

Now There Is
HOPE

The Books of Ezra & Esther



Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church

Dr. Brad Strait
May 21-22, 2022

Key Sources:

James Brooks, Craig
Blomberg, C.S. Lewis,
Andrew Brunson

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The Books of Ezra & Esther

Persecution—
The Simple Truth

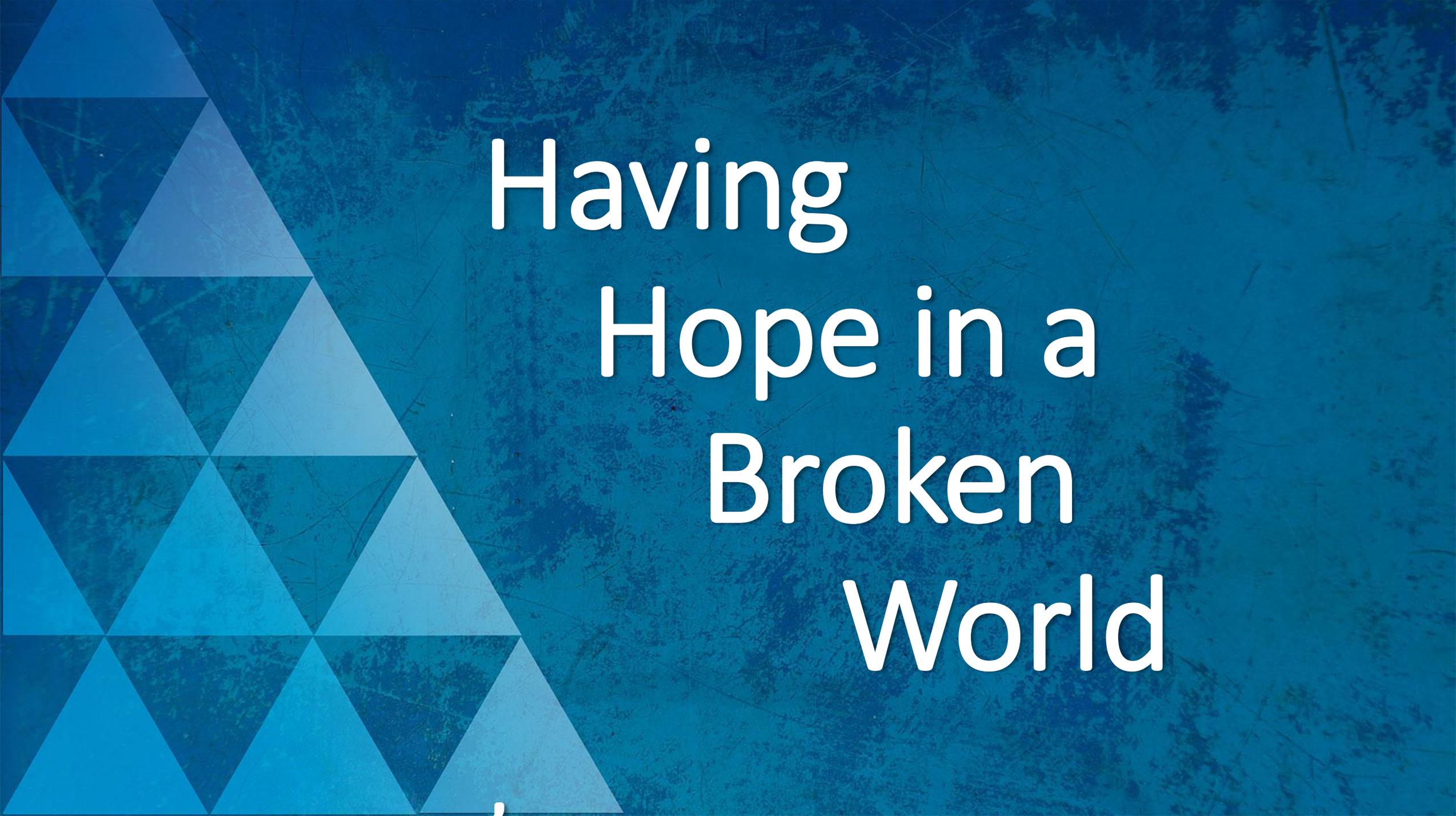


God's Covenant Faithfulness

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God's
Prevenience
and
Providence



Having Hope in a Broken World

Jeremiah 25:10-11

¹⁰ I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹
This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Ezra 4:23-24

²³ As soon as the copy of the letter of King Artaxerxes was read...they went immediately to the Jews in Jerusalem and compelled them by force to stop.

