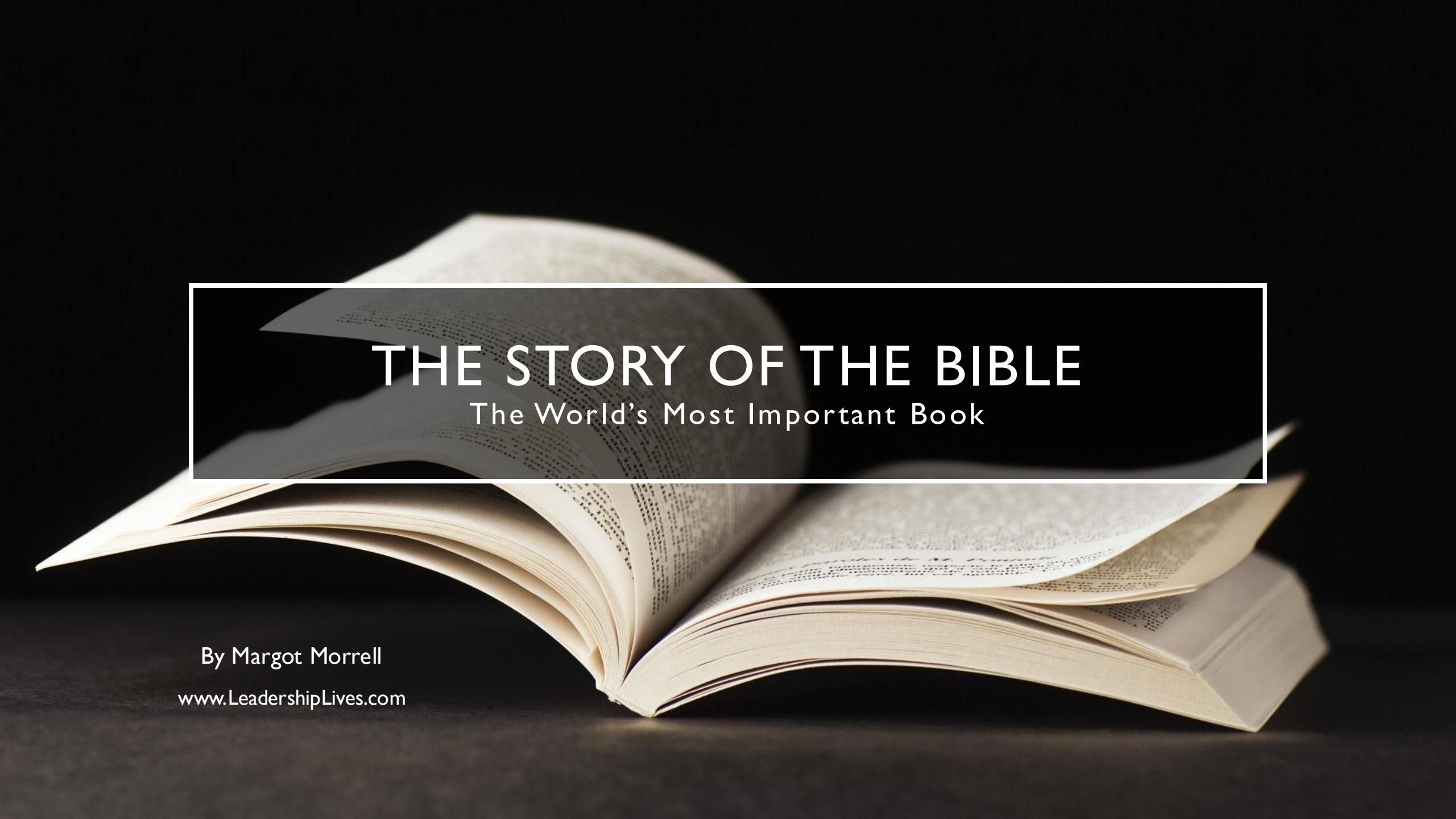


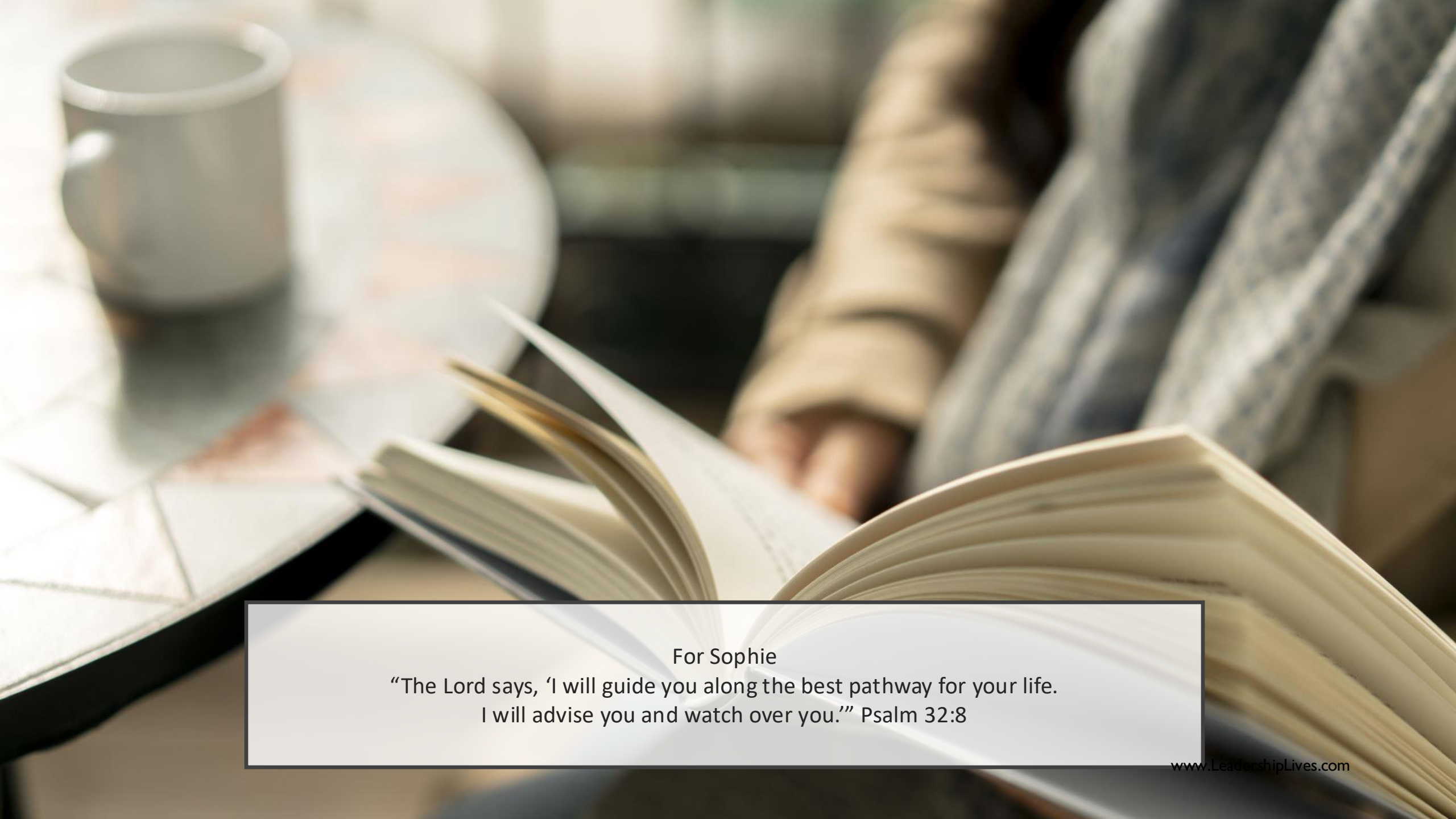


THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

The World's Most Important Book

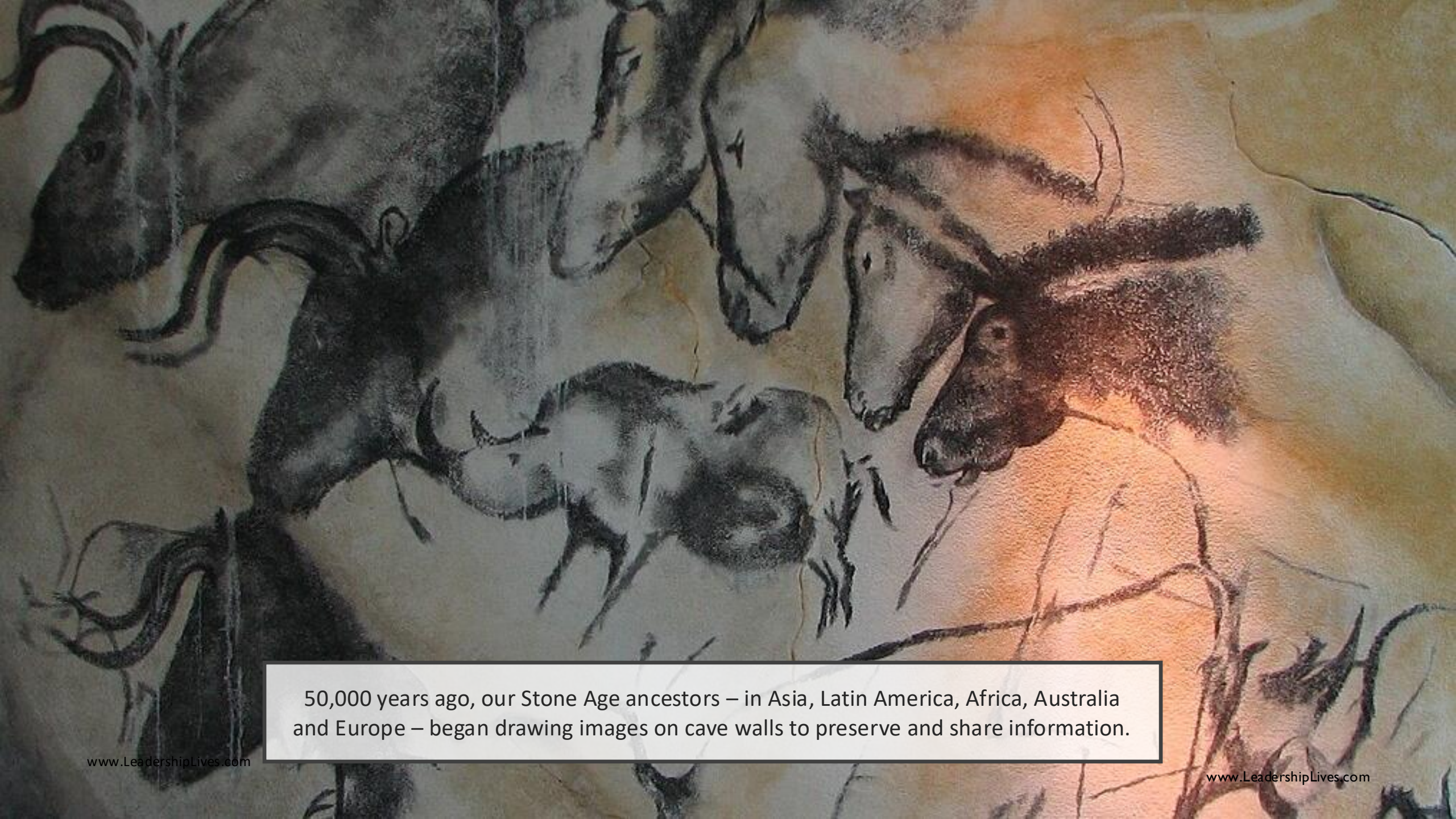
By Margot Morrell

www.LeadershipLives.com



For Sophie

“The Lord says, ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.
I will advise you and watch over you.’” Psalm 32:8



