

Jesus' Authority is Challenged

Matthew 21: 23-32

April 23, 2023

Verse 23

The phonies question Jesus

This group, the rich, elite, full of control, and full of themselves, attack Jesus

Their goal – *SHUT HIM UP!*

Jesus is teaching in the temple, and they burst into His teaching session

Like protestors on a college campus, screaming and interrupting the speaker – *lawlessness!!*

Satan's strategy: Silence anyone who is exposing his ways

A sign of a dying society, given over to Godlessness, is ***lawlessness!!***

Their obvious problem: *Fear of the truth!!*

“One word of truth can dispel a world of lies”
(Os Guinness)

Brethren, in the midst of lawless madness, ***speak the truth!***





When a society kicks God out of the mainstream culture, ***“lawlessness will abound”!!***

Verse 24 - 27

Jesus questions the “*questioners*”

Jesus is in full control; He is never flustered, never intimidated, always in charge

Jesus brings up John the Baptist:

***“The baptism of John - where is it from?
From heaven or from men?”***

Jesus asks a brilliant question, and the religious attackers are stumped!

- Whatever they said would stir up the crowd
- These proud, aggressive, religious leaders ***FEARED*** the crowd!

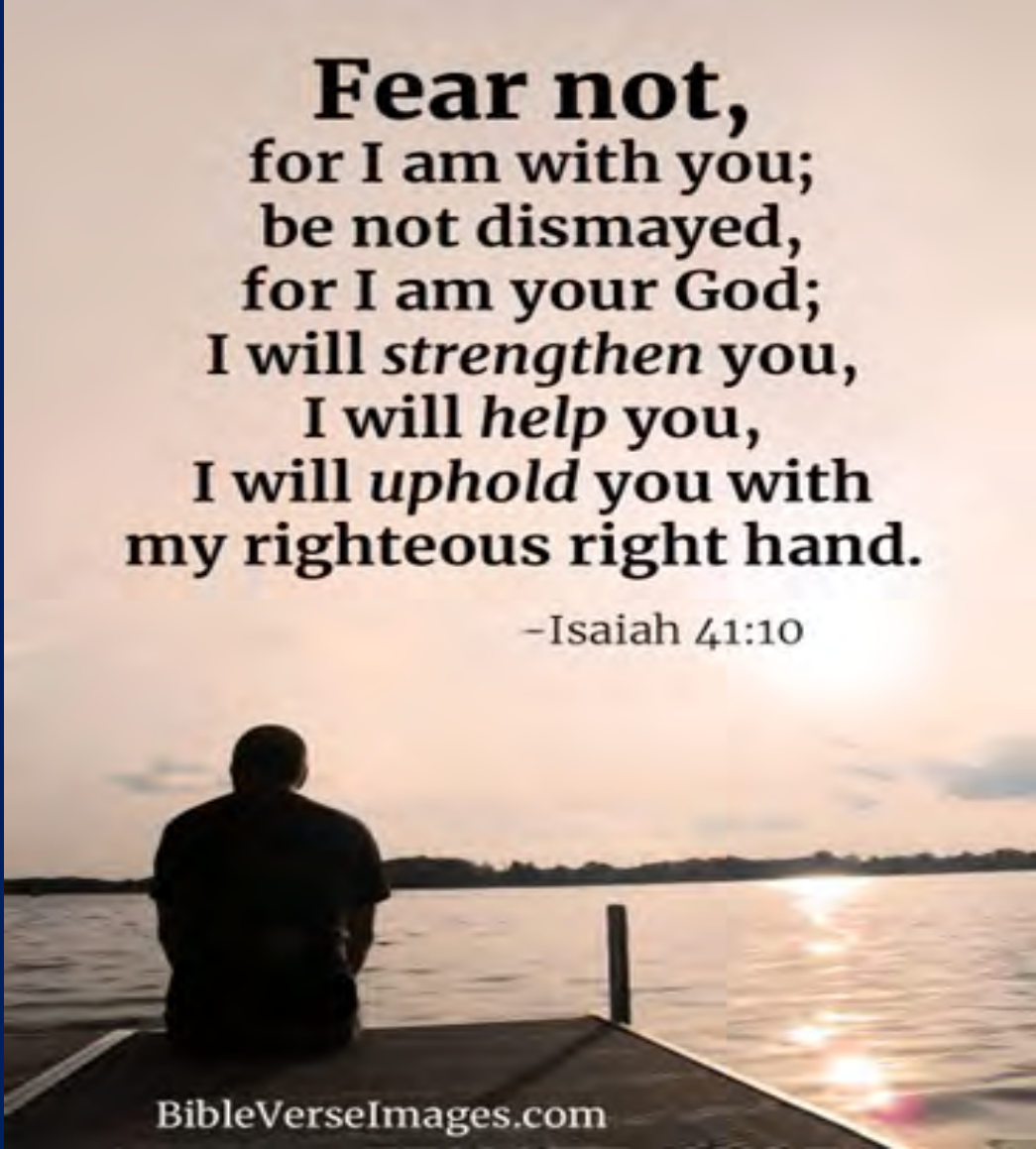
“The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else.” (Oswald Chambers)

