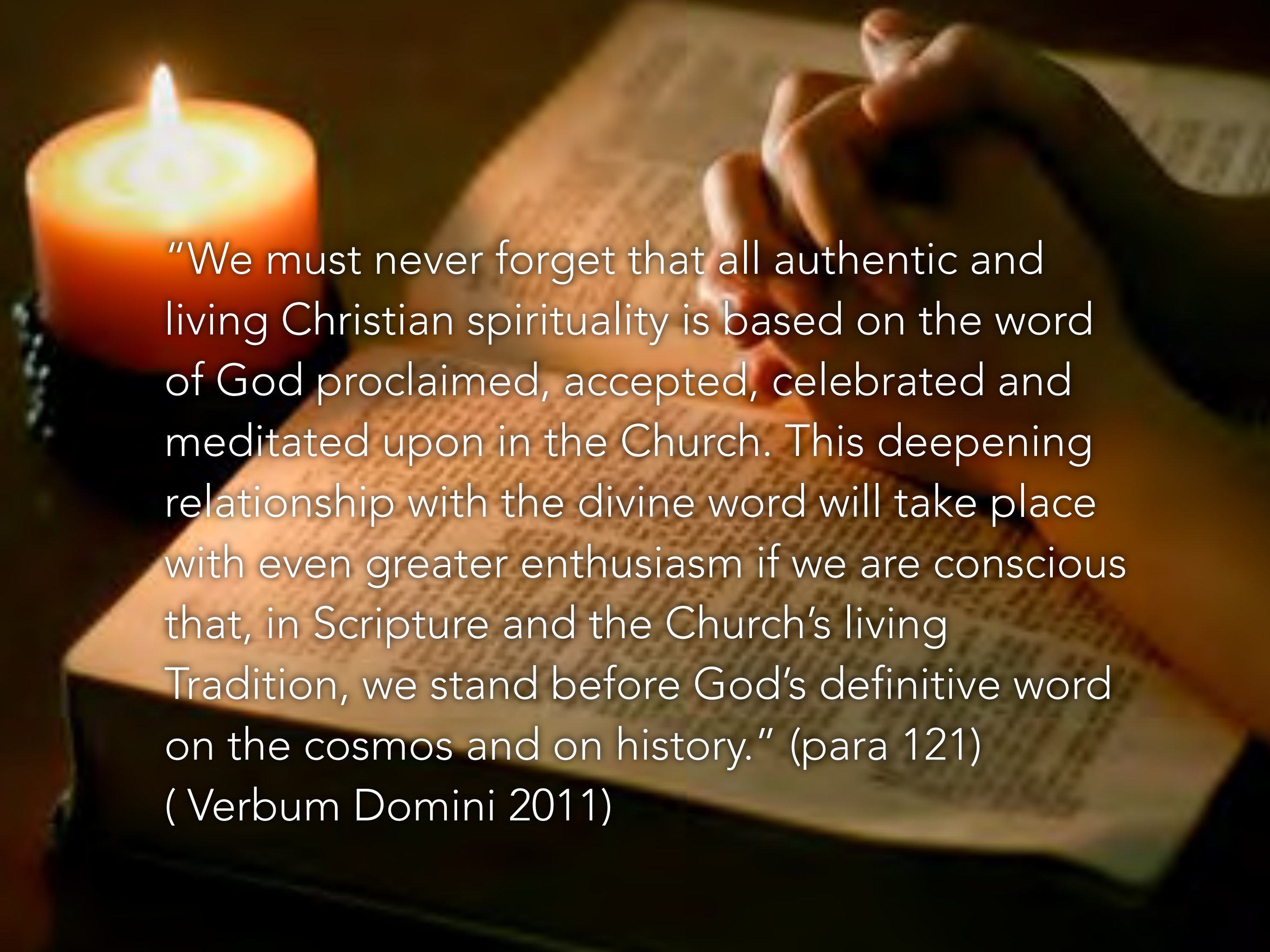


Chris Monaghan cp

Vic - East Gathering Day
20 February 2022

THE BIBLE AS A SOURCE FOR SPIRITUALITY

A lit candle with a warm orange glow is on the left. In the background, a pair of hands holds an open book, with the pages showing printed text. The scene is dimly lit, with the candle providing the primary light source.

