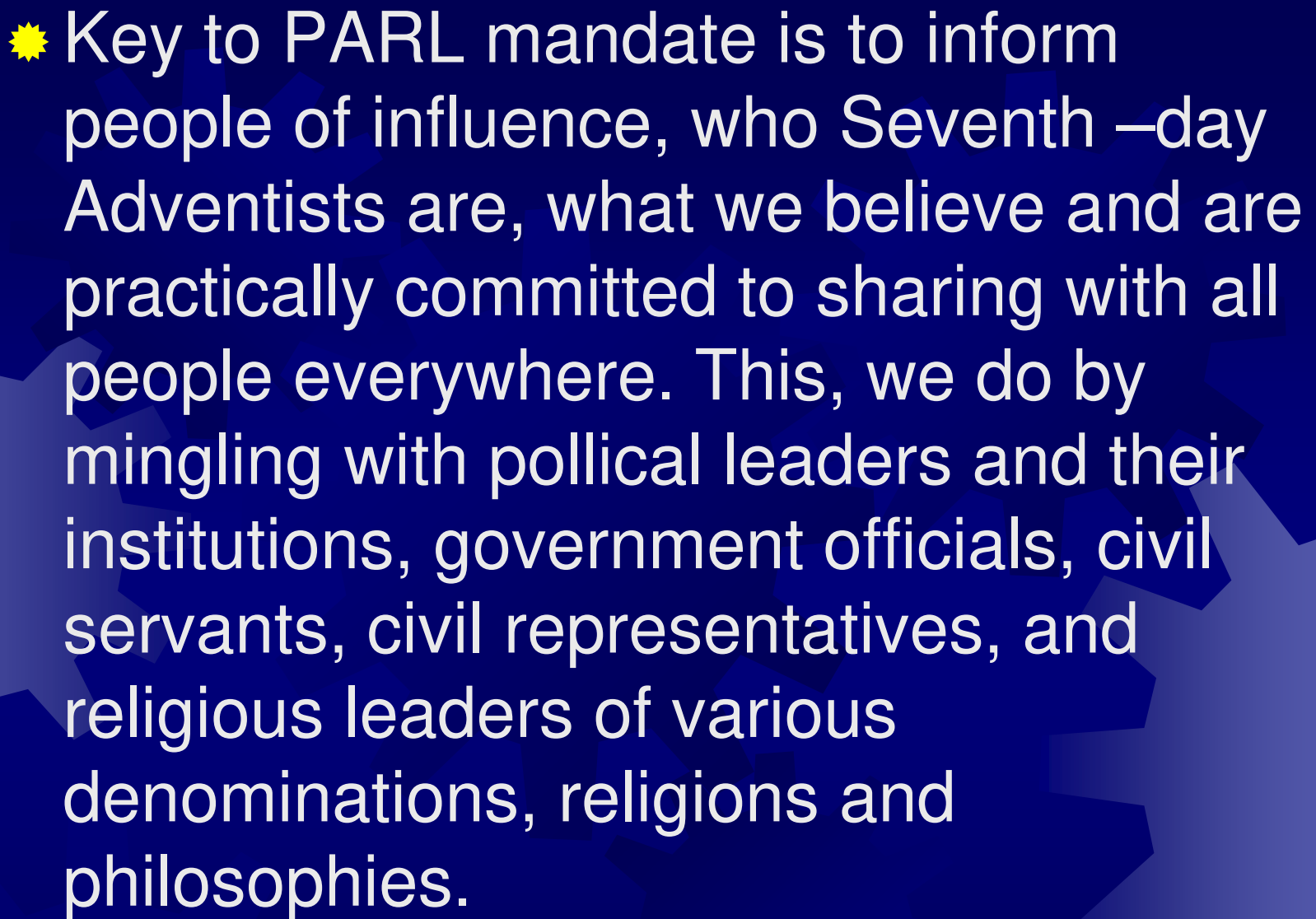
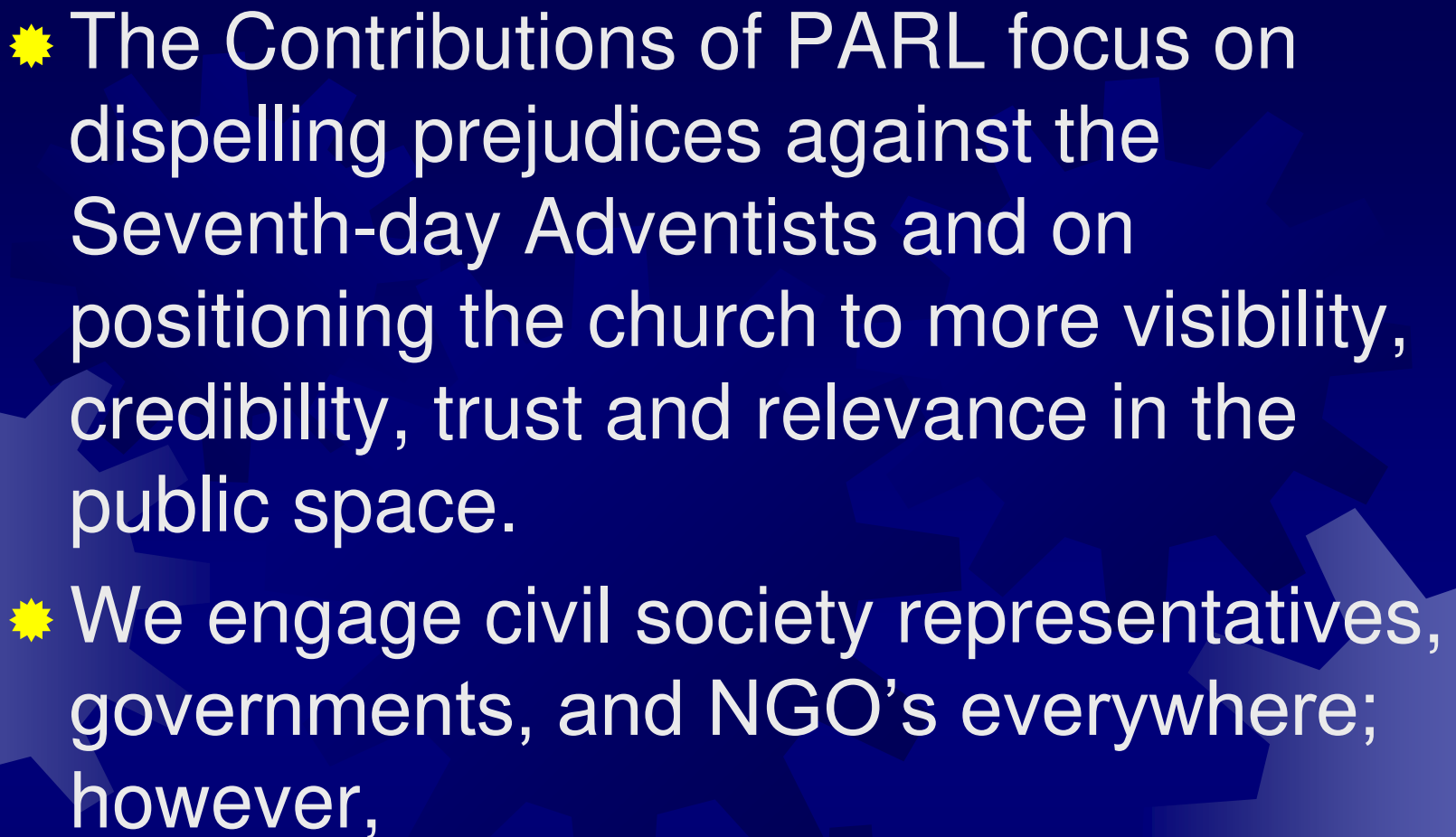


**★ Public Affairs and Religious Liberty:
A Theological Witness of PARL.
Distinctive Seventh-day Adventist
Perspectives.**

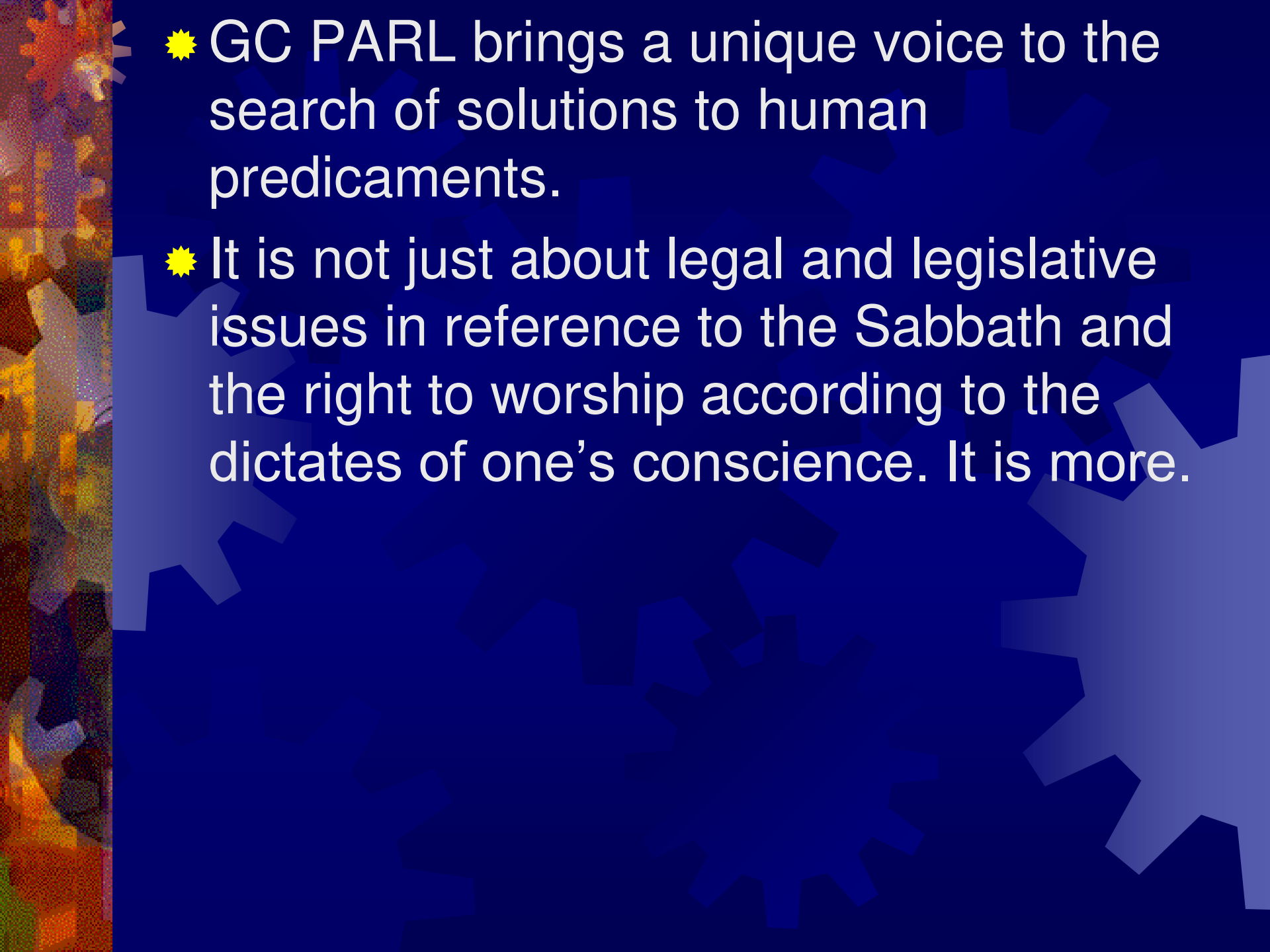
Ganoune Diop, Ph.D.
General Conference PARL director
Secretary General IRLA

