

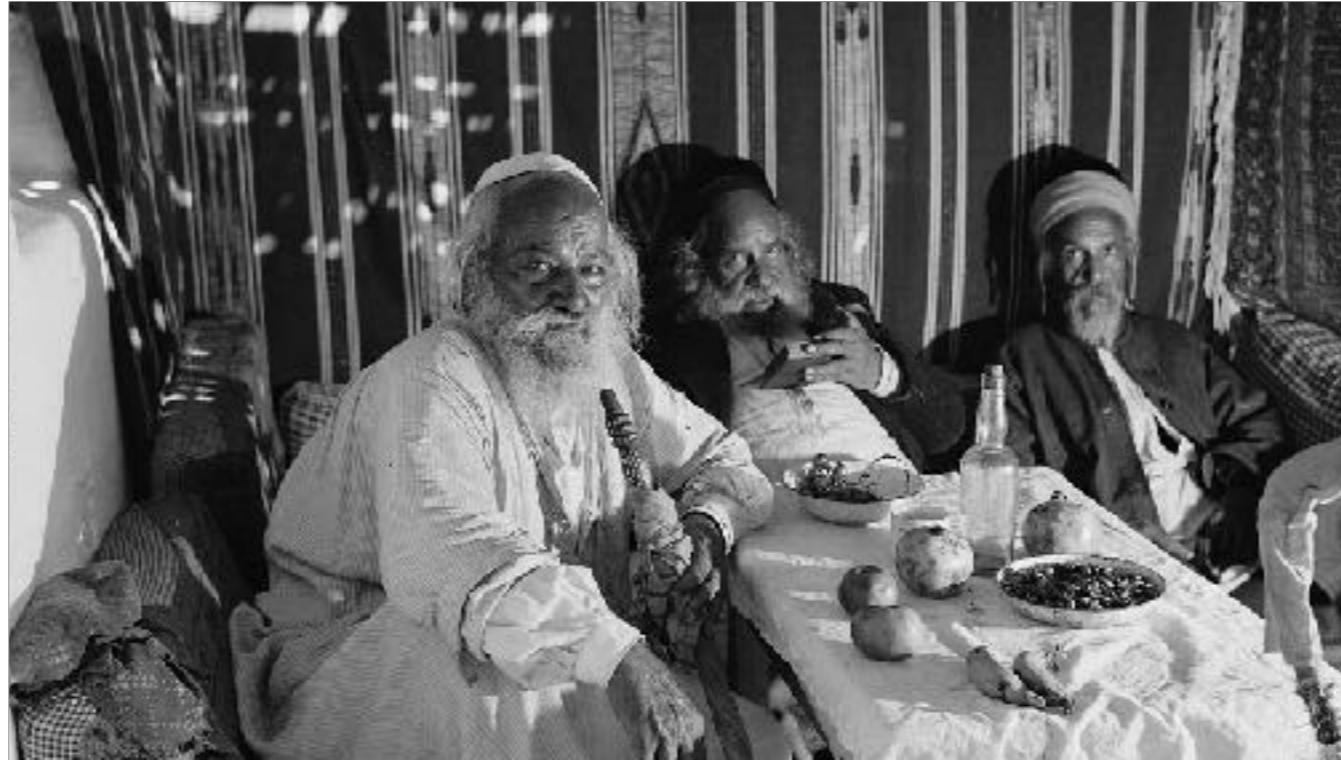
- The Miracle Worker, tells the story of Helen Keller.



- An illness renders infant Helen Keller blind, deaf, and consequently mute (deaf-mute).
 - Pitied and badly spoiled by her parents, Helen is taught no discipline and, by the age of six, grows into a wild, angry, tantrum-throwing child in control of the household.
 - Desperate, the Kellers hire Annie Sullivan to serve as governess and teacher for their daughter.

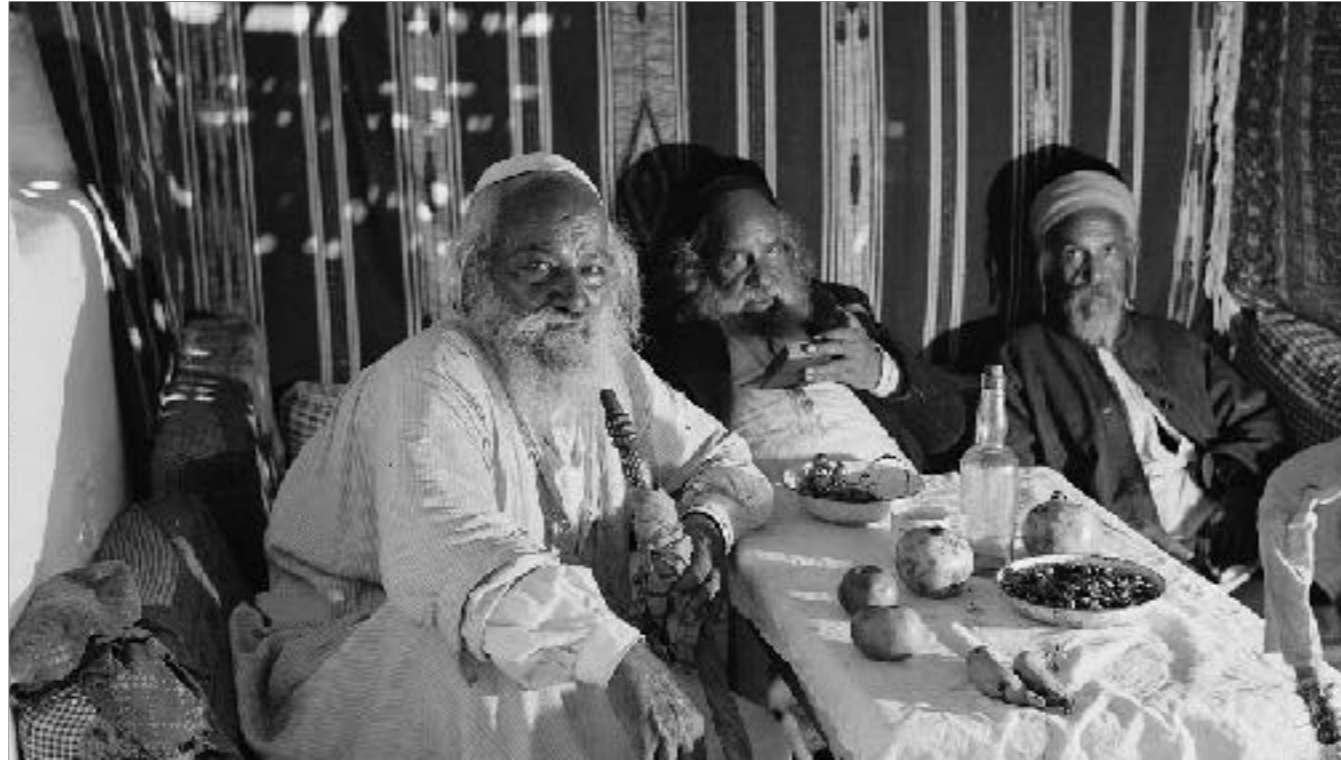


- After several fierce battles with Helen, Annie convinces the Kellers that she needs two weeks alone with Helen in order to achieve any progress in the girl's education.
- In this time, Annie teaches Helen discipline through persistence and consistency, and language through hand signals, a double breakthrough that changes Helen's life and has a direct effect on the lives of everyone in the family.

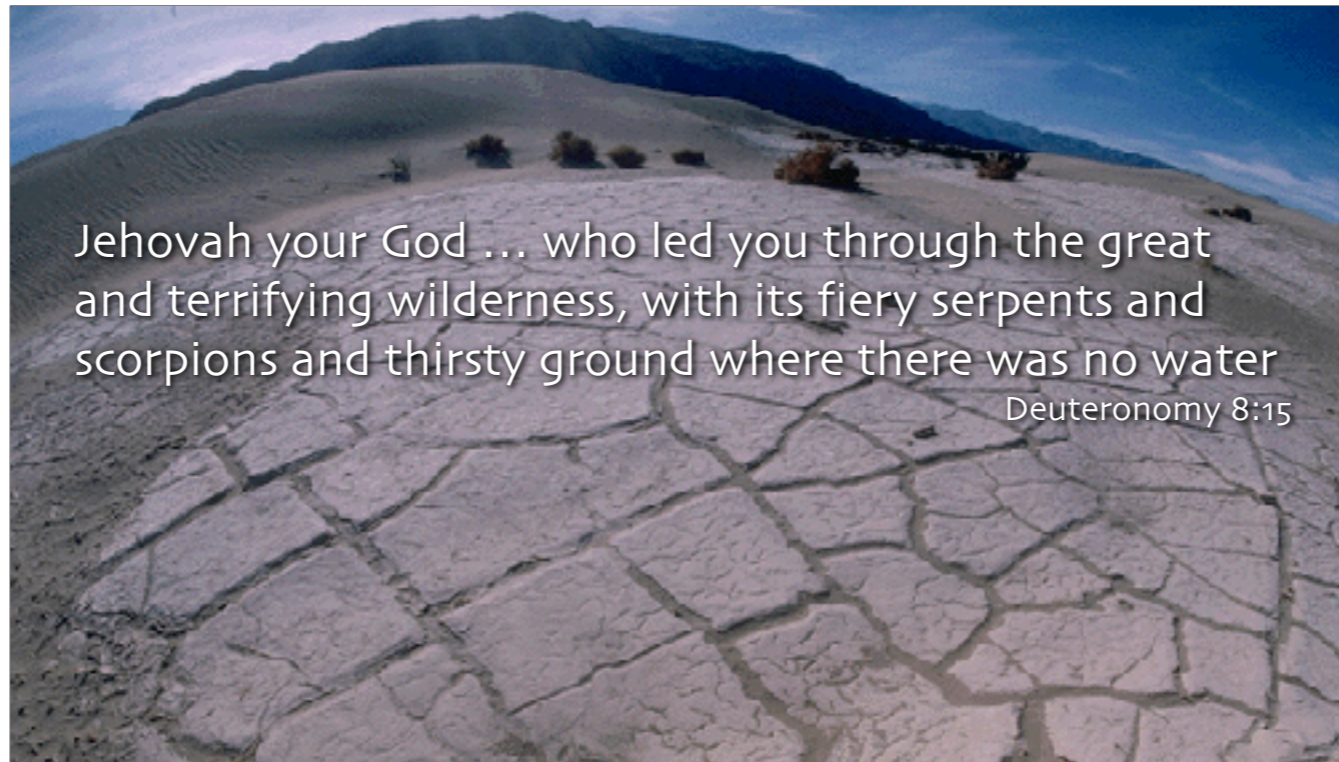


- Leviticus 23:40-43

- And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook,
- and **you shall rejoice** before the LORD your God seven days.
- 41 You shall **celebrate it as a feast** to the LORD for seven days in the year.
- It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

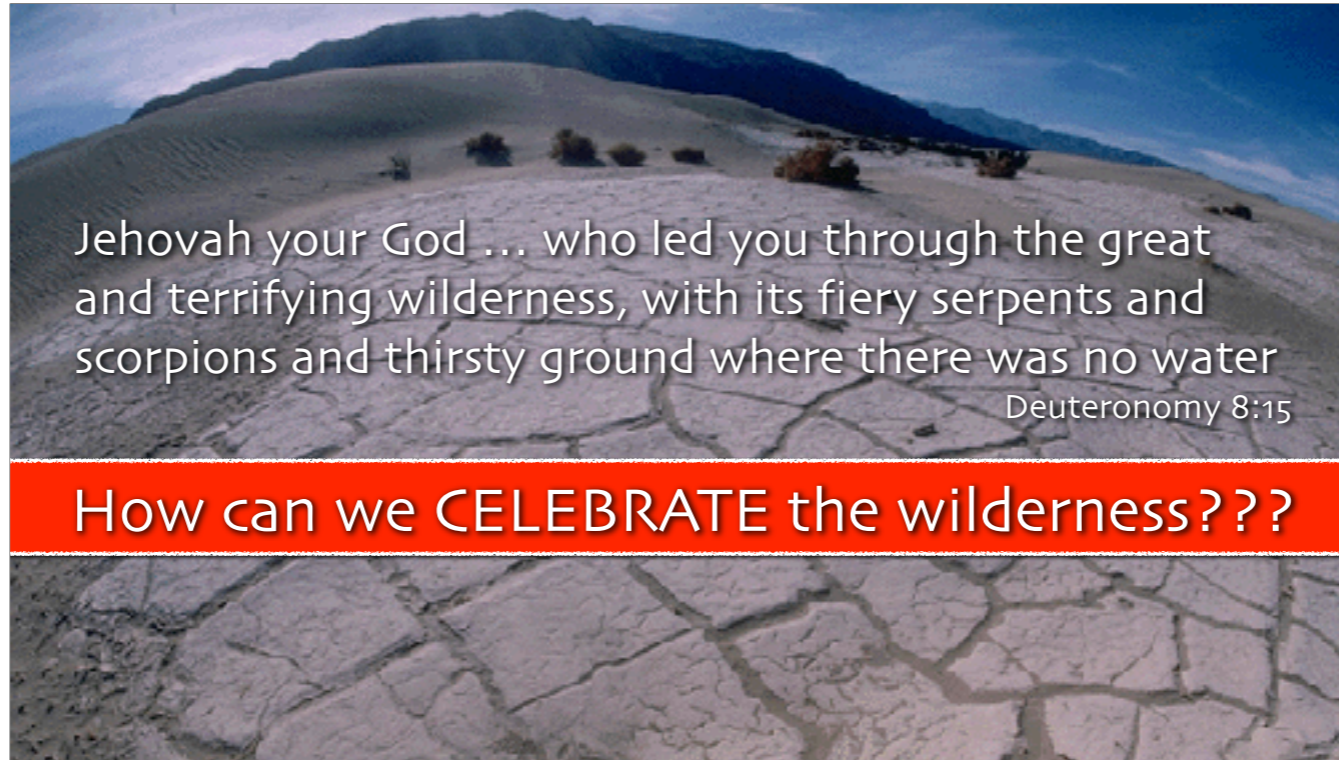


- 42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days.
- All native Israelites shall dwell in booths,
- 43 that your generations may know that **I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt:**
- I am the LORD your God.”