"We must never forget that all authentic and living Christian spirituality is based on the word of God proclaimed, accepted, celebrated and meditated upon in the Church. This deepening relationship with the divine word will take place with even greater enthusiasm if we are conscious that, in Scripture and the Church's living Tradition, we stand before God's definitive word on the cosmos and on history." (para 121)
(Verbum Domini 2011)

THE BIG QUESTIONS



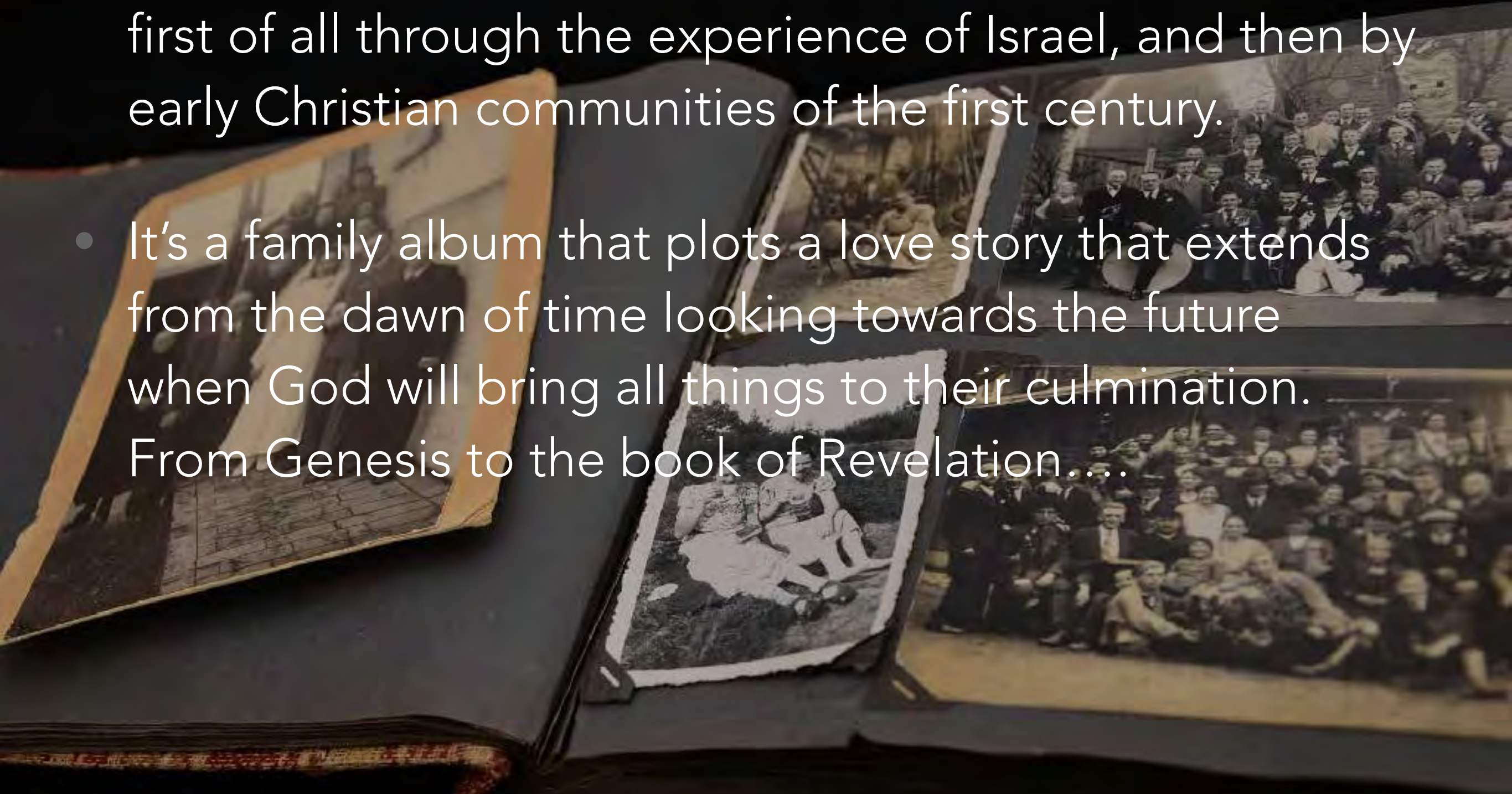
SOME UNIVERSAL HUMAN QUESTIONS

- What's the meaning of life?
- Who are we, and how are we to live?
- How do we make sense of suffering and death?
- Is this all there is?
- Is there life after death?
- Where do we come from?