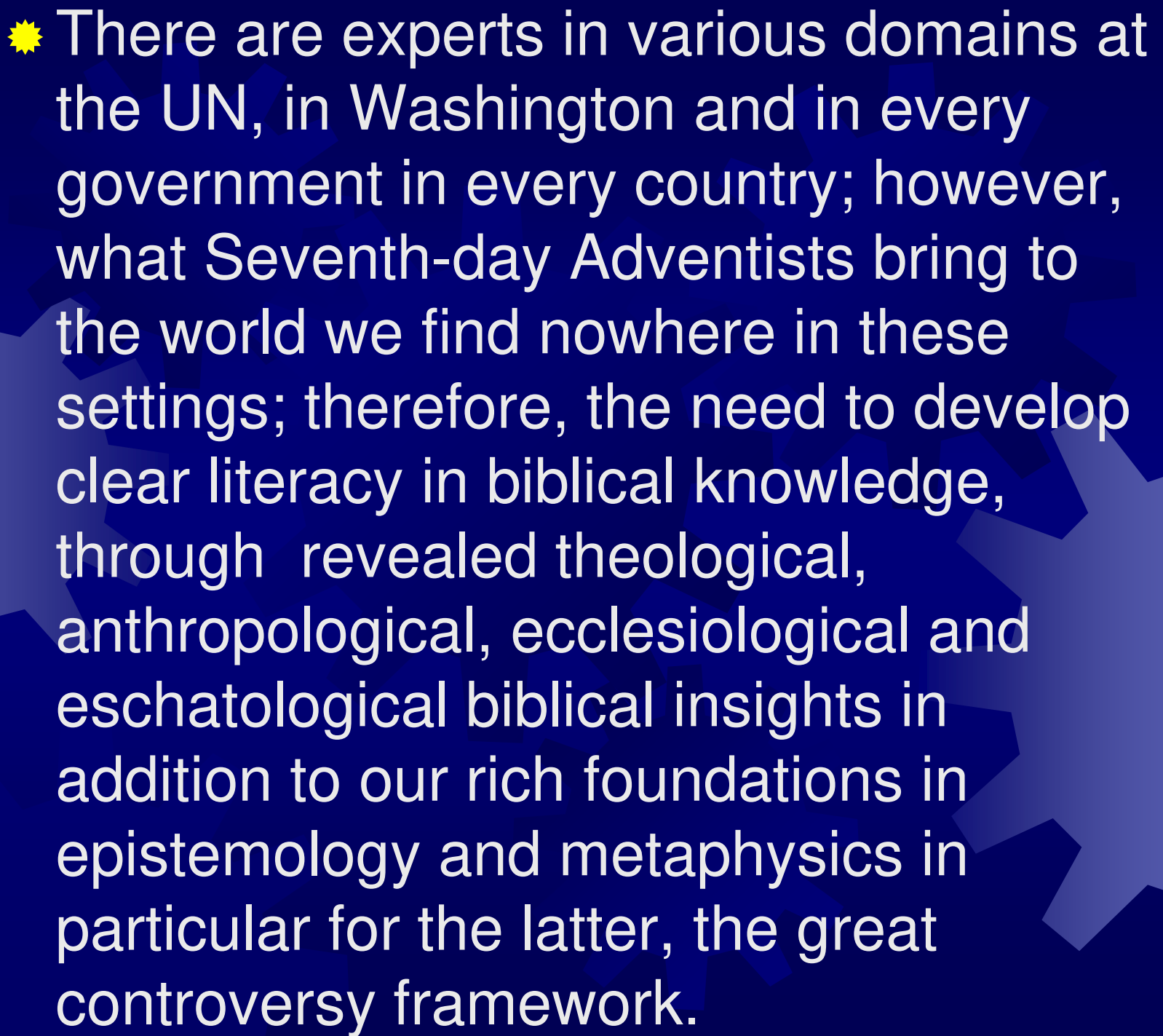
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★ Key to PARL mandate is to inform people of influence, who Seventh –day Adventists are, what we believe and are practically committed to sharing with all people everywhere. This, we do by mingling with pollical leaders and their institutions, government officials, civil servants, civil representatives, and religious leaders of various denominations, religions and philosophies.

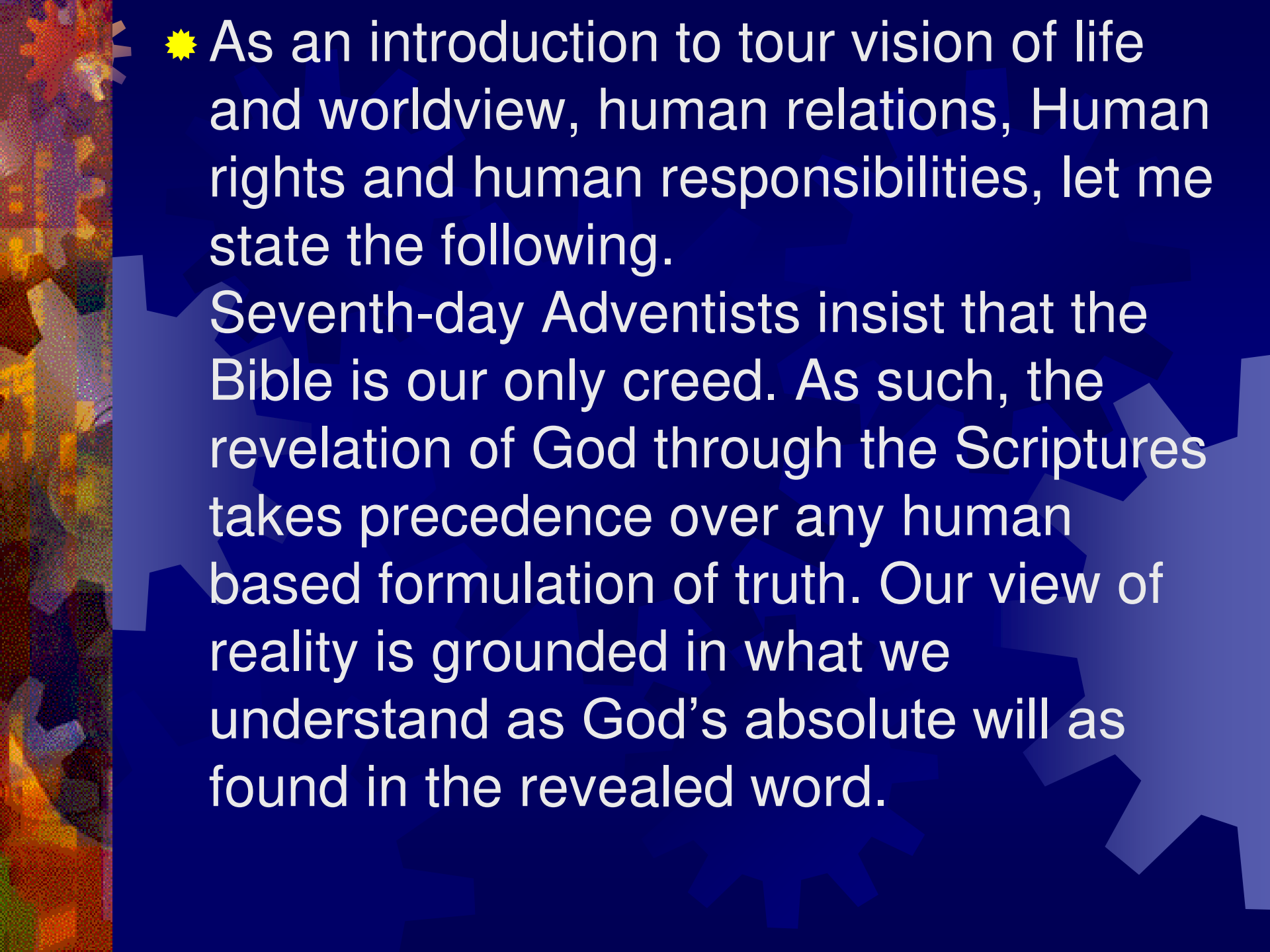
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- ✦ The Contributions of PARL focus on dispelling prejudices against the Seventh-day Adventists and on positioning the church to more visibility, credibility, trust and relevance in the public space.
 - ✦ We engage civil society representatives, governments, and NGO's everywhere; however,

Our best contributions are in the realm of our theology and anthropology in addition to eschatology, end-time events and the ultimate freedom from all evil..

- 
- The background features a dark blue field with several large, semi-transparent gears of varying shades of blue. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured appearance, possibly representing a gear mechanism or a natural scene. The text is presented in a clean, white, sans-serif font.
- ★ GC PARL brings a unique voice to the search of solutions to human predicaments.
 - ★ It is not just about legal and legislative issues in reference to the Sabbath and the right to worship according to the dictates of one's conscience. It is more.

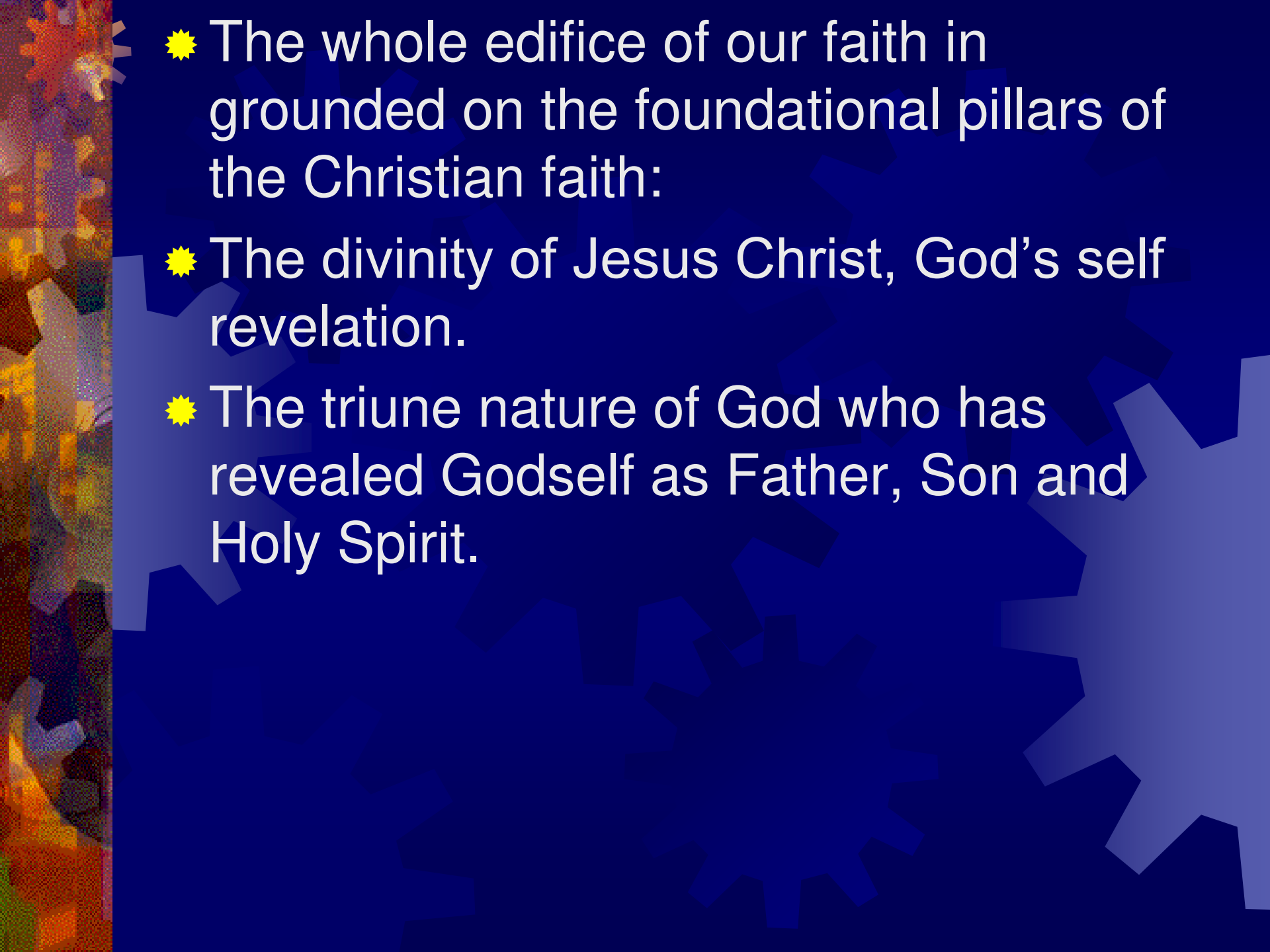
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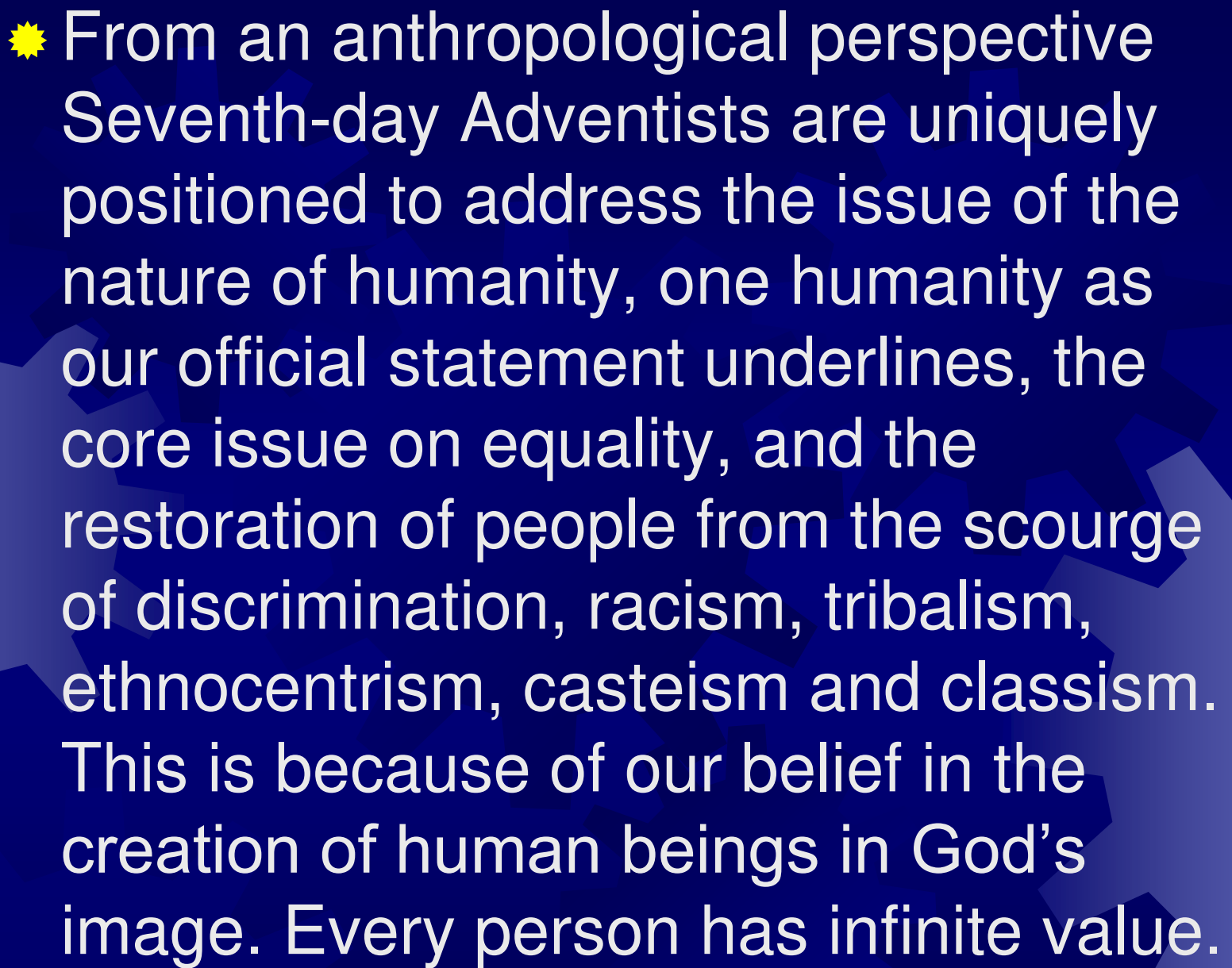
★ There are experts in various domains at the UN, in Washington and in every government in every country; however, what Seventh-day Adventists bring to the world we find nowhere in these settings; therefore, the need to develop clear literacy in biblical knowledge, through revealed theological, anthropological, ecclesiological and eschatological biblical insights in addition to our rich foundations in epistemology and metaphysics in particular for the latter, the great controversy framework.

