

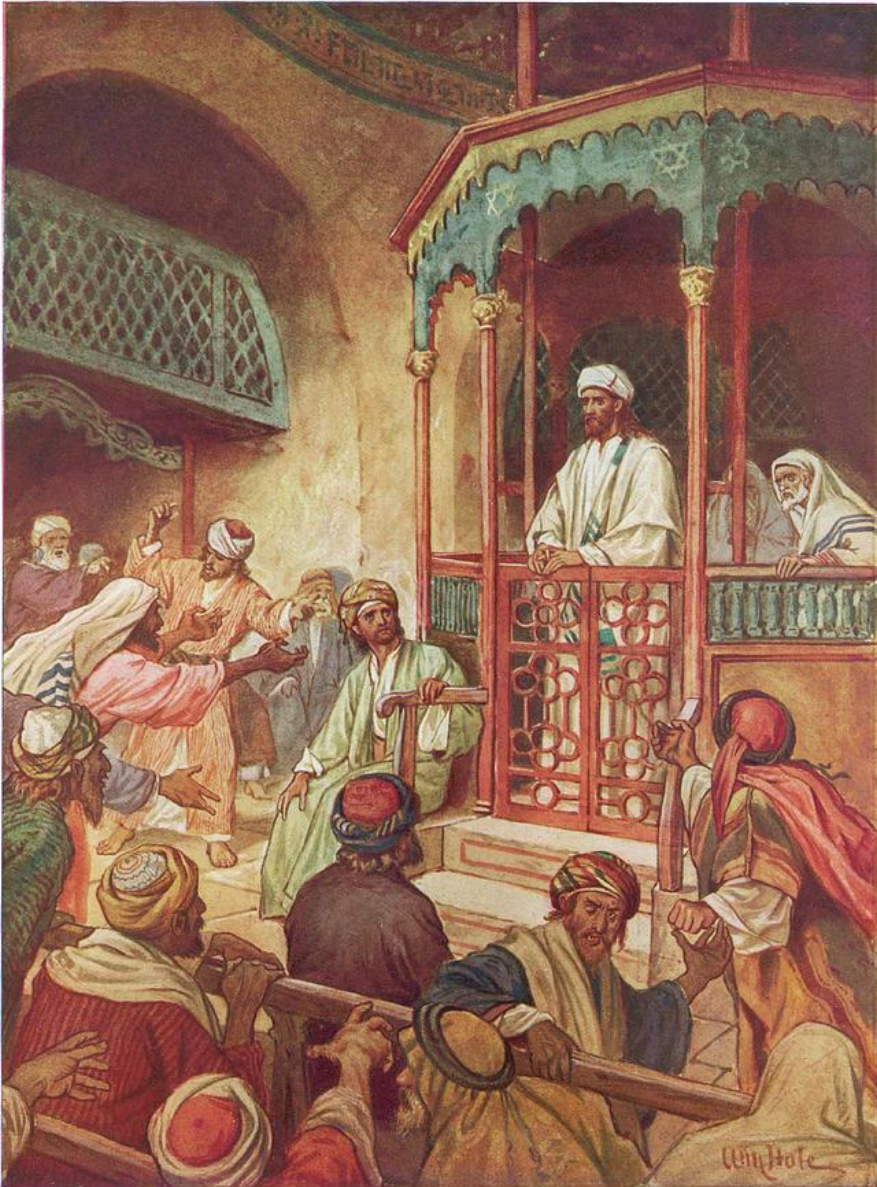
**Whose side is God on?**

**How does God work in the world?**

## **Luke's story so far ...**

Jesus' mother knows he will be  
a revolutionary leader  
who will become king on earth  
through suffering ...

