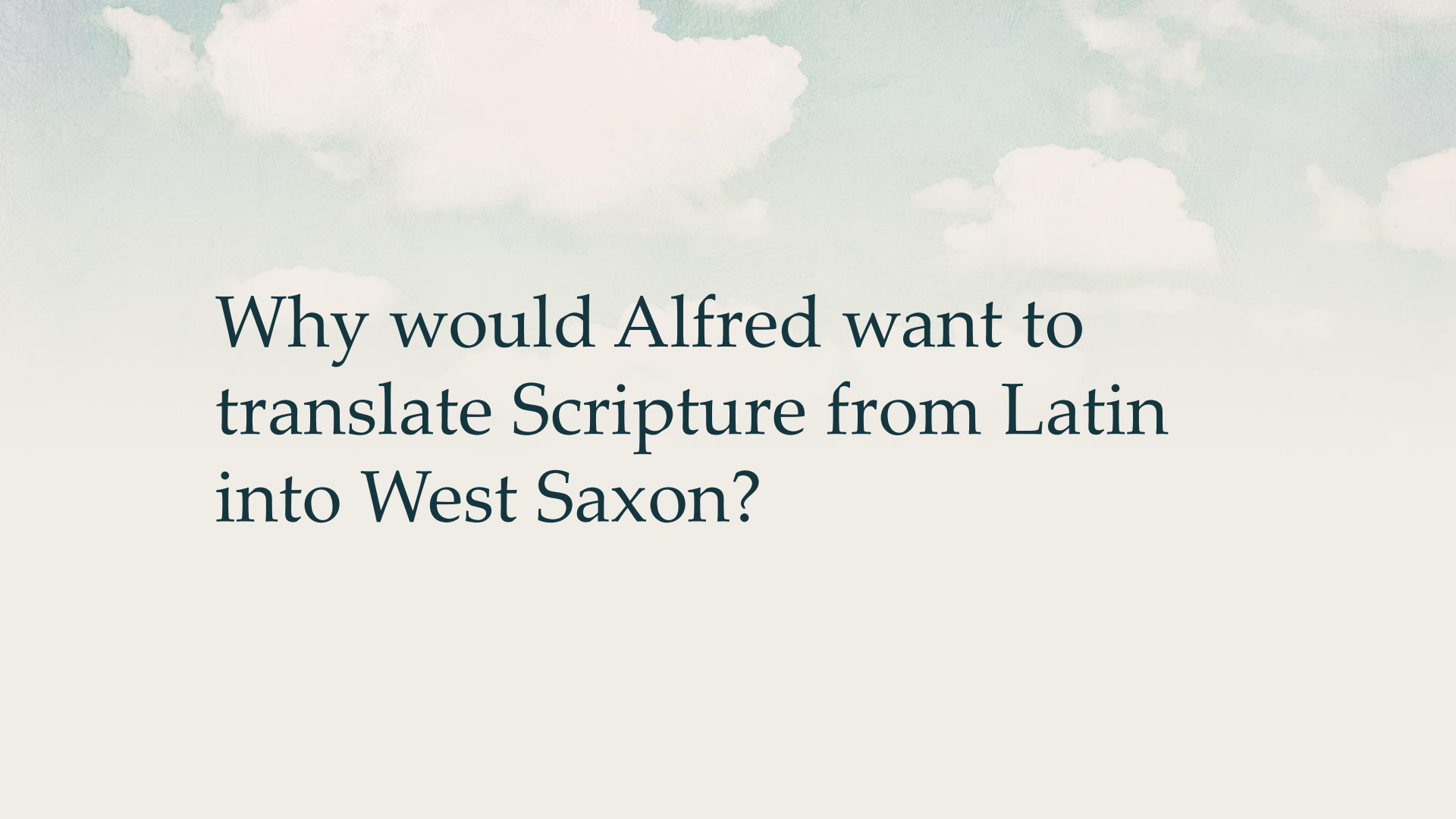


What did you think of Alfred's  
“handbook”?

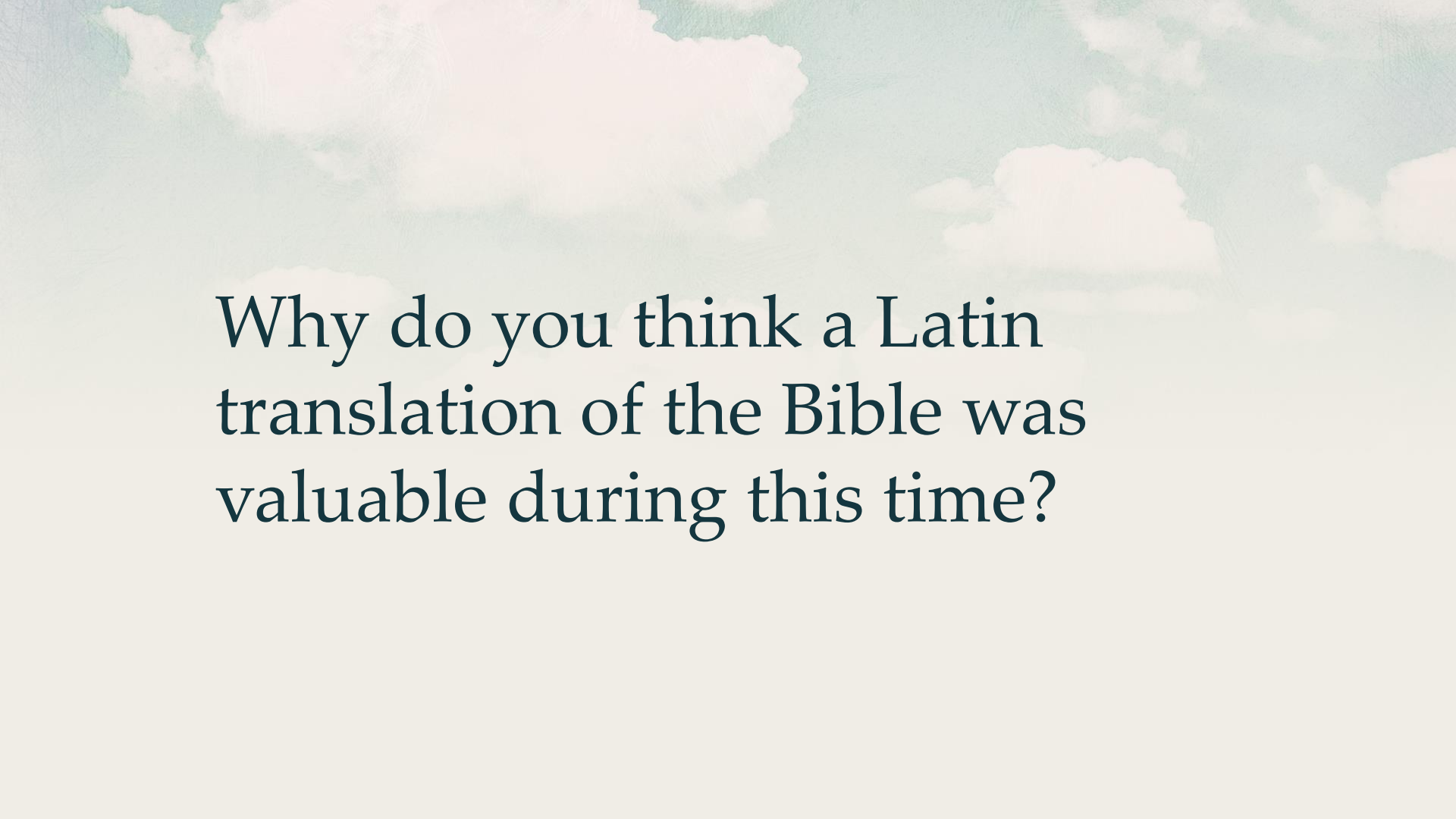


What do you think is the difference between learning the “flowers” of Scripture and studying the broad framework?





Why would Alfred want to  
translate Scripture from Latin  
into West Saxon?



Why do you think a Latin translation of the Bible was valuable during this time?



  
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# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 9

# Christendom Divided

**754, 756**

Pepin the Short, son of Charles Martel and King of the Franks, twice defends the city of Rome against Lombard invasions.

**804**

Alcuin, teacher and advisor to Charlemagne, dies in Tours.

**800**

Charlemagne is crowned “Emperor of the Romans” by Pope Leo III.

**868**

Cyril and Methodius visit Rome to meet with Pope Adrian II.

**863**

Pope Nicholas I calls the new eastern Patriarch Photius a usurper and then convenes a council to excommunicate him.

**c. 878**

Alfred the Great defeats the Viking King Guthrum at the Battle of Edington. After they sign a peace treaty, Guthrum converts to Christianity, and Alfred baptizes him.



**c. 910**

Eastern Church leaders split over the decision to allow Emperor Leo VI to marry a fourth time. The patriarch resigns in protest.

**1054**

In a dispute over doctrine, church practice, and the spiritual authority of the pope, leaders of Roman and Eastern Churches excommunicate each other, sealing the **Great Schism**.



Introduction:

---

**July 16, 1054**



Eastern Church

Western Church

Eastern Church

Eastern Church

Rome

Constantinople

Antioch

Jerusalem

Alexandria

Fatimid Caliphate



# When Christians Disagree

# Galatians 2

Why did Peter suddenly stop eating with the Gentiles (v. 12)?

**He feared those who promoted Jewish customs as a necessary part of Christianity.**

# Galatians 2

How did this decision influence others (v. 13)?

**Other Jews and even Barnabas joined his hypocrisy.**



# Galatians 2

Read verse 14 and state in your own words why Peter's actions were wrong.

His behavior contradicted the gospel, which removes barriers between Jews and Gentiles. Why should Peter show preference to a group because of their ethnicity, especially when he ignored Jewish customs before?

Context:

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# Acts 10:9–16



Discussion:

---

# Unity vs. Uniformity



# When Christians Fight

# Causes of Conflict

1 Corinthians 1:10–13

**B. Tribalism**—Holding to a name or group blindly, without understanding doctrine

# Causes of Conflict

Colossians 2:16–19

**A. Ritualism and Asceticism—**  
Insisting that certain traditions  
are as important as Scripture;  
viewing suffering as a form of  
spiritual discipline

# Causes of Conflict

Titus 3:9

**C. Combativeness**—Arguing over absurd, insignificant points and theological mysteries

# Causes of Conflict

James 4:1–10

**D. Pride and Greed**—Allowing ambition and the desire for wealth to replace the worship of God



	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Main City</b>	Rome	Constantinople
<b>Leader</b>	The Pope	The Ecumenical Patriarch
<b>Credited Founder</b>	Peter the Apostle	Andrew the Apostle
<b>Primary Language for Ritual &amp; Worship</b>	Latin	Greek
<b>Nature of the Holy Spirit</b>	“Proceeds from the Father and the Son”	“Proceeds from the Father”
<b>Bread of Communion</b>	Unleavened	Leavened
<b>Marriage for Priests</b>	Discouraged—then after 1139, forbidden	Allowed prior to ordination
<b>Feast Days (after the 1500s)</b>	Based on the Gregorian calendar	Based on the Julian calendar



History:

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*Filioque*

History:

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# Gregorian and Julian Calendars



# The Fruits of Wisdom

# James 3

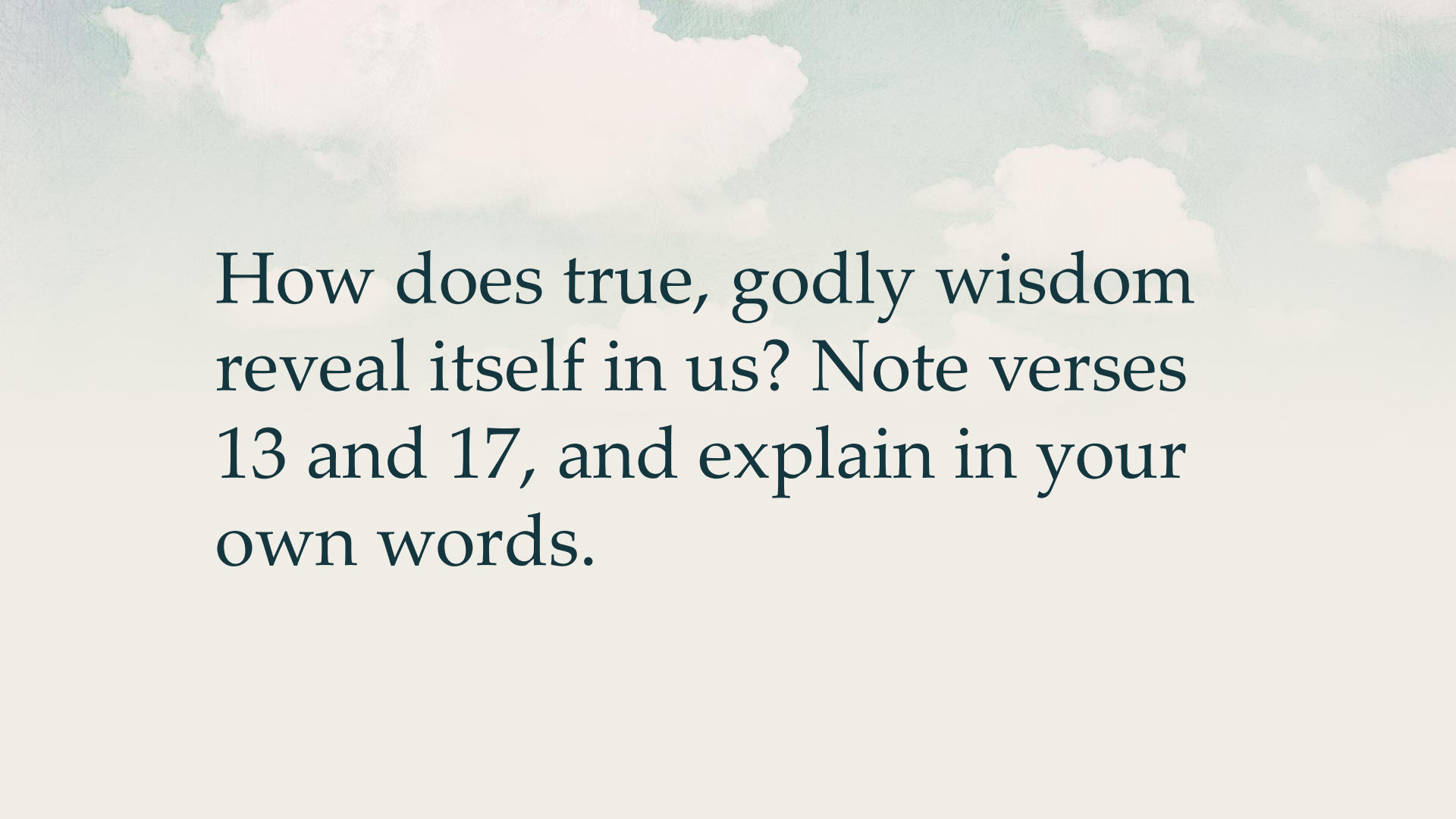
What is the source of envy and selfish ambition (v. 15)?

**It is earthly and devilish. It does not come from above.**

# James 3

According to verse 16, what follows those attitudes?

**Disorder/confusion, every kind of vile/evil work**



How does true, godly wisdom reveal itself in us? Note verses 13 and 17, and explain in your own words.

# James 3

What results from this wisdom?

Righteousness grown in peace



# Ephesians 4

If we wish to pursue God's calling for believers, what attitudes should we maintain (vv. 2–3)?


**Humility, meekness/gentleness, longsuffering/patience, love, and an eagerness to preserve unity.**



Does Paul's list of essentials  
seem too simple or short?



What things did you suggest  
that every Christian should  
believe?



What positions / practices  
could Christians disagree  
about—yet remain followers of  
Christ?

