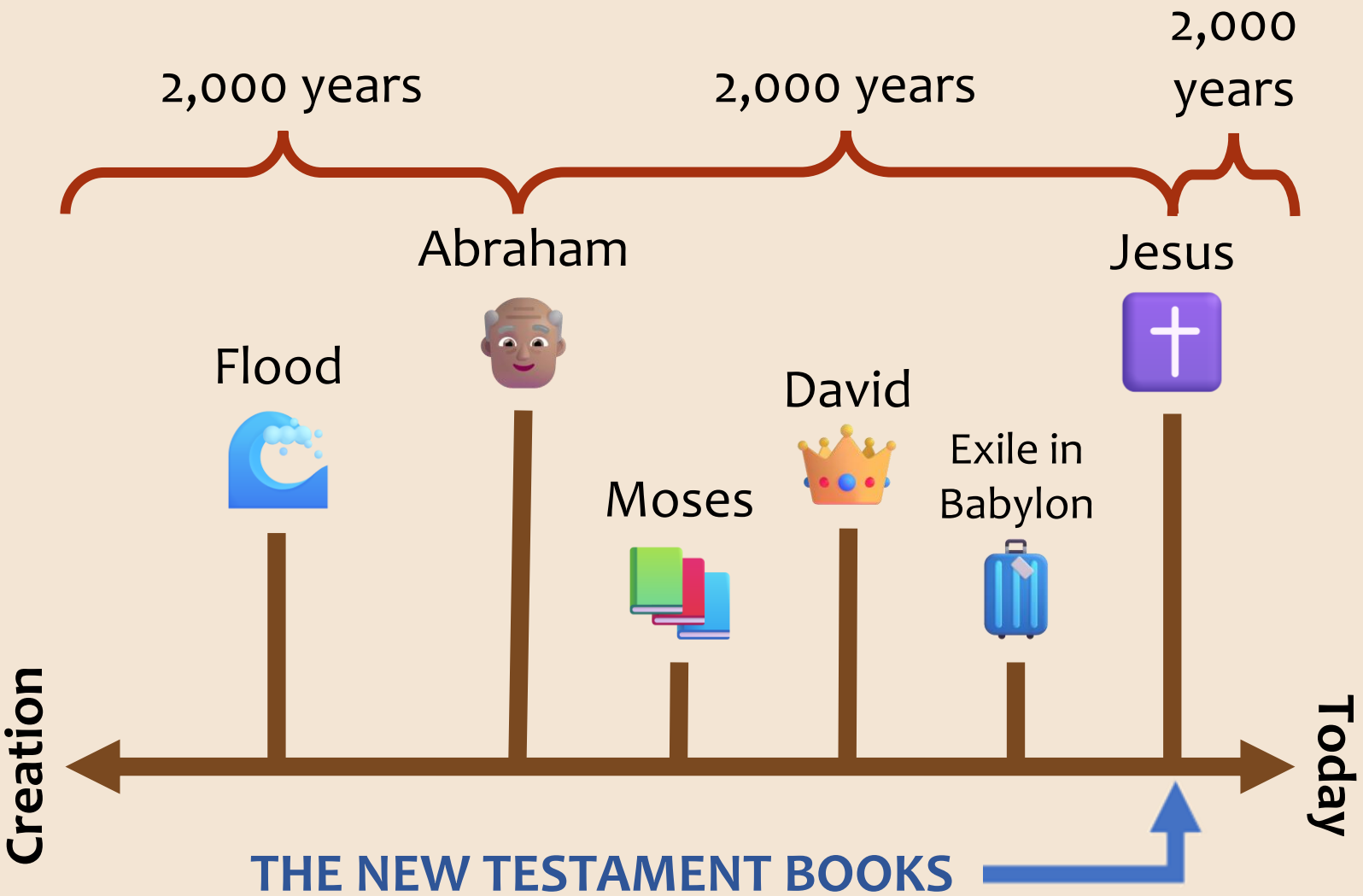