²⁴ Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

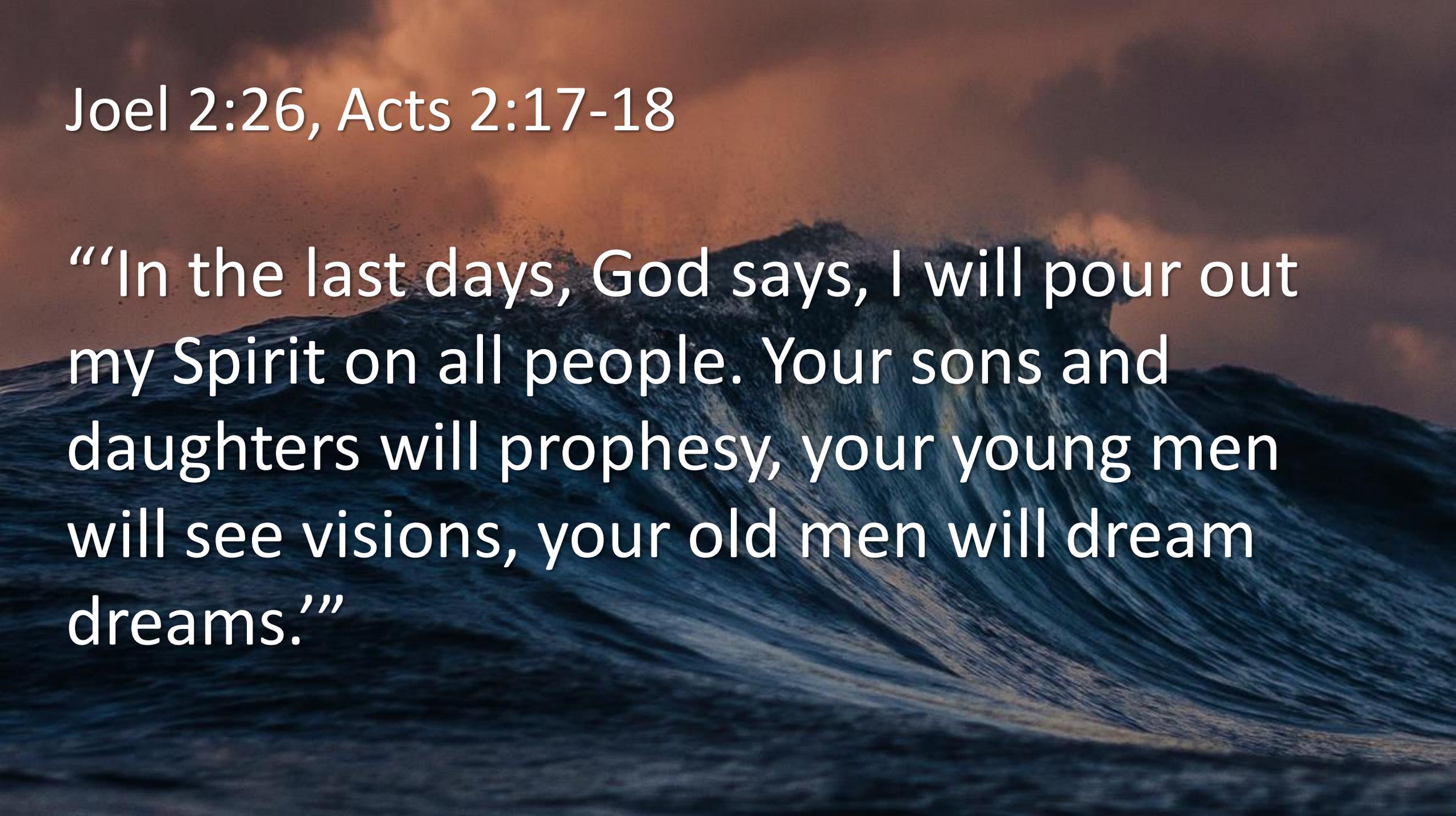
Esther 3:13

¹³ Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.