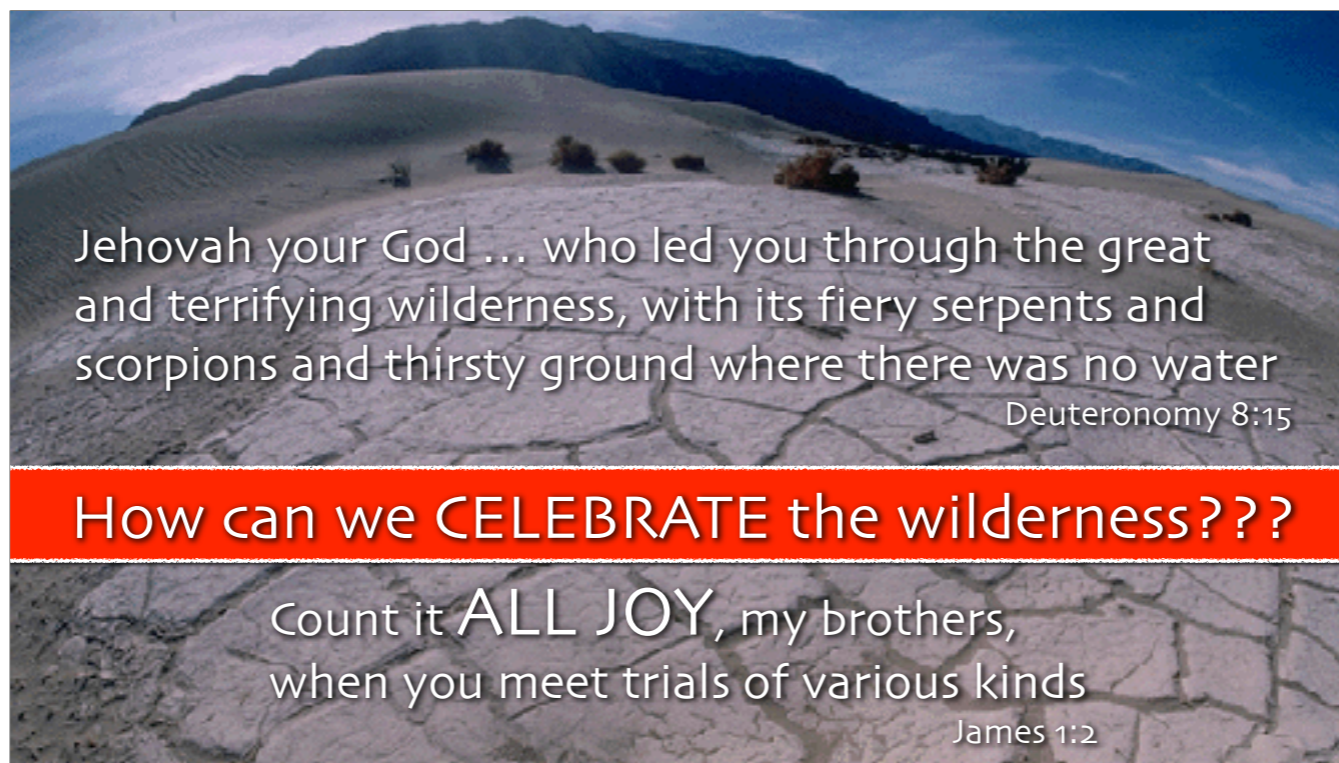


Jehovah your God ... who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water
Deuteronomy 8:15

- Deuteronomy 8:15 who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water,



- How can we celebrate the wilderness?
 - dangerous
 - enemies
 - long
 - tiring
 - death
 - want to go home

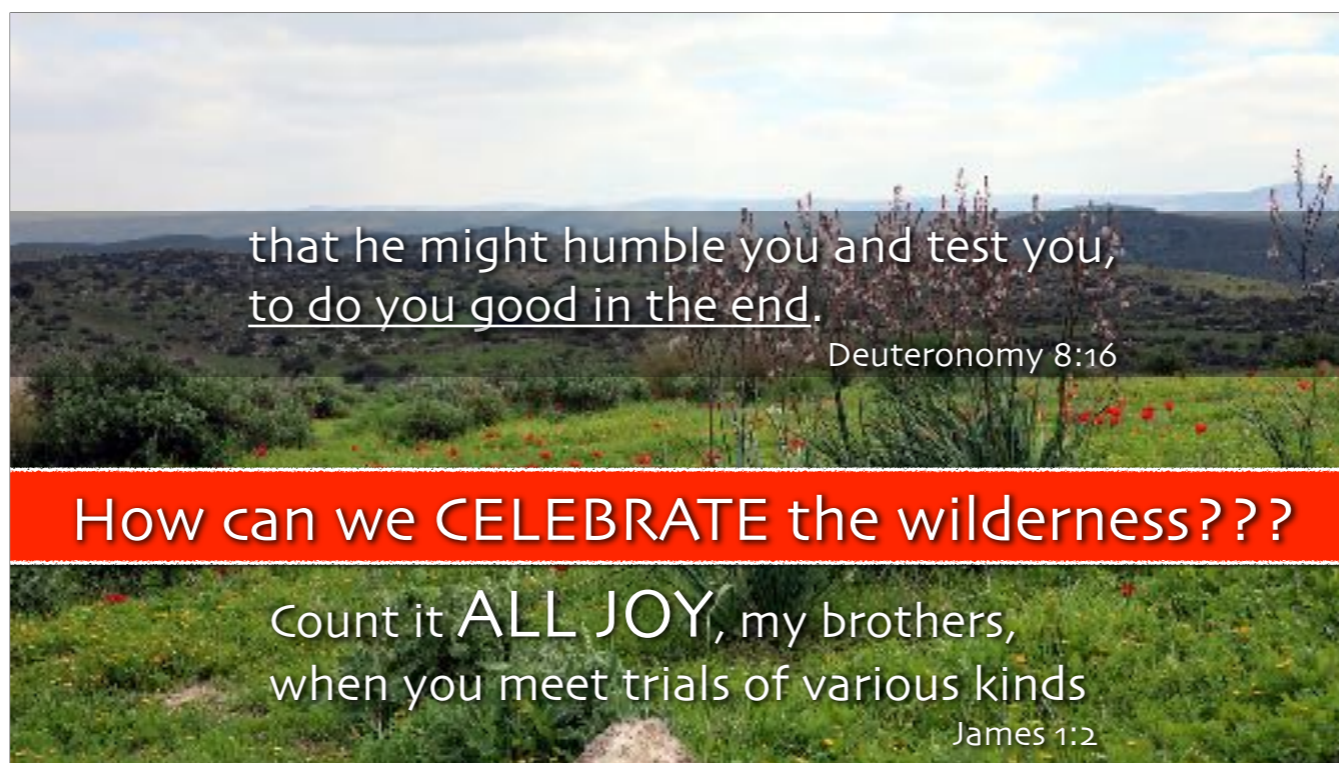


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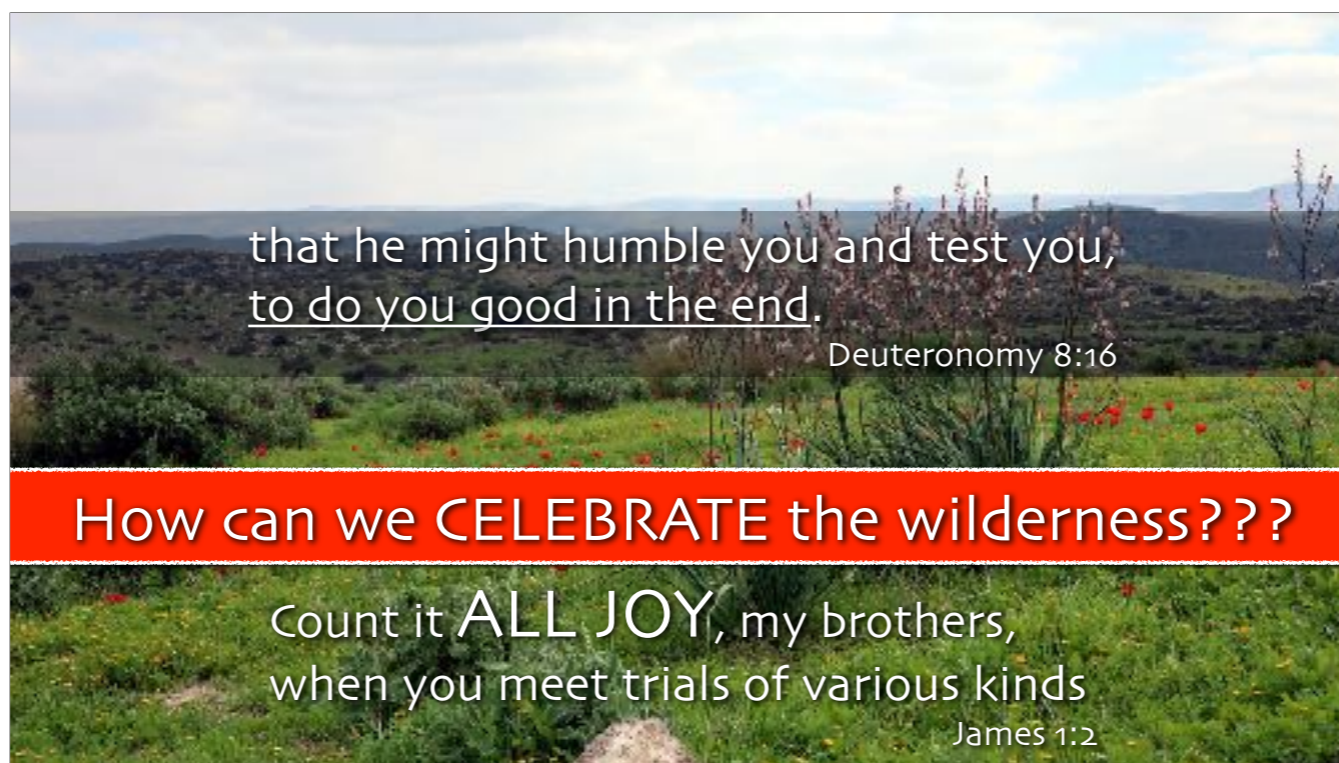
How can we CELEBRATE the wilderness???

Count it ALL JOY, my brothers,
when you meet trials of various kinds
James 1:2

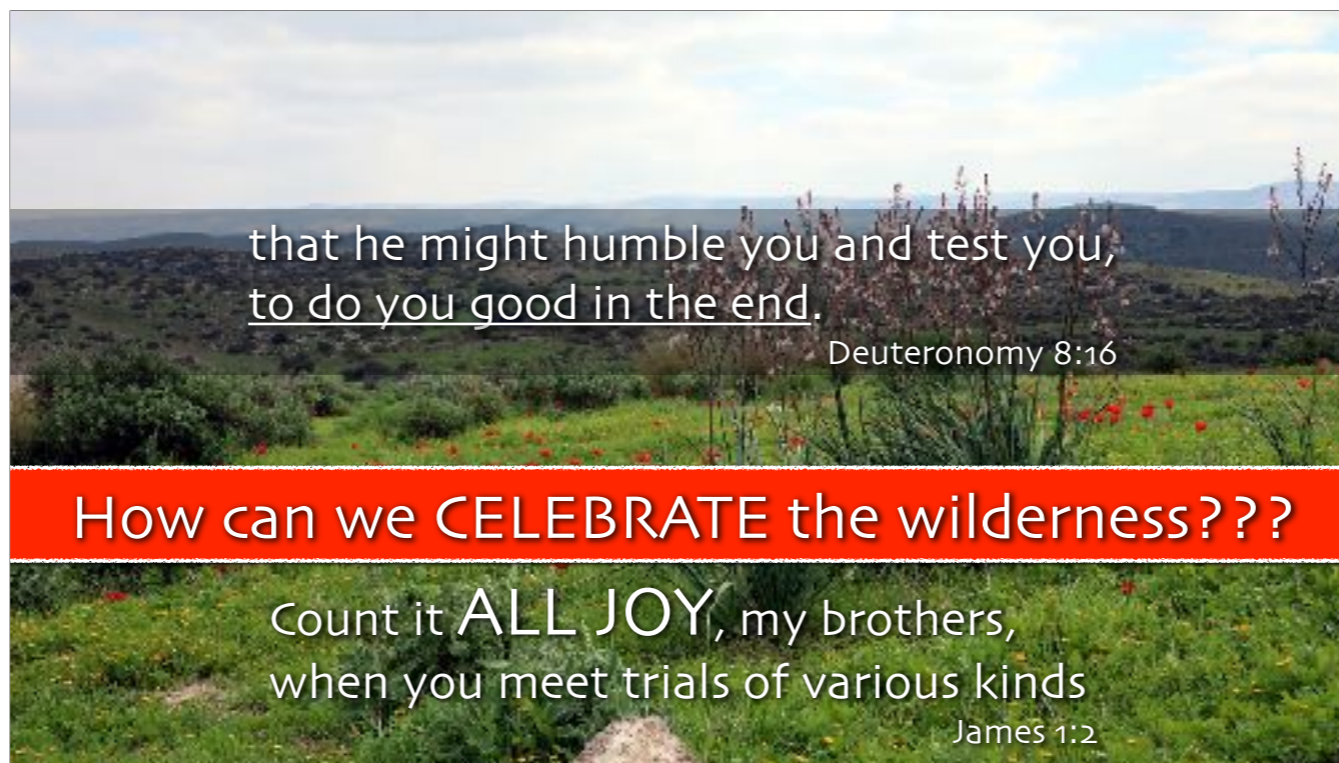
- James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
 - Is this just nonsense?
 - Or is this just a pious sounding platitude intended to make us feel better?
- 1 Peter 4:12-14 (ESV) 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But **rejoice** insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.



- Deuteronomy 8:16 that he might humble you and test you, **to do you good in the end.**
- In thinking about the wilderness, we must consider carefully how we think of the God who leads us through the wilderness.
 - This challenges us to reconsider the who and the why of the wilderness.



- When we consider this, it reminds us to think noble things of our God and Father
 - Our God is committed to the redemption of all: that all would be saved.
 - (sometimes we forget the scope because we tend to individualize salvation predominantly)
 - And so when God's plan to save humankind seems severe, and wrathful,
 - We choose to remember WHAT he is doing and WHY he is doing it.
 - Even He knows the pain ... allowing his son to suffer on earth, and suffer in death so that we could be saved.



that he might humble you and test you,
to do you good in the end.