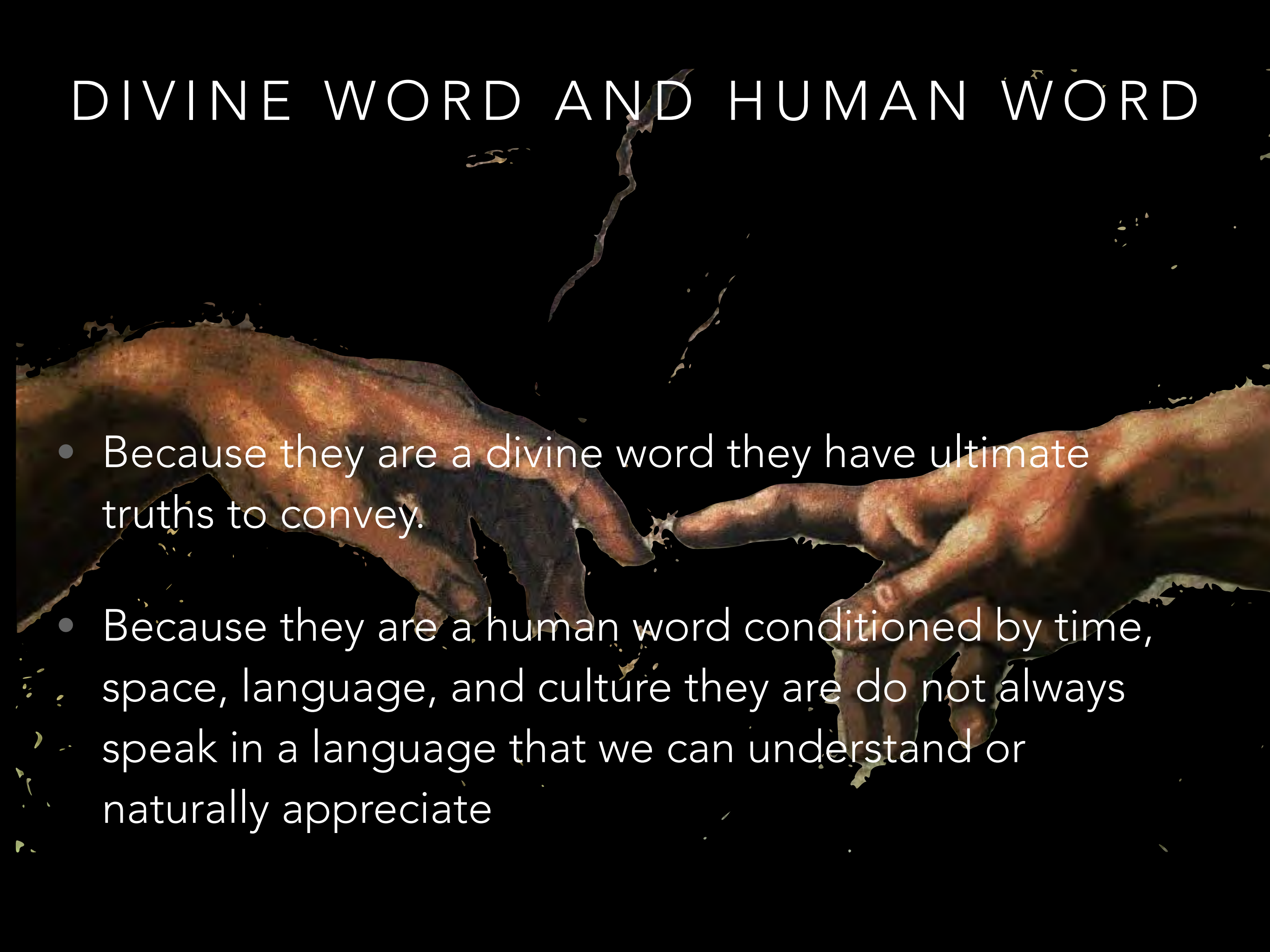


WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURES?

- Ultimately the scriptures are snapshots and reflections on God's relationship with all creation and humanity, first of all through the experience of Israel, and then by early Christian communities of the first century.
- It's a family album that plots a love story that extends from the dawn of time looking towards the future when God will bring all things to their culmination. From Genesis to the book of Revelation....



DIVINE WORD AND HUMAN WORD

- 
- The background of the slide is a reproduction of Michelangelo's famous fresco, "The Creation of Adam." It depicts the reclining position of Adam on the left, reaching out with his right arm, and the proleptic position of God on the right, reaching out with his right index finger. The two hands are just inches apart, creating a sense of tension and divine spark. The background is a deep, dark blue/black, which makes the white text and the warm tones of the figures stand out.
- Because they are a divine word they have ultimate truths to convey.
 - Because they are a human word conditioned by time, space, language, and culture they are do not always speak in a language that we can understand or naturally appreciate

The background of the slide is a composite image of Earth and the Moon in space. The Earth is the central, largest element, showing a blue and white horizon with some landmasses visible. To the left, a portion of the Moon is visible. To the right, another smaller celestial body, possibly a planet or moon, is partially visible. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

THE WORLD BEHIND THE TEXT

THE WORLD IN THE TEXT

THE WORLD IN FRONT OF THE TEXT



'...and they would have walked down those steps and hung their togas on those three hooks.'

