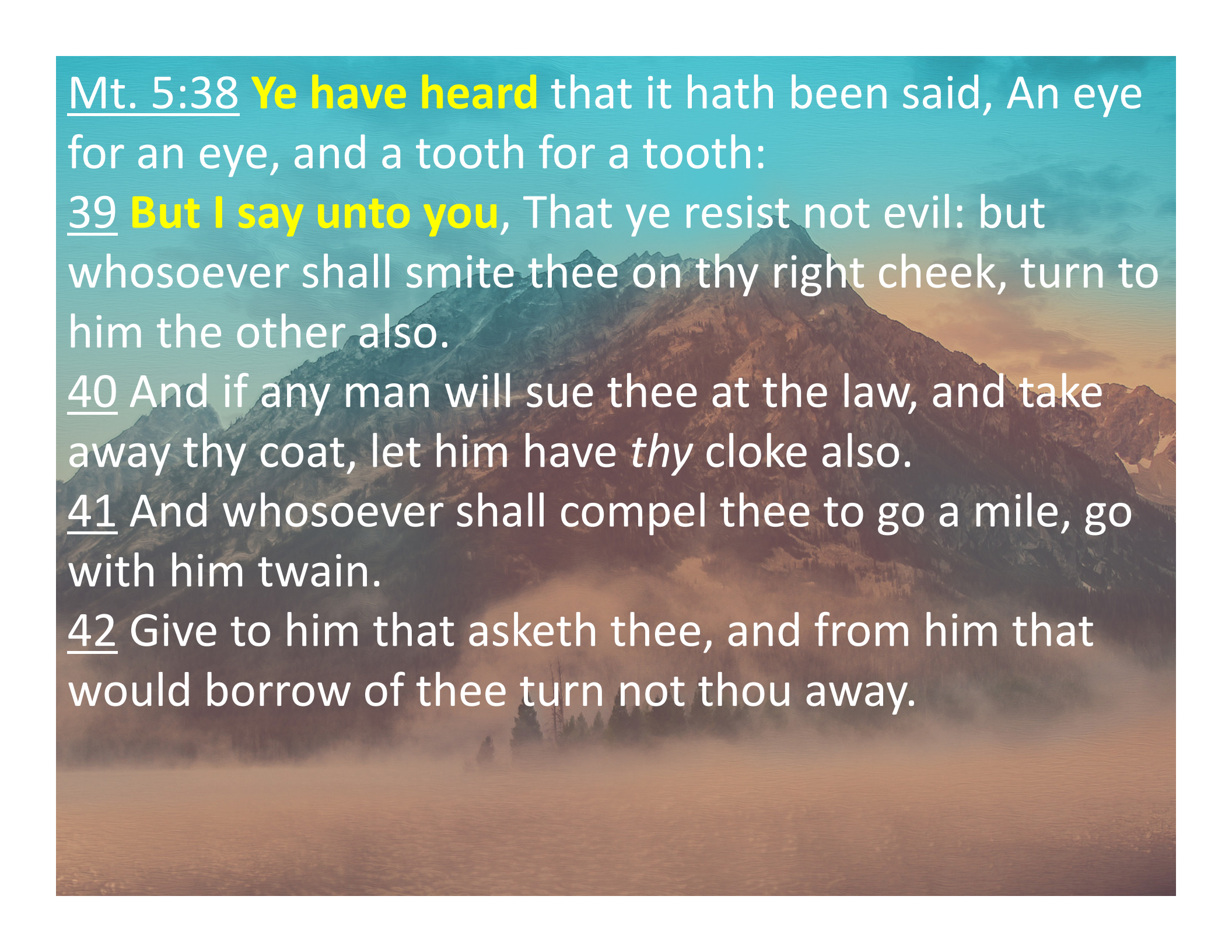


THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
Mt. 5:38-42
“The Question of Ineffable Love”

A scenic landscape featuring a range of mountains in the background, with a lake in the foreground. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The text is overlaid on the image in white and yellow.

Mt. 5:38 **Ye have heard** that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 **But I say unto you**, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Review

Back in December we began the exegesis of this great sermon preached by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE DISCIPLE AND HIS BLESSINGS, 5:1-16

A. The Setting, 5:1-2

B. The Sayings, 5:3-12

C. The Sequel, 5:13-16

II. THE DISCIPLE AND HIS BELIEFS, 5:17-20

A. A Personal Appreciation of God's Law, 5:17-18

B. A Personal Application of God's Law, 5:19-20

III. THE DISCIPLE AND HIS BIBLE, 5:21-48

A. The Question of Injuring Lives, 5:21-24

B. The Question of Invoking Law, 5:25-26

C. The Question of Indulging Lust, 5:27-32

D. The Question of Inappropriate Language, 5:33-37

1. The Danger of a Broken Word, 5:33

2. The Demand for a Better Way, 5:34-37

a. Swearing Flippantly, 5:34-36

b. Speaking Firmly, 5:37

Early in the “Sermon on the Mount” the Lord Jesus emphasized His concern regarding “righteousness.”

Mt. 5:20 For I say unto you, That **except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

- The Lord Jesus is not negating the Law of Moses; He is clarifying the truth of its intent, and correcting the perversion of the Pharisees.
- The intent of this law is to minimize excessive retribution – “the punishment must fit the crime.”
- The purpose of law is to protect the innocent, punish the transgressor and provide repayment for loss.

1 Tim. 1:9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

- The discernment and application of punishment was NOT a judgment to be administered individually, but by a magistrate, or judge.

E. The Question of Ineffable Love, 5:38-48

1. The Law of Retaliation, 5:38-42

a. The Law's Way, 5:38

Mt. 5:38 **Ye have heard** that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

- Retaliation was common in the ancient Near East.
- Frequently it led to vendettas in which escalating vengeance continued for generations.
- Israel's "law of retaliation," decreed by a magistrate or judge, limited retaliation to no more than equal compensation.