Do not allow anyone to intimidate you regarding the truth!

Fear is an unwelcomed consequence of the fall of mankind into sin – Genesis 3: 9-10


To live in constant, unremittent fear is incapacitating!

God constantly tells believers to trust and not fear

A person is sitting on a wooden dock, looking out over a body of water at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright reflection on the water. The sky is a mix of orange and blue. The person is silhouetted against the bright light of the sunset.

Fear not,
for I am with you;
be not dismayed,
for I am your God;
I will *strengthen* you,
I will *help* you,
I will *uphold* you with
my righteous right hand.

-Isaiah 41:10



God is our
refuge and
strength,

A very
present **help** in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear.

Psalm 46:1-2

Enter God – *exit fear*

Exit God – *enter fear*

Verse 28 - 31

Two Sons / Two Opportunities

Both sons are given a command by their father, “. . . *go, work today in my vineyard*”

Son #1 = the tax collectors and harlots, the scum in society (*nothing lower in Jewish culture*)

Son #2 = the religious leaders, cream of the crop (*highly esteemed in Jewish culture*)

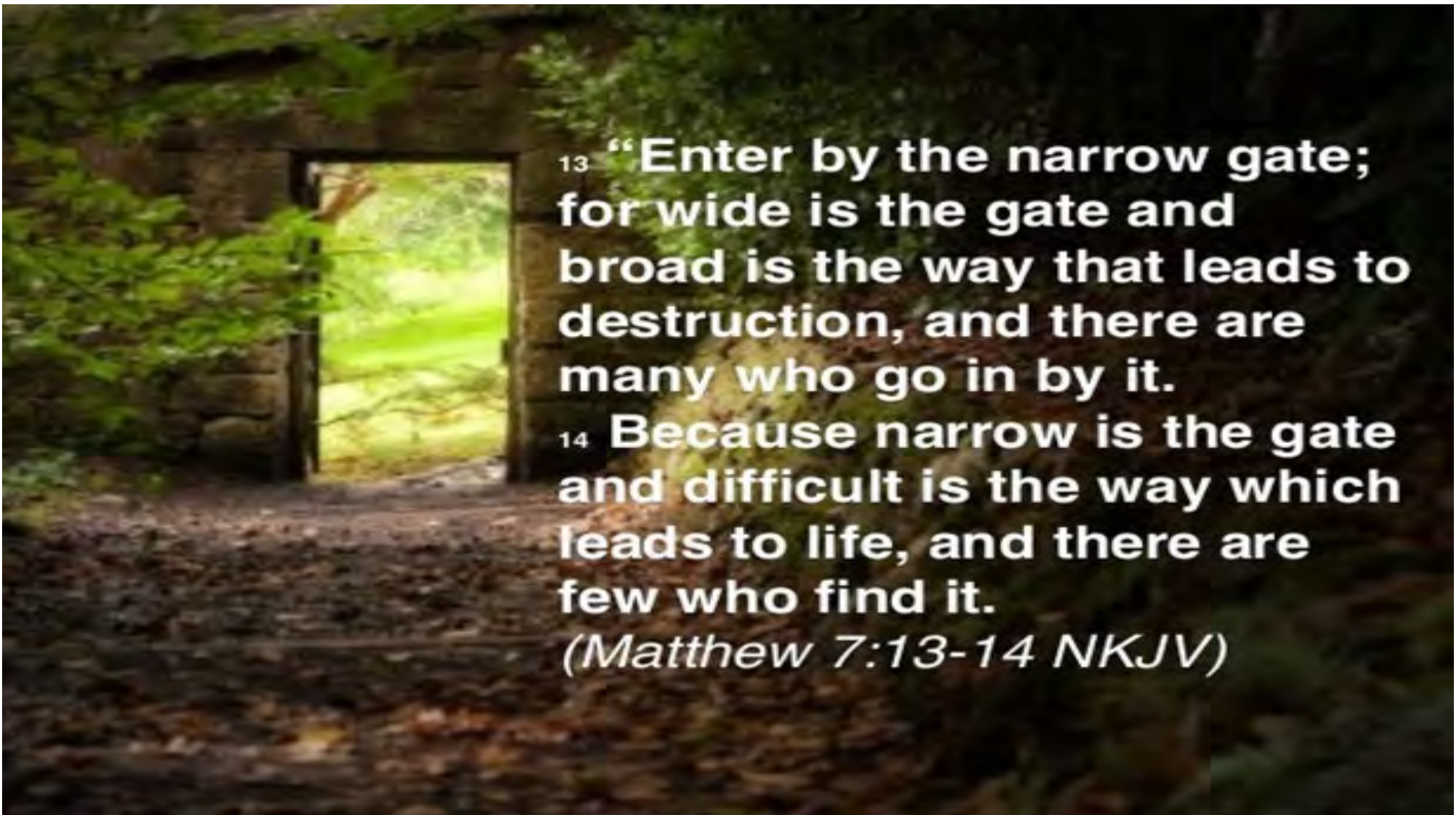
Son #1 = *“I will not’, but afterward he regretted it and went”*

Tax collectors and harlots want nothing to do with God

But when they heard John preach, they repented!

There is no face looking by God; all are welcomed, all are invited to be part of God’s family

Salvation is wide open to everyone, *but there is only one narrow way to God!*

A photograph of a narrow, dark stone archway leading to a bright, sunlit path in a forest. The path is made of dirt and gravel, and the surrounding area is filled with green foliage and trees. The light from the path creates a strong contrast with the dark interior of the archway.

¹³ **“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.**

