

valueFUL

letter to the Colossians

[Meaningful](#)

Colossians 1:24-29

Wayne Braudrick

March 1, 2026

Life Change: We labor for meaningful maturity

Something really tasty in scripture...

The outer coating:

I suffer for the body of Christ, a cause for joy

24

It is a simple matter of fact, that the afflictions of every [Christian] supplement the afflictions of Christ. The Church is built up by repeated acts of self-denial in successive individuals and successive generations. They continue the work which Christ began.” – J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*

I labor for everyone's maturity, empowered by Jesus

29

The crunchy inner wafers:

I serve God's church to make His word fully known

25

We proclaim Christ, using wisdom for maturity

28

The central, chocolate-crème-covered idea: in Christ,
Gentiles have the hope of glory

26-27

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Faithful Truthful Powerful Wonderful Masterful Graceful Mindful Purposeful Delightful Joyful

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PLEASE SILENCE YOUR PHONE

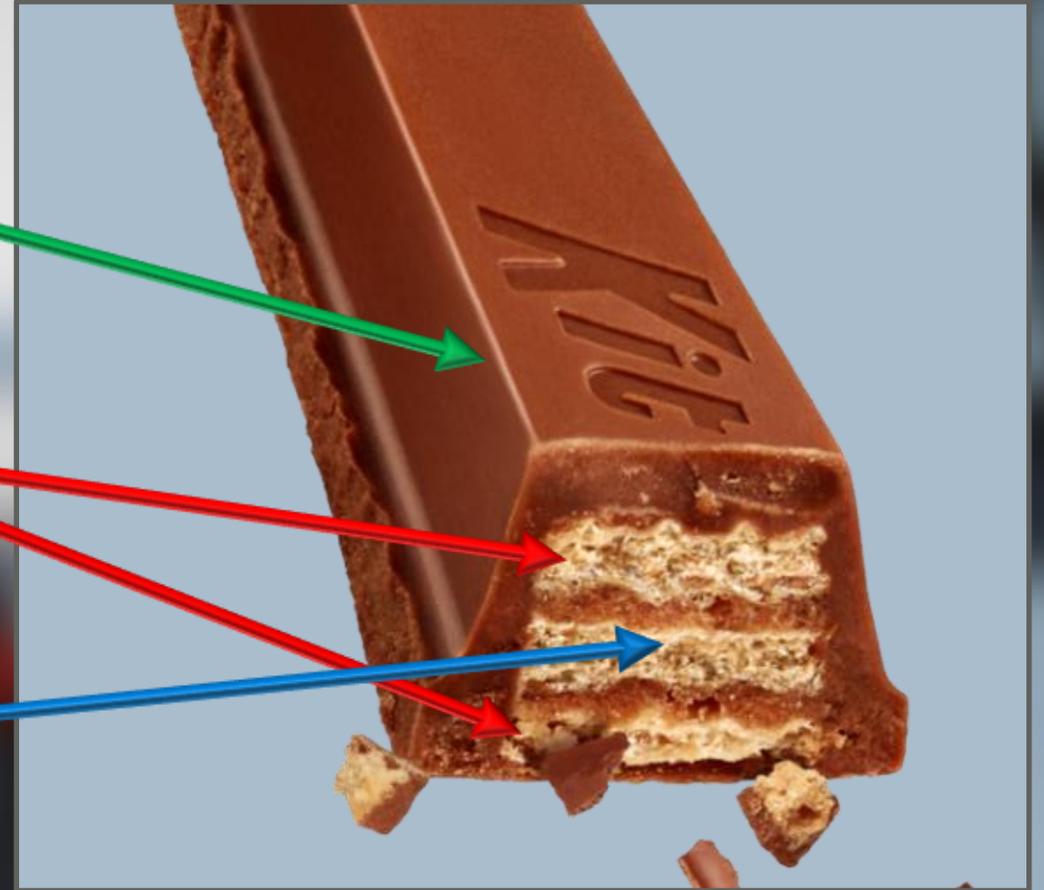


courtesy Nestle



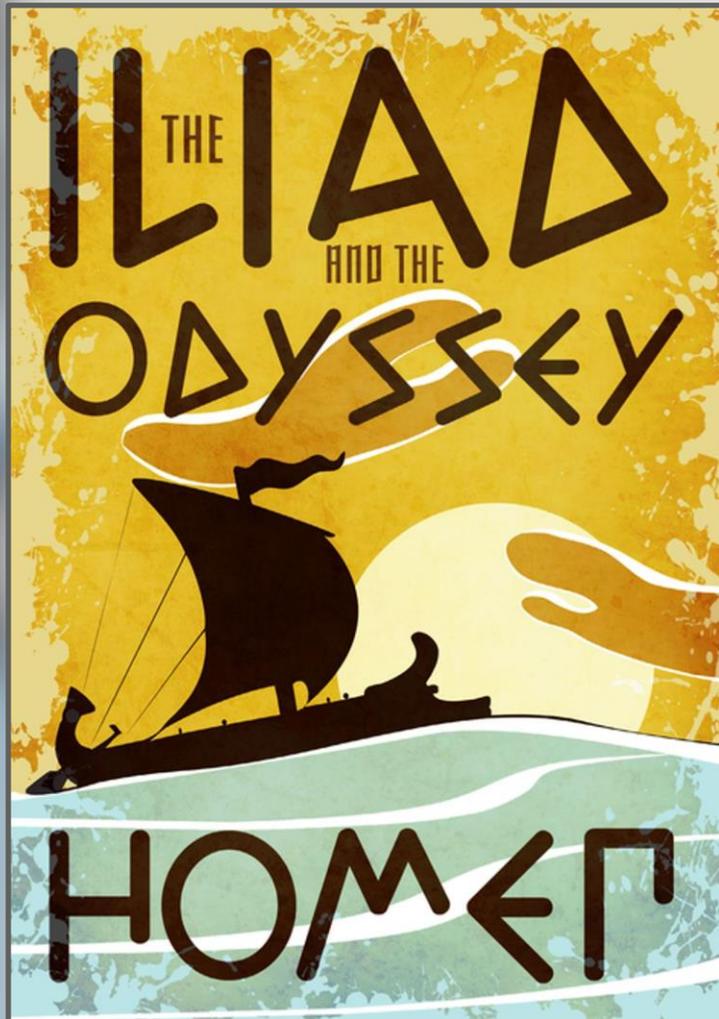
courtesy tastingtable

- **There is an outer layer of a repeated idea that holds the passage together.**
- **Then, one or more inner layers harmonize, covering different aspects of a related thought.**
- **Often, a chiasm holds a middle idea that serves as the biggest point in the paragraph.**



Like a Kit-Kat!