There is always the need to go deeper -
there is so much we can't be expected to see

A CHALLENGE: BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THESE WORLDS

- The scriptures come from a world that is not our own and sometimes we find it hard to connect what is going on in our lives with what is happening in the readings.
- We need to build bridges between our worlds.



CONTEXTS CHANGE - YOU CAN'T ALWAYS APPLY IT THE SAME WAY

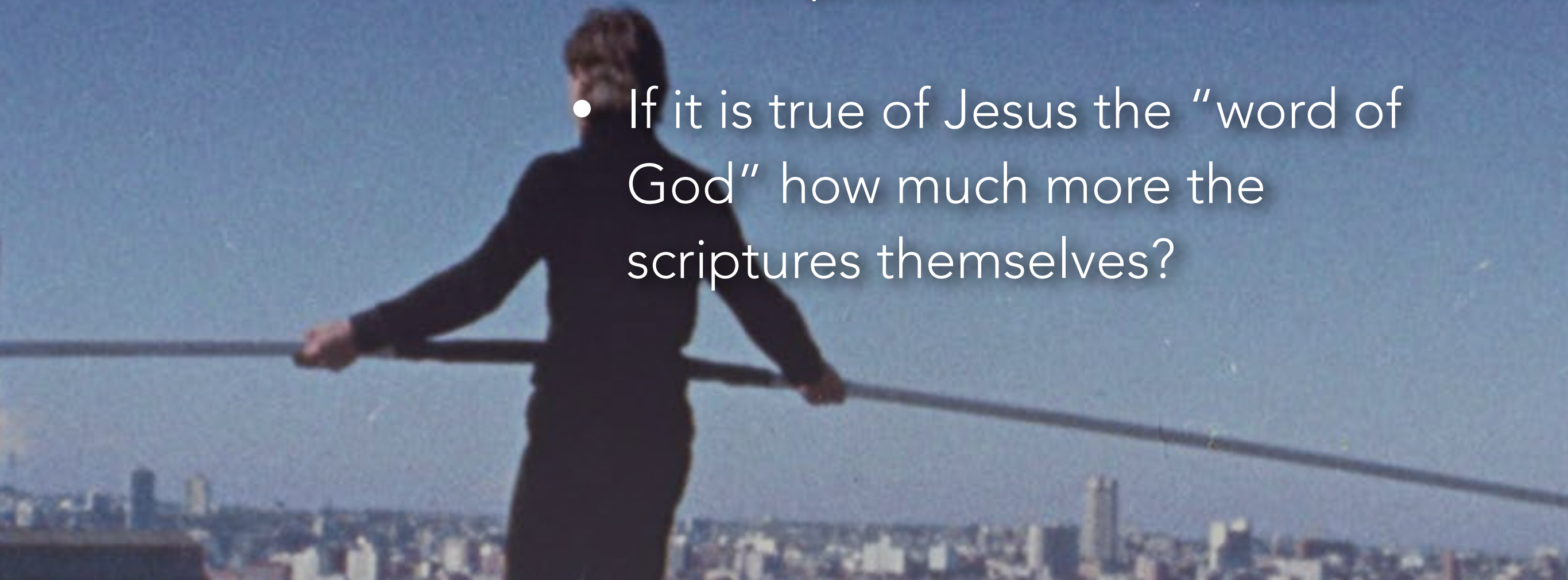
- Care needs to be taken - because the Word is human and divine - you can't take everything as having the same value.
- Leviticus 25:44 states that I may possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations.
- A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own a Canadian?



- Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle-room here?