¹⁴ **Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

(Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV)



Son #2 = “‘I go, sir’, but he did not go”

Speaks of the religious leaders

They heard John’s message, but rejected John’s message about Messiah

Jesus calls these hyper-religious leaders hypocrites, mask wearers, seeking the applause of men

Verse 32

The only way to righteousness

What is the way of righteousness?

*John's message was "repent,
for the kingdom of God is at
hand"*



METAMBIA

Greek: The journey of changing
one's mind, heart, self or way of life

Jesus was accepted by the masses, but rejected by the religious leaders

In the New Testament, around 200 times the criteria for salvation is to **believe in Jesus!**

Believe = “*pisteuo*” = commit to, place your trust in Jesus as your sin bearer, your Savior

What about repentance?

When one believes in Jesus, a person realizes their need for a Savior and repentance takes place

Believe and repentance go together; you cannot have one without the other

All world religions and all cults are working their way to God - *None can!*

Christianity is not about working for salvation; *God has done the work!*

Christianity is about believing and receiving the gift of salvation!

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast”

(NKJV)

CLOSING:

Regarding challenging Jesus: The hyper-religious challenged Jesus and came away limping

Regarding fear: Believers are to fear God only; it is wrong for a believer to fear anything else!

Chuck Misler on fear: Worry is a trickle of fear in our soul that soon cuts a crevice so deep that it drains all other thoughts away

Jesus on worry: *“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

Matthew 6: 34

We all have the fear/worry gene; it came at the fall – *“Adam was afraid and hid himself”*

We are told to fear not, stop worrying!

