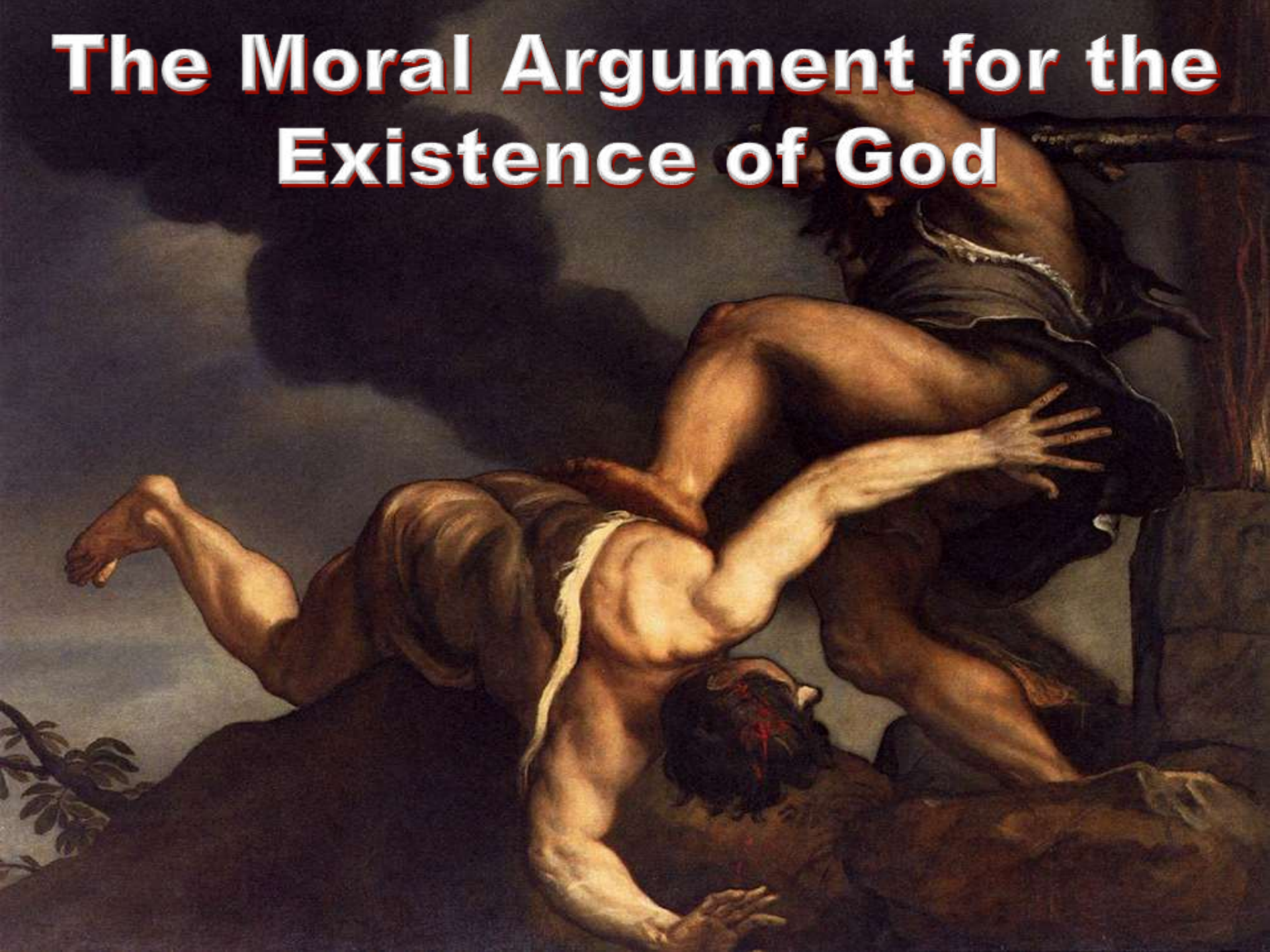


The Moral Argument for the Existence of God