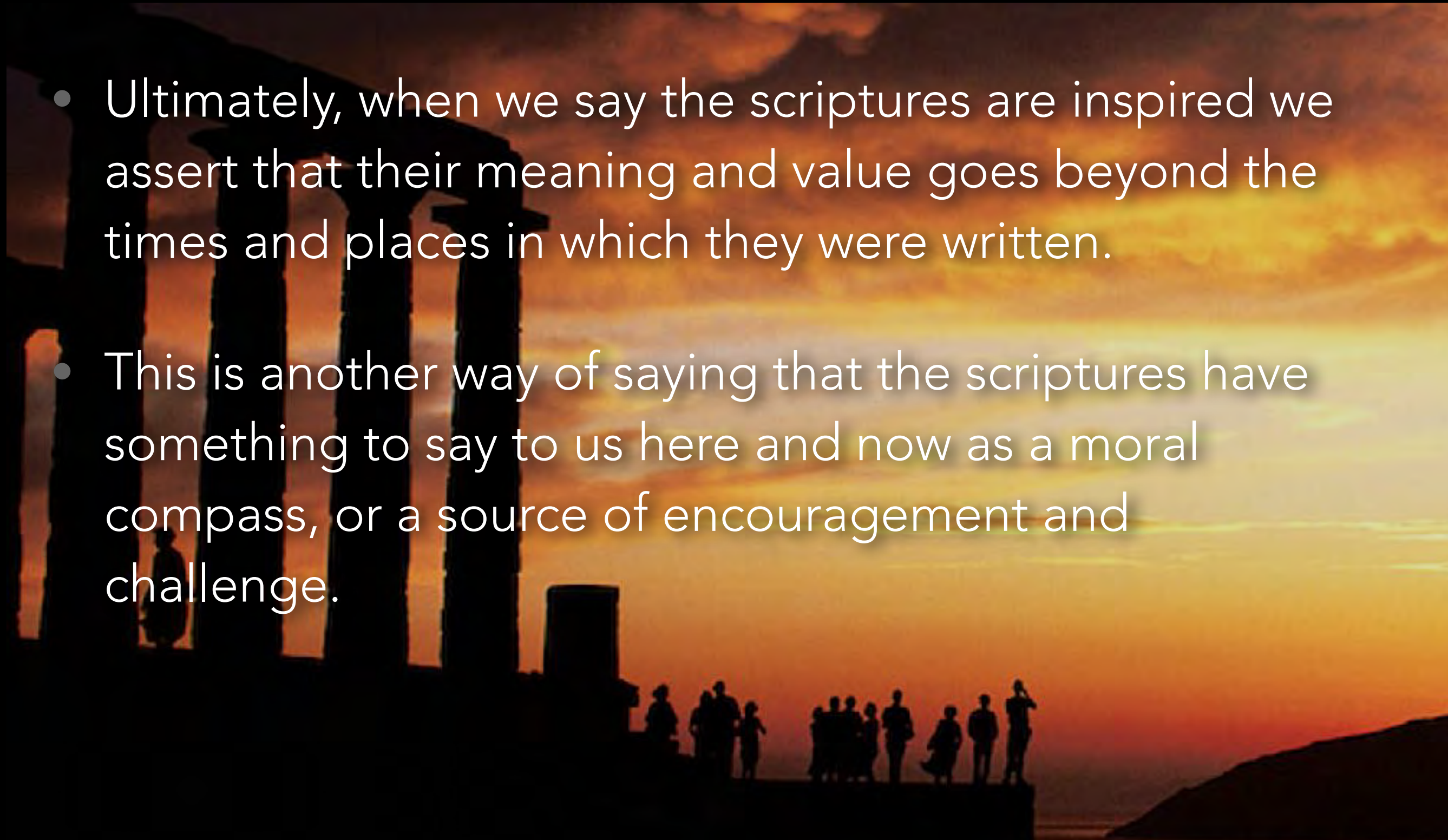
IT BECOMES AT TIMES A BALANCING ACT

- That Jesus is truly divine and truly human is to state the challenge as much as it is to provide the answer to the question "Who is Jesus?"
- If it is true of Jesus the "word of God" how much more the scriptures themselves?



