



Test of Faith

# Recap

conforming to an **original** so as to reproduce **essential** features

Are you an **authentic** Christian?



To be an authentic Christian is to first take seriously our sacred document, wrestle with its claims and finally apply these claims to every aspect of life

# Recap

Progressive  
Christianity

**Bible**

New  
Apostolic  
Reformation

Incomplete revelation

“experience”

New revelation

“experience”

# Recap

“The **Bible** is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of **scheming swindlers**. We **pretend** to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand, we are **obliged** to act accordingly.” Soren Kierkegaard, *Provocations: Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard*

# Eight Ways Your Perception of Reality Is Skewed, Jill Suttie

But it turns out sight is much more **complicated** than that, according to the new book *Perception: How Our Bodies Shape Our Minds*, by University of Virginia psychologist Dennis Proffitt and Drake Baer. What we perceive in any given moment is not only determined by **sensory** input, but by our personal physical abilities, energy levels, feelings, social identities, and more.

“It’s common sense to believe we experience the world as it **objectively** is,” the authors write. “Even though our naive intuitions are that we see the world as it is, **we do not.**”

# Eight Ways Your Perception of Reality Is Skewed, Jill Suttie

This is useful to know—especially now, when we are fighting a deadly pandemic and mired in political and social turmoil. If we understand what **irrelevant** factors manipulate what we see and think, we can perhaps find ways to **overcome** these influences and make better decisions as a society.

“If we are going to have a better **understanding** of ourselves and our fellow human beings, we need to appreciate the startling individuality of everyone’s experience,” write Proffitt and Baer. That means having **humility**.

**Perception** is how we **interpret** the world through our many **'filters'** (biases, prejudices, hurt, emotions and confirmation bias)

Reality is **truth** on truths terms (objective, verifiable, external)