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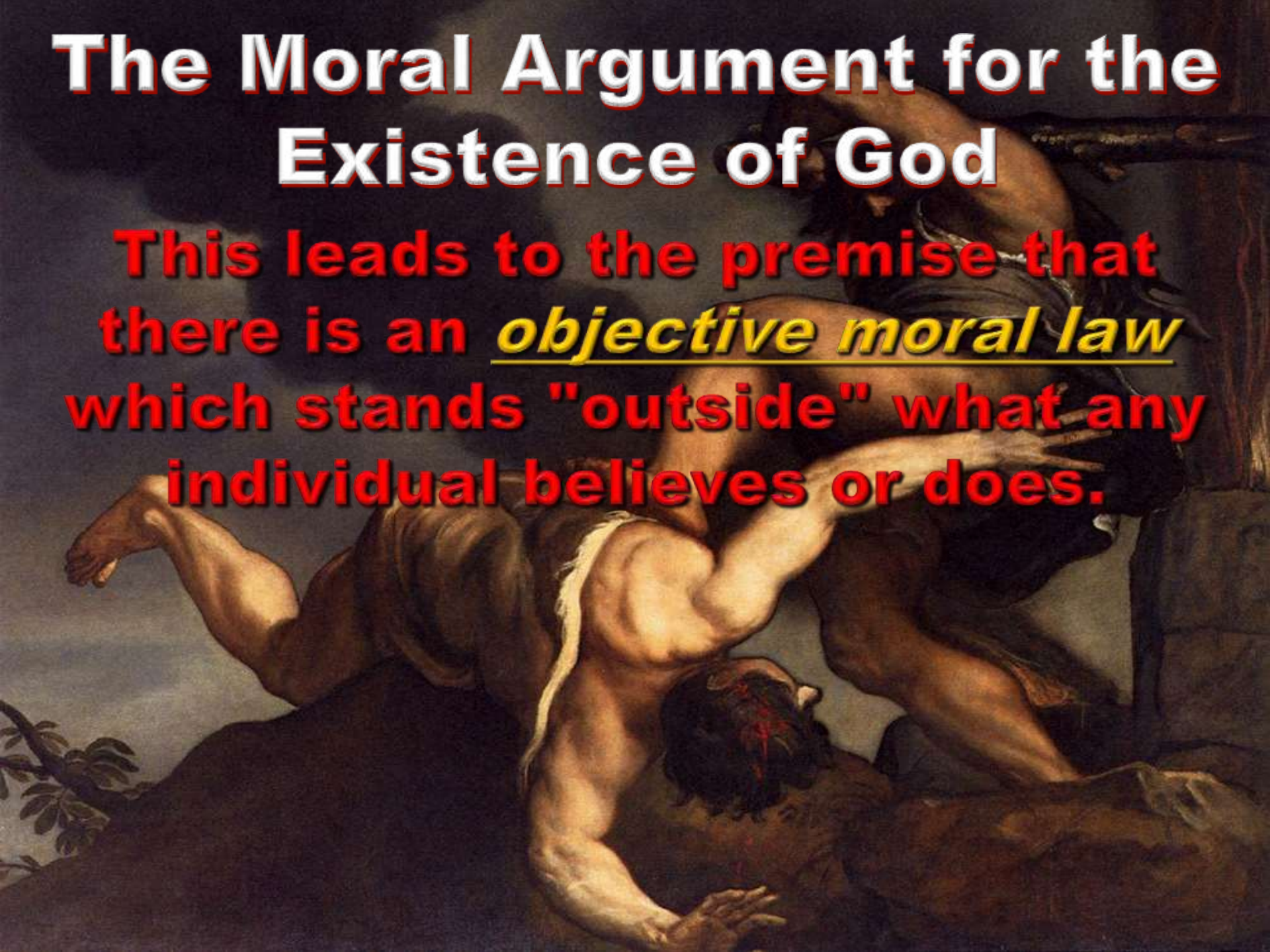