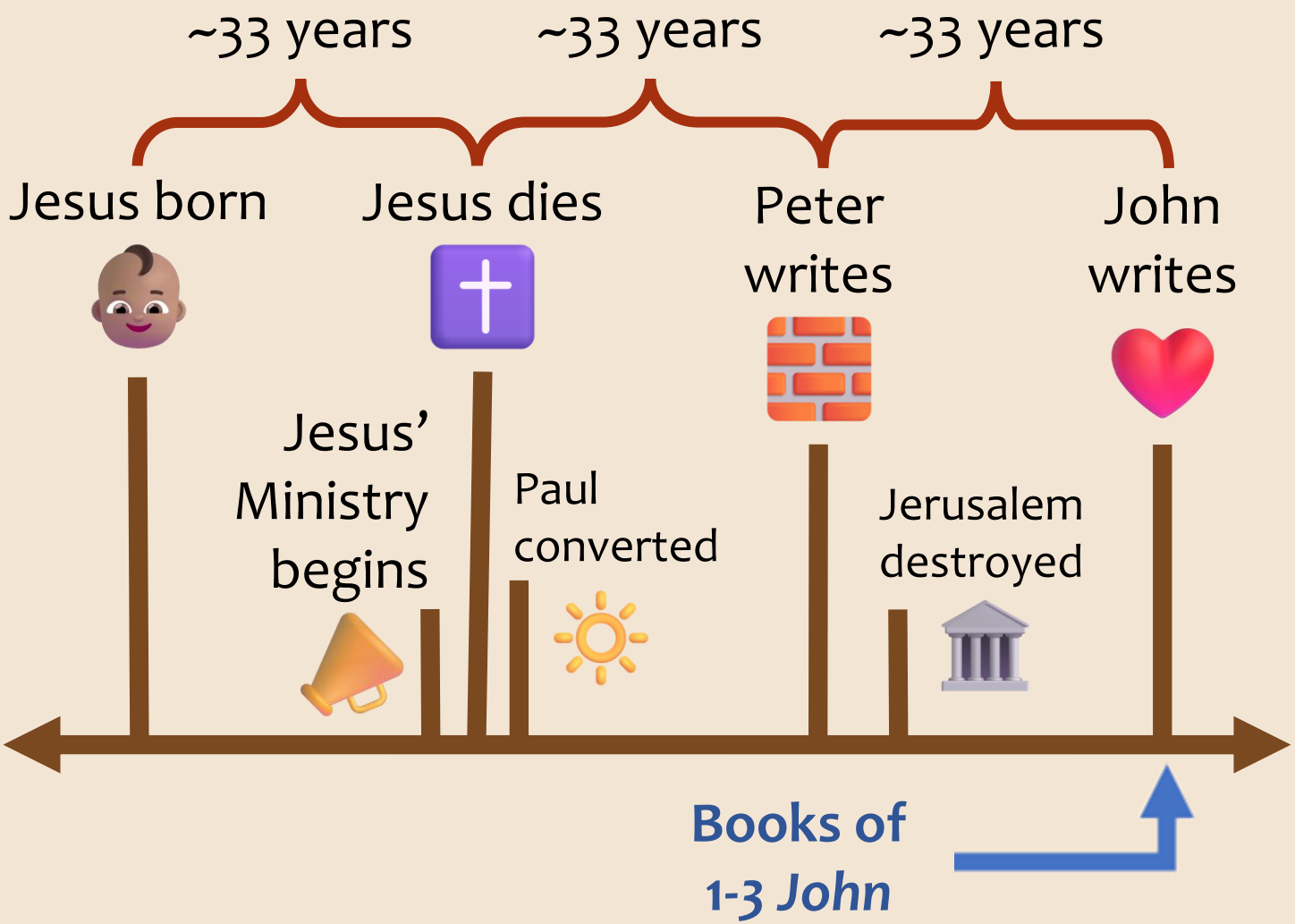