Chiasm is used in oral history as a memory aid – which may explain why chiasms appear so often in Old Testament poetry. The structure is especially rich in Homer, who wrote about 100 years after David and 800 or so years before the Apostle Paul.



Three Poets in three distant Ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The First in loftiness of thought Surpass'd,
The Next in Majesty, in both the Last.
The force of Nature could no farther goe,
To make a Third she joyn'd the former two.

Paradise Lost.

Francis A. Leigh,
A

POEM

In Twelve Books.

The AUTHOUR

JOHN MILTON.

The Fourth Edition, Adorn'd with Sculptures.

LONDON,

Printed by Miles Flesher, for Richard Bently, at the
Post-Office in Russell-street, and Jacob Tonson at the
Judge's-Head in Chancery-lane near Fleet-street.

M DC LXXXVIII.

Is it just an excuse
to eat Kit-Kats in
church?"



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24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for his body, that is, the church. **25** I have become its servant, according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, **26** the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. **27** God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **28** We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. **29** I labor for this, striving with his strength that works powerfully in me.

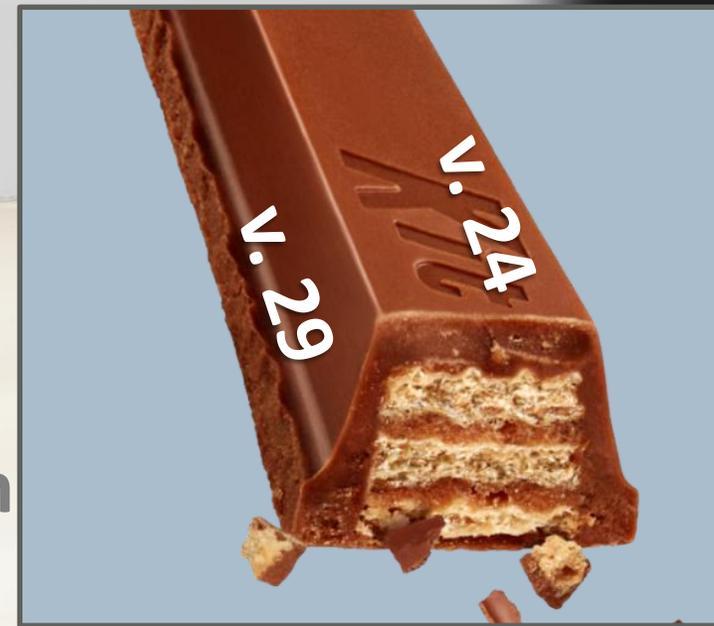
I suffer for the body of Christ, a cause of joy.

I serve God's church to make His word fully known.

In Christ, Gentiles have the hope of glory.

We proclaim Jesus, using wisdom for maturity.

I labor for everyone's maturity in Christ, empowered by Jesus.



24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for his body, that is, the church.

Colossians 1 CSB

Roman Catholic majority doctrine: Jesus' suffering only gets us started, and we need work of "the saints" and our own penance to be right before God.

Interpreting the “afflictions of Christ” as Christ’s redemptive sufferings, many [Roman Catholics] have used this verse as grounds for asserting that Christ’s atonement is defective and that the sufferings of the saints are needed to supplement his works on our behalf...But we may be sure that Paul did not regard the death of Jesus as lacking in efficacy. (See Colossians 2:11-15.)

– Curtis Vaughan, *Colossians*

¹⁴ He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.

Colossians 2 CSB

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for his body, that is, the church.

Colossians 1 CSB



Greek: thlipseon θλίψεων = trouble, adversity, hardship – especially economic or social pains

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It is a simple matter of fact, that the afflictions of every [Christian] supplement the afflictions of Christ. The Church is built up by repeated acts of self-denial in successive individuals and successive generations. They continue the work which Christ began. – J.B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*



Reason through your scriptural support for that pet practice, asking yourself whether the practice grew directly from the text or whether the text became a convenient cover.

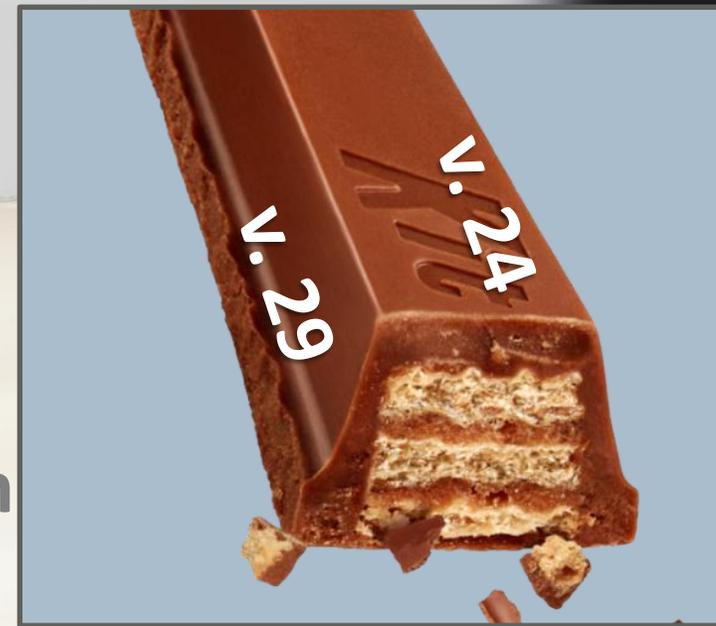
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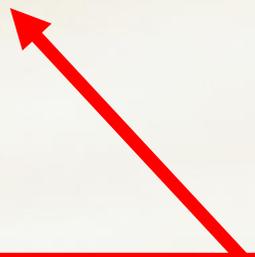
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“I labor” translates κοπιῶ kopio = a word for wearisome toil.