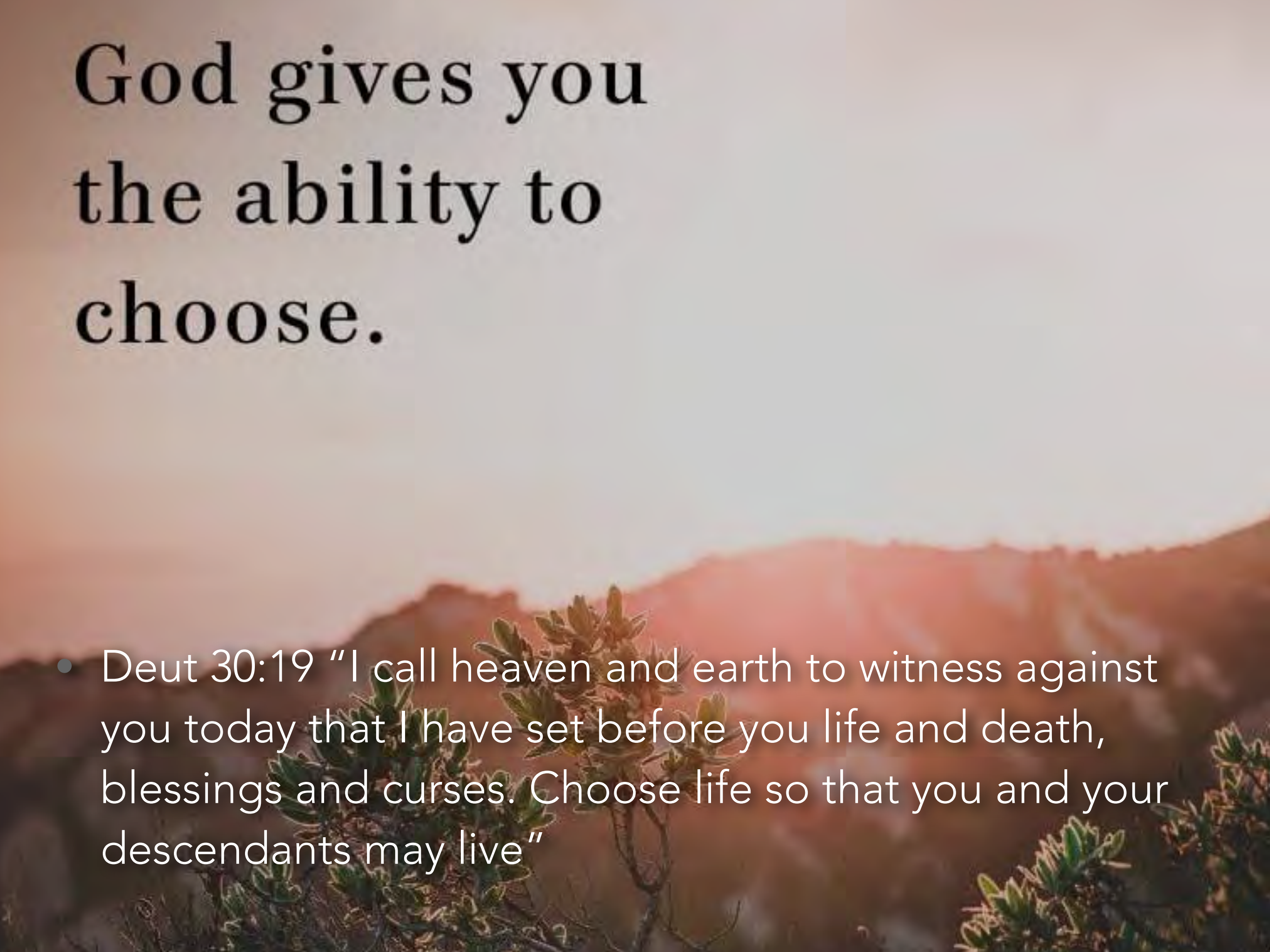
WE CAN FIND OURSELVES IN THESE STORIES

- Ultimately, when we say the scriptures are inspired we assert that their meaning and value goes beyond the times and places in which they were written.
- This is another way of saying that the scriptures have something to say to us here and now as a moral compass, or a source of encouragement and challenge.



WE CAN SEE OURSELVES IN THE SCRIPTURES


- There are stories of finding and losing, loving and hating, of exile and return, of traveling to new lands of hope and promise, of building in hope and watching dreams being torn down. Faith, hope, and love compete with despair, cynicism, and grief.
- There are stories of families divided, promises made and broken, looking for a place to belong, getting caught up in competition and jealousy, politics, betrayal, national fervour and ambition.



God gives you
the ability to
choose.

- Deut 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live"


PSALMS - THE ANATOMY OF THE SOUL



"Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him."

Psalm 62:1

- In Israel's prayers of praise, thanks, loss, fear, hope, sorrow and seeking wisdom we see ourselves as we seek for God in the complexity of our lives.