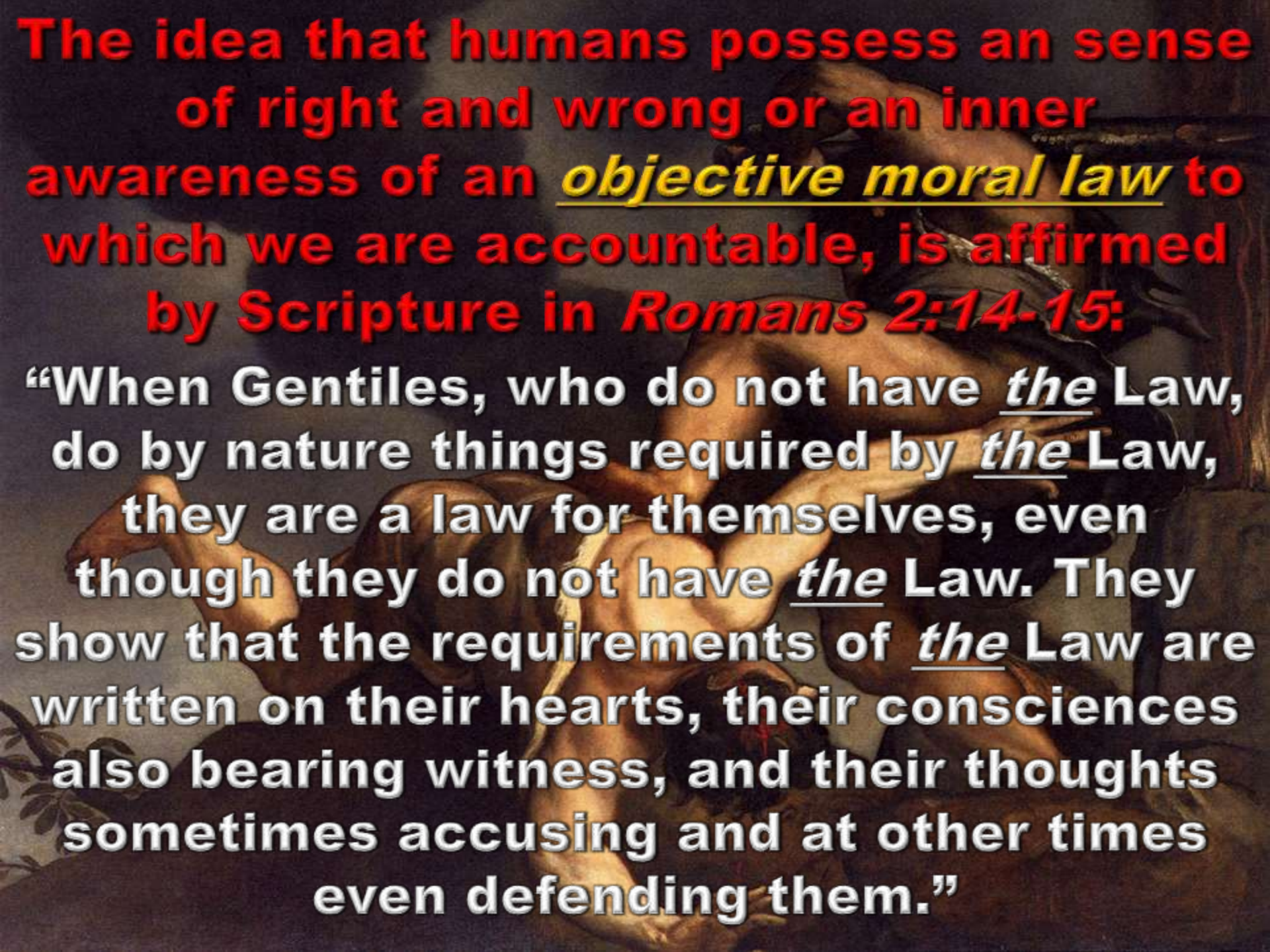
The Moral Argument begins with the common human experience of a sense of moral obligation –

We all have a direct intuitive knowledge that there are things one ought to do and things one ought not to do.

The Moral Argument for the Existence of God

This leads to the premise that there is an objective moral law which stands "outside" what any individual believes or does.



The background of the text is a classical painting depicting a muscular man wrestling a lion. The man is in a dynamic, athletic pose, leaning forward with his arms around the lion's neck. The lion is also in a powerful, muscular form, struggling against the man. The scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment with some foliage visible in the lower left corner. The overall tone is dramatic and emphasizes physical strength and the struggle between nature and law.