Ex. 21:24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand,
foot for foot,

Lev. 24:19 And if a man cause a blemish in his
neighbour; **as he hath done, so shall it be done to
him;**

20 Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as
he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done
to him *again*.

Deut. 19:21 And thine eye shall not pity; *but life shall
go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand,
foot for foot.*

- The Jews, through the Pharisees' teaching, tended to view the law of retaliation as God's permission to take vengeance in a personal way.
- That was never God's intention (cf. Lev. 19:18). He simply wanted to protect them from excessive vengeance and to curb vendettas.

Lev. 19:17 Thou shalt **not hate thy brother in thine heart**: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but **thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.**

- In some situations the Jews could *pay* to avoid the vengeance of their brethren.
- By the first century, monetary reparations had replaced physical maiming as the penalty for physical injury.

Ex. 21:26 And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake.

27 And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

- As God had permitted divorce because of the hardness of man's heart, so He permitted a certain amount of retaliation under the Mosaic Law.
- However, His intention was that His people would avoid divorce and retaliation entirely. He wanted us to love one another and to put the welfare of others before our own.

Deut. 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

16 If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him *that which is wrong*;

17 Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days;

18 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, *if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother*;

19 **Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.**

20 And **those which remain shall hear, and fear**, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

21 And thine eye shall not pity; *but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*

b. The Lord's Way, 5:39-42

(1) When People Smite Us, 5:39

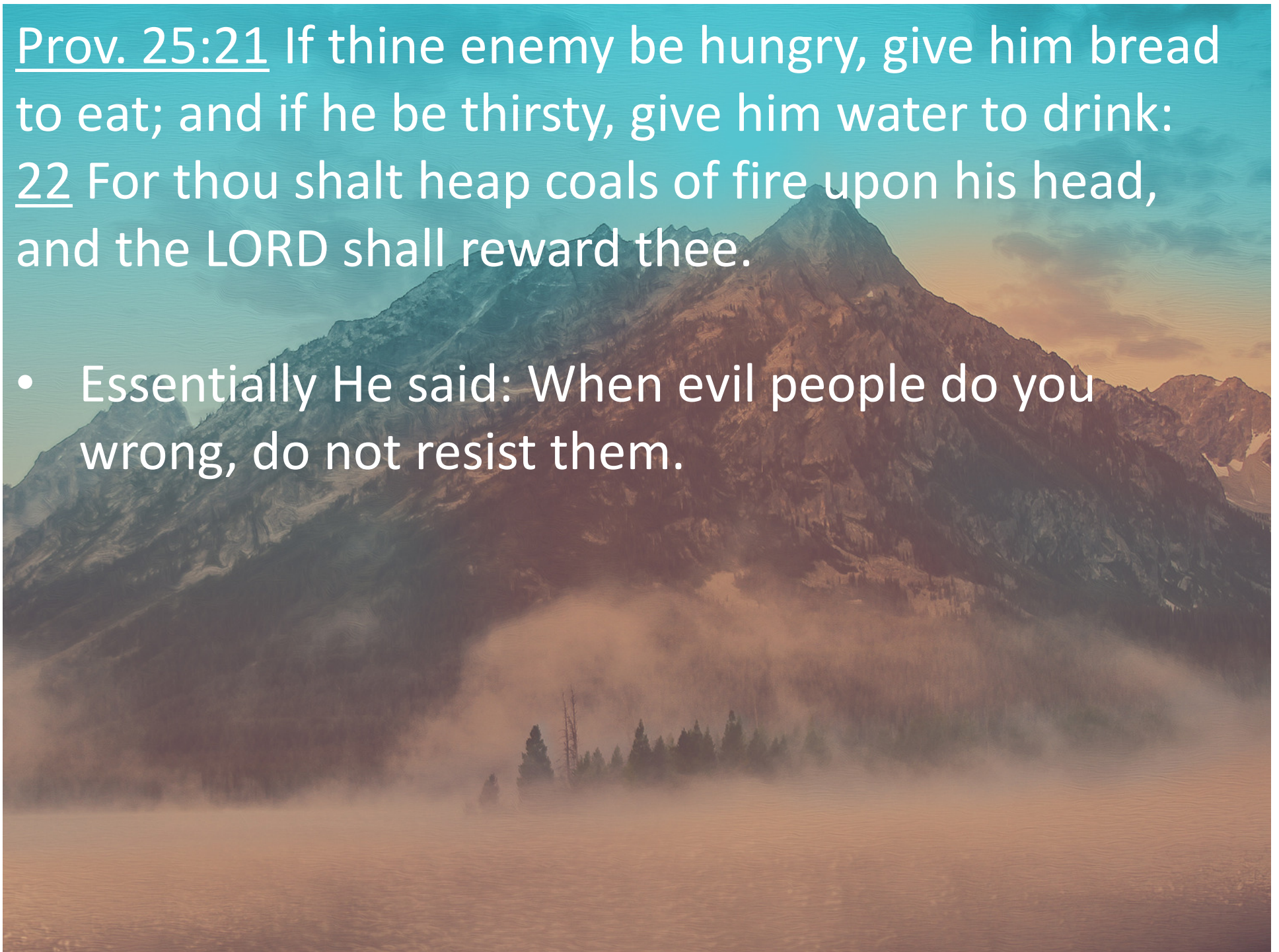
Mt. 5:39 **But I say unto you**, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

- Jesus first expounded God's intention regarding retaliation against the attack upon one's person.

Prov. 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; *but* wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

Prov. 25:21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

- Essentially He said: When evil people do you wrong, do not resist them.