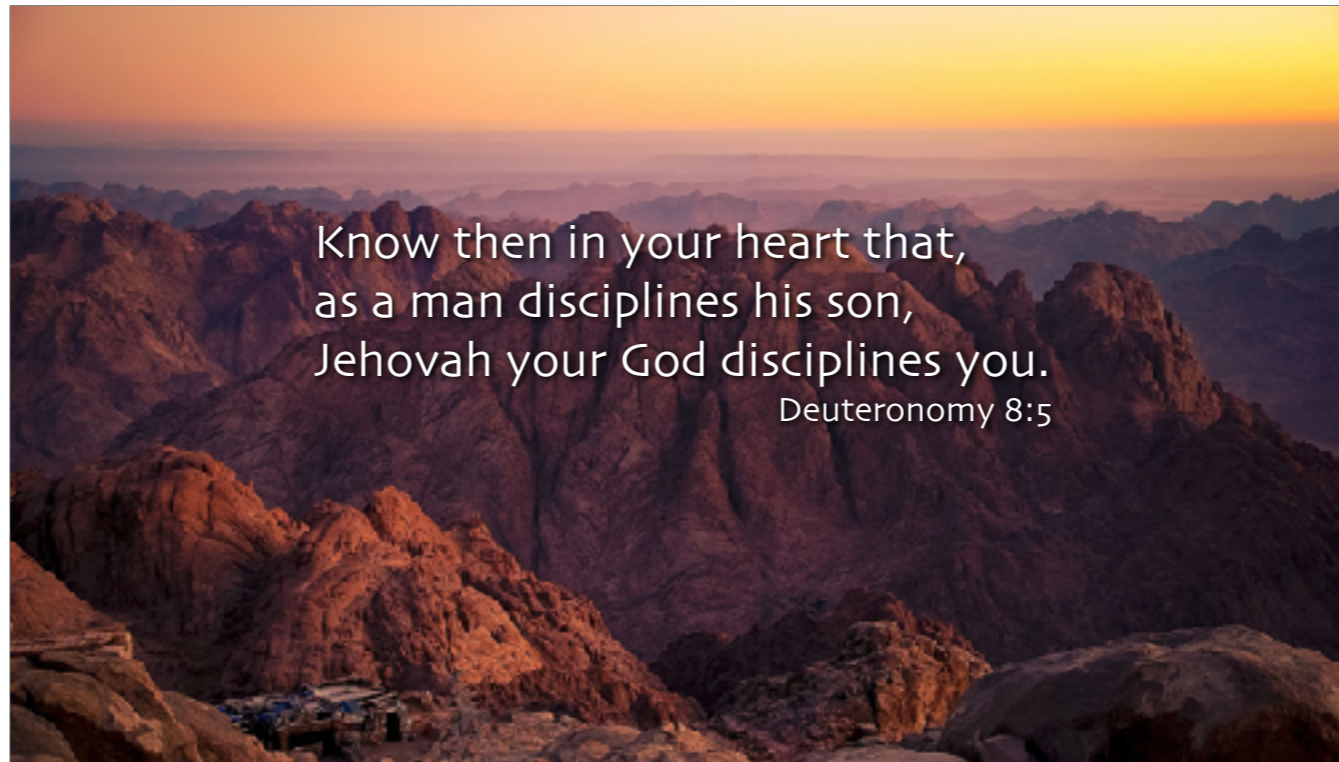
Deuteronomy 8:16

How can we CELEBRATE the wilderness???

Count it **ALL JOY**, my brothers,
when you meet trials of various kinds

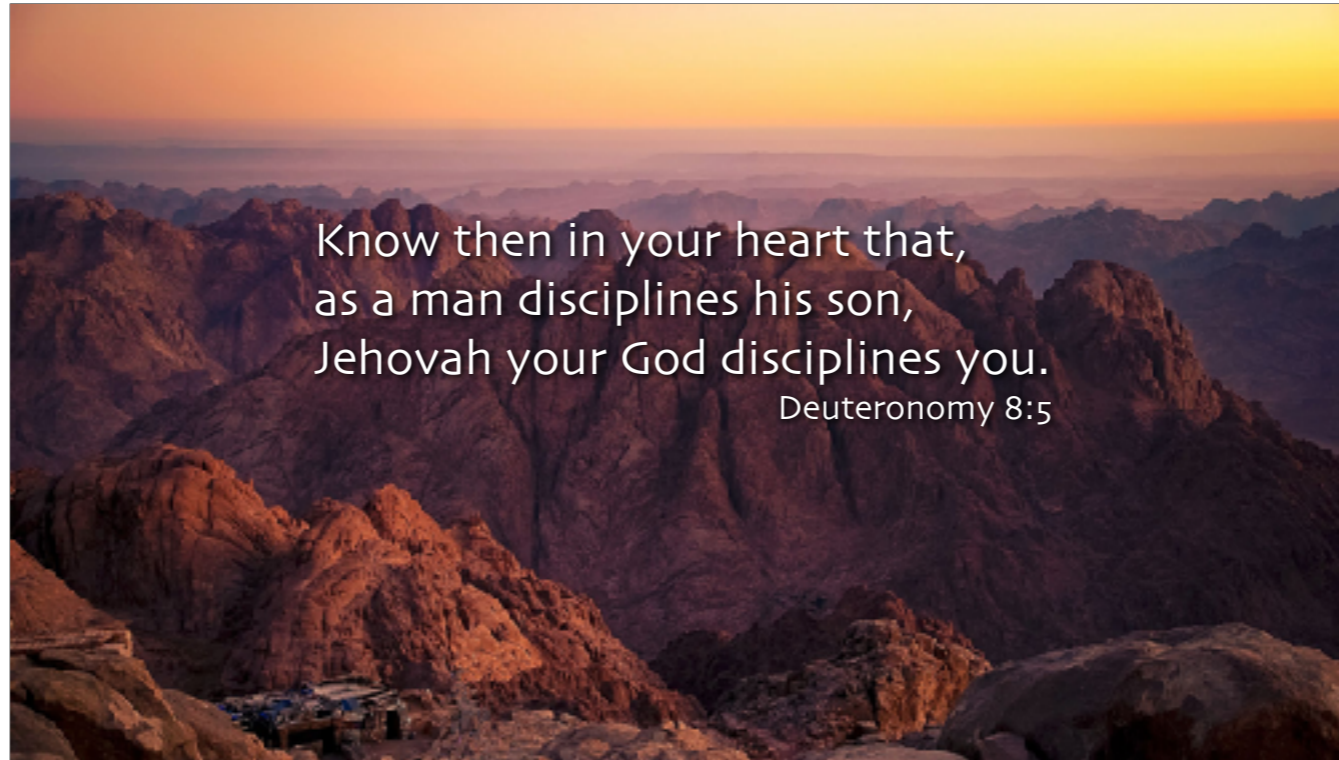
James 1:2

- There are hard things God must do for our good, just like we do for our children.

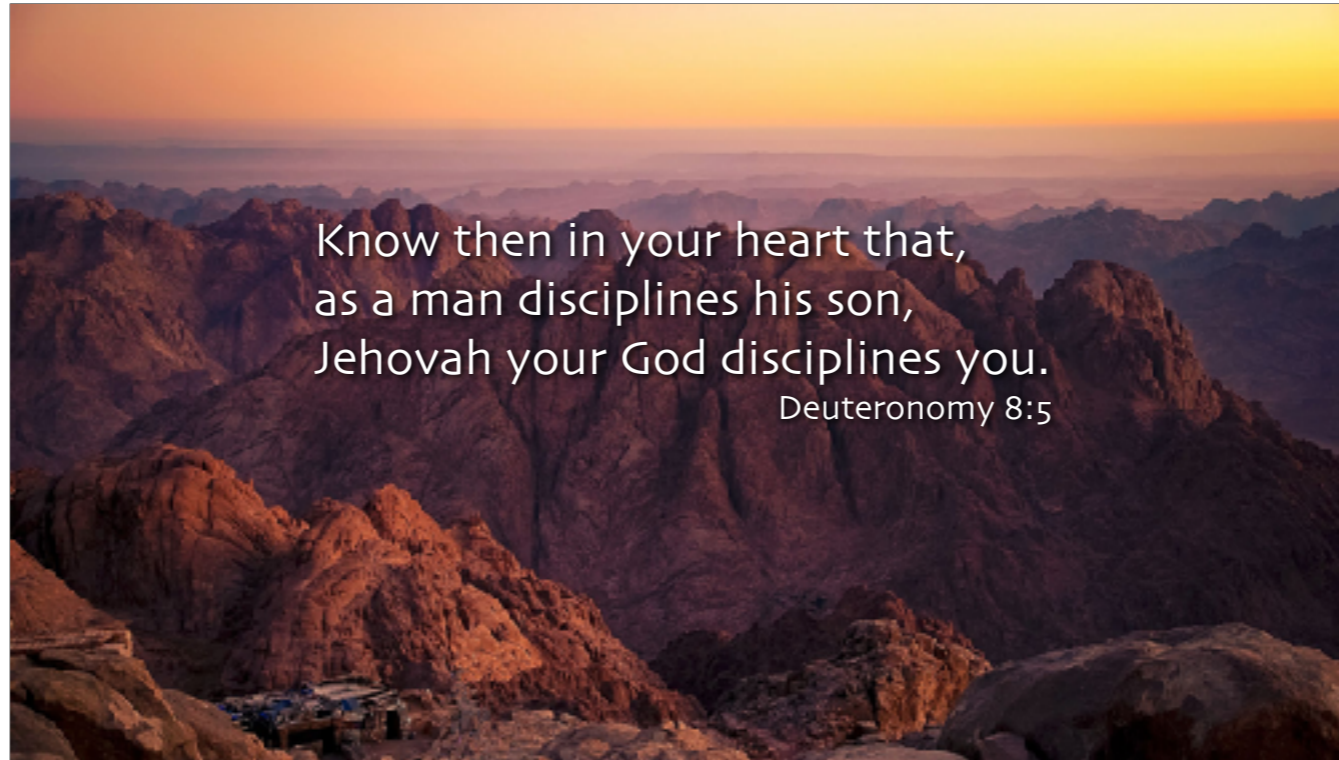


Know then in your heart that,
as a man disciplines his son,
Jehovah your God disciplines you.
Deuteronomy 8:5

- Deuteronomy 8:5 Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.

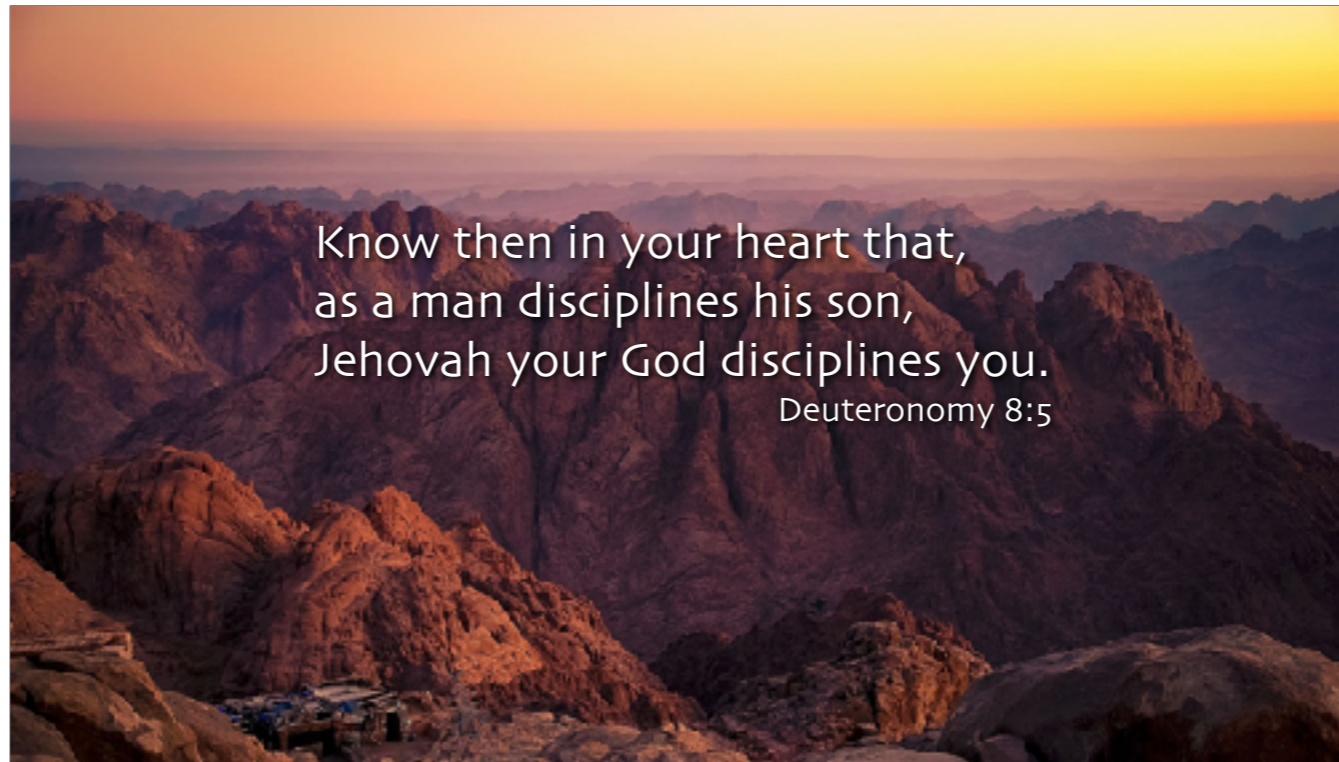


- Deuteronomy 11:2-7: 2 And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it),
- **consider the discipline of the LORD your God,**
 - his greatness,
 - his mighty hand and his outstretched arm,