# Why did Jesus' hearers try to kill him?



# God's vengeance ...

Isaiah 61:1-2

*'The spirit of the Lord God is upon me  
because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners,  
2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour  
**and the day of vengeance of our God'***

# God's vengeance omitted ...

Isaiah 61:1-2

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because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners,  
2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour  
~~and the day of vengeance of our God'~~*

# God's vengeance omitted ... provoked fury

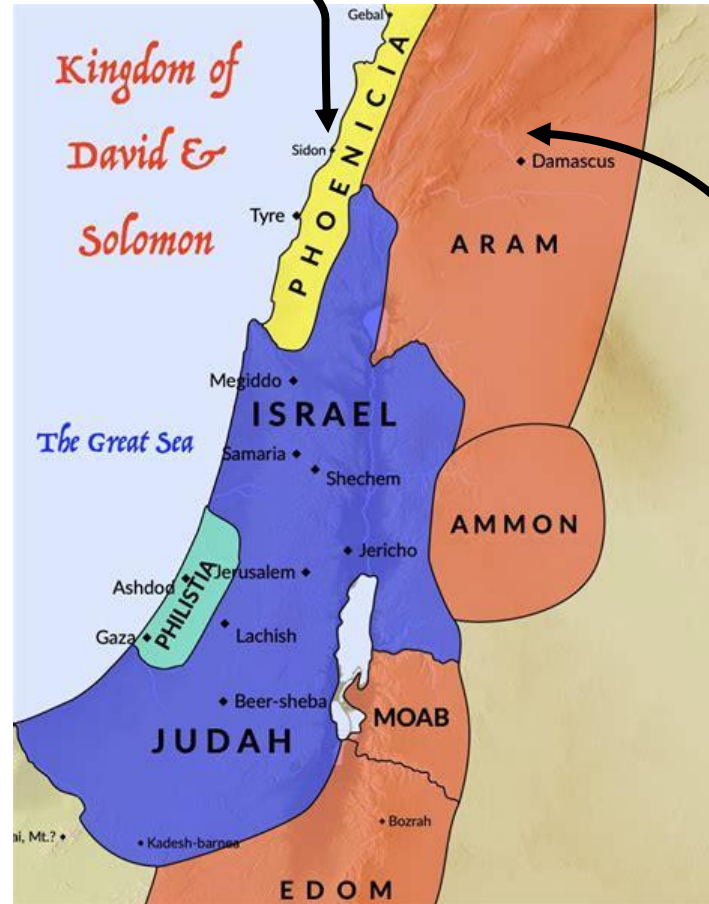
Luke 4:22

*'All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth'* (NRSV).