Further Reading:

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# A Hymn of Kassia



History:

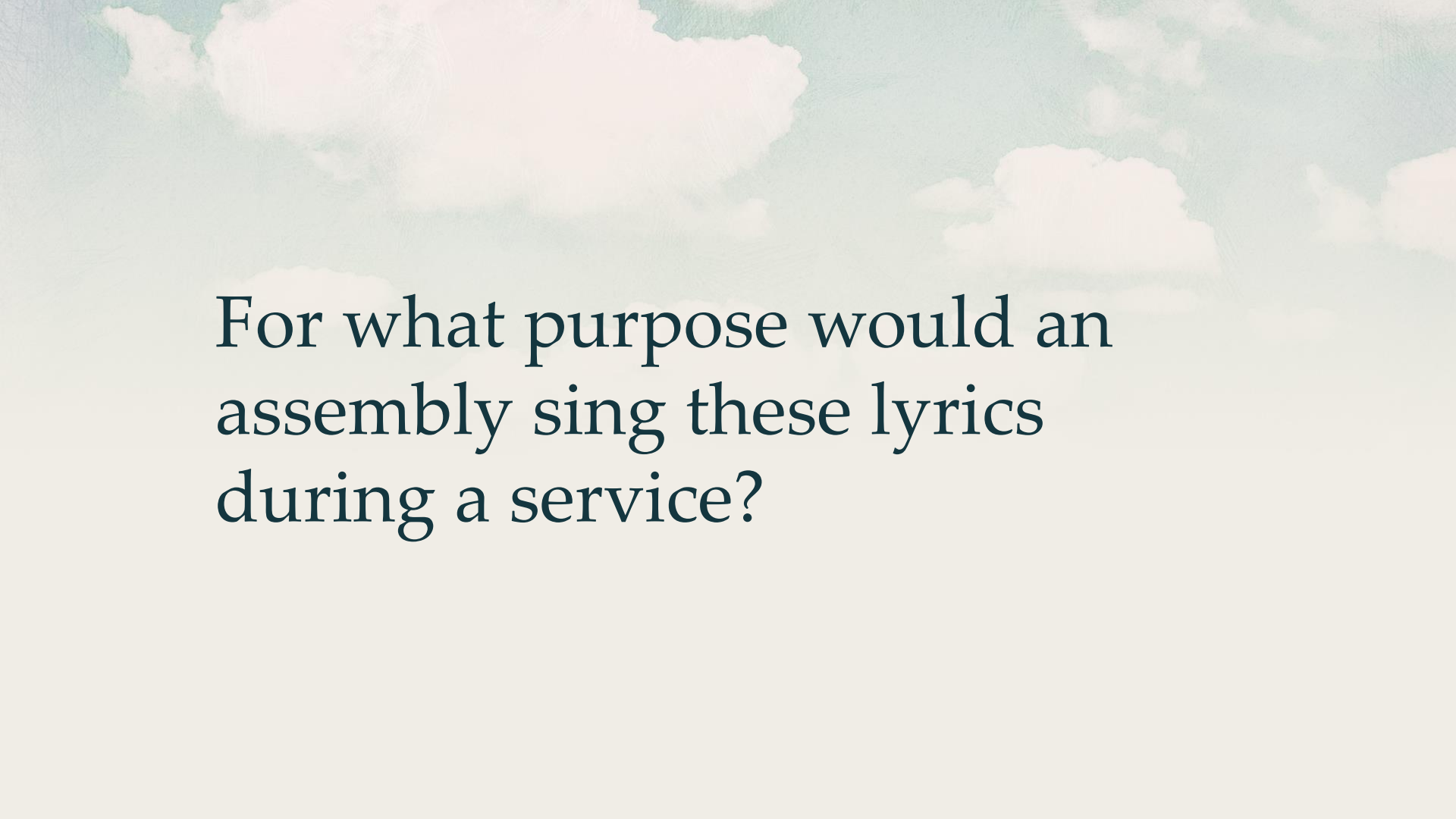
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# Penitential Hymn

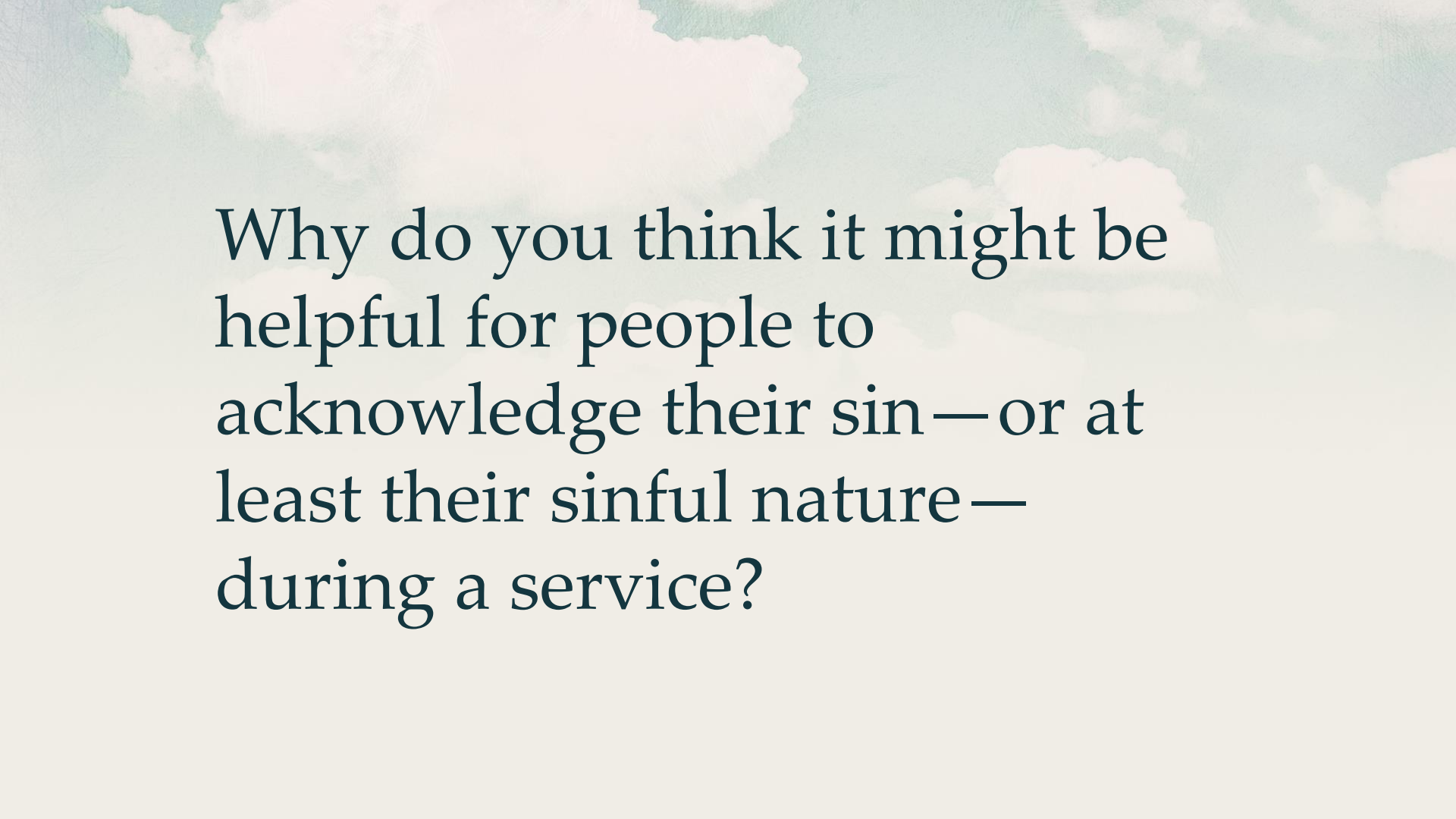
Note Luke 7:36–50 and  
John 12:1–8.

Do you think Kassia captures  
the meaning of Scripture? Why  
or why not?





For what purpose would an assembly sing these lyrics during a service?



Why do you think it might be helpful for people to acknowledge their sin—or at least their sinful nature—during a service?



Note the imagery Kassia uses.  
Why would she compare tears  
and rain?

The logo features a circular icon with a stylized arrow pointing upwards and to the right, positioned above the text. The text "PositiveAction" is in a bold, sans-serif font, with "Positive" and "Action" joined together. Below it, "FOR CHRIST" is written in a smaller, all-caps, spaced-out sans-serif font.

**PositiveAction**  
FOR CHRIST



# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 10

# The Crusades



**610**

**Muhammad** claims a vision from the angel Gabriel and declares himself a messenger of the one God, or Allah.

**630**

Muhammad returns to conquer Mecca, establishing Islam as a formidable political power. He dies in 632.

**668**

Now in control of much of the Middle East, Muslim forces attack Constantinople, yet fail to capture the city.

**800**

The Holy Roman Empire begins under Charlemagne.

**622**

Persecuted by polytheists, Muhammad and his followers flee Mecca to establish a theocracy in Medina, reflecting the civil and religious doctrines of the Qur'an.

**c. 637**

After decades of unrest under Byzantine and Persian control, Jerusalem is besieged and captured by Muhammad's successors.

**c. 760**

After years of infighting, the (Arab-centric, Sunni) Umayyad dynasty falls to the (multi-ethnic, Shia) Abbasid revolution. In the East, Abbasid power centers on Damascus. In the West, remnants of the Umayyads establish an emirate in Cordoba, Spain.



**c. 969**

The Fatimid dynasty assumes control of Palestine and Jerusalem. Rulers alternately welcome or persecute non-Muslims. During the rule of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (c. 996–1020), officials reportedly destroy many church buildings, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

**1054**

Roman and Eastern Churches seal their divide in the Great Schism.

**c. 1071**

Now in control of the Abbasid Empire, the Seljuk Turks expand their territory, defeating Constantinople's armies in Asia Minor and capturing Jerusalem from the Fatimids. Persecution of non-Muslims worsens.

**1065**

The 12,000-person Great German Pilgrimage ends in disaster. Perhaps thousands of lives are lost to bandit attacks, though a Fatimid army rescues many more.

**1096–99**

**The First Crusade**, prompted by Pope Urban II, conquers Nicea, Antioch, and Jerusalem, leaving many Christians, Jews, and Muslims dead. European soldiers establish feudal kingdoms in Palestine.

**1202–04**

**The Fourth Crusade**, prompted by Pope Innocent III, never reaches Palestine. The Crusaders instead become pawns of European factions, capturing the already-Christian city of Zara and ransacking Constantinople.

Introduction:

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# Urban II



Byzantine  
Empire

○ Rome

○ Constantinople

Contested Territory

Divided  
Seljuk States

○ Jerusalem

Fatimid Caliphate

○ Mecca

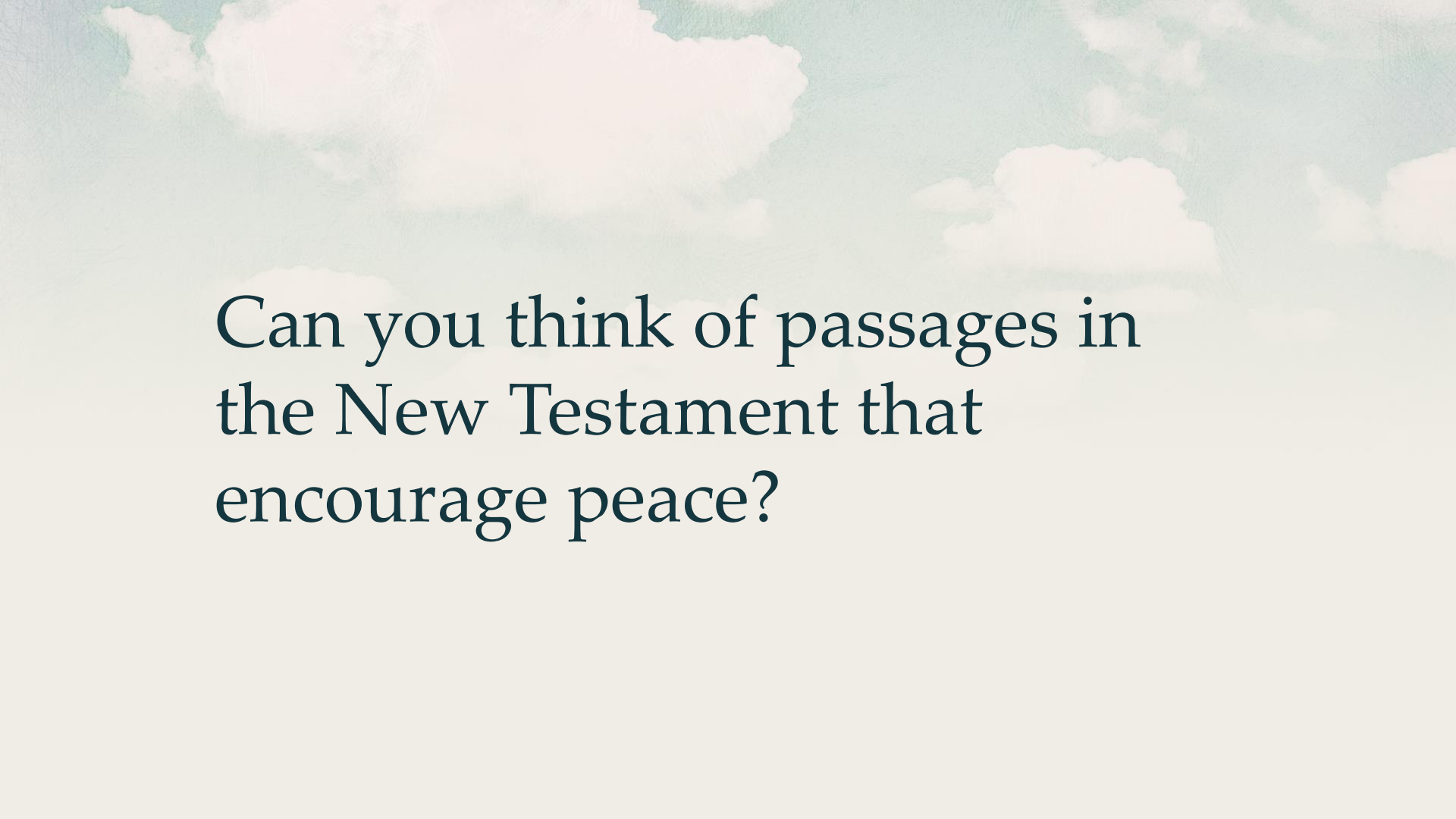


# Defining a Crusade



# Christians and Warfare





Can you think of passages in  
the New Testament that  
encourage peace?

Context:

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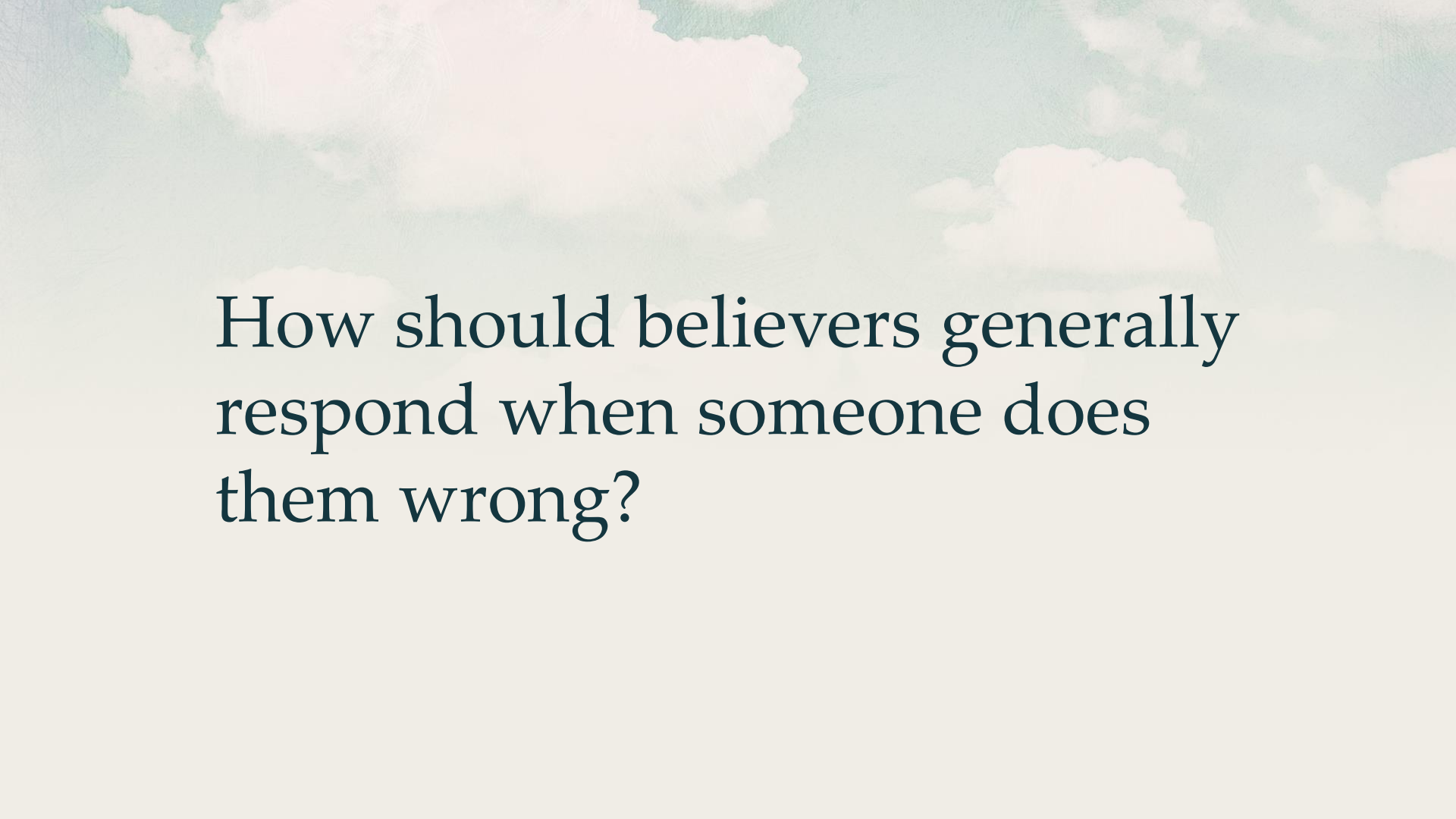
# Warfare in the Old Testament