# Difficult Conversations

Determine whether the conversation is an invitation

Weigh your relationship in regards to trust, honesty and depth

Probe and define terms

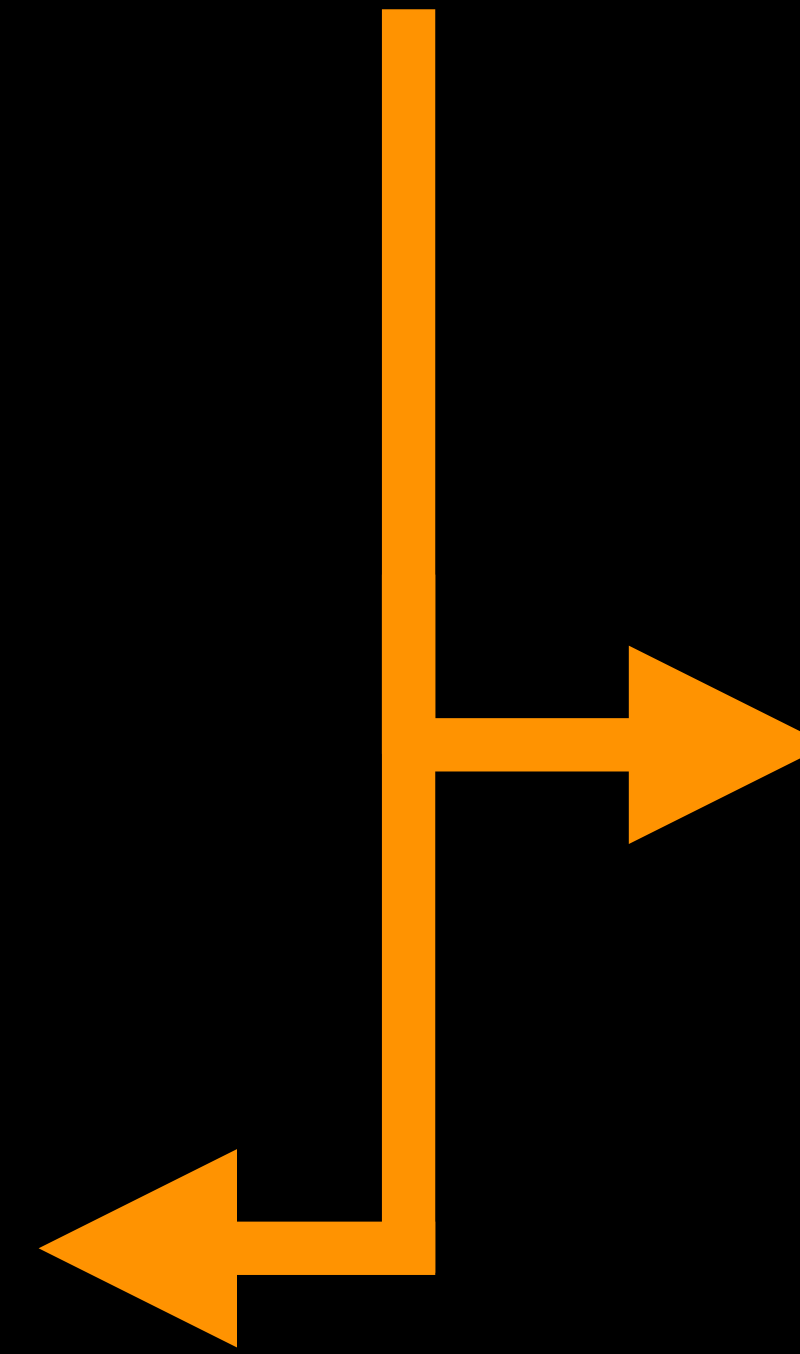
Accept refusal

Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever make it personal



**Anthropology:** the study of human societies and cultures and their development.

**Textual Criticism:** Before the fifteenth century, all books were produced by hand. Handwritten documents are called manuscripts. With rare exceptions, the originals of ancient works (also called the autographs) have been lost. The only things that have survived are manuscript copies of ancient works. The science of attempting to reconstruct the text of documents is known as “textual criticism.”



**Archeology:** the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains

“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘**Lord! Lord!**’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. **Matthew 7:21**”

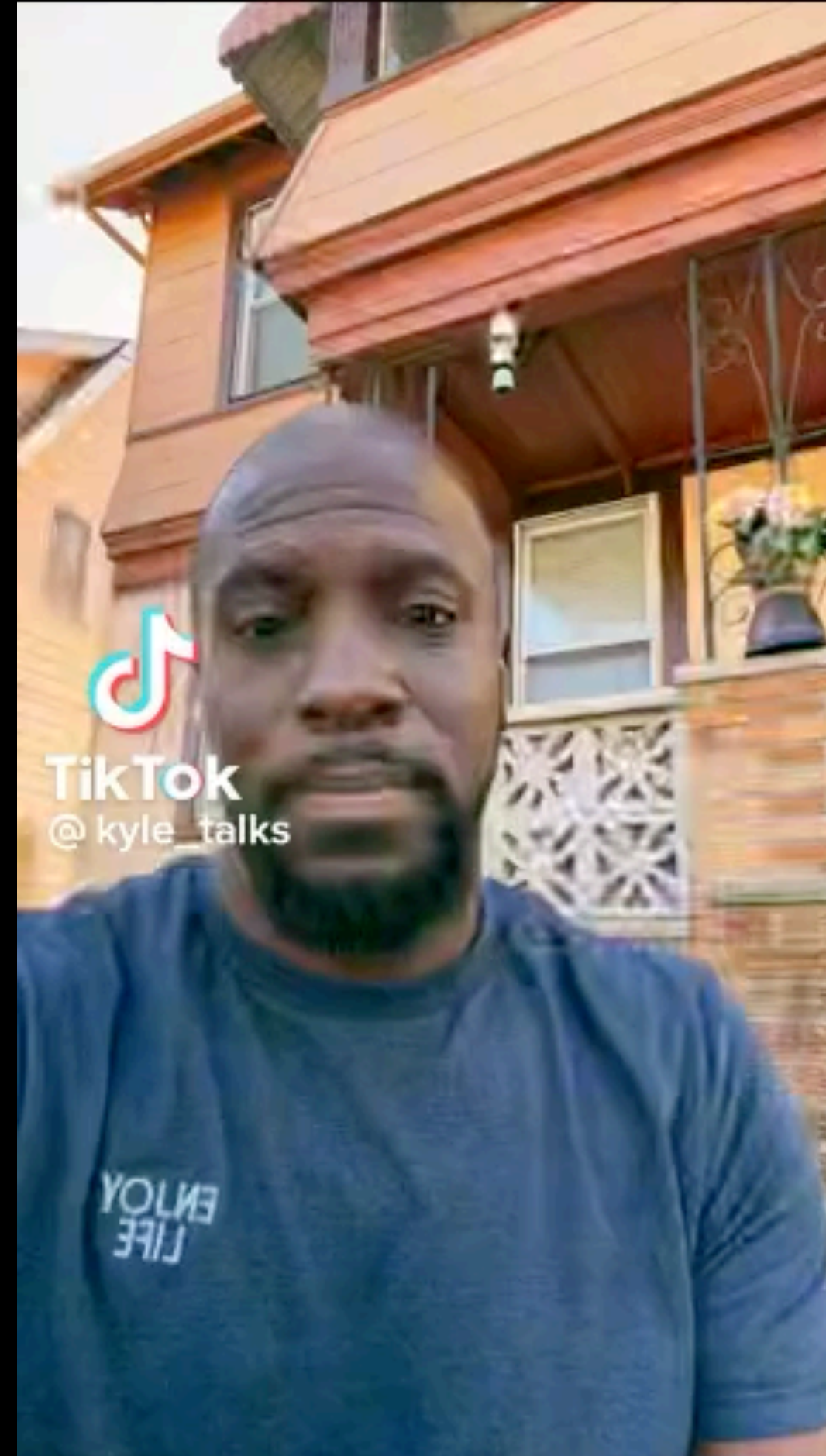
What is the **bible**?