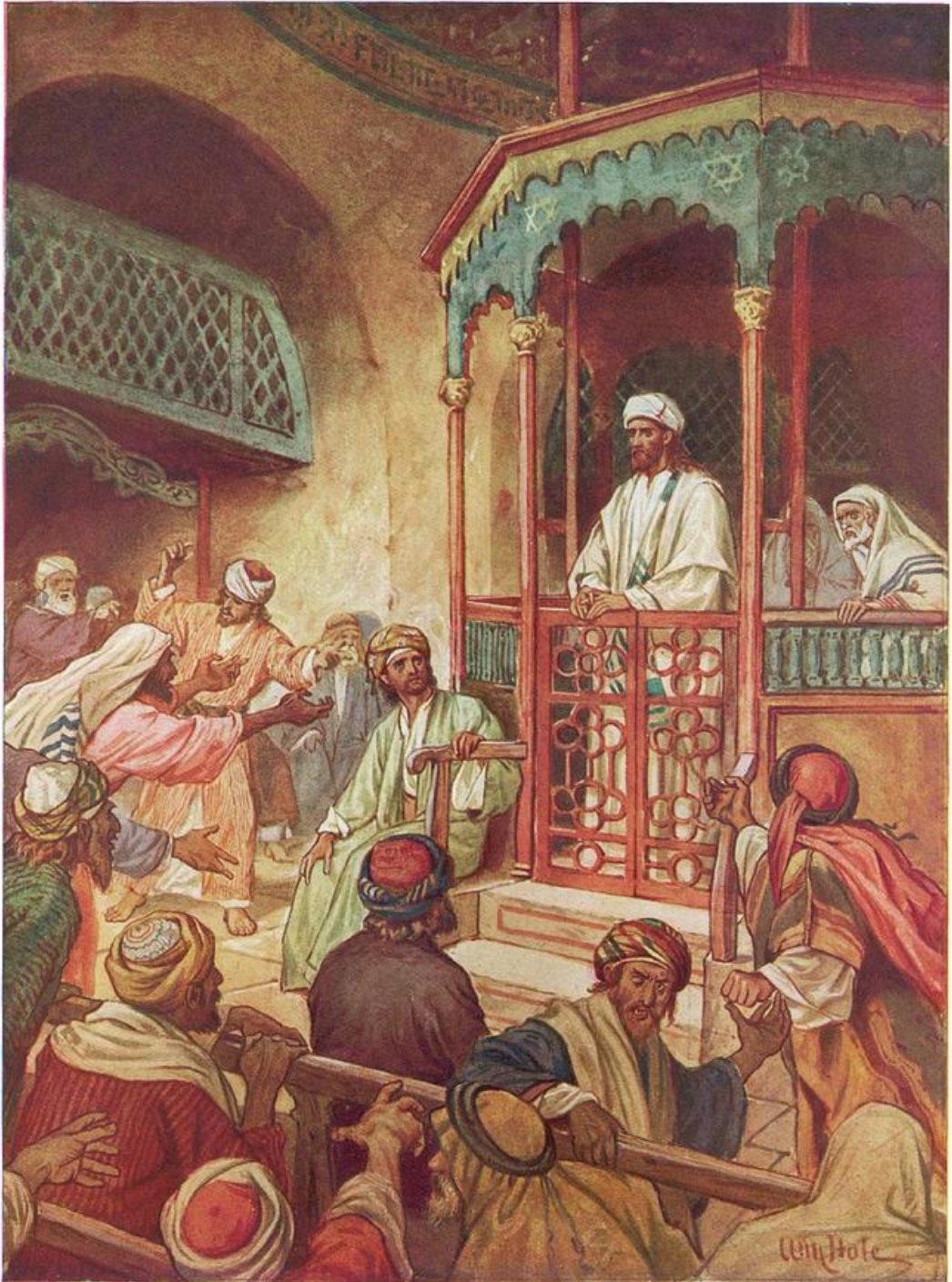
***'They protested with one voice and were furious, because he spoke only about (God's year of) mercy (and omitted the words about the messianic vengeance)'*** (Joachin Jeremias).



# God is NOT unconditionally on the side of Israel









## **Q. Whose side is God on?**

A. God is on the side of those who suffer ('the poor, the prisoners, the blind & the oppressed').

*'More communist than Marx'* – but not violent & not dead.

## Q. Whose side is God on?

A. God is on the side of those who suffer ('the poor, the prisoners, the blind & the oppressed').

*'More communist than Marx'* – but not violent & not dead.

God is never unconditionally on the side of any ethnic group, nation state, or political leader.

**Q. How does God work in the world?**



Q. How does God work in the world?

A. Through human **faith**, expressing itself through **love**.

*‘People who find Jesus/God resurrect and become better persons ... Planting Jesus in people’s hearts is like planting trees to help the earth to survive.’*

# What is **faith**?

**Faith: a relationship of trust, based on confidence not certainty, and involving risk.**


Beliefs: opinions or judgements about which a person or group is fully persuaded.

# What might **love** look like?



## Vicar is murdered in churchyard

Rebecca Fowler • Tuesday 13 August 1996 23:02 BST • [Comments](#)



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A young vicar with a "brilliant future" was murdered in a brutal stabbing early yesterday morning in the grounds of his parish church in Liverpool, and police were last night searching for a man they describe as "highly dangerous".

Christopher Gray, 32, the vicar of St Margaret's Church in Anfield, Liverpool, a gifted scholar who had insisted on working in a tough urban parish, was discovered bleeding to death by neighbours, after they heard a cry.