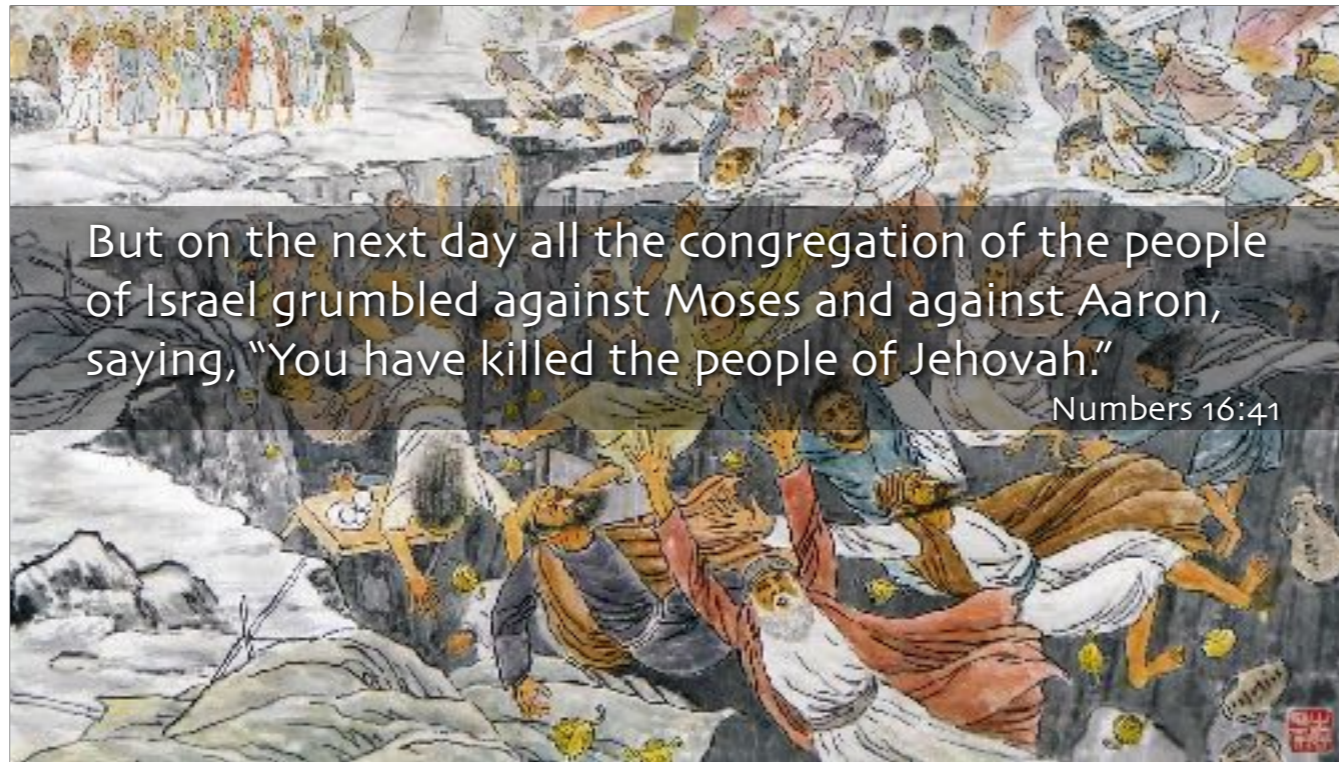


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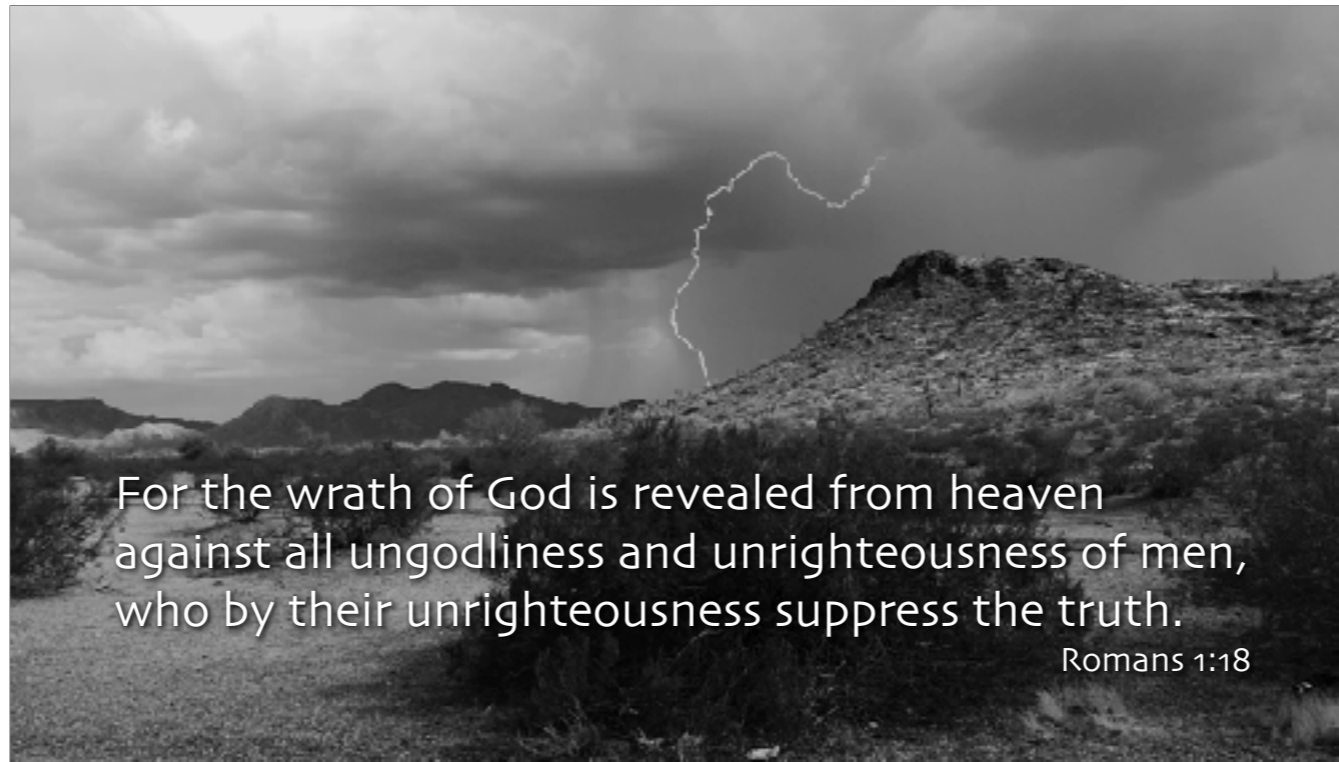
- 3 his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land,
 - 4 and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots,
 - how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued after you,
 - and how the LORD has destroyed them to this day,
- 5 and what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place,



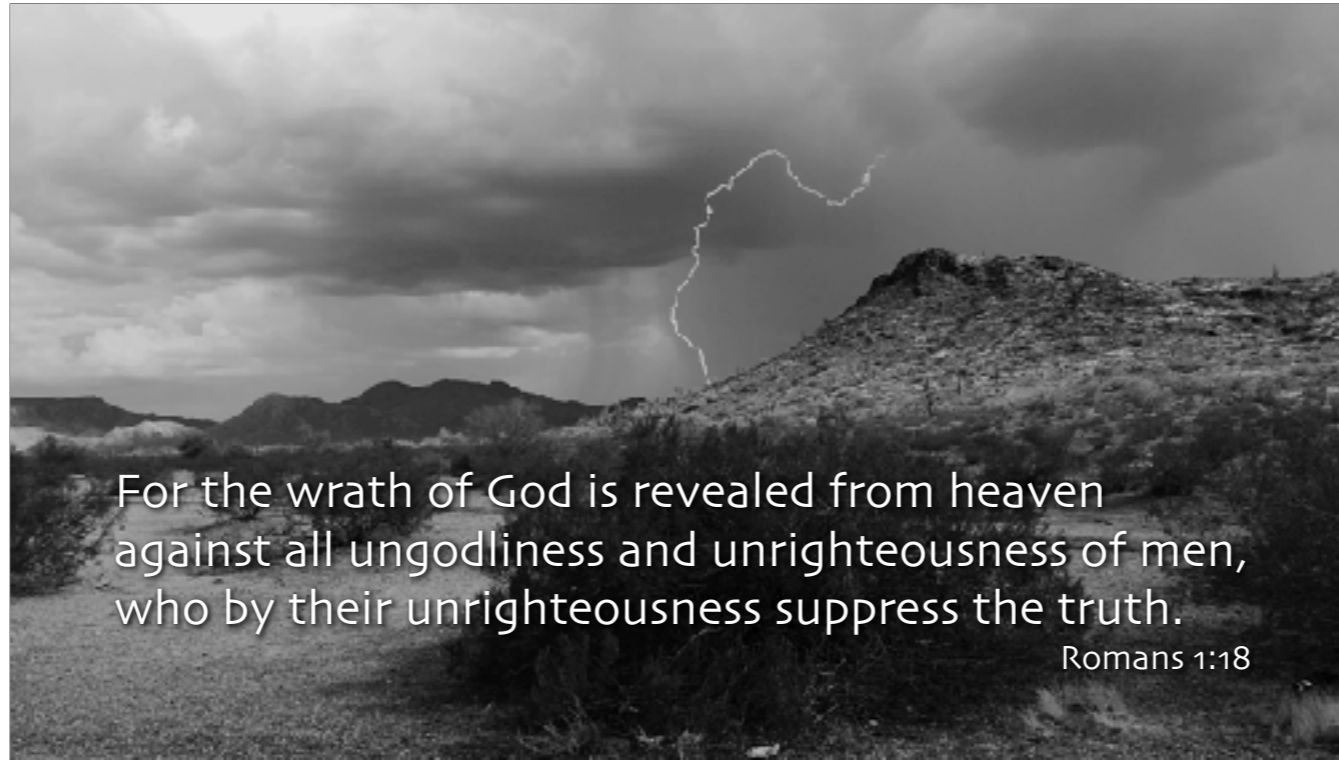
- 6 and what he did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben,
 - how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel.
- 7 For your eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD that he did.



- Numbers 16:41 (ESV) 41 But on the next day all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD."



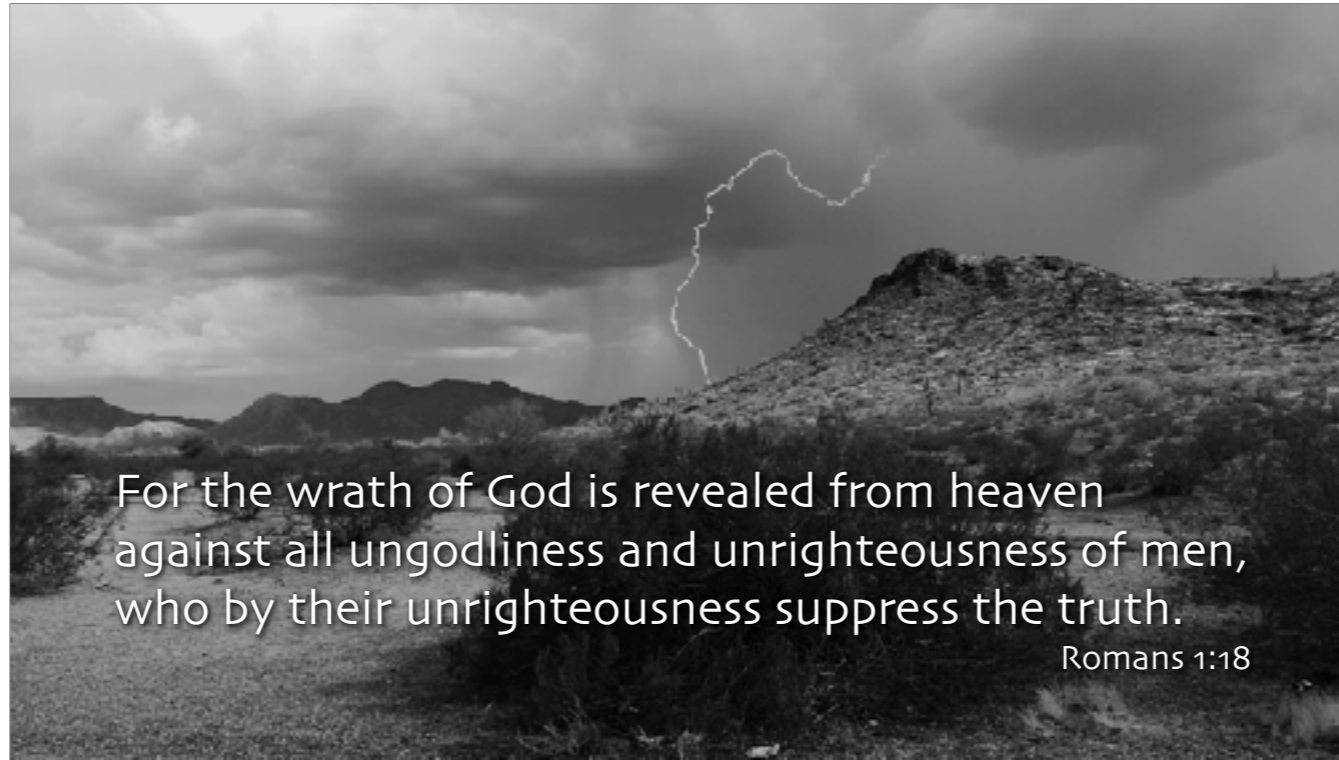
- Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
- God's anger is against a world of people so that he might redeem that world of people.
 - The curse, which is his wrath made visible, embraces all humans: rebels and subjects, the innocent and the guilty.



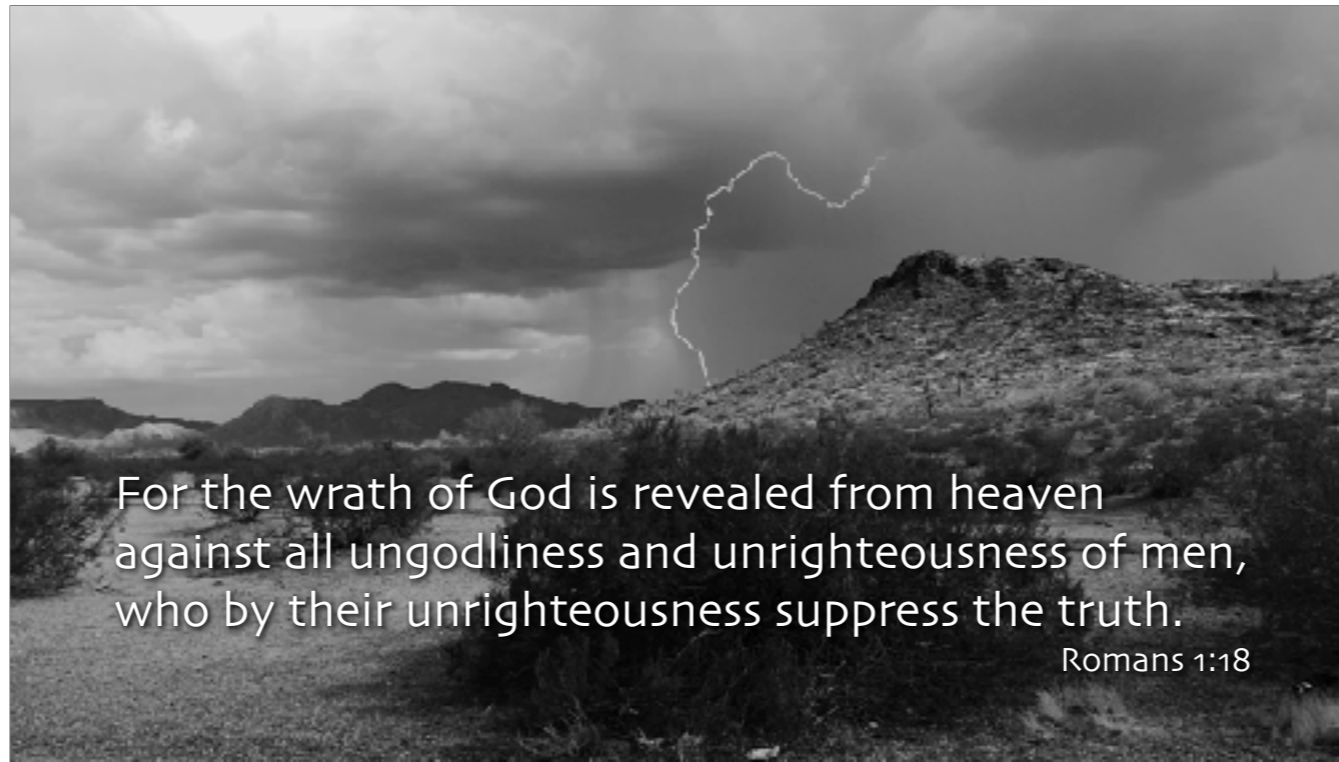
For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 1:18

- Romans 3:22-26 (ESV) For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.