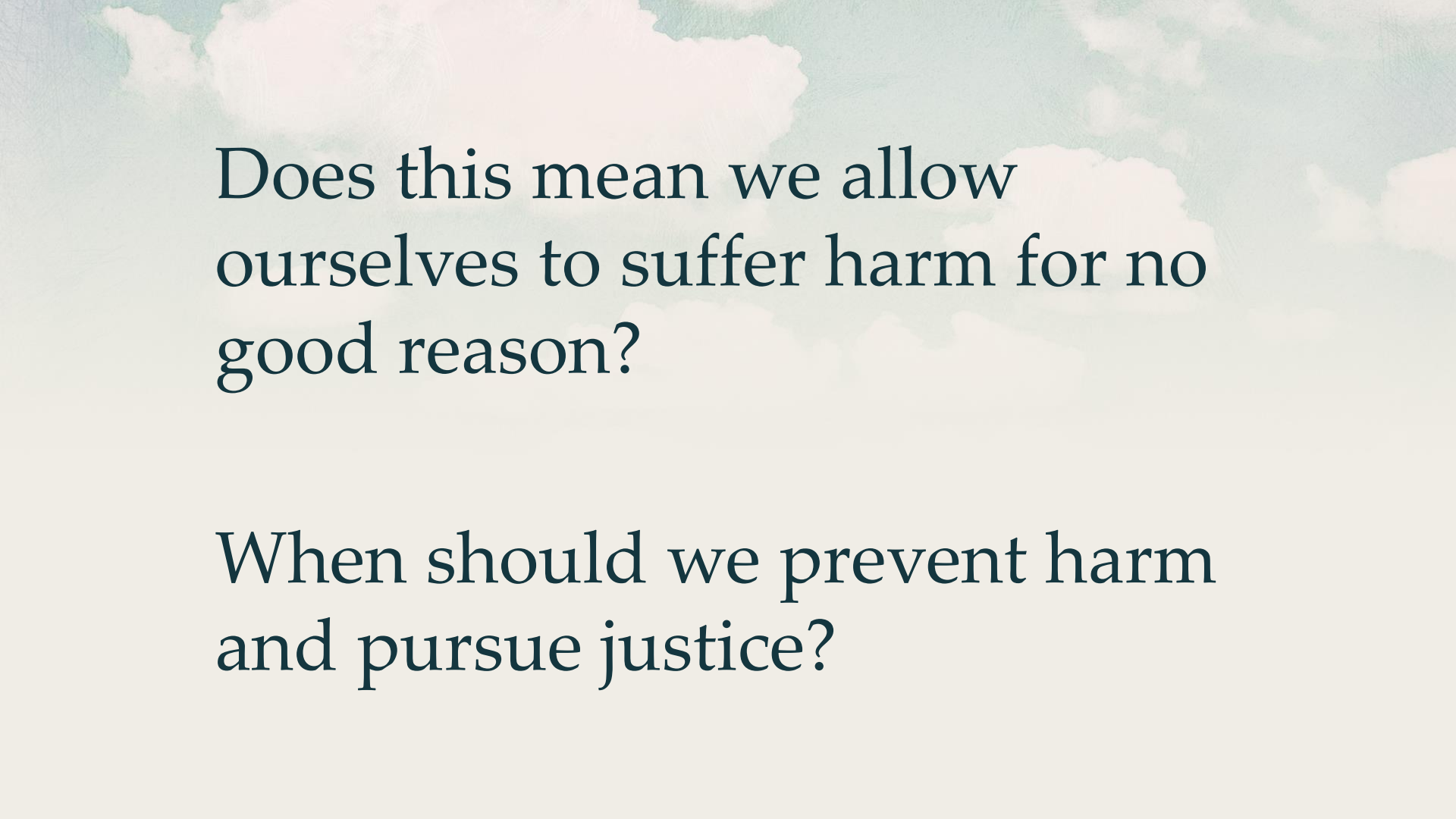
# 1 Peter 2

According to verse 14, what does God allow government officials to do?

**Punish those who do evil and praise those who do good.**

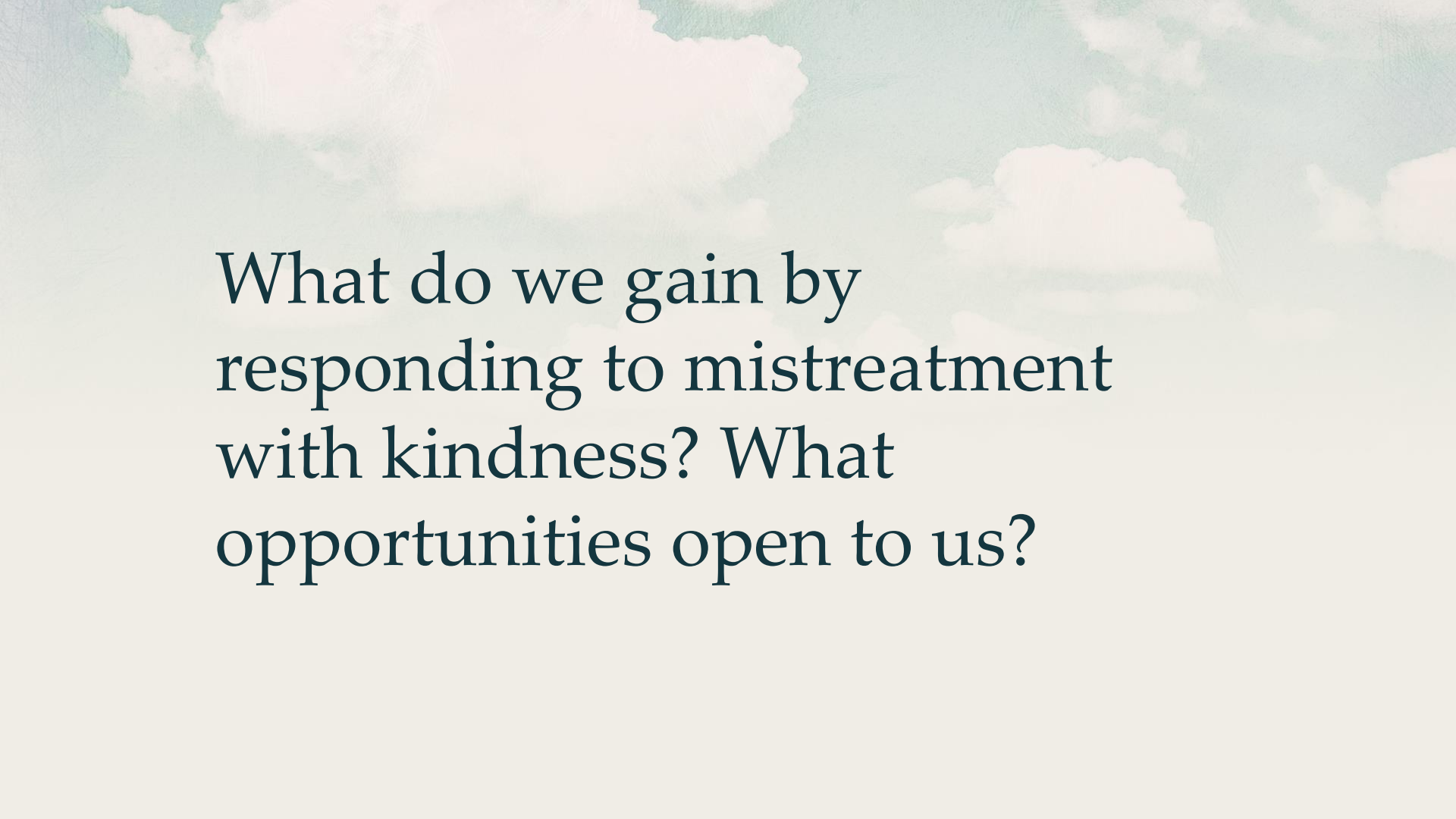


How should believers generally respond when someone does them wrong?



Does this mean we allow  
ourselves to suffer harm for no  
good reason?

When should we prevent harm  
and pursue justice?



What do we gain by  
responding to mistreatment  
with kindness? What  
opportunities open to us?

# Christian Soldiers

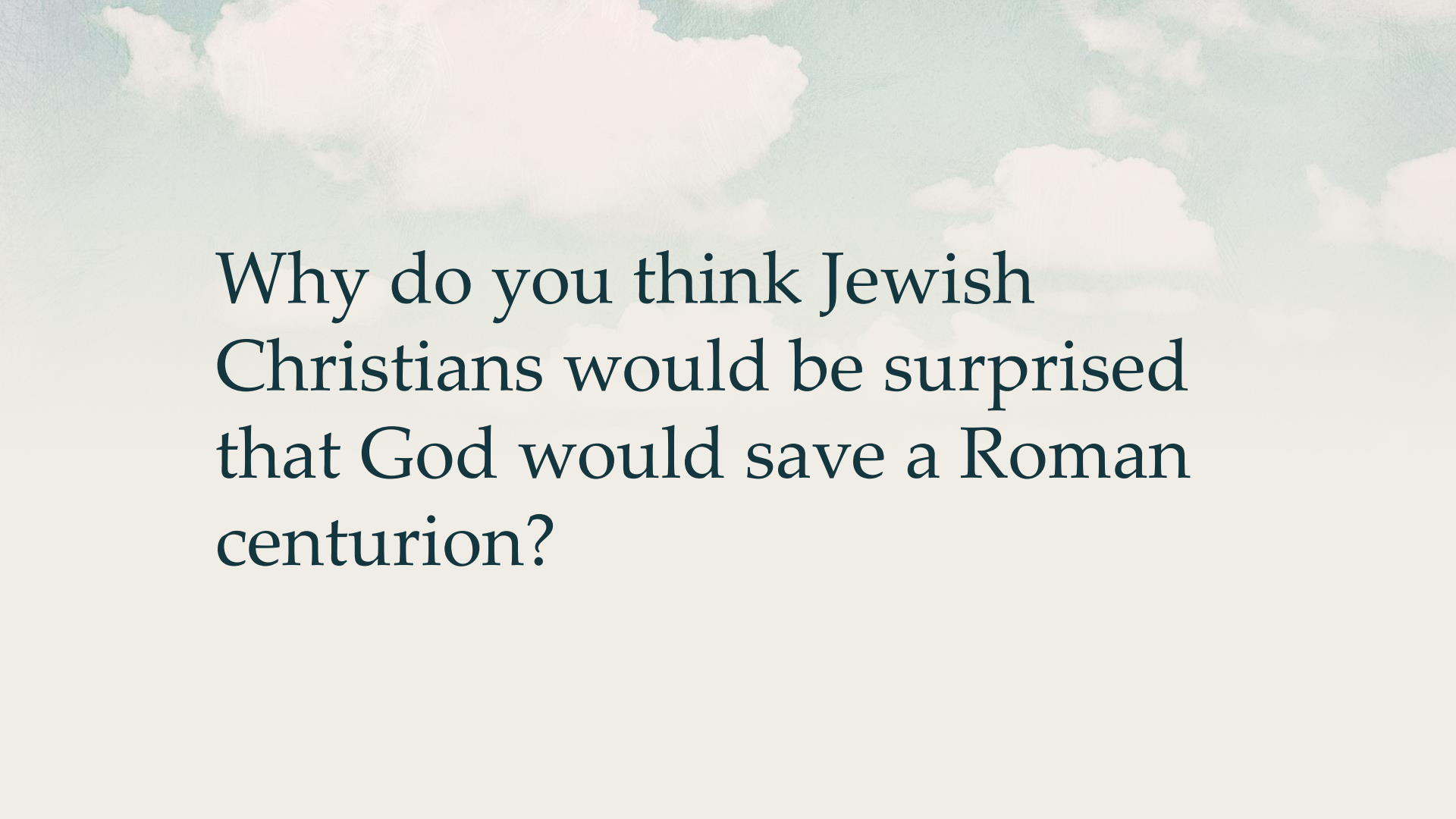
What did Jesus say about the centurion who sought His help (Matt. 8:10)?

**Jesus had not met anyone in Israel with greater faith.**

# Christian Soldiers

What did the conversion of the centurion Cornelius prove to the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 10:45; 11:18)?

**That God saves and offers His Spirit to Gentiles as well as Jews**



Why do you think Jewish  
Christians would be surprised  
that God would save a Roman  
centurion?



# Luke 3

What instruction does John specifically give soldiers (v. 14)?

**Do not use your power to extort or mistreat people.**

**Don't accuse people falsely.**

**Be content with your wages.**

# Luke 3

In warning soldiers against the abuse of power, does John command them to quit the military?

**No.**

Discussion:

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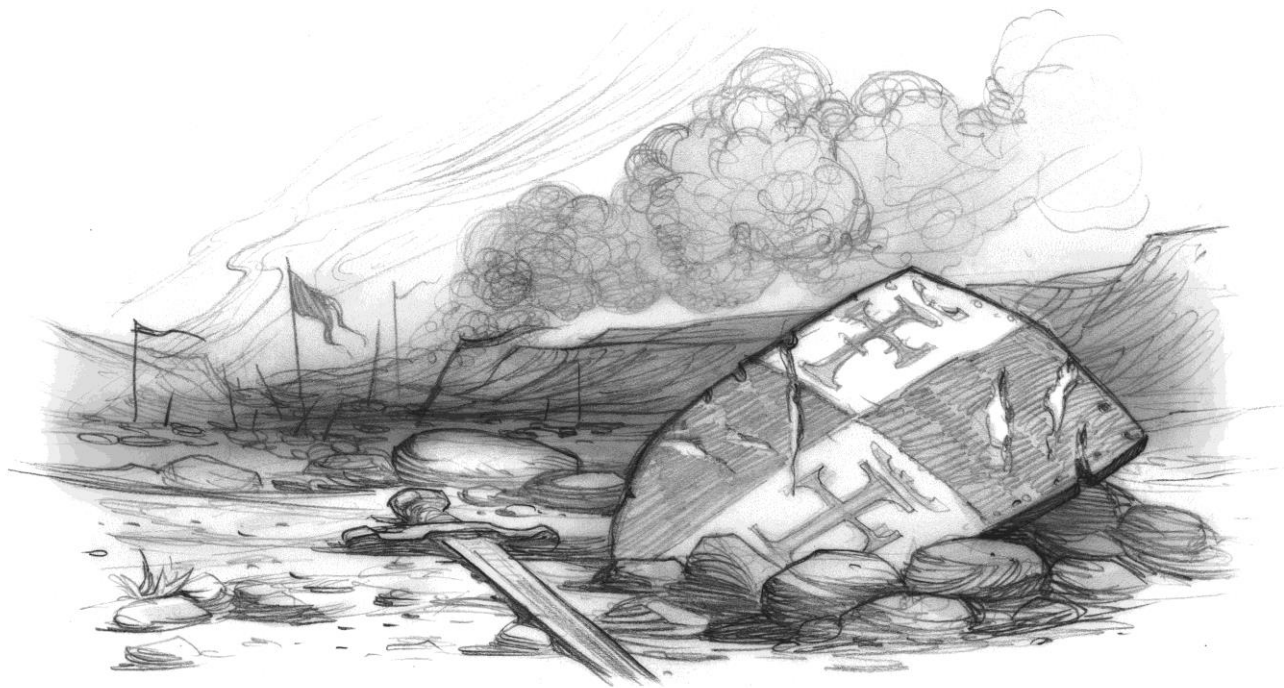
# Augustine's *Just War*



# From Europe to Jerusalem

# The Knights Templar

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# The Crusades Come to Europe

# Matthew 26

Why did Jesus warn Peter to put away his sword (v. 52)?

**People who take up the sword will die by the sword.**



Context:

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# General Truths

Discussion:

---

# Christians and Deadly Force

# Innocent III and the Albigensian Crusade

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History:

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# The Third Crusade

# Ephesians 6

Where do we find strength  
(v. 10)?

**In the Lord—in His power**

# Ephesians 6

Is the warfare of Christians  
primarily physical or spiritual  
(v. 12)?

**Spiritual**

# Ephesians 6

Note the rest of this passage (vv. 13–20). Name two pieces of equipment listed by Paul.

How do you think these tools help us handle conflicts?