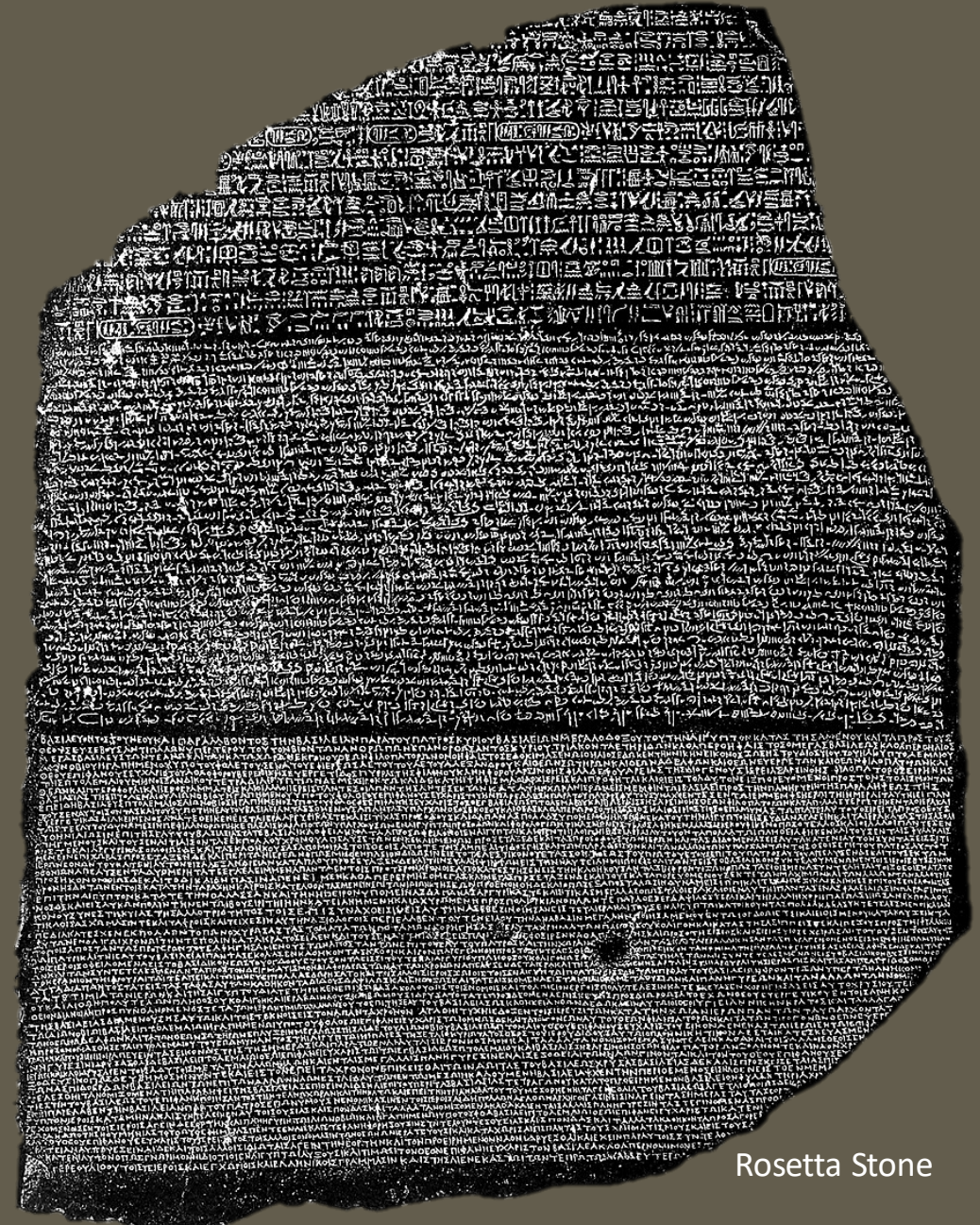
50,000 years ago, our Stone Age ancestors – in Asia, Latin America, Africa, Australia and Europe – began drawing images on cave walls to preserve and share information.



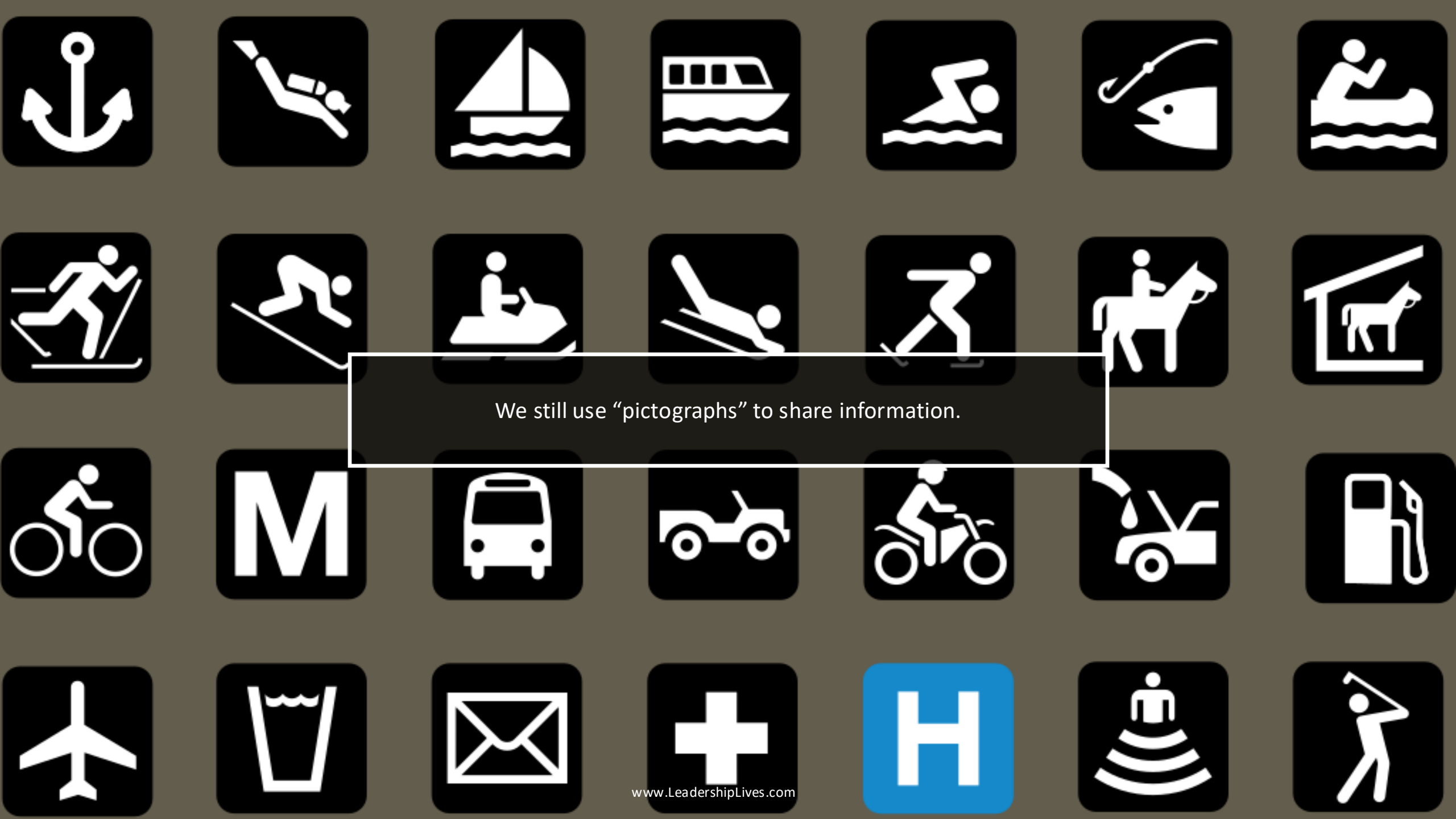
Over the course of thousands of years, the drawings became more sophisticated. These images, from a cave in western Bulgaria, were created between 1,200 and 8,000 B.C.