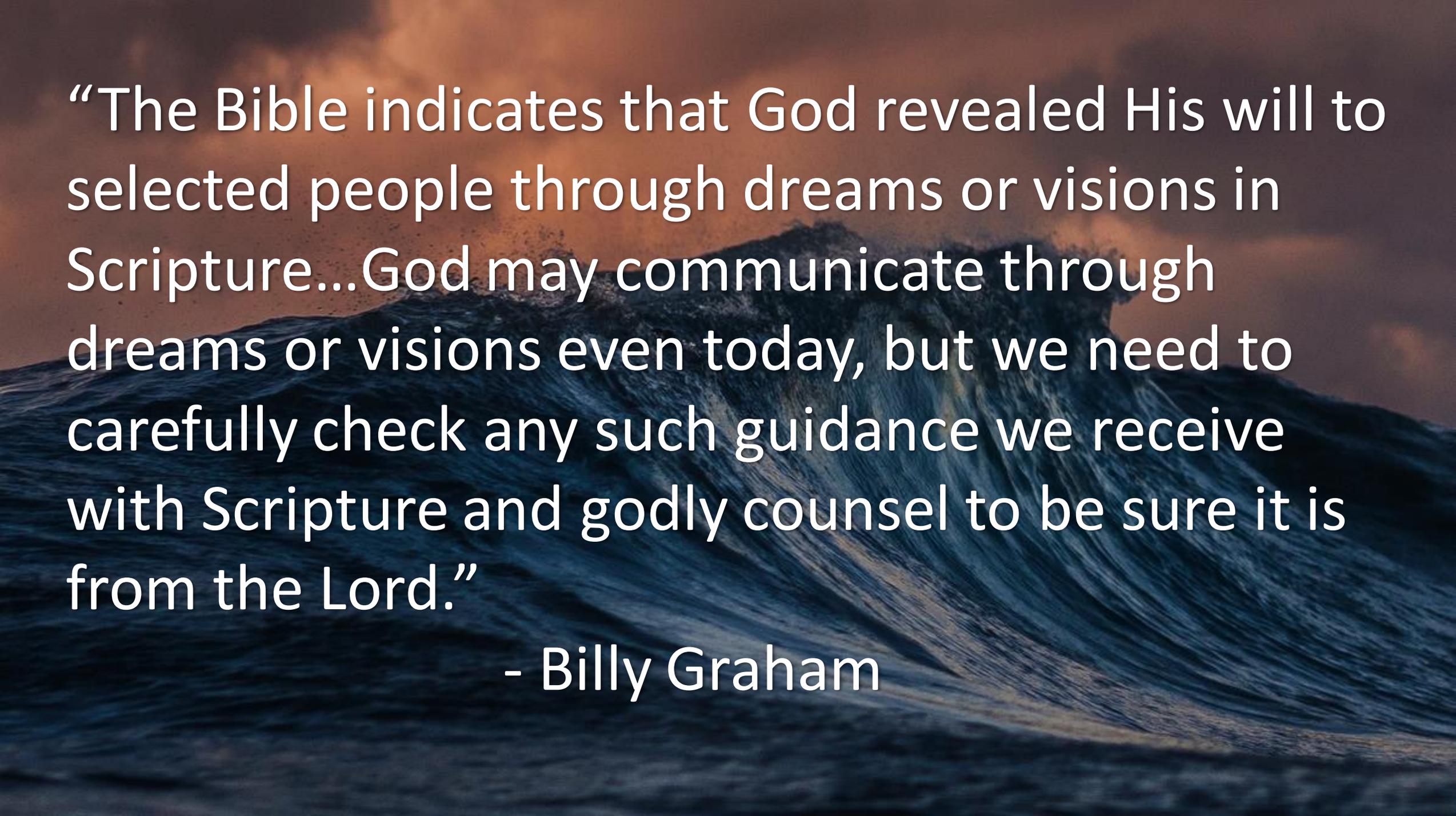
Job 33:14-16

“For God does speak—now one way,
now another—though no one perceives
it. In a dream, in a vision of the night,
when deep sleep falls on people as they
slumber in their beds, he may speak in
their ears.”



Joel 2:26, Acts 2:17-18

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.”



“The Bible indicates that God revealed His will to selected people through dreams or visions in Scripture...God may communicate through dreams or visions even today, but we need to carefully check any such guidance we receive with Scripture and godly counsel to be sure it is from the Lord.”

- Billy Graham



persecution

Matthew 5:10-12

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven...”

John 15:18-19

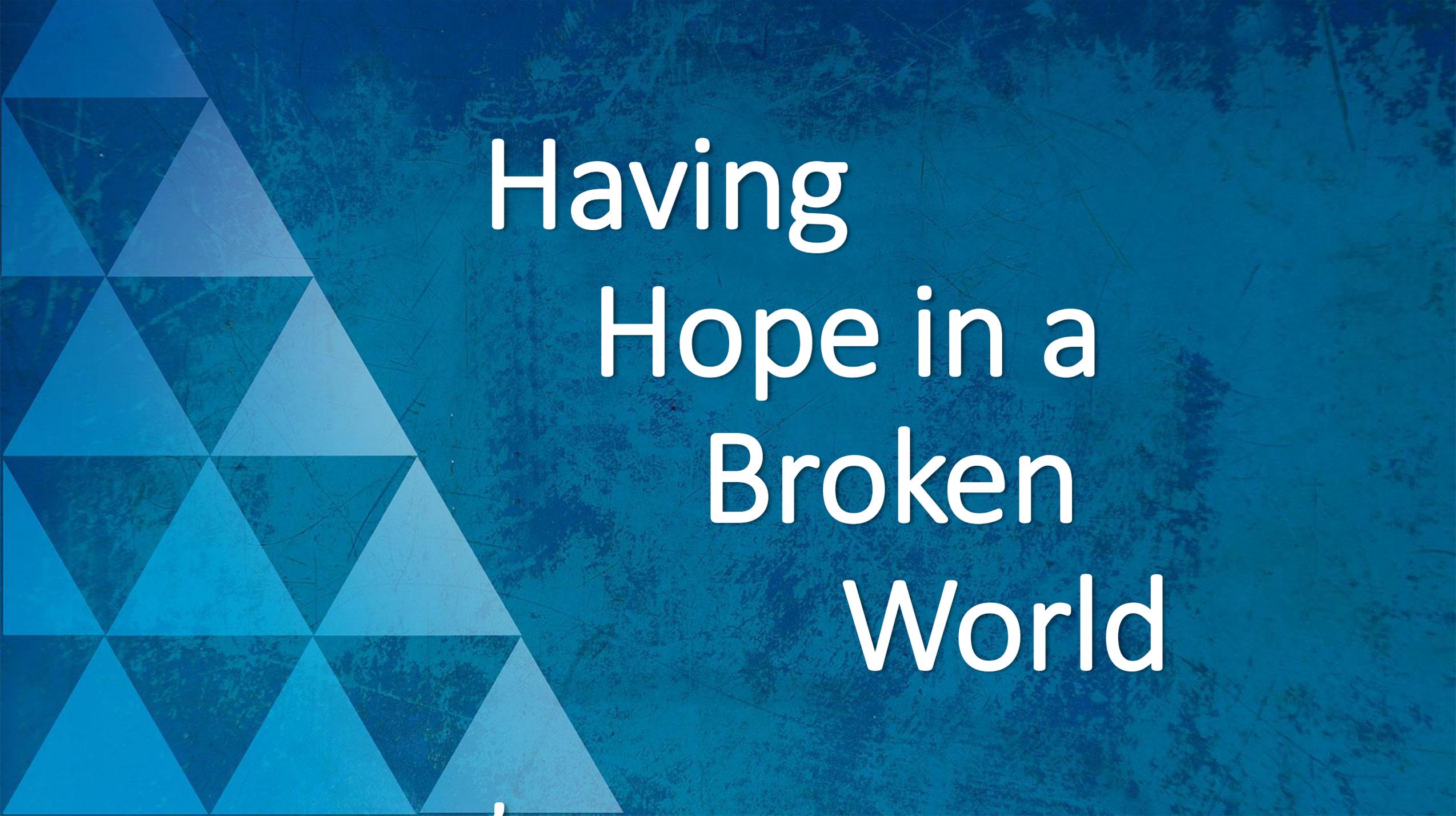
"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."

1 Thes. 3:4-5

“In fact, when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And it turned out that way, as you well know.”

2 Timothy 3:12-13

“¹² In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”



Having Hope in a Broken World



Mark 13:9-20

Jesus in Mark 13:9-20

⁹ “You must be on your guard (*blepete*).”