Further Reading:

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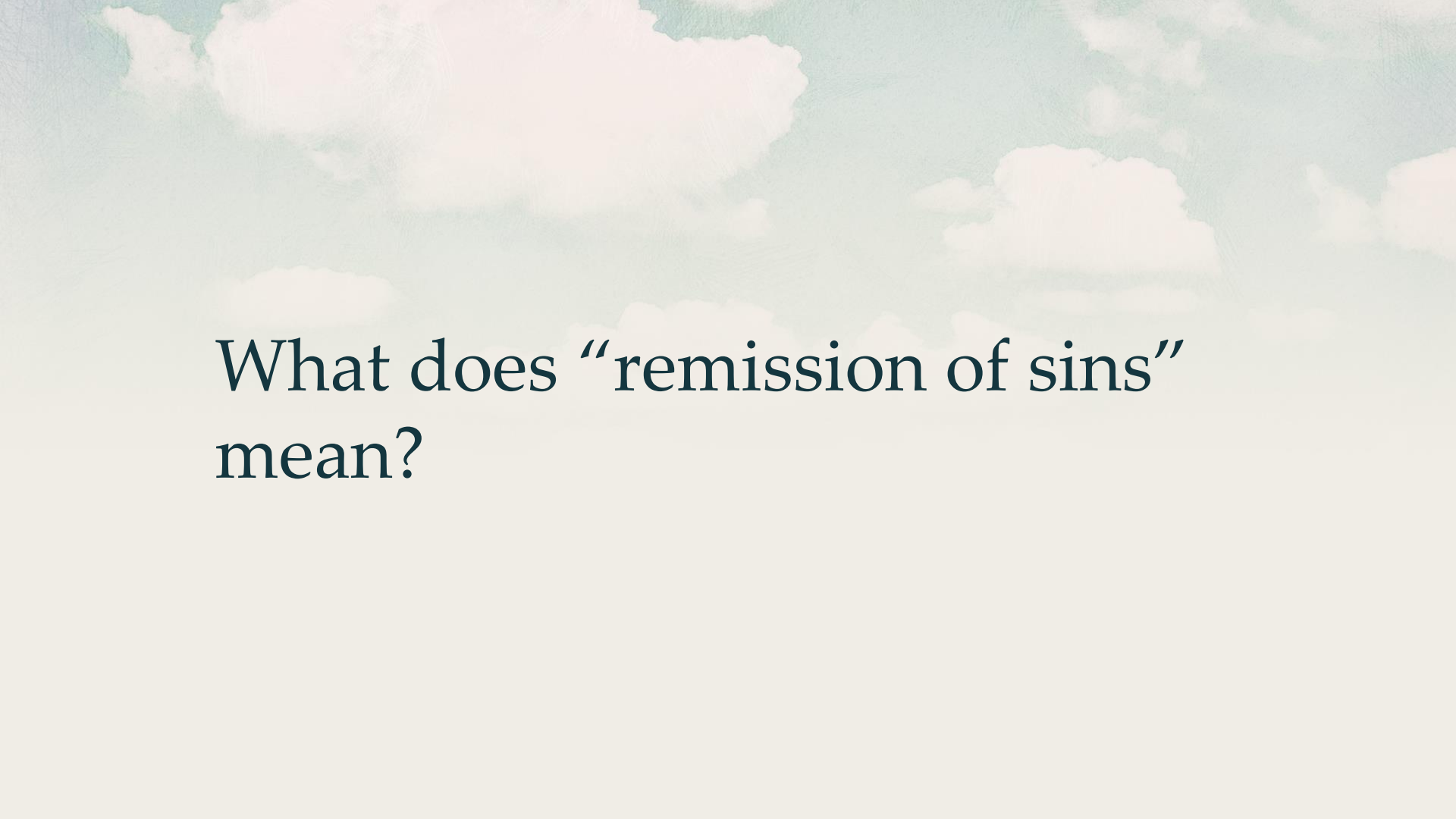
# A Call for Crusade



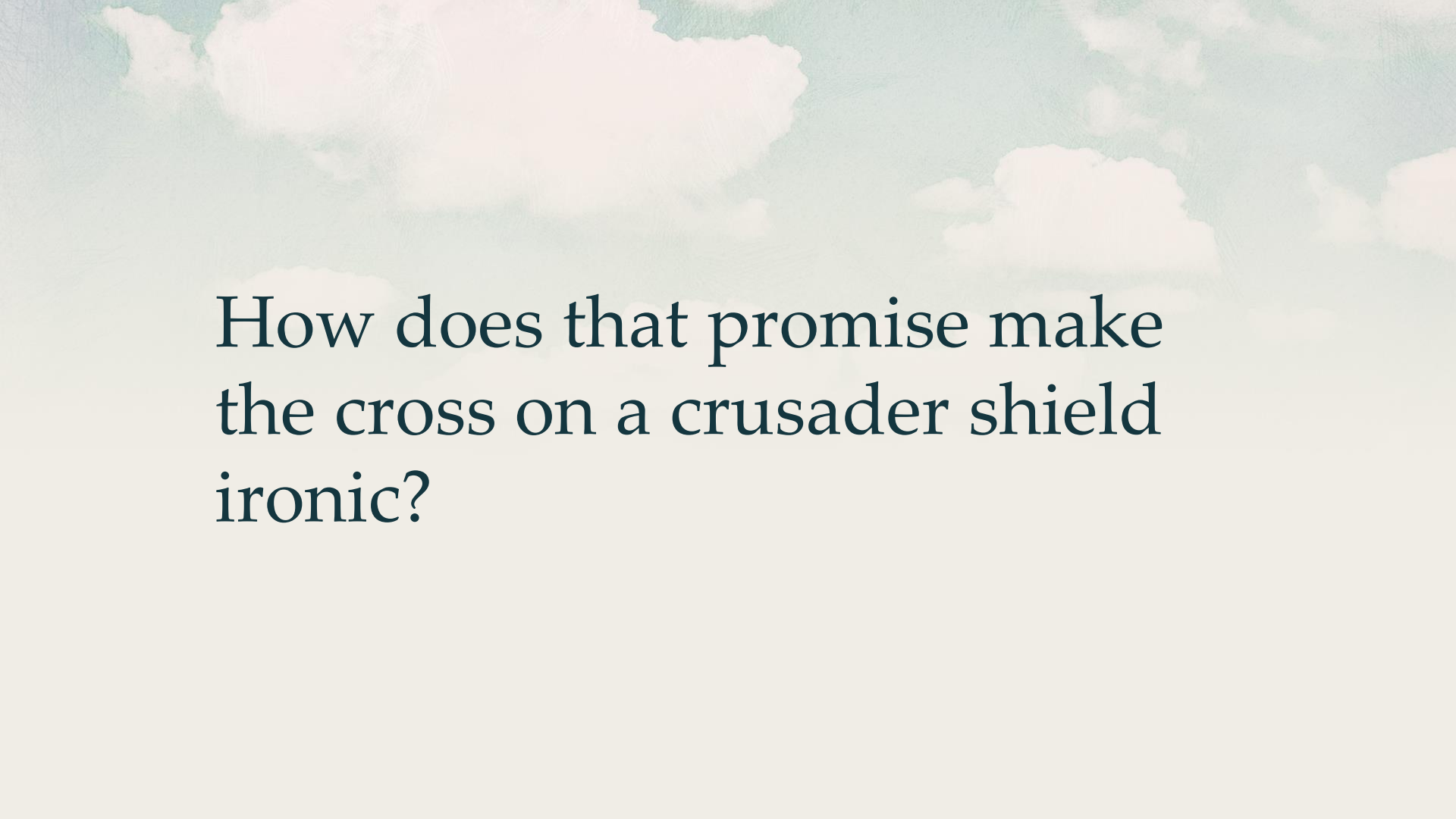
# Urban II's Call

What does Urban II promise to those who die during the crusade?

**Immediate remission of sins**



What does “remission of sins”  
mean?



How does that promise make  
the cross on a crusader shield  
ironic?

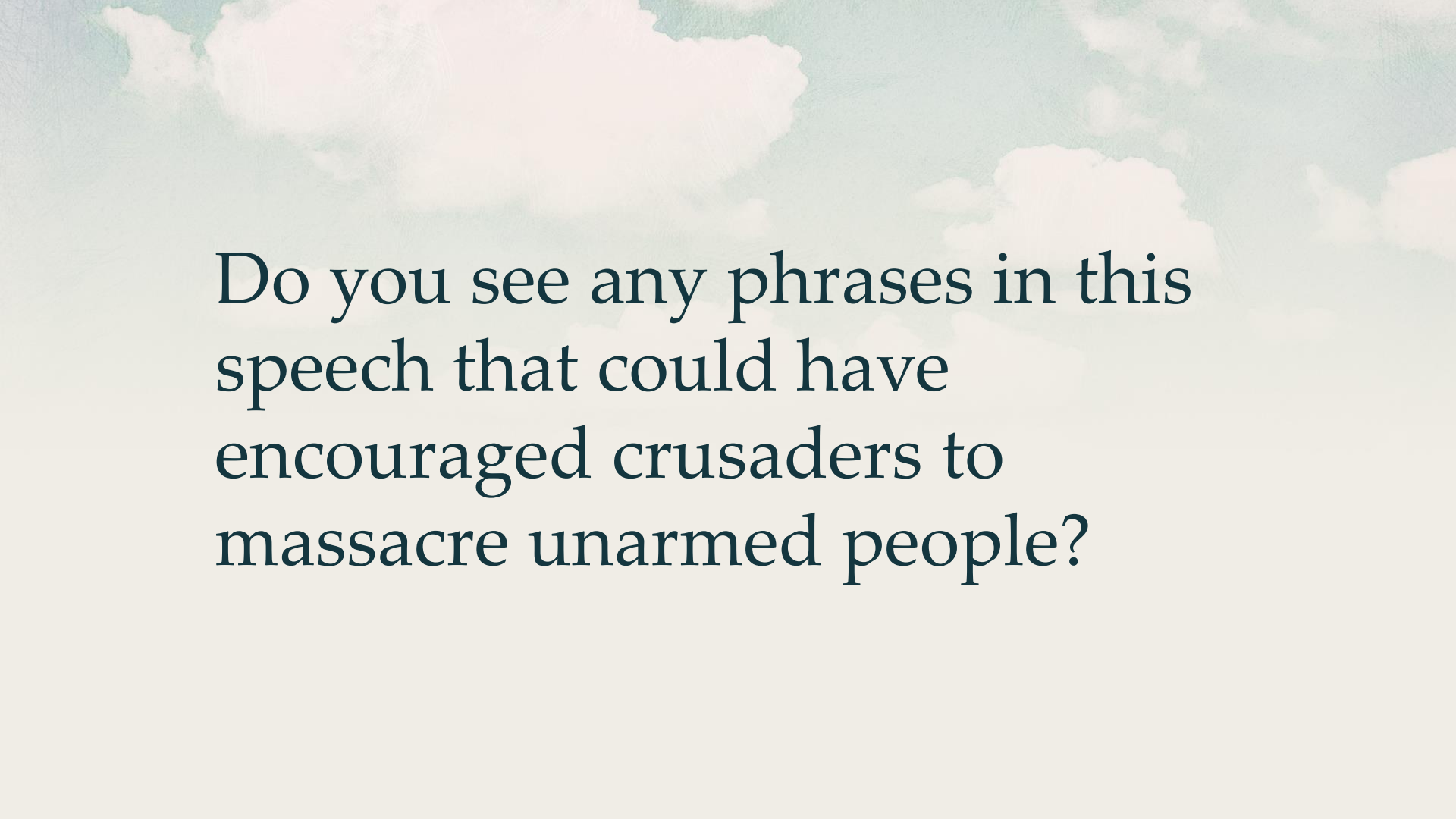


What are some phrases that  
make this a call to “holy” war?

Context:

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# The Dangers of Misdirected Faith



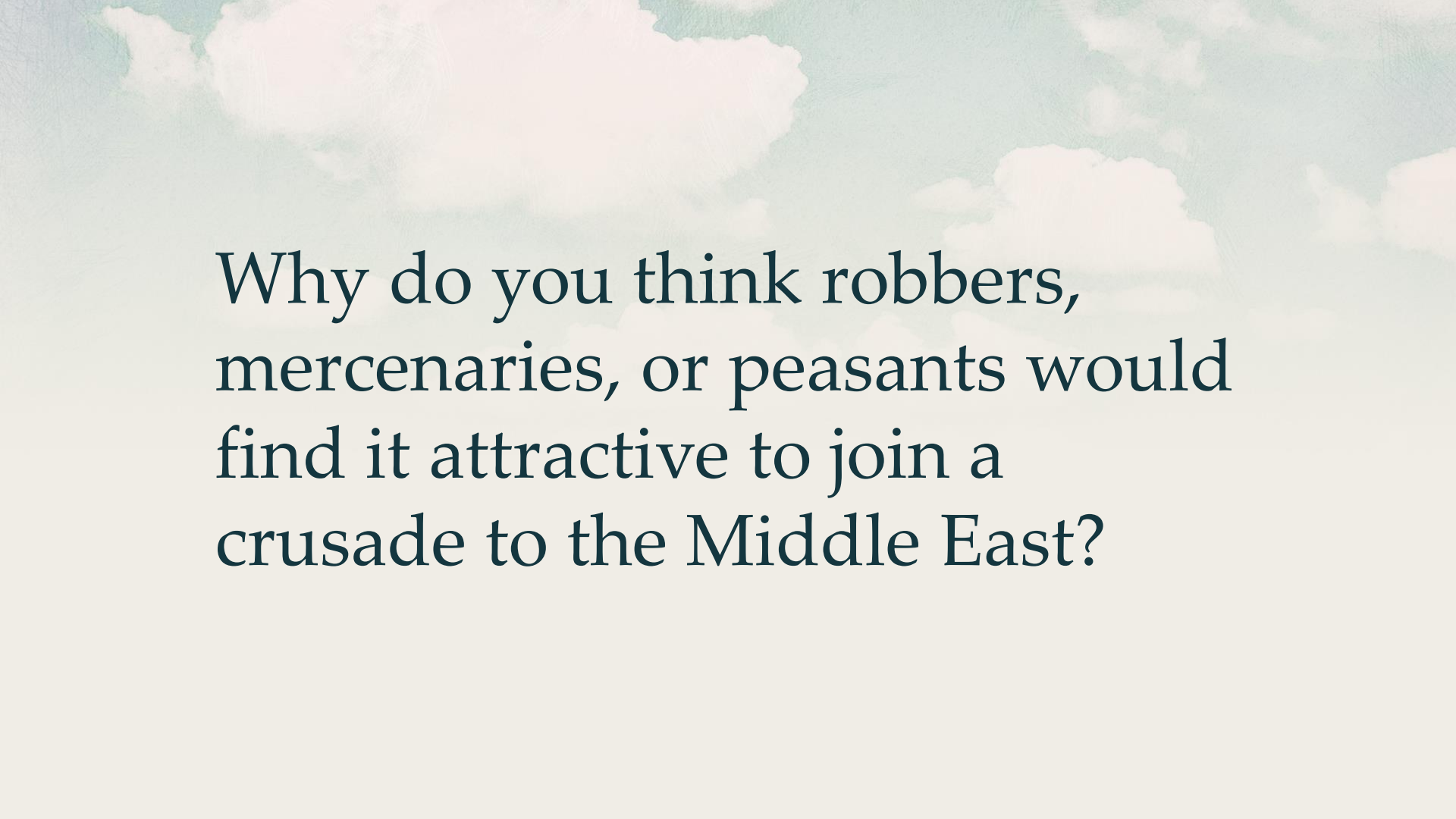
Do you see any phrases in this speech that could have encouraged crusaders to massacre unarmed people?



# Urban II's Call

In addition to the knights and nobles assembled at this council, whom does Urban call to join the crusade?

**Robbers, those fighting with family members, mercenaries, and manual laborers**



Why do you think robbers,  
mercenaries, or peasants would  
find it attractive to join a  
crusade to the Middle East?

# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*





## CHAPTER 11

# Out of the Cloister





**c. 530**

**The Rule of Benedict** begins to regulate the life and practices of monastic communities.

**800**

Charlemagne is crowned “Emperor of the Romans.” He finances new monasteries within his kingdom.

**c. 871–899**

Alfred the Great, King of Wessex, rebuilds at least two monasteries in England and sends financial support to others abroad.

**1054**

Roman and Eastern Churches seal their divide in the Great Schism.

**1096–99**

The First Crusade conquers Nicea, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Crusaders establish feudal kingdoms in Palestine.

**1202–04**

The Fourth Crusade ends with the ransacking of Constantinople.

**c. 1200s**

**The Mendicant Orders** organize to focus on pastoral ministry, forsaking personal property and practicing sharp asceticism.

**d. 1226**

**Francis of Assisi**, an Italian friar who founded the Franciscan Order

**d. 1221**

**Dominic de Guzmán**, a Spanish priest who founded the Order of Preachers

Introduction:

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# Dominic de Guzmán





Divisions Between  
the Church and the People:  
**Wealth**

# Wealthy Believers

According to Proverbs 14:31 and 17:5, what do we do when oppressing or mocking the poor?

**We insult/disrespect God.**

# Wealthy Believers

What teaching from Christ did the apostle relate (Acts 20:35)?

**It's more blessed to give than to receive.**

# Wealthy Believers

Note also 1 Timothy 6:17–19.

What attitude should we avoid  
(v. 17)?

**Pride or arrogance, trusting in  
uncertain riches**

Context:

---

# James 2:1–9



Divisions Between  
the Church and the People:  
**Education and  
Privilege**

# Privilege and Christianity

In 1 Corinthians 1:26–29, Paul explains that God can use foolish and weak things to shame the wise and the strong. Why (v. 29)?

**So that no one could brag in  
God's presence**



# 1 Corinthians 8

According to verse 1, what is one result of knowledge?

**It puffs up—it can make us arrogant.**

# 1 Corinthians 8

But what does love do (v. 1)?

**It builds up.**

# Privilege and Christianity

And according to 1 Corinthians 13:2, what do we gain from all gifts, knowledge, and faith—if we don't have love?