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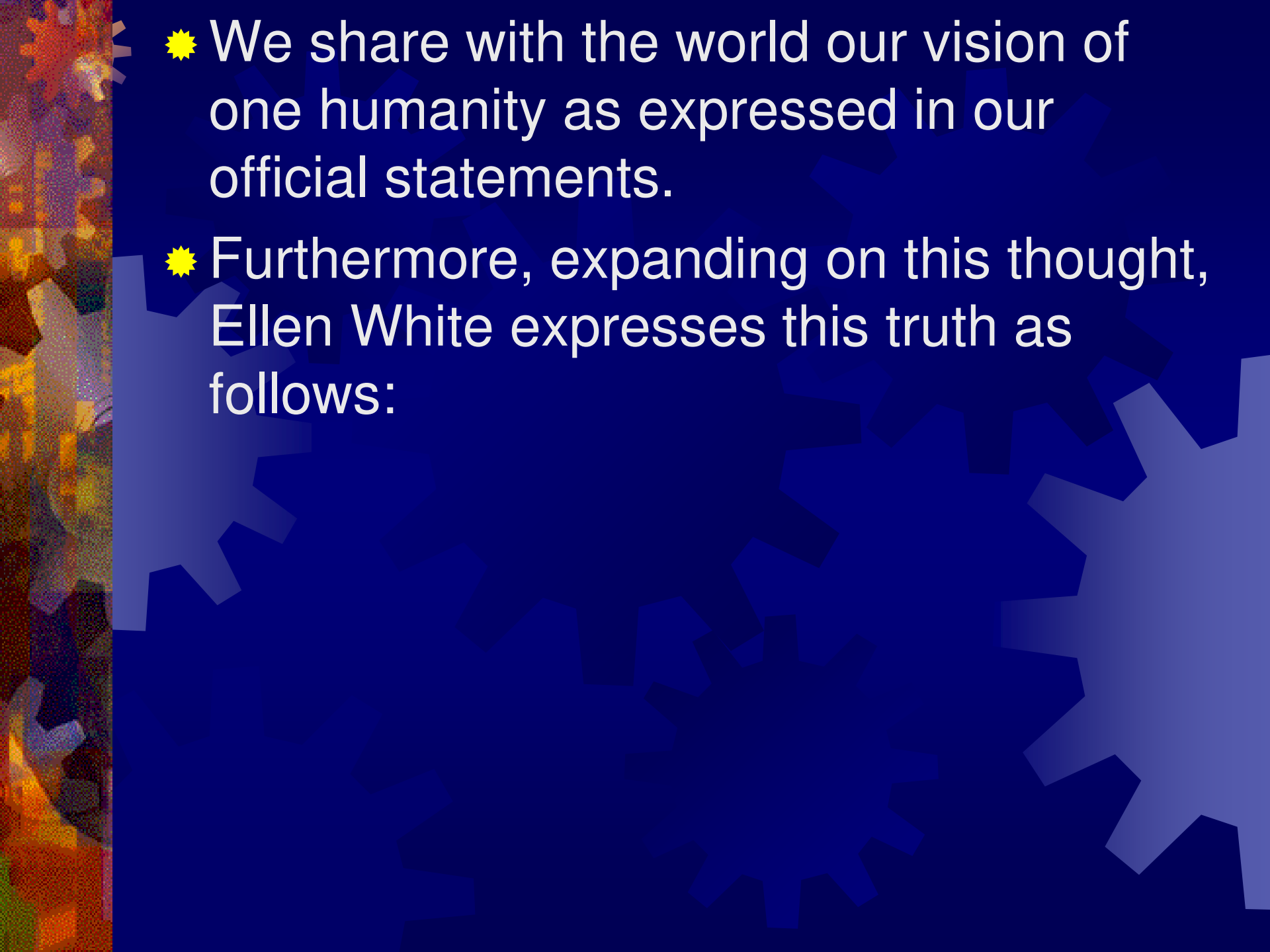
★ As an introduction to our vision of life and worldview, human relations, Human rights and human responsibilities, let me state the following.

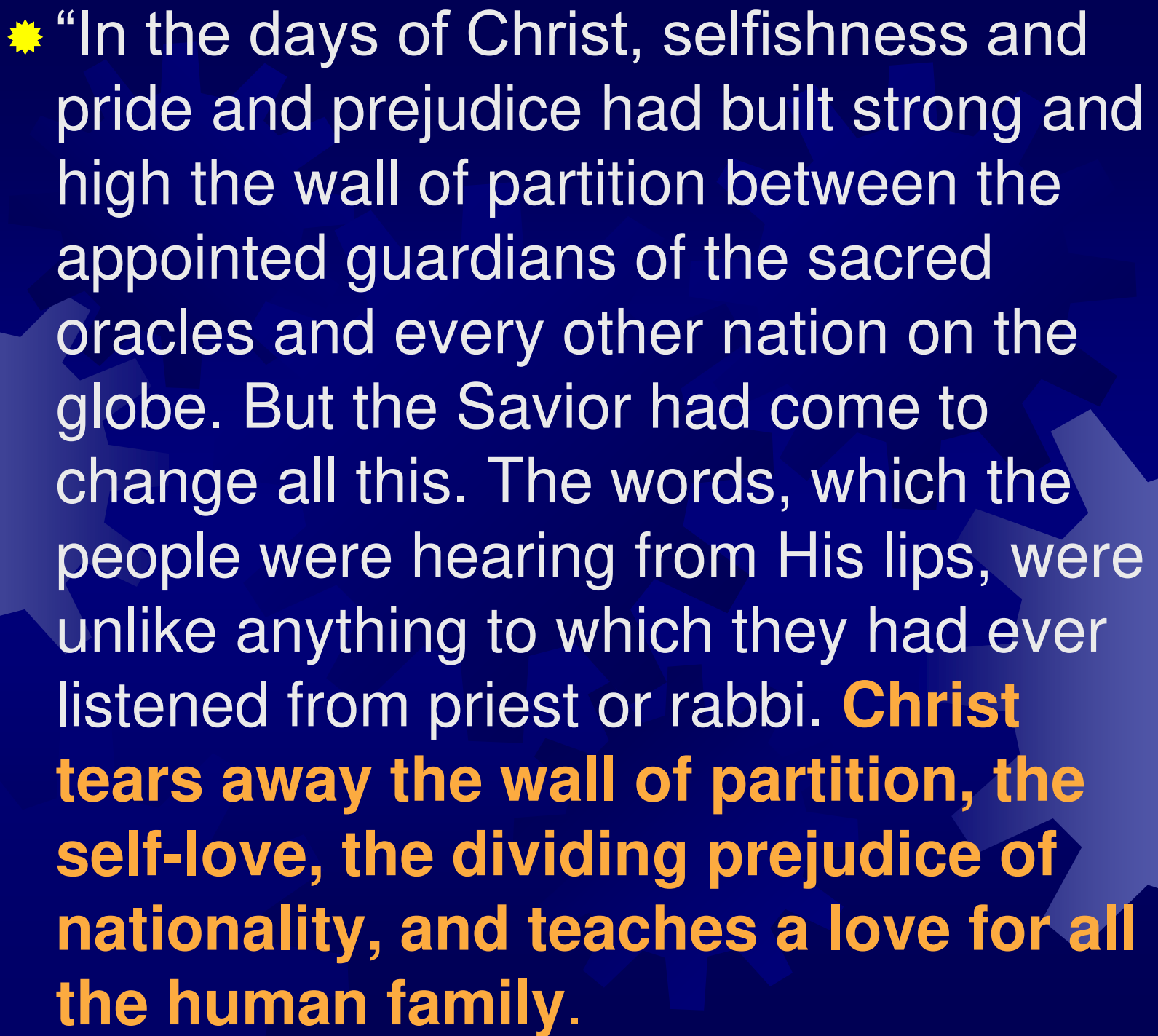
Seventh-day Adventists insist that the Bible is our only creed. As such, the revelation of God through the Scriptures takes precedence over any human based formulation of truth. Our view of reality is grounded in what we understand as God's absolute will as found in the revealed word.