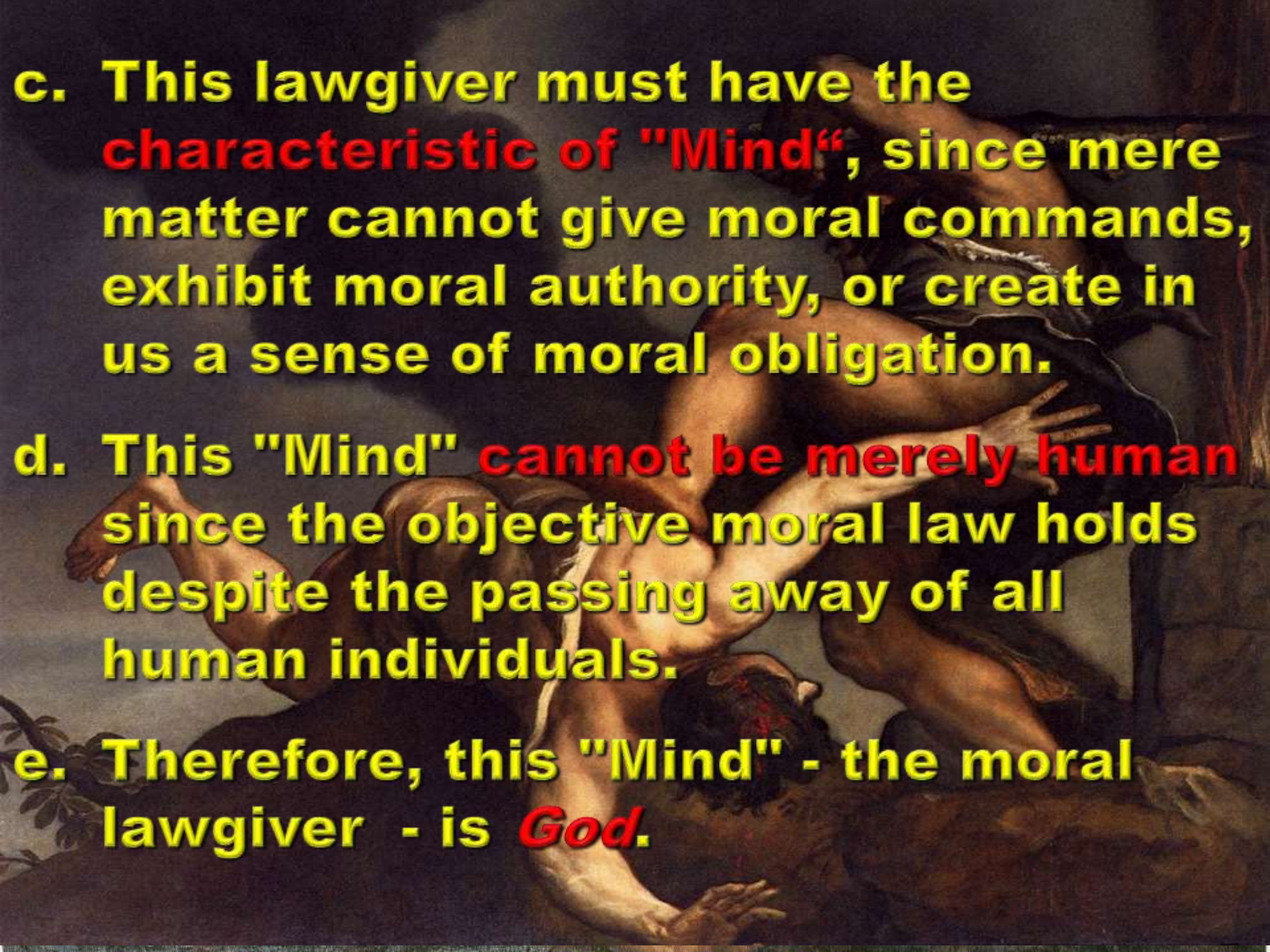
The idea that humans possess an sense of right and wrong or an inner awareness of an objective moral law to which we are accountable, is affirmed by Scripture in *Romans 2:14-15*:

“When Gentiles, who do not have the Law, do by nature things required by the Law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the Law. They show that the requirements of the Law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing and at other times even defending them.”

A form of the Moral Argument based on the thought of C.S. Lewis:



1. There is an objective **"natural"** moral law toward which all men have a sense of obligation.
2. Therefore there must be a moral **"lawgiver"**.

- 
- c. This lawgiver must have the **characteristic of "Mind"**, since mere matter cannot give moral commands, exhibit moral authority, or create in us a sense of moral obligation.
- d. This "Mind" **cannot be merely human** since the objective moral law holds despite the passing away of all human individuals.
- e. Therefore, this "Mind" - the moral lawgiver - is **God**.

A form of the Moral Argument based on the thought of William Lane Craig:



- 1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.**
- 2. Objective moral values and duties do exist.**
- 3. Therefore, God exists.**

Evidence and reasons for the truth of premise 1:

“If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.”

- a. Without God, all that exists is nature, and no objective moral values or duties can be derived from the natural world alone.
- b. Without God, there is no reason to believe that humans have objective moral value, since they are as much a part of nature as lions, sharks, or apes.
- c. It is not *belief* in God that is necessary to *behave* as though morals existed. It is the *existence* of God that is necessary for objective morality to actually exist.