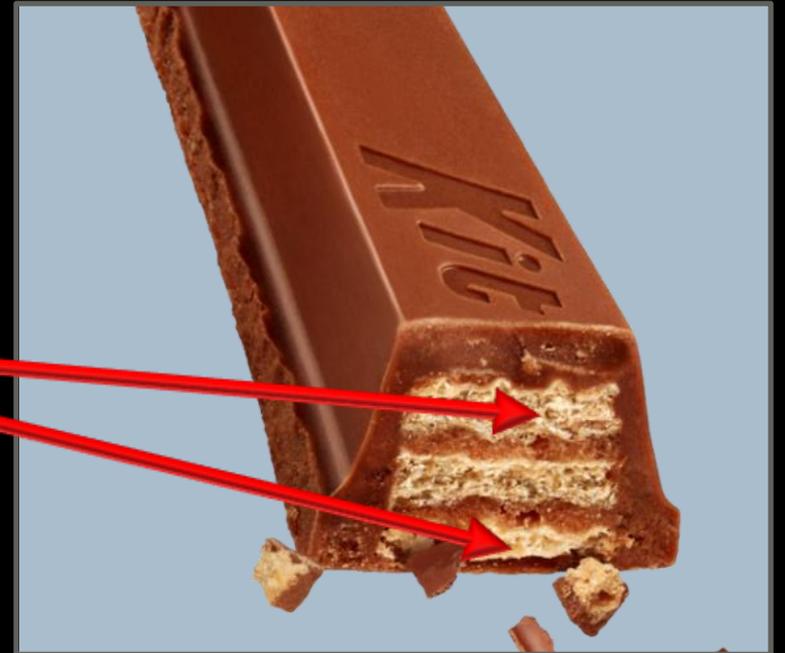
“Striving” is ἀγωνιζόμενος agonizomenos = agony from intense exertion, a word from the Olympic games.

“Strength” & “works” are noun and verb forms of the same word, ἐνέργεια energeia/energeo = operative power, energy.

Jesus is the source of the strength, providing “powerfully” δύναμις dynamis = supernatural or overwhelming ability.

25 I have become its servant, according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.

- There is an outer layer of a repeated idea
- **Then, one or more inner layers harmonize, covering different aspects of a related thought.**
- A middle idea that serves as the biggest point in the paragraph.



28 We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

¹⁸ Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28 CSB



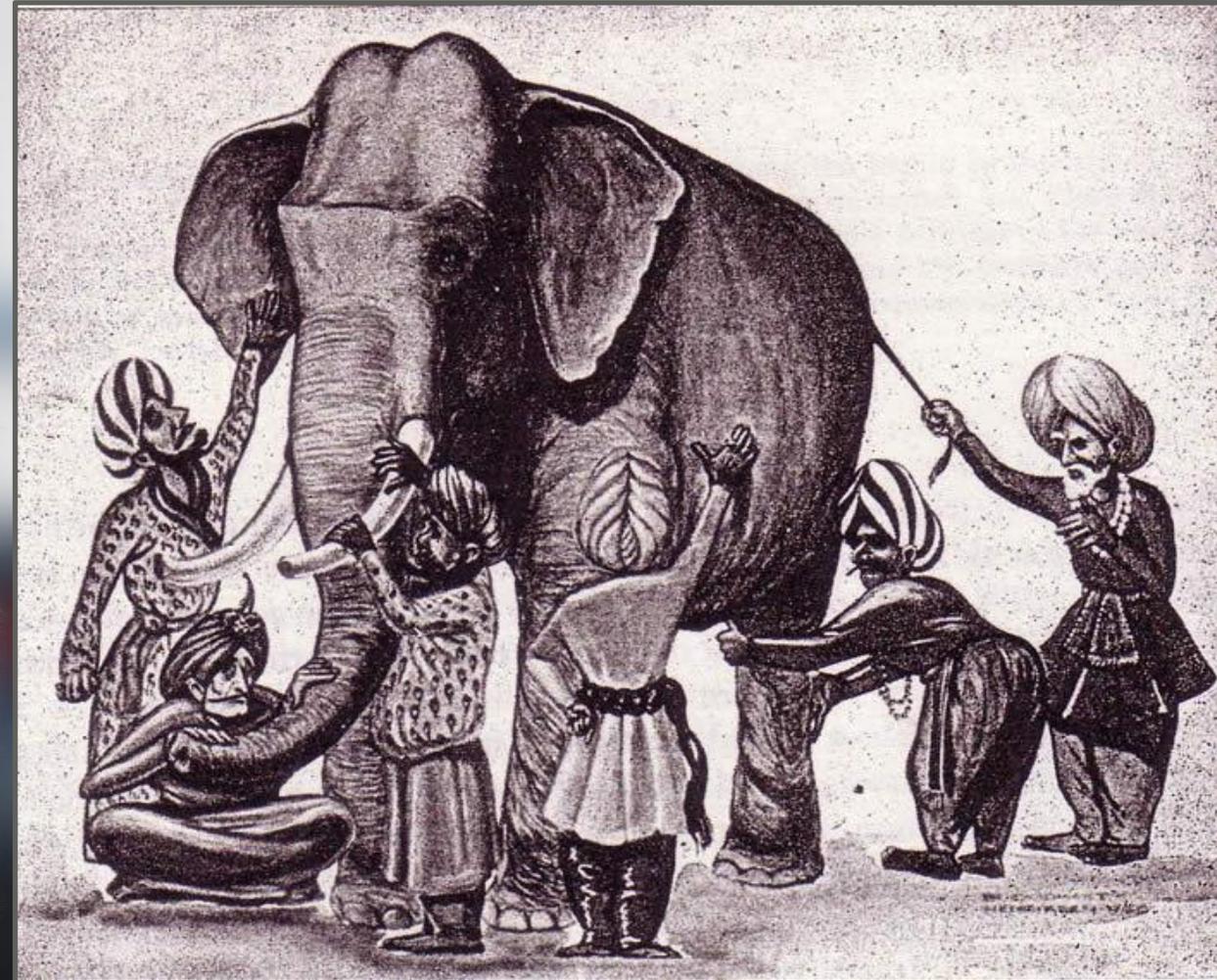
John Godfrey Saxe, an American lawyer, became very concerned that people in his day – the later 19th century – were picking and choosing information without considering the whole.