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- The background is a dark blue field with several large, semi-transparent gears of various sizes and colors (blue, grey, and light blue) scattered across it. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured appearance, possibly representing a gear mechanism or a mechanical part.
- ✦ The whole edifice of our faith is grounded on the foundational pillars of the Christian faith:
 - ✦ The divinity of Jesus Christ, God's self-revelation.
 - ✦ The triune nature of God who has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

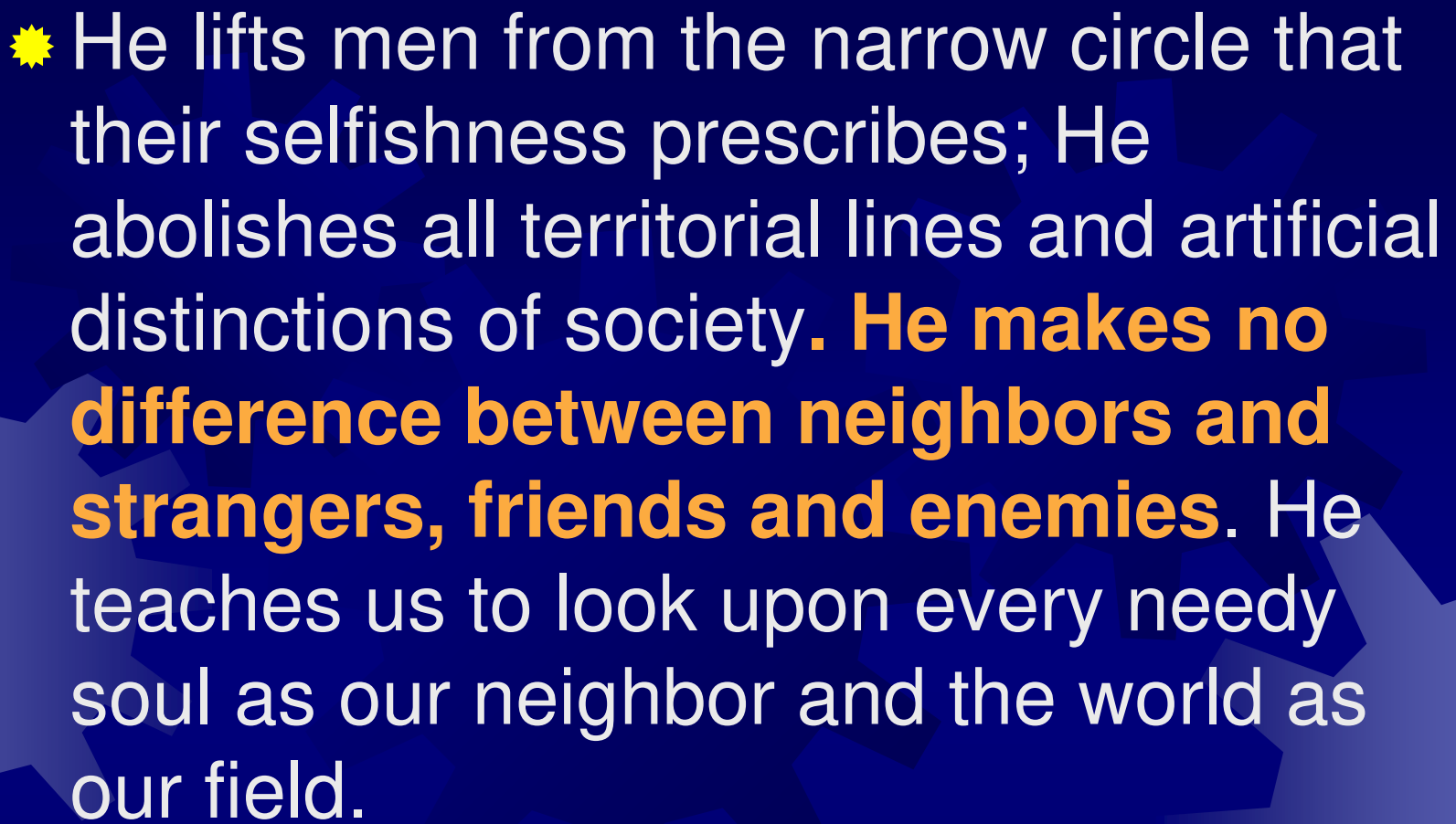
The background is a dark blue field with several semi-transparent, light blue gears of various sizes scattered across it. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and somewhat pixelated texture in shades of orange, red, and yellow. A small, bright yellow starburst icon is positioned at the top left of the text area.

From an anthropological perspective Seventh-day Adventists are uniquely positioned to address the issue of the nature of humanity, one humanity as our official statement underlines, the core issue on equality, and the restoration of people from the scourge of discrimination, racism, tribalism, ethnocentrism, casteism and classism. This is because of our belief in the creation of human beings in God's image. Every person has infinite value.

- 
- ✦ We share with the world our vision of one humanity as expressed in our official statements.
 - ✦ Furthermore, expanding on this thought, Ellen White expresses this truth as follows:

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★ “In the days of Christ, selfishness and pride and prejudice had built strong and high the wall of partition between the appointed guardians of the sacred oracles and every other nation on the globe. But the Savior had come to change all this. The words, which the people were hearing from His lips, were unlike anything to which they had ever listened from priest or rabbi. **Christ tears away the wall of partition, the self-love, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family.**

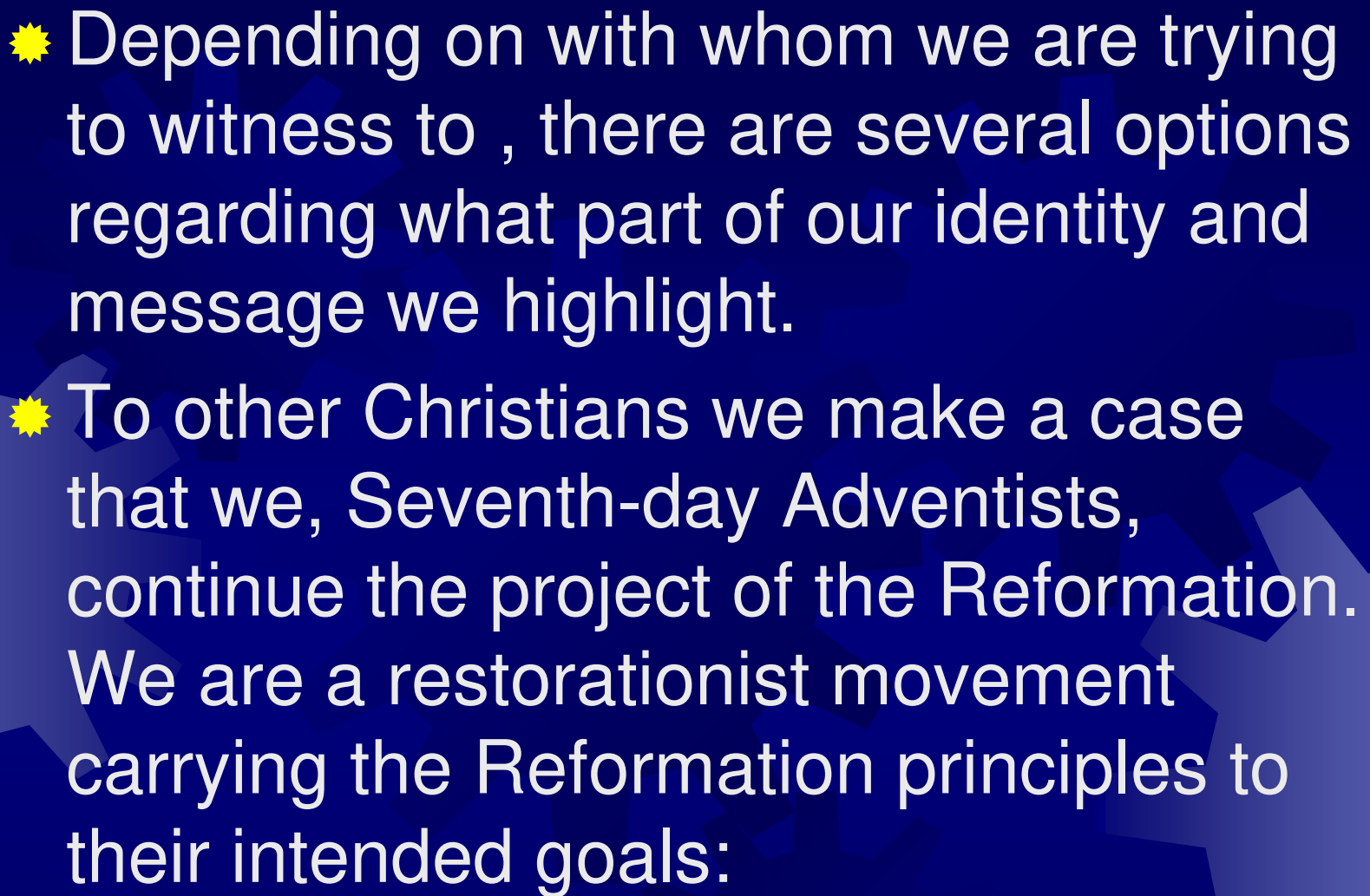
The background is a dark blue field with faint, light blue gear patterns. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured appearance, possibly representing a gear mechanism or a natural scene. The text is presented in a clean, sans-serif font, with a yellow starburst icon at the start of each line.

☀ He lifts men from the narrow circle that their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. **He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies.** He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our neighbor and the world as our field.

☀ Ellen G White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings*, 42.

The background is a dark blue field filled with various shades of blue gears of different sizes, some overlapping. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, textured pattern of gears in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. The text is centered in the blue area.

✦ Focus on Witnessing to Others

- 
- ✦ Depending on with whom we are trying to witness to , there are several options regarding what part of our identity and message we highlight.
 - ✦ To other Christians we make a case that we, Seventh-day Adventists, continue the project of the Reformation. We are a restorationist movement carrying the Reformation principles to their intended goals:



★ **The Meaning of the Principles of the Reformation**

- ★ To capture the multiple facets of the Reformation and entertain a broader and more comprehensive understanding, it is helpful to identify several principles that are intrinsic to the Reformation. They are shared by several traditions, denominations, and communions. (This is useful to remember during our dialogues with other faith traditions.)

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- The background is a dark blue field with faint, semi-transparent gear patterns. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured appearance, possibly representing a gear or a mechanical part. The text is presented as a numbered list in white, italicized font.
1. Scripture alone (*Sola Scriptura*)
 2. Grace Alone (*Sola Gratia*)
 3. Sola Fide (*Faith Alone*)
 4. Christ Alone (*Solus Christus*)
 5. To God Alone Be All the Glory (*Soli Deo Gloria*)
 6. Priesthood of All Believers (*Presbyterii Fidelium*)
 7. The Church in a Perpetual State of Reformation (*Ecclesia Semper Reformanda*)



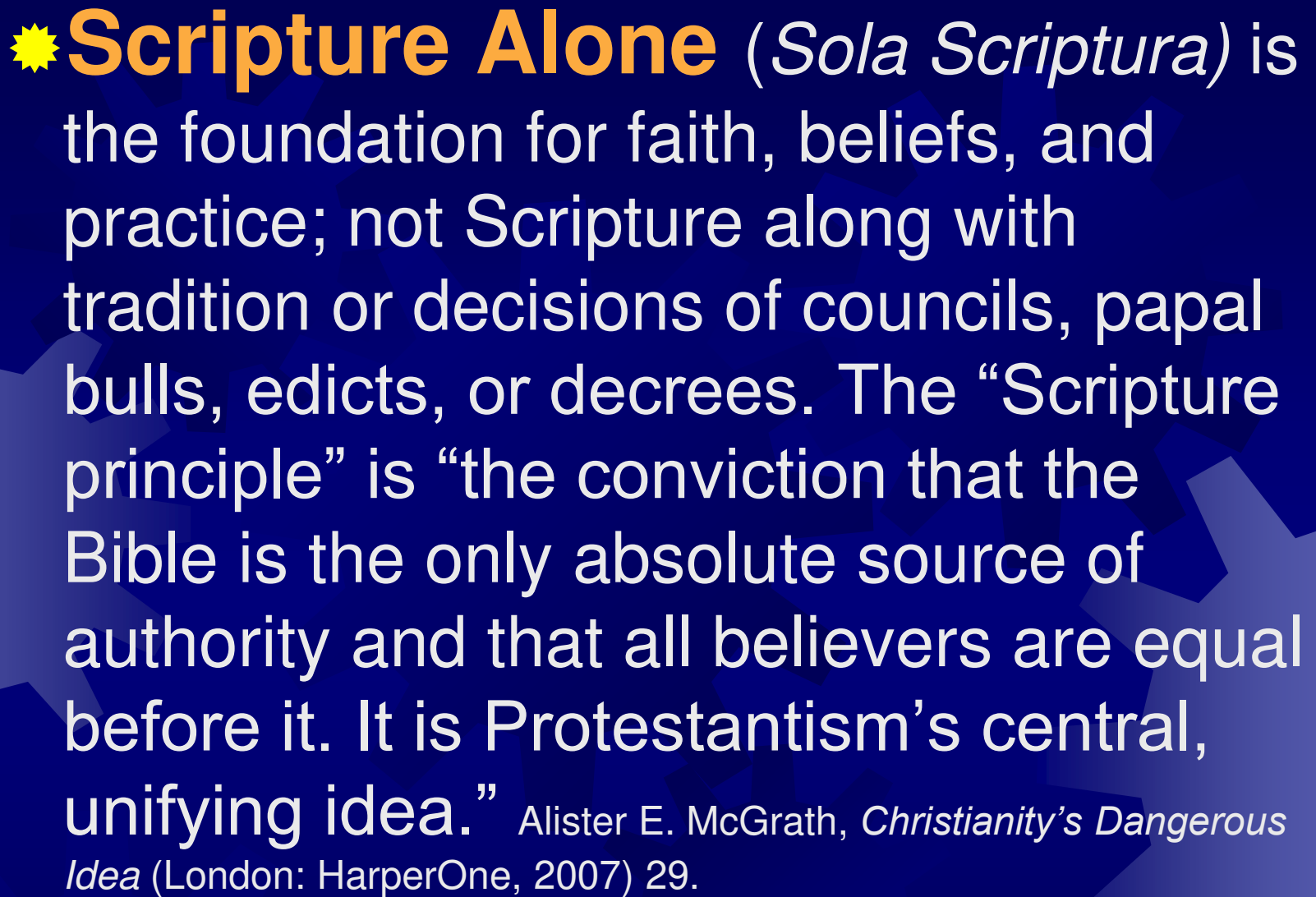
8. Freedom of Conscience (*Conscientia Fidelium*)