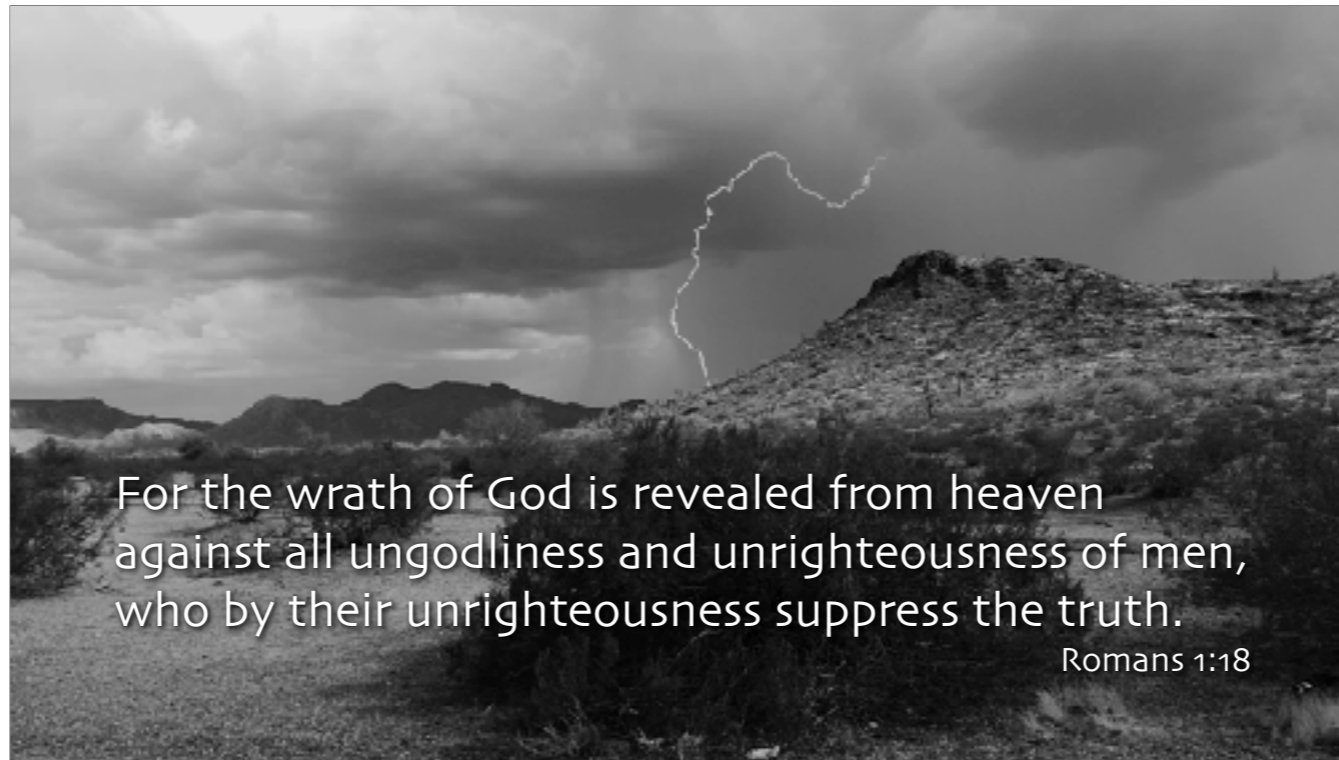
- What if it's part of his redeeming work?
 - What if his wrath exists only to destroy what necessitates the wrath in the first place?
 - What if we see it as a response from a holy Father who loves us beyond imagining?
 - A Father who's willing to do more for us than we want him to do.
 - A Father who does at a cosmic level what Annie Sullivan did to Helen Keller to rescue her from crippling, narrowing, cheapening blindness.



For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 1:18

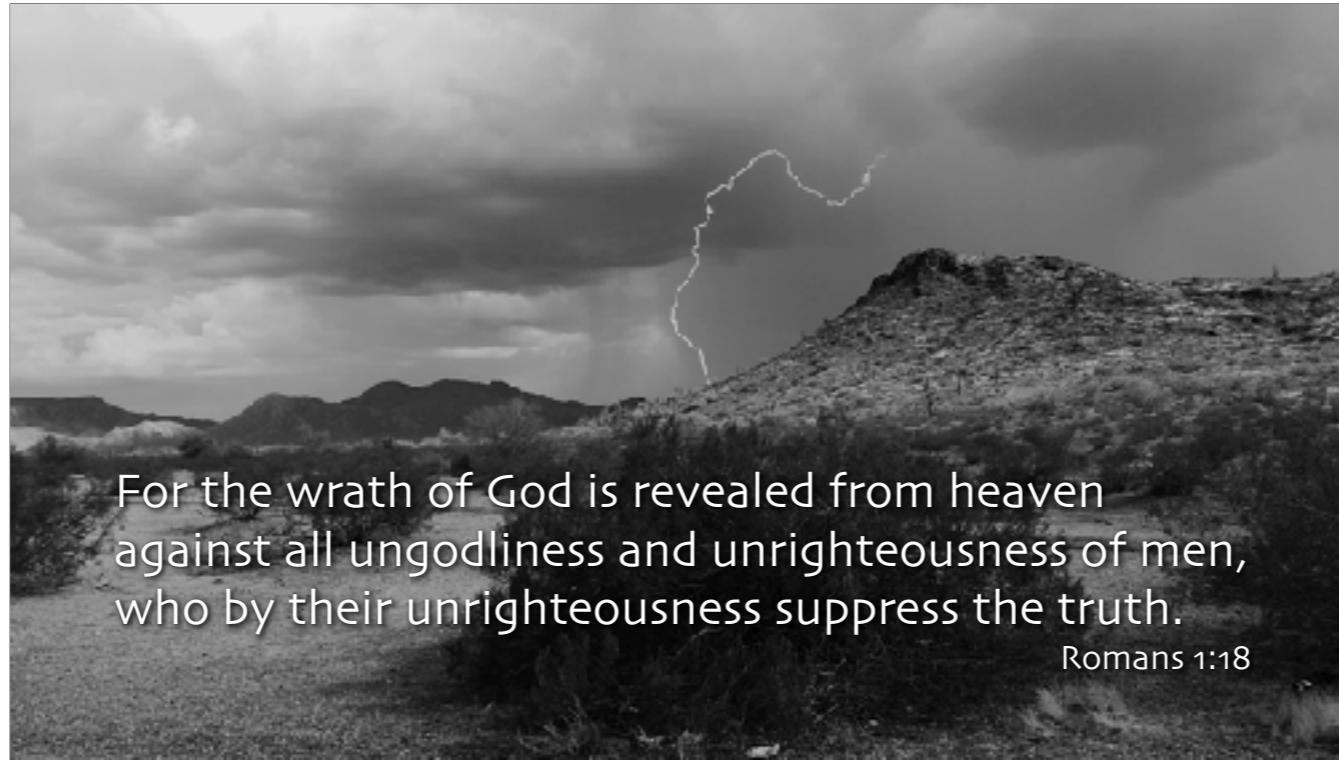
- Matthew 4:23-24 (ESV) 23 And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. 24 So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them.



For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 1:18

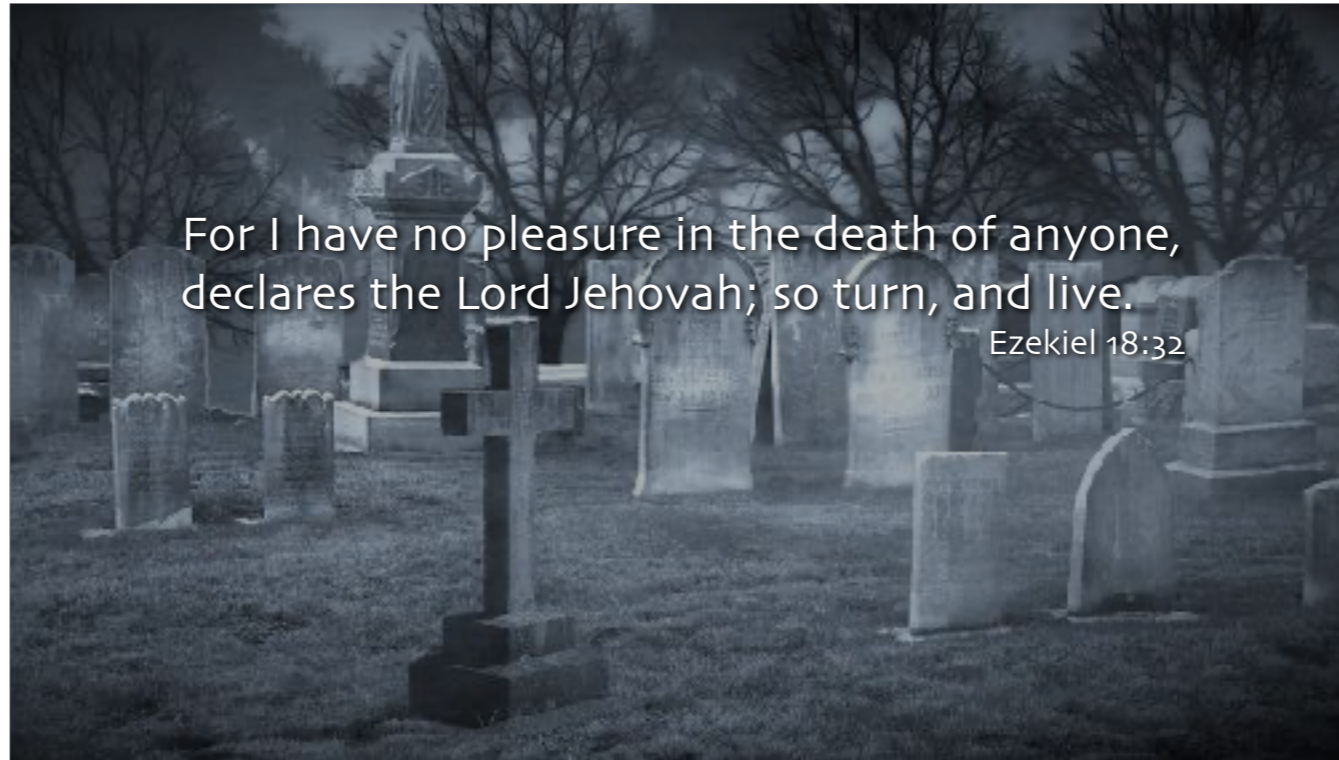
- Matthew 8:14-17 (ESV) 14 And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. 15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. 16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."
 - In making use of Isaiah 53, Matthew makes it clear that disease and loss have come on humanity as part of the judgment of God, and Christ bore it on his heart for us.



For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven
against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 1:18

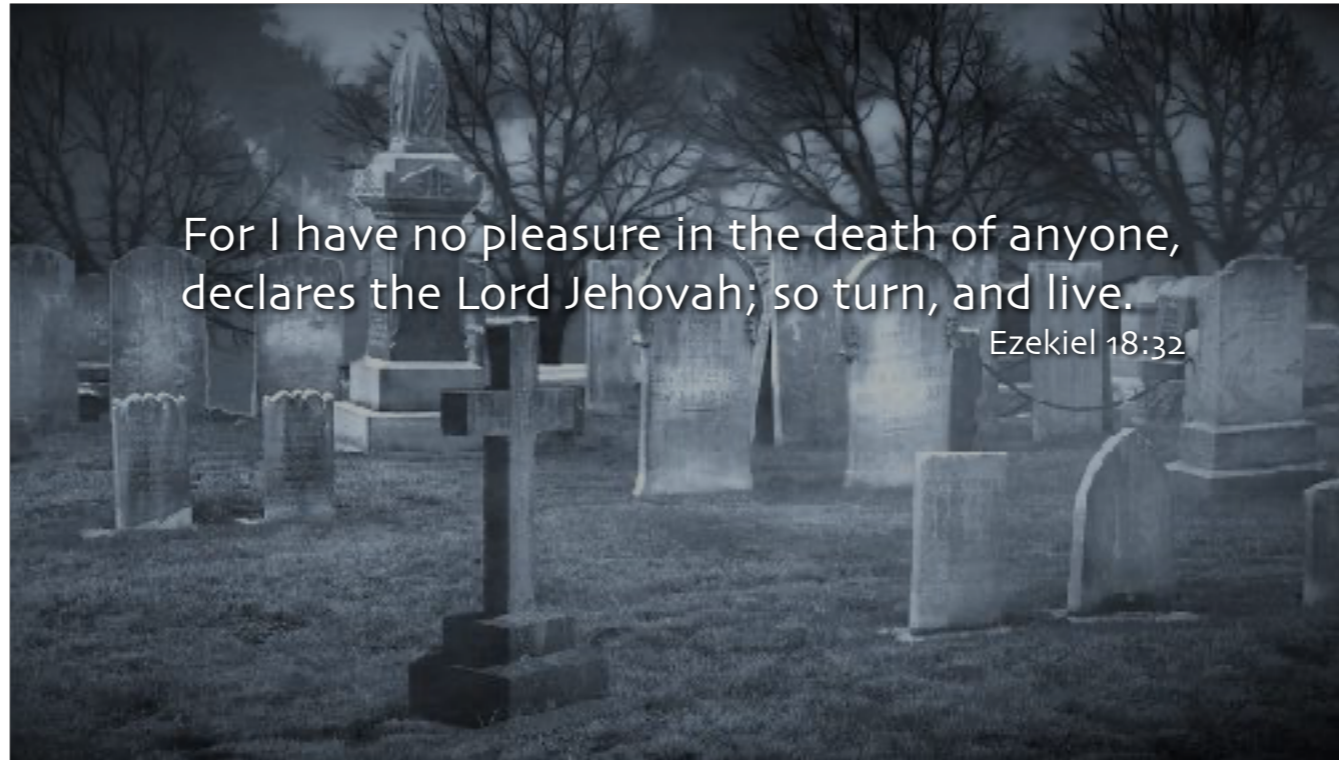
- We can't seem to get it into our heads that God has already and will again put the innocent and righteous to grief so that a sleeping world might wake up and live.
- The wrath of God that engulfed the innocent babies in Noah's day makes it clear that God is earnest enough in working for world's redemption to do things that are distressing to him.
- Heschel remarks: "Nothing is so sweet to the heart of man as love. However, for love to function, the suppression of sympathy may be necessary."
- DWS: So is this saying that God is okay with collateral damage?



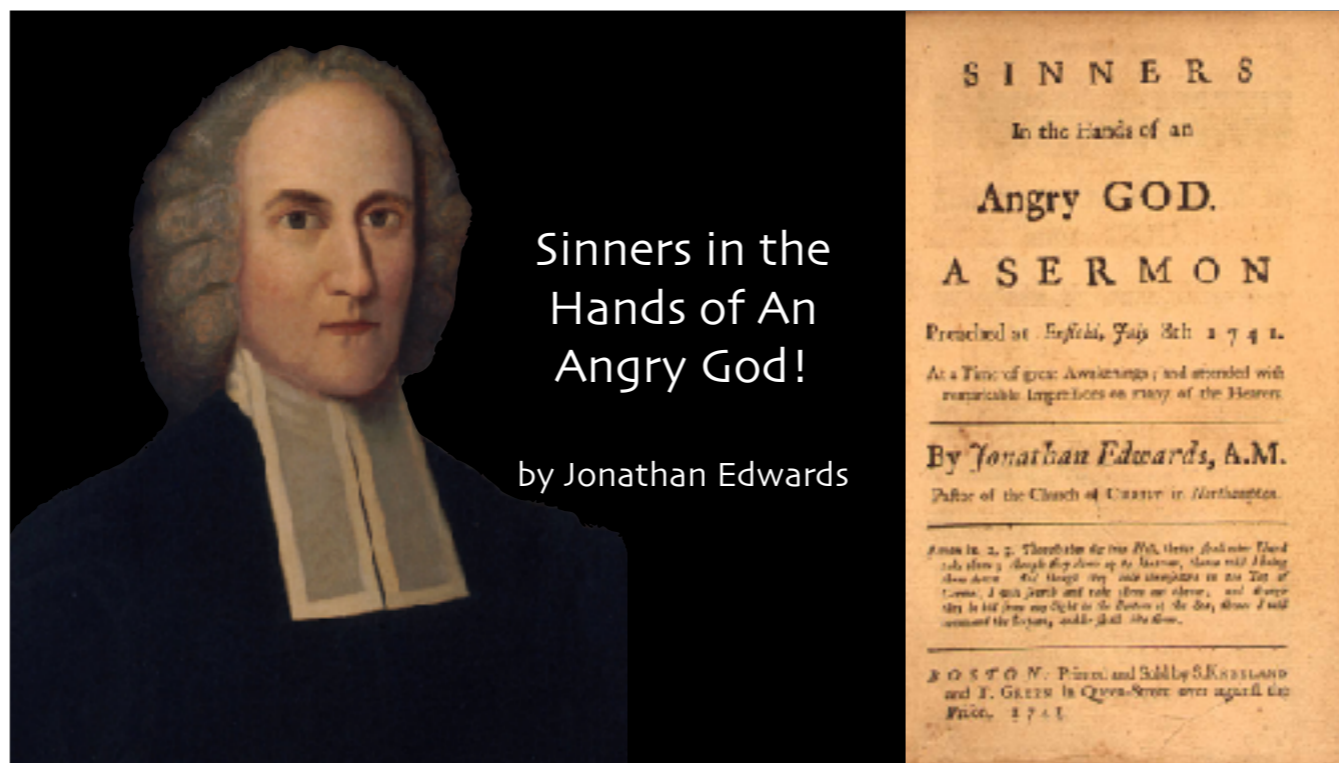
For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone,
declares the Lord Jehovah; so turn, and live.