Images evolved into pictographs, and then, into letters and alphabets. Each letter represented a sound and, when combined, created words that told stories.



Rosetta Stone



We still use “pictographs” to share information.



Mediterranean Sea

Mesopotamia

Tigris

Euphrates

Syrian
Desert

Sinai

Persian Gulf

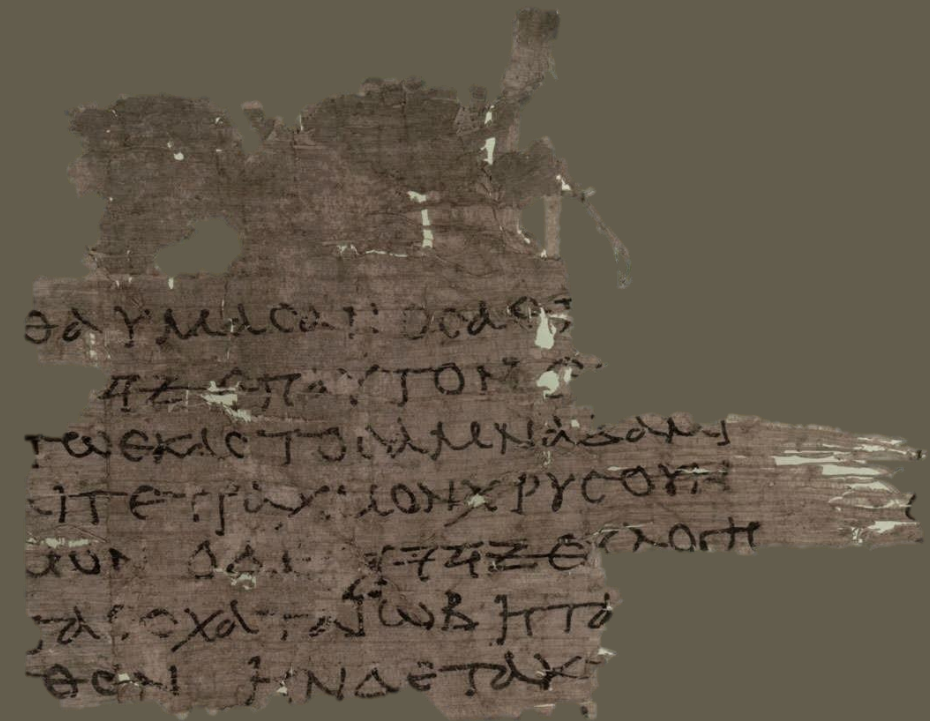
Nubian Desert

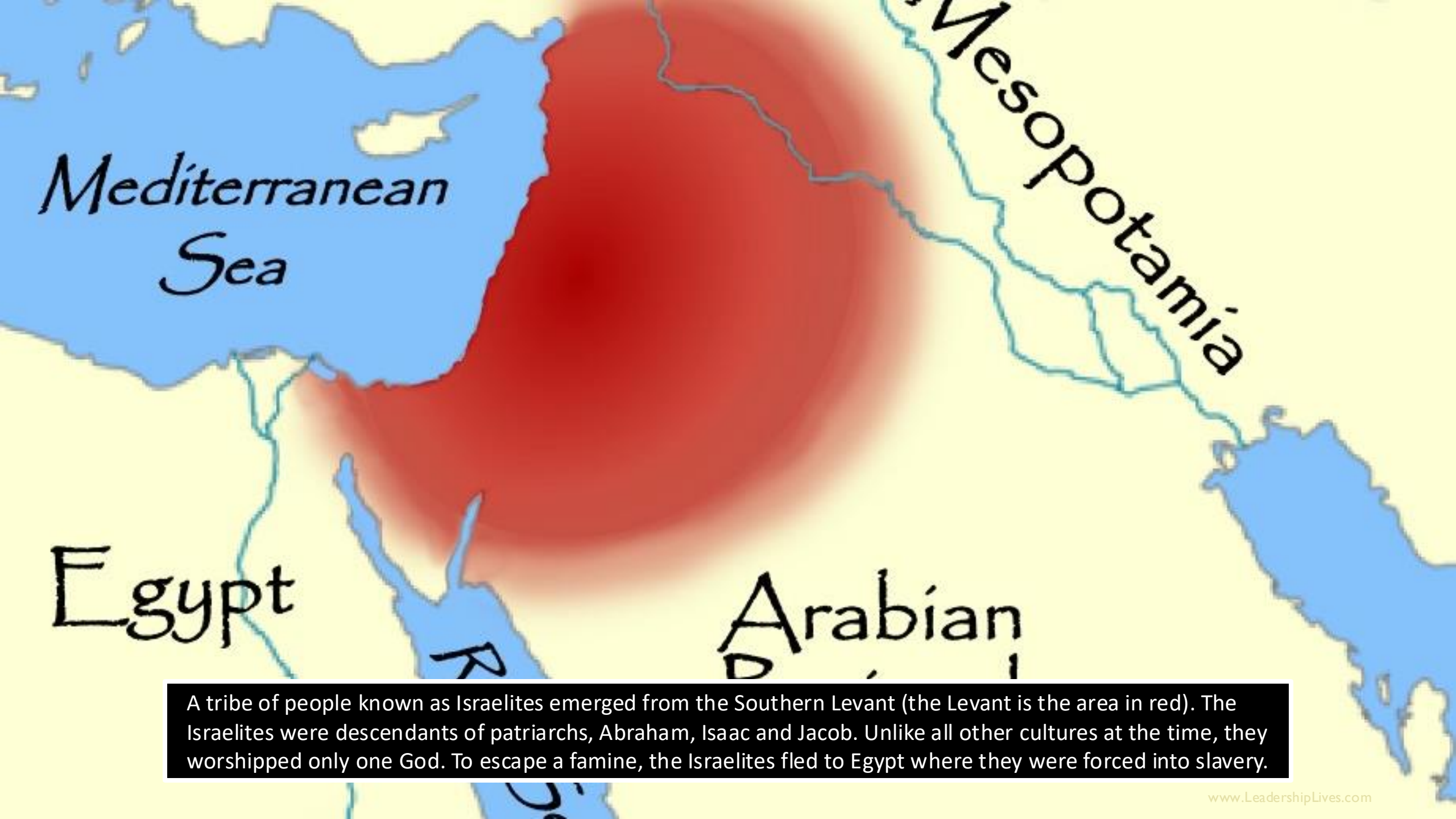
Red Sea

Nile

About 8,000 years ago in a region we know as the Fertile Crescent, our ancestors settled down for the first time to grow crops and develop herds of goats, sheep and cows. "Mesopotamia" is a Greek word that means between two rivers.

Small communities grew up, and people began to develop pottery and libraries.





A tribe of people known as Israelites emerged from the Southern Levant (the Levant is the area in red). The Israelites were descendants of patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Unlike all other cultures at the time, they worshipped only one God. To escape a famine, the Israelites fled to Egypt where they were forced into slavery.

A 13th century BC monument, documents an Egyptian victory over the Israelites during the reign of Merneptah, ca. 1213 – 1203 BC.



The Merneptah Stele
Ca. 1213 – 1203 BC

Around this time, the Israelites began to document their relationship with God.

One of their earliest stories dates from the 13th century BC. The Song of the Sea celebrates the tribe's miraculous escape from captivity in Egypt. This story was later incorporated into the Book of Exodus.