STORY TIME



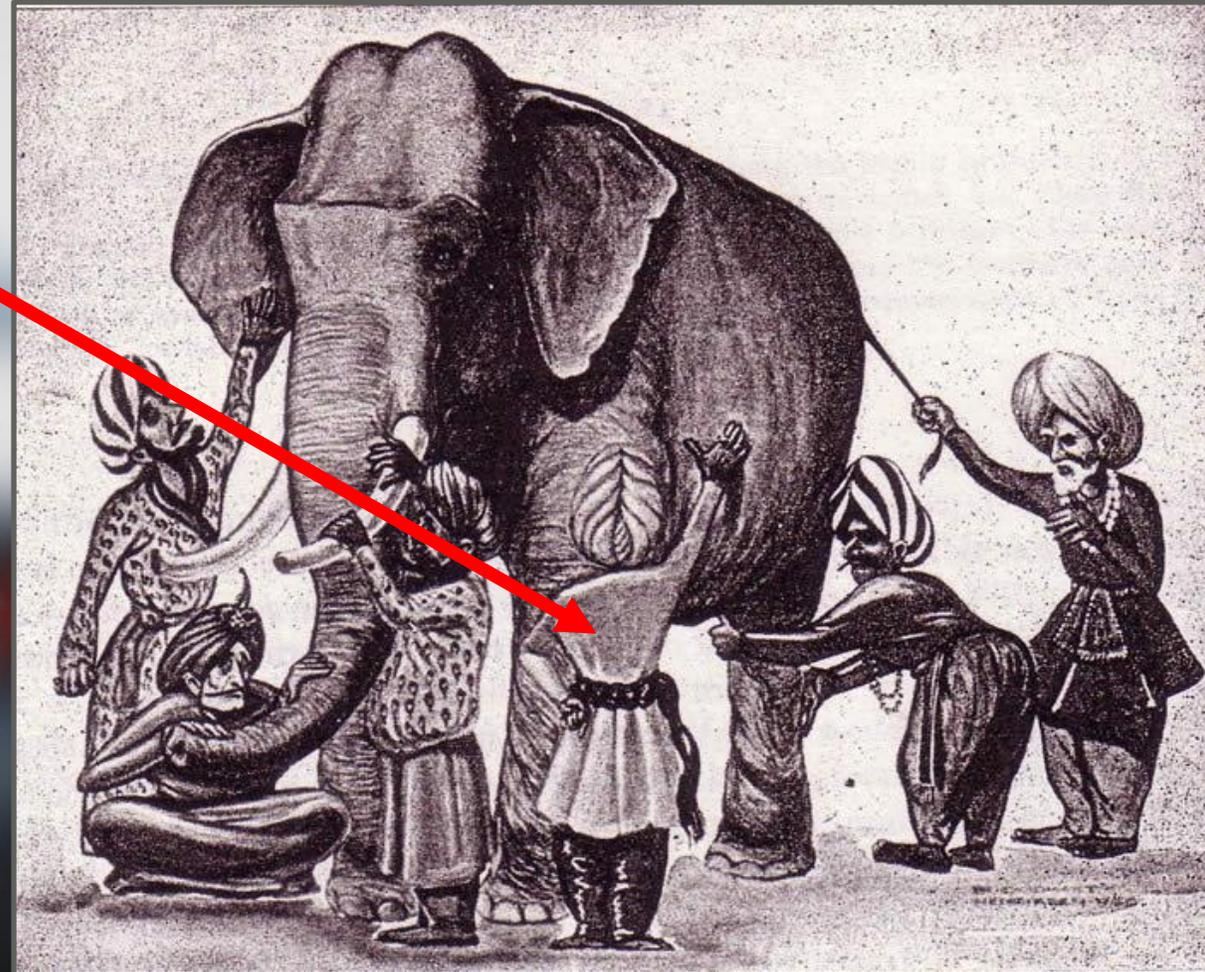
The Blind Men & The Elephant” by John Godfrey Saxe

**It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.**



The Blind Men & The Elephant” by John Godfrey Saxe

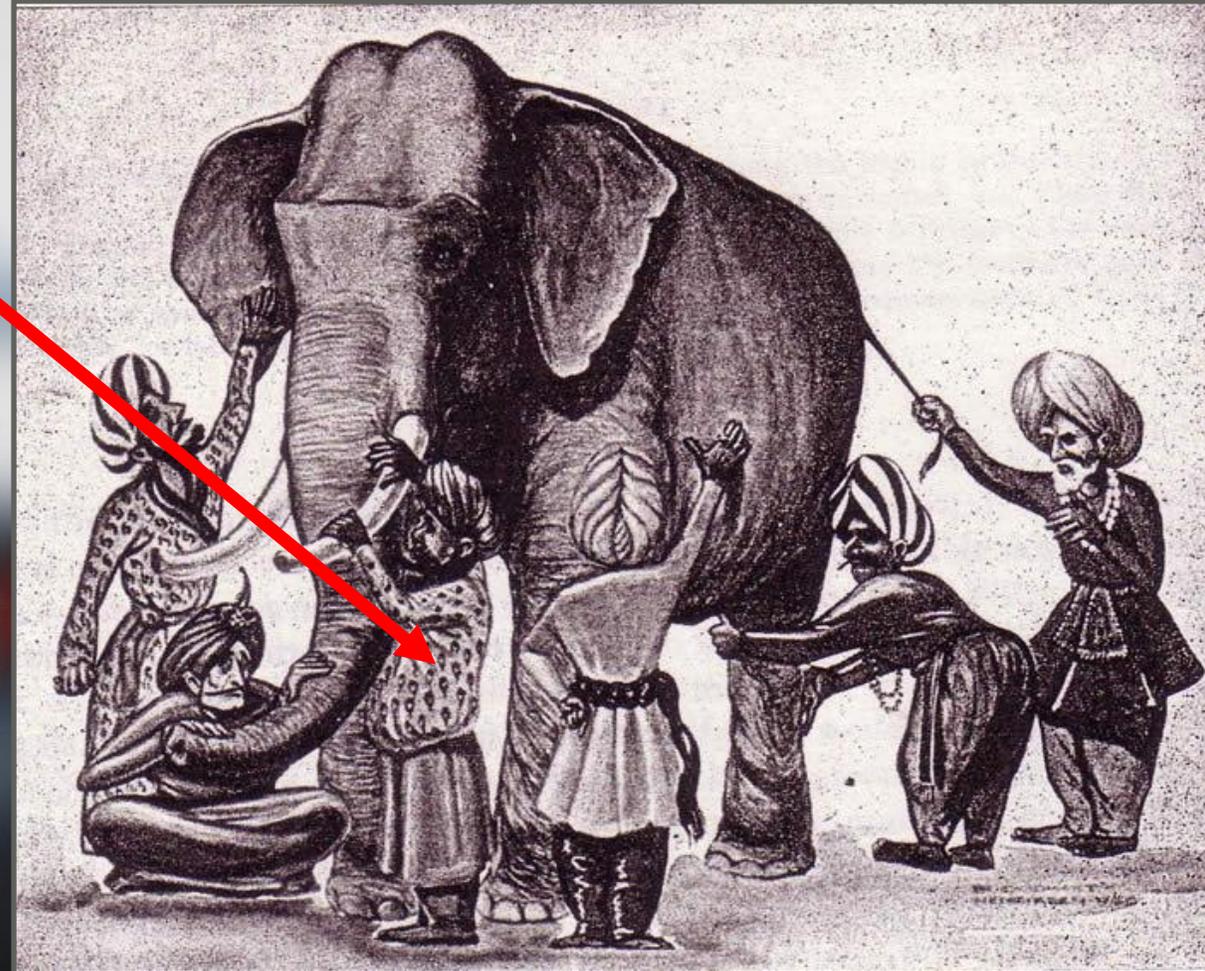
The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me!--but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"