Ezekiel 18:32

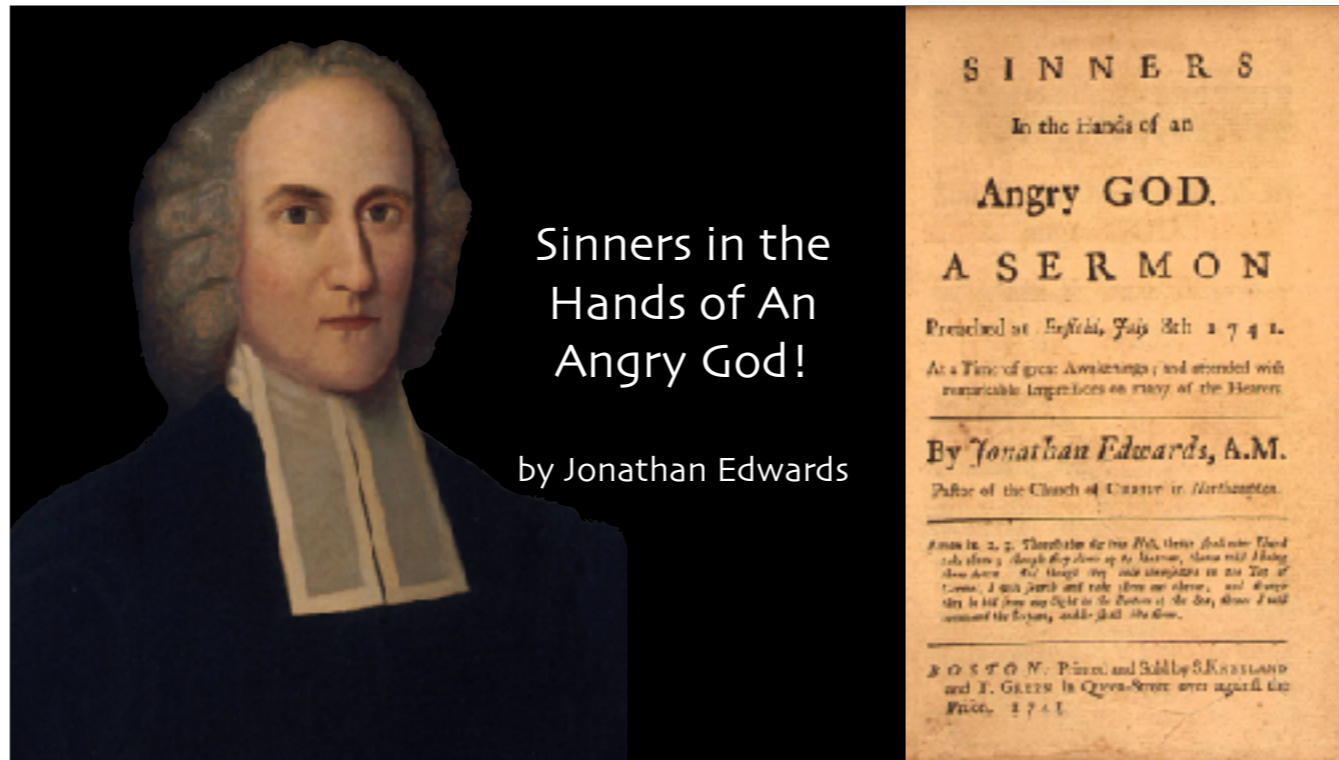
- Ezekiel 18:32 (ESV) 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”
- Ezekiel 33:11 (ESV) 11 Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?
- We’re not to think of God as unfeeling!
 - We’re not to give the impression that those who celebrate the wrath of God are unfeeling!



- Deuteronomy 28:63 (ESV) 63 And as the LORD took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the LORD will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you. And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it.
- How do we reconcile this?
 - What God did to Israel as a nation (destroy) was for their ultimate good.
 - This is different than God delighting in the death of an individual.

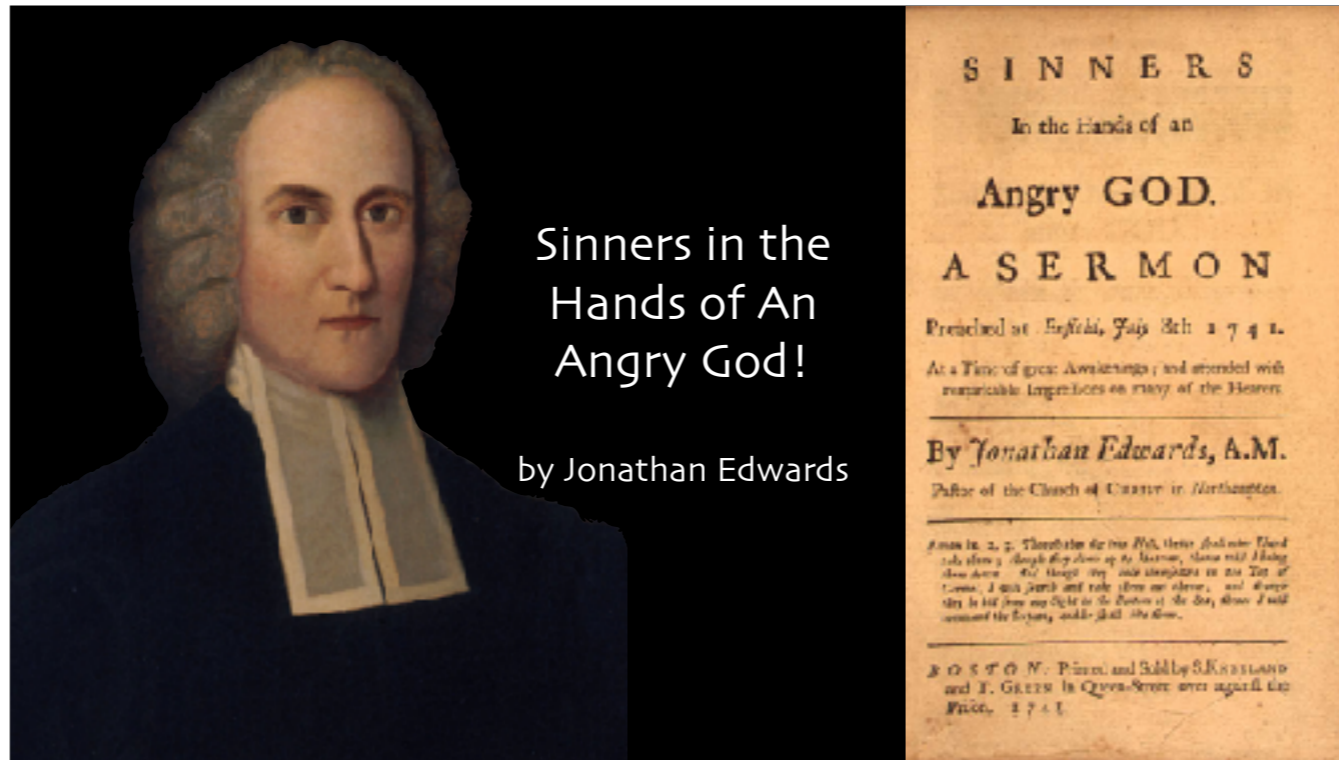


- Jonathan Edward's well known sermon: "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God".
- Most have no idea what's in the sermon, but the title has formed their concept of our Father as an always angry autocrat, whose wrath is wholly vengeful.
- And, they are not wrong, concerning the contents.
- In his eagerness to demonstrate the wrath of God against sin,
 - he never mentions the love of God or
 - the purpose of our Father's wrath (as far as I recall, anyway.)

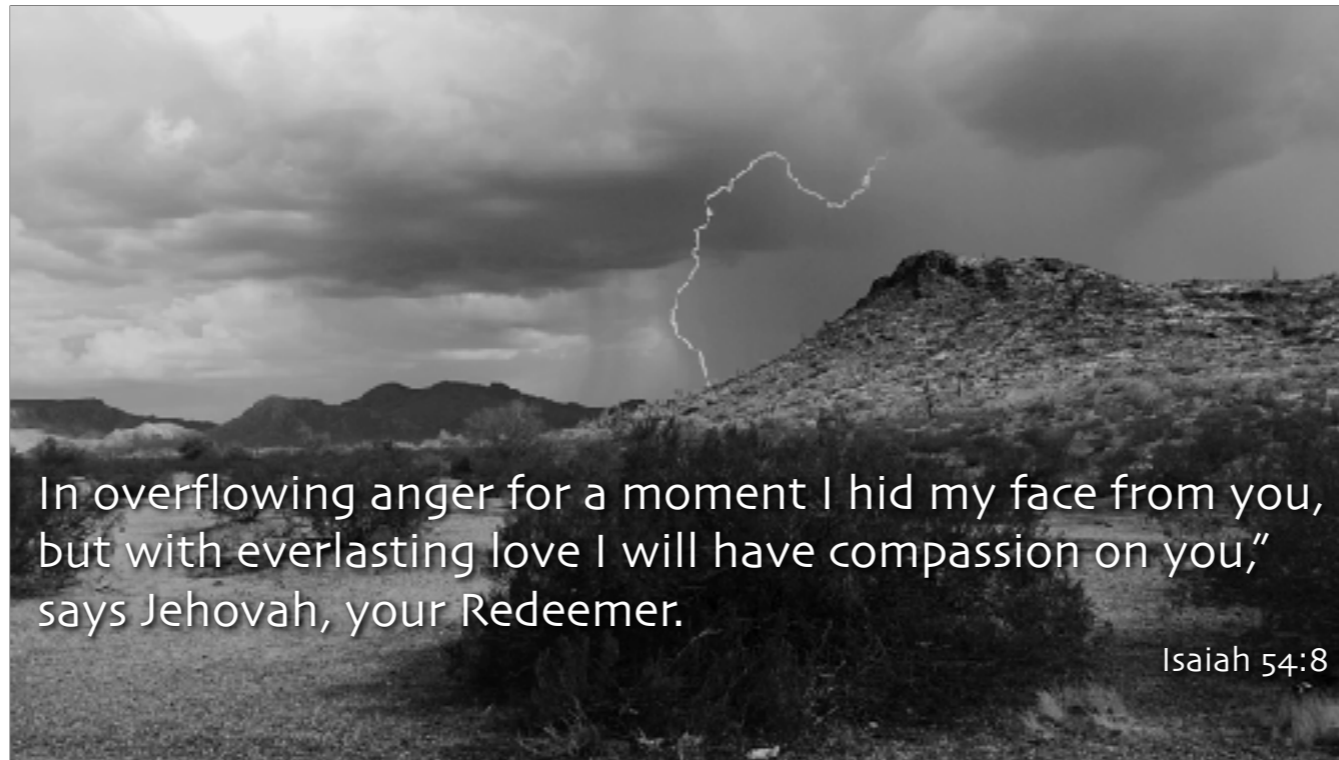


- Is wrath an defining attribute of God?

- Romans 11:22: Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.
- Exodus 34:6-7: The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."



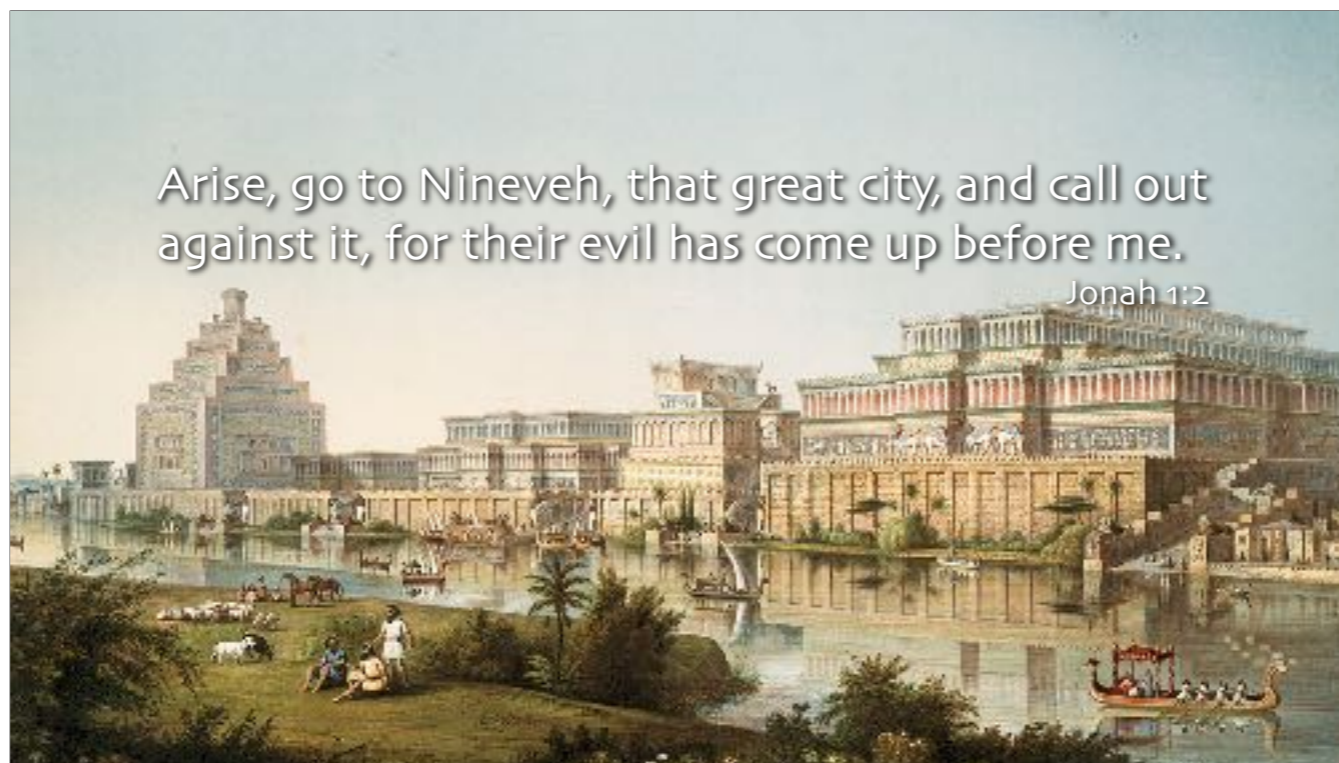
- Nahum 1:2: The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord is avenging and wrathful; the Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.