Jesus in Mark 13:9-13, 20

^{9b} You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. ¹⁰
And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

Jesus in Mark 13:9-13, 20

¹¹ Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

Jesus in Mark 13:9-13, 20

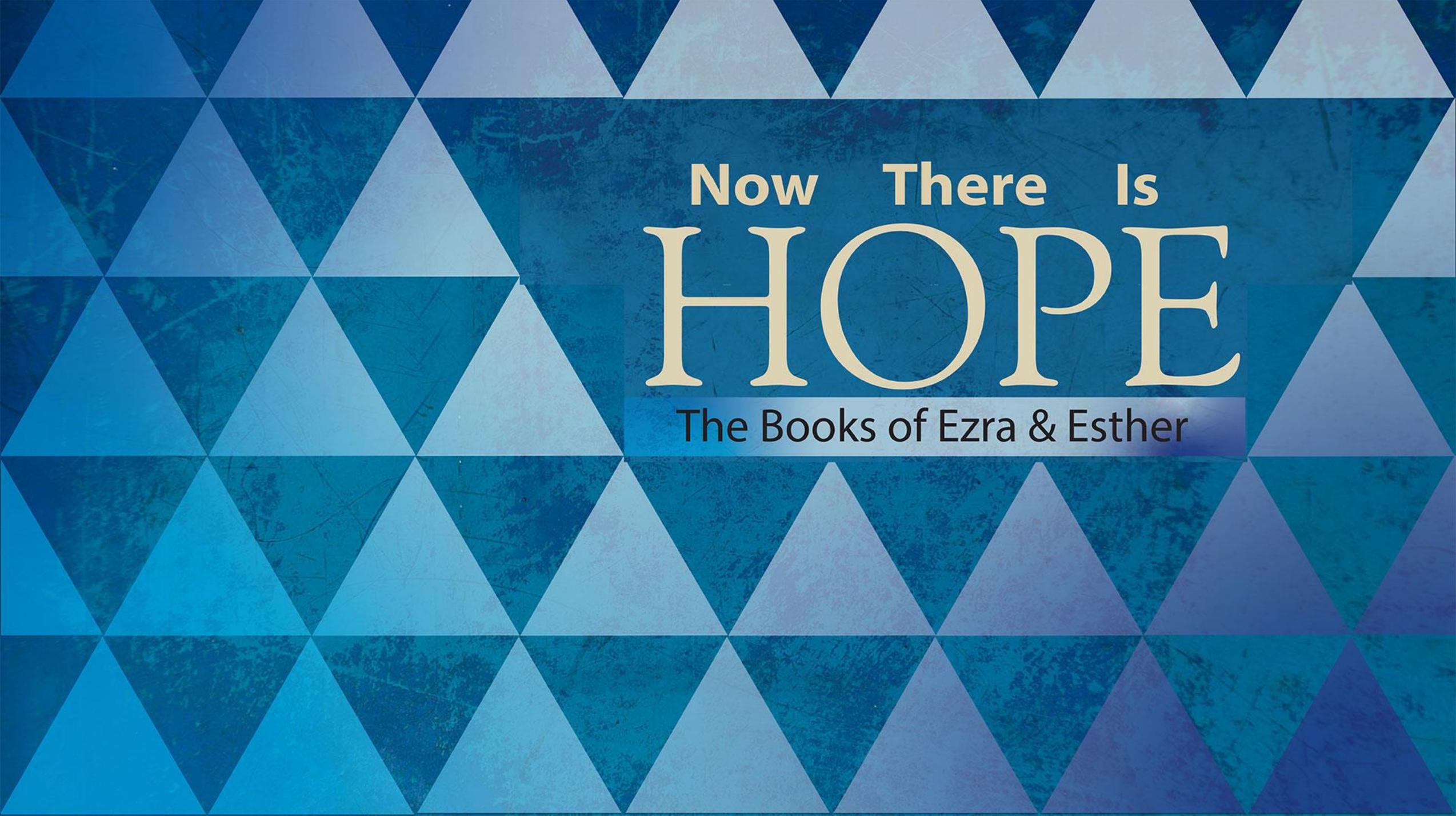
12 “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.”

Jesus in Mark 13:9-13, 20

13 “Everyone will hate you because of me”

Jesus in Mark 13:9-13, 20

¹³ Everyone will hate you because of me...
but the one who stands firm (*hupomeno*) to
the end (*eremos telos*) will be saved...