Original Word: ἀντίστημι

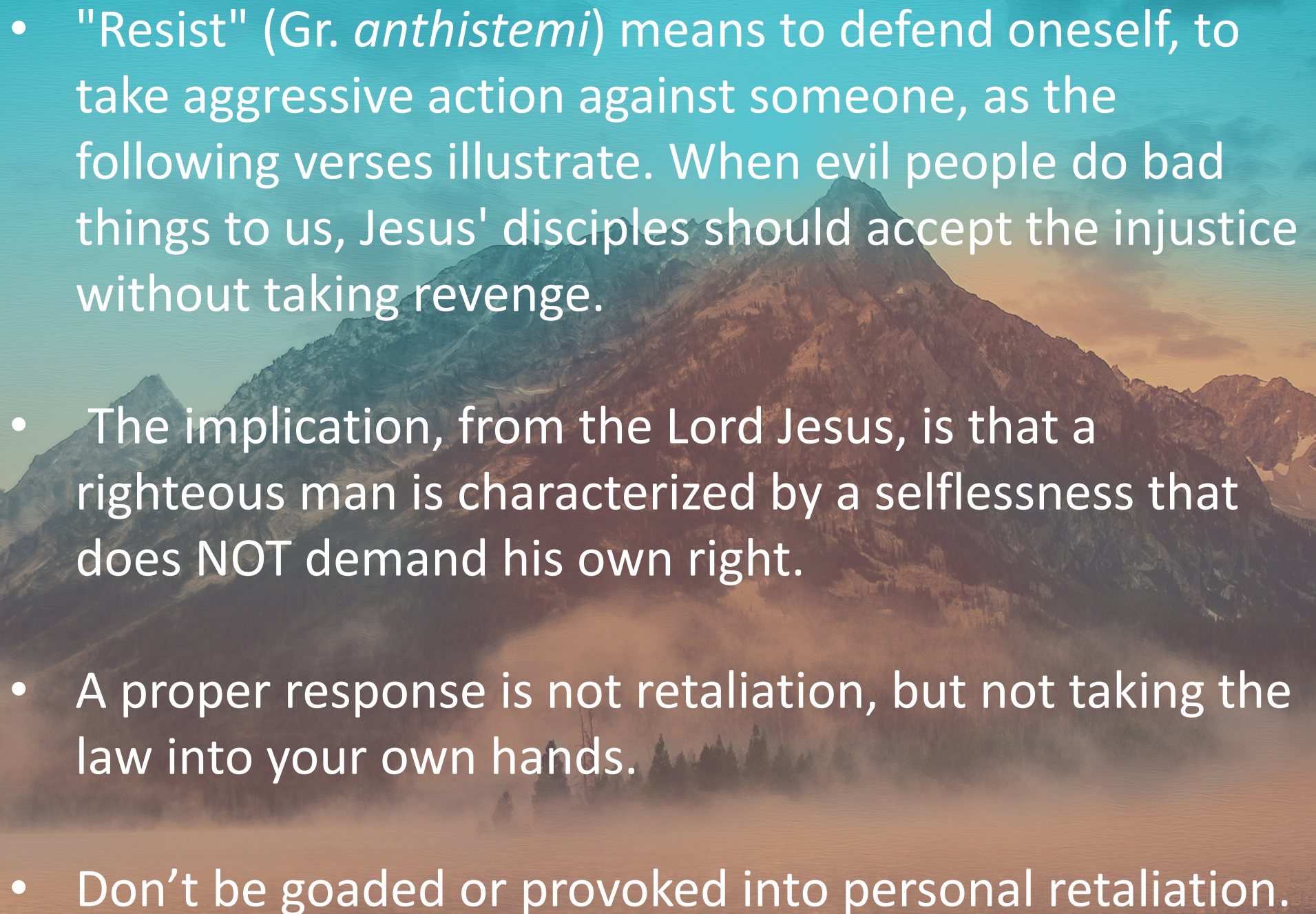
Transliteration: anthístēmi

Usage: I set against; I withstand, resist, oppose.

anthístēmi - **properly, take a complete stand against, i.e. a "180 degree, contraryposition"; (figuratively) to establish one's position publicly by conspicuously "holding one's ground," i.e. refusing to be moved ("pushed back").**

anthístēmi ("oppose fully") means to **forcefully declare one's personal conviction (where they unswervingly stand);** to *keep one's possession; ardently withstand, without giving up (letting go).* (*anthístēmi*) was a *military* term in classical Greek (used by Thucydides, etc.) meaning "to strongly resist an opponent" ("take a *firm stand against*").]

<https://biblehub.com/greek/436.htm>

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- "Resist" (Gr. *anthistemi*) means to defend oneself, to take aggressive action against someone, as the following verses illustrate. When evil people do bad things to us, Jesus' disciples should accept the injustice without taking revenge.
 - The implication, from the Lord Jesus, is that a righteous man is characterized by a selflessness that does NOT demand his own right.
 - A proper response is not retaliation, but not taking the law into your own hands.
 - Don't be goaded or provoked into personal retaliation.



