

TL;DR

Best & **WORST**

of the

Bible



Terry BUG Lilly

TL;DR

THE
Best & **WORST**
OF THE
Bible

TERRY BUG LILLY



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**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO
MY DEAR FRIEND AND COLLABORATOR
MARY FREEMAN,
AN ABSOLUTE GODDESS AMONG MORTALS.**

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Introduction

He had been fasting in the wilderness for forty days. No doubt, he was at his most vulnerable, physically and emotionally, when the Adversary approached with his temptations.

The person we are talking about is, of course, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

After not eating for 40 days, he must have been very hungry, so Satan first tempted him by telling him to turn a rock into a loaf of bread.

Jesus responded by quoting Deuteronomy 8:2-3, saying, "MAN DOESN'T LIVE BY BREAD ALONE."

Then came a more devious trap.

After taking Jesus along to the top of the temple he challenged him to prove his station as the Son of God. Here the Devil quoted scripture himself (Psalm 91:11-12), urging Jesus to jump, saying, "HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU, TO GUARD YOU IN ALL YOUR WAYS. THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP IN THEIR HANDS, THAT YOU DO NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE."

Again, Jesus countered him with another scripture.

But, seeing that Satan was able to use the Bible as a lure to bait his snare is disturbing and important. This moment reveals a critical danger: *scripture can be weaponized for evil.*

The problem was that Satan had plucked out an isolated verse and misapplied it, disregarding its context and original intent.

Even well meaning individuals can be guilty of this dangerous potential for harm whenever handling scripture.



To ensure an accurate understanding of the Bible it should always be considered with respect for:

Historical Context -

What were the circumstances in which it was being written? What was the setting? Who is speaking? Who was its intended audience? Why was it being said?

Original Language -

What is the meaning of the words as written at the time when they were recorded? How would contemporary people have understood what was being said at that time?

Canonical Context -

How does it fit in with the rest of the Bible? Do we understand how it fits in with the overall theme and message of the Bible.

**UNDERSTANDING A SCRIPTURE'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT,
ORIGINAL INTENDED MEANING AND RELATIONSHIP TO
THE BIBLE AS A WHOLE CAN SAFEGUARD AGAINST
MISINTERPRETATIONS.**

Otherwise, a person could find themselves mid-air in a free-fall, with no angels waiting to catch them on the ground.

For the third temptation, Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and told him that he would give them all to him for one act of worship.

Jesus was famously a great guy. I have always found him to be an endearing figure. I imagine that he might have thought for a moment about all the good he could do for mankind if he were given Earth's kingdoms at that time. All the suffering and pain he could have helped people avoid. It might have been a powerful temptation, but spoiler alert, he didn't fall for the trap. (The parallel accounts of the Temptation of Christ can be found at Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:13, Luke 4:1-13)

Discussing religion can be a delicate matter. It's a very personal subject for most people, at the heart of their identity, and their beliefs are not up for debate. For other people, the subject is considered a waste of time. They have no interest in it and would rather talk about nearly anything else.

But, I promise you, this look into what I consider to be the best and worst of the Bible is very much for all people, and I invite you to stay with me and hear me out.



**"AND WHEN THE DEVIL HAD ENDED EVERY
TEMPTATION, HE DEPARTED FROM HIM UNTIL
ANOTHER OPPORTUNE TIME." - LUKE 4:13**

Unfortunately, I anticipate that some will be quick to dismiss me in this endeavor, and accuse me of being like the Devil, quoting scripture for my own selfish purposes.

In fact, I have had this very accusation leveled at me before, when someone couldn't defend their position on a Biblical topic and responded instead with that ad hominem attack.

I wanted to address that objection preemptively by acknowledging what would be the incorrect way to quote scripture, without honoring its contextual setting, linguistic intent, and relationship to the Bible as a whole. With this in mind, I will be drawing attention to these considerations as we proceed.

Nevertheless, I still ask that if anyone finds that I have misapplied or misunderstood any scripture within this presentation, I welcome any correction offered in a spirit of mildness. As Galatians 6:1 (ISV) says, "IF A PERSON IS CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING WRONG, THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL SHOULD RESTORE THAT PERSON GENTLY."

I don't have any claim to divine revelation nor any gift of special esoteric knowledge. What I do have, though, is nearly 40 years of in-depth, sincere, consistent study of the scriptures, and what I find to be compelling, I have distilled into this presentation that you are now entertaining.

My thoughts and feelings about the Bible are tempered by respect for integrity and an honest desire for truth.



the Best of the Bible

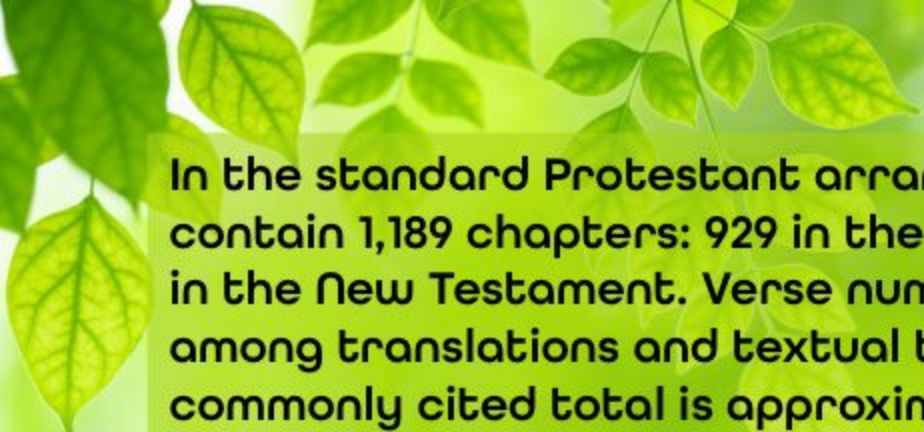


It is widely recognized as the best-selling publication of all time.

The standard Protestant Bible contains 66 books (73 in Catholic traditions). Traditionally described as the work of around 40 writers over roughly 1,500 years, the Bible's actual history of authorship, editing, and transmission is considerably more complex.

In the standard Protestant arrangement, the Old Testament contains 39 books. These books that Christians typically call the Old Testament were written primarily in Hebrew, with portions in Aramaic.

The remaining 27 books in the standard Protestant Bible, written primarily in Koine Greek, make up the New Testament.



In the standard Protestant arrangement, those books contain 1,189 chapters: 929 in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament. Verse numbering varies somewhat among translations and textual traditions, but a commonly cited total is approximately 31,102 verses.

A printed Bible typically contains between 1,200 and 1,500 pages. But if you happen to pick up a Bible, you might notice that its pages are usually printed on much thinner paper than you find in most other books. This feature, intended to keep the Bible compact and portable, has often found utility as a substitute for rolling papers by smokers of tobacco or, ironically, "the Devil's Lettuce," cannabis.

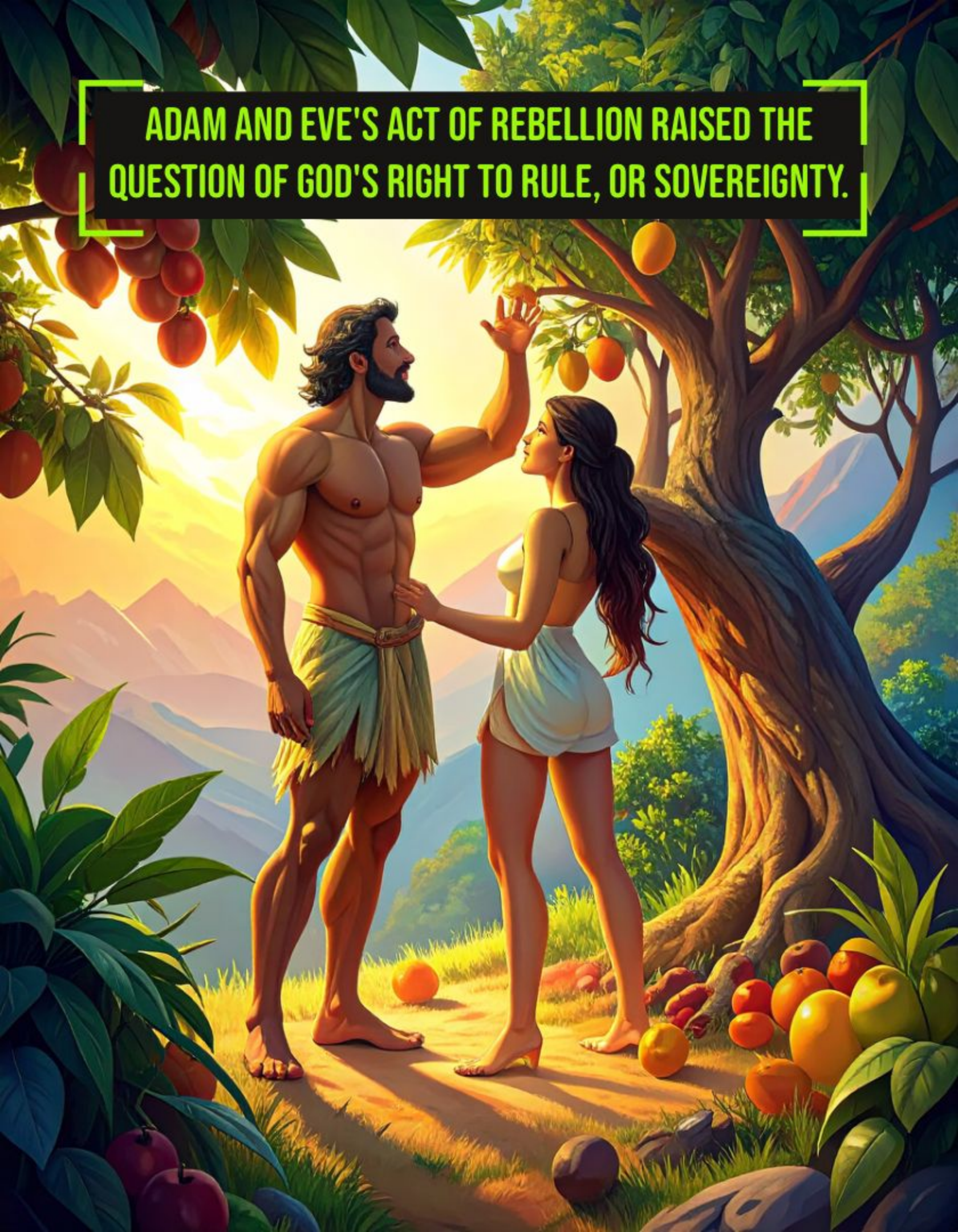
While word counts vary by translation, edition, and counting method, a commonly cited count for the King James Bible is about 783,000 words.

Are you exhausted yet? Estimates vary by translation and reading pace, but reading the entire Bible straight through is commonly estimated at roughly 65 to 80 hours, about two full-time workweeks on the clock.

It's understandable if your reaction to the Bible is TL;DR, the web slang for "Too Long, Didn't Read." But don't worry, I have read it and studied it in depth for decades.

My aim here is to give readers unfamiliar with the Bible a concise working knowledge of its story, structure, and major ideas, while inviting those who already know and revere it to spend some time with a familiar book, considering its contents alongside me.