Easy to say, hard to do!

What if ? →

What if ? →

What if ? ↓

What if ? →

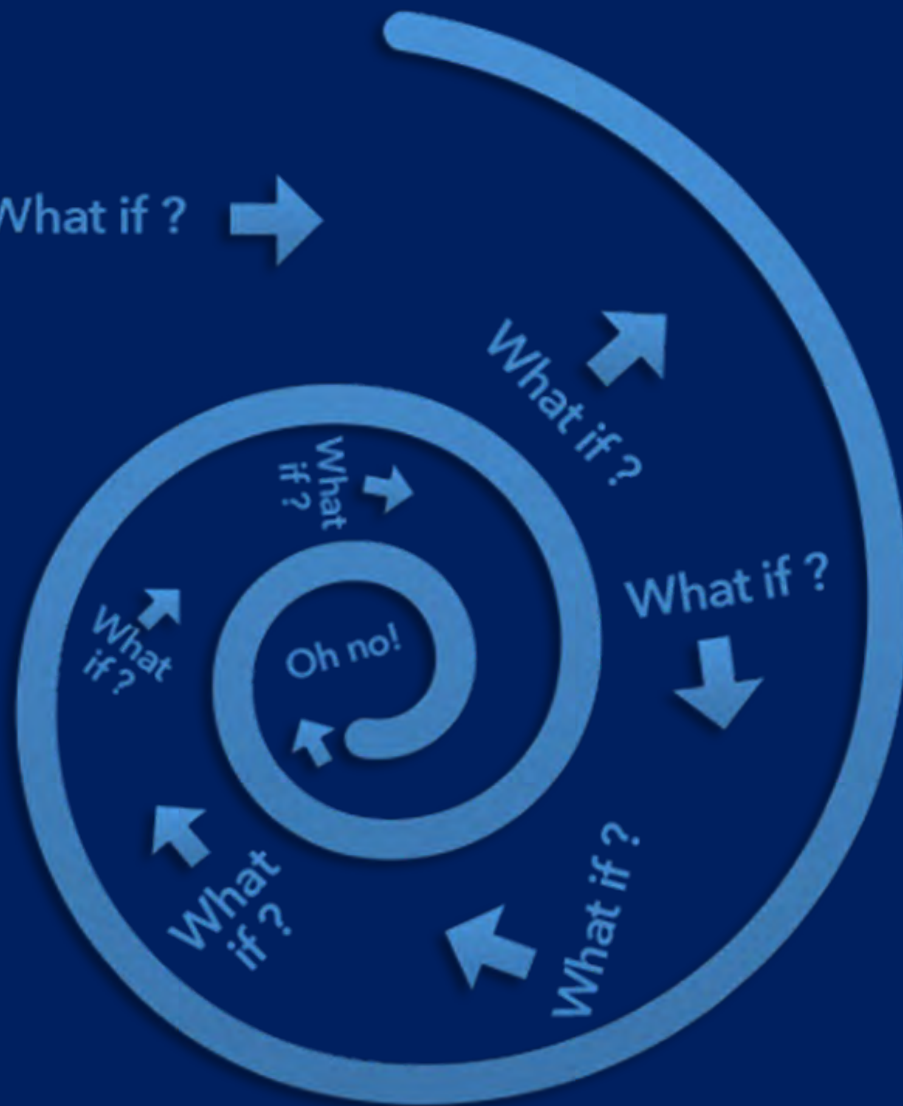
What if ? →

What if ? →

What if ? →

What if ? ←

Oh no!



When worry happens, take a hard stop!!

Do not live in ***“what if”*** land

Live in ***“Trust”*** land!!