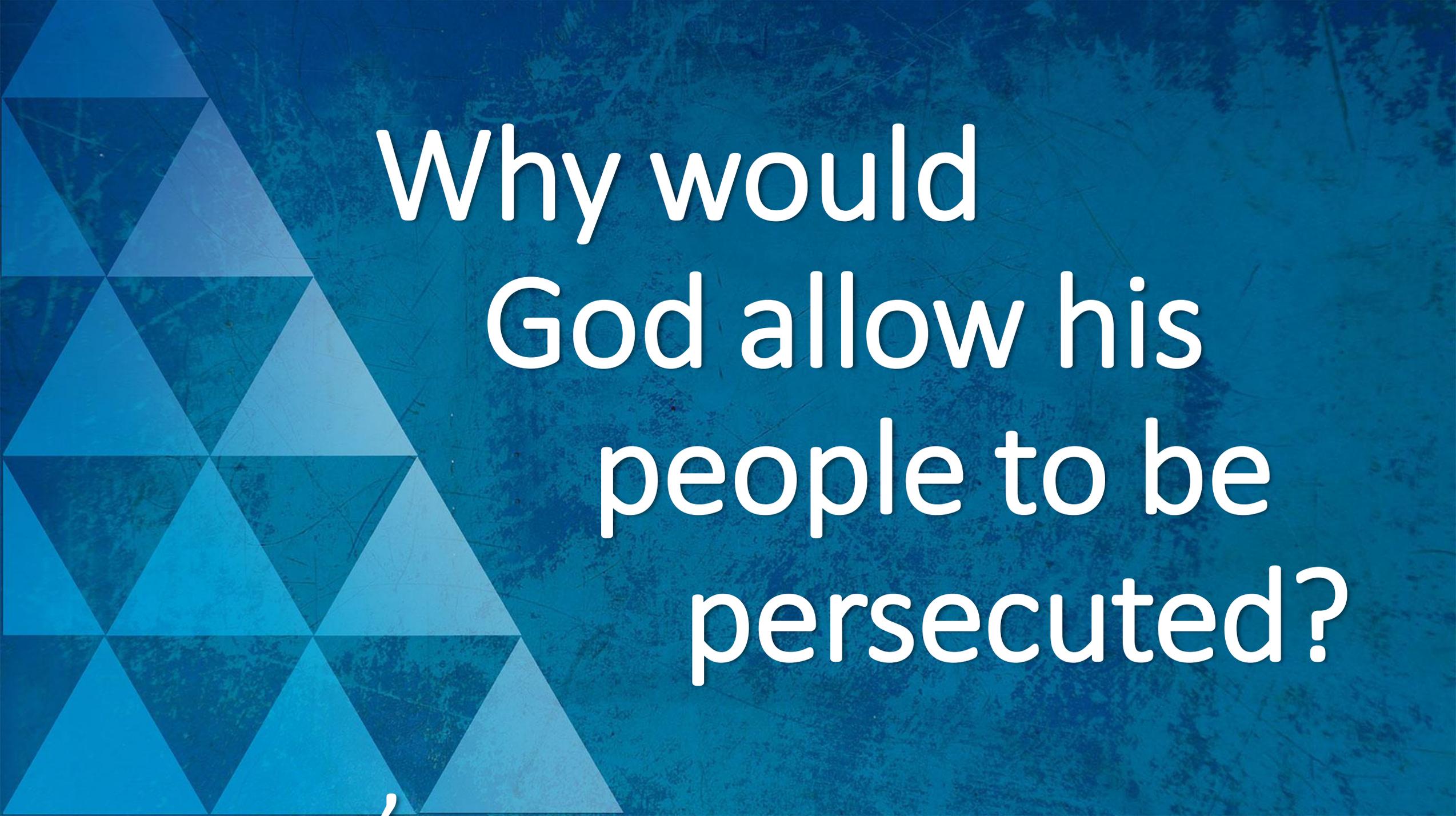
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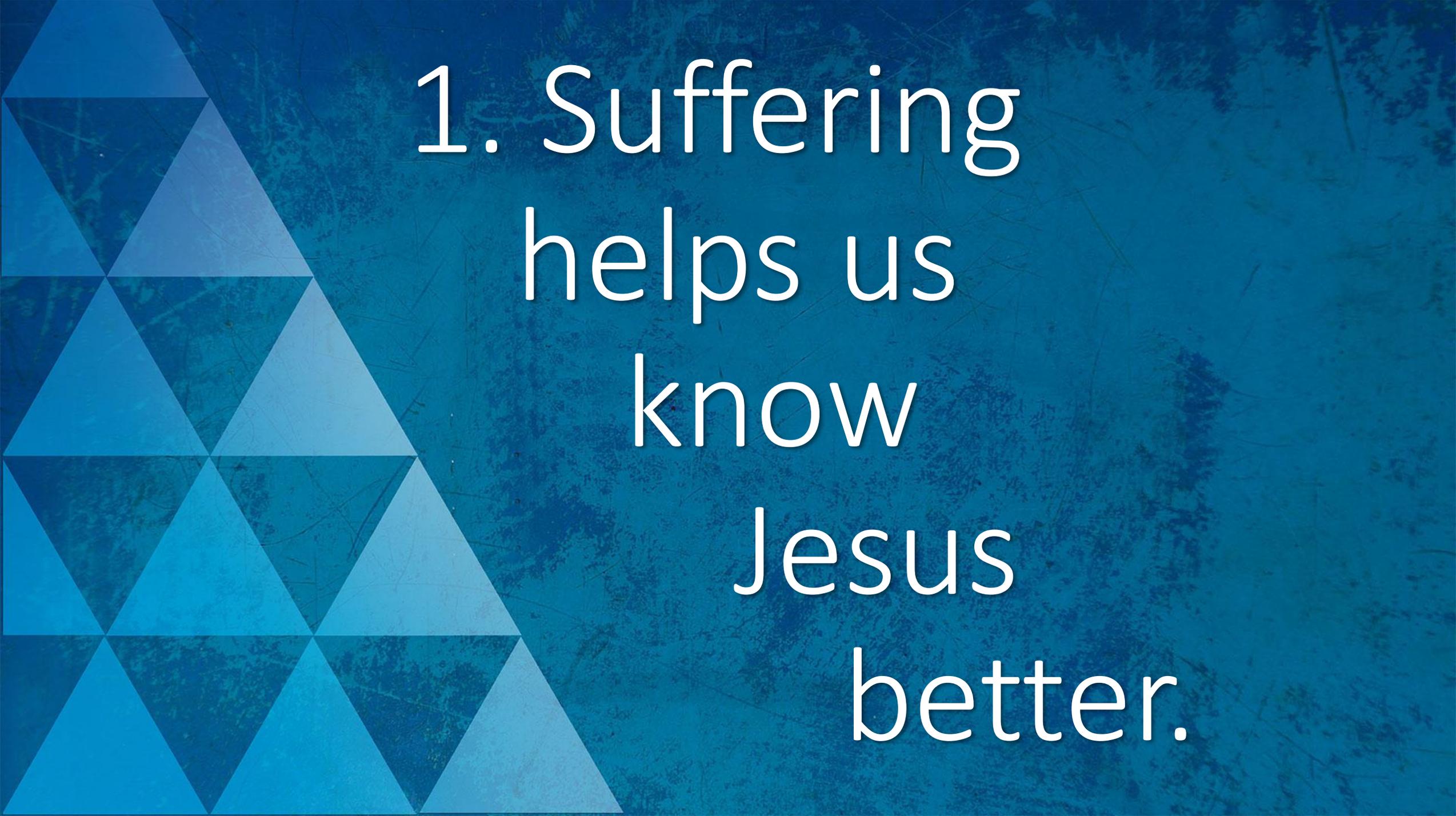
Jesus in Mark 13:9-20

²⁰ “If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.”