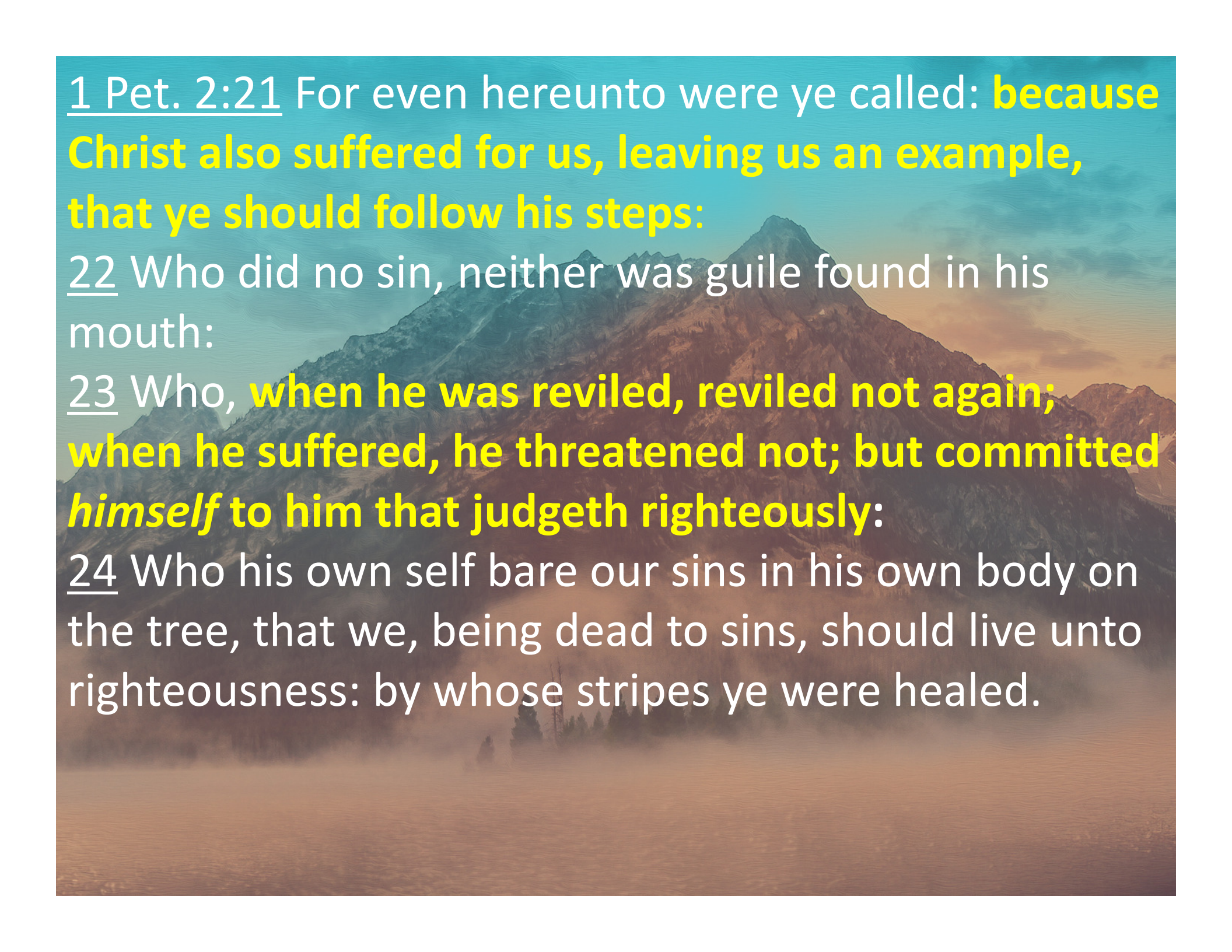
❖ Jesus' purpose in the Sermon on the Mount was threefold:

- to reinforce the Law's (Old Testament's) timeless revelatory authority (5:18-19),

- to refocus its original meaning (5:21-22)

- to replace its temporary regulatory provisions (5:38-39).

❖ By doing these things, Jesus "fulfilled" (established) the Law.

A scenic landscape featuring a range of mountains in the background, with a lake in the foreground. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The text is overlaid on this background.

1 Pet. 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: **because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:**

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who, **when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:**

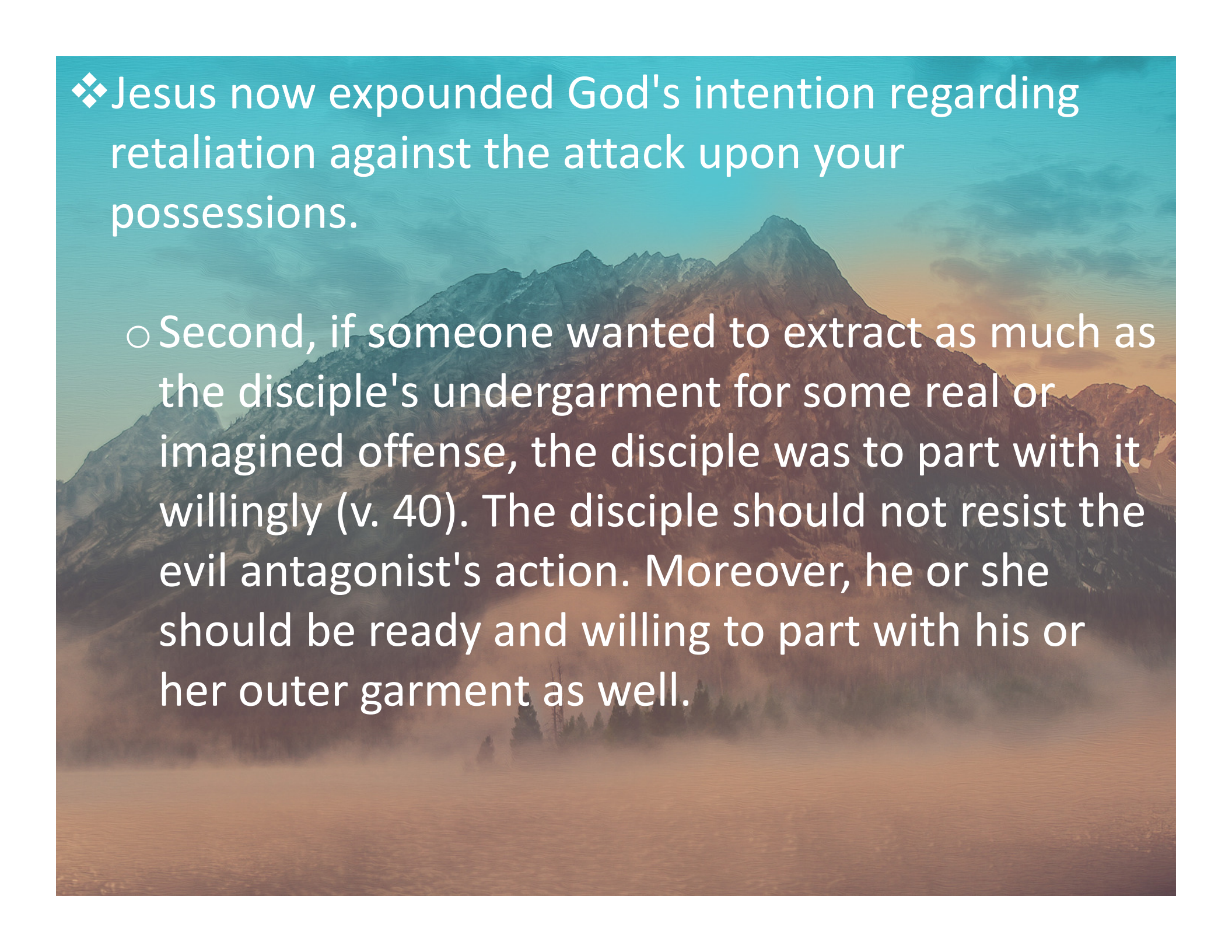
24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