The Books of
1 and 2 and 3 John

Bible timeline



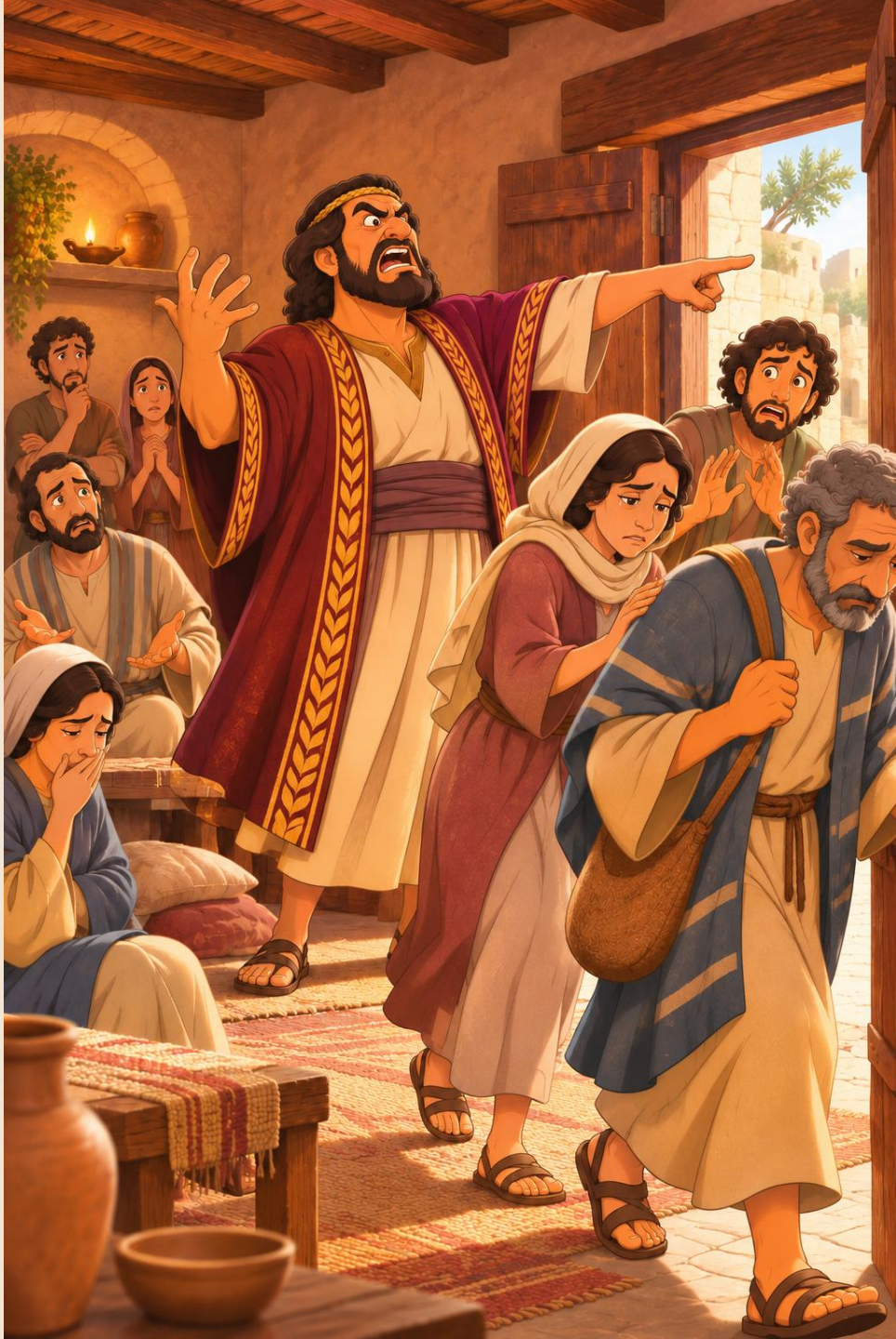
Bible timeline



Summary

1 and 2 and 3 John

- Love matters most – but still be VERY watchful for false teachers and other bad actors.
  - "Love" used about 52x in the 3 books (46x in *1 John*)
  - Yet, we get the idea of "antichrist" from these books alone (*1-2 John*), as well as Diotrephes (*3 John*)



Why *1-3 John* are special

I argue that 1 John is the New Testament book of poetry.

- I can structure most if not all of the book as poems (and did in 2023)
- Bibles that do poetic formatting will do 2:12-14 as a poem and rarely 1:1-4, but that's about it
- But look at 5:6-13, for example. →
  This is deliberate and literary. I can give you 15 other examples like this.

Poem #16: Testimony!

Testimony of the water, the blood and the Spirit

6 This is he that came by water and blood,
[even] Jesus Christ;
not by water only,
but by water and blood.
And it is the Spirit that beareth witness,
because the Spirit is truth.
7 For there are three that bear record *
8 the Spirit, and the water, and the blood:
and these three agree in one.

Believing the testimony

9 If we receive the witness of men,
the witness of God is greater:
for this is the witness of God
which he hath testified of **his Son**.
10 He that believeth on the **Son of God**
hath the witness in himself:
he that believeth not God
hath made him a liar;
because he believeth not the record
that God gave of **his Son**.

The testimony is life

11 And this is the record,
that God hath given to us eternal life,
and this life is in **his Son**.
12 He that hath **the Son**
hath life;
[and] he that hath not the **Son of God**
hath not life.
13 These things have I written unto you
that believe on the name of the **Son of God**;
that ye may know that ye have eternal life,
and that ye may believe on the name of the **Son of God**.