In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you,
but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,"
says Jehovah, your Redeemer.

Isaiah 54:8

- The wrath of God is real, but it's not permanent ; it's a passing and contingent reaction, with a greater purpose.
 - Isaiah 54:8 In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer.
 - Psalms 30:5 For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.
 - Psalms 103:8-9 (ESV) 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.



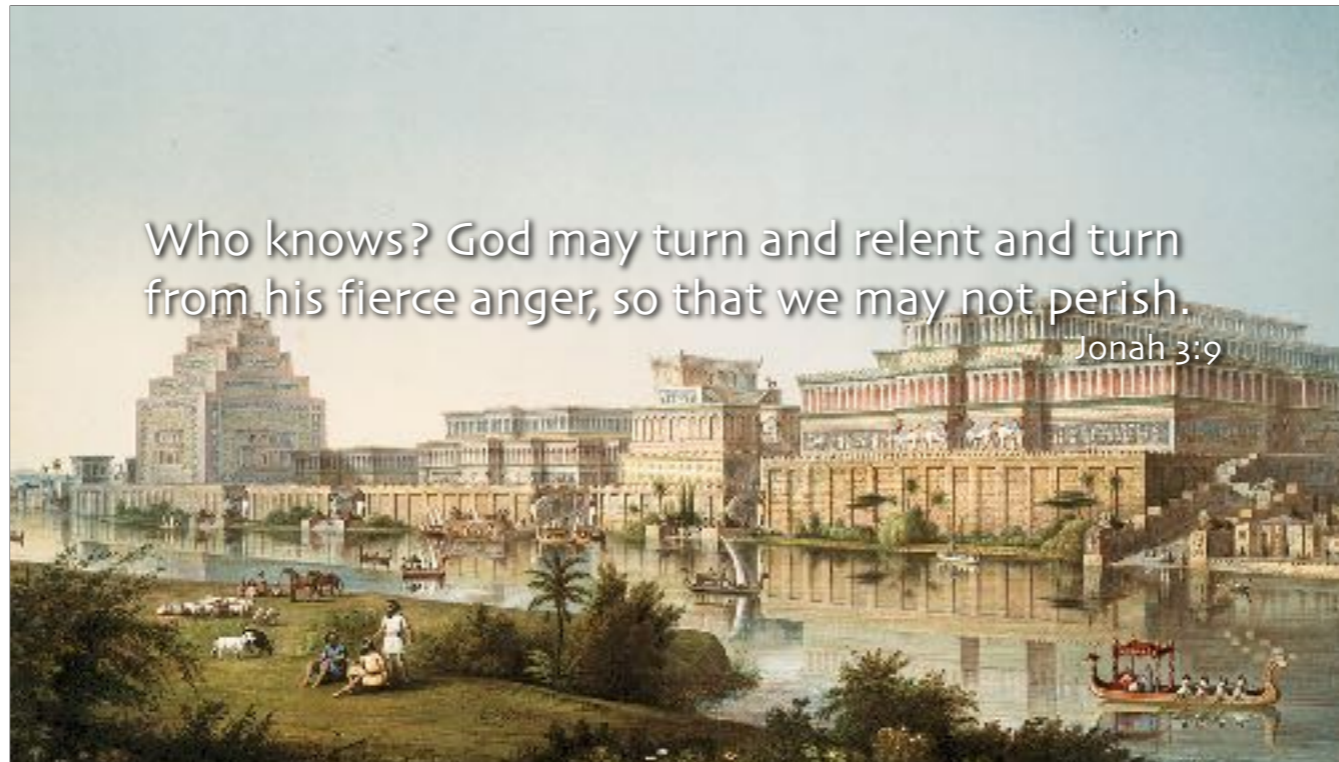
- Jonah 1:1-3 (ESV) 1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.



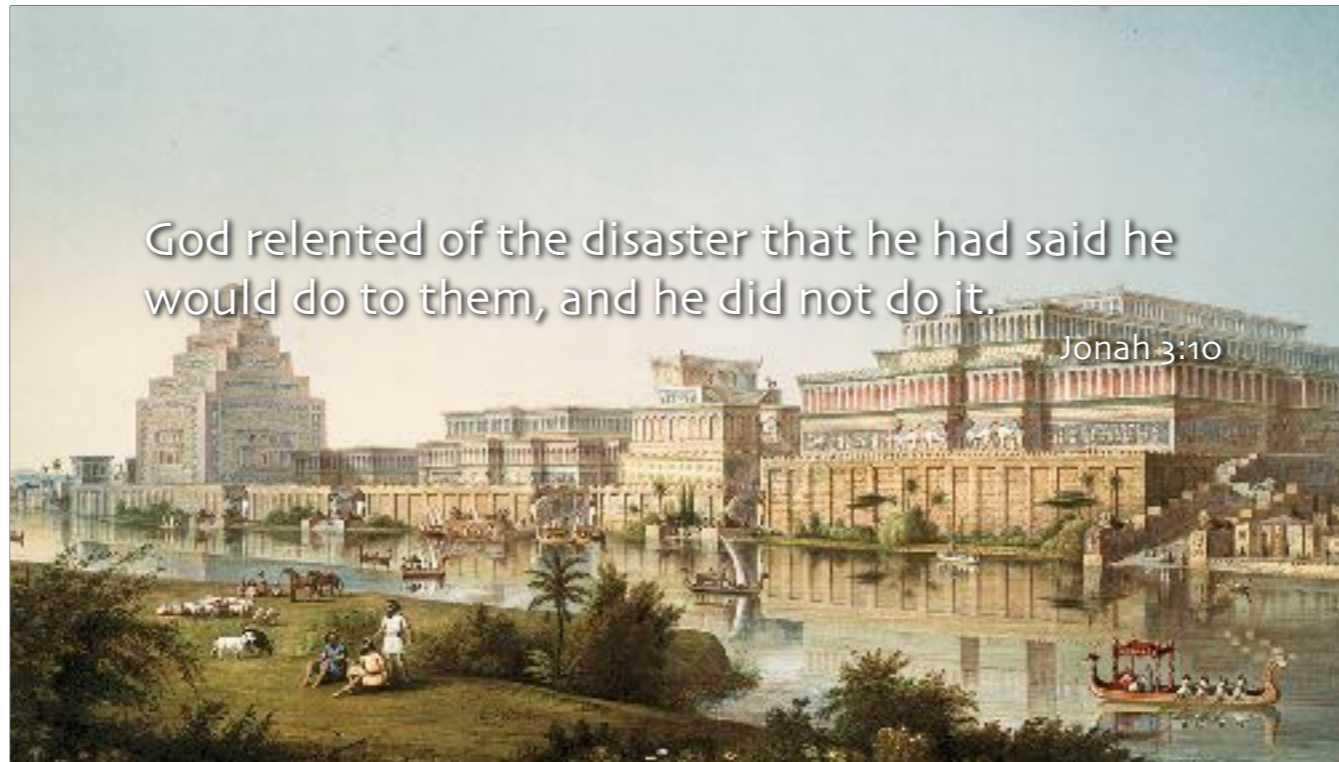
Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!

Jonah 3:4

- Jonah 3:4-5 (ESV) 4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.



- Jonah 3:9-10 (ESV) 9 Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.”



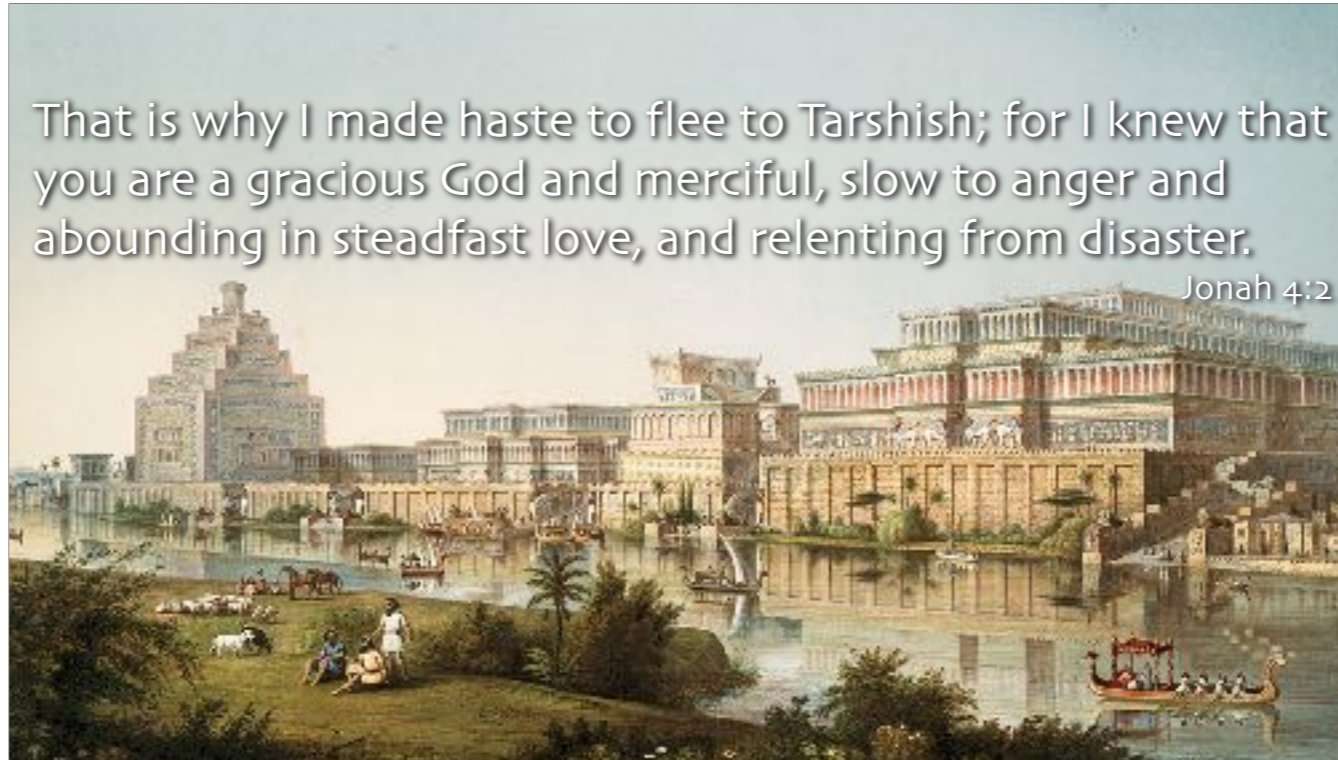
God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Jonah 3:10

- 10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

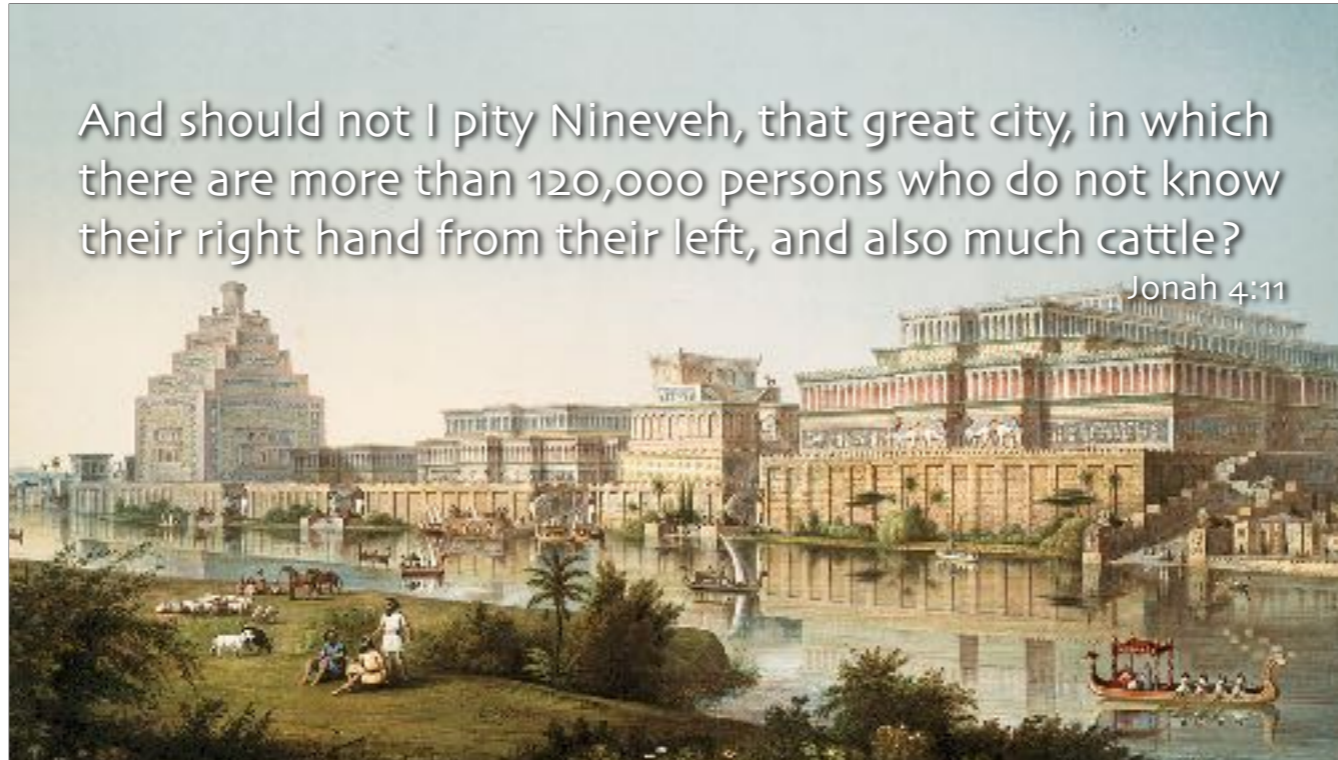
Jonah 4:2



- Jonah 4:1-2 (ESV) 1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?