❖ Jesus gave four illustrations to clarify what He meant.

○ In the first (v. 39b), a disciple suffers an unjustified physical attack on his or her person. What is that one to do? He or she should not injure the aggressor in return, but should absorb the injury and the insult. He should even be ready to accept the same attack again.

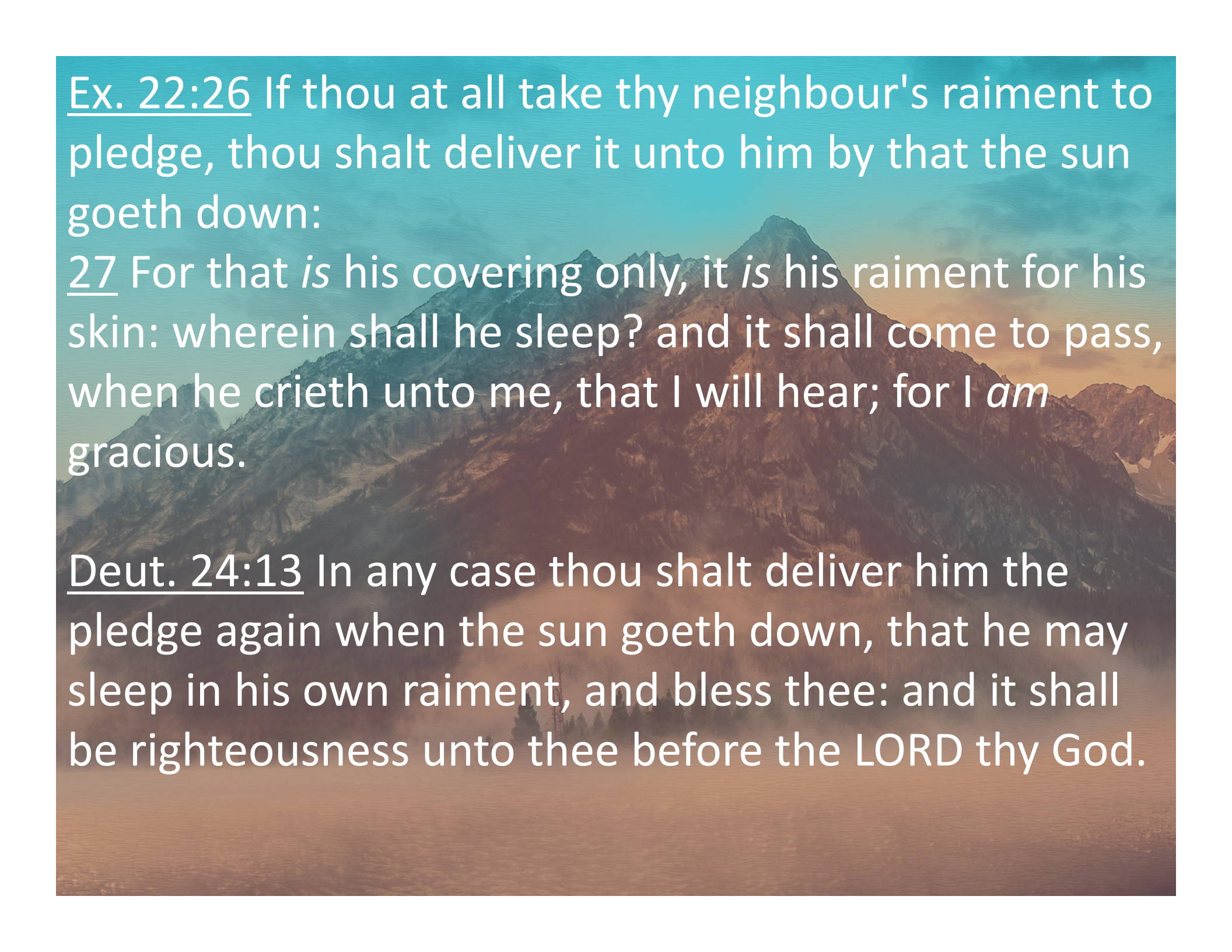
(2) When People Sue Us, 5:40

Mt. 5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also.

A scenic landscape featuring a range of rugged mountains in the background, with a calm lake in the foreground. The sky is a mix of light blue and soft orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall tone is peaceful and majestic.

❖ Jesus now expounded God's intention regarding retaliation against the attack upon your possessions.

○ Second, if someone wanted to extract as much as the disciple's undergarment for some real or imagined offense, the disciple was to part with it willingly (v. 40). The disciple should not resist the evil antagonist's action. Moreover, he or she should be ready and willing to part with his or her outer garment as well.