**Nothing**

Discussion:

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# Wealth, Power, and Evil



# Rise of the Mendicant Orders

History:

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# Benedict of Nursia

History:

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# Urbanization



History:

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# Legacy of the Mendicant Orders



# The Duty to Reach Out

# Matthew 25

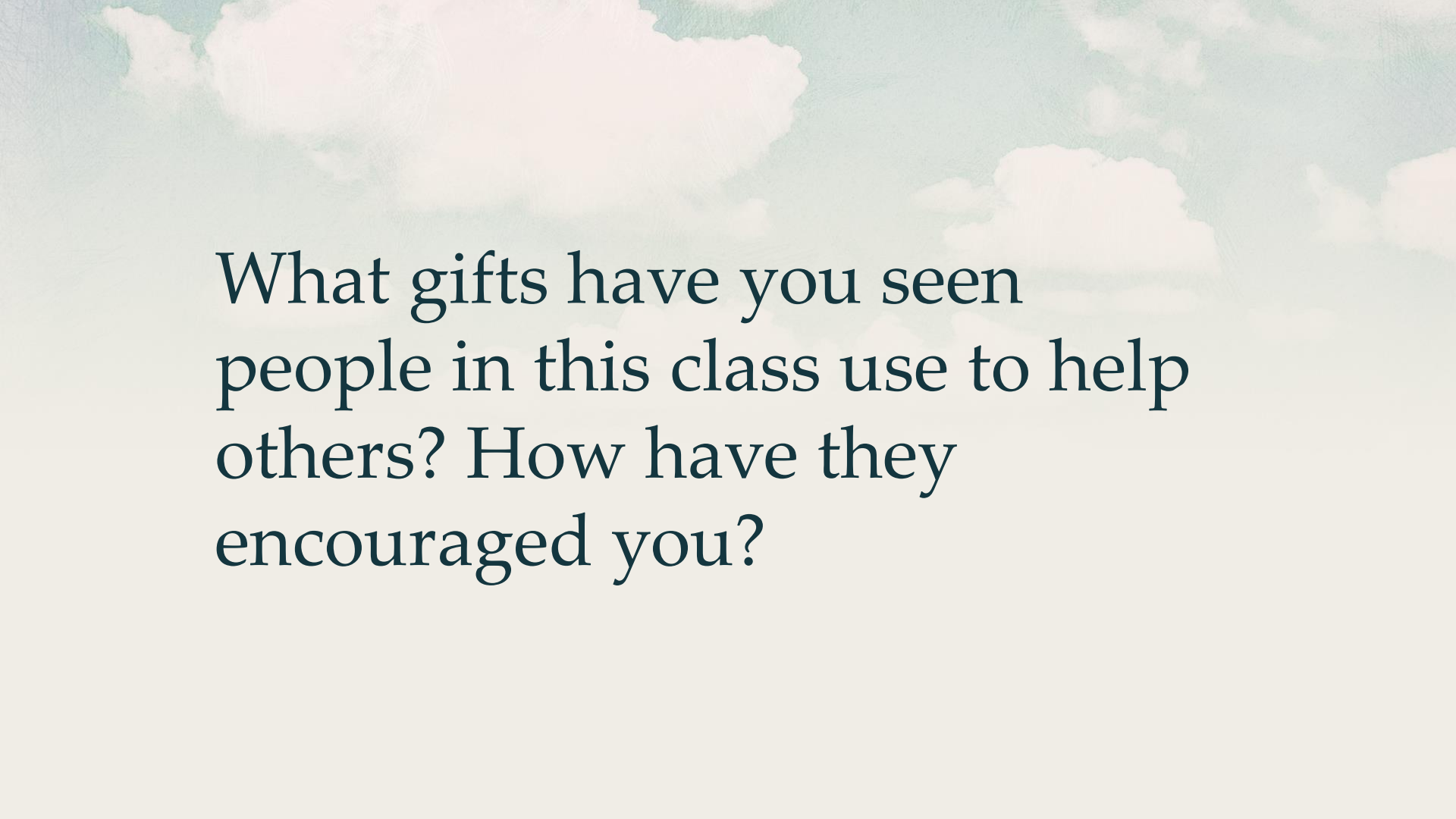
What is the inheritance of those who serve God (v. 34)?

**His kingdom**

# Matthew 25

Why does the King reward believers who help people in need (v. 40)?

**To help those people is to serve God**

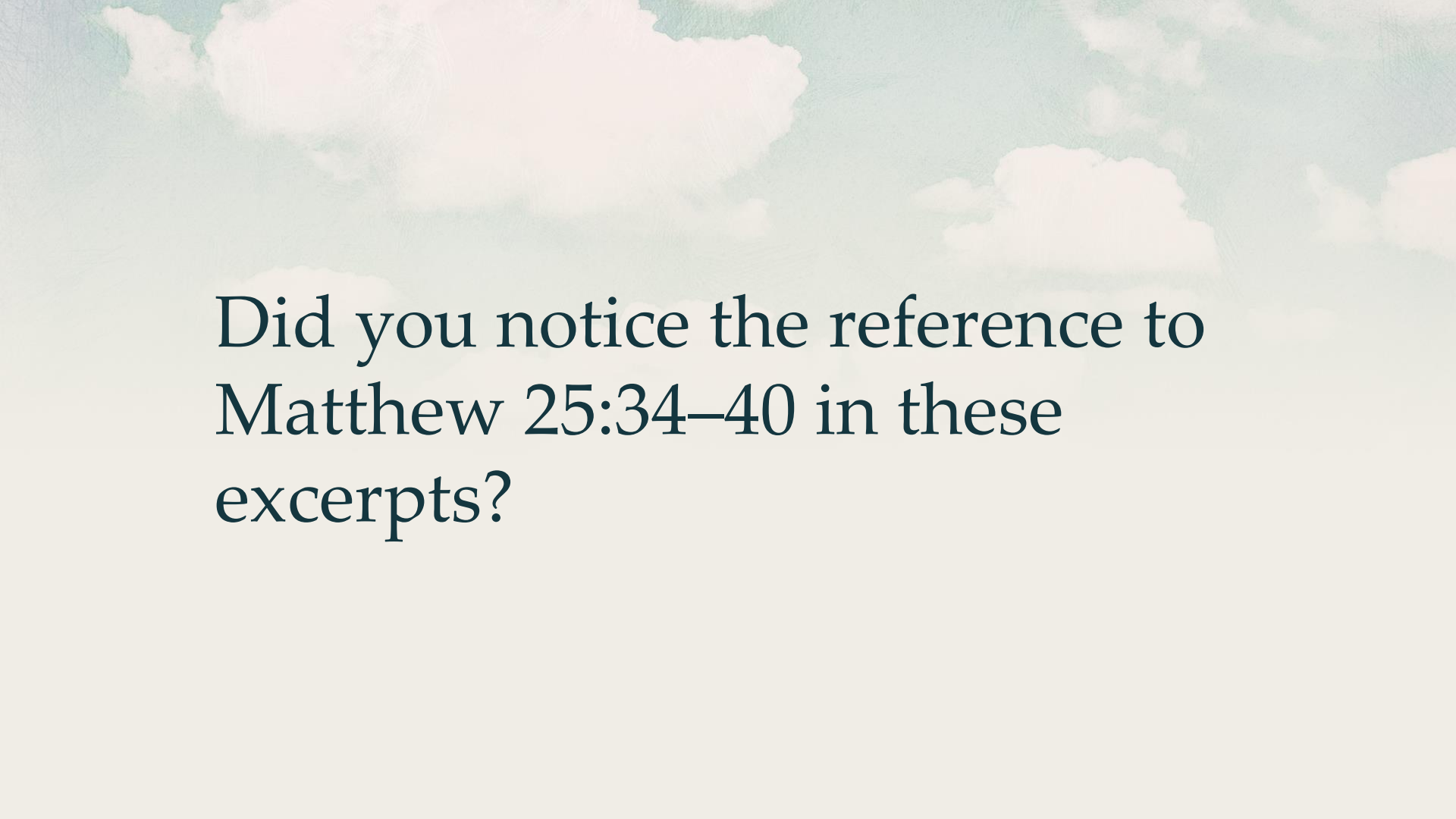


What gifts have you seen  
people in this class use to help  
others? How have they  
encouraged you?

Further Reading:

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# The Rule of Francis



Did you notice the reference to  
Matthew 25:34–40 in these  
excerpts?



# The Rule of Francis

What statements do you think guard against some of the corruptions of the Roman Catholic Church?

The friars couldn't own property or even accept money for work. They couldn't debate with people, at least not harshly.

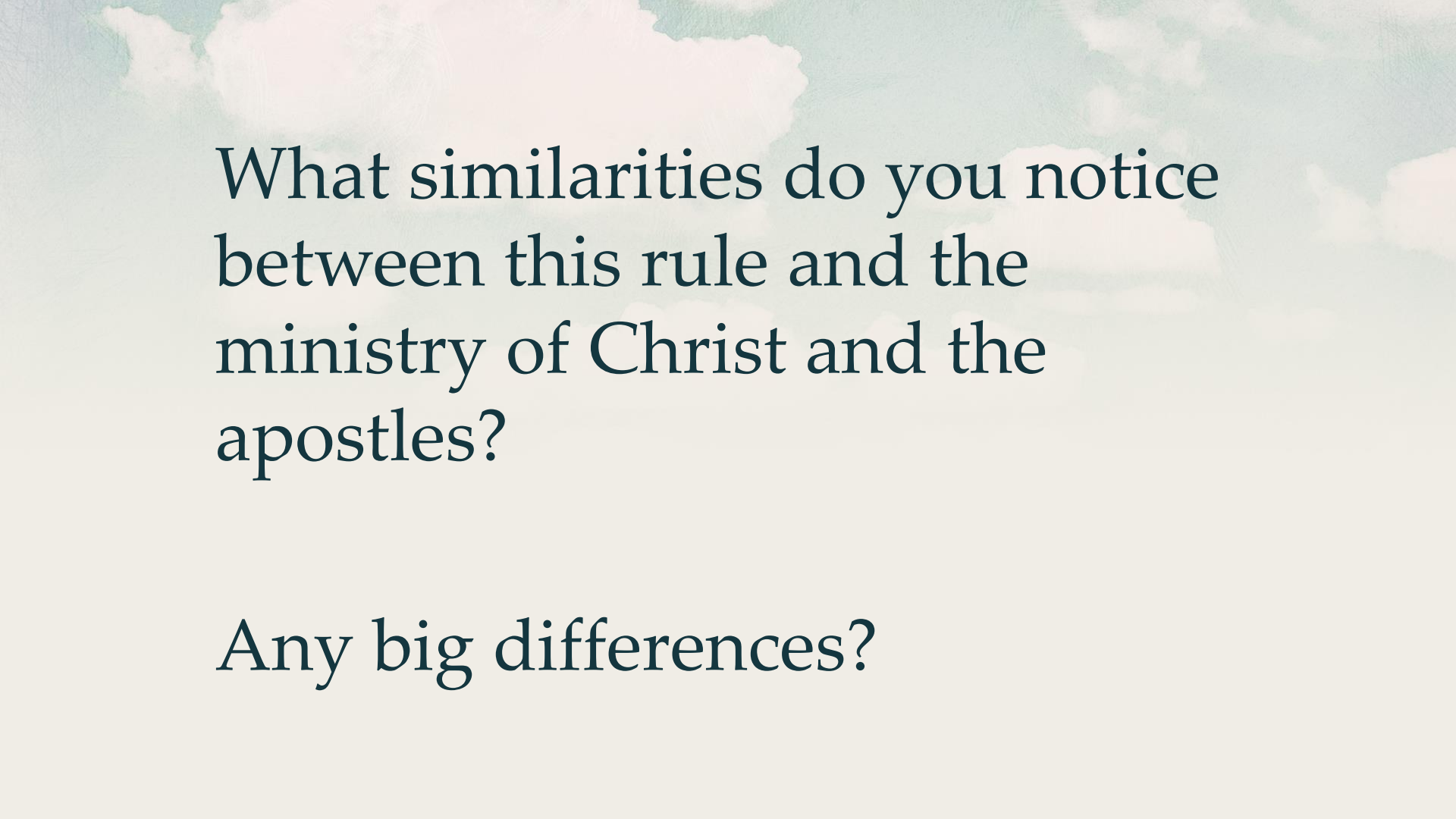


Do you think these restrictions  
went too far?

# The Rule of Francis

What statements show that this order intended to minister to people directly?

The rule included notes on traveling, working, and helping the sick.



What similarities do you notice between this rule and the ministry of Christ and the apostles?

Any big differences?

Do you think the advice given  
to preaching friars (Ch. 9) is  
helpful?

Why or why not?

Discussion:

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# Simple Messages



# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*





## CHAPTER 12

# A Turbulent Darkness

## c. 1200s

The Mendicant Orders organize to focus on pastoral ministry.

## 1315–22

**The Great European Famine** radically lowers food supplies—for seven years, in some areas. Hunger and disease lead to millions of deaths.

## 1347–50

The bubonic plague, or **Black Death**, kills perhaps 25 million people in Europe—a third of the population. Recurrences through the 1300s would kill another 75 million.

## 1309

**The Avignon Papacy** begins. For about 70 years, a series of French popes ruled the Catholic Church from southern France.

## 1337

The English King Edward III invades France, citing a claim to the French throne—and sparking over a century of sporadic conflict known later as the **Hundred Years' War**.

## 1378–1417

**The Western Schism** divides Roman Catholics. During this period, up to three popes would claim supreme authority at the same time.

## 1384

**John Wycliffe**, translator of the Vulgate into English, dies.

## 1414–18

**The Council of Constance** convenes and declares itself the supreme authority of the Catholic Church. Two popes would eventually be deposed, while a third resigns.

## 1415

**John Hus**, preacher and early reformer, is executed in Constance.

## 1417

Cardinals elect Martin V as pope, officially ending the Western Schism.

Introduction:

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# The Fourteenth Century

History:

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# Dark Tales

History:

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# The Bubonic Plague

History:

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# Quarantine



History:

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# Joan of Arc

Discussion:

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# Signs of the End



**Where Was  
the Church?**



# The Avignon Papacy

History:

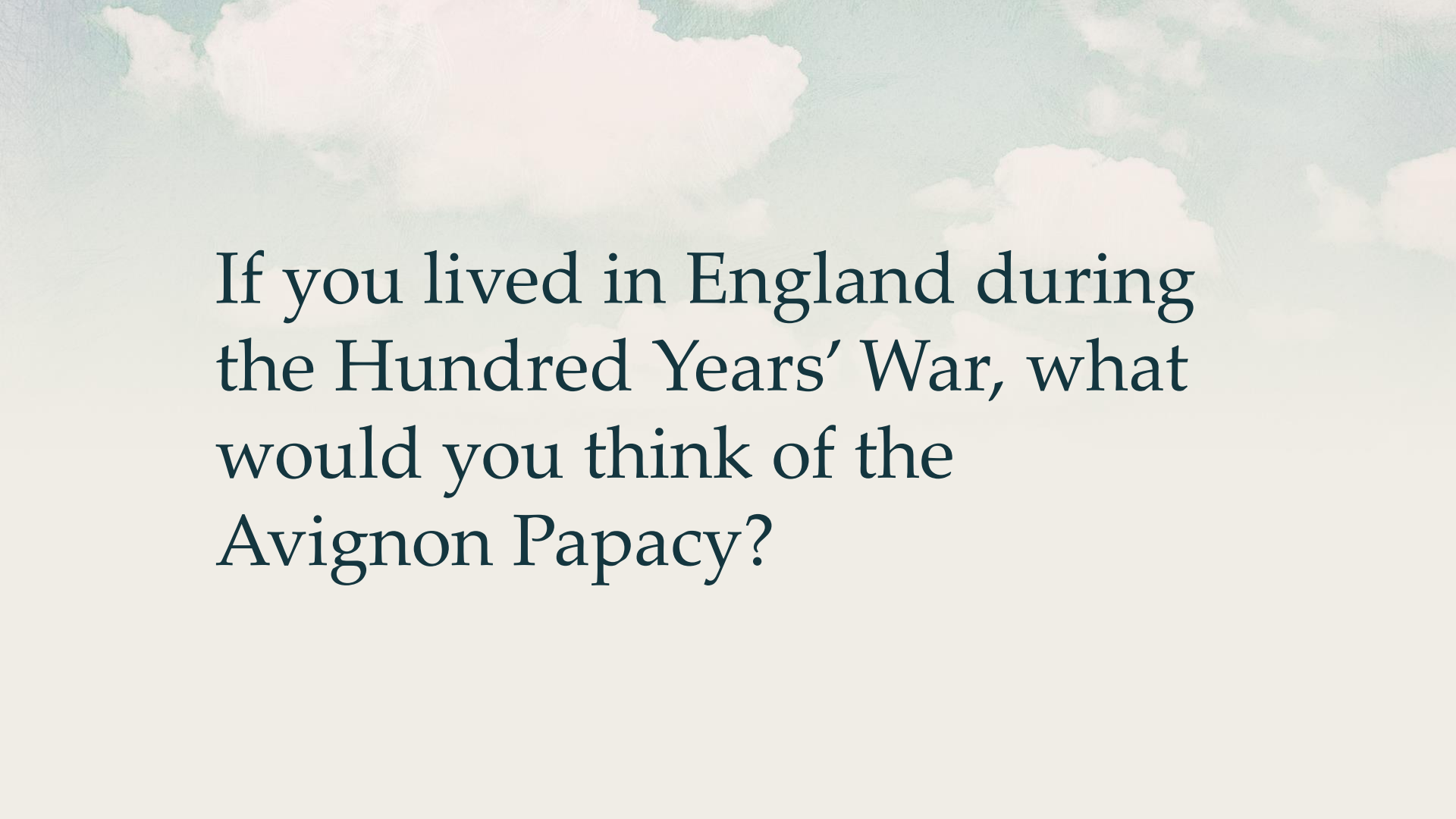
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# The Babylonian Captivity

# Petrarca's Letter

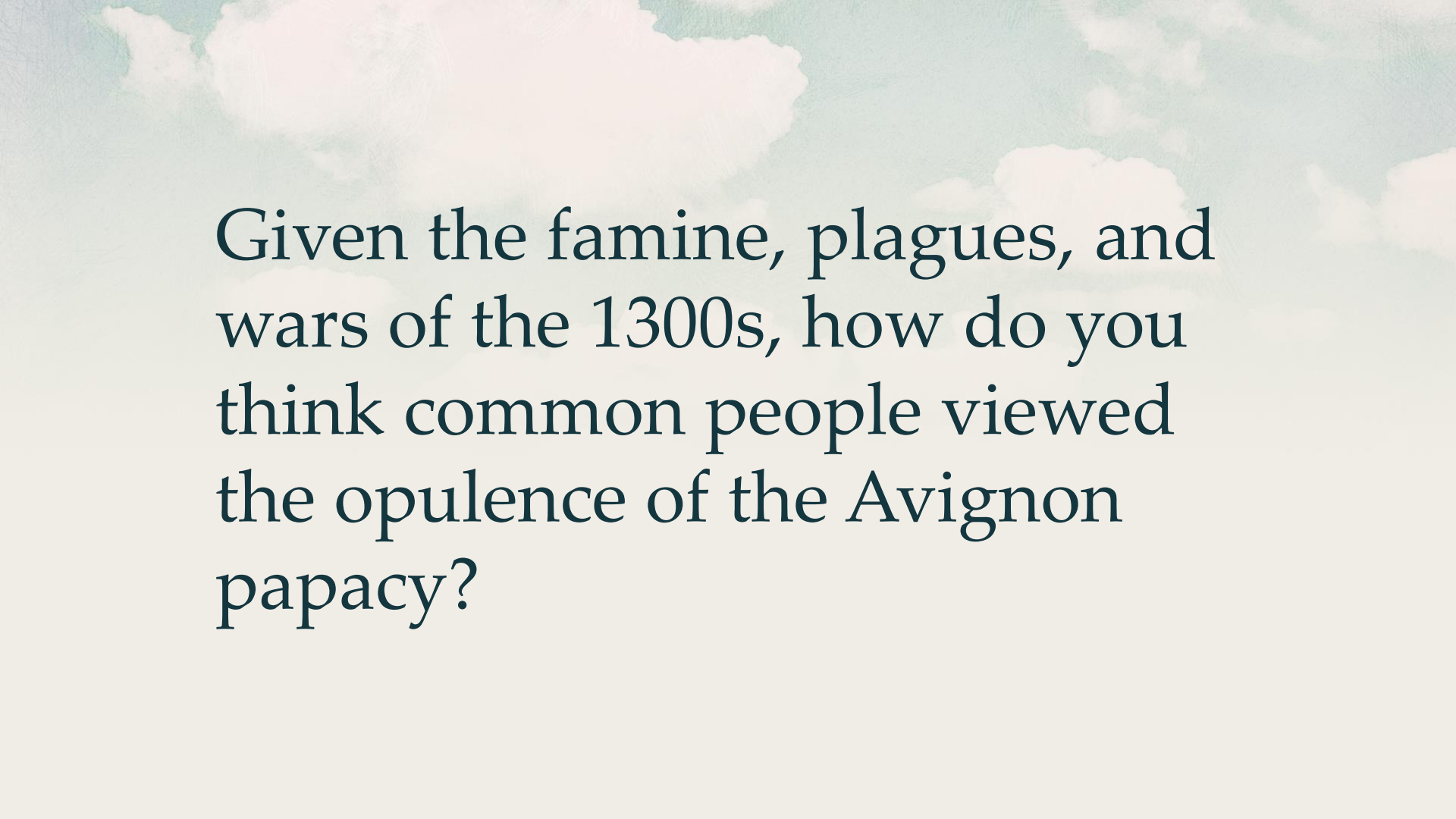
What seems to be Petrarca's biggest criticism of the curia in Avignon?