The bible is a **document** of real **people** in  
real **places** interacting with real **history**

- The Bible says that God helps those who help themselves.
- The books of the New Testament were written centuries after the events they describe.
- “Cleanliness is next to godliness” is in the Bible.
- According to the Bible, the earth is flat.
- The earliest New Testament manuscripts go back only to the fourth or fifth centuries AD.
- The Bible teaches that the earth is the center of the universe.
- The English Bible is a translation of a translation of a translation (etc.) of the original, and fresh errors were introduced in each stage of the process.

Humanist reject the claim that the Bible is the word of God. They are convinced the book was written **solely** by humans in an **ignorant, superstitious, and cruel** age. They believe that because the writers of the Bible lived in an **unenlightened** era, the book contains many **errors** and **harmful** teaching. [American Humanist Association](#)

Most christians have no  
clue how we got the bible,  
but they defend it as if they  
wrote it 🤔🤔



gazine.com

“It is our **preference** that decides against Christianity,  
not **arguments.**” Friedrich Nietzsche (1844—1900)



If you were a rising young archaeologist in the 1970s, you were **skeptical** of stories about Jewish kings. The ascendant critical school in biblical scholarship, sometimes known by the general name “minimalism,” was making a strong case that there was no united Israelite monarchy around 1000 B.C.—this was a fiction composed by writers working under Judean kings perhaps three centuries later. The new generation of archaeologists argued that the Israelites of 1000 B.C. were little more than Bedouin tribes, and David and Solomon, if there were such people, weren’t more than local sheikhs. This was part of a more general movement in archaeology worldwide, away from **romantic** stories and toward a more technical approach that sought to look dispassionately at physical remains. [Matti Friedman](#)

Israeli archaeologist Israel Finkelstein, of Tel Aviv University, and the American scholar Neil Asher Silberman. Archaeology, the authors wrote, “has produced a stunning, almost encyclopedic knowledge of the material conditions, languages, societies, and historical developments of the centuries during which the traditions of ancient Israel gradually crystallized.” Armed with this interpretative power, archaeologists could now **scientifically** evaluate the **truth** of biblical stories. [Matti Friedman](#)

# COMPARING ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

ANCIENT WORK	EARLIEST MANUSCRIPT	GAP OF TIME	TOTAL MANUSCRIPTS
TACITUS' ANNALS (110 AD)	850 AD - 1050 AD	750 YEARS	36
HERODOTUS HISTORY (400'S BC)	150-50 BC	250 YEARS	106
THUCYDIDES' HISTORY (400'S BC)	3RD CENTURY BC	150 YEARS	188
SOPHOCLES' PLAYS (400'S BC)	3RD CENTURY BC	150 YEARS	226
PLATO'S TETRALOGIES (400'S BC)	3RD CENTURY BC	200 YEARS	238
CAESAR'S GALLIC WARS (50 BC)	9TH CENTURY AD	850 YEARS	251
PLINY NATURAL HISTORY (79 AD)	5TH CENTURY AD	400 YEARS	200+
DEMOSTHENES (300'S BC)	1ST CENTURY BC	300 YEARS	444
LIVY'S HISTORY OF ROME (17 AD)	4TH CENTURY AD	300 YEARS	473
HOMER'S ILIAD (~800 BC)	415 BC	400 YEARS	1,900
<b>NEW TESTAMENT</b>	<b>125 AD</b>	<b>30 YEARS</b>	<b>5,856</b>

SOURCE: Institute for New Testament Textual Research (INTTR) Münster, Germany.  
Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Updated 2017).