Ex. 22:26 If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down:

27 For that *is* his covering only, it *is* his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I *am* gracious.

Deut. 24:13 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

(3) When People Seize Us, 5:41

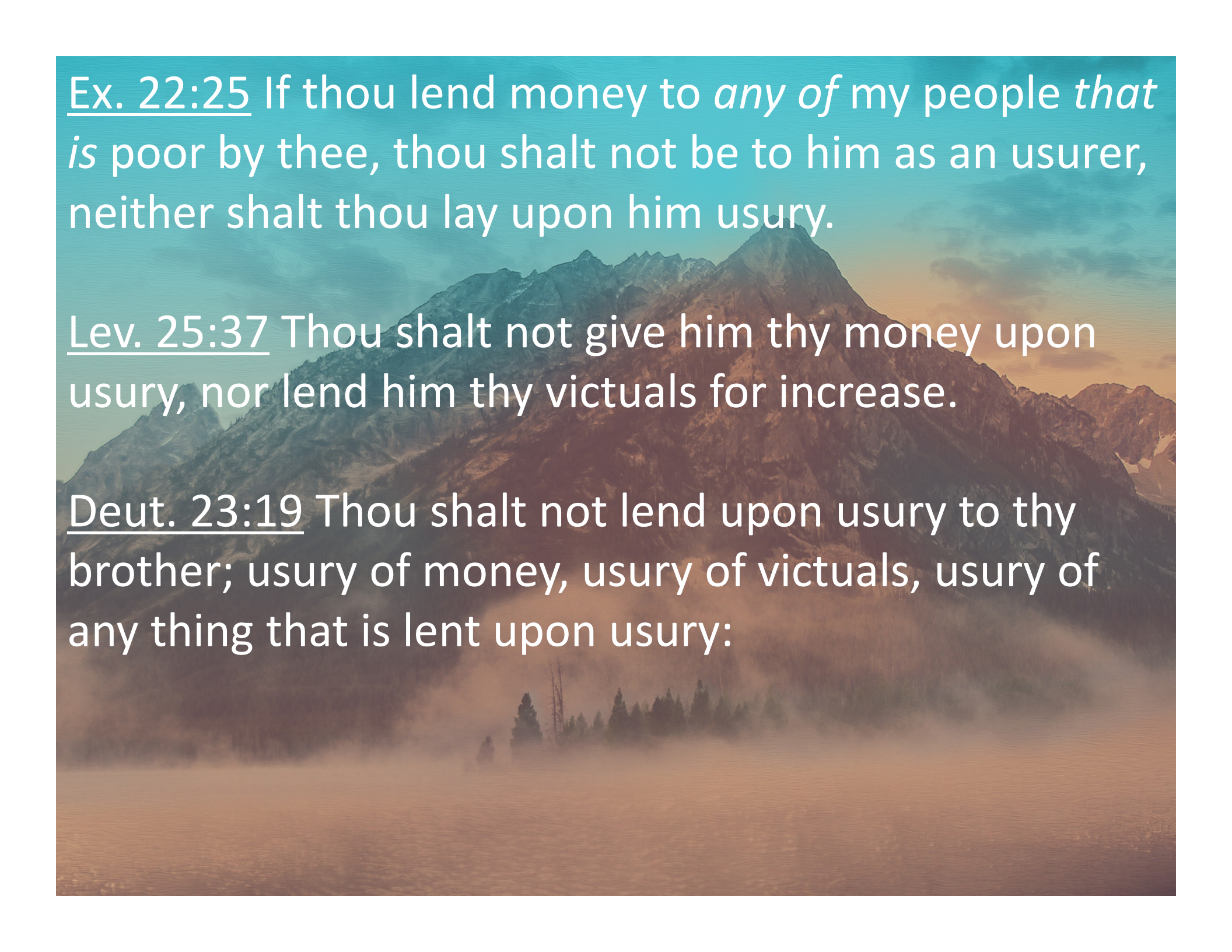
Mt. 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

- The third illustration requires some background knowledge of customs in New Testament times to appreciate (v. 41). **The Romans sometimes commandeered civilians to carry the luggage of military personnel, but the civilian did not have to carry the luggage for more than one Roman mile.**