**ADAM AND EVE'S ACT OF REBELLION RAISED THE
QUESTION OF GOD'S RIGHT TO RULE, OR SOVEREIGNTY.**



Early in Genesis, the Bible introduces Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Their original sin of eating forbidden fruit from a specific tree is the inciting incident that sets everything else in motion, providing a thread of plot that is woven between the books of Law and history, genealogies, stories, songs, poems, letters, and other written works that follow.

Adam and Eve's act of rebellion can be understood as a challenge to God's authority, or his right to rule, setting the stage for the ultimate showdown between good and evil: the conflict between willful self-governance and submissive obedience to God.

That impending war looms over the entire Bible like an approaching storm cloud, ultimately climaxing in the Bible's final book, Revelation, with fever dream visions of its final battle.

Narrative events, often featuring miraculous supernatural displays of power and highlighting scores of notable men and women who serve as both inspirational role models and cautionary tales, flesh out the volatile relationship between God and the ancient nation of Israel.



The answer to the problem introduced in Eden enters the picture as the man Jesus with the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books cover his birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection.

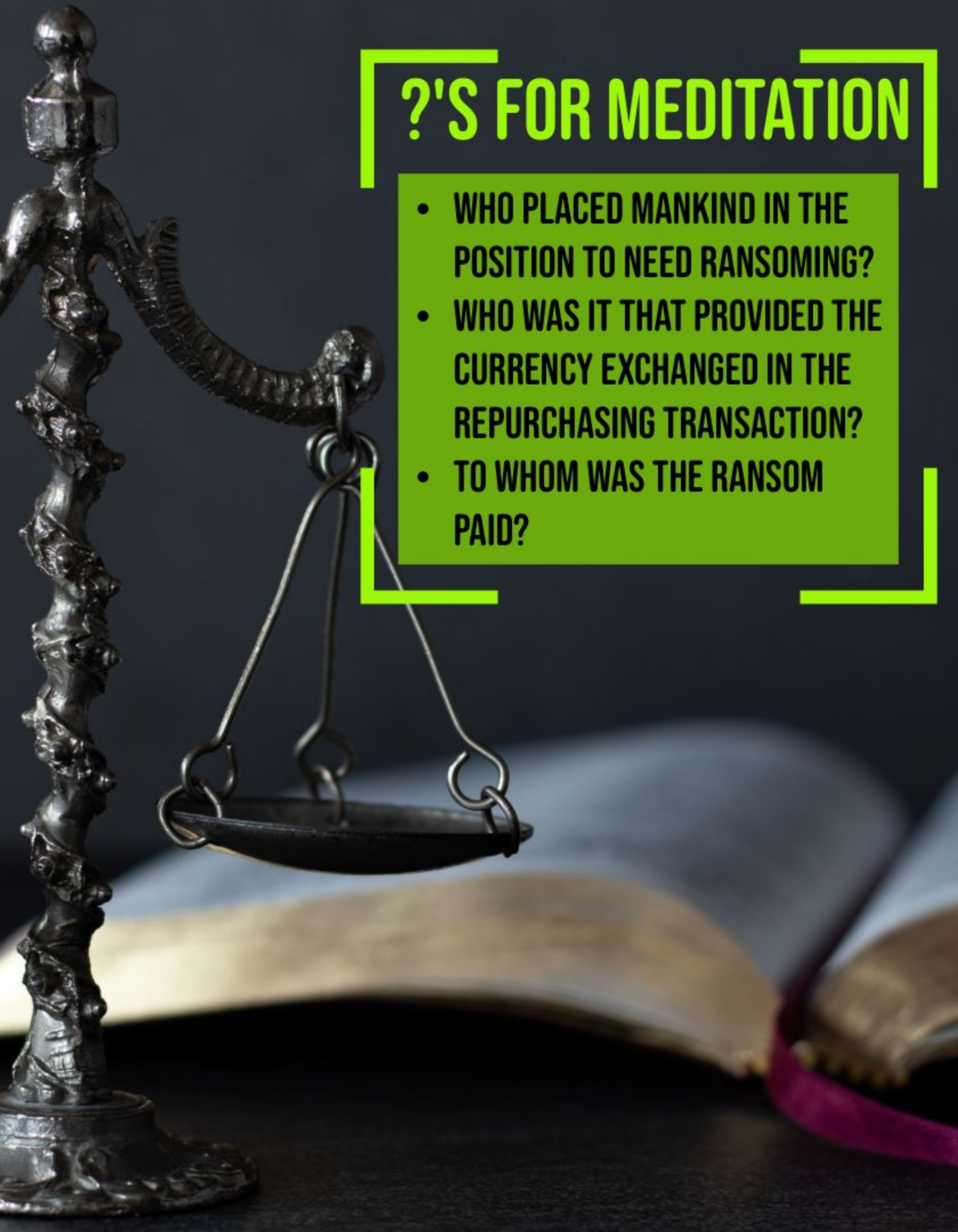
Jesus' unblemished human life serves as a ransom in the sense that it repurchased, or bought back, mankind from the slave-like subjugation to sin and death into which it had been sold by the first human pair. (See Romans 5:12; 6:23; 1 Timothy 2:6; Matthew 20:28.)

His entire earthly existence, being free from the stain of sin or disobedience, cosmically balanced the scales of justice that were tipped by Adam and Eve willfully squandering their purity and perfection to disobey God's instruction and eat the Forbidden Fruit from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Their debt was otherwise passed along to their offspring, subjecting all humankind to frustration and a futile existence (Romans 8:19-20). Romans 5:12 (NASB) explains how that condition entered the human experience: "THEREFORE, JUST AS THROUGH ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH THROUGH SIN, AND SO DEATH SPREAD TO ALL MANKIND, BECAUSE ALL SINNED."

Were it not for the hope provided through Jesus, that would be the end of the story. Instead, the relationship between Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience provides the main theme of the Bible, stated concisely in the Apostle Paul's epistle, or letter, to the Romans.

He wrote at Romans 5:19 (NLT): "ADAM DID NOT OBEY GOD, AND MANY PEOPLE BECAME SINNERS THROUGH HIM. CHRIST OBEYED GOD AND MAKES MANY PEOPLE RIGHT WITH HIMSELF."



? 'S FOR MEDITATION

- **WHO PLACED MANKIND IN THE POSITION TO NEED RANSOMING?**
- **WHO WAS IT THAT PROVIDED THE CURRENCY EXCHANGED IN THE REPURCHASING TRANSACTION?**
- **TO WHOM WAS THE RANSOM PAID?**

Whether you view the Bible as God's Holy Word or only a notable piece of literature, as I mentioned earlier, I believe Jesus is an outstanding figure. You almost can't help but be drawn to him and the masterful way he taught.

His message was simple; in fact, he said that the law and the prophets hung from just two commandments.

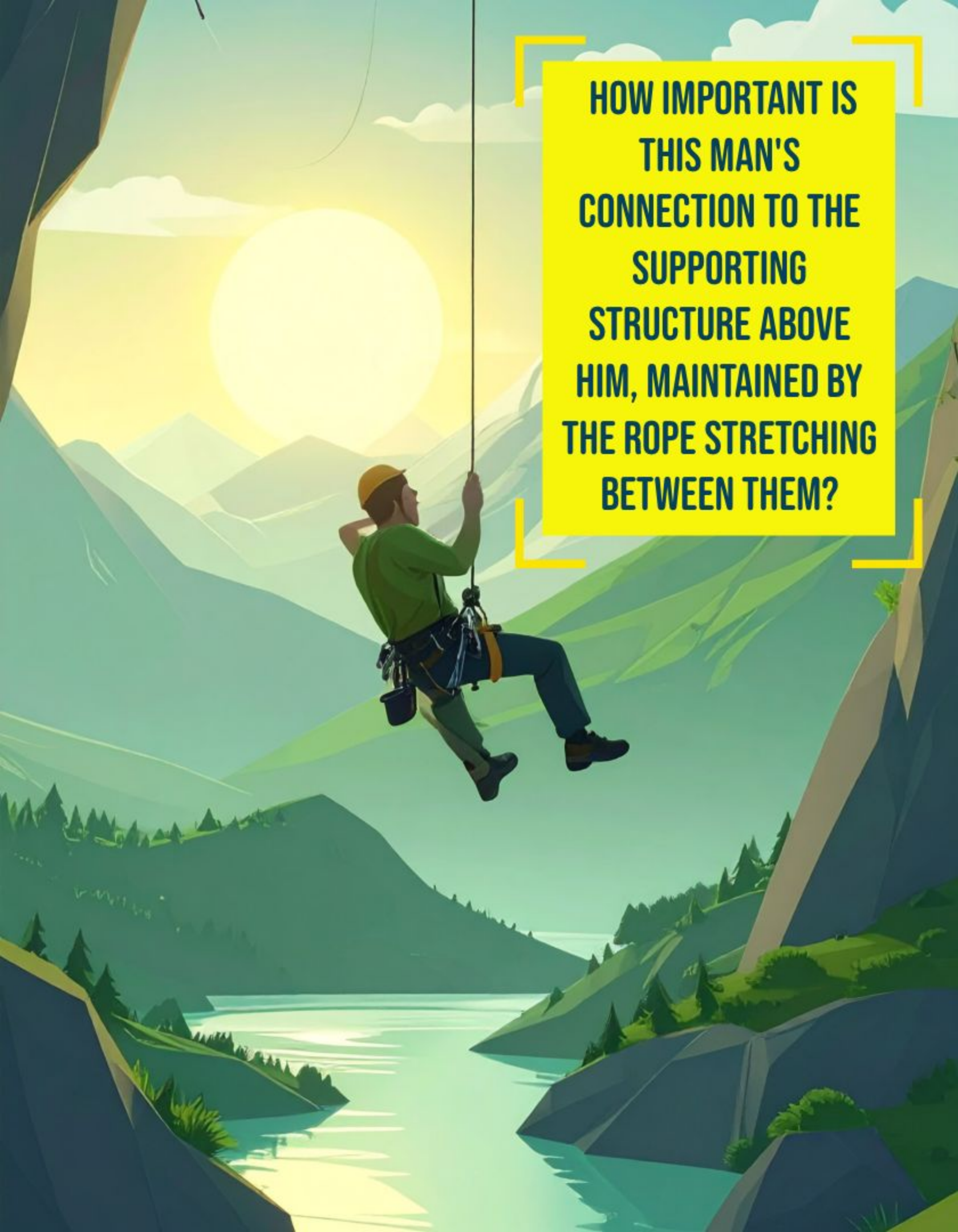
MATTHEW 22:37-40 [NIV] JESUS REPLIED: "LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE IT: "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS HANG ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS.

When one thing is described as "hanging on" another, it calls to mind a hierarchical relationship that we can visualize.

Picture a man, rappelling off a high cliff.

He is trusting his tether to the rock above him with his life.

If that man just rushed past the step of securing his rope or didn't give proper attention to the weight-bearing anchor above him, he would fall to his death.

An illustration of a man in a green shirt, blue pants, and a yellow hard hat rappelling down a rope. He is wearing a harness and has a tool bag attached. The background features a large, bright sun, distant mountains, and a body of water. The scene is framed by a yellow border.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS
THIS MAN'S
CONNECTION TO THE
SUPPORTING
STRUCTURE ABOVE
HIM, MAINTAINED BY
THE ROPE STRETCHING
BETWEEN THEM?**

The same can be true of ideas as well. Without the master or suspending subject, the subordinate items are forfeit. They fall away, or are out of the picture, so to speak.