Why would
God allow his
people to be
persecuted?



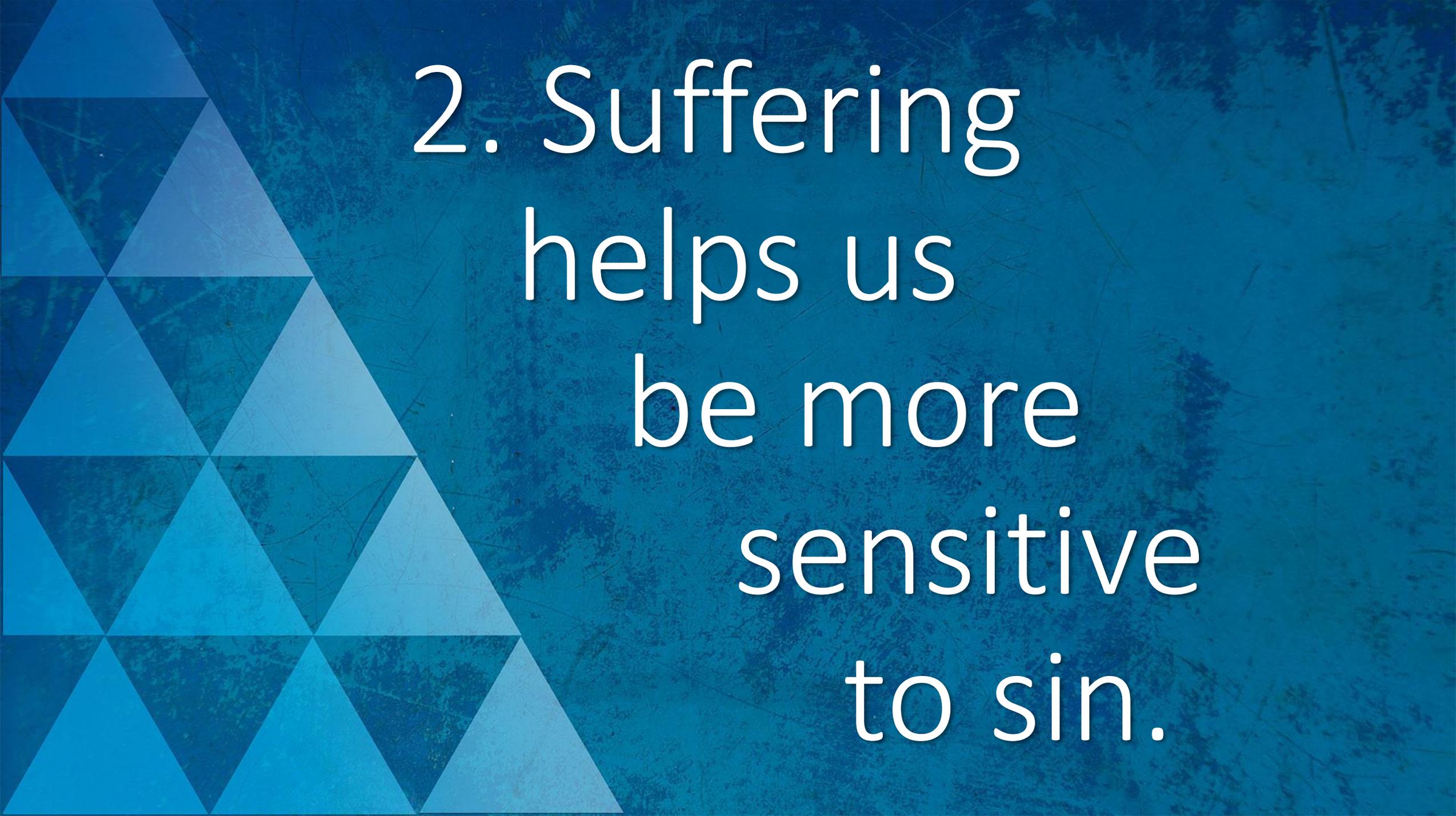
1. Suffering
helps us
know
Jesus
better.

Philippians 3:10-11

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Romans 8:35-37

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’”