Whose side is God on?

**Those who suffer**

How does God work in the world?

**Through faith & love (not violence)**

Christians have expressed **faith & love** through ...

valuing everyone

caring for the sick

mass education

opposing colonial abuses

Christians have expressed **violence** through ...

imperial religion

crusades

colonialism

supporting dictators

## Getting it wrong in 2024: supporting Israel's violence

*'Fifteen years ago, we set out to awaken the sleeping giant of Christian Zionism and we have achieved that goal and more. Christians United For Israel (CUFI) reaches millions with its biblical message of support for Israel and communicates the justness of Israel's cause to church leaders, elected officials and average Americans each-and-every-day.'*

Pastor John Hagee, CUFI Founder and Chairman (<https://cufi.org/> accessed 31.10.24)

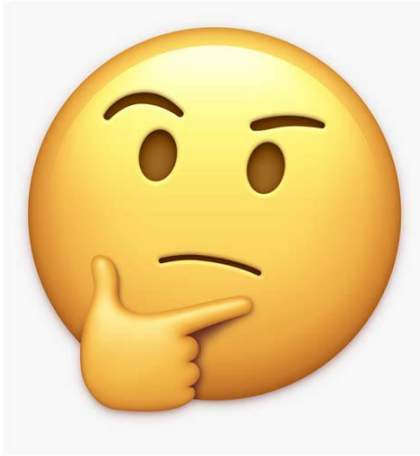


## **Injustice must be named**

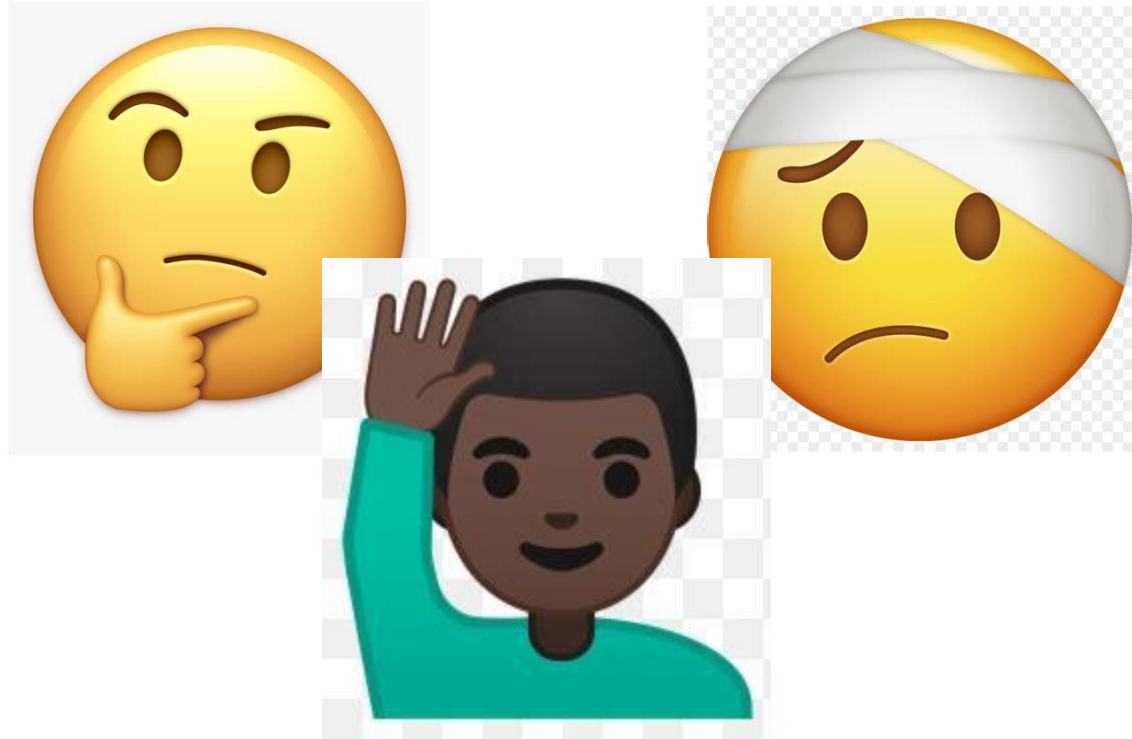
*'The Hamas attack was abhorrent and absolutely reprehensible, and truly people who live in Israel, Jewish, Palestinian and others are being threatened as I write. Their pain is our pain. At the same time, the long standing suffering of Palestinians has been compounded by the attacks on Gaza since October 7 where over 40,000 people have been killed, many of them, children. Additionally, settler attacks have only increased in the West Bank. Their pain is our pain - or it should be. However, far too many evangelicals around the world a-critically "stand with Israel", and remain oblivious to the suffering Palestinians. This injustice must be named.'*