To the contemporary Jews listening to Jesus as he spoke, “the law” would have been understood as what we think of today as the first five books of the Bible, and “the prophets” would have been understood to include other writings, such as those from Ezekiel, Jeremiah, or Isaiah. These holy writings were a highly revered foundational library of history, supernatural wisdom, and the basis for their entire identity and way of life.

Jesus said that the Law and the Prophets were subordinate to, or dependent upon, a hinge point, a keystone, a primary principle strong enough to bear the weight of all that heavy material, and it is this: that you love your God and you love your neighbor.

For Jesus’ audience, “the Law and the Prophets” referred broadly to their sacred scriptures and the religious authority derived from them. Applied today, the principle is just as demanding: any religious rule, doctrine, practice, or prohibition we claim from scripture remains subordinate to the two commandments on which Jesus said all the Law and the Prophets hang.

Love God and Love your neighbor.

A man who was an expert in the law then asked a fair question, “Who really is my neighbor?”

Jesus answered with a story, a parable, as recorded at Luke 10:30-35 (NIV):

A MAN WAS GOING DOWN FROM JERUSALEM TO JERICHO, WHEN HE WAS ATTACKED BY ROBBERS. THEY STRIPPED HIM OF HIS CLOTHES, BEAT HIM AND WENT AWAY LEAVING HIM HALF DEAD.



A PRIEST HAPPENED TO BE GOING DOWN THE SAME ROAD, AND WHEN HE SAW THE MAN HE PASSED BY ON THE OTHER SIDE.



SO TOO, A LEVITE WHEN HE CAME TO THE PLACE AND SAW HIM, PASSED BY ON THE OTHER SIDE.



BUT, A SAMARITAN, AS HE TRAVELED, CAME WHERE THE MAN WAS; AND WHEN HE SAW HIM, HE TOOK PITY ON HIM.

HE WENT TO HIM AND BANDAGED HIS WOUNDS, POURING ON OIL AND WINE. THEN HE PUT THE MAN ON HIS OWN DONKEY, BROUGHT HIM TO AN INN AND TOOK CARE OF HIM. THE NEXT DAY HE TOOK OUT TWO DENARII [silver coins, each worth a laborer's day's wage] AND GAVE THEM TO THE INNKEEPER. 'LOOK AFTER HIM,' HE SAID, 'AND WHEN I RETURN, I WILL REIMBURSE YOU FOR ANY EXTRA EXPENSE YOU MAY HAVE.'



When Jesus spoke about a priest and a Levite, these would have been people whom his audience would have naturally trusted and respected.

Today, we may read this account retrospectively, knowing that elsewhere Jesus sharply criticized religious leaders; for example, experts in the law for burdening the people (Luke 11:46), and Pharisees, whom he called "OFFSPRING OF VIPERS" at Matthew 12:34.

Where we might naturally think of those first-century priests and Levites as haughty and not particularly kind or giving, his audience would have primarily recognized them as holding positions of responsibility and authority within their faith and community.

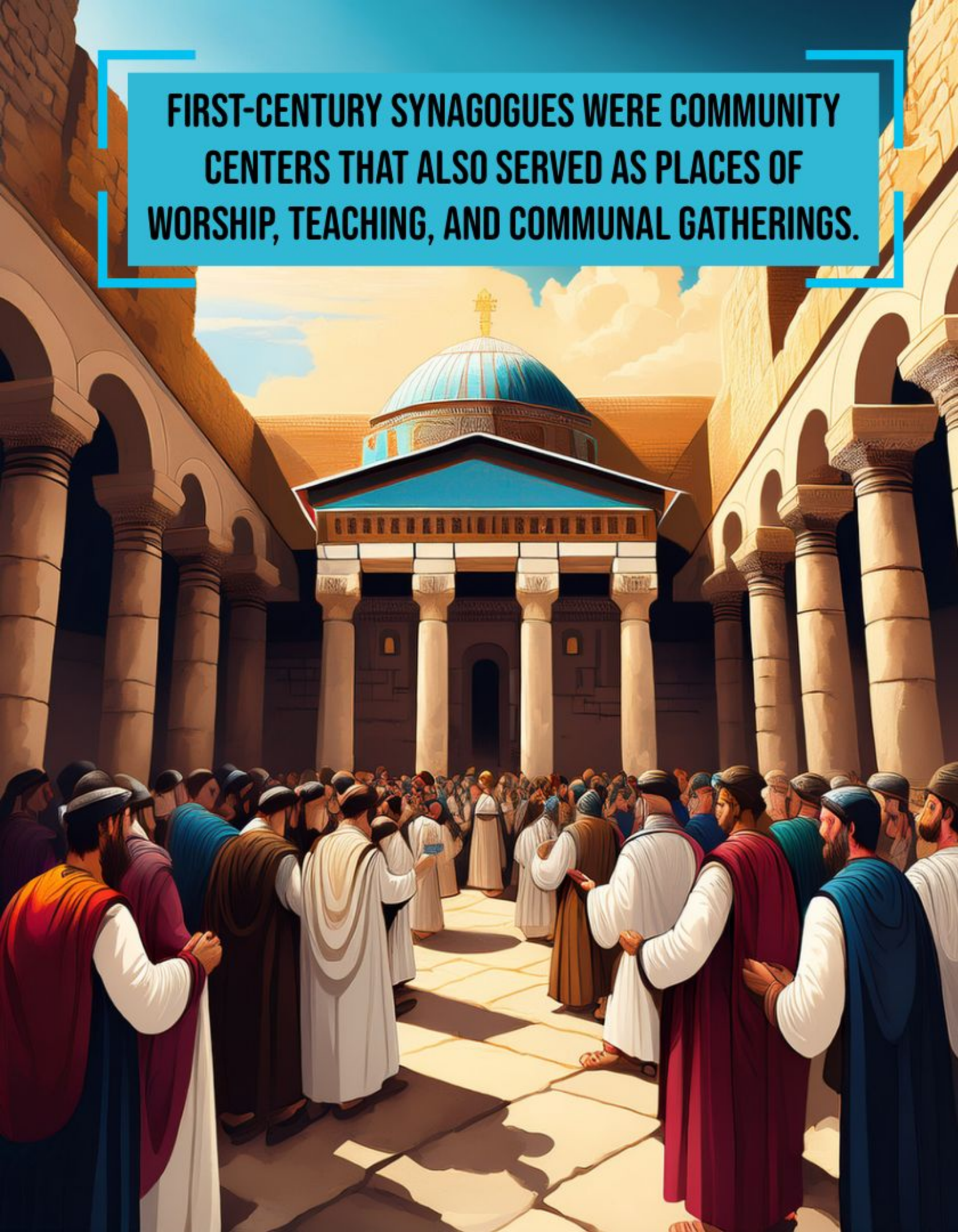
But when each of these Jewish leaders saw the man, beaten and robbed, they crossed to the other side of the road. Maybe they thought, "I can't get dirty; I have important work to do." Or maybe they imagined the man deserved to be in that condition: that if he had been more selective about who he hung out with or where he went, he wouldn't have been jumped.

The Samaritans, on the other hand, were looked down upon, even condemned, by the Jewish community.

On another occasion, at John 4:9, Jesus asks a Samaritan woman at a well for a drink of water, and she is shocked that a Jewish man would even speak to her. The two groups did not mix.

Even though both communities shared a common heritage, they were estranged and deeply divided in politics, religion, culture, and competing claims about their identity.

FIRST-CENTURY SYNAGOGUES WERE COMMUNITY CENTERS THAT ALSO SERVED AS PLACES OF WORSHIP, TEACHING, AND COMMUNAL GATHERINGS.



And yet, it was a Samaritan who saw the Jewish man in need, gave up his ride to the victim, took him somewhere safe, and even paid for his treatment and care.

The parable doesn't mention him asking questions first to make sure the man robbed on the road deserved his help. It doesn't say he placed conditions on the man either. He simply saw a fellow in need, and despite their differences, sacrificed his own finances and convenience to help.

Let's return to the account in Luke chapter 10, where the man had asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"

After concluding the parable, Jesus then asks a question in verses 36-37 (NIV): "WHICH OF THESE THREE DO YOU THINK WAS A NEIGHBOR TO THE MAN WHO FELL INTO THE HANDS OF ROBBERS?" THE EXPERT IN THE LAW REPLIED, "THE ONE WHO HAD MERCY ON HIM."

JESUS TOLD HIM, "GO AND DO LIKEWISE."

Jesus was a masterful teacher; he chose his words precisely and carefully. A powerful lesson had just been taught, one that I would argue is the single greatest message contained in all of the Bible, supported by its context as being a demonstration of the two most important commandments: Love God and love your neighbor.

Let's consider what it means to obey these two rules from which all other doctrine and teaching can be said to hang.

A person's love for God is a private relationship that concerns the self and the Creator. As Matthew 6:6 (GNT) advises: "BUT WHEN YOU PRAY, GO TO YOUR ROOM, CLOSE THE DOOR, AND PRAY TO YOUR FATHER, WHO IS UNSEEN. AND YOUR FATHER, WHO SEES WHAT YOU DO IN PRIVATE, WILL REWARD YOU."

A person may feel that they should or should not do certain things based upon that connection, but it would necessarily be a demonstration of their own submissive obedience to God's will, governed by love.

The fruit, evidence, or resulting product of that relationship is enumerated at Galatians 5:22-23 (AMP): BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT [THE RESULT OF HIS PRESENCE WITHIN US] IS LOVE [UNSELFISH CONCERN FOR OTHERS], JOY, [INNER] PEACE, PATIENCE [NOT THE ABILITY TO WAIT, BUT HOW WE ACT WHILE WAITING], KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL. AGAINST SUCH THINGS THERE IS NO LAW.

Any action taken to the contrary (one that would not be kind or gentle, for example) is not of God.

Rather, the apostle Paul included a description of such disingenuous religion among the signs of the last days at 2 Timothy 3:5 (NIV): "HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING ITS POWER."

Hatred, fits of rage, selfish ambition, jealousy, dissensions, factions, and the like do not result from loving God, but these are instead specifically listed among the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:13-21).

Love for God is internal to a man and shapes and conditions his heart. It is only visible by the fruit that it produces. (Luke 6:43-45)

The second commandment is external to a man and informs how he is to interact with others as it was illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

"A GOOD TREE DOES NOT PRODUCE BAD FRUIT. ALSO, A BAD TREE DOES NOT PRODUCE GOOD FRUIT. . .A GOOD PERSON HAS GOOD THINGS SAVED UP IN HIS HEART. AND SO HE BRINGS GOOD THINGS OUT OF HIS HEART. BUT AN EVIL PERSON HAS EVIL THINGS SAVED UP IN HIS HEART. SO HE BRINGS OUT BAD THINGS. A PERSON SPEAKS THE THINGS THAT ARE IN HIS HEART. - LUKE 6:43-45 (ICB)



When you put yourself in the mindset of Jesus' first-century audience, his words were surprising, if not shocking, and could have been viewed as extreme. He subverted the norm and demonstrated a practical love that transcends appearances or divisions.

The men who were supposed to have been the most good, the most spiritual, the leaders in faith, had failed to keep the second commandment.

The one who, by their religious standards and social expectations, was irrelevant, had been set up as their example to follow. This Samaritan distinguished himself by taking action, showing empathy to a person unlike himself, protecting him, and strengthening him without hesitation or limitations imposed due to his personal beliefs or way of life.

It is a beautiful and moving message. It gives me goosebumps.

How could someone apply its principles today?