"The Blind Men & The Elephant" by John Godfrey Saxe

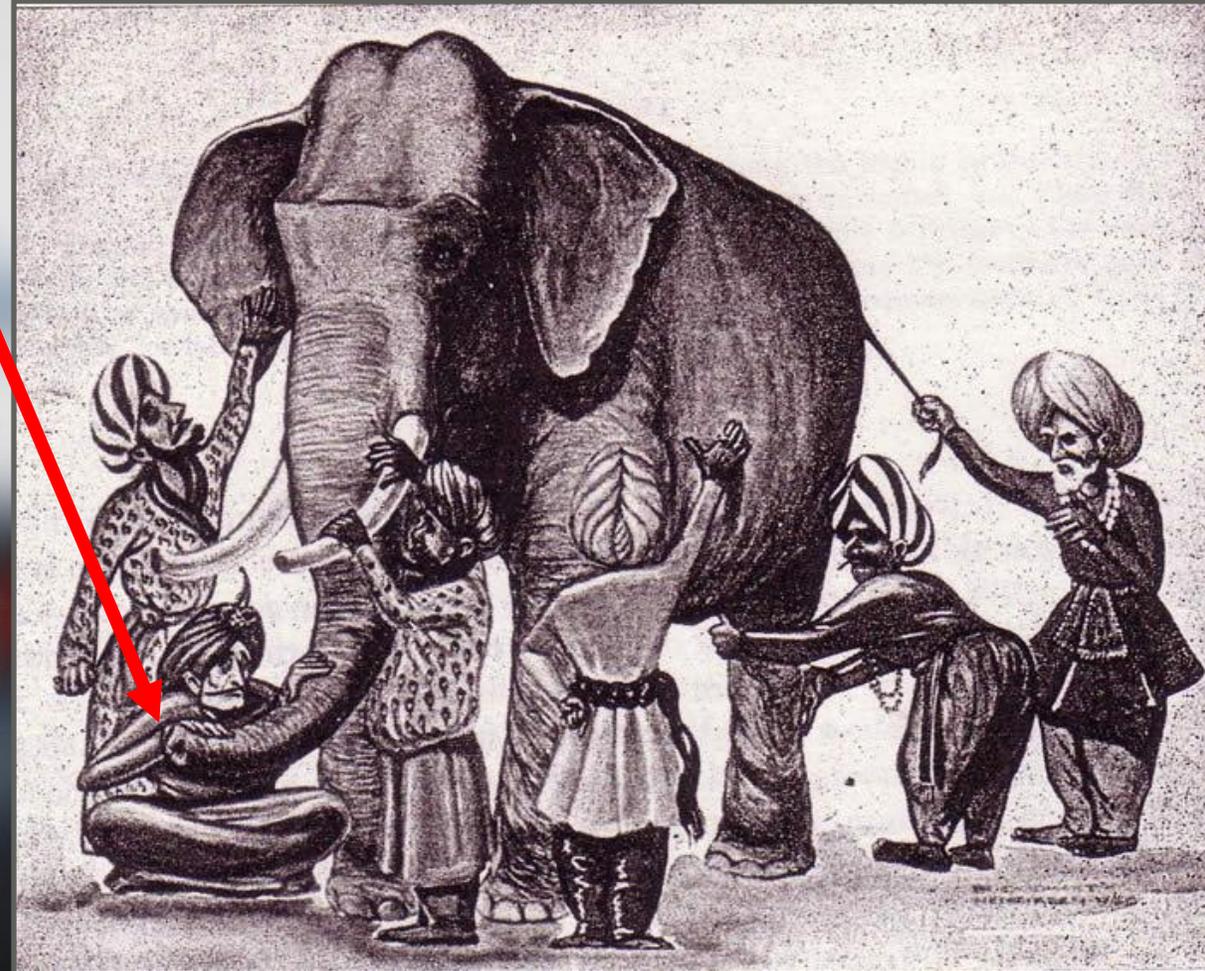
The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried: "Ho!--what have we here
So very round and smooth and
sharp?"

To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"



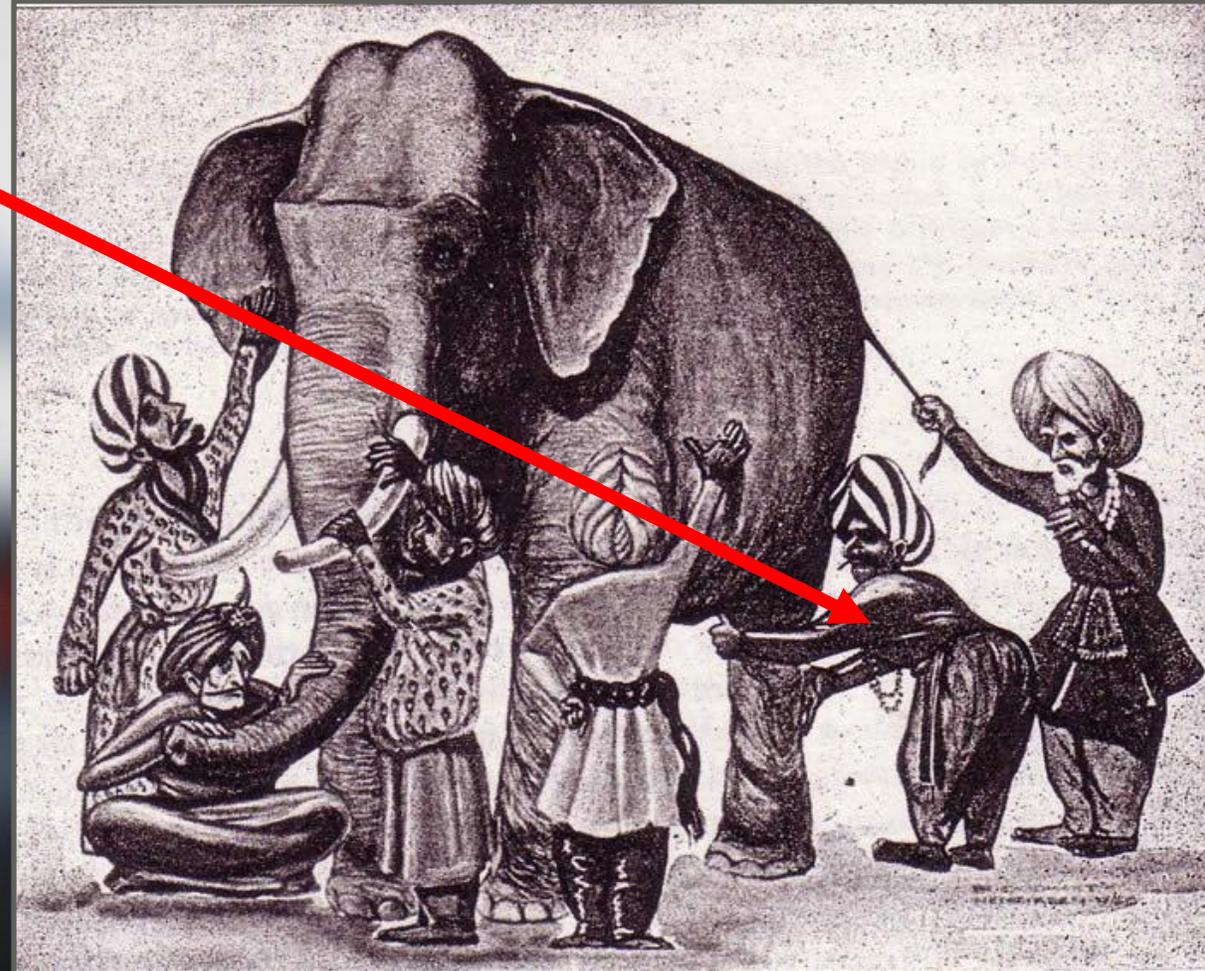
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The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his
hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"