**Likely hypocrisy and love of wealth**

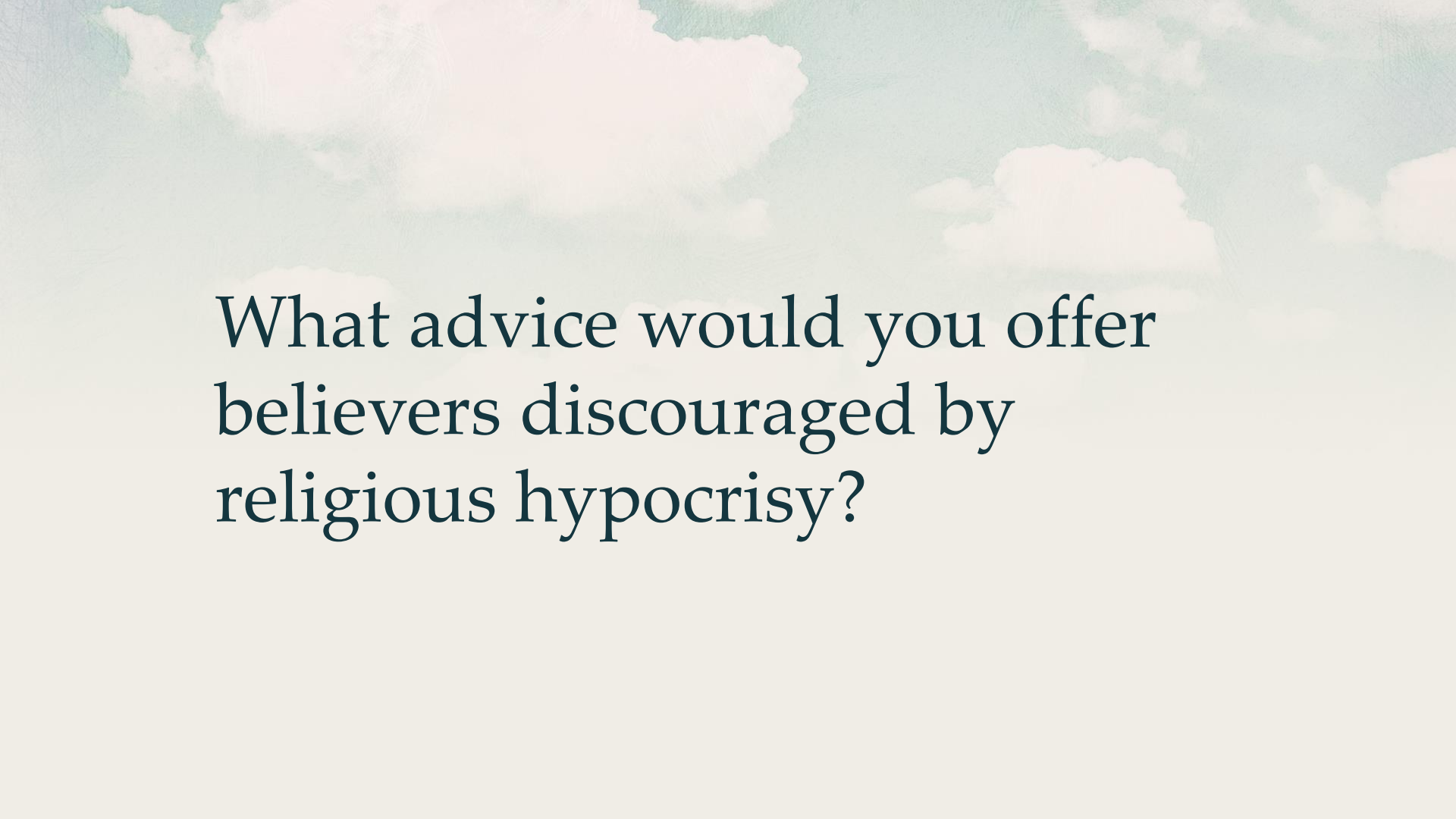


If you lived in England during the Hundred Years' War, what would you think of the Avignon Papacy?





Given the famine, plagues, and wars of the 1300s, how do you think common people viewed the opulence of the Avignon papacy?



What advice would you offer  
believers discouraged by  
religious hypocrisy?

# Matthew 23

According to verses 5–7, what did the Pharisees want from these rituals and titles?

**They wanted to be seen by others (v. 5). They wanted attention and honor.**

# Matthew 23

In obsessing over insignificant rules, what did these leaders ignore (v. 23)?

**Justice, mercy, and  
faith/faithfulness**

# Matthew 23

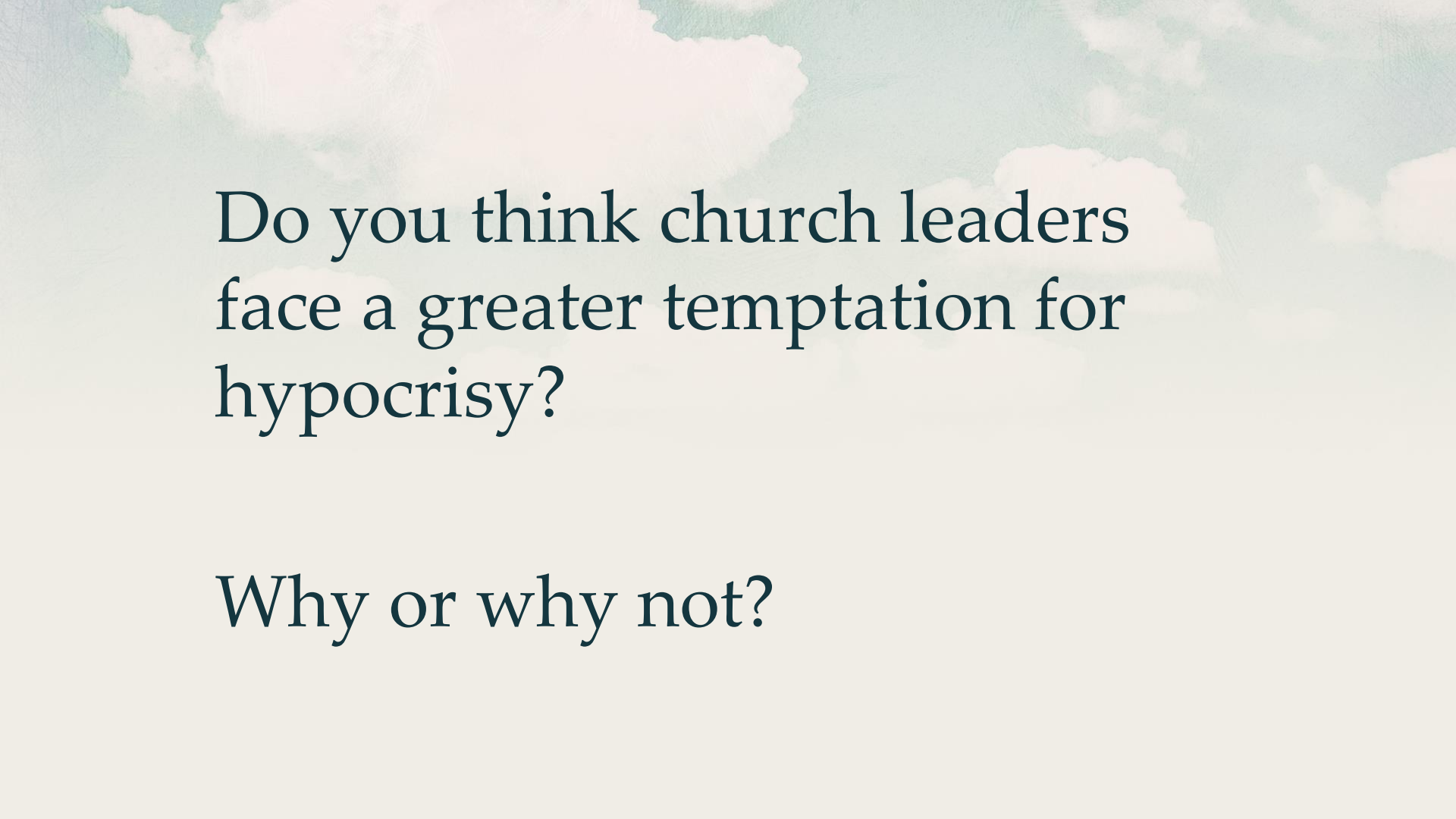
And by focusing on their appearance, what did they allow to grow inside (vv. 27–28)?

**Death, uncleanness,  
hypocrisy, and  
wickedness/lawlessness**

# Matthew 23

What then did Jesus tell His followers to do (vs. 2–3)?

**Do what the Pharisees say to do—but don't imitate their actions.**



Do you think church leaders  
face a greater temptation for  
hypocrisy?

Why or why not?





# The Western Schism

History:

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# Catherine of Siena

History:

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# Political Popes

Avignon Papacy	Roman Papacy
Clement VII (1378–94)	Urban VI (1378–89)
	Boniface IX (1389–1404)
	Innocent VII (1404–06)

Benedict XIII  
(1394–1423)

Gregory XII  
(1406–15)

**The Council of Pisa  
(1409)**

Alexander V  
(1409–10)

John XXIII  
(1410–15)

**The Council of Constance (1414–18)**

Martin V  
(1417–31)

Clement  
VIII\*  
(1423–29)

Benedict  
XIV\*  
(1st)  
(1424–29)

Benedict  
XIV\*  
(2nd)  
(c. 1430–37)

Eugene IV  
(1431–47)



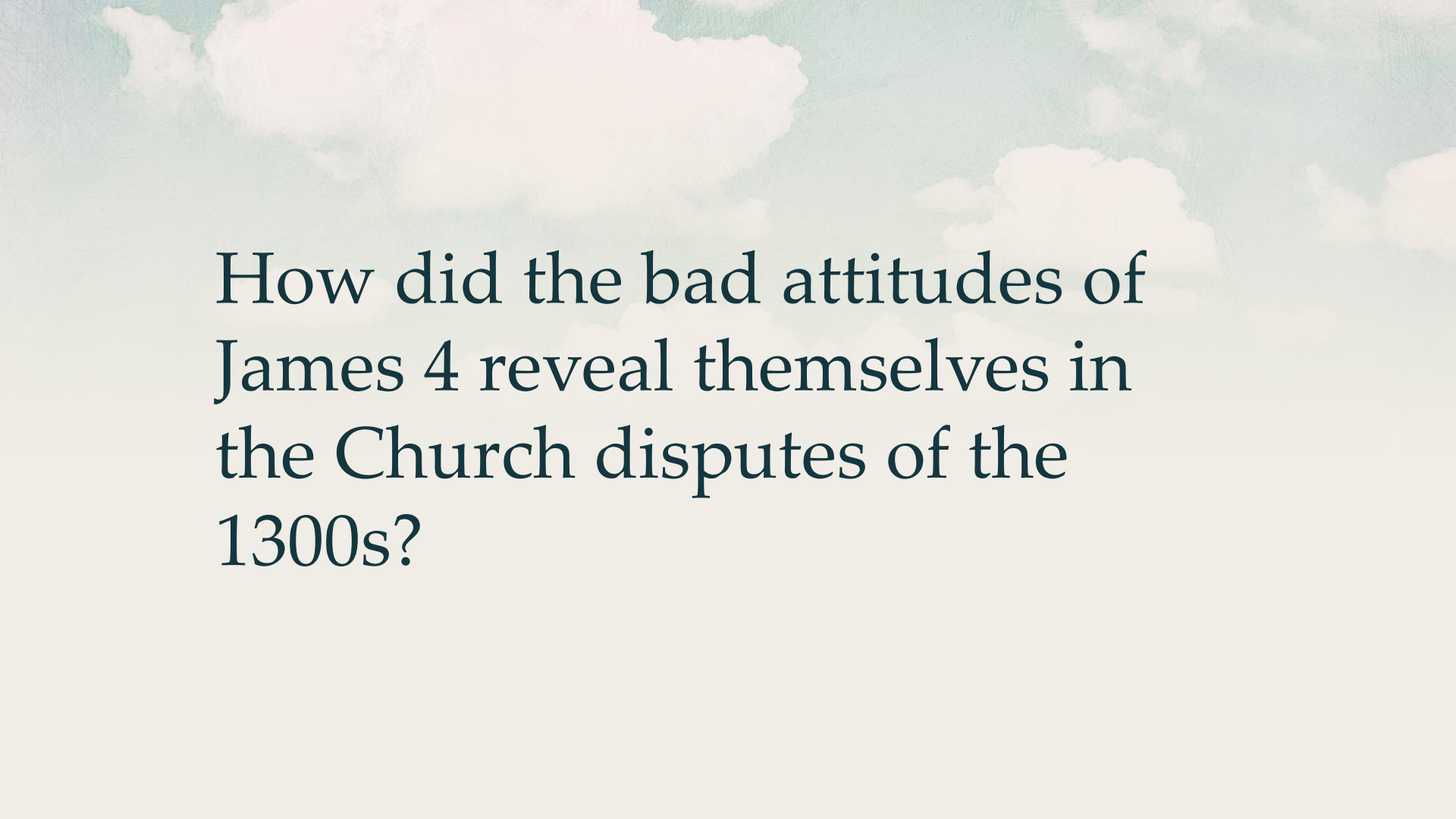
*Constance* ○

*Avignon* ○

○ *Pisa*

○ *Rome*





How did the bad attitudes of James 4 reveal themselves in the Church disputes of the 1300s?