Combining both the Old and New Testament, we have more than **66,000** manuscripts and scrolls that speak to the validity of Scripture

“In fact, most of the changes found in early Christian manuscripts have nothing to do with theology or ideology. Far and away the most changes are the result of mistakes pure and simple—slips of the pen, accidental omissions, inadvertent additions, misspelled words, blunders of one sort or another” [Bart Ehrman, Misquoting Jesus, 55](#)

“The interval between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact **negligible**, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established” [Sir Frederick Kenyon](#)

Archeology doesn't **prove** the bible

Archeology affirms/illuminates the **history** of the bible

# Tel Dan Inscription



# Tel Dan Inscription

In **1993**, excavators at Tel Da uncovered an inscription with the word BYTDWD on it. They convincingly argued that the word means “**house of David**” and dates to the ninth century BC. The inscription had been sealed by a later Assyrian destruction layer firmly dated to 733/722 BC. An ash layer is an archaeologist’s dream. Anything sealed beneath it must be dated earlier because there is no possibility of intrusion by later artifacts. Pottery directly beneath the destruction level dates to the ninth and eighth centuries BC, and from this period the so-called House of David inscription must have come.



## The James Ossuary



The James Ossuary, as it's come to be known, is a limestone bone box that bears an Aramaic inscription reading "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus."

# The James Ossuary

Controversy—including charges of **forgery**—has surrounded this ossuary

The saga of the James Ossuary culminated in 2012 with the acquittal of Israeli antiquities collector (and owner of the ossuary) Oded Golan in a **seven-year** “forgery trial of the century.”

The inscription, reading “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” has been authenticated by two eminent paleographers (specialists in dating, interpreting and authenticating inscriptions): André Lemaire of the Sorbonne and Ada Yardeni of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

statistical improbabilities of these names and relationships referring to anyone else in that time

“Moreover,” he wrote, “it was not proven in any way that the words ‘the brother of Jesus’ necessarily refer to the ‘Jesus’ who appears in Christian writings.” **Judge**

# Merneptah Stele



# Merneptah Stele

In 1896 W. M. Flinders Petrie discovered the Merneptah Stele -- also known as the Israel Stele or Victory Stele of Merneptah -- in the first court of Merneptah's mortuary temple at Thebes. It is inscribed on the reverse of a large granite stele originally erected by the **Ancient Egyptian king Amenhotep III**, but later inscribed by Merneptah who ruled Egypt from 1213 to 1203 BC. The black granite stele primarily commemorates a victory in a campaign against the Libu and Meshwesh Libyans and their Sea People allies, but its final two lines refer to a prior military campaign in Canaan in which Merneptah states that he defeated Ashkelon, Gezer, Yanoam and **Israel** among others. It is preserved in the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo.

# Curse Tablet

## Folded lead tablet from Mt. Ebal



*Photograph by Michael C. Luddeni*

# Curse Tablet

And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount **Ebal**. [Deuteronomy 11:29](#)

That same day Moses also gave this charge to the people: “When you cross the Jordan River, the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin must stand on Mount Gerizim to proclaim a blessing over the people. And the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali must stand on Mount **Ebal** to proclaim a **curse**.” [Deuteronomy 27:11-13](#)

## Curse Tablet

The team claims the inscription is written in an archaic script, which they term “proto-alphabetic.” Furthermore, they suggest that the use of the name Yhw, a shortened version of the divine name Yahweh (YHWH), is clear evidence that the text is an archaic Hebrew inscription. If true, this would make the tablet **hundreds of years** older than previously known early Hebrew inscriptions. They also suggest that the inscription provides the earliest reference to the name **Yahweh** found in ancient Israel.

The lead tablet, which measures less than 1 inch square, appears to have been folded in half after being written. This makes it impossible to read without advanced digital scanning, which was carried out in Prague by the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. Although images of the scans have not been released, the ABR team says that the inside contains 40 letters written in four lines of text.

# Curse Tablet

Here's what the tablet says:

“Cursed, cursed, cursed – cursed by the God YHW.

You will die cursed.

Cursed you will surely die.

Cursed by YHW – cursed, cursed, cursed.”

The pottery found with the tablets can be dated as far back as 1400 BC. If these dates are accurate, this would be the earliest time in history where we see the name **YHW** in Hebrew outside the Bible.