Do you place commands and expectations on what other people should or should not be doing, like the Jewish religious leaders were condemned for? Would you distance yourself, or walk by on the other side of the road, so to speak, when someone who is odd or different has been knocked down, hurt, or had something taken away from them?

Or are you someone who, regardless of how someone else chooses to live their life, whether or not they believe as you do, takes care of them, giving up your own comfort and material things, protecting and strengthening them whenever there is a need, like the Samaritan did?

Neighborly Samaritan Creed



- Works, status, and even authority within "religion" can be meaningless.
- Obeying the command to love can mean sacrificing comfort or material things for someone we disagree with or could even be inclined to condemn.
- Love should be shown whenever there is a need, not because it has been earned or any qualifying conditions met.



When we consider this brief scene and its powerful lesson in relation to the broader picture within the Bible, specifically in conjunction with the rest of Jesus' teachings, we find strong support for its message.

Jesus spoke in Matthew 25:31-46 about separating people as sheep from goats. Those who were favored as sheep were the ones who clothed and fed the poor, visited those who were in jail, and took care of the sick. Jesus said that the way you treat the least of these, he viewed as if it were how he personally had been treated.

The most disadvantaged, the most different, the most in need were the ones he looked at, to see who would show them love, as a litmus test for the condition of the heart.

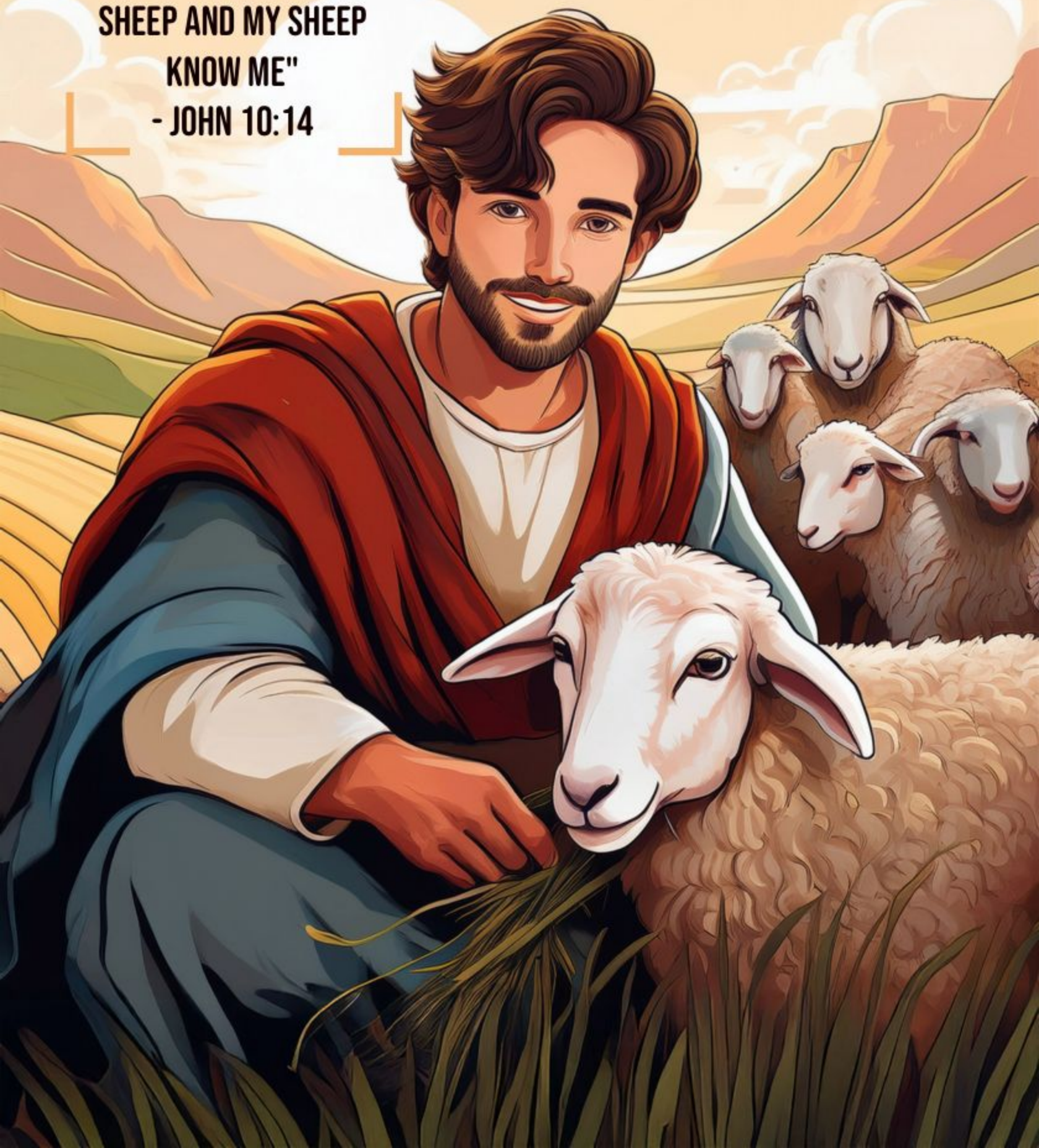
Additionally, in his famous "Sermon on the Mount," starting at Matthew 7:1, Jesus told his followers, "JUDGE NOT, LEST YOU BE JUDGED," warning that the standard by which we judge others will also be applied to us, and condemning the hypocrisy of scrutinizing another person's faults while ignoring our own.

In the "Model Prayer" from that same occasion, Jesus expressed the same reciprocal principle in what is traditionally rendered, "FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US."

That wording, "**as we forgive**," binds the grace shown by God to us as commensurate with that which we extend to people we have reason to forgive.

If we were never wronged by someone else, then we would not have reason to be forgiving; so we can expect that other people will give us cause for objection or offense, thereby providing us the opportunity to be forgiving.

**"I AM THE GOOD
SHEPHERD; I KNOW MY
SHEEP AND MY SHEEP
KNOW ME"
- JOHN 10:14**



"SERMON ON THE MOUNT" MATTHEW 5-7



If you believe you were born in sin and that Jesus pouring out his blood paid a debt for you, then holding on to something you have against someone else, valid though it may be, anything you can't forgive or overlook, restricts the amount to which your own debt is to be covered.

That is further demonstrated in another of Jesus' parables, this one found in Matthew 18:21-35.

Here, Jesus tells the story of a man who is absolved of a large debt he owed to his king, a parallel to mankind having its debt of inherited sin forgiven by God.

However, that man, who had his large debt erased, later refused to forgive a much smaller debt owed to him by a poor servant.

MATTHEW 18:21-35



**THE PARABLE OF
THE UNMERCIFUL
SERVANT**



Whenever we have a cause for complaint against someone, regardless of what it might be, it could only be a fraction of what God has shown himself willing to forgive for us. Isaiah 1:18 (NIV) says: "COME NOW, LET US SETTLE THE MATTER," SAYS THE LORD. "THOUGH YOUR SINS ARE LIKE SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY ARE RED AS CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE LIKE WOOL."

In the parable of the unmerciful servant, the king was outraged when he heard of his debtor's hardheartedness, restored that man's original debt, and had him handed over to the jailers until the debt was paid, a sentence that, given the enormous amount owed, would effectively have been indefinite.

In the same way, taking an accounting of someone else's sins and demanding consequences for whatever wrongs we may be aware of can invalidate the undeserved mercy we might hope to receive. If we want God to overlook our debt, we cannot be the arbiter of someone else's.



the Best of the Bible

- LOVE GOD AND PRODUCE THE FRUIT OF LOVE, JOY, PEACE, GOODNESS, KINDNESS, MILDNESS, FAITH & SELF CONTROL
- SHOW LOVE TO YOUR NEIGHBOR, WHO IS ANYONE IN NEED, BY TAKING ACTION, REGARDLESS OF DIFFERENCES IN LIFESTYLE, BELIEFS, OR CULTURE
- DO NOT JUDGE ANYONE, BUT FORGIVE FREELY, BECAUSE WE ALL NEED, AND THEREFORE MUST SHOW, UNDESERVED KINDNESS



These scriptures and the meditation on their contents that we have considered so far are what I hope you will agree to be the very best of the Bible. And yet, all that we have studied together is condensed and concentrated down even further by Jesus into just one verse at Matthew 7:12 (GNT), where we read: "DO FOR OTHERS WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO FOR YOU: THIS IS THE MEANING OF THE LAW OF MOSES AND OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHETS."

That "Golden Rule" is beautiful and powerful.

Hopefully its message has been enriched for you, or even just dusted off, by the supporting context to its application we have explored. This loving standard is not always easy to follow, nor is it often demonstrated by those who claim to be religious, but it is a simple encapsulation of all spirituality.

I genuinely am moved by these principles, and I try to live by them, not because I think it will get me a ticket to heaven, or a supernatural reward, but because I objectively recognize their instruction to be ethically and morally right, and I hope to live in a world where everyone understands that when we help others, we help ourselves.

Clearly, there is value and wisdom to be found within the pages of the Bible for everyone's benefit; whether someone has a zealous faith in its authority or if they are only engaging with it as a noteworthy piece of literature. However, that is not to say that there isn't room for critique or even objection to some of its contents.

I hope that by now I have demonstrated a level of respect for the Bible and that I have achieved and been able to share something worthwhile from all the hours, days, weeks, months, years, and even decades I have spent in its pages.

In the next section, I will draw your attention to what I believe qualifies as the worst content to be found in the Bible.

THE WORST OF THE BIBLE



If you have assumed, believed, or even been taught that God loves everyone, I regret to inform you that is explicitly not the case. (See Proverbs 6:16-19; Psalm 5:5; Romans 9:13.)

He is, by his own admission, jealous (Exodus 20:5), and after the verses we next consider you might add: vindictive, violent, sexist, and prejudiced. Realistically, He probably wouldn't make it through a week at your place of employment before the HR Department would be calling him in.

Well, for all of the love and positivity in the Bible, I think you will agree that some verses are less likely than others to be found on a T-shirt or keychain at the Christian bric-a-brac store.

And yet, the entire Bible is presented as God's correspondence with humanity. It professes that the holy spirit inspired its authors to write down, not their own thoughts, but rather expressions of Divine wisdom. (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21.)

2 Tim 3:16-17 ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD AND BENEFICIAL FOR TEACHING, FOR REBUKE, FOR CORRECTION, FOR TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS; SO THAT THE MAN OR WOMAN OF GOD MAY BE FULLY CAPABLE, EQUIPPED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK. (NASB)

That is a gigantic claim to make, and I believe it should be taken seriously and soberly evaluated critically.

Surely, if an all-powerful and all-knowing God exists, then we could safely assume that, should He have any interest in communicating with His creation by means of a book, He has the power to do so.

It would follow, then, that with His power and focus aimed at this channel, it would be crucial that it communicate His thoughts clearly and accurately. He would be invested in the entirety of its contents being understandable and cohesive.

Presupposing that God has the will and power to communicate by means of a book, we ought to have unquestionable evidence of such awesome provenance. Even more so, an entity who insists upon cosmic justice, condemning all humanity for the dietary choices of ancient ancestors, must hold His own written word to a similar standard of infallible purity.

If even one part of it could be dismissed or, upon evaluation, any aspect or thought contained within it were to call into question the authenticity of its origin, then we would have demonstrated either a lack of power or interest from its alleged author to support Divine credence.

"ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD AND
BENEFICIAL FOR TEACHING, FOR REBUKE,
FOR CORRECTION, FOR TRAINING IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS"
- 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 (NASB)

PSALM 69:29

let them not be enrolled
among the righteous.
But I am lowly and in pain;
let your salvation, O God,
protect me.

I will praise the name of God
with a song;
I will magnify him with
thanksgiving,
than an ox
or a bull with horns and hoofs.
Let the oppressed see it and be
glad;

you who seek God, let your
hearts revive,
For the LORD hears the needy,
and does not despise his own
that are in bonds.

Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and everything that
moves in them,
For God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah;
and his servants shall live there
and possess it.

the children of his servants
shall inherit it,
and those who love his name
shall live in it.

Psalm 70

Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies
(Ps 40:13-17)

To the leader, Of David,
for the memorial offering.
Be pleased, O God, to deliver
me.

O LORD, make haste to help me!
Let those be put to shame and
confusion
who seek my life,
Let those be turned back and
brought to dishonor
who desire to hurt me.

Let those who say, "Aha, Aha!"
turn back because of their
shame.

Let all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you,
Let those who love you
say evermore, "God is great!"
But I am poor and needy;
hasten to me, O God!
You are my help and my
deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay!

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Psalm 71

Prayer for Lifelong Protection and Help

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness deliver me
and rescue me;
incline your ear to me and
save me.

Be to me a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress,^a to save me,
for you are my rock and my
fortress.

Rescue me, O my God, from the
hand of the wicked,
and from the grasp of the unjust
and cruel.
For you, O LORD, are my hope,
my trust, O LORD, from my
youth.

Upon you I have leaned from my
birth;
it was you who took me from
my mother's womb.
My praise is continually of you.

I have been like a portent to
many,
but you are my strong refuge;
My mouth is filled with your
praise,
and with your glory all day
long.

Do not cast me off in the time of
old age;
do not forsake me when my
strength is spent.

For my enemies speak
concerning me,
and those who watch for my
life consult together,
They say, "Pursue and seize that
person
whom God has forsaken,
for there is no one to deliver."

O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help
me!

Let my accusers be put to shame
and consumed;
let those who seek to hurt me
be covered with scorn and
disgrace.

But I will hope continually,
and will praise you yet more
and more.

^aSyr: Heb and they shall live
^aGk Compare 31:3. Heb to come
continually you have commanded

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PSALM 72:15

and your righteousness to a
king's son.
May he judge your people with
righteousness,
and your poor with justice.

May the mountains yield
prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness,
poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy,
and crush the oppressor.

May he live^a while the sun
endures,
and as long as the moon,
May he be like rain that falls on
the mown grass,
like showers that water the
earth.

In his days may righteousness
flourish
and peace abound, until the
moon is no more.

May he have dominion from sea
to sea,
and from the River to the ends
of the earth.

May his foes bow down before
him,
and his enemies lick the dust.
May the kings of Tarshish and
of the isles
render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and
Seba
bring gifts.

May all kings fall down before
him,
all nations give him service.

For he delivers the needy when
they call,
the poor and those who have
no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the
needy,
and saves the lives of the
needy.

From oppression and violence he
redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in
his sight.

Long may he live!

^aGk Compare Syr: Heb to a generation,
to all that come. ^aGk: Heb may they
fear you. ^aCn: Heb those who live in
the wilderness



So, we have our standard for evaluating the scriptures, admittedly a high bar, but one set by God himself, as 1 Peter 1:15-16 (NCV) says: "BUT BE HOLY IN ALL YOU DO, JUST AS GOD, THE ONE WHO CALLED YOU, IS HOLY. IT IS WRITTEN IN THE SCRIPTURES: 'YOU MUST BE HOLY, BECAUSE I AM HOLY.'"

To be "holy" is to be sacred or set apart. But the God to whom the Bible attributes its authorship is also described as perfect and just, as one who does no wrong (Deuteronomy 32:4), and as a God who does not lie (Titus 1:2; see also Numbers 23:19).

Psalm 18:30 further describes God's way as perfect and the LORD's word as flawless. If the scriptures are genuinely the product of that perfect and holy source, it is reasonable to expect them to reflect those same qualities.

With all of this to consider, we will be turning to the Old Testament and the Mosaic Law. But there are a few key points to keep in mind as we do:

Jesus said in Matthew 5:17 that he did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but rather to fulfill them.

Similarly, Luke 16:17 says that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to go unfinished.

So, while Christians generally do not treat the Mosaic Law as a binding legal code, its underlying principles still stand as what is embodied in Christ, not altered or dismissed by His coming to earth.

Furthermore, Malachi 3:6 reminds us that God does not change; so, the way He felt about a topic or issue in the past must be exactly how He thinks about it today.

Therefore, far from being trivial, the old law can be expected to reflect the perfect intentions of a consistent Deity, the standard for holiness. Having now reviewed the context in which to read the Old Testament law, let's dive in.

The 18th chapter of the book of Leviticus begins with the words, "THE LORD SAID TO MOSES," setting up that what is to follow was verbally dictated by God. In other words, these laws literally came straight from the mouth of God to Moses's ear.

The understanding of this framework, in which Moses transcribed dictation from God, is consistent with the many other instances where Moses reported having literal conversations with God, including once from a burning bush at Exodus 3:2-5.

He even recorded at Exodus 33:18-23 getting to physically see God's backside, an experience that left Moses' face temporarily supernaturally luminous, as we read at Exodus 34:29-35.



**THEN THE LORD SAID, "THERE
IS A PLACE NEAR ME WHERE
YOU MAY STAND ON A ROCK.
WHEN MY GLORY PASSES BY, I
WILL PUT YOU IN A CLEFT IN
THE ROCK AND COVER YOU
WITH MY HAND UNTIL I HAVE
PASSED BY. THEN I WILL
REMOVE MY HAND AND YOU
WILL SEE MY BACK; BUT MY
FACE MUST NOT BE SEEN."**

EXODUS 33:21-23

The 18th chapter of Leviticus is probably best known for what is written in the 22nd verse:

LEVITICUS 18:22 [KJV] "THOU SHALT NOT LIE WITH MANKIND, AS WITH WOMANKIND: IT IS ABOMINATION."

While there is some squabbling about the original meaning of that verse, it is widely accepted as a condemnation of homosexuality. Personally, I agree with that prevailing understanding of its meaning as being the original intent of its verbiage.

Considering the evidence that sexual orientation is influenced in considerable measure by biological factors, including genetic variation and prenatal developmental influences such as hormone exposure, God seems to have a problem with the naturally occurring diversity present in not just humans, but many species of his creation.

It seems inconsistent for God to create a naturally occurring biological product and then to find it perverse. Still, this is the reality presented by the Bible, if not concerning homosexuality, then certainly concerning menstruation.

Leviticus chapter 18 is part of a section of the law that addresses various sexual practices considered "abominable" or unacceptable within the context of the covenant between God and the nation of Israel.

Before God did or didn't address homosexuality in verse 22, in verse 19 God instructed Moses to record;

LEVITICUS 18:19 (NIV) "DO NOT APPROACH A WOMAN TO HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS DURING THE UNCLEANNES OF HER MONTHLY PERIOD."

Leviticus 15:19 places a menstruating woman in a state of ritual uncleanness for seven days beginning with the onset of her menstrual flow, even if the bleeding ends earlier.

If bleeding continues beyond the prescribed menstrual period, Leviticus 15:25-28 requires her to remain unclean throughout the discharge and then count seven additional days after it ceases. Later Jewish practice extended the requirement of seven "clean days" after bleeding more broadly.

As the 18th chapter starts to wrap up, at verse 24 God says, "DO NOT DEFILE YOURSELF IN ANY OF THESE WAYS," in reference not only to homosexuality, but also to sexual contact during a woman's period of menstrual uncleanness.

And Leviticus 18:29 (NIV): "EVERYONE WHO DOES ANY OF THESE DETESTABLE THINGS - SUCH PERSONS MUST BE CUT OFF FROM THEIR PEOPLE."

Within Leviticus 18, both acts are prohibited in the same list and fall under the chapter's collective warning that those who practice any of these detestable things are to be cut off from their people.

This is not a fringe interpretation of the scriptures, but rather it is the precise meaning of the law and how it would have been understood by the Israelites who received it.

Any man 'parting the red seas,' or 'riding the crimson tide,' or even getting frisky during the period of menstrual uncleanness that followed, is equally as detestable as a man who has sex with another man.

If anything were to distinguish one act as more perverse or unnatural from the other, arguably the prohibition against sexual contact during menstrual uncleanness may be more important, since it is mentioned first.

Regardless of which of these sins a person were found guilty of the punishment was the same; they were to be removed from the nation.

This is reaffirmed in chapter 20, where once again, at the outset, we are told these laws were given by God to Moses at Leviticus 20:1.

Here, for good measure, as we read through the chapter, we find another condemnation of homosexuality:

"WHEN A MAN HAS SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH ANOTHER MAN AS WITH A WOMAN, BOTH MEN ARE DOING SOMETHING DISGUSTING AND MUST BE PUT TO DEATH. THEY DESERVE TO DIE." - LEVITICUS 20:13 (GW)

And, not to be overlooked, is another reiterated prohibition just five verses down.

WHOEVER HAS SEXUAL INTERCOURSE WITH A WOMAN IN HER MENSTRUAL FLOW, AND HAS UNCOVERED HER NAKEDNESS, AND SHE HAS OPENED THE FOUNTAIN OF HER BLOOD, BOTH SHALL BE DESTROYED FROM THE MIDST OF THEIR PEOPLE. - LEVITICUS 20:18 (CATHOLIC PUBLIC DOMAIN VERSION)

Leviticus 20:23 says God abhorred the nations for practicing these things. And if Malachi 3:6, "I THE LORD DO NOT CHANGE," means that his moral judgment of such conduct remains constant, then it follows that his attitude toward these acts has not changed either.

LEVITICUS 20:23 (NCV) I AM FORCING OUT AHEAD OF YOU THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE. BECAUSE THEY DID ALL THESE SINS, I HAVE HATED THEM. DO NOT LIVE THE WAY THOSE PEOPLE LIVED. So, you can see, after listing gross conduct, which included homosexual relations and dipping the bed-stick in the marinara sauce, God said these are the things that the nations do, and the reasons why he abhors, or hates, them.



My sincere sympathies go out to anyone just discovering that the Bible says God hates them.

There is a suspicious imbalance of attention placed on denouncing homosexuality, while the prohibition against sex and the menstrual cycle goes unmentioned.

For what reason, or by what justification, I have to wonder, has one law been elevated as instructive, while another has gone virtually untold, when they both were allegedly given by God directly to Moses in the same breath?

To minimize or even dismiss a law, and conveniently the one that is more likely to be impactful for a majority of people, while using one adjacent to it to condemn a minority, suggests outrageously shameful motives. The Bible states in plain language that these unclean acts are perverse in God's eyes, both earning his hatred.

To excuse, redact, or retire one of the laws from the Old Testament because it has become outdated undermines the credibility of the claim of Divine Authorship for the entire Bible.

Supernatural standards from an eternal, unchanging Deity wouldn't have a shelf life or ever become stale. God's own standard of Holiness requires that anything He does be free from error or corruption. (See Deuteronomy 32:4: HE IS THE ROCK, HIS WORKS ARE PERFECT, AND ALL HIS WAYS ARE JUST. A FAITHFUL GOD WHO DOES NO WRONG, UPRIGHT AND JUST IS HE.)