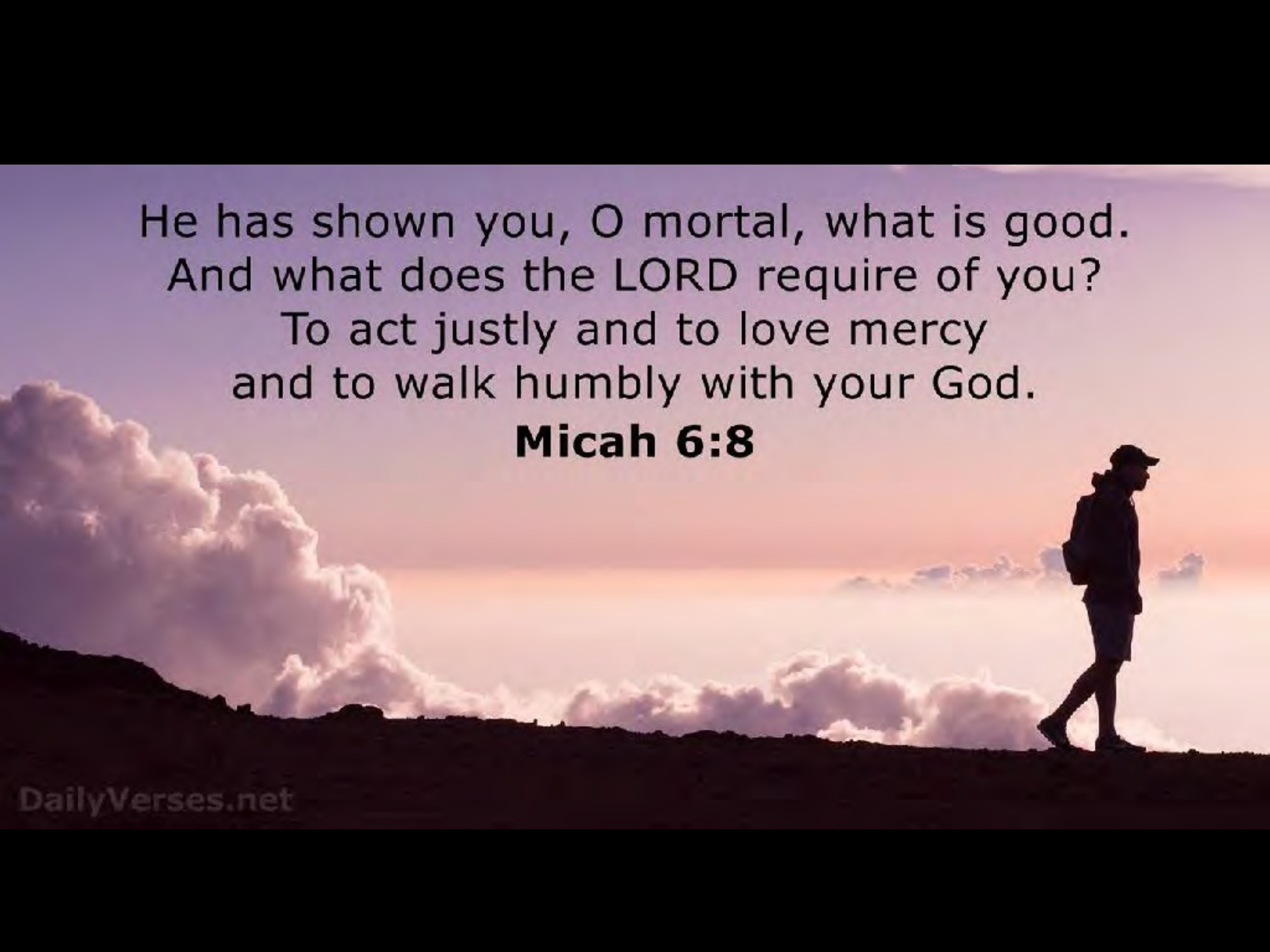
Create in me
a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast
spirit within me.

Psalm 51:10

THE PROPHETS



- They were Israel's conscience, and they can be ours too, calling us to care for the poor, living justly, worshipping God with our hearts, challenging us to authentic living, and providing a source of hope in times of loss.

A silhouette of a person wearing a cap and a backpack, walking along the ridge of a hill. The background is a dramatic sunset or sunrise sky with soft, pinkish-orange clouds. The person is walking from left to right, looking towards the horizon.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8



Can a mother forget the baby
at her breast and have
no compassion on the child
she has borne?

Though she may forget,
I will not forget you!

See, I have engraved you
on the palms of my hands;
your walls are ever before me.

Isaiah 49:15-16

DailyVerses.net

Wisdom

Art - 4th Chryl C. Gould

- Prov. 4:5-7 Get wisdom; get insight: do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight.