# Curse Tablet

Archaeologists Scott Stripling, Pieter van der Veen, and Prof. Galil claim to have found the earliest written example of God's name, often expressed in English as "**Yahweh**". The discovery could have huge implications on the accepted timeframe and veracity of biblical events, as well as providing evidence that the ancient Hebrews were literate much earlier than had been previously thought by many in the academic community.

"Many Bible critics have claimed that in the **thirteenth century BCE**, the people of Israel did not read and write, and therefore could not have written the Bible," explained Galil regarding the significance of written text from such an early date, adding: "Someone who knows how to write a text with a chiastic pattern can write anything".

A small inscription on lead, thought to be **3,200** years old, appears to have the oldest script so far verifying biblical events.

“As a matter of fact, however, it may be categorically stated that no **archaeological** discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference.” Nelson Glueck, *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2021

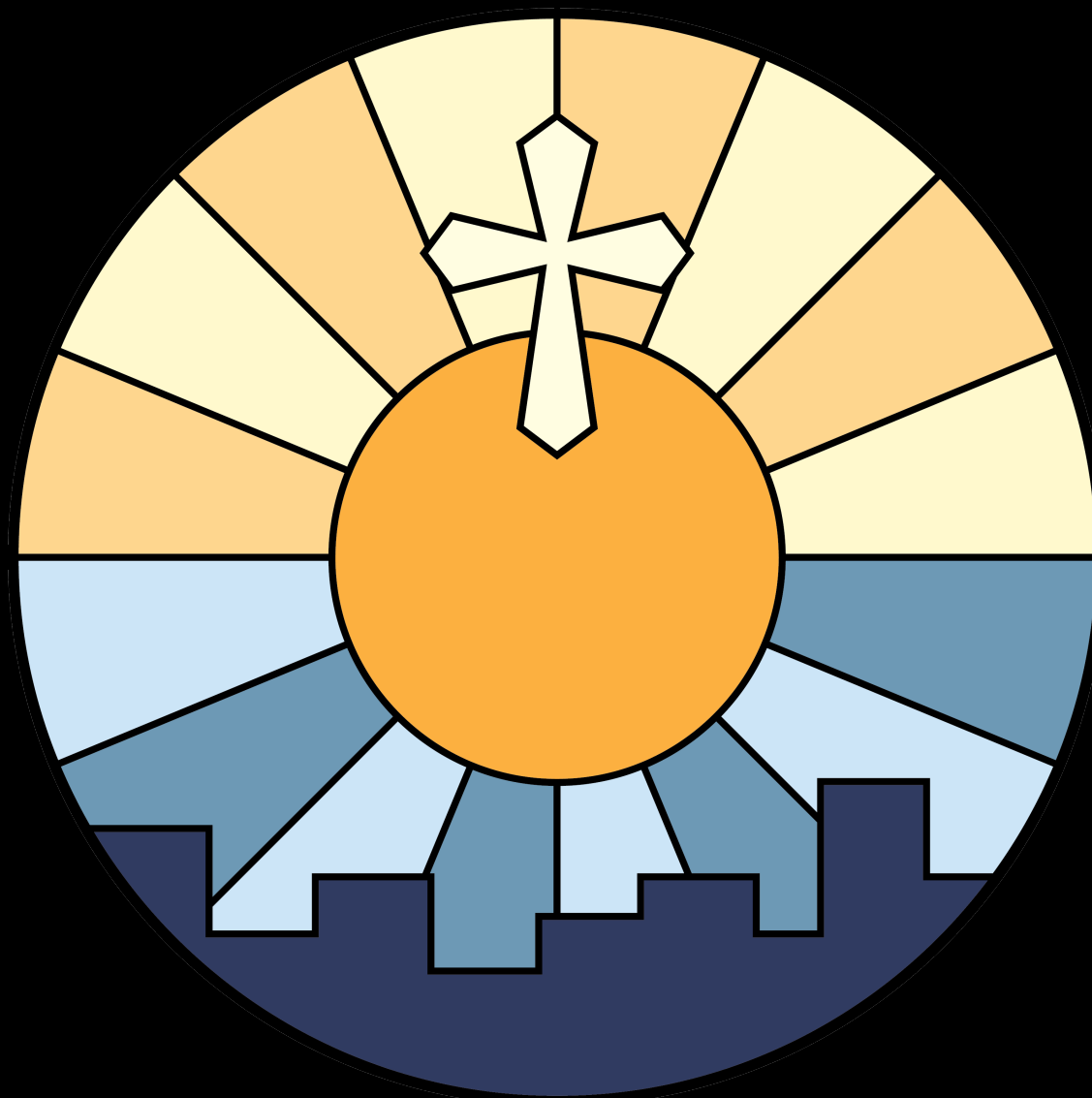
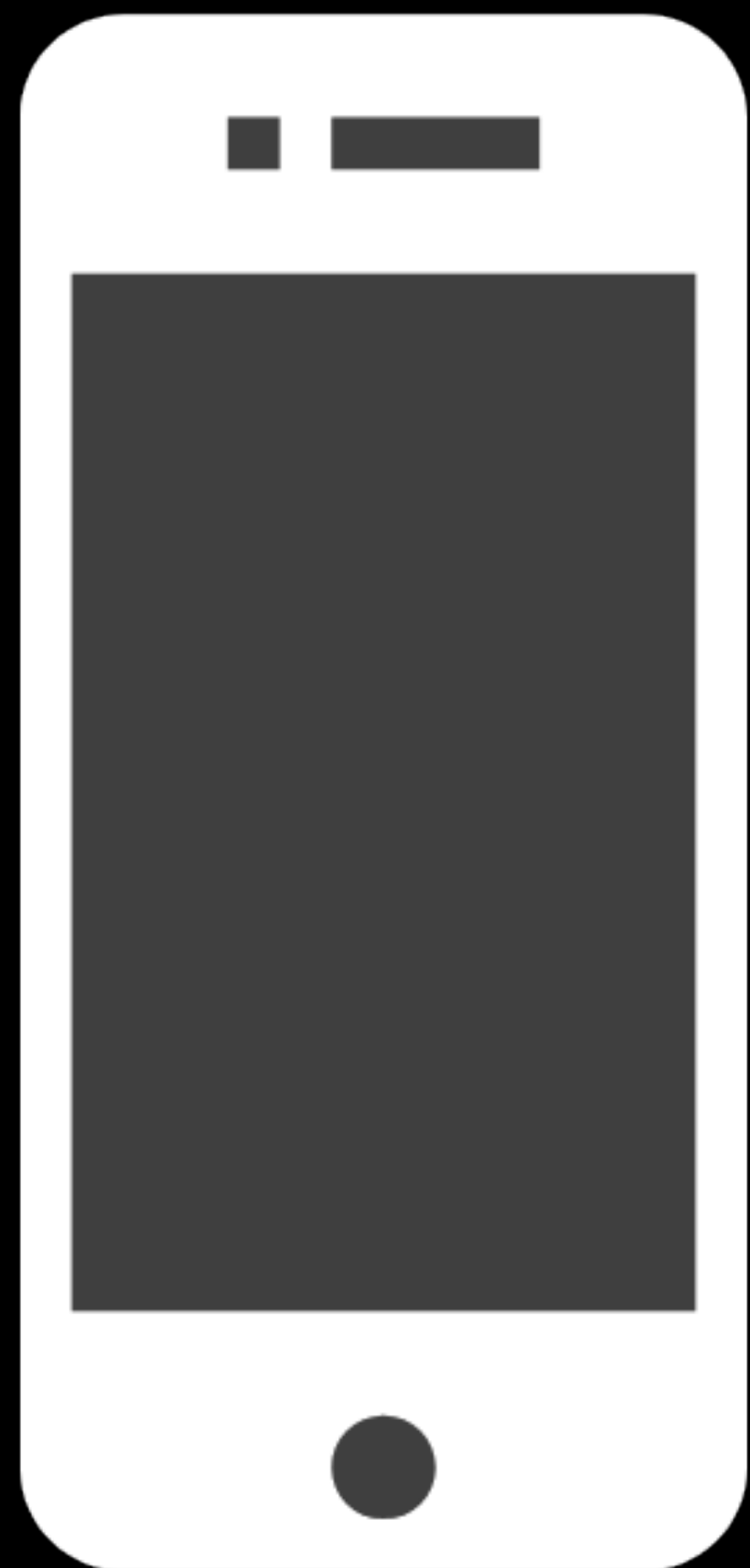
“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘**Lord! Lord!**’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. **Matthew 7:21**

**Lord, Kurios:** he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord

And you must love the Lord your God with all your **heart**, all your **soul**, all your **mind**, and all your **strength**. **Mark 12:30**

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