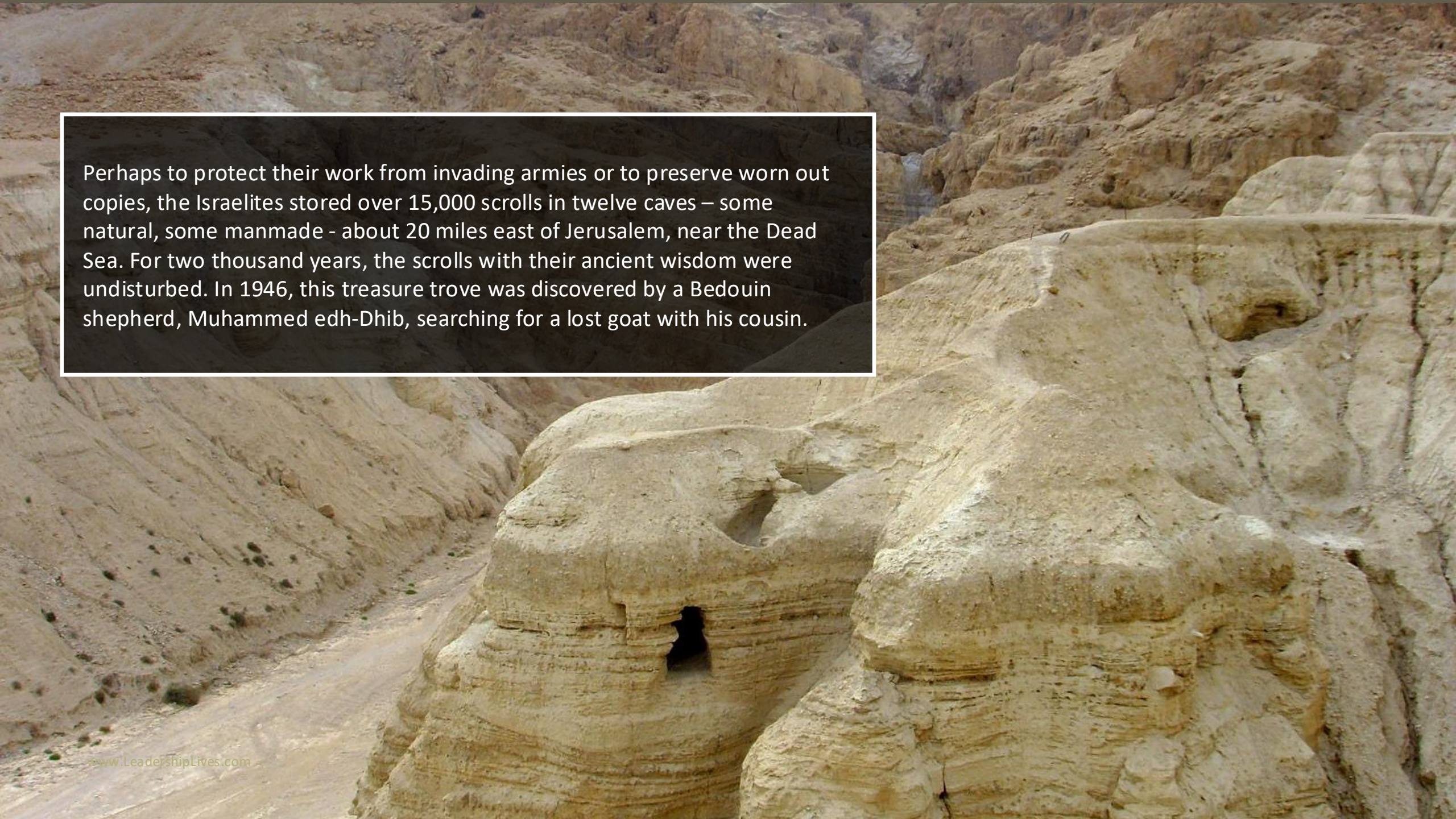
“Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: ‘I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him.’”

Exod. 15:1-2





By the 6th century BC, Hebrew scribes were writing down stories, songs, history, laws, prophecies and wisdom that their tribe had passed down for generations. They wrote on scrolls made of parchment and papyrus. The scrolls were stored in jars.

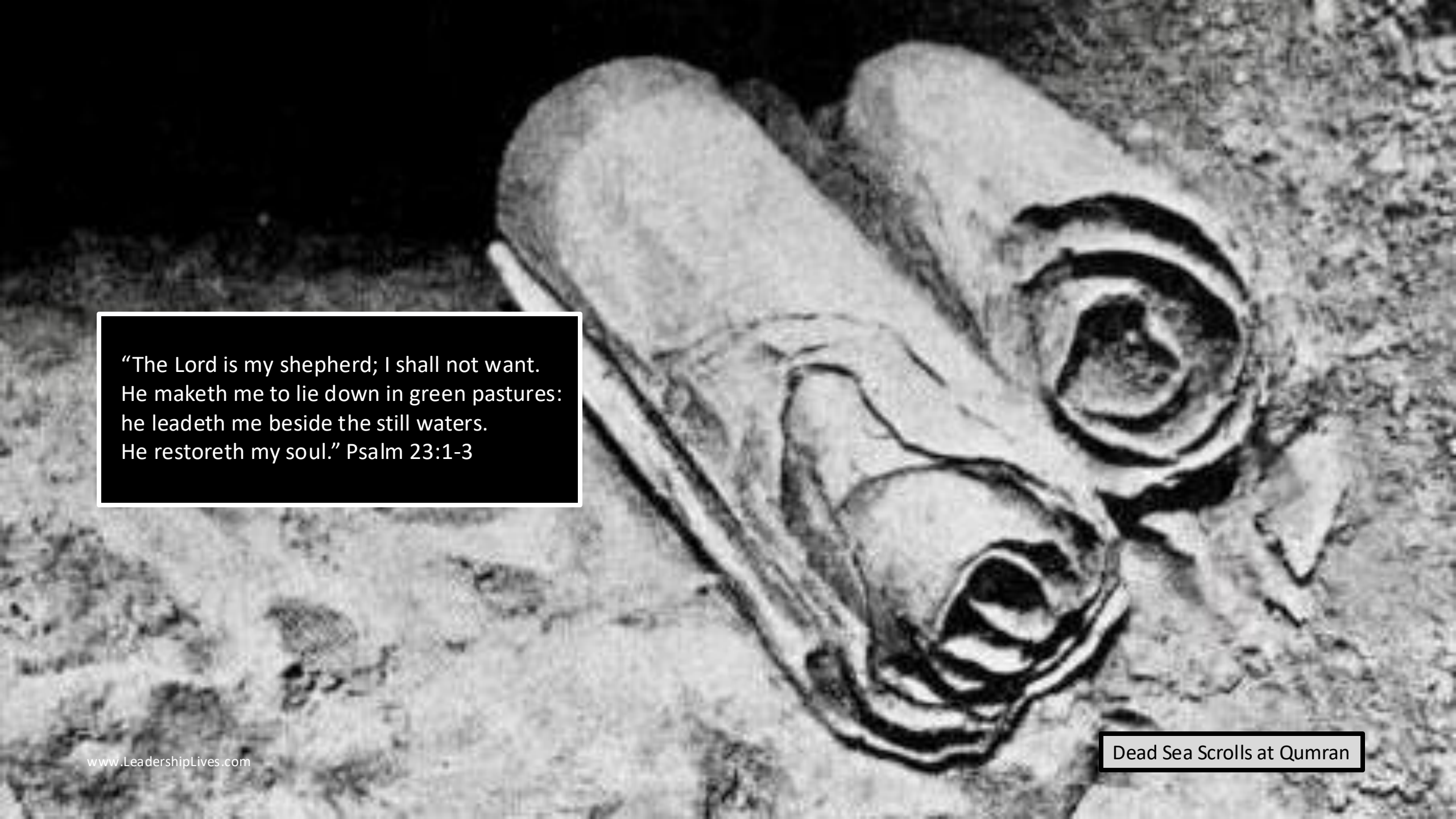
The background of the image is a photograph of a desert canyon. The canyon walls are made of light-colored, layered rock, showing signs of erosion. A small, dark opening is visible in the rock face. The sky is not visible, and the overall tone is arid and historical.

Perhaps to protect their work from invading armies or to preserve worn out copies, the Israelites stored over 15,000 scrolls in twelve caves – some natural, some manmade - about 20 miles east of Jerusalem, near the Dead Sea. For two thousand years, the scrolls with their ancient wisdom were undisturbed. In 1946, this treasure trove was discovered by a Bedouin shepherd, Muhammed edh-Dhib, searching for a lost goat with his cousin.

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

Jeremiah 29:11





“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul.” Psalm 23:1-3

An aerial photograph of a desert canyon. In the foreground, a sandy, light-colored path or dry riverbed winds through the landscape. To the right, a prominent, light-colored rock formation with distinct horizontal sedimentary layers is visible. Several small, dark, rectangular openings, which are the entrances to the Qumran Caves, are visible in this rock formation. The background shows the rugged, layered walls of the canyon under a clear sky.

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.
Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”
Proverbs 3:3-4

In the 8th century BC, the prophet Isaiah predicted the birth of a Savior.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6 NIV

700 years later, Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled.



A few years after Christ's death on the cross, a Hebrew Pharisee "breathing threats and murder" set out for Damascus to round up and imprison believers.