9. Human Dignity (*Dignitatis Humanae*)

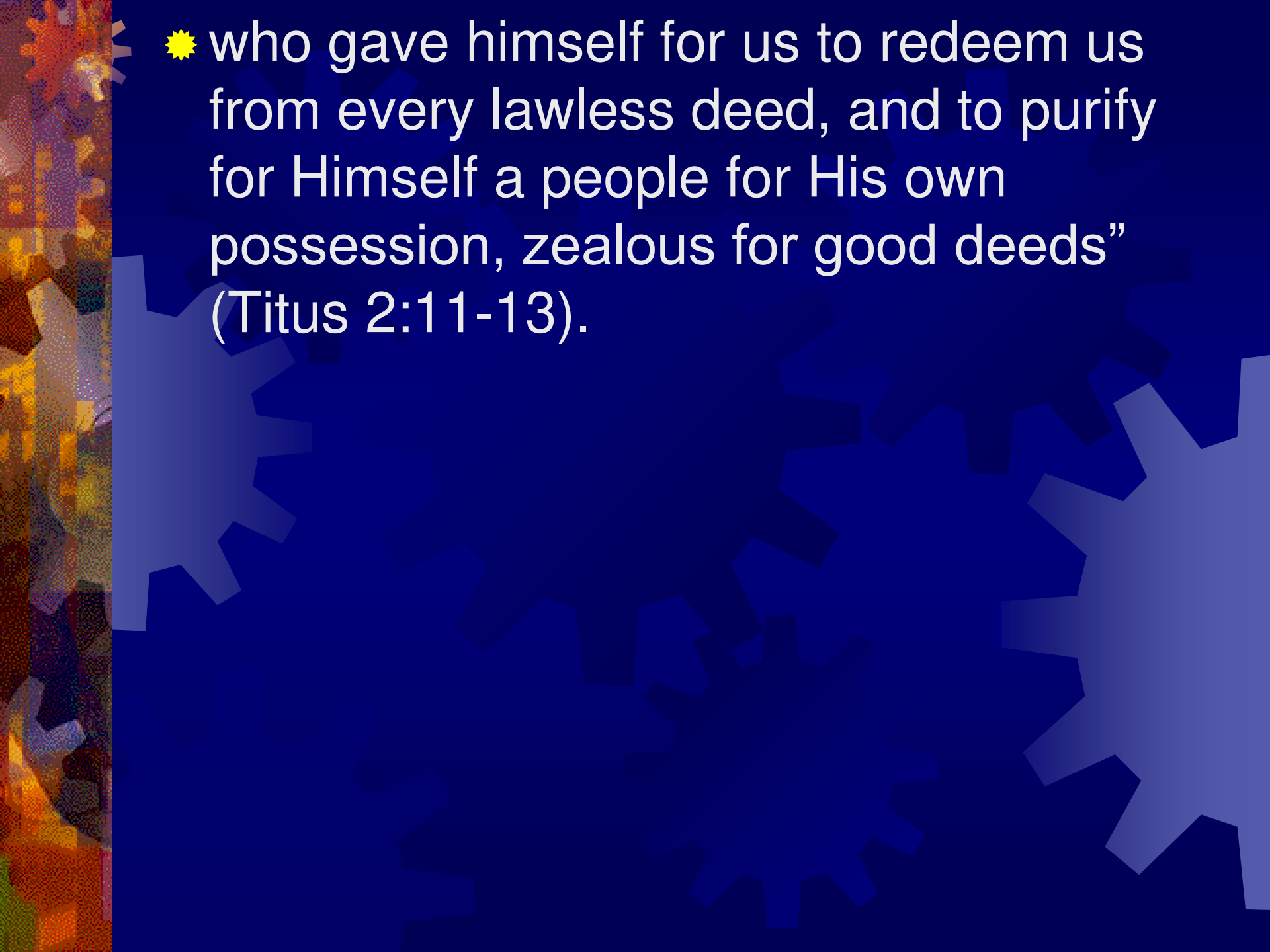
10. Personal Equality (*Personalis Aequalitatem*)

11. The Cross Alone is Our Theology
(*Crux Sola est Nostra Theologia*)

12. The Love of God (*Deus Caritas est*)

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★ **Scripture Alone** (*Sola Scriptura*) is the foundation for faith, beliefs, and practice; not Scripture along with tradition or decisions of councils, papal bulls, edicts, or decrees. The “Scripture principle” is “the conviction that the Bible is the only absolute source of authority and that all believers are equal before it. It is Protestantism’s central, unifying idea.” Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea* (London: HarperOne, 2007) 29.

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✦ who gave himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:11-13).



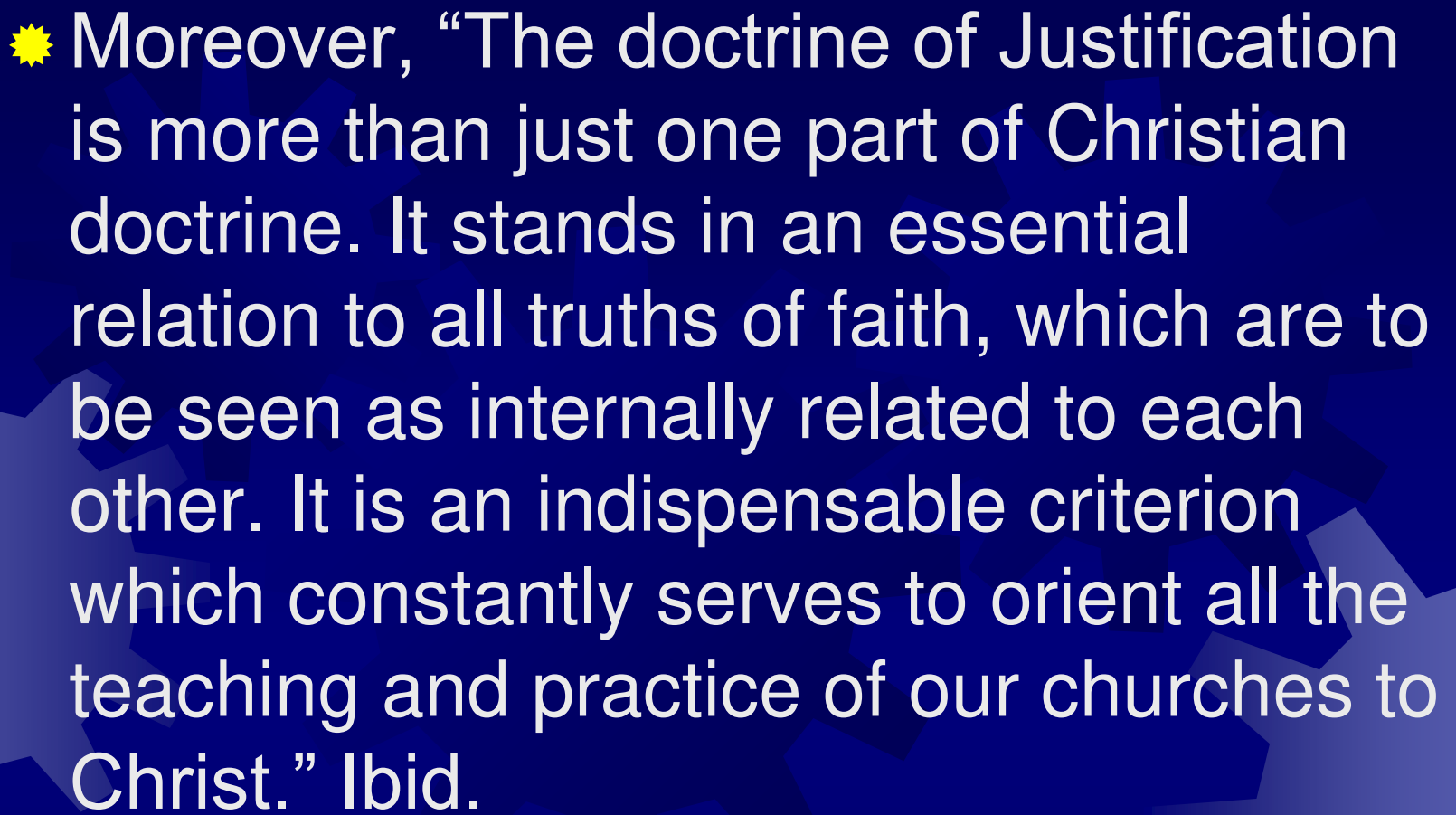
✦ **Grace Alone**

- ✦ The principle of “grace alone” highlights the depth of God’s love manifested in the unmerited favor he grants to those he created in his image. Those who receive God’s grace are called to be gracious people. To be consistent with this principle of grace, an attitude of gratitude should pervade the life of all Christians.

3. **Faith Alone** (*Sola Fide*), not faith with works, to earn salvation

✦ The nature of justification was at the root of the Reformation. For the Lutheran Reformation, it was considered “the first and chief article, the ruler and judge over all other Christian doctrines.” Justification was the crux of all the disputes. “*Rector et iudex super omnia genera doctrinarum.*”

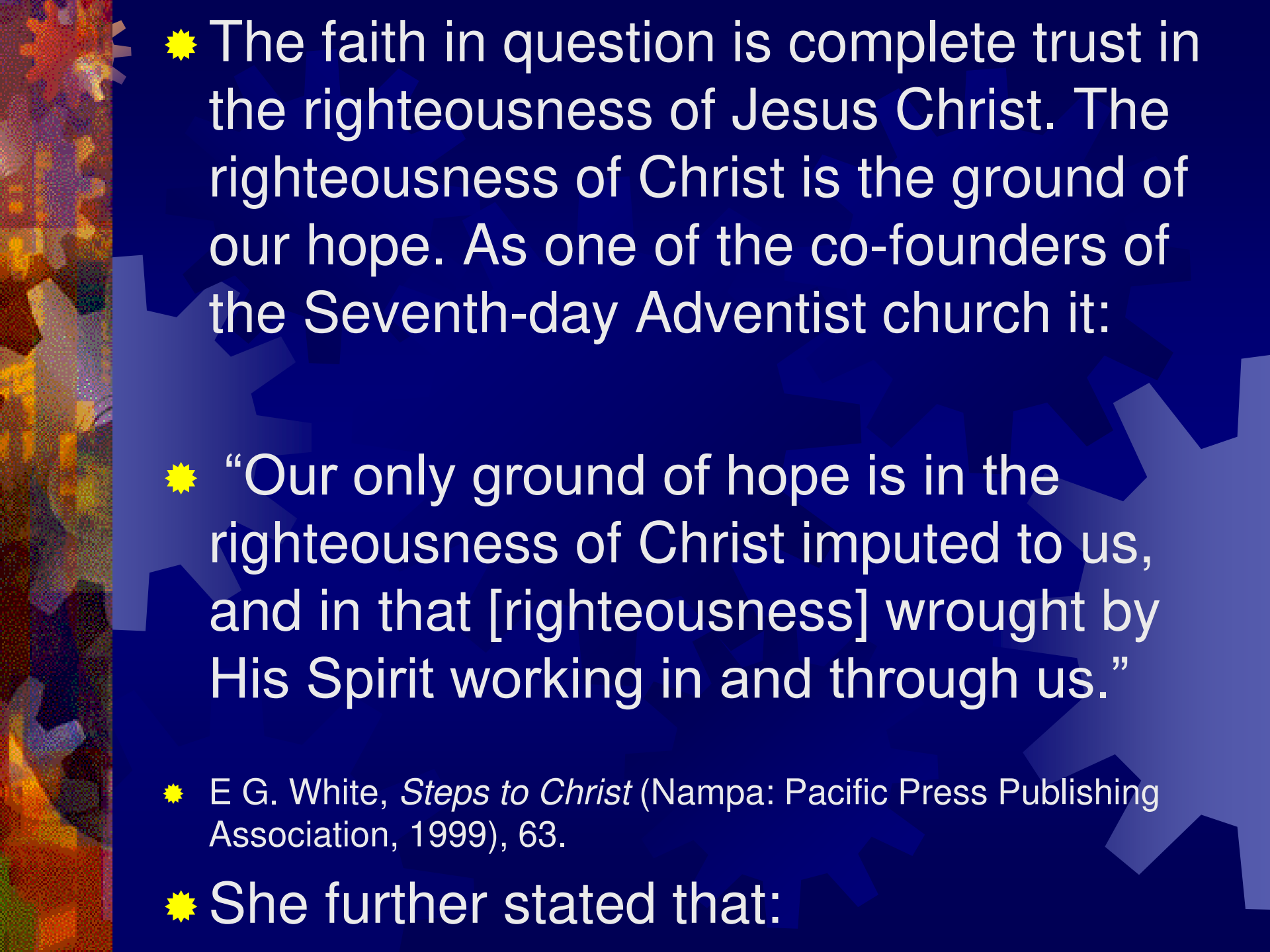
✦ Weimar Edition of Luther’s Works (WA), 39, I, 205. See also, “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church” (Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2yGyxtD> on September 11, 2017) paragraph