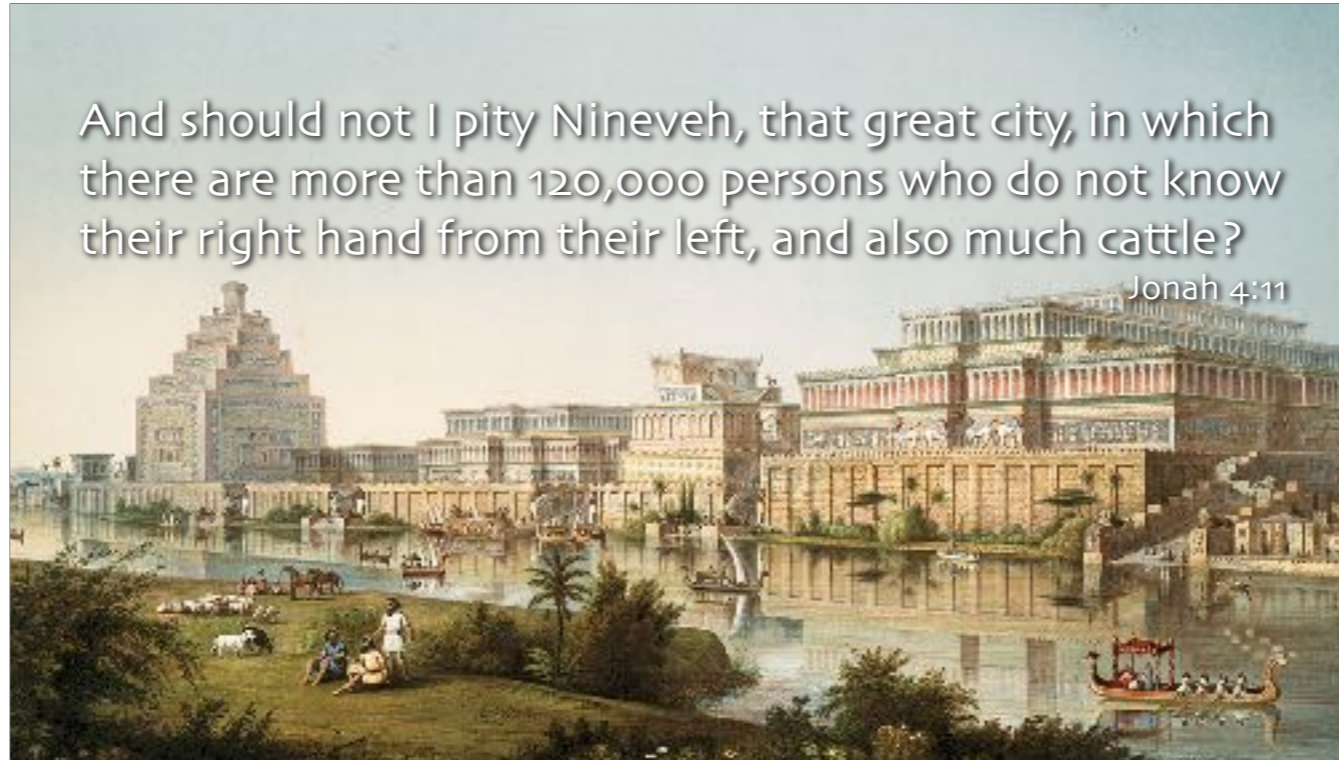
Jonah 4:11



- Jonah 4:11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”
- Jehovah knew how many innocents there were in Nineveh.
 - Yet still was prepared to overthrow the city.
- When they repented, he had compassion, and relented.

And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?

Jonah 4:11

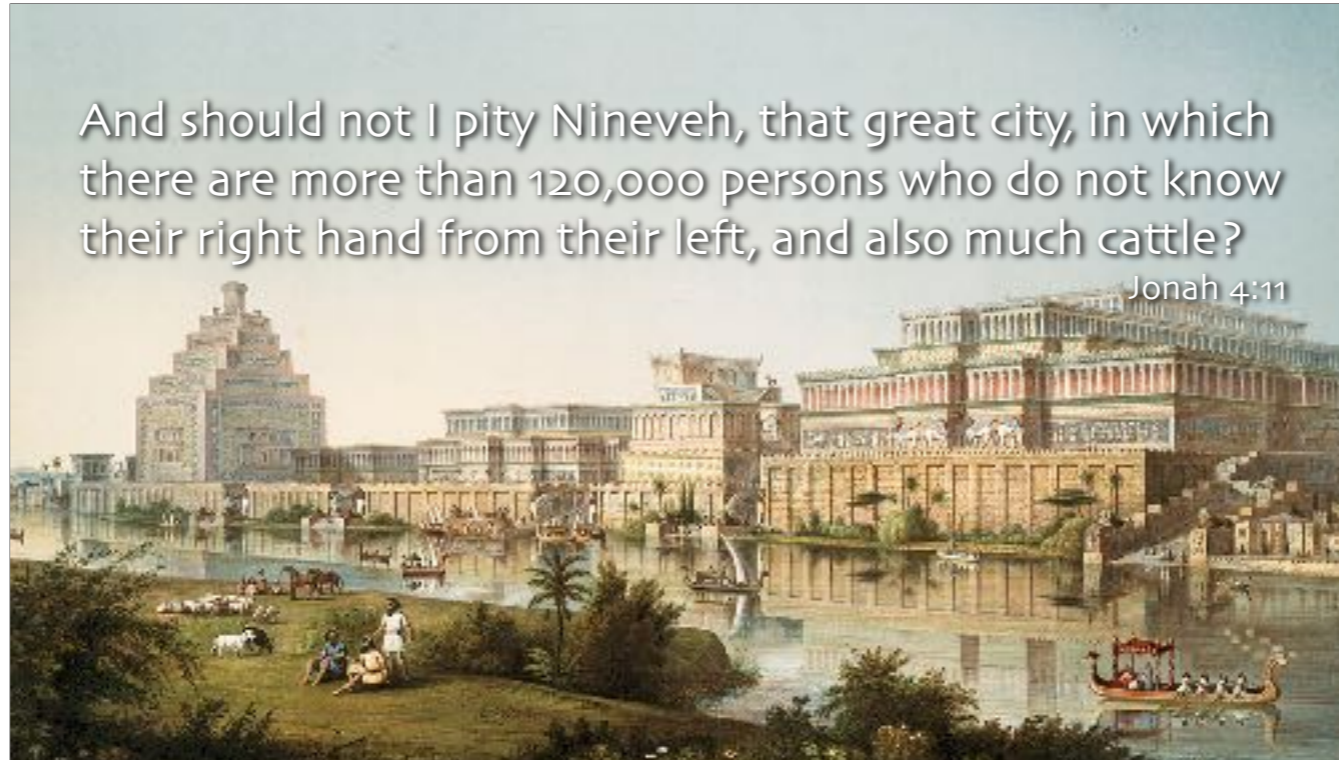


- Heschel insists:

- “An essential feature of God’s anger as proclaimed by the prophets is its contingency and non-finality.
- There is no divine anger for anger’s sake.
- Its meaning is ...
 - instrumental: to bring about repentance;
 - its purpose and consummation is its own disappearance.”

And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?

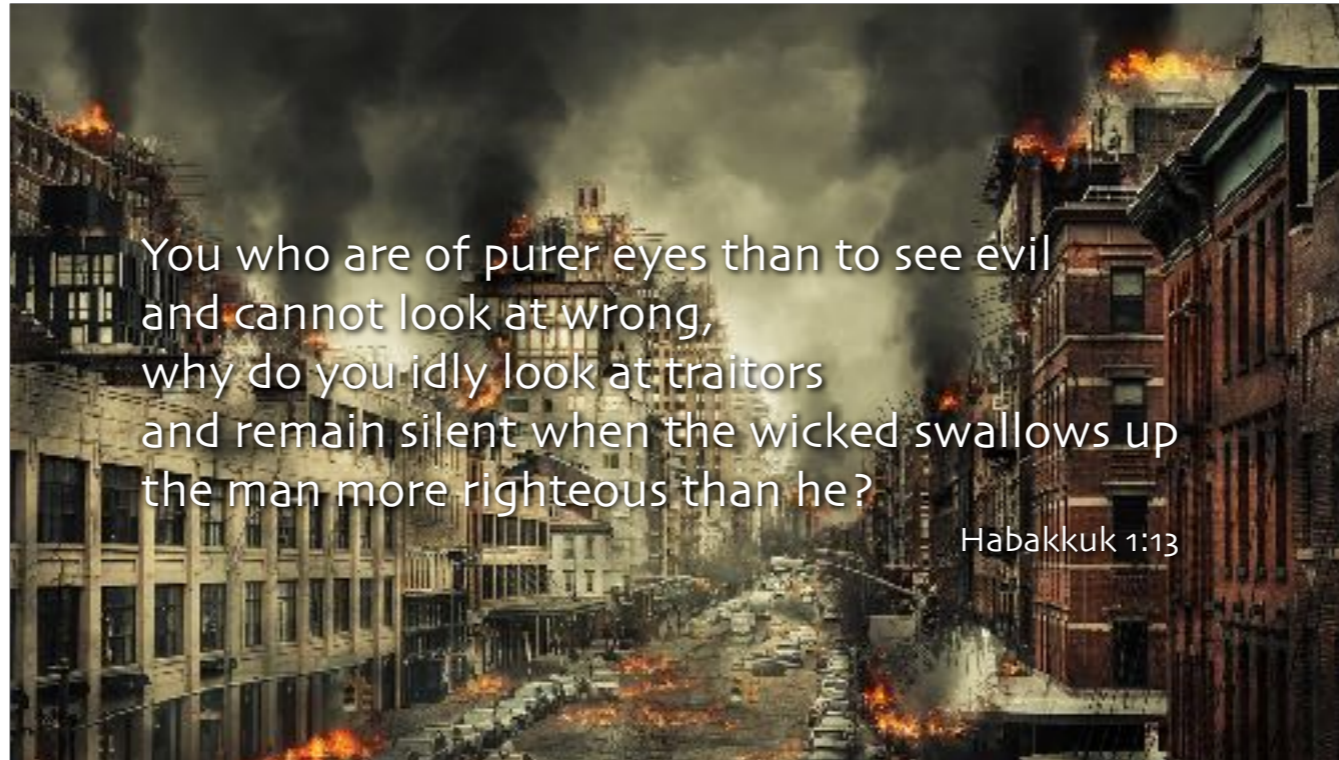
Jonah 4:11



- God's wrath works itself out of a job.
 - It was precisely because Jonah knew this about God and his wrath that he didn't want to preach to Nineveh.
 - Graceless, loveless Jonah wanted Nineveh dead!
 - Without chance of reprieve.
 - A gracious God who loves the whole of humanity wanted her to turn and live



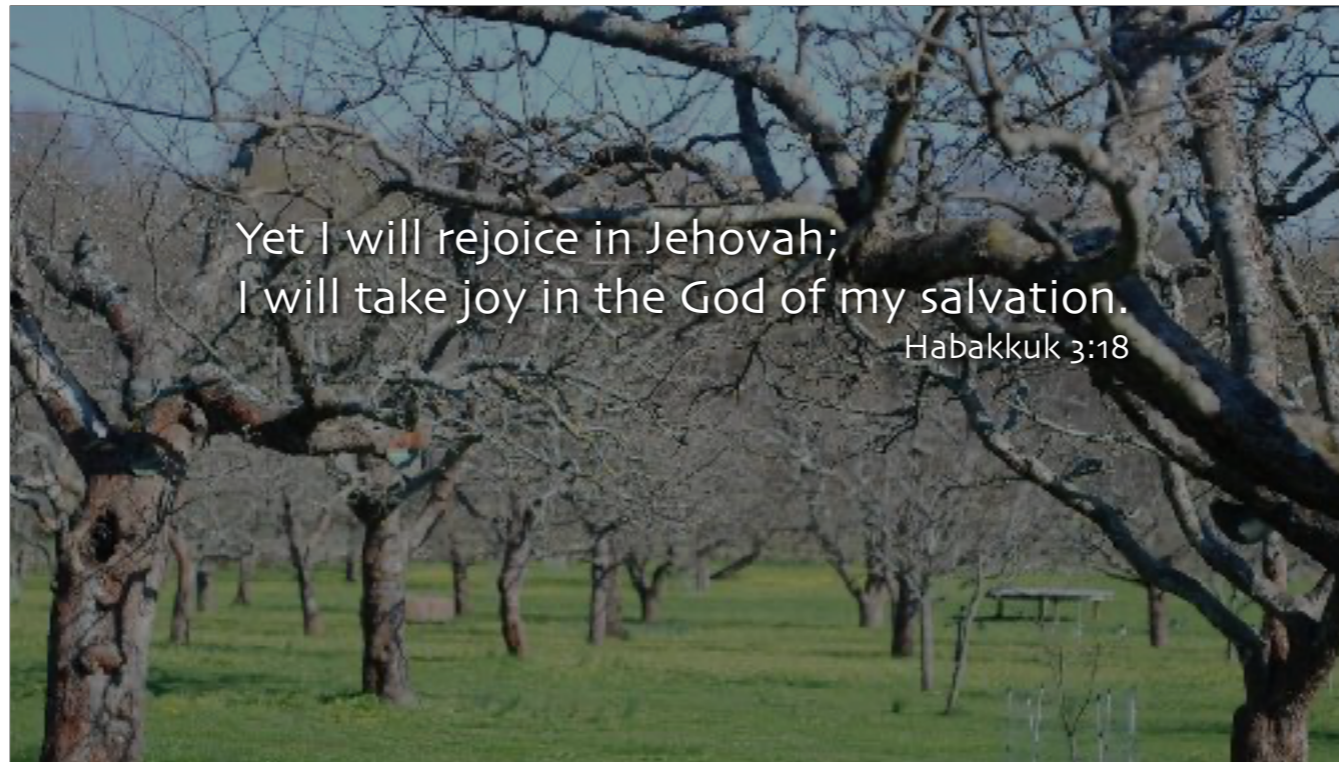
- Questions God about why he's not doing anything about the wickedness of his people.
 - Underlying thought is that Habakkuk expected God to do something! Why?
- When told of God's plan to bring in the Babylonians to destroy his people, Habakkuk is shocked since the Babylonians are worse than Judah.



You who are of purer eyes than to see evil
and cannot look at wrong,
why do you idly look at traitors
and remain silent when the wicked swallows up
the man more righteous than he?

Habakkuk 1:13

- Habakkuk 1:12-13 (ESV) 12 Are you not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, you have ordained them as a judgment, and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof. 13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?



- Habakkuk 3:17-19 (ESV) 17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, 18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. 19 GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.



- Leviticus 23:40-43

- And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook,
- and **you shall rejoice** before the LORD your God seven days.
- 41 You shall **celebrate it as a feast** to the LORD for seven days in the year.



- Celebrating the wilderness
 - Why would Jehovah want the people to remember facing His wrath?
 - His wrath is a tool intended to discipline,
 - necessary
 - instructive
 - he didn't take pleasure in these deaths.
- Are we willing to learn to celebrate the wrath of God?

You shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days.
You shall celebrate it as a feast to Jehovah

Leviticus 23:40-41



- Celebrating the wilderness is not really about the wilderness.
 - It's about the God who leads through the wilderness.
 - Will you believe in him and rejoice in him?
- Ultimately, in Jesus we have the victory over death (the curse) and our hope of eternal life assured.
 - But there's still the journey through the wilderness for us.

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

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Celebrating the Wilderness

Leviticus 23:40-43

Synopsis: Why would Jehovah command Israel to celebrate the journey through the wilderness? The wilderness is not just about the trials, but also teaches us about who our God is and helps us to understand his wrath.

Lesson borrowed from Jim McGuiggan's book: Celebrating the Wrath of God: Reflections on the Agony and Ecstasy of His Relentless Love, Chapter 9: Celebrating the Wrath of God.

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”