Discussion:

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# Conflicts Today

Discussion:

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# Henry Knighton on Wycliffe



# Sparks of the Reformation

# John Wycliffe



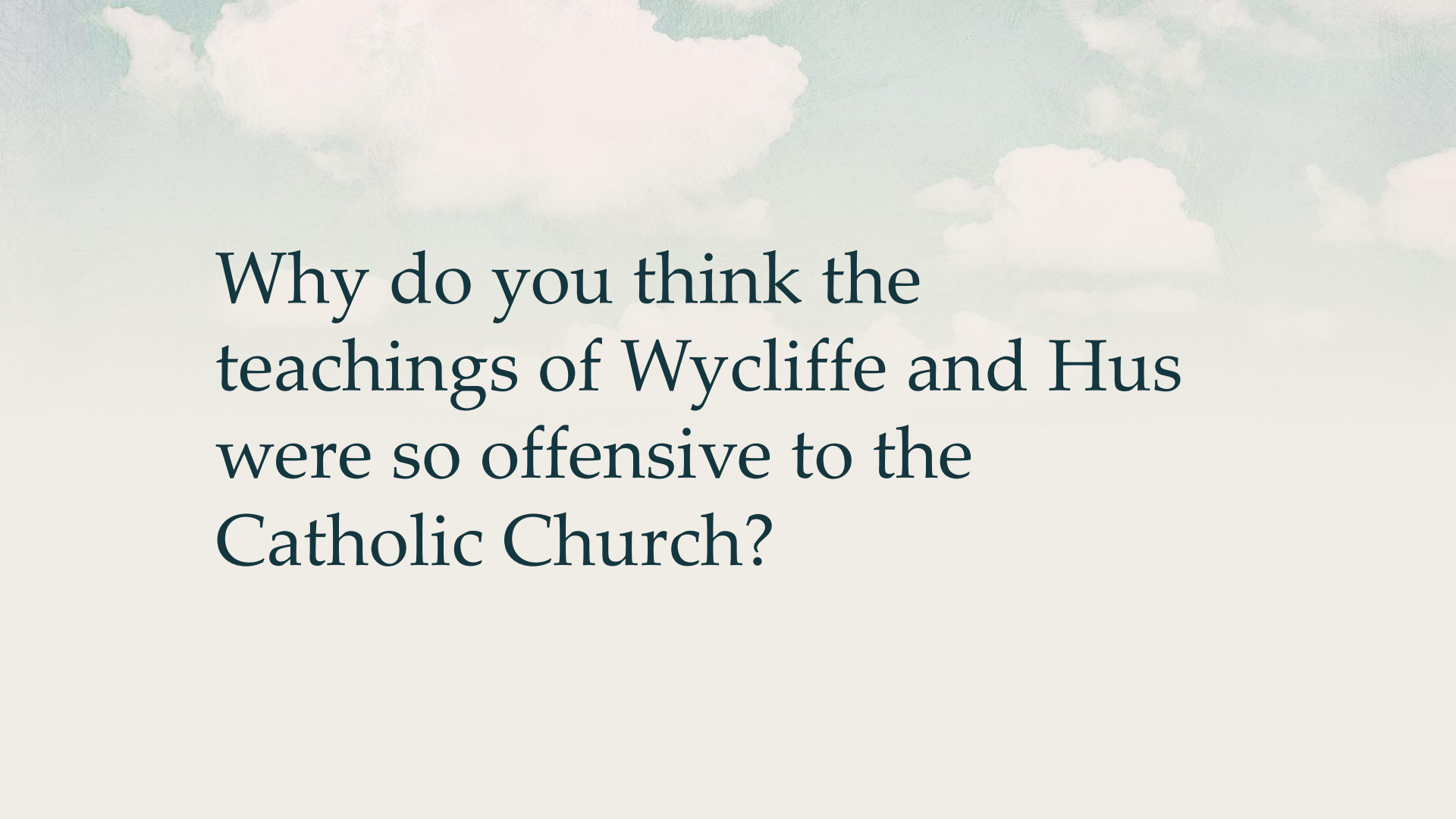
# John Hus



History:

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# Indulgences



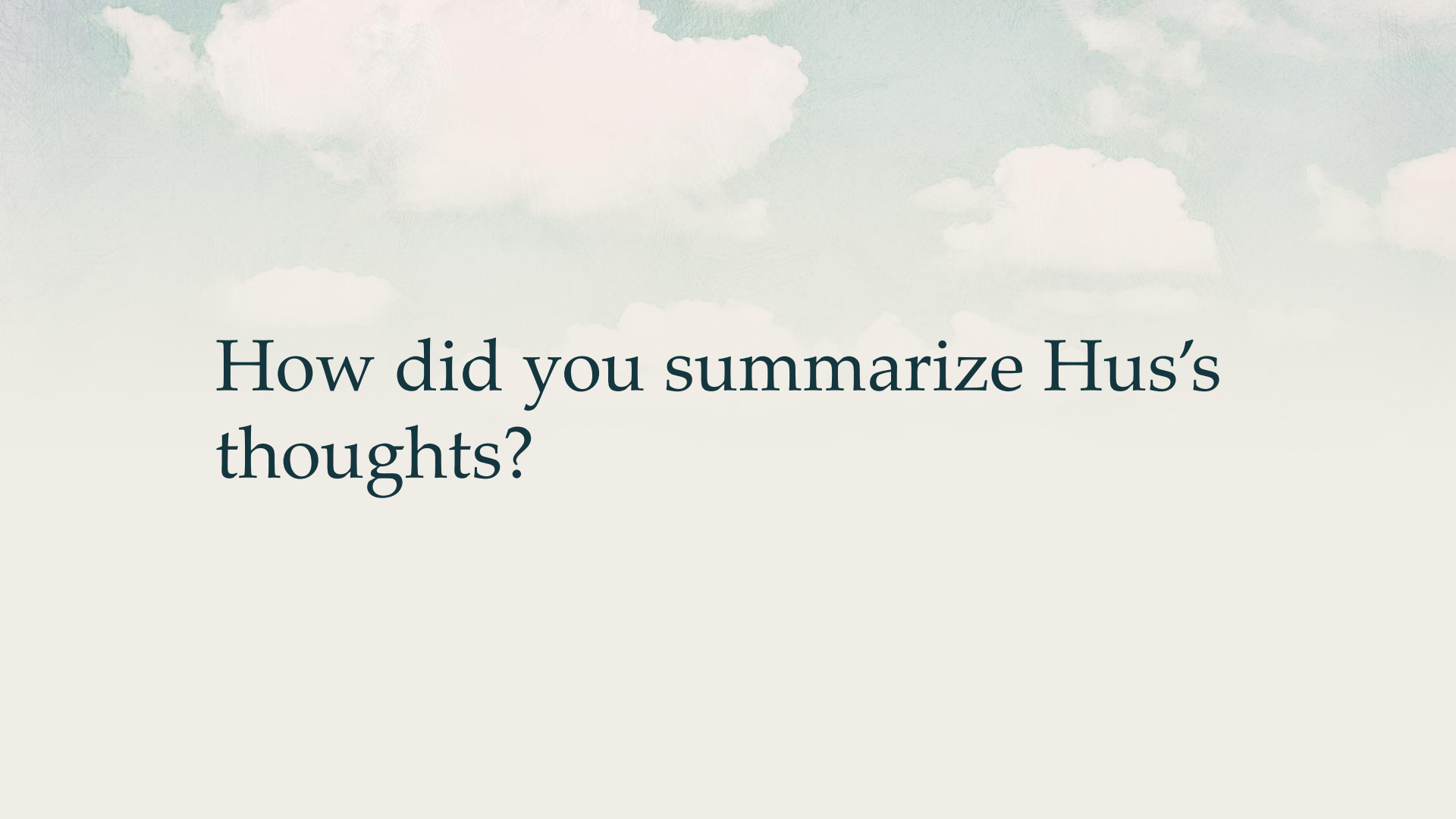
Why do you think the teachings of Wycliffe and Hus were so offensive to the Catholic Church?



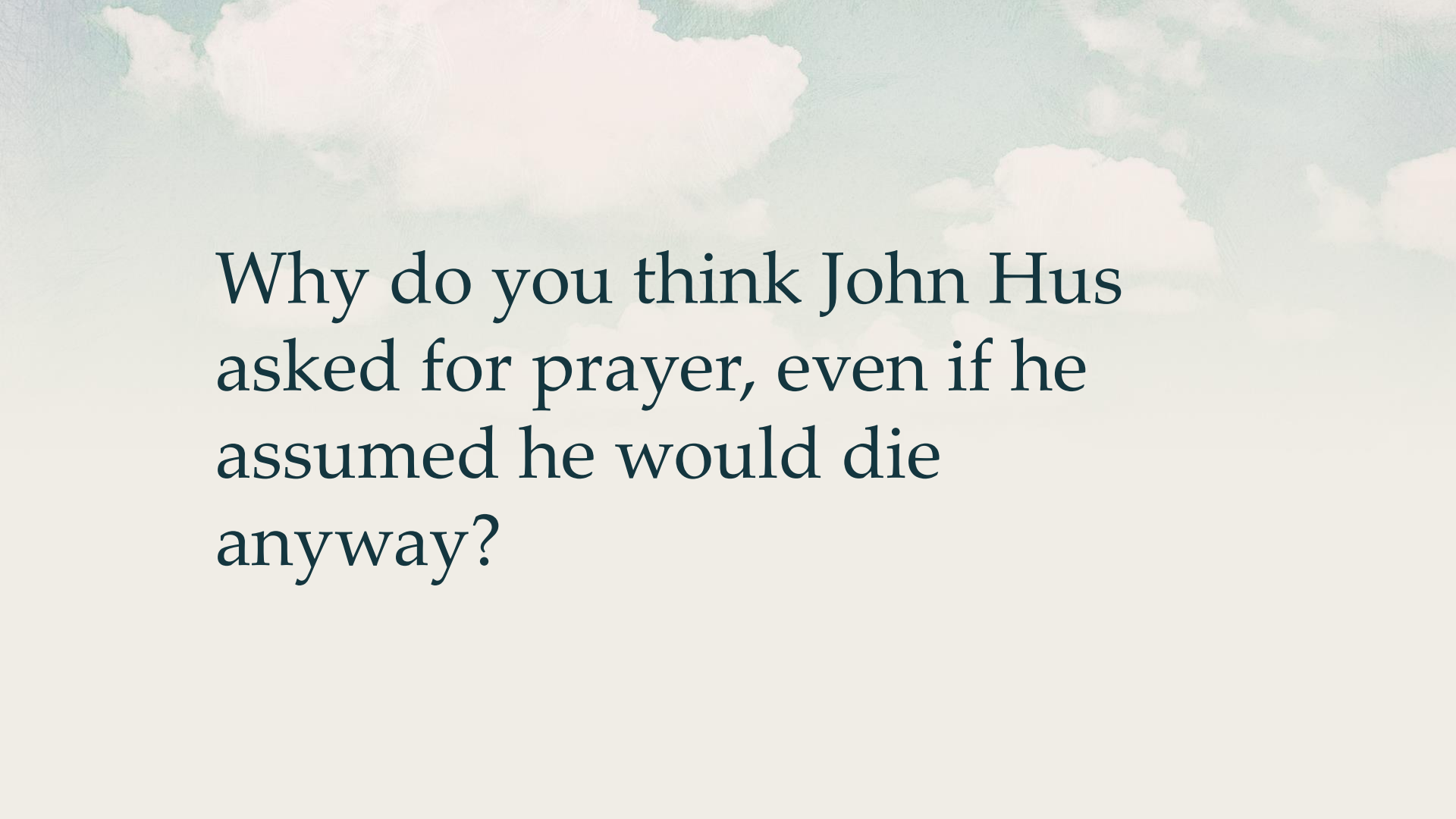
Further Reading:

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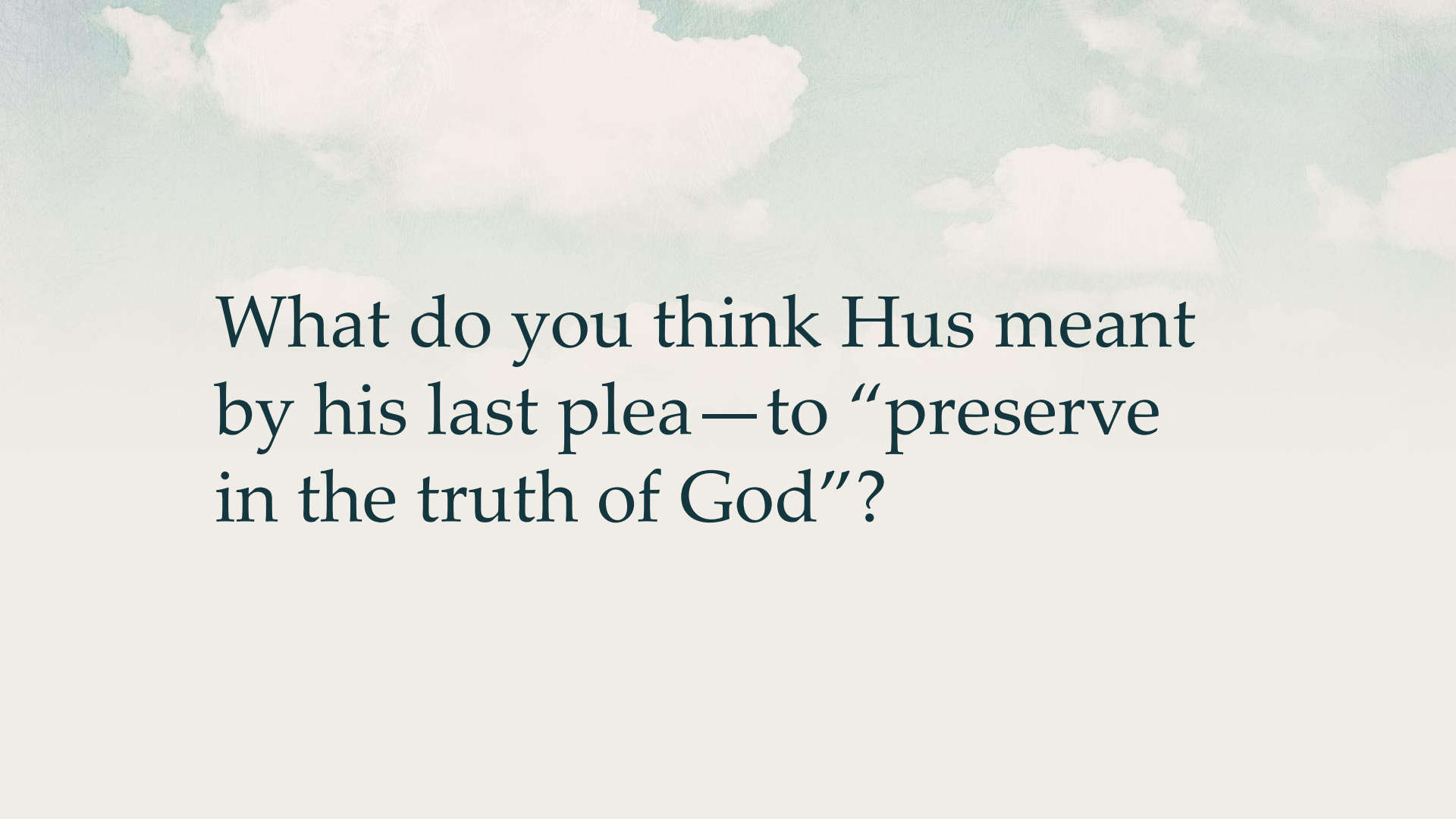
**A Final Goodbye**



How did you summarize Hus's thoughts?



Why do you think John Hus  
asked for prayer, even if he  
assumed he would die  
anyway?



What do you think Hus meant by his last plea—to “preserve in the truth of God”?



# GOD'S PREVAILING WORK



*Themes in Church History, AD 30-1517*



## CHAPTER 13

# The Light of the Word

**1309**

The Avignon Papacy begins.

**1315–22**

The Great European Famine leads to the deaths of millions.

**1337**

The Hundred Years' War begins with Edward III's invasion of France.

**1347–50**

The Black Death begins to ravage Europe.

**1378–1417**

The Western Schism divides Roman Catholics.

**1384**

John Wycliffe, translator of the Vulgate into English, dies.

**1414–18**

The Council of Constance, declaring itself the authority of the Catholic Church, replaces the three sitting popes with Martin V.

**1415**

John Hus is martyred in Constance.



**c. 1439–50**

**Johann Gutenberg** develops a movable-type mechanical press, with which he publishes the Latin Vulgate and revolutionizes European scholarship.

**1453**

The Hundred Years' War ends with the French capture of Bordeaux.

**1513**

Giovanni de' Medici, ruler of Florence, is elected **Pope Leo X**.

**1517**

To address corruption in the Catholic Church, the monk **Martin Luther** writes 95 *theses*, or points, in Latin, and then nails them to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, Saxony. Publishers translate and print the theses widely.

**1516**

**Desiderius Erasmus** publishes a Greek New Testament in parallel with the Latin Vulgate.

Introduction:

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# Martin V

History:

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# The Hussite Wars



# Following the Light

# 1 John 1

In verses 1–2, John says that he and the other apostles have seen, heard, and even touched the “Word of Life.” Who do you think he means by this?

**The apostle refers to Jesus Christ.**

Context:

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# John 1:1–5

# 1 John 1

And because they've met this Word, what do the apostles do now (vv. 3–4)?

Teach and write about what they've learned, so that others can know the Father and His Son



# Luke 11

According to verse 28, who are blessed?

**Those who hear the word of God and keep/obey it**

# Luke 11

But what do many people look for instead (v. 29)?

**A sign**

# Luke 11

What imagery does Jesus then use to describe the truth of God's Word (v. 33)?

**A lamp/light**

# Luke 11

What happens if we do not focus on this light (vv. 34–35)?

**We will be filled with darkness.**

Discussion:

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# Obstacles to Study



# Darkness Before Dawn

History:

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# Julius II



History:

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# *Julius Excluded from Heaven*

Discussion:

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# Religious Corruption



# The Word Rises

Discussion

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# Outsourcing Our Beliefs

# Promise of the Word

Matthew 5:17–18

Nothing in the Law will pass away — everything will be accomplished.