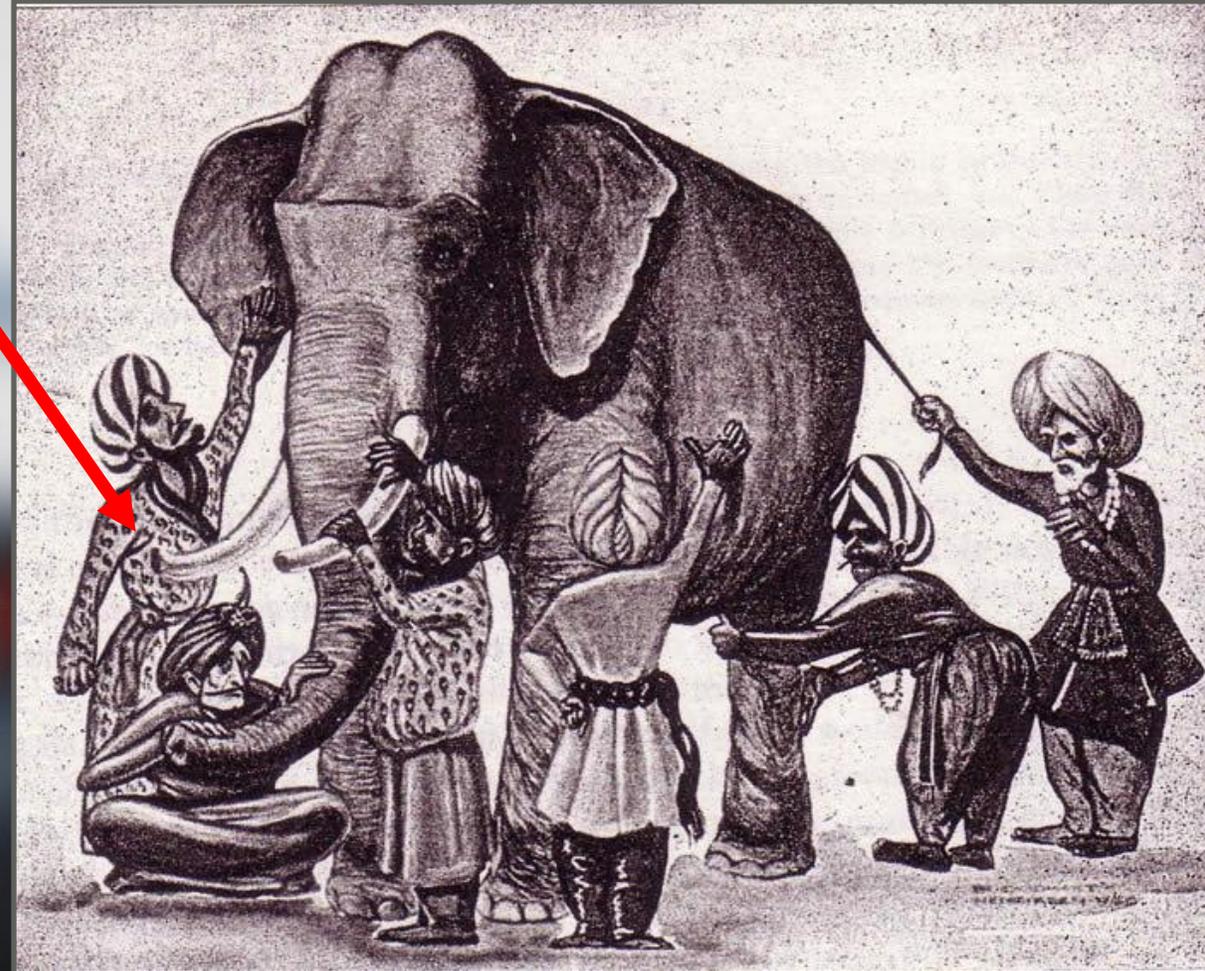
"The Blind Men & The Elephant" by John Godfrey Saxe

The Fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast
is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"