Ruth Padilla DeBorst (open letter 28.9.24)

# Where am I on the journey of faith & love?

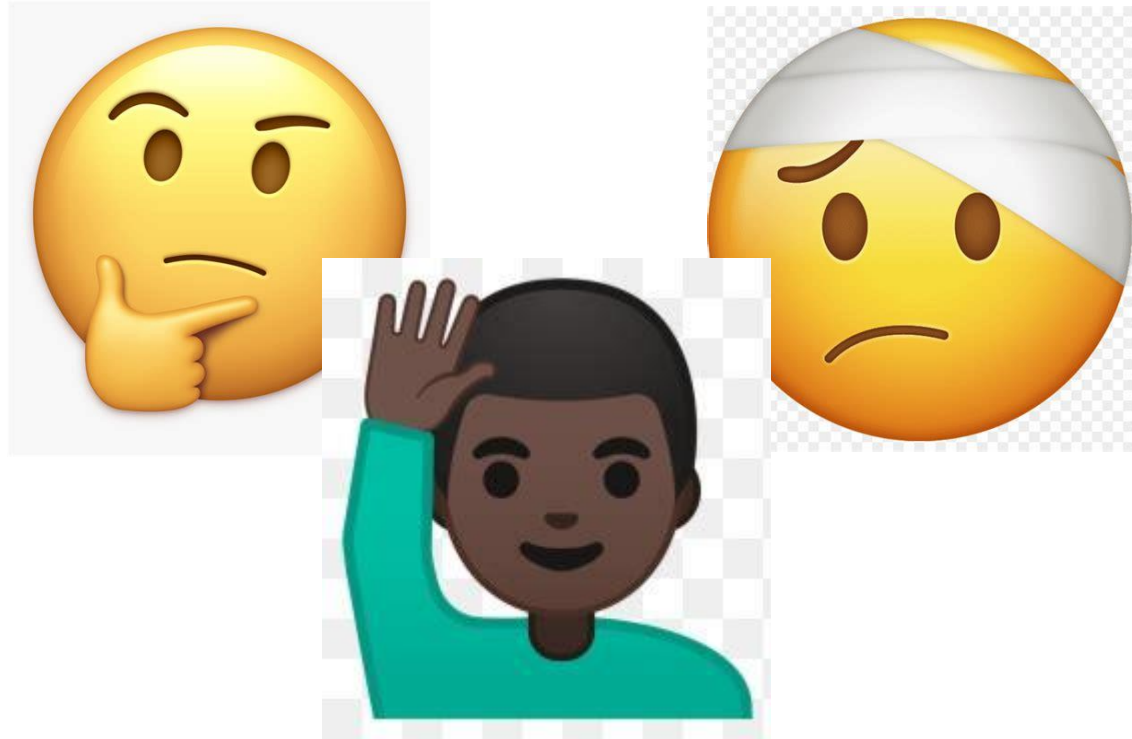


# Where am I on the journey of faith & love?





**Where am I on the journey of faith & love?**



**What might be my next step on this journey?**