IN JESUS GOD'S WORD BECOMES
FLESH LIKE US

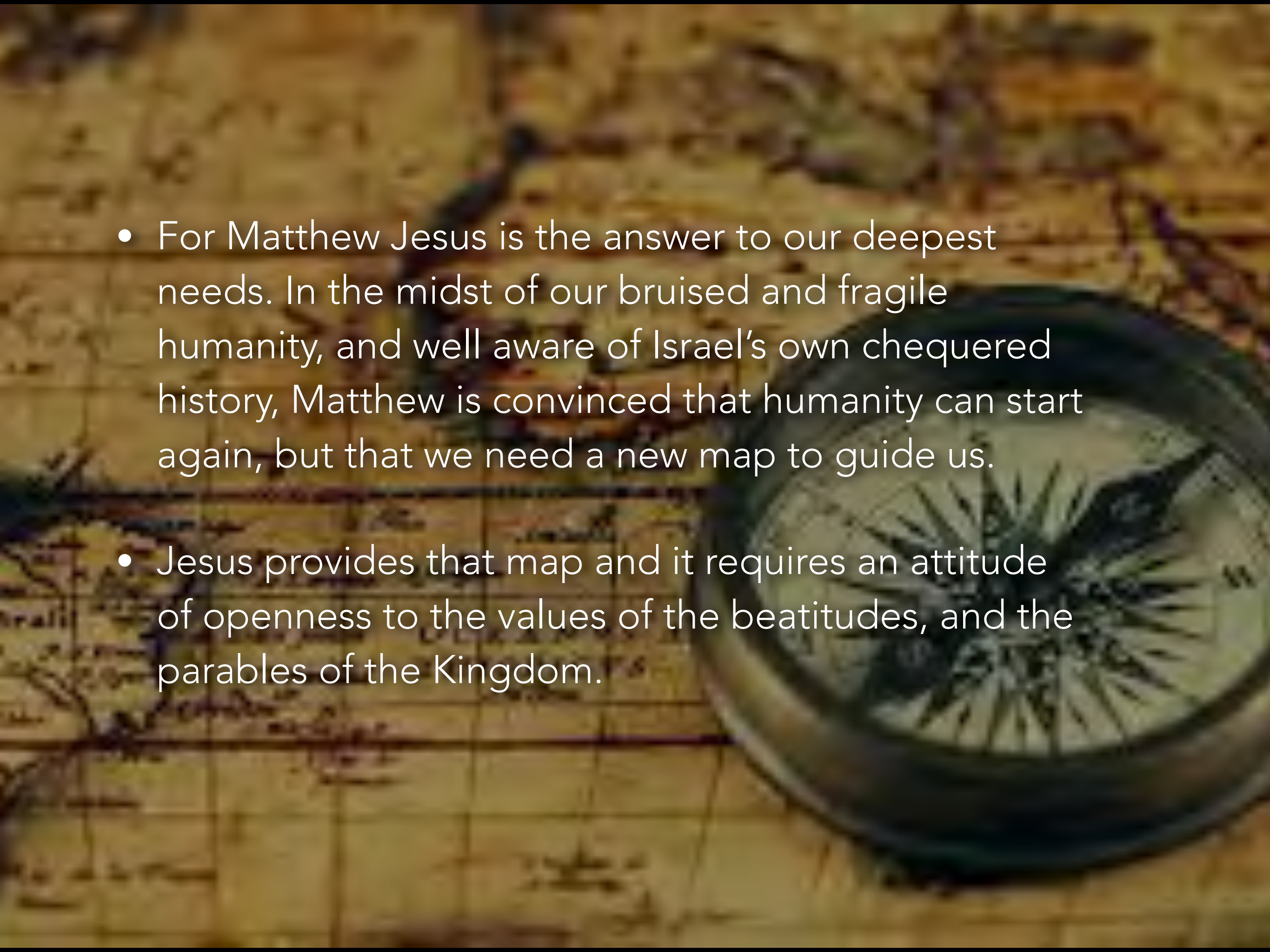
DailyVerses.net

The Word became flesh
and made his dwelling
among us. We have seen
his glory, the glory
of the one and only Son,
who came from the Father,
full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

MATTHEW'S VIEW OF THE CHURCH

- Like Jesus' genealogy Matthew's community, and the Church in any age, is made up of saints and sinners, weeds and wheat (Matt 13:24-30) capable of courage and deceit, faith and failure, whose love can run cold (Matt 24:12) but who can rejoice because they have been invited into the mystery of the Kingdom (Matt 13:11). They have found the pearl of great price (Matt 13:46) but will they use the talents they have been given (Matt 25:24-25) or will they be seduced by arguing about who is the greatest (Matt 18:4), or fail to see the invitation to move on because the mission to the world beckons (Matt 17:4)?

- 
- For Matthew Jesus is the answer to our deepest needs. In the midst of our bruised and fragile humanity, and well aware of Israel's own chequered history, Matthew is convinced that humanity can start again, but that we need a new map to guide us.
 - Jesus provides that map and it requires an attitude of openness to the values of the beatitudes, and the parables of the Kingdom.

ASK

AND

IT WILL BE *Given* TO YOU

SEEK

AND

YOU WILL *Find*

KNOCK

AND

THE DOOR SHALL BE *Opened*

Matt 7:7