If you have noticed that lesbians seem to be getting a free pass, it may have something to do with the Divine attitude towards women in general, note 1 Corinthians 14:34-35
THE WOMEN MUST KEEP SILENT. THEY DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK. THEY MUST TAKE THEIR PLACE AS MOSES' TEACHINGS SAY. IF THEY WANT TO KNOW ANYTHING THEY SHOULD ASK THEIR HUSBANDS AT HOME. IT IS SHAMEFUL FOR A WOMAN TO SPEAK IN CHURCH. (GW)

And also 1 Timothy 2:11-14
LET THE WOMAN LEARN IN SILENCE WITH ALL SUBJECTION. BUT I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN TO TEACH, NOR TO USURP AUTHORITY OVER THE MAN, BUT TO BE IN SILENCE. FOR ADAM WAS FIRST FORMED, THEN EVE. AND ADAM WAS NOT DECEIVED, BUT THE WOMAN BEING DECEIVED WAS IN THE TRANSGRESSION (KJV)

These verses are uncomfortable to read today with some finding creative ways to dodge or justify them, but the simple fact remains, All scripture is inspired by an eternal, unchanging God, or none of it is.

Women did not enjoy property, inheritance, or other legal rights equal to those of men. Their second-class personhood means that much of the law ignores the possibility of women having a say in their sexuality or even acknowledging their autonomy.



Let's briefly pivot now to God's standards regarding human slavery found at Leviticus 25:44-46 where we read from the New International Version:

"YOUR MALE AND FEMALE SLAVES ARE TO COME FROM THE NATIONS AROUND YOU; FROM THEM YOU MAY BUY SLAVES. YOU MAY ALSO BUY SOME OF THE TEMPORARY RESIDENTS LIVING AMONG YOU AND MEMBERS OF THEIR CLANS BORN IN YOUR COUNTRY, AND THEY WILL BECOME YOUR PROPERTY. YOU CAN BEQUEATH THEM TO YOUR CHILDREN AS INHERITED PROPERTY AND CAN MAKE THEM SLAVES FOR LIFE, BUT YOU MUST NOT RULE OVER YOUR FELLOW ISRAELITES RUTHLESSLY."

If pressed, I believe most people sharing this modern age with you and me today would agree that slavery is inhumane, degrading, and wrong. However, we know that slavery has been a shameful stain on much of human history.

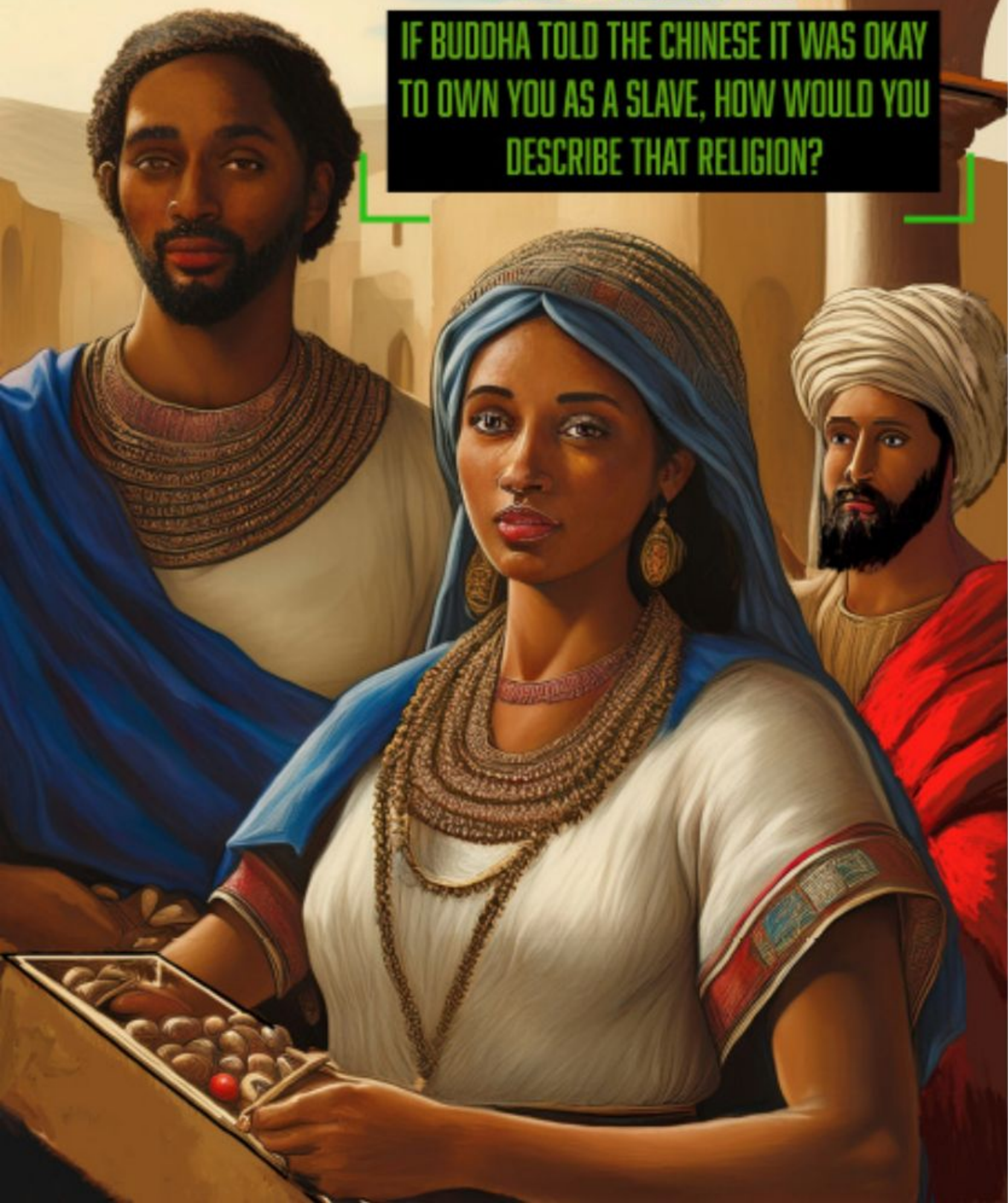
Reading this passage in which God provides explicit permission to the nation of Israel to own other people as estate property is shocking.

They couldn't take a compatriot as a lifelong slave, although in the surrounding text there are some circumstances, with time limits, under which a fellow Israelite might become a slave. Thus, the instruction specifically prohibits ruthless treatment of fellow Israelites without extending that same protection to foreign slaves, implicitly permitting precisely that kind of brutal, merciless, and severe treatment of non-Israelite slaves.

I hope that you will agree that Divine permission for slavery doesn't qualify as the best of the Bible. But owning people from the surrounding lands was actually on the better side of the nation of Israel's God-advised foreign policy; it gets much worse.

? FOR MEDITATION

IF BUDDHA TOLD THE CHINESE IT WAS OKAY
TO OWN YOU AS A SLAVE, HOW WOULD YOU
DESCRIBE THAT RELIGION?



DEUTERONOMY 20:13-16 (NIV) WHEN THE LORD YOUR GOD DELIVERS [THE CITY] INTO YOUR HAND, PUT TO THE SWORD ALL THE MEN IN IT. AS FOR THE WOMEN, THE CHILDREN, THE LIVESTOCK AND EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE CITY, YOU MAY TAKE THESE AS PLUNDER FOR YOURSELVES. AND YOU MAY USE THE PLUNDER THE LORD YOUR GOD GIVES YOU FROM YOUR ENEMIES. THIS IS HOW YOU ARE TO TREAT ALL THE CITIES THAT ARE AT A DISTANCE FROM YOU AND DO NOT BELONG TO THE NATIONS NEARBY. HOWEVER, IN THE CITIES OF THE NATIONS THE LORD YOUR GOD IS GIVING YOU AS AN INHERITANCE, DO NOT LEAVE ALIVE ANYTHING THAT BREATHES.

These verses describe two types of conquests the Israelites might engage in. When the land was in an area that God had promised to His people, there were to be no survivors; women, children, and livestock were to be slaughtered without mercy. In other lands, all the men were to be killed, but women and children could be kept alive and taken as spoils of war along with the livestock and other valuables.

Regardless of how genocide or this type of violence may sit with you, I have only drawn your attention to these guidelines to provide context for circumstances in which God sanctions what, by any meaningful modern standard of consent, amounts to rape.

DEUTERONOMY 21:11-14 (NIV) IF YOU NOTICE AMONG THE CAPTIVES A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN AND ARE ATTRACTED TO HER, YOU MAY TAKE HER AS YOUR WIFE. BRING HER INTO YOUR HOME AND HAVE HER SHAVE HER HEAD, TRIM HER NAILS AND PUT ASIDE THE CLOTHES SHE WAS WEARING WHEN CAPTURED. AFTER SHE HAS LIVED IN YOUR HOUSE AND MOURNED HER FATHER AND MOTHER FOR A FULL MONTH, THEN YOU MAY GO TO HER AND BE HER HUSBAND AND SHE SHALL BE YOUR WIFE. IF YOU ARE NOT PLEASED WITH HER, LET HER GO WHEREVER SHE WISHES. YOU MUST NOT SELL HER OR TREAT HER AS A SLAVE, SINCE YOU HAVE DISHONORED HER.

“IF YOU NOTICE AMONG
THE CAPTIVES A **BEAUTIFUL
WOMAN** AND ARE ATTRACTED
TO HER, YOU MAY TAKE HER
AS **YOUR WIFE.**”

– DEUTERONOMY 21:11 (NIV)



In this section, it is evident that the captive woman has no say in the matter. She is taken into the man's home based solely upon his physical attraction to her, and after a month, he is free to have sex with her. Then, if he isn't happy with her, after he has "dishonored her," he can just put her out on her own.

Picture the reality of this instruction.

This woman's life has been completely shattered. She witnessed the slaughter of nearly everyone she ever knew, including those she loved and had lifelong relationships with. The few people who managed to survive the attack will share her fate and will also be taken away as slaves. Any supplies, valuables, or wealth that her family may have accumulated over generations are similarly carried off. She then helplessly watched as strangers celebrated their victory as her family home was leveled to the ground.

Four weeks later, with her head shaved bald, she is taken to the bedroom of a man she had watched through tears and the smoke of her burning home, praising his God while still wet with the blood of her father and brothers.

Now, her future will be decided by whether or not he is happy with her after he has taken her sexually.

If he is displeased, she will be free to go; pushed out alone, defiled, with no living male relatives, no home, and with nothing that her family may have been storing up for her. She must face the weather, wild animals, and other predatory men all on her own, bald and shamed. Her prospects are bleak.

It makes me shake with rage and sadness.

This is the law, as Moses says, that was given to him directly by God.

I hope you will agree that this grim historical reality qualifies for consideration as the worst of the Bible.

THE WORST OF THE BIBLE

- COUPLES THAT ARE INTIMATE DURING MENSTRUATION, AND INCLUDING UP TO SEVEN DAYS FOLLOWING IT, AS WELL AS GAY MEN, ARE HATED BY GOD
- WOMEN ARE TO STAY SILENT AND ASK THEIR HUSBANDS AT HOME IF THEY WANT TO LEARN SOMETHING
- GOD-GIVEN APPROVAL FOR OWNING FOREIGN PEOPLE AS ESTATE PROPERTY
- GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR GENOCIDE THAT INCLUDE A PROVISION OF COMPULSORY SEX FOR SURVIVAL



CONCLUSION



Thank you for accompanying me on this journey through what I believe are the Bible's brightest lights and darkest shadows.