(4) When People Supplicate Us, 5:42

Mt. 5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

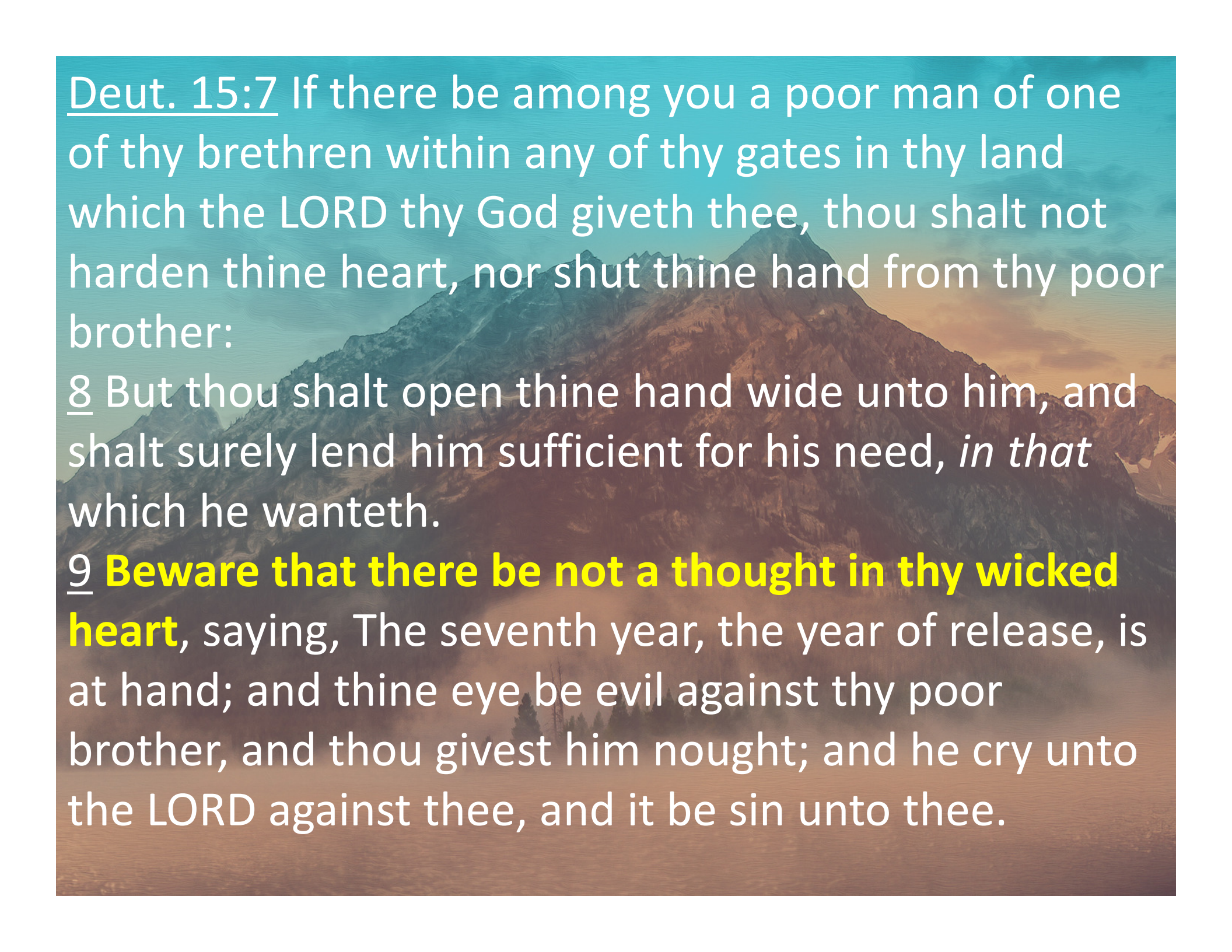
- Fourth, Jesus told His disciples to give what others request of them, assuming it is within their power to do so. This applies to loans as well as gifts.
- A willing and generous spirit is implicit in this command. This does not mean we should give all our money away to individuals and institutions that ask for our financial assistance.

A scenic landscape featuring a range of mountains in the background, with a lake in the foreground. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The water in the lake is calm, reflecting the light from the sky. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Ex. 22:25 If thou lend money to *any of* my people *that is poor* by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.

Lev. 25:37 Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.


Deut. 23:19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:



Deut. 15:7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:

8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth.

9 **Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart**, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.



10 Thou shalt surely give him, and **thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him**: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

11 For **the poor shall never cease out of the land**: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Psa. 37:26 *He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.*

Psa. 112:5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.



Prov. 11:15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart *for it*: and he that hateth suretiship is sure.

Prov. 17:18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, *and* becometh surety in the presence of his friend.

Prov. 22:26 Be not thou *one* of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.

❖ The scene in view in all these illustrations, and in all of this teaching, is one individual dealing with another individual.

❖ Personal wrongs are in view, not social or governmental crimes.



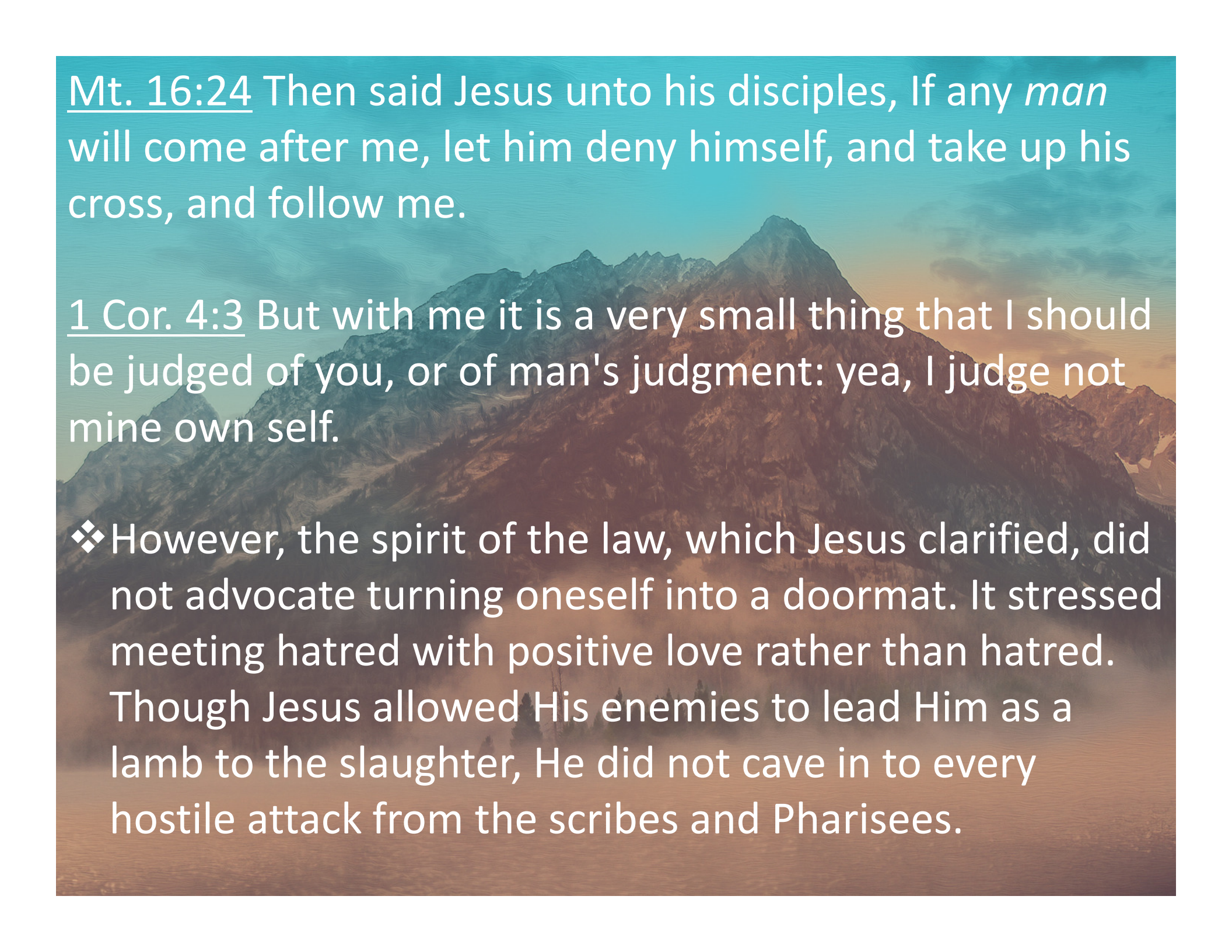
❖ There is a progression in these illustrations, from simply not resisting, to giving generously to people who make demands that tempt us to retaliate against them.