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Moreover, “The doctrine of Justification is more than just one part of Christian doctrine. It stands in an essential relation to all truths of faith, which are to be seen as internally related to each other. It is an indispensable criterion which constantly serves to orient all the teaching and practice of our churches to Christ.” Ibid.

✦ **Christ Alone (Solus Christus)**

- ✦ This is about Christ's Sovereignty, supremacy and sufficiency.
- ✦ He is the only legitimate leader (arxegos, prodomos, according to the book of Hebrews).
- ✦ Seventh-day Adventists uplift Christ. He is the center of attraction:
- ✦ In the book of Revelation, God's end-time movement is described as keeping God's commandments and the faith of Jesus.

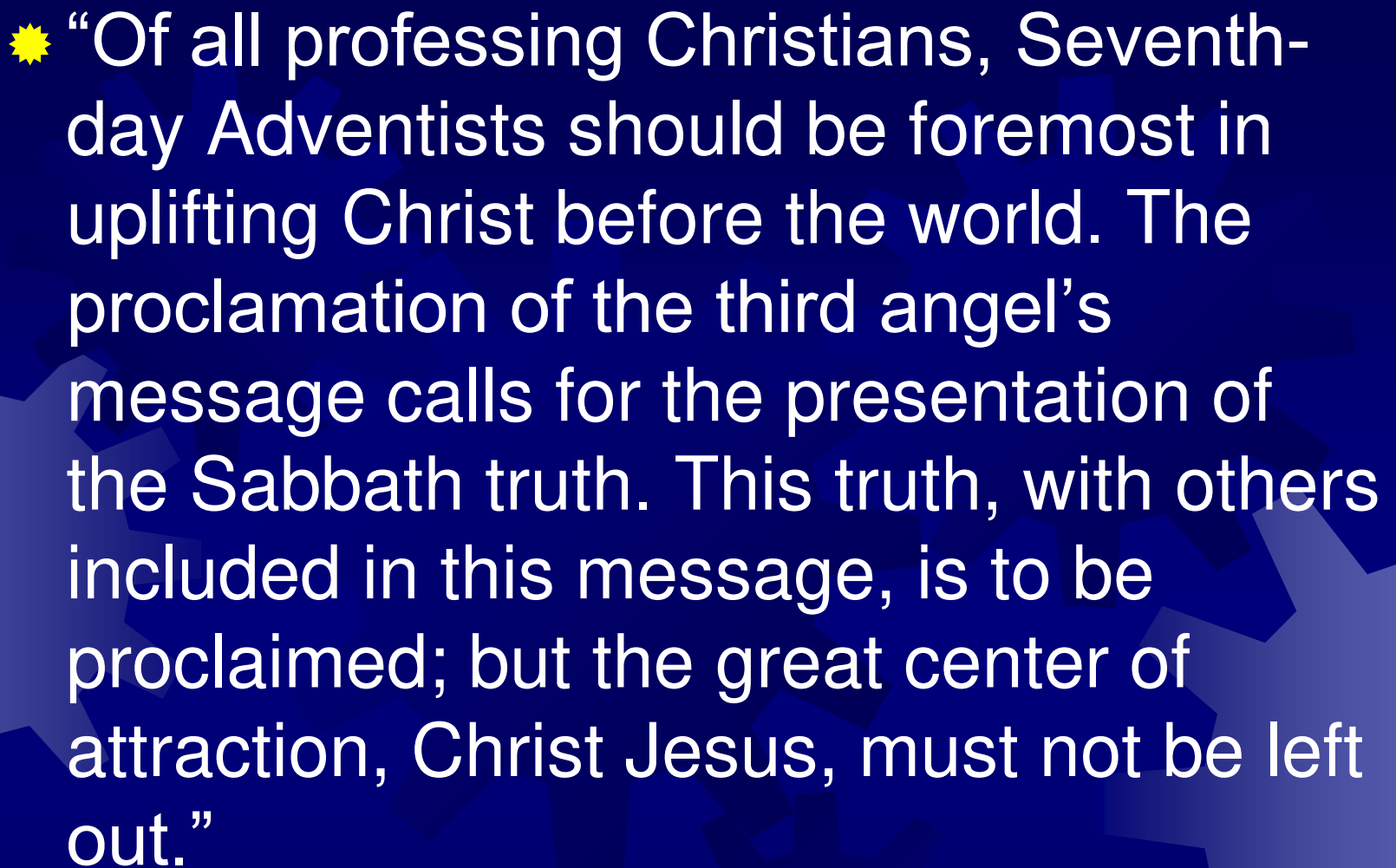


- ★ The faith in question is complete trust in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The righteousness of Christ is the ground of our hope. As one of the co-founders of the Seventh-day Adventist church it:

- ★ “Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that [righteousness] wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.”

- ★ E G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1999), 63.

- ★ She further stated that:

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☀ “Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel’s message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in this message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out.”

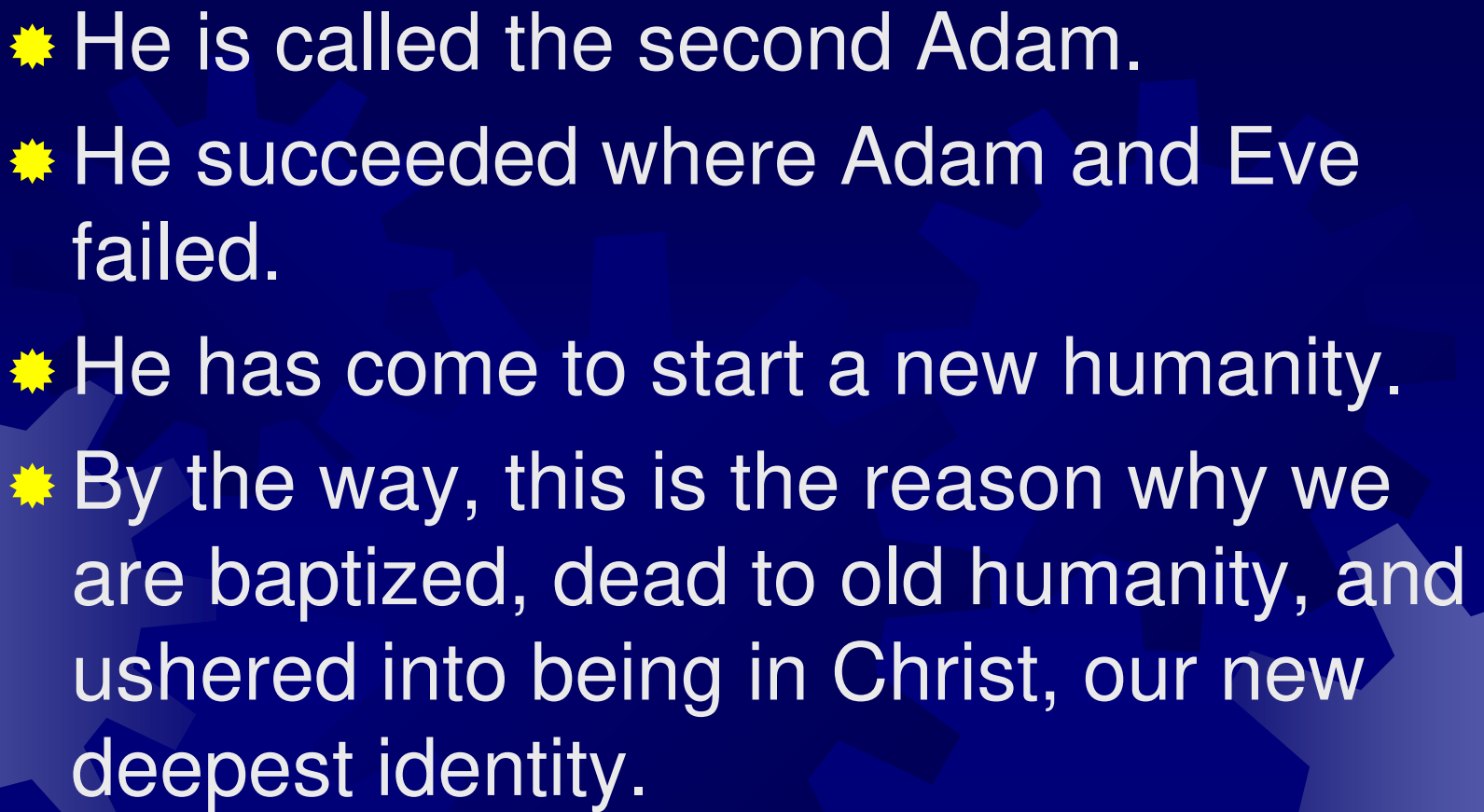
☀ Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 156, emphasis supplied.