2. Suffering
helps us
be more
sensitive
to sin.

1 Peter 4:1-2

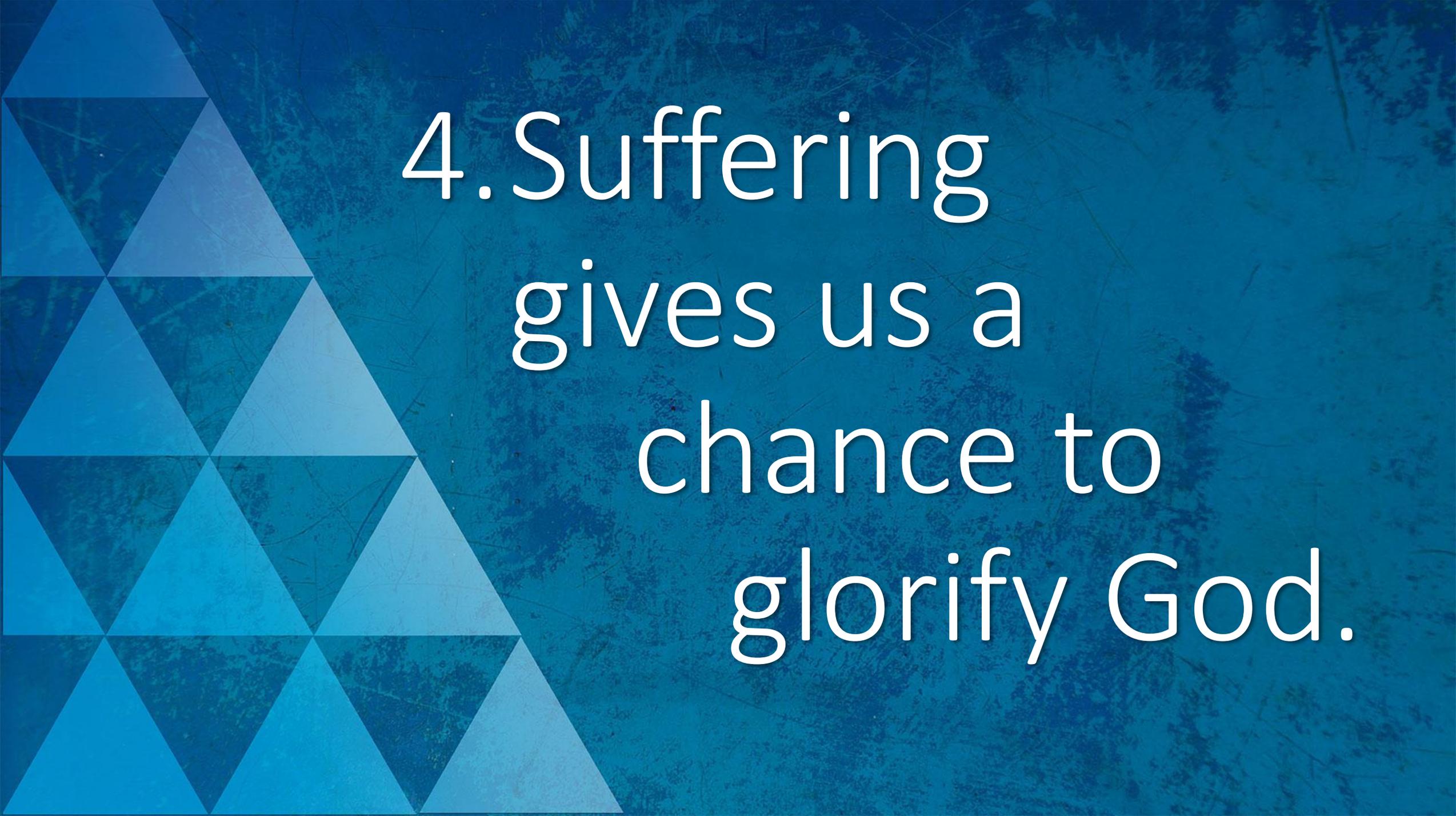
Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.



3. Suffering
grows us
toward
maturity.

James 1:2-4

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”



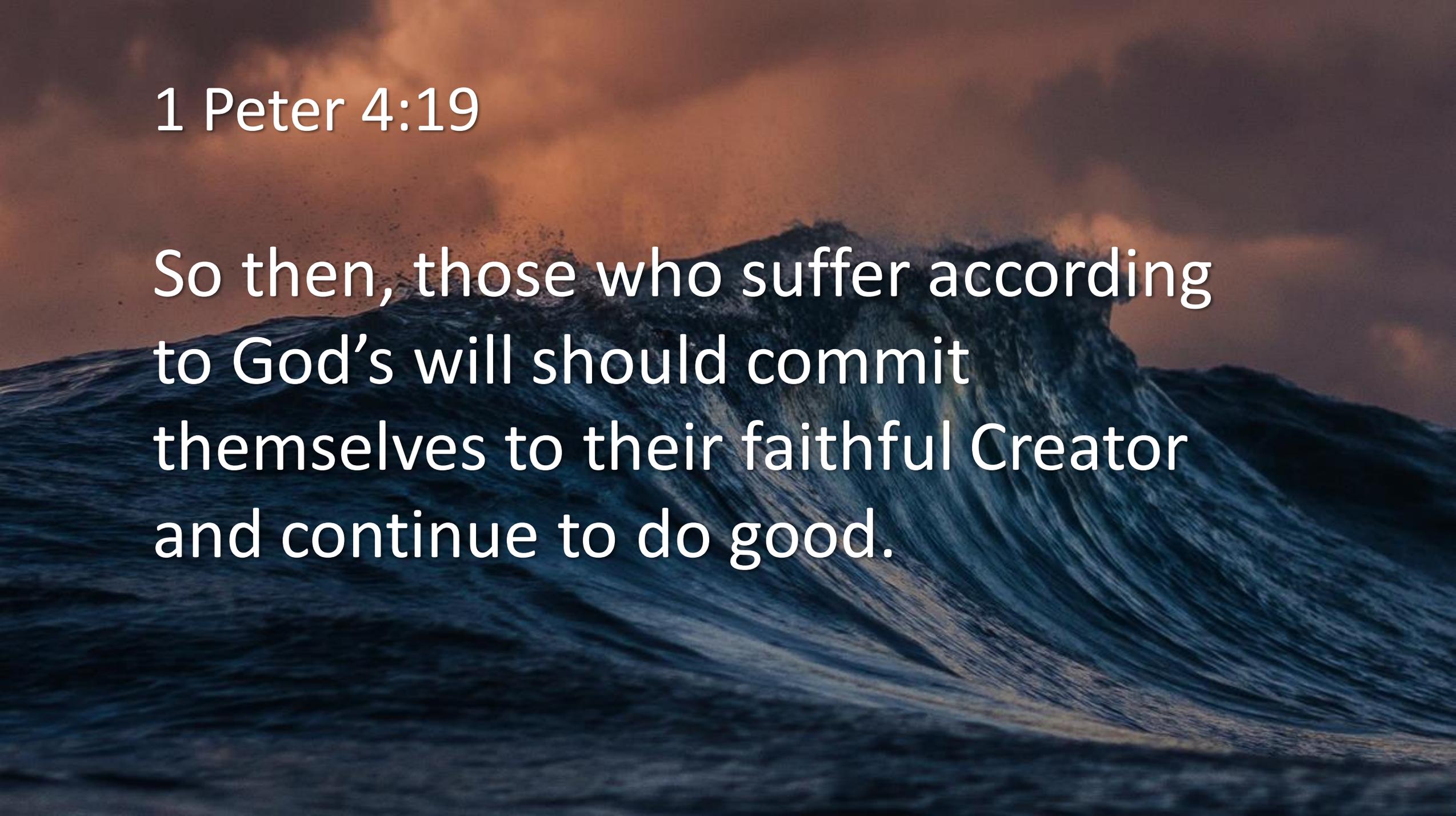
4. Suffering
gives us a
chance to
glorify God.