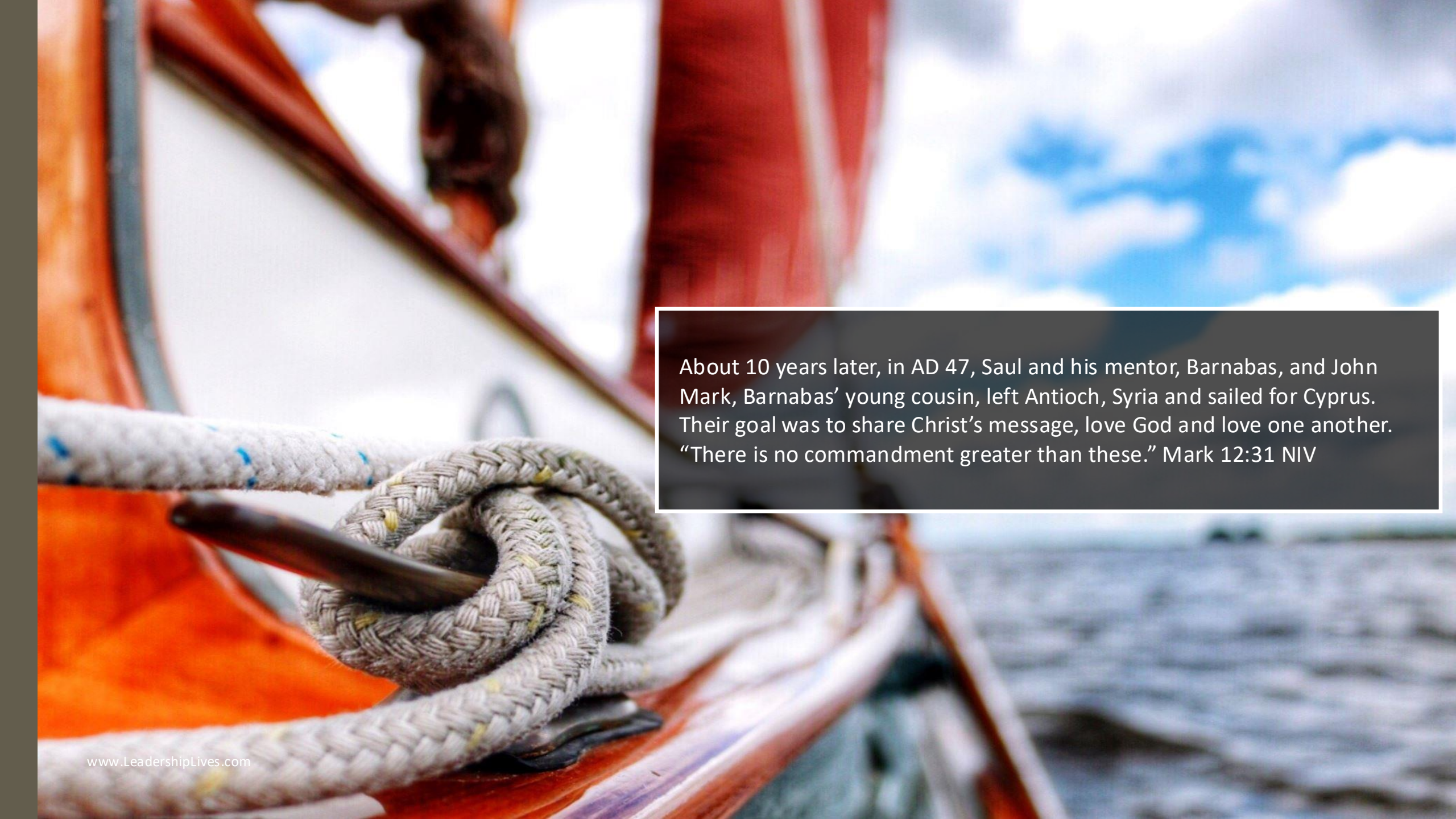
In sight of his destination, the Pharisee was knocked to the ground by a brilliant flash of light. He heard a voice asking, "'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked.

'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'" Acts 9:5-6

Saul, who later used the Greek version of his name, Paul, dedicated his life to spreading Jesus' teachings.

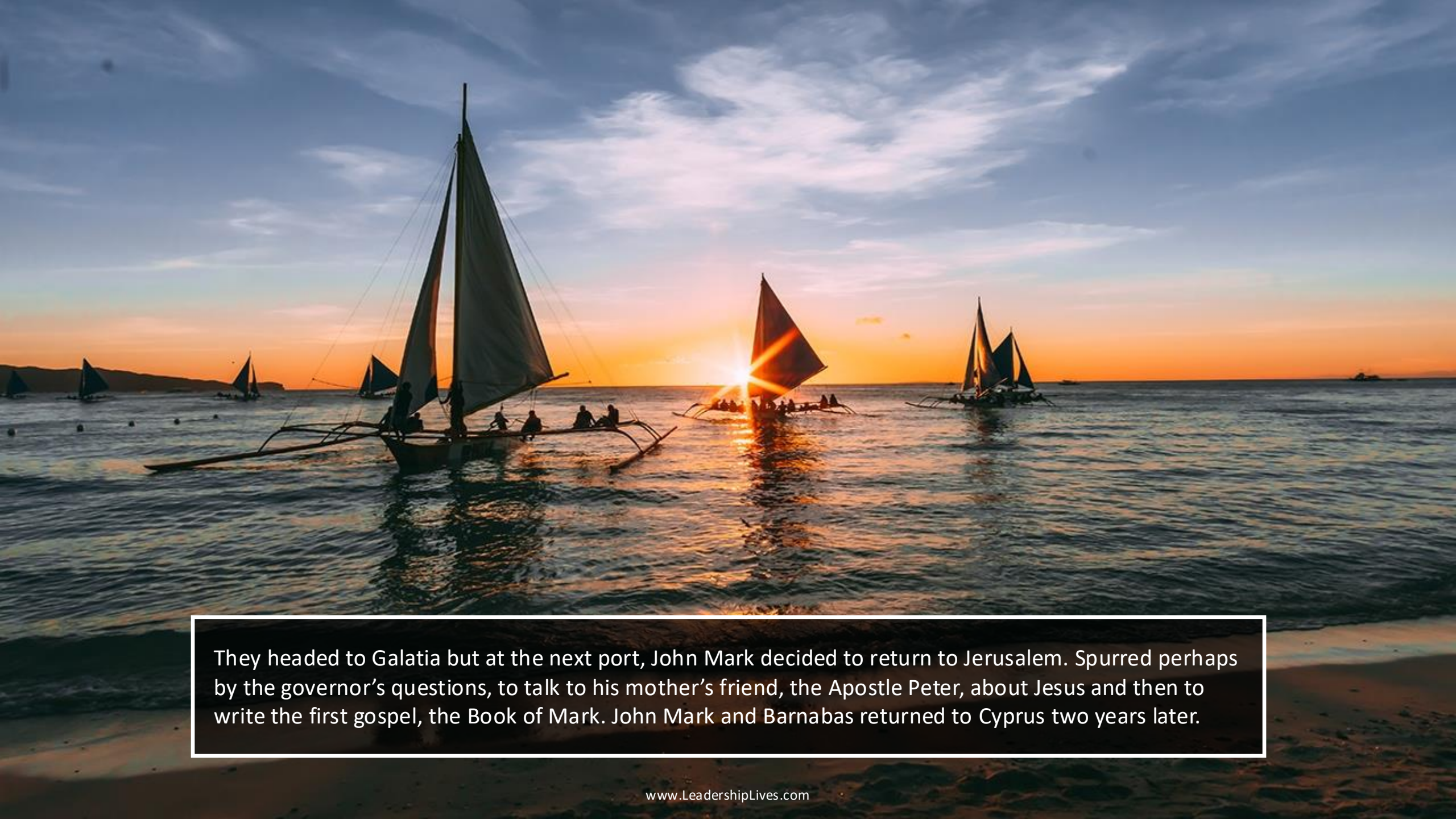




About 10 years later, in AD 47, Saul and his mentor, Barnabas, and John Mark, Barnabas' young cousin, left Antioch, Syria and sailed for Cyprus. Their goal was to share Christ's message, love God and love one another. "There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:31 NIV



At their final stop in Cyprus, they met the Roman governor, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent and sensible man who asked perceptive questions and became a believer.



They headed to Galatia but at the next port, John Mark decided to return to Jerusalem. Spurred perhaps by the governor's questions, to talk to his mother's friend, the Apostle Peter, about Jesus and then to write the first gospel, the Book of Mark. John Mark and Barnabas returned to Cyprus two years later.