# **Promise of the Word**

1 Peter 1:22–25 (cf. Isaiah 40:6–8)

**The Word of the Lord  
remains/abides forever.**

Context:

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# Christ and the Law



Discussion:

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# Looking for His Hand



# Heralds of the Light



*Oxford,*  
**England**

○  
*Rotterdam,*  
**Netherlands**

*Wittenburg,*  
○ **Saxony**

○ *Prague,*  
**Bohemia**

*Zurich,* ○  
**Swiss Confederacy**

○ *Rome,*  
**Papal States**

History:

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# Erasmus's Sources

History:

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# Trent on the Vulgate

History:

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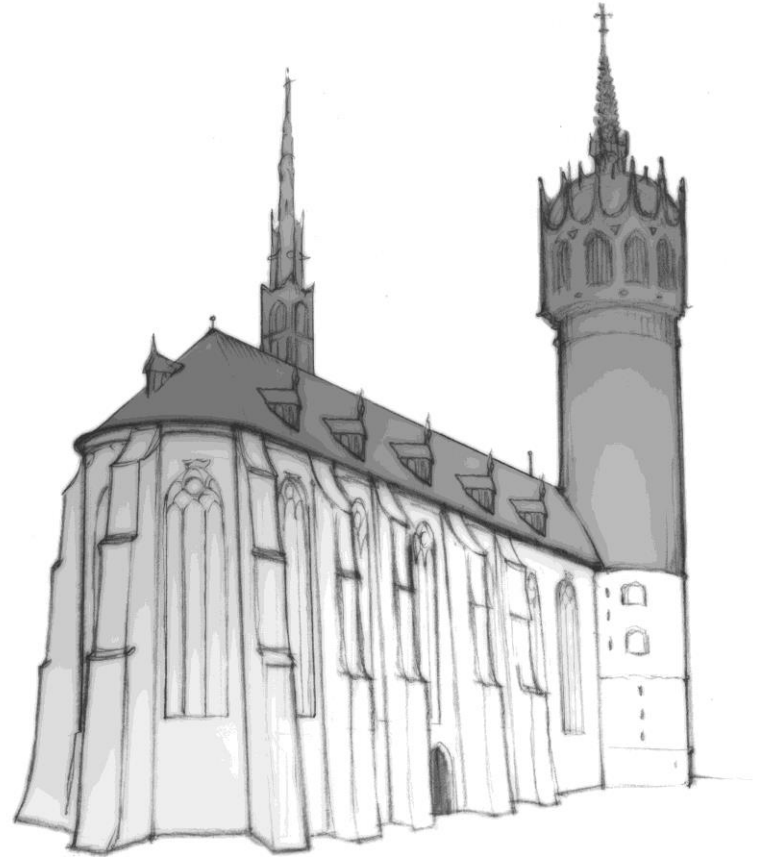
# Romans 1:17



History:

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# Luther's Arguments





# Hebrews 4

In verse 12, what imagery does the writer use to picture the Word of God?

**It's living, active—sharper than a double-edged sword.**

# Hebrews 4

What can the Word do (v. 12)?

**Reveal the divisions of soul  
and spirit; interact with our  
thoughts and intentions**

# Hebrews 4

Can anyone hide from this power  
(v. 13)?

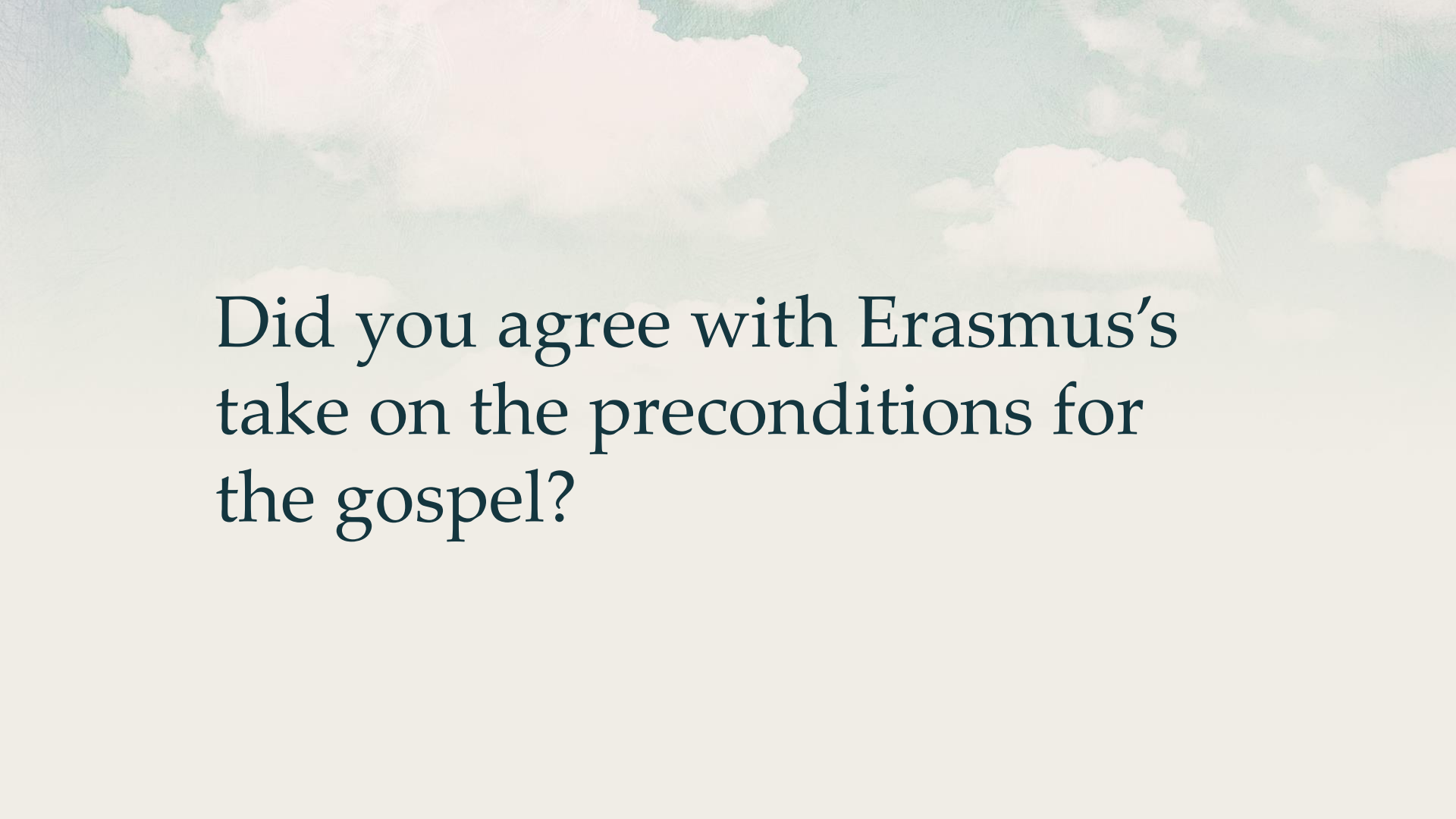
**No.**

Further Reading:

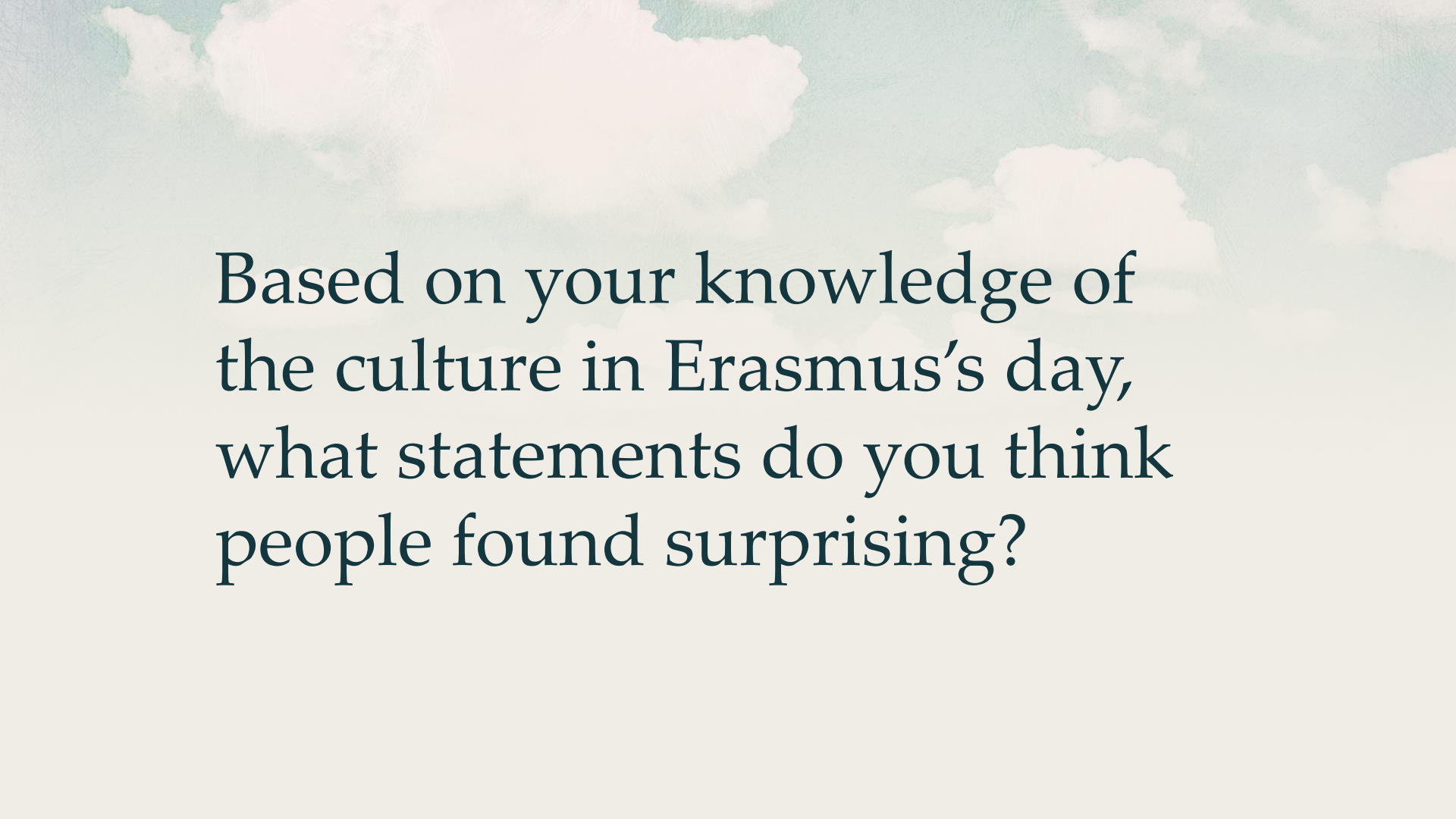
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# Christ in the Word

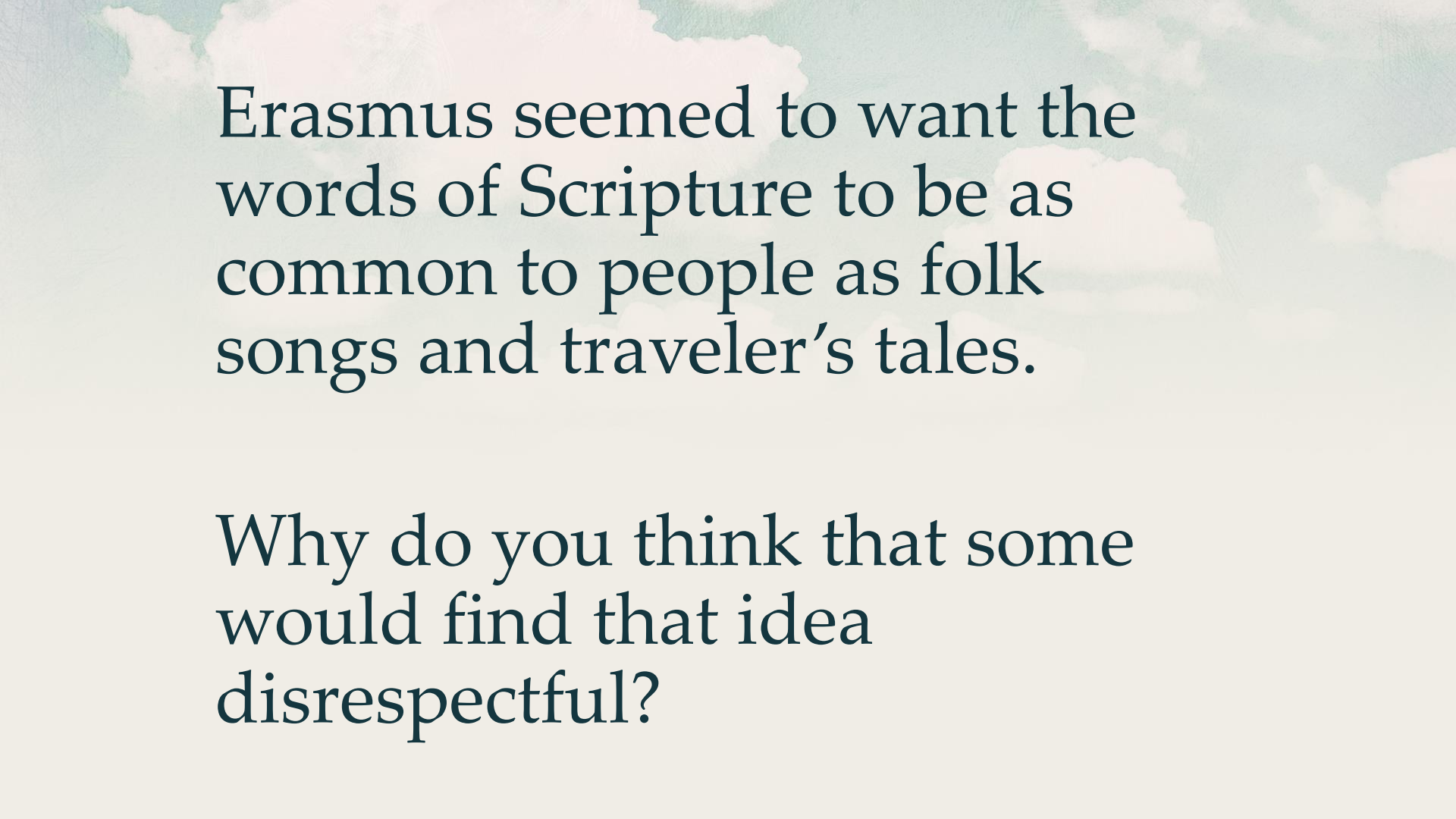




Did you agree with Erasmus's  
take on the preconditions for  
the gospel?



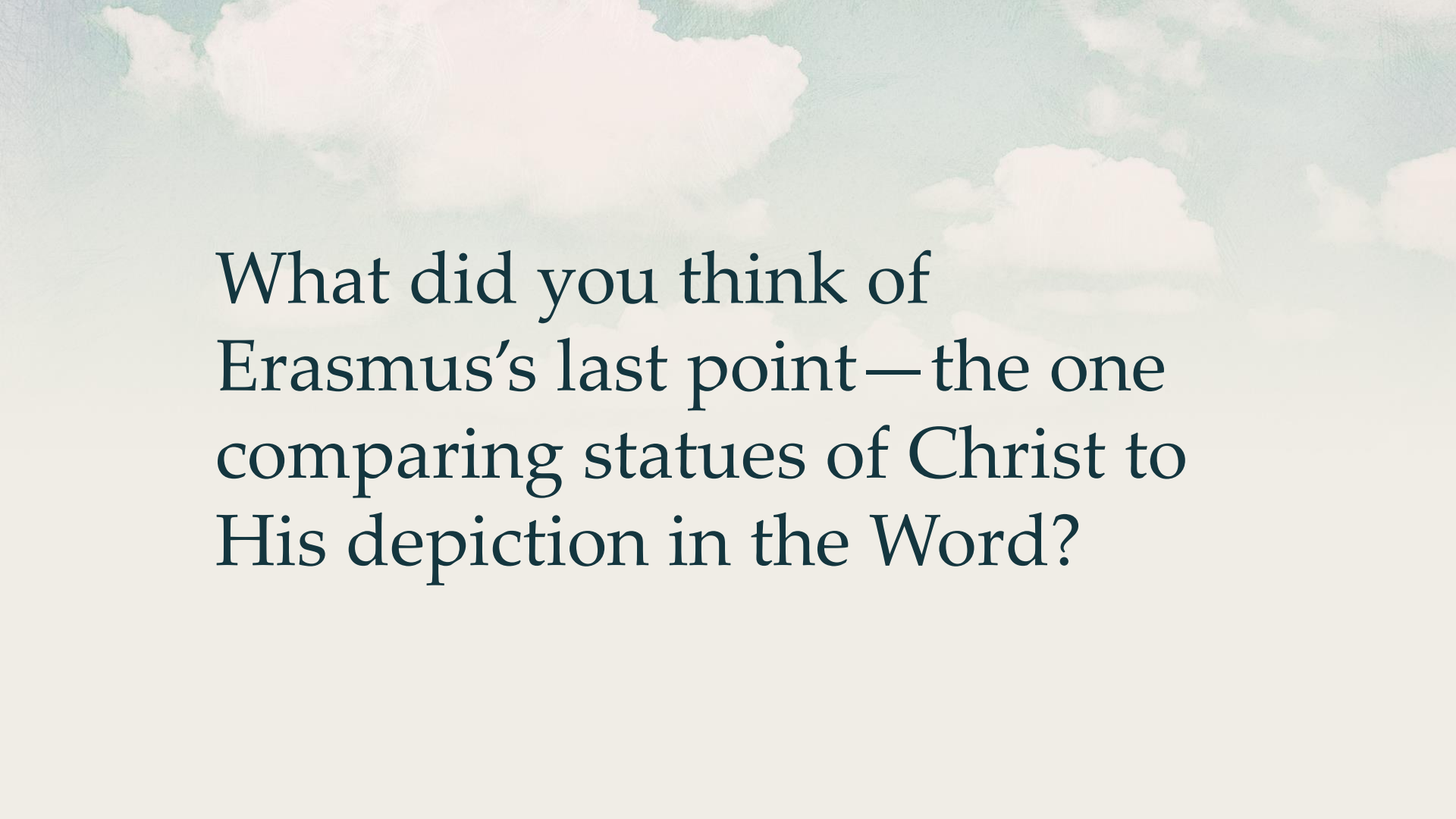
Based on your knowledge of the culture in Erasmus's day, what statements do you think people found surprising?



Erasmus seemed to want the words of Scripture to be as common to people as folk songs and traveler's tales.

Why do you think that some would find that idea disrespectful?





What did you think of  
Erasmus's last point—the one  
comparing statues of Christ to  
His depiction in the Word?

Final Note:

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**Psalm 78:1-4**