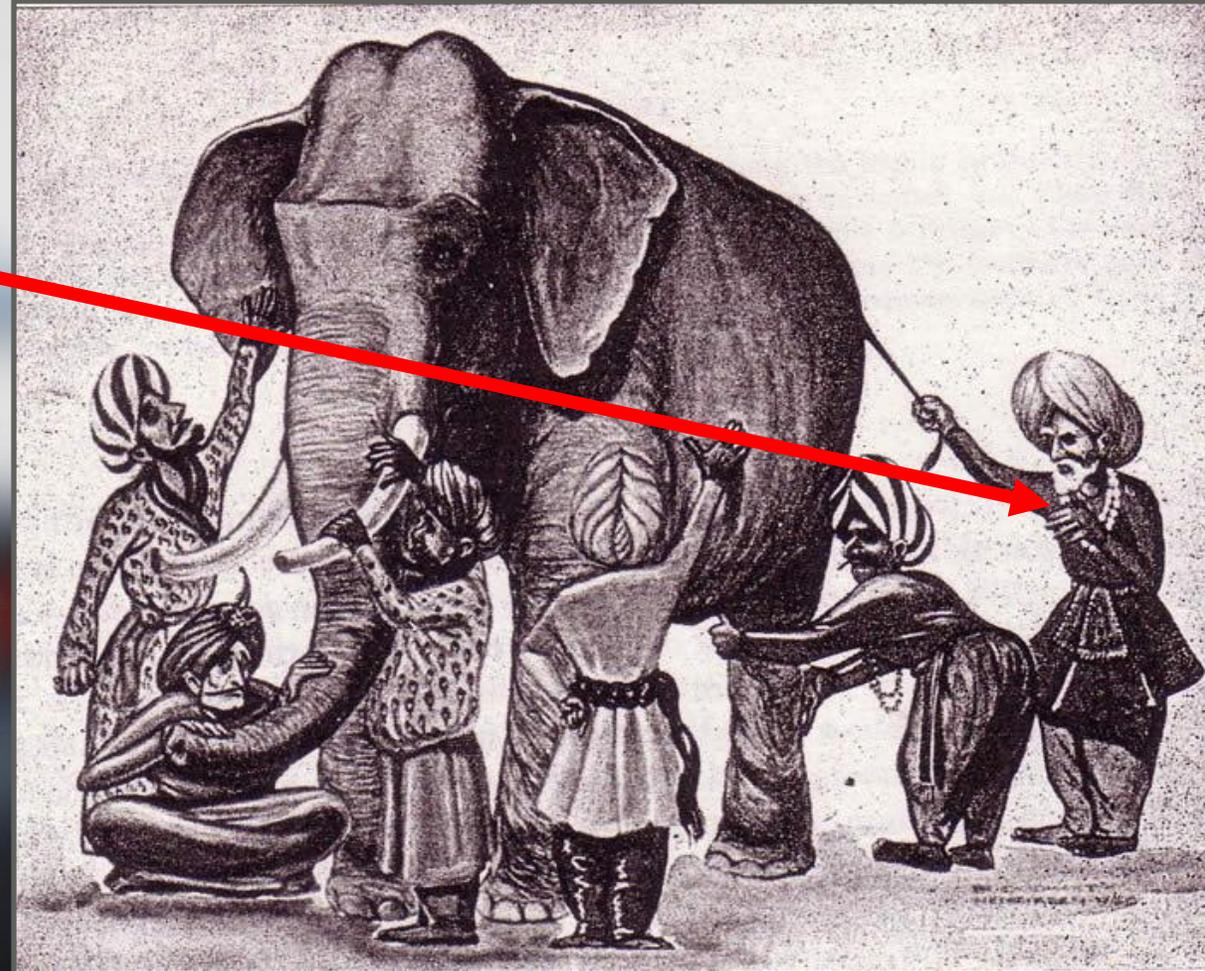
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The Fifth, who chanced to touch
the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"



"The Blind Men & The Elephant" by John Godfrey Saxe

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"



The Blind Men & The Elephant” by John Godfrey Saxe

**And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!**

The Blind Men & The Elephant” by John Godfrey Saxe

**So, oft in theologic wars
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!**

25 I have become its servant, according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.

28 We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Colossians 1 CSB



Tyson Zahner: If what you feel in your heart can override what the text says, doesn't that make Christianity infinitely malleable? How do you ever know when you're wrong?

They tried to respond, but every answer relied on the same circular reasoning the question was designed to expose. Ultimately, I don't doubt the sincerity of the progressive Christians I spoke with this week. But sincerity isn't the same as accuracy. A worldview that makes your own heart the final authority...is not freeing. It's a prison with no walls, a place where you can wander anywhere, but no one can ever tell you if you've gone the wrong way.

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Colossians 1 CSB-

The deep end of Christianity isn't the version that tells you what you want to hear. It's the one that loves you enough to tell you what you need to hear. – Tyson Zahner, "Progress?"

**28 We proclaim him,
warning and teaching
everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present
everyone mature in Christ.**

Colossians 1 CSB

² Then he sent them to proclaim...[saying] ³ “Take nothing for the road,” he told them, “no staff, no traveling bag, no bread, no money; and don’t take an extra shirt.”

Luke 9 CSB

Principle: Those who would proclaim Jesus trust Him and not material things.

Assessment: I trust Jesus and not things of earth _____

- a) Almost always.**
- b) For a few hours on Sundays after church.**
- c) When things of earth fail me.**
- d) Almost never.**

26 “Therefore, [because Jesus will return to judge] don’t be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that won’t be uncovered and nothing hidden that won’t be made known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops.”

Matthew 10 CSB

Principle: Those who would proclaim Jesus are boldly unafraid of opposition.

Assessment: I am afraid _____

- a) Almost always.**
- b) Except for a few hours on Sundays during & after church.**
- c) Often, but I mask it with medicine, relations, activity, etc.**
- d) Almost never.**

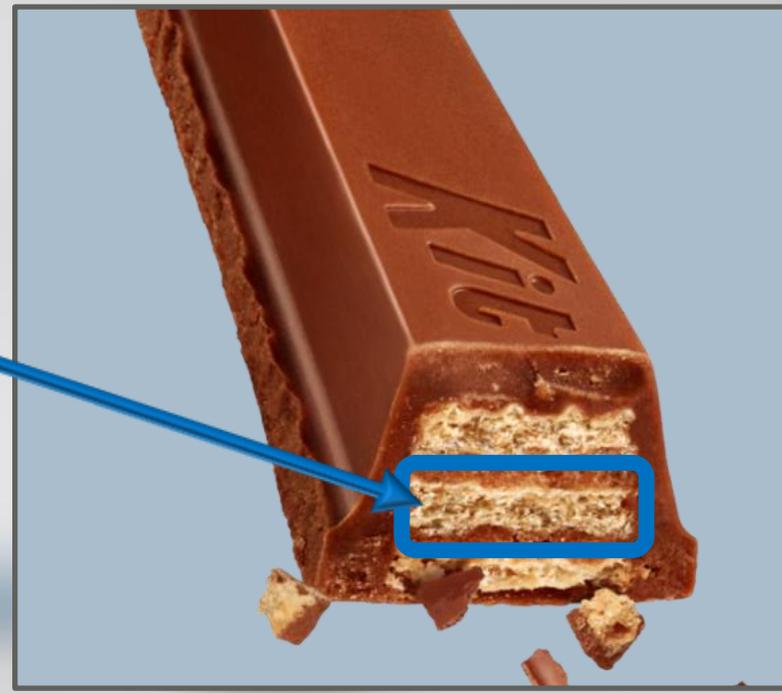
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Colossians 1 CSB



- A middle idea that serves as the biggest point in the paragraph.