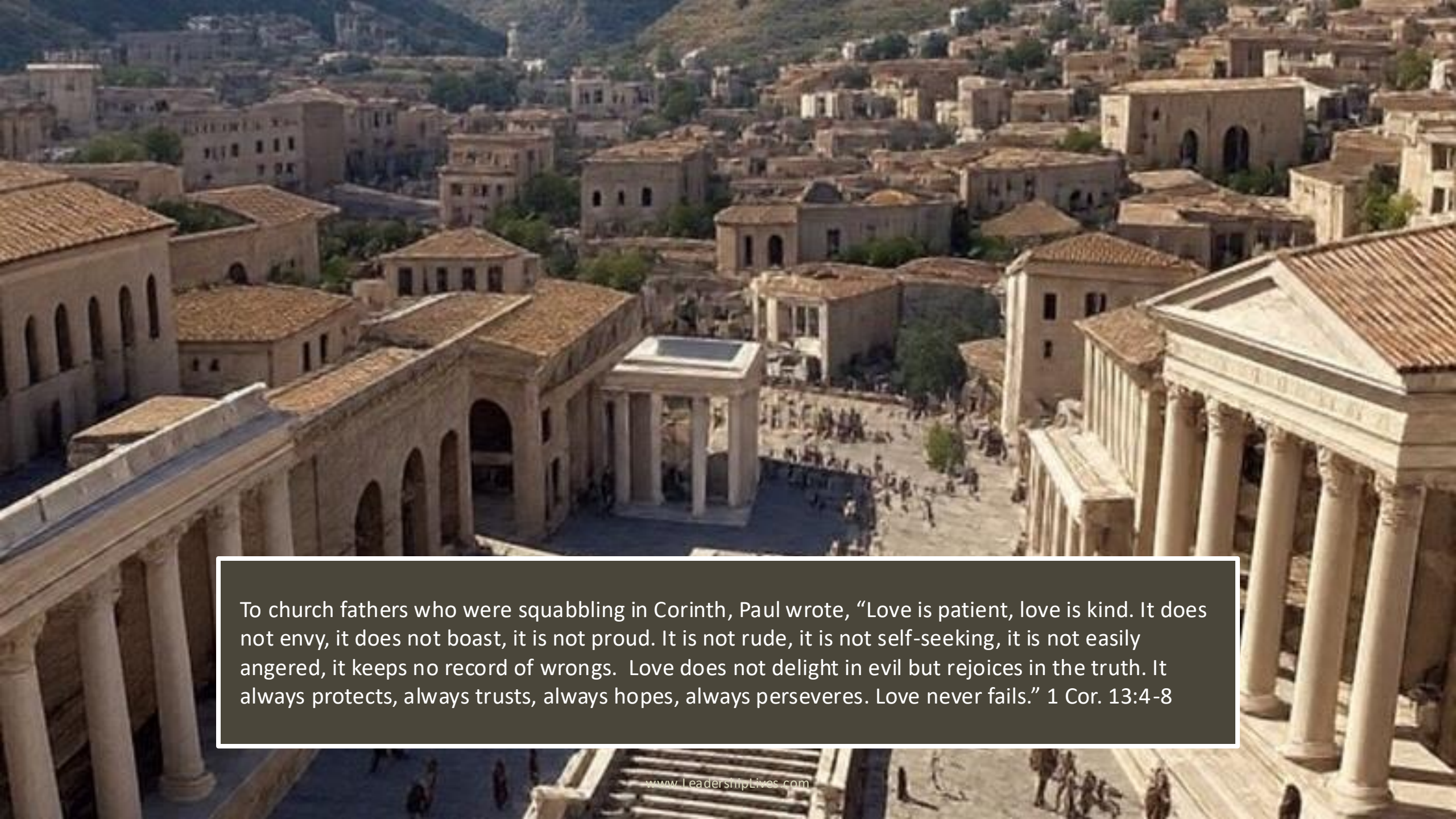
Back in Antioch, Paul heard that believers in Galatia had begun to listen to false preachers.

He wrote his first epistle to them saying, “I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are accepting another gospel.” Gal. 1:6

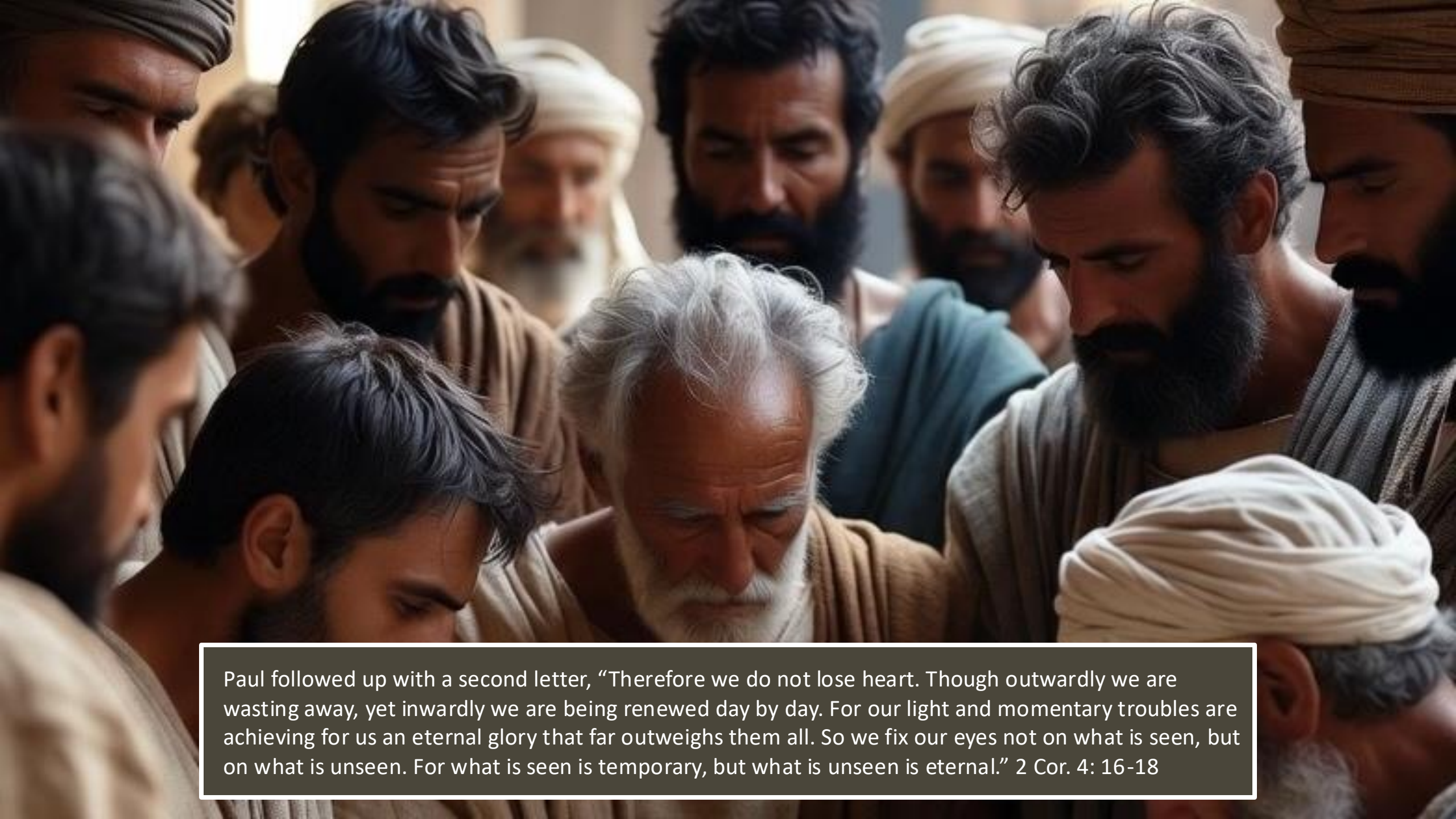
He added, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Gal. 5:22-23

Over the next 18 years, Paul wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament, and some of the Bible’s most beautiful and inspiring words.





To church fathers who were squabbling in Corinth, Paul wrote, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” 1 Cor. 13:4-8