To pick and choose from within the Bible, accepting some verses while excusing or minimizing others, is to use our own judgment to decide which parts of an allegedly perfect Divine communication deserve to be treated as authoritative, demonstrating that morality and ethics temper, rather than arise from, religion.

But if an eternal, unchanging, all-powerful God deliberately chose this book as His means of communicating with humanity, He cannot be insulated from its difficult passages simply by attributing them to human imperfection whenever they become inconvenient.

Under that claim of Divine authorship, God is everything, or He is nothing.

Either the Bible as a whole can bear the standard of supernatural Divine wisdom, justice, and perfection attributed to its source, or the claim that it is the authoritative expression of that source must fail.

If human error, prejudice, or moral limitation is necessary to explain portions of the text, then human judgment has superseded and supplanted Divine authority.

Furthermore, we must consider: if God does anything, then He is actively responsible for everything.

I see a woman on social media declaring, "God is good all the time," because she scored a bargain on shoes. If so, then why were innocent children starving to death, being sex trafficked, and crying out unanswered at that very moment?

If God is inclined to affect human affairs, surely He has the power to do so; it naturally follows then that if he ever has interceded in any instance, then any harm that befalls anyone has been directly authorized by God's lack of interest in intervening.

You cannot attribute any occurrence to the hand of God without indicting Him for every failure to act.

In the 2023–24 Religious Landscape Study, 5% of Americans identified as atheist (not believing in God or gods) and 6% as agnostic (not claiming to know whether God or gods exist, often regarding the question as unknown or perhaps unknowable), according to the Pew Research Center.

Atheists and agnostics both fall under the umbrella category of the 29% of Americans who report having "no religious affiliation."

The same study reported that a gradually shrinking 62% of Americans identify as Christian. But, for now, a clear majority of Americans believe in God. And for many of them, not only is He very real, they are confident that He plays an active role in their lives.

Certainly, throughout the ages, there have been plenty of individuals who have devoted their entire lives to God, in worship, or service, even as far as martyrdom. That fact alone could be argued as evidence enough to substantiate God being as real as anything else.

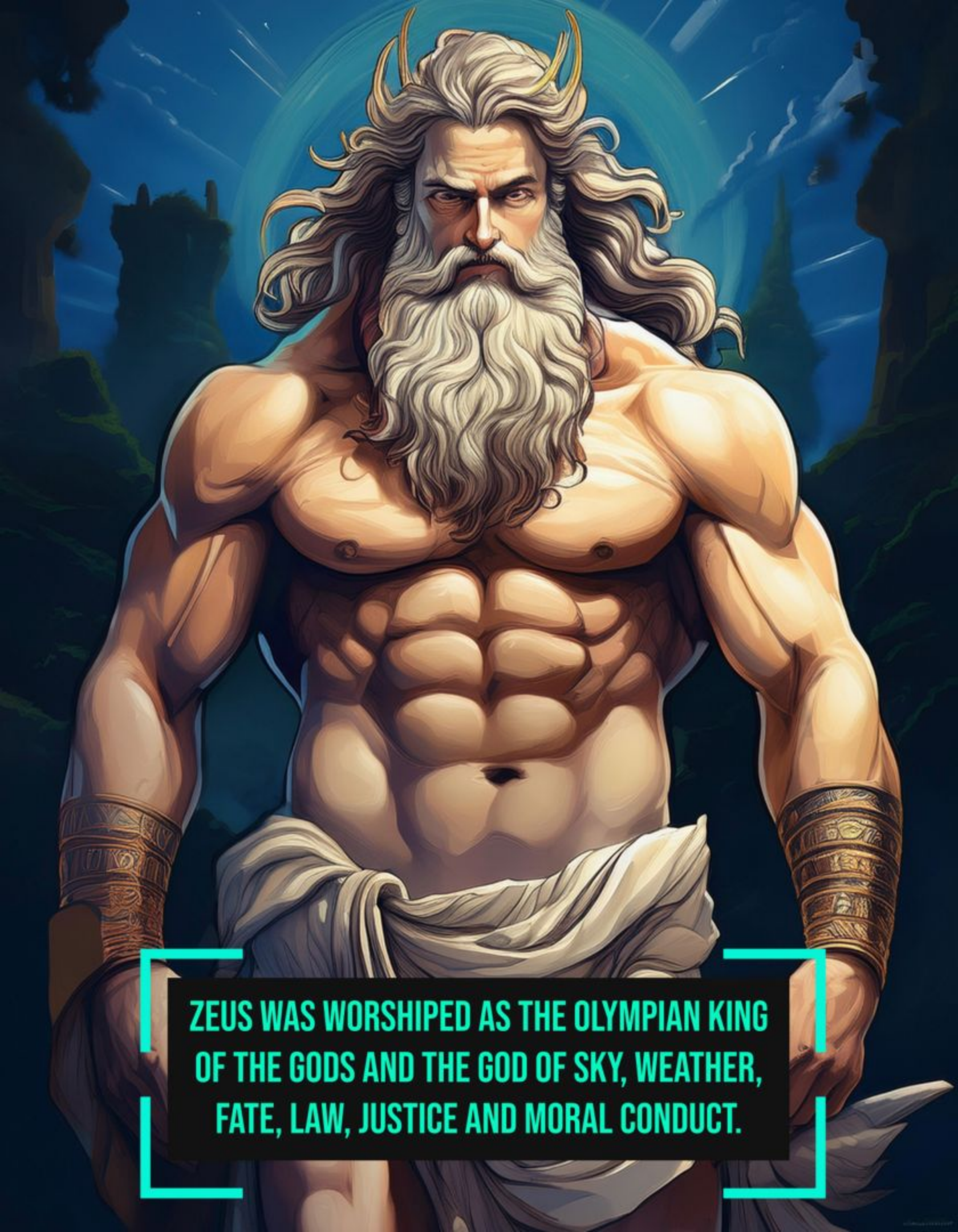
Still, the unfalsifiable existence of God remains a topic that has been debated many times over, without any real progress ever being made towards reaching a consensus.

Without any explicit way to establish the presence or absence of God definitively, it's probably not worth rehashing the same old arguments each side is likely to make. Neither is likely to change the minds of the other anyway.

Most modern-day believers in the God of the Bible consider Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Ra, Osiris, Isis, Odin, Thor, and other gods and goddesses once zealously worshiped to be mythological rather than actual divine beings. Yet these figures were taken seriously by the cultures that worshiped them, and the myths surrounding them helped explain everything from natural phenomena and ritual to social order, human conduct, and the cosmos.

Time and investigation often reveal supernatural superstitions to be explainable as natural phenomena.

Where the Bible describes seizure-like symptoms and attributes them to an evil spirit (Mark 9:17-27; compare Matthew 17:15-18), today we understand neurological disorders such as epilepsy through the functioning and biochemistry of the brain, with diagnostic and therapeutic methods that do not depend on expelling supernatural creatures.



**ZEUS WAS WORSHIPED AS THE OLYMPIAN KING
OF THE GODS AND THE GOD OF SKY, WEATHER,
FATE, LAW, JUSTICE AND MORAL CONDUCT.**

A scientific theory is a well-tested explanation of natural phenomena, supported by a large body of evidence and repeatedly tested and confirmed by observation and experiment. Importantly, a theory must allow us to make predictions that can then either reinforce or invalidate that explanation.

Unlike religion, which relies on faith, having confidence or trust in the absence of proof (Hebrews 11:1), a scientific theory is a way of explaining something occurring in the natural world that's based on empirical observations and quantitative measurements.

The fact that the cutting edge of scientific knowledge is constantly being updated is a feature, not a flaw, of the methodology.

Suppose someone doubts the theory of gravity, evolution, or the shape of the planet. In that case, this is invariably a failure on the part of that individual to study and comprehend the massive body of corroborating experimentation, data, evidence, and predictions that have been validated within those fundamental constructs.

Of course Flat-Earthers who obsess over the Bible's mention of a firmament (Genesis 1:6-8) should be put on notice that the scriptures also state that God "HANGS THE EARTH ON NOTHING" at Job 26:7 and that he "SITS ENTHRONED ABOVE THE CIRCLE OF THE EARTH" at Isaiah 40:22, rendered "GLOBE OF THE EARTH" in some translations, including the Douay-Rheims and Catholic Public Domain Version.

Dismissal or contempt for an accepted truth, without investigation, is the unbreakable barricade of willful ignorance and stupidity.

Where Divine insight should have anticipated neurological science or human equality, the Bible instead echoes the ancient misunderstandings of its time, another indicator of its authorship.

Regardless, the Bible should not be discarded as worthless. It holds real value, beauty, and meaning within its pages.

My aim here has not been to destroy faith, but rather to temper it with a fuller understanding of the Bible as a whole, its contents within context, and the original intent of its speakers, and to challenge the devout to hold themselves accountable to the very authority on which their faith rests.

As we reviewed, at its best, the Bible shapes the heart to be more tolerant, loving, and understanding. We saw that Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan instructed Christians to be of service to others even when they disagree with their beliefs, way of life, or culture.

Jesus taught that taking account of another person's debt while refusing to extend the mercy we ourselves hope to receive places our own forgiveness in jeopardy. The standard is reciprocal: forgiven as we forgive.

But the Bible also contains outmoded attitudes toward foreigners, women, slavery, and other tenets incompatible with a more mature understanding of the universe and our place in it.

I can't tell you whether to believe in the Bible or not. That is a personal decision you should make on your own. Still, I suggest that it should be based upon your evaluation of the text as wholly reflecting eternal divine wisdom, justice, and love, or containing human thinking instead.

If you believe these man-flavored ideas are attributable to the mysterious ways of God, specifically that gays and menstruation are gross, women should shut up and let their husbands do the thinking, that slavery is good business, genocide is just policy and rape is a good way to test if you should keep a woman or discard her ... Well, I concede that you at least have biblical support for your position.

However, if this is your belief, then we disagree.

Fortunately, the imperative to be peaceful, tolerant, kind, mild, and long-suffering falls to you, not to me. The clear language of your foundational instruction requires that you still love me, care for me, and come to my aid when I am in need.

I am your neighbor.

God gives the sun and rain, life-sustaining energy and water, to everyone, good or wicked, as Matthew 5:45 points out. If someone claims to love their God, then who are they to argue against His egalitarian approach to extending benevolence to everyone?

Just as the Jewish priest and Levite walked by the man in need from his parable, Jesus said that at the time of judgment, there would be people who were loudly religious, taking the spiritual lead, but not doing any spiritually meaningful work.

MATTHEW 7:22-23 (NKJV) MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, 'LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESED IN YOUR NAME, CAST OUT DEMONS IN YOUR NAME, AND DONE MANY WONDERS IN YOUR NAME?' AND THEN I WILL DECLARE TO THEM, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS!'

These individuals would point to numerous accomplishments that seemed impressive, work that they would claim to be evidence of their relationship with Jesus. But, they are practicing lawlessness; causing divisions, stirring up judgmental attitudes, fomenting hatred and a lack of empathy.