★ Uplifting Jesus

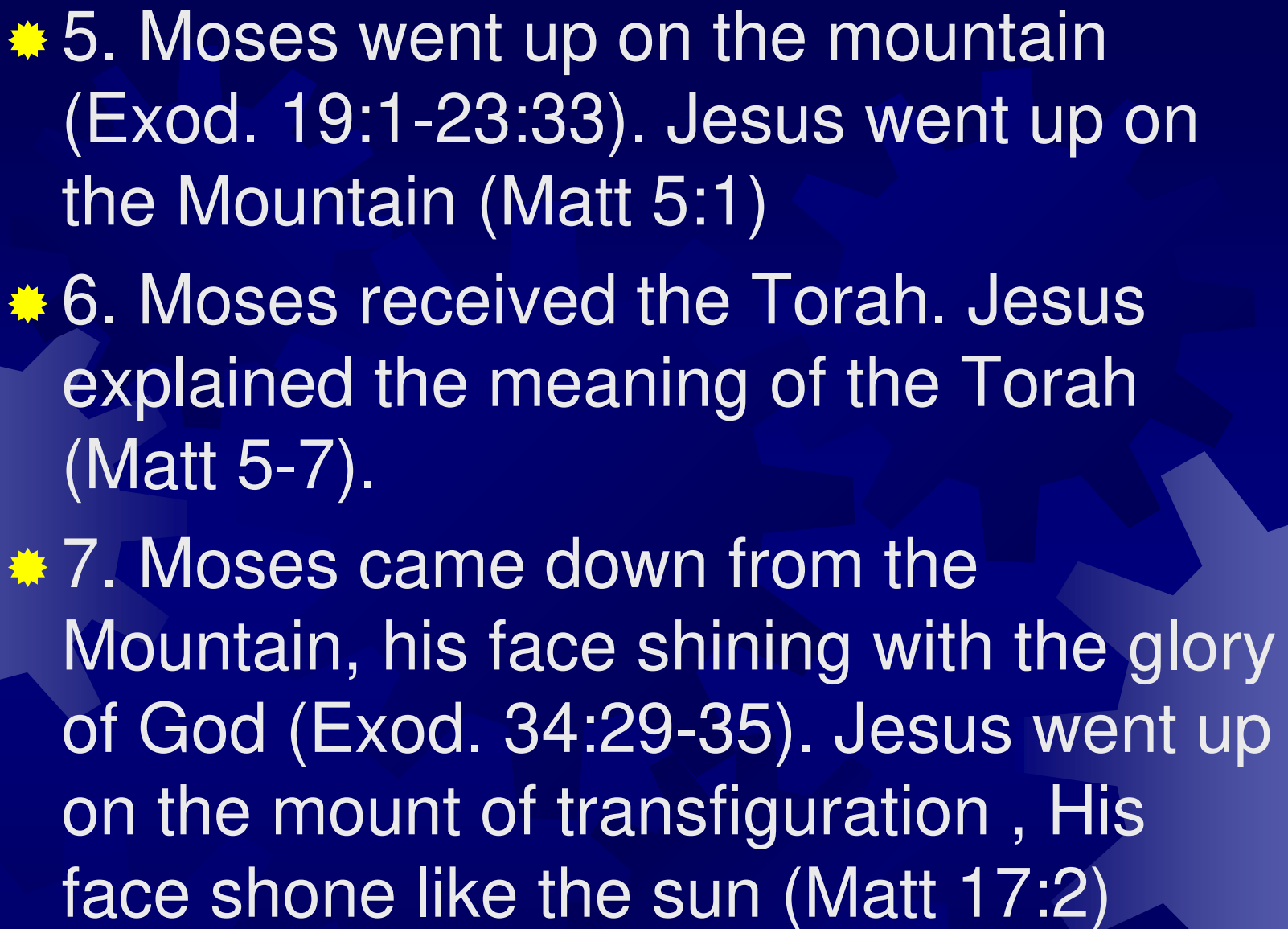


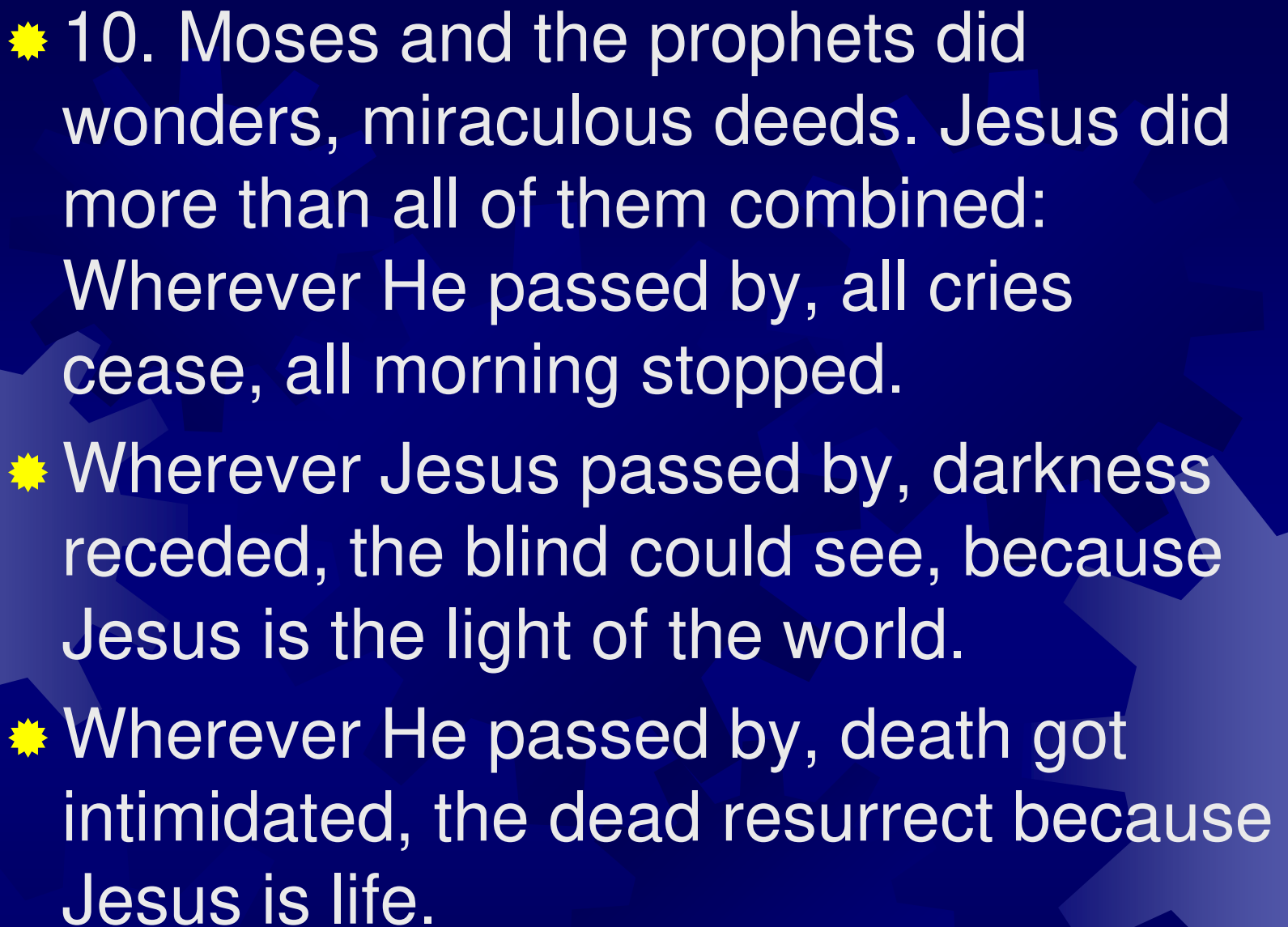
✦ Jesus, the New Adam

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- The background is a dark blue field with several large, semi-transparent gears of varying shades of blue. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured appearance, possibly representing a gear mechanism or a natural scene. The text is presented as a list of four points, each starting with a yellow starburst icon.
- ★ He is called the second Adam.
 - ★ He succeeded where Adam and Eve failed.
 - ★ He has come to start a new humanity.
 - ★ By the way, this is the reason why we are baptized, dead to old humanity, and ushered into being in Christ, our new deepest identity.

✦ **Jesus, the New Moses**

- ✦ 1. Moses was about to be murdered. Egypt sheltered him. Jesus was about to be murdered Egypt sheltered him.
- ✦ 2. At the command of God, Moses changed the water into blood. Jesus changed the water into wine.
- ✦ 3. Moses and the Israelites walked on a parted sea. Jesus walked on water.
- ✦ 4. Moses and all the prophets said: "Thus, said the Lord." Jesus said "Amen, I tell you." He is the Lord.

- 
- ★ 5. Moses went up on the mountain (Exod. 19:1-23:33). Jesus went up on the Mountain (Matt 5:1)
 - ★ 6. Moses received the Torah. Jesus explained the meaning of the Torah (Matt 5-7).
 - ★ 7. Moses came down from the Mountain, his face shining with the glory of God (Exod. 34:29-35). Jesus went up on the mount of transfiguration, His face shone like the sun (Matt 17:2)

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- ★ 10. Moses and the prophets did wonders, miraculous deeds. Jesus did more than all of them combined: Wherever He passed by, all cries cease, all mourning stopped.
 - ★ Wherever Jesus passed by, darkness receded, the blind could see, because Jesus is the light of the world.
 - ★ Wherever He passed by, death got intimidated, the dead resurrect because Jesus is life.

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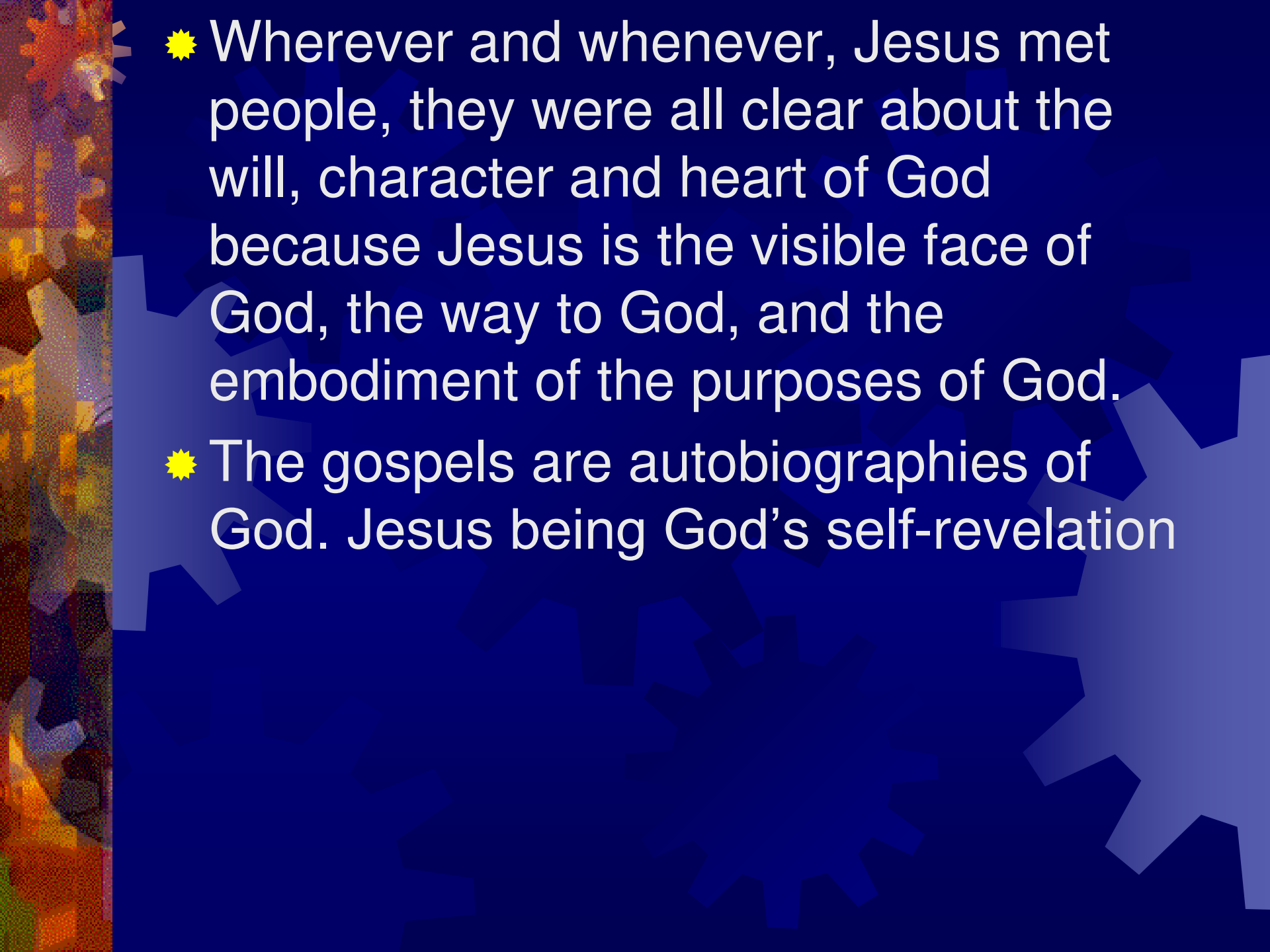
11. Jesus is the New Covenant in person.
All the promises of God are yes in Him.

12. Jesus is the new temple, greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6).

This was scandalous.


The temple was not only the center of the Jewish world but the whole world.