Evidence and reasons for the truth of premise 2:

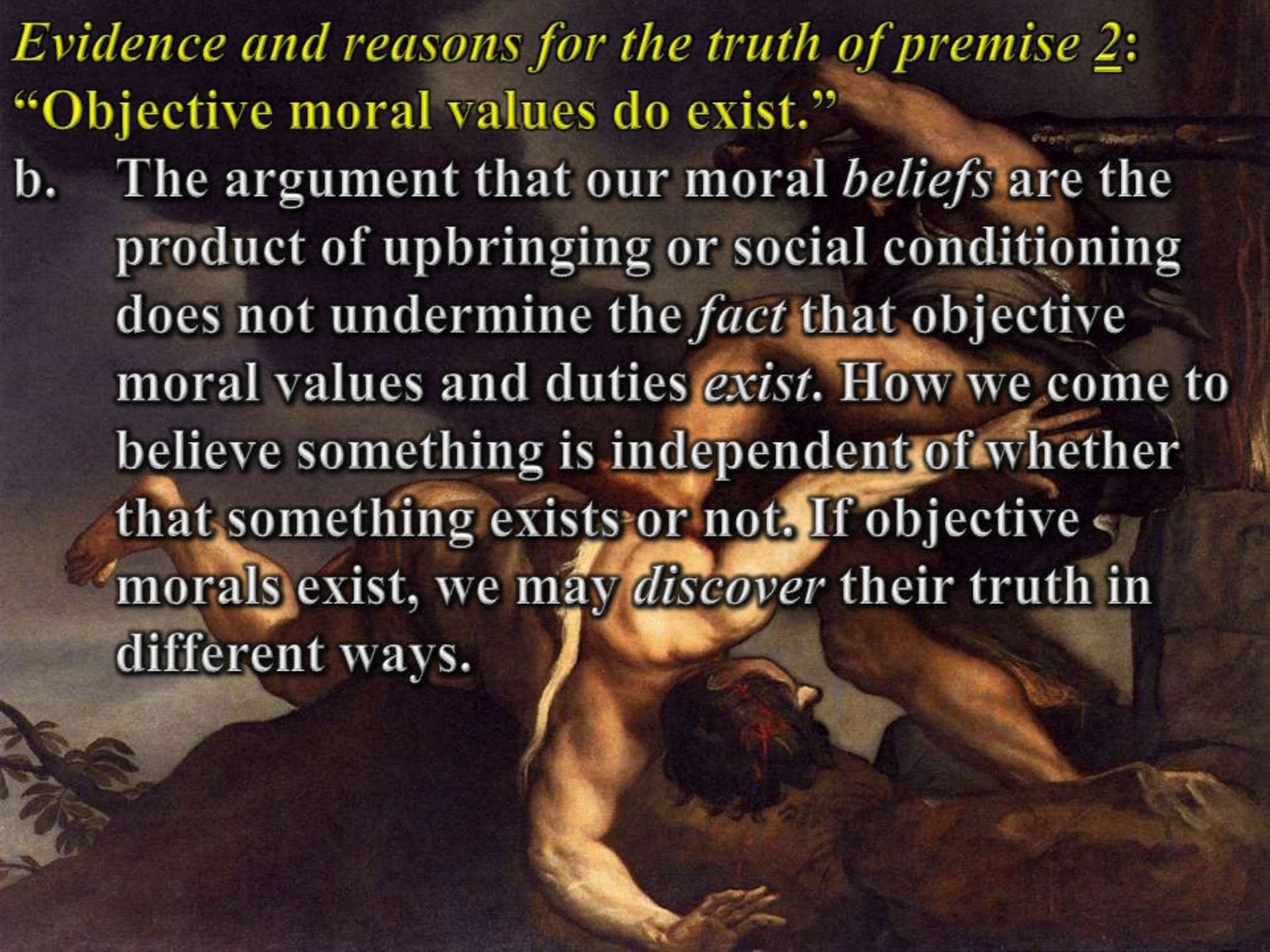
“Objective moral values do exist.”

- a. In human moral experience we do, in fact, encounter objective moral values and duties. For example, there is (near) universal agreement that things like rape and child torture are objectively wrong, not just socially frowned upon. Likewise, everyone recognizes the moral duty to care for helpless children. And love, generosity, and self-sacrifice are recognized as really morally good. People who not see these things we rightly consider to be blind or damaged in some way.

Evidence and reasons for the truth of premise 2:

“Objective moral values do exist.”

- b. The argument that our moral *beliefs* are the product of upbringing or social conditioning does not undermine the *fact* that objective moral values and duties *exist*. How we come to believe something is independent of whether that something exists or not. If objective morals exist, we may *discover* their truth in different ways