1 Peter 1:6-8

“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

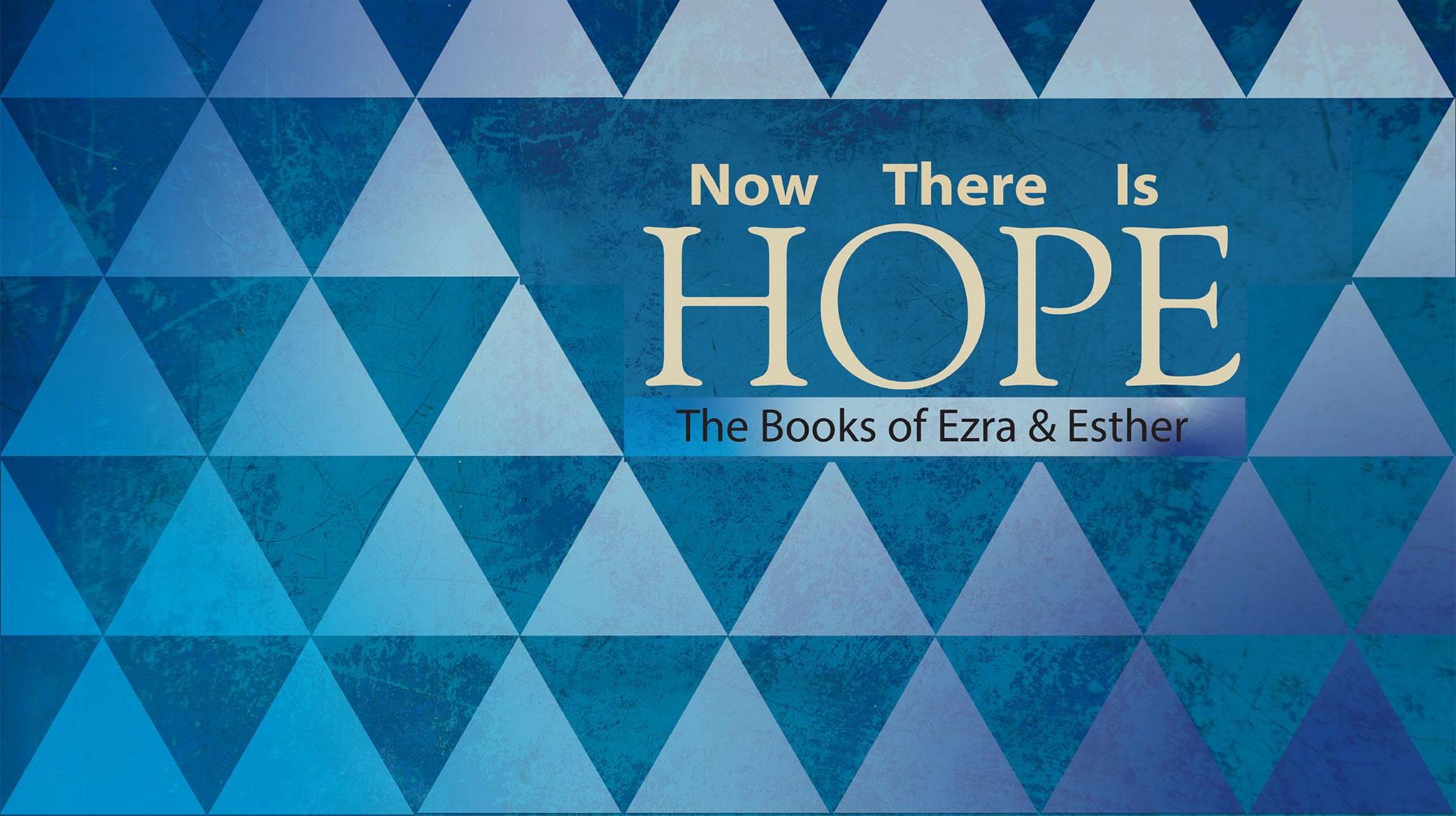
2 Corinthians 4:8-10

“⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

A dramatic ocean wave crashing under a stormy, orange-hued sky. The wave is dark blue and white, with a large crest. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, and the overall lighting is dim and atmospheric, suggesting a sunset or sunrise during a storm.

1 Peter 4:19

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.



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