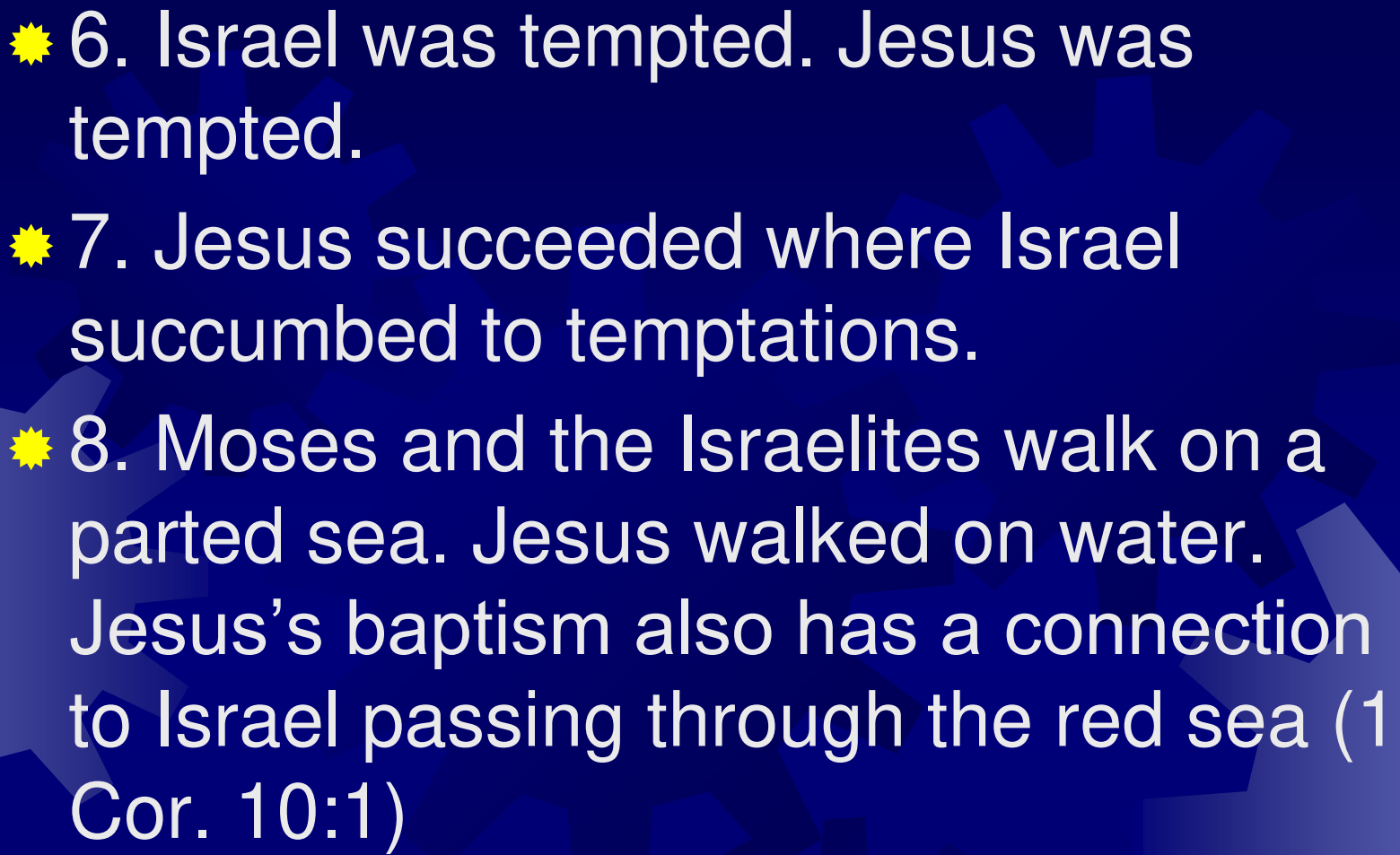
No wonder, the indictment brought against Jesus to murder him was that he said he would destroy the temple.

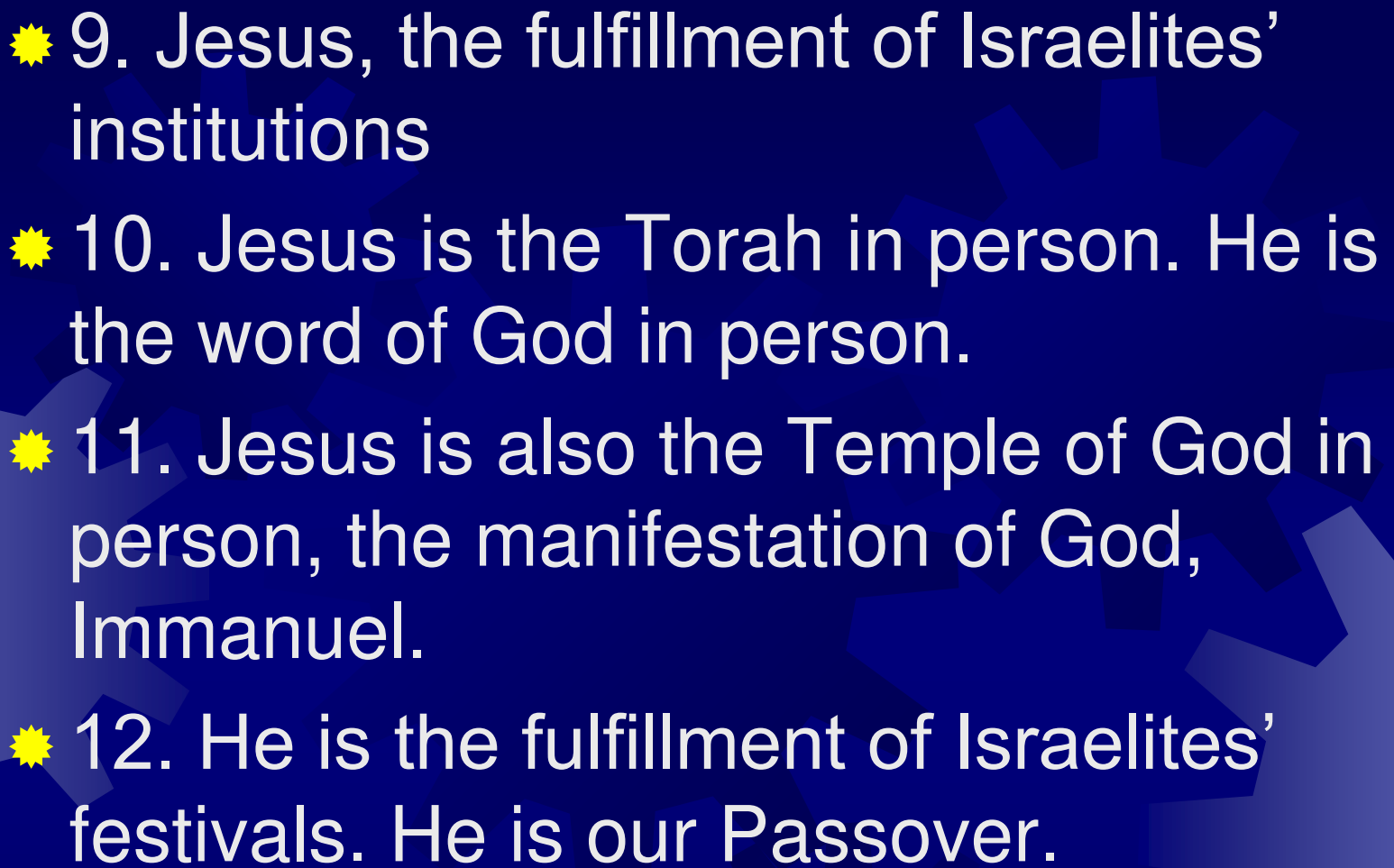
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- ✦ Wherever and whenever, Jesus met people, they were all clear about the will, character and heart of God because Jesus is the visible face of God, the way to God, and the embodiment of the purposes of God.
 - ✦ The gospels are autobiographies of God. Jesus being God's self-revelation



Jesus, The New Israel

- 
- ★ 1. Israel went to Egypt. Jesus went to Egypt
 - ★ 2. God called Israel out of Egypt. God called his Son Jesus out of Egypt
 - ★ 3. There were twelve tribes in Israel. Jesus chose twelve disciples
 - ★ 4. There were 70 elders who accompanied Moses. Jesus sent 70 people to preach and to heal
 - ★ 5. Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness. Jesus spent 40 days in the desert.

- 
- ✦ 6. Israel was tempted. Jesus was tempted.
 - ✦ 7. Jesus succeeded where Israel succumbed to temptations.
 - ✦ 8. Moses and the Israelites walk on a parted sea. Jesus walked on water. Jesus's baptism also has a connection to Israel passing through the red sea (1 Cor. 10:1)

- 
- ★ 9. Jesus, the fulfillment of Israelites' institutions
 - ★ 10. Jesus is the Torah in person. He is the word of God in person.
 - ★ 11. Jesus is also the Temple of God in person, the manifestation of God, Immanuel.
 - ★ 12. He is the fulfillment of Israelites' festivals. He is our Passover.



In fact, the New Covenant is a covenant of freedom.

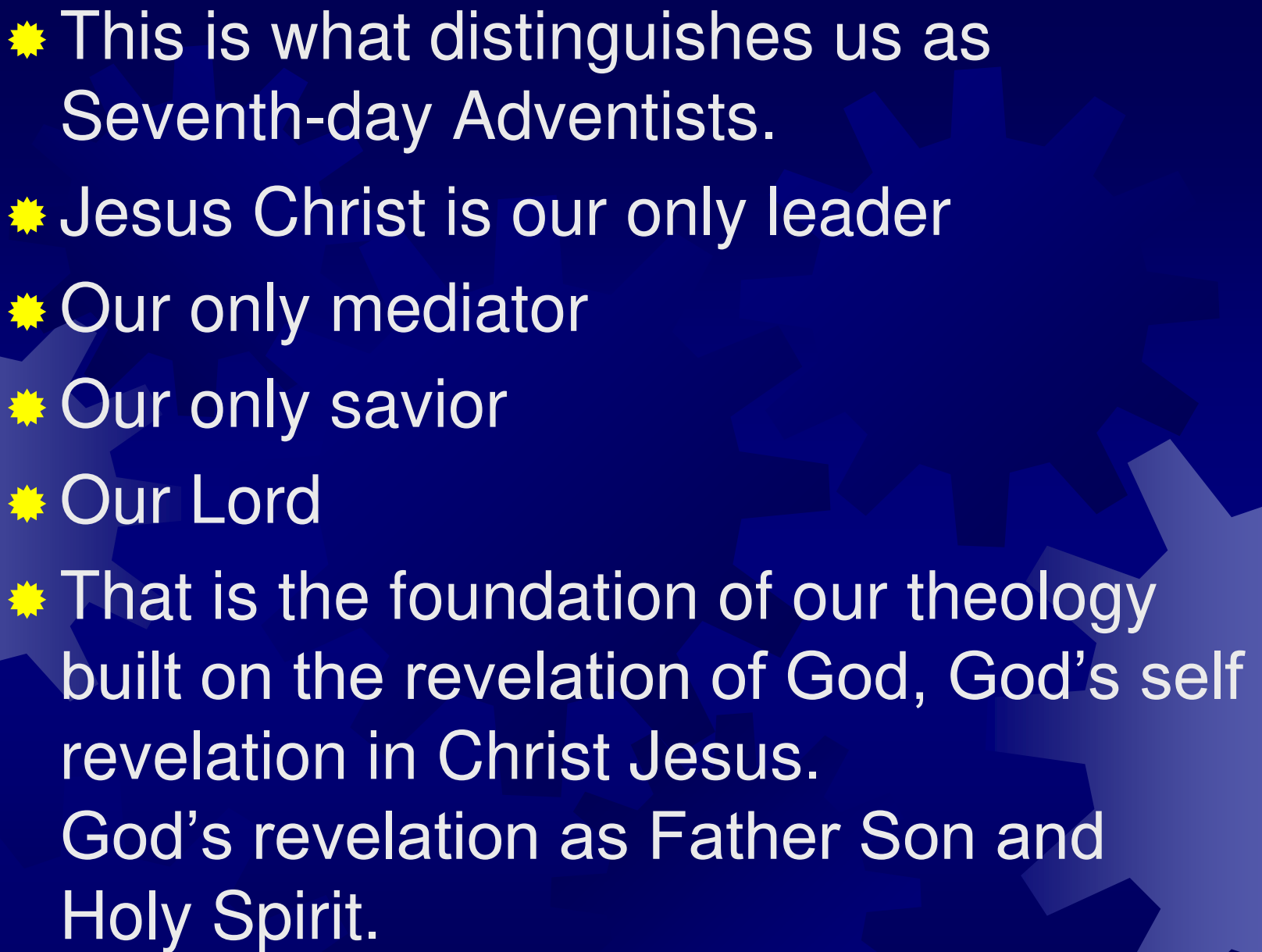
Freedom to have access to God.

No need for mediation of holy places

No need for the mediations of holy objects

No need for mediations of holy personnel

The freedom to have direct access to God is the reason why we are all priests and temples specified the New Covenant.

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- ✦ This is what distinguishes us as Seventh-day Adventists.
 - ✦ Jesus Christ is our only leader
 - ✦ Our only mediator
 - ✦ Our only savior
 - ✦ Our Lord
 - ✦ That is the foundation of our theology built on the revelation of God, God's self revelation in Christ Jesus.
God's revelation as Father Son and Holy Spirit.