❖ Love must be the disciple's governing principle, not selfishness.

Mt. 18:15 Moreover **if thy brother shall trespass against thee**, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear *thee, then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

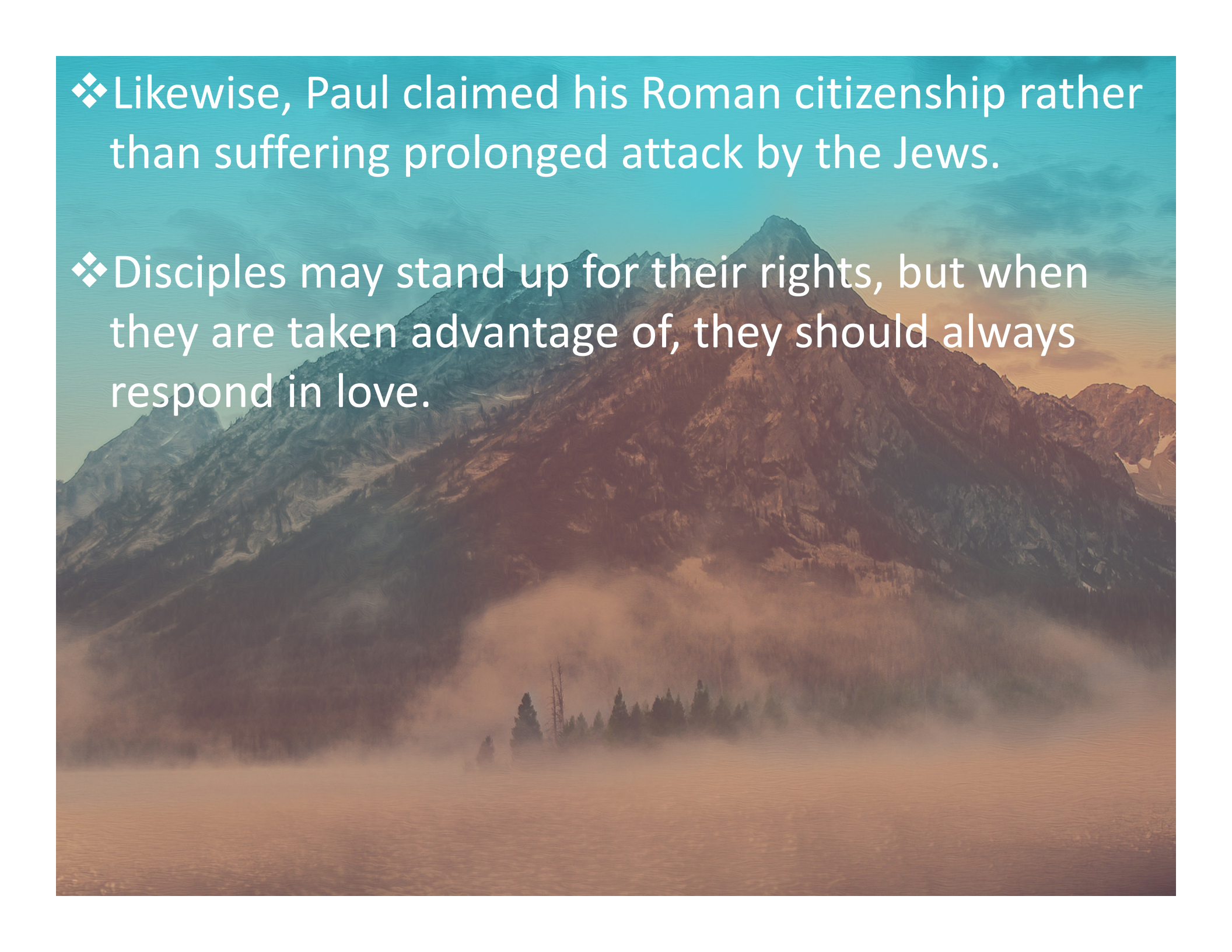
17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.



Mt. 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

1 Cor. 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

❖ However, the spirit of the law, which Jesus clarified, did not advocate turning oneself into a doormat. It stressed meeting hatred with positive love rather than hatred. Though Jesus allowed His enemies to lead Him as a lamb to the slaughter, He did not cave in to every hostile attack from the scribes and Pharisees.

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- ❖ Likewise, Paul claimed his Roman citizenship rather than suffering prolonged attack by the Jews.
 - ❖ Disciples may stand up for their rights, but when they are taken advantage of, they should always respond in love.

Conclusion

Rom. 12:17 Recompense to no man evil for evil.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Prov. 25:28 He that *hath* **no rule over his own spirit** is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Prov. 16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and **he that ruleth his spirit** than he that taketh a city.