However, Jesus said his true disciples would be meek, uniquely identifiable by their uncommon practice of love, as peacemakers who go beyond avoiding confrontation, but who actively work towards peace by supporting those with whom they may disagree. (Matthew 5:5-9, John 13:35)

**"IN THIS WAY YOU SHOW THAT YOU ARE CHILDREN
OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. HE MAKES HIS SUN
RISE ON PEOPLE WHETHER THEY ARE GOOD OR
EVIL. HE LETS RAIN FALL ON THEM WHETHER
THEY ARE JUST OR UNJUST."**

- MATTHEW 5:45 (GW)



Stockpiling weapons, waiting for things to pop off so they can then get violent, is the opposite of, or antithesis to, the teachings of Jesus. When the apostle Peter drew his sword during Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, Matthew 26:52 (NIV) records Jesus telling him, "PUT YOUR SWORD BACK IN ITS PLACE, FOR ALL WHO DRAW THE SWORD WILL DIE BY THE SWORD."

It is possible to justify a judgment against your neighbor by taking a scripture out of its context. A church may harbor hatred for people because of how they express themselves or live their lives, and excuse actions taken to cleanse whatever it has deemed "wrong" by cherry-picking a verse.

That is Satanic behavior. Remember, the Devil was able to justify his temptation with a scripture.

However, we can identify such wicked anti-Christ attitudes by looking deeper into the scriptures to understand who is speaking, to whom they are saying it, and why it is being said. What was the original intended message, and how would it have been understood at the time? Does it make sense as part of the broader message of the Bible? Is it supported by the rest of what you know to be true?

Jesus hammered home the same point time and time again that his followers would specifically show love to those with whom they did not agree.

At Matthew 5:46-47 (ESV), after instructing his disciples to love their enemies, he continued:

"FOR IF YOU LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE YOU, WHAT REWARD DO YOU HAVE? DO NOT EVEN THE TAX COLLECTORS DO THE SAME? AND IF YOU GREET ONLY YOUR BROTHERS, WHAT MORE ARE YOU DOING THAN OTHERS? DO NOT EVEN THE GENTILES DO THE SAME?"

It is specifically and crucially the way Christians demonstrate kindness and love towards those with whom they disagree that is their test. Jesus laid down his life for everyone, as 2 Corinthians 5:15 (NIV) says, "HE DIED FOR ALL."

Some people would try to make distinctions, placing limitations on who qualifies for the ransom value of his blood.

Jesus used sheep as an analogy for his true followers, those who hear his voice and follow him. He said his flock would include sheep not of the same fold, and that they would ultimately be united as one flock under one shepherd (John 10:16, 27).

It's not within the ability of a human to know whom Christ regards as his sheep. When someone appoints themselves shepherd over another person (deciding who belongs in Christ's flock, who does not, or who is worthy of the salvation he offers), they assume an authority the scriptures assign to Christ himself.

Acts 10:42 (NIV) identifies Jesus as "THE ONE WHOM GOD APPOINTED AS JUDGE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD."

Matthew 7:3-5 is almost sassy when it asks, in substance, "How are you going to pick at the sawdust in someone else's eye with a big old beam sticking out of your own?"

In other words, worry about yourself before you start thinking about what you feel are someone else's sins, which is good advice for us all.



"SO WHY DO YOU SEE THE PIECE OF SAWDUST IN ANOTHER BELIEVER'S EYE AND NOT NOTICE THE WOODEN BEAM IN YOUR OWN EYE?"
- MATTHEW 7:3

I am far from perfect.

But the weight of this discussion rests entirely on what is found within the Bible. If I have ever misunderstood or improperly applied any scripture, it is my sincere hope that my understanding will be refined by anyone who feels they have justification for a better interpretation.

Otherwise, I trust that, despite how you may feel about the information presented within my nominations for what may be considered the Best and Worst of the Bible, you won't hold it against the messenger.

May all of your sins be forgiven to the depth and measure that you can forgive me for mine.

About the Author

Terry "Bug" Lilly is an artist, author, musician, and designer whose work spans writing, visual art, music, storytelling, and humor. His work frequently explores identity, belief, human connection, and the complicated process of becoming more fully oneself. He currently resides in Huntington, WV.

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Appendix A - Scriptures Cited but Not Fully Quoted

The following passages are reproduced in order of first appearance in the text and grouped by chapter. They include scriptures cited, referenced, paraphrased, or quoted only in part. All passages in this appendix are from the World English Bible, Protestant Edition (WEBP).

Introduction

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

2 You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, to test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

3 He humbled you, allowed you to be hungry, and fed you with manna, which you didn't know, neither did your fathers know, that he might teach you that man does not live by bread only, but man lives by every word that proceeds out of the LORD's mouth.

Matthew 4:1-11

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry afterward. 3 The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But he answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth.'"

5 Then the devil took him into the holy city. He set him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and, 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you don't dash your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus said to him, "Again, it is written, 'You shall not test the Lord, your God.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 He said to him, "I will give you all of these things, if you will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and served him.

Mark 1:13

13 He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals; and the angels were serving him.

Luke 4:1-13

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. He ate nothing in those days. Afterward, when they were completed, he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

4 Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

5 The devil, leading him up on a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 The devil said to him, "I will give you all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I want. 7 If you therefore will worship before me, it will all be yours."

8 Jesus answered him, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve him only.'"

9 He led him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, 'He will put his angels in charge of you, to guard you;' 11 and, 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest perhaps you dash your foot against a stone.'"

12 Jesus answering, said to him, "It has been said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

13 When the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him until another time.

The Best of the Bible

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Timothy 2:6

6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony at the proper time,

Matthew 20:28

28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

1 Peter 1:18-19

18 knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things like silver or gold, from the useless way of life handed down from your fathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish or spot, the blood of Christ,

Romans 8:19-20

19 For the creation waits with eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope

Luke 11:46

46 He said, "Woe to you lawyers also! For you load men with burdens that are difficult to carry, and you yourselves won't even lift one finger to help carry those burdens."

Matthew 12:34

34 You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

John 4:9

9 The Samaritan woman therefore said to him, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, 23 gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:13-21

13 For you, brothers, were called for freedom. Only don't use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants to one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, be careful that you don't consume one another. 16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, that you may not do the things that you desire. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are obvious, which are: adultery, sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustfulness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, divisions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these; of which I forewarn you, even as I also forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit God's Kingdom.

Luke 6:43-45

43 For there is no good tree that produces rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree that produces good fruit. 44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people don't gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45 The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings out that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks.

Matthew 25:31-46

31 But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you took me in. 36 I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.'

37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? 38 When did we see you as a stranger and take you in, or naked and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?'

40 The King will answer them, 'Most certainly I tell you, because you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' 41 Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; 43 I was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

44 Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you?'

45 Then he will answer them, saying, 'Most certainly I tell you, because you didn't do it to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me.' 46 These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Matthew 7:1

1 Don't judge, so that you won't be judged.

Matthew 18:21-35

21 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Until seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I don't tell you until seven times, but, until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he had begun to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But because he couldn't pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, with his wife, his children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will repay you all!' 27 The lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him and forgave him the debt.

28 But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred denarii, and he grabbed him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'

29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you!' 30 He would not, but went and cast him into prison until he should pay back that which was due. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord called him in and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Shouldn't you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, even as I had mercy on you?' 34 His lord was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him. 35 So my heavenly Father will also do to you, if you don't each forgive your brother from your hearts for his misdeeds."

The Worst of the Bible**Proverbs 6:16-19**

16 There are six things which the LORD hates; yes, seven which are an abomination to him: 17 arrogant eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, 19 a false witness who utters lies, and he who sows discord among brothers.

Psalms 5:5

5 The arrogant will not stand in your sight. You hate all workers of iniquity.

Romans 9:13

13 Even as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Exodus 20:5

5 you shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate me,

2 Peter 1:20-21

20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. 21 For no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Titus 1:2

2 in hope of eternal life, which God, who can't lie, promised before time began;

Numbers 23:19

19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should repent. Has he said, and he won't do it? Or has he spoken, and he won't make it good?

Psalms 18:30

30 As for God, his way is perfect. The LORD's word is tried. He is a shield to all those who take refuge in him.

Matthew 5:17

17 Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill.

Luke 16:17

17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tiny stroke of a pen in the law to fall.

Malachi 3:6

6 For I, the LORD, don't change; therefore you, sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

Exodus 3:2-5

2 The LORD's angel appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the middle of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3 Moses said, "I will go now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned."

4 When the LORD saw that he came over to see, God called to him out of the middle of the bush, and said, "Moses! Moses!"

He said, "Here I am."

5 He said, "Don't come close. Take off your sandals, for the place you are standing on is holy ground."

Exodus 33:18-23

18 Moses said, "Please show me your glory."

19 He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the LORD's name before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." 20 He said, "You cannot see my face, for man may not see me and live." 21 The LORD also said, "Behold, there is a place by me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22 It will happen, while my glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; 23 then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

Exodus 34:29-35

29 When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mountain, Moses didn't know that the skin of his face shone by reason of his speaking with him. 30 When Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come near him. 31 Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses spoke to them.

32 Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them all the commandments that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses was done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. 34 But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out; and he came out, and spoke to the children of Israel that which he was commanded. 35 The children of Israel saw Moses' face, that the skin of Moses' face shone; so Moses put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Leviticus 15:19

19 If a woman has a discharge, and her discharge in her flesh is blood, she shall be in her impurity seven days. Whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening.

Leviticus 15:25-28

25 If a woman has a discharge of her blood many days not in the time of her period, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her period, all the days of the discharge of her uncleanness shall be as in the days of her period. She is unclean. 26 Every bed she lies on all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her period. Everything she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her period. 27 Whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the evening. 28 But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

Leviticus 18:24

24 Don't defile yourselves in any of these things; for in all these the nations which I am casting out before you were defiled.

Leviticus 20:1

1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Conclusion**Mark 9:17-27**

17 One of the multitude answered, "Teacher, I brought to you my son, who has a mute spirit; 18 and wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they weren't able."

19 He answered him, "Unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to me."

20 They brought him to him, and when he saw him, immediately the spirit convulsed him and he fell on the ground, wallowing and foaming at the mouth.

21 He asked his father, "How long has it been since this has been happening to him?"

He said, "From childhood. 22 Often it has cast him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out with tears, "I believe. Help my unbelief!"

25 When Jesus saw that a multitude came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!"

26 After crying out and convulsing him greatly, it came out of him. The boy became like one dead, so much that most of them said, "He is dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up; and he arose.

Matthew 17:15-18

15 "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is epileptic and suffers grievously; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 So I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him."

17 Jesus answered, "Faithless and perverse generation! How long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you? Bring him here to me." 18 Jesus rebuked the demon, and it went out of him, and the boy was cured from that hour.

Hebrews 11:1

1 Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, proof of things not seen.

Genesis 1:6-8

6 God said, "Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." 7 God made the expanse, and divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. 8 God called the expanse "sky". There was evening and there was morning, a second day.

Job 26:7

7 He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing.

Isaiah 40:22

22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in,

Matthew 5:45

45 that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

Matthew 5:5-9

5 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

John 13:35

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

2 Corinthians 5:15

15 He died for all, that those who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who for their sakes died and rose again.

John 10:16, 27

16 I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock with one shepherd.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Acts 10:42

42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that this is he who is appointed by God as the Judge of the living and the dead.

Matthew 7:3-5

3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye? 4 Or how will you tell your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye,' and behold, the beam is in your own eye?

5 You hypocrite! First remove the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

Scripture References & Bible Translations

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