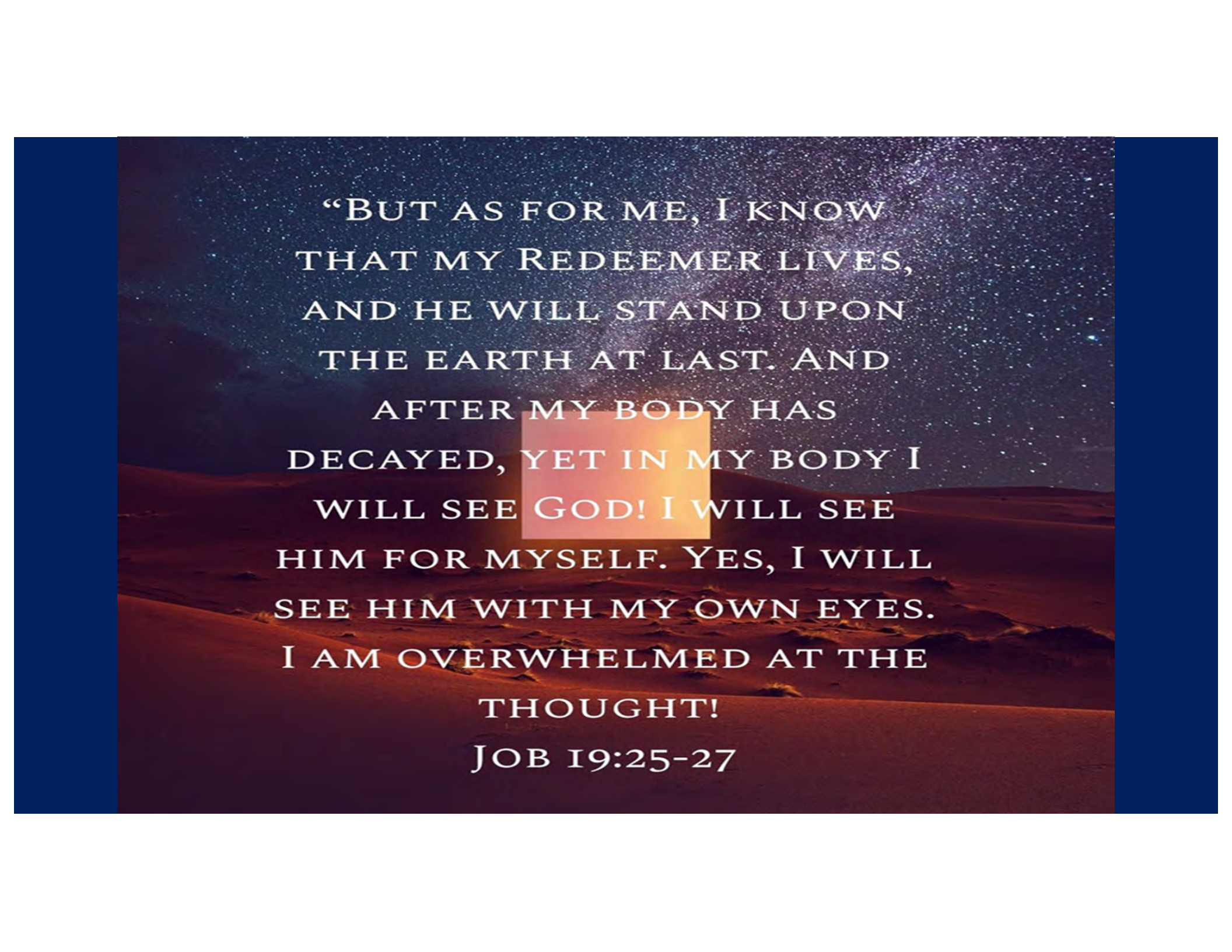
Regarding the way of righteousness:

There is one person who will get
you to heaven, ***JESUS!!***



It is all about *believing* and *receiving* the gift of salvation – *do it NOW!!*

You, too, can join the chorus of believers, through the epochs of time, who can say like Job



“BUT AS FOR ME, I KNOW
THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES,
AND HE WILL STAND UPON
THE EARTH AT LAST. AND
AFTER MY BODY HAS
DECAYED, YET IN MY BODY I
WILL SEE GOD! I WILL SEE
HIM FOR MYSELF. YES, I WILL
SEE HIM WITH MY OWN EYES.
I AM OVERWHELMED AT THE
THOUGHT!

JOB 19:25-27

***I KNOW MY REDEEMER
LIVES!***