

An orange envelope with the words "Open Invitation" printed in a white, serif font. The envelope is placed on a dark blue folder. A black fountain pen lies diagonally across the folder to the right of the envelope. The entire scene is set against a light-colored, textured background.

Open Invitation

**Old and New**

<sup>16</sup> "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. <sup>17</sup> It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law. <sup>18</sup> "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

“The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John.”



But, with the arrival of John, something is changing.



"Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it."



The good news of the kingdom of God is intended to *displace* all other worldly systems.



"and everyone is *forcing their way* into it"



"and everyone is *forcing their way* into it"

"to use power to forcibly seize, laying hold of something with *positive aggressiveness*"





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"to use power to forcibly seize, laying hold of something with *positive aggressiveness*"

Is it active or passive?



## Active & Passive?



The love, grace, and mercy of God (when the Kingdom is rightly proclaimed as Jesus is doing) invite—with divine persistence—people to come near to God.

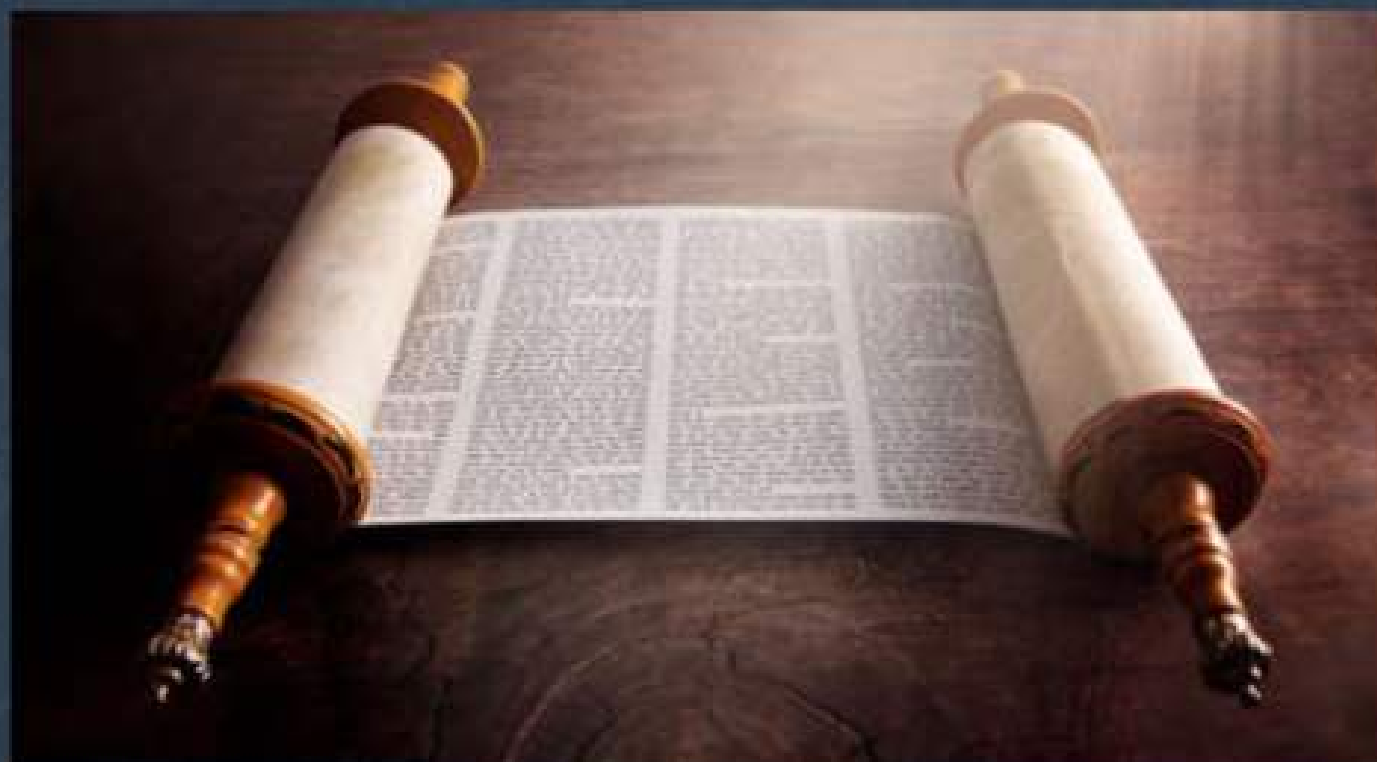
"A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful... There are traps everywhere."

(C.S. Lewis in *Surprised by Joy*)

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There is also the expectation of “forcefulness” to step into the kingdom invitation of Jesus!

“It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.”



"It is not that 'the law and the prophets' belong to an old, now-bygone era, but that the Scriptures of Israel must be understood in light of the manifestation of God's purpose within the ministry of Jesus."

(Joel B. Green)

"Jesus' contention with the Pharisees is not a case of the new superseding the old; by no means. His contention is over a proper reading of the old. Not one dot (a decorative scribal marking on the text) of the law was void. But, what Jesus is saying and doing is 'according to the law' if it is rightly understood.

(Fred Craddock)



"This doesn't mean that the law and the prophets were wrong, or are now irrelevant. They remain fixed and unalterable. They are a true signpost to what God is going to do, even though they cannot themselves bring about the new day, the new world, that God is creating through Jesus."

(N.T. Wright)

You need a Guide.



One possible reason that Jesus' teaching on divorce is situated here is that he understands that his "opponents" believe that he "doesn't take the bible seriously."

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Jesus' teaching on divorce is probably one of the most restrictive among his Jewish rabbi peers.

"Putting the passage together, we find the underlying challenge to be *faithful*: faithful in our use of money, faithful to God rather than money, faithful in our hearts not just in our outward appearances, faithful to the kingdom which has now begun with Jesus, faithful to our marriages.

As soon as we begin to think of money, or land, or other people, as commodities we might own or exploit, we take a step away from our vocation to be truly human beings—God's true children—and towards the other master, who is always ready to accept new servants."

(N.T. Wright)

Invite the divine persistence and positive aggressiveness of the news of the Kingdom of God to fill, and flow from, your life.

What does your relationship with the “Law and the Prophets” look like? Are you allowing Jesus to be your guide as you journey into the Old Testament?



Ask the Spirit to reveal to you any areas of your life where faithfulness needs to grow.

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