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I serve God's church to make His word fully known.
In Christ, Gentiles have the hope of glory.
We proclaim Jesus, using wisdom for maturity.
I labor for everyone's maturity in Christ, empowered by Jesus.**

Greek: μυστήριον mysterion = something always true but only recently understood

²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1 CSB

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Jesus is the source of the strength, providing “powerfully” δύναμις dynamis = supernatural or overwhelming ability.

12 [Before trusting] Christ you were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

Ephesians 2 NLT

**Rest surely, bed of stone
Dead men's defiant throne
For heavy is the head
Lost at sea, painted red
Submerged for the crowning
Bloodstained and drowning
Sinking ever down
Downward, ever down**

– from “Actual Drowning” by Mike Braudrick

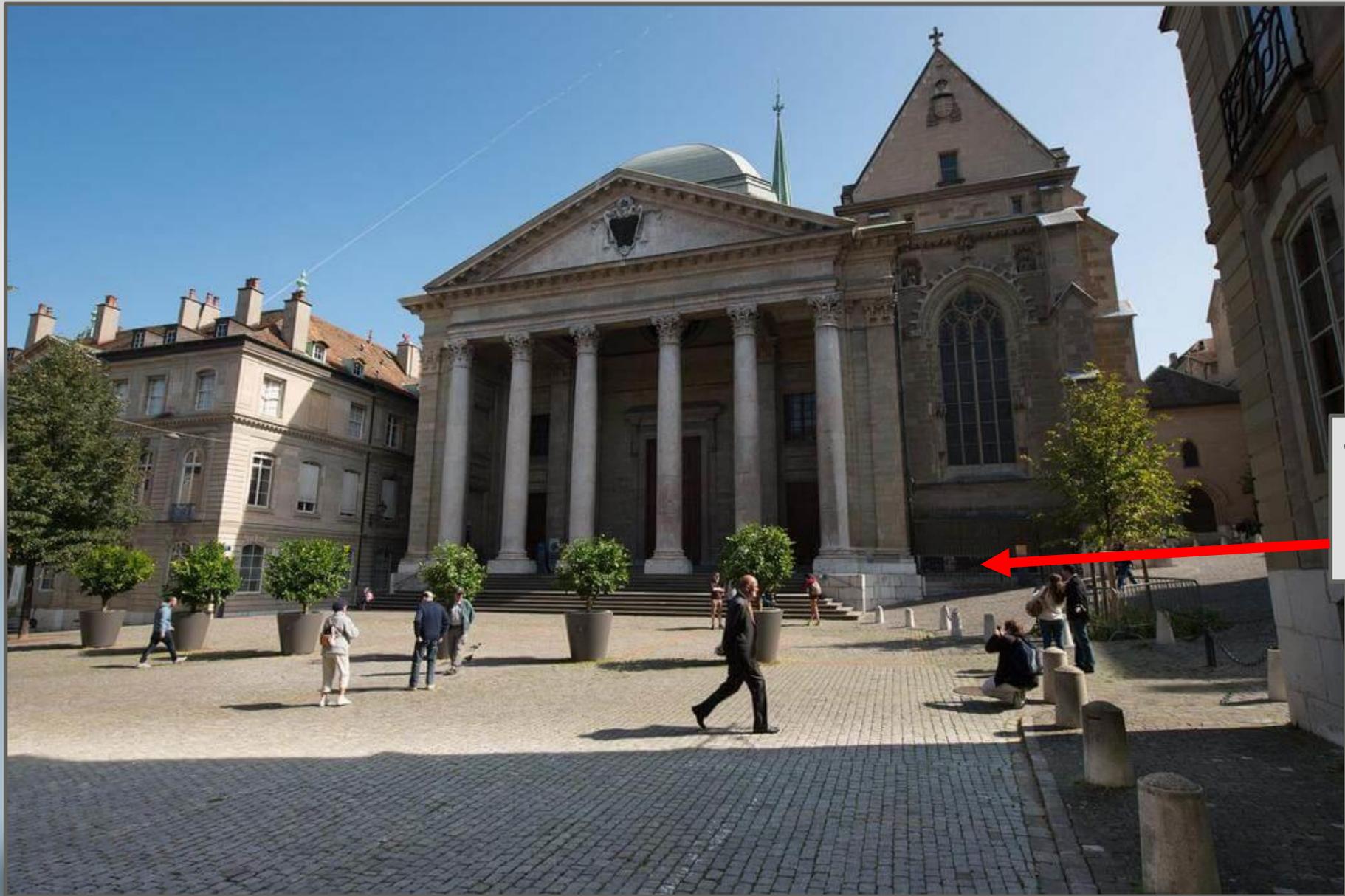
¹² [Before trusting] Christ you were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

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Colossians 1 CSB



courtesy Fodors



**They were
here.**



Genava ruins from 1st c. B.C.

²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷ God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1 CSB

**13 But now you have been united with Christ Jesus.
Once you were far away from God,
but now you have been brought near to him
through the blood of Christ.**

**14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us.
He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when,
in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of
hostility that separated us. ¹⁷ He brought this Good News
of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and
peace to the Jews who were near.**

Ephesians 2 NLT

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I serve God's church to make His word fully known.

In Christ, Gentiles have the hope of glory.

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I labor for everyone's maturity in Christ, empowered by Jesus.

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I serve God's church to make His word fully known.

In Christ, Gentiles have the hope of glory.

We proclaim Jesus, using wisdom for maturity.

I labor for everyone's maturity in Christ, empowered by Jesus.

Because of what God has done, because of the core that Christ is in you...You, Christian, can do what God wants done. You can serve the church and share the full word of God. It's hard work, but God empowers it and that makes it a joy.

Who are we?

We are redeemed community.

[Col. 1: the revealed mystery is our sure hope of glory in Jesus.]

What do we do?

We do the Great Commission.

[We proclaim Jesus, making the Word fully known for maturity.]

How is that done?

By the power of the Holy Spirit.

[His strength works powerfully in me.]

Why? To what end?

For the glory of God.

[Rejoicing and maturity glorify God.]

Faithful Truthful Powerful Wonderful Masterful Graceful Mindful Purposeful Delightful Joyful

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