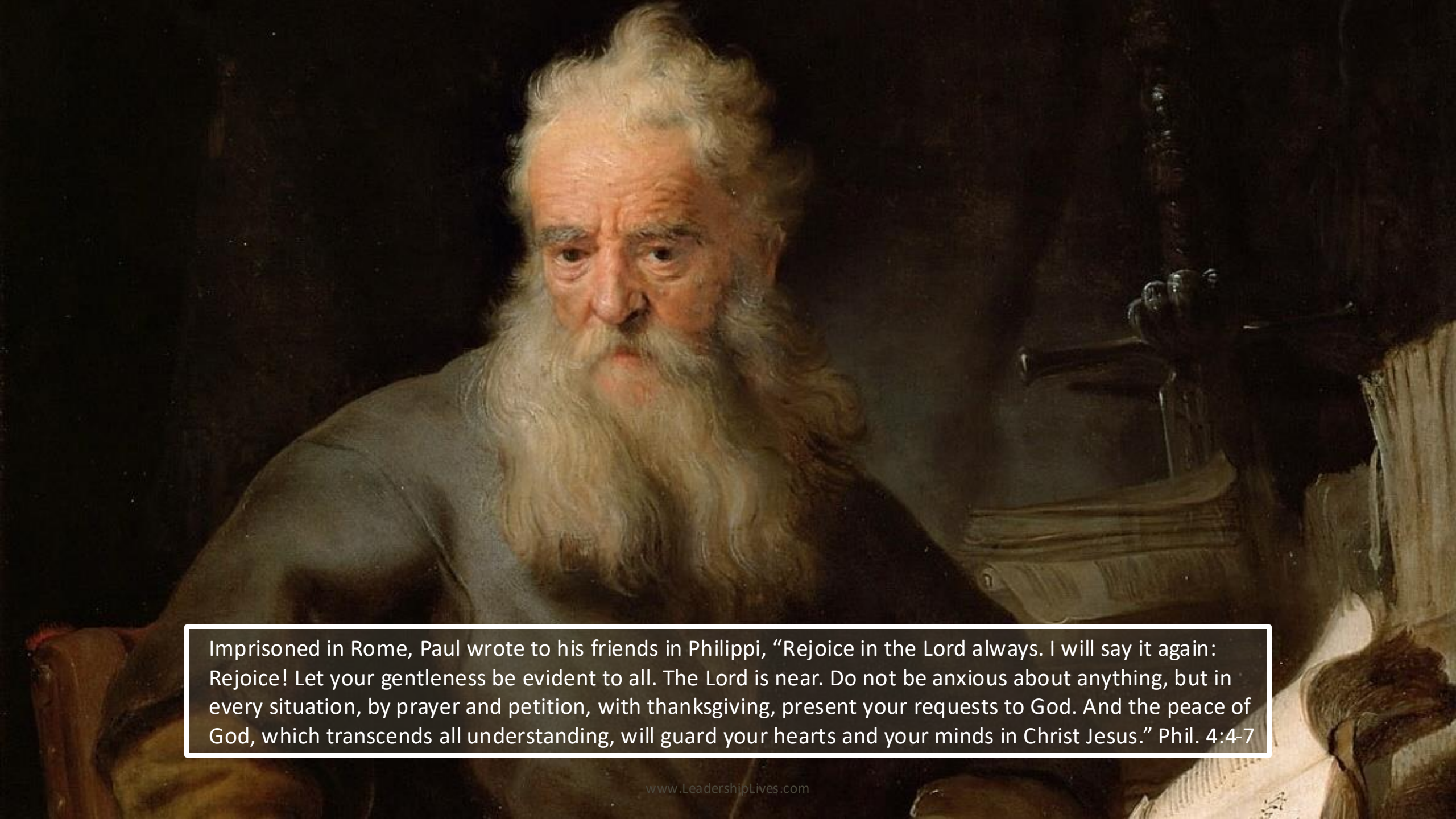
Paul followed up with a second letter, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” 2 Cor. 4: 16-18

To church leaders in Ephesus at the center of the pagan world, Paul wrote,

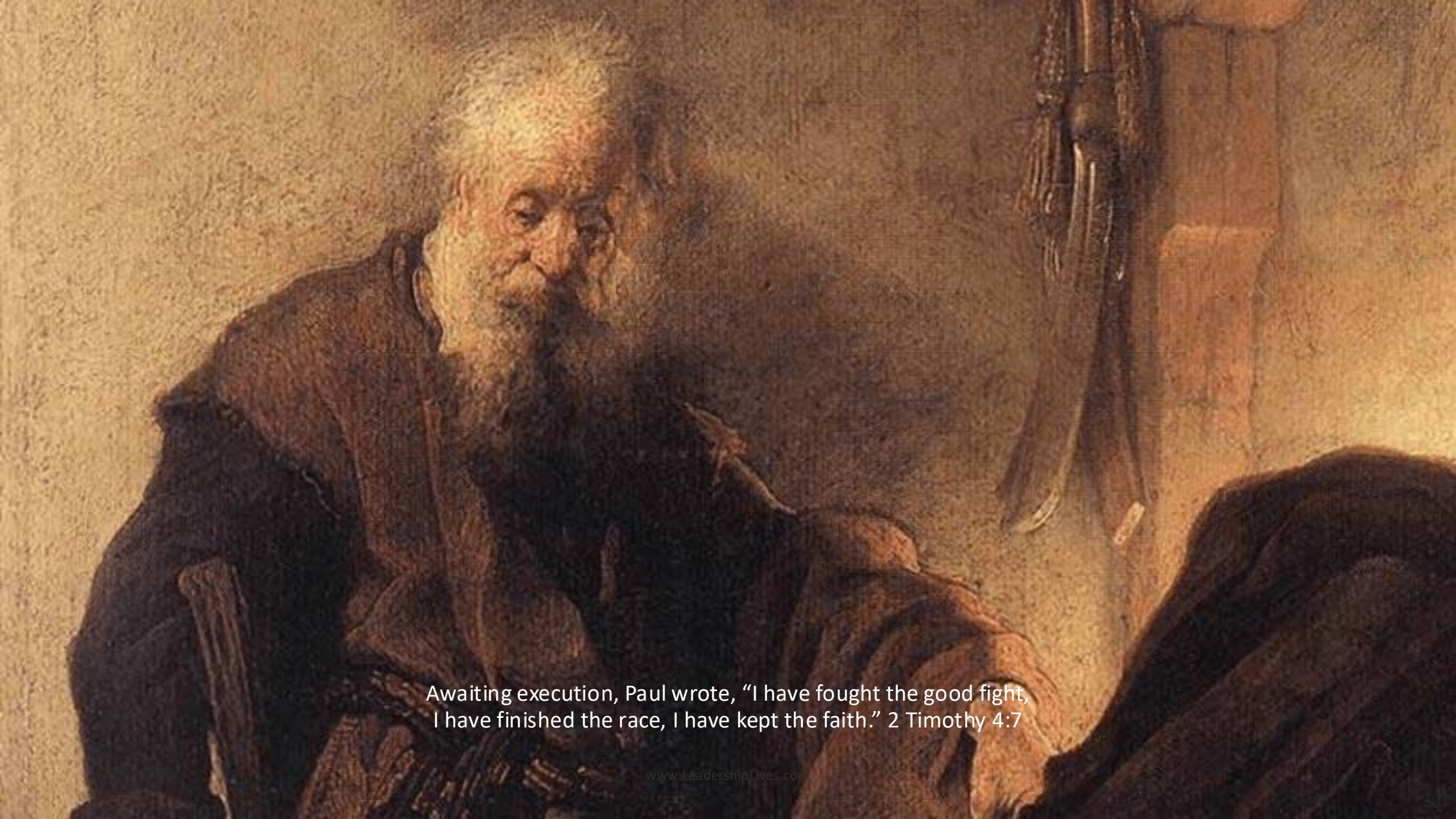
“In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.

And you will need the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the Word of God.”
Eph. 6:16-17





Imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote to his friends in Philippi, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:4-7