Main characters

-  **John**
  - Likely author of these books and the gospel of John (though never actually named)
-  **Christians… somewhere**
  - 3 John addressed to Gaius about "the church" (**v. 9**) he is in (somewhere)
  - 2 John *may* be to that same church, but it's not spelled out
  - 1 John has no named recipients or locations
-  **Diotrephes**
  - **3 John 9-10**

Outline of *1 and 2 and 3 John*

- **1 John 1:1-3:10**: "This then is the message… that God is light" (**1:5**, KJV)
- **1 John 3:11-5:21**: "For this is the message… that we should love one another" (**3:11**, KJV)
- **2 John**: "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments" (**v. 6**, KJV)
  - You should NOT welcome those why deny the truth (**v. 9**)
- **3 John**: "Therefore we ought to support people like these" (**v. 8**, KJV)
  - You should welcome traveling Christians (**vs. 5-6**)

Theology and doctrine

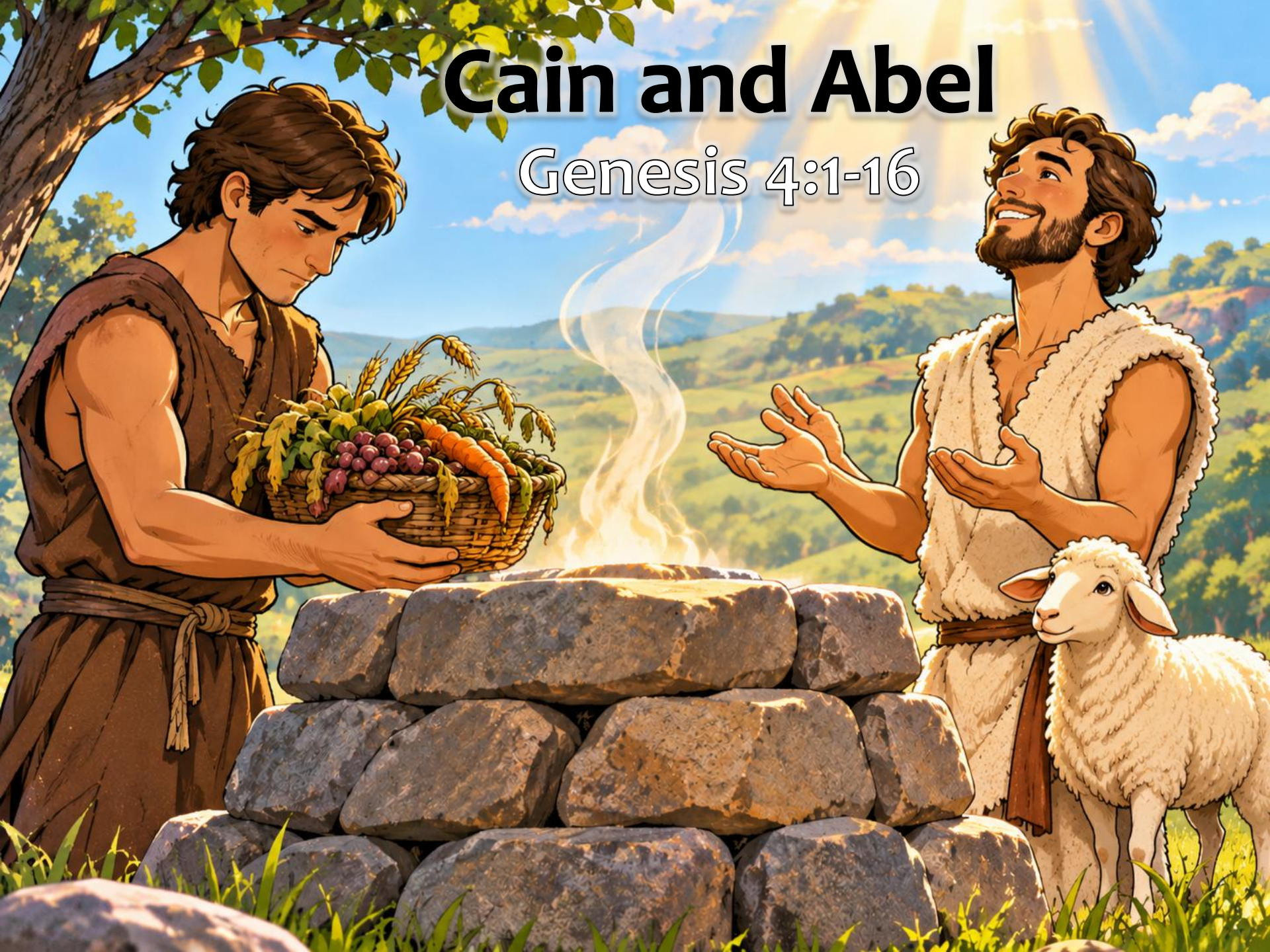
Diotrephes

- Let's look at the right things to do
  - Welcome good traveling Christians (**3 John 5-8**)
  - Refuse to welcome teachers of lies (**2 John 9-11**)
  - Rebuke and expel brethren in constant sin *as a church group* (**1 Corinthians 5:4**)
- Diotrephes did the opposite
  - Shuns brethren (**3 John 10**) – travelers, is implied, *I think*
  - Shuns good teachers (**3 John 9**)
  - Kicks good people out of a church single-handedly (**3 John 10**)
- Loving to be first (**3 John 9**)
  - Or "have preeminence." That's the word (a form of it) that Colossians used to make the case for Christ.

Recap of *1 and 2 and 3 John*

- **Summary**
  - Love matters most – but still be VERY watchful for false teachers
- **Why it is special**
  - 1 John is the New Testament book of poetry
- **Main characters**
  - John
  - Christians
  - Diotrephes

- **Outline**
  - **1 John 1:1-3:10**: "This then is the message… that **God is light**" (**1:5**, KJV)
  - **1 John 3:11-5:21**: "For this is the message… that we should **love one another**" (**3:11**, KJV)
  - **2 John**: "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments" (**v. 6**, KJV)
  - **3 John**: "Therefore we ought to support people like these" (**v. 8**, ESV)
- **Theology and doctrine**
  - Diotrephes: infamous example of terrible leadership