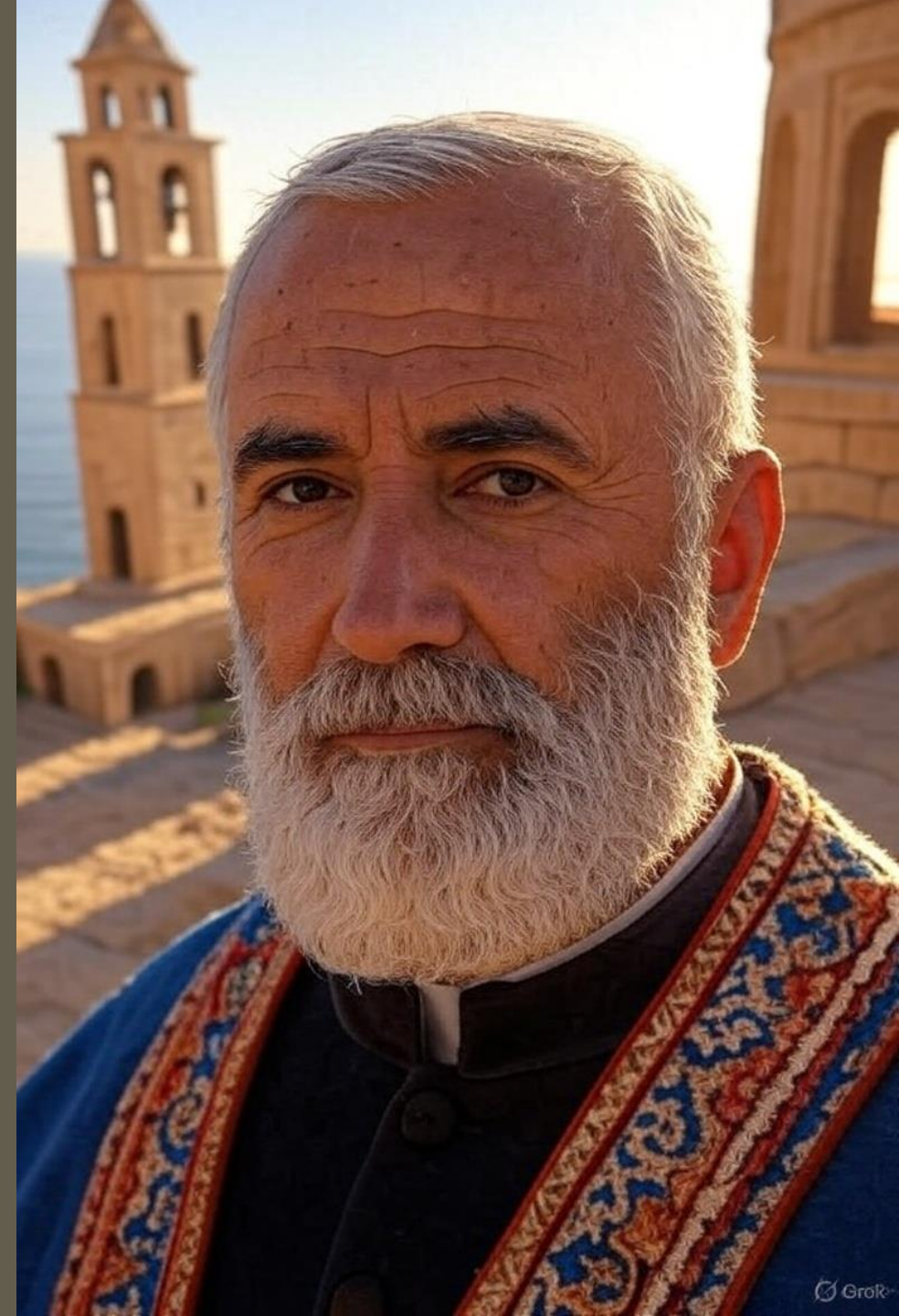


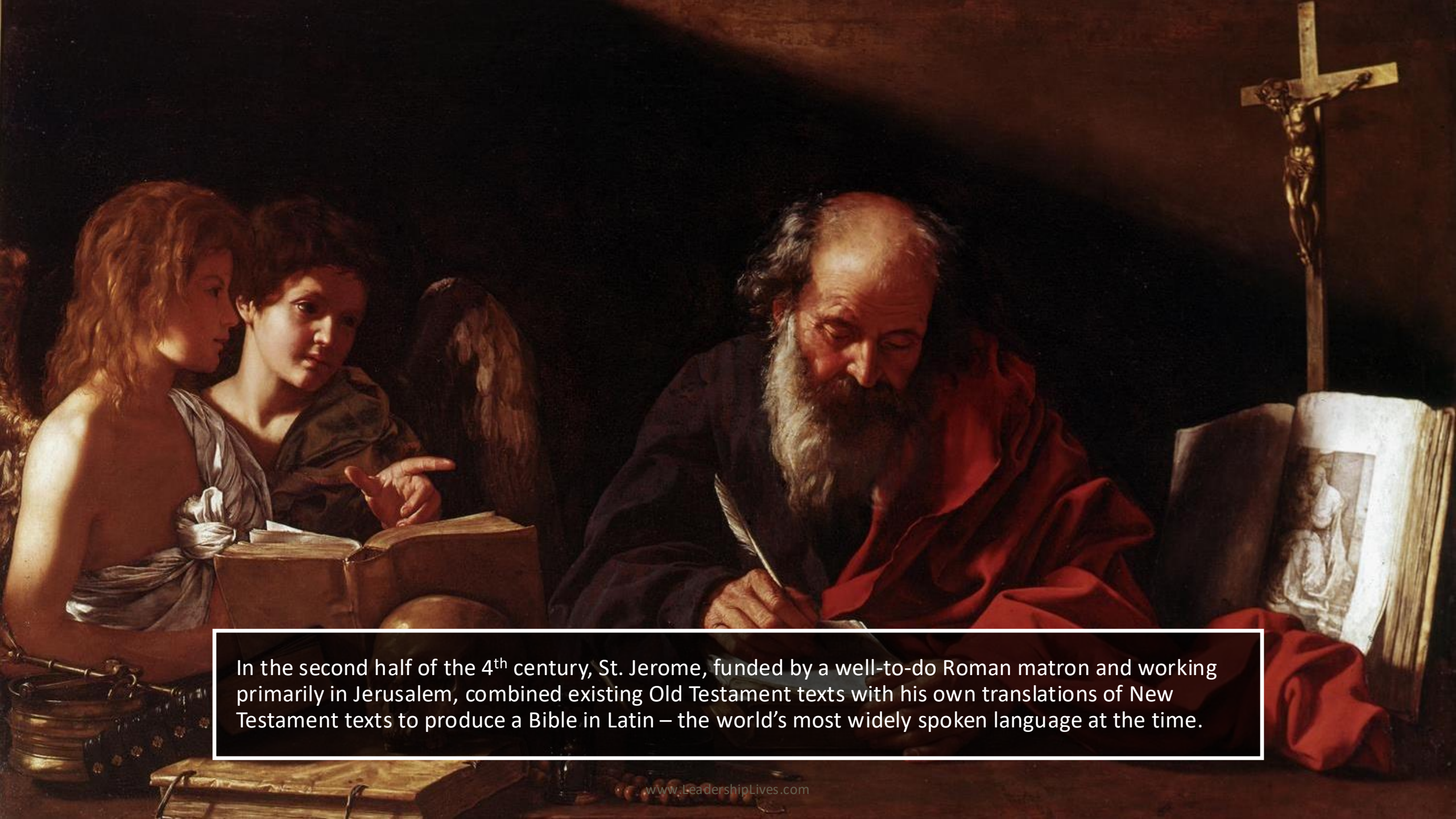
Awaiting execution, Paul wrote, "I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7

For the next 200 years, Paul's letters were transcribed and shared throughout the Roman Empire.

In the early 4th century, learned historian and bishop, Eusebius of Caesaria, meticulously documented the evolution of the church and organized early Christian texts into three categories – accepted, rejected and disputed. He shaped the New Testament by accepting the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's letters, among others.

Eusebius' work provided a structure for the earliest Bible handwritten in Greek with a New Testament. Today part of a 4th century Bible, Codex Sinaiticus, based on Eusebius' work is at the British Museum.





In the second half of the 4th century, St. Jerome, funded by a well-to-do Roman matron and working primarily in Jerusalem, combined existing Old Testament texts with his own translations of New Testament texts to produce a Bible in Latin – the world's most widely spoken language at the time.



Over the course of 1,300 years, 40 authors, ranging from a king to an illiterate fisherman, wrote the 66 books that comprise the Bible. The term "Bible" comes from a Latin word that means The Books. Today the Bible is available in over 450 languages and is estimated to have sold over 5 billion copies.

My great, great grandfather bought this Bible in Manhattan in 1850. He had it with him at the Battles of New Orleans and Vicksburg.

Bibliography

American Bible Society and Howard Clark Kee. *The Learning Bible*, 1995.

De Hamel, Christopher. *The Book. A History of the Bible*. Phaidon, 2001.

Eusebius of Caesarea. Wright, William, ed.; McLean, Norman, ed. *The ecclesiastical history of Eusebius in Syriac*. Cambridge University Press, 1898. <https://archive.org/details/ecclesiastical00euse>.

McDowell, Josh. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. Here's Life Publishers, Inc. 1979.

Milford, Humphrey. *The Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance*. Oxford University Press, 1900. <https://archive.org/details/oxfordcyclopedic00unse>.

Price, Ira M. *The Monuments and the Old Testament*. The Christian Culture Press, 1900. <https://archive.org/details/monumentsoldtest00pric>.

Schaff, Philip. *A Dictionary of the Bible*. American Sunday-School Union, 1885. <https://archive.org/details/dictionaryofbi00scha>.



IMAGE CREDITS

Chauvet Cave Paintings, southeastern France. HTO, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Magura Cave Paintings, western Bulgaria, dating from 8000 BC to 1200 BC. Daznaempoveche, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Hieroglyphs from the tomb of Seti 1. Unknown Egyptian scribe, Copyrighted free use, via Wikimedia Commons.

Rosetta Stone, Book: Sir Ernest Alfred Wallis (1857-1934) Photo: Donald Macbeth, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

National Park Service Pictographs. Tkgd2007, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Fertile Crescent map. Astroskiandhike, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Pot, 2800 BC - 2600 BC, Iraq, © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license.

Papyrus LXX Oxyrhynchus 3522. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Map of Levant. No machine-readable author provided. MapMaster assumed (based on copyright claims)., CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Merenptah Stele. Alyssa Bivins, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons.

The Israelites Crossing the Red Sea. Caspar Luyken, before 1708, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

The Great Isaiah Scroll. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Dead Sea Scroll Jars. Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin FRCP(Glasg), CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

Qumran Cave. Effi Schweizer, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Dead Sea Scroll Jars. Willem van de Poll, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

Dead Sea Scrolls before they were unraveled. Abraham Meir Habermann, 1901–1980, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

IMAGE CREDITS, CONTINUED

Vadi Qumran and Qumran caves. Dr. Avishai Teicher Pikiwiki Israel, CC BY 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons.

An engraving of a scroll of the Pentateuch in Hebrew characters, British Library Add. MS. 4,707. The scroll is open to the column showing Exodus 15:1-19. Public Domain.

No. 17 Scenes from the Life of Christ - 1. Nativity - Birth of Christ. Giotto, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

The Conversion of Saint Paul, ca. 1391, Spinello Aretino. Metropolitan Museum.

Sailboat - detail. Microsoft Stock Image.

Paul, Barnabas and John Mark meeting with Sergius Paulus. Image created by @Grok.

Sailboats. Microsoft Stock Image.

Paul Writing to the Galatians. Image created by @Grok.

1st century Corinth. Image created by @Grok.

Church Elders Praying at Corinth. Image created by @Grok.

Helmet. Microsoft Stock Image.

Paul the Apostle at his desk, ca. 1633, Rembrandt. Public Domain.

Paul the Apostle in prison, 1627, Rembrandt. Public Domain.

Eusebius. Image created by @Grok.

St. Jerome in his study with two angels by Bartolomeo Cavarozzi. Early 17th c. Public Domain.

Gutenberg Bible, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Author photograph.

George Price Bible, Author photograph.