Cain and Abel
Genesis 4:1-16

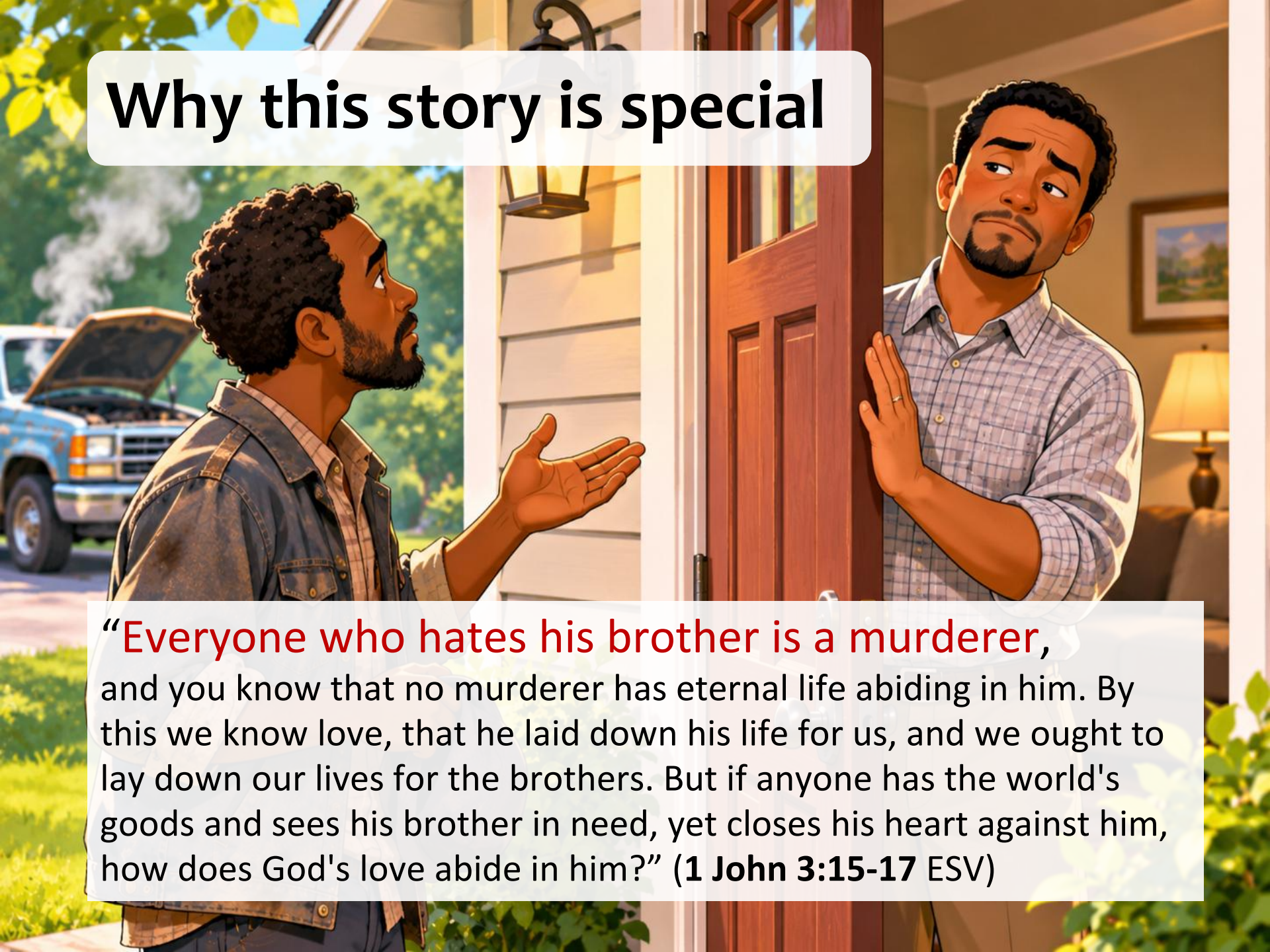
Summary

Cain and Abel
Genesis 4

- Cain kills his brother, Abel.
  - Or as **1 John 3:12** explains, “We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous” (ESV).
  - I think we can safely infer from this that jealousy was Cain’s reason.



Why this story is special



"Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (**1 John 3:15-17** ESV)

Main characters

- 👨‍🌾 **Cain**
  - Farmer of crops
  - First son of Adam and Eve
- 🐑 **Abel**
  - Shepherd
- 🔥 **The LORD**
  - Has conversations with Cain

Outline of *Genesis 4:1-16*

1. **Vs. 1-5:** The LORD accepts Abel's offering but not Cain's

2. **Vs. 6-7:** The LORD warns Cain to control his anger

3. **Vs. 8-10:** Cain kills Abel and lies to the LORD

4. **Vs. 11-16:** The LORD punishes Cain

In case you missed it

Cain and Abel were probably not young

- The story starts with their births
- But they already have jobs in **verse 2**
- They must be less than 130 (**Genesis 5:3**)
- But… were there other people around?
  - In **verse 14**, Cain is worried about being killed by… someone
  - In **verse 16**, Cain goes to "the land of Nod"
  - In **verse 17**, Cain has a wife
- None of these requires outsiders or present-day populations
  - Cain could fear future generations
  - "Land of Nod" is akin to "land of wandering"; it might just be related to the description of Cain in **verse 12**
  - Adam and Eve had other children (**Genesis 5:4**); nothing says Seth was their third

Theology and doctrine

- Am I my brother's keeper? (**verse 9**)
- Yes!
  - Help when he needs food or clothes (**Deuteronomy 15:7–11; James 2:15–16**)
  - Encourage and care (**Romans 12:15; Hebrews 10:24–25**)
  - Correct his sins (**Leviticus 19:17; Matthew 18:15**)
  - Even love your enemies (**Exodus 23:4–5; Matthew 5:44**)
- <u>But</u> we are individually responsible for our decisions (**Romans 14:12**)

Recap of *Genesis 4:1-16*

- **Summary**
  - Cain kills his brother, Abel
- **Why it is special**
  - "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer" (**1Jn 3:15**, ESV)
- **Main characters**
  - Cain
  - Abel
  - The LORD

- **Outline**
  1. **Vs. 1-5**: The LORD accepts Abel's offering but not Cain's
  2. **Vs. 6-7**: The LORD warns Cain to control his anger
  3. **Vs. 8-10**: Cain kills Abel and lies to the LORD
  4. **Vs. 11-16**: The LORD punishes Cain
- **In case you missed it**
  - Cain and Abel were probably not young
- **Theology and doctrine**
  - Am I my brother's keeper? (**verse 9**) Yes!

Poem: **John 1:1-14**
The Word and the Light

- Again, most translations will not print this as poetry
- But it is poetic in its rhythm, repeated words, and coy vagueness
- Many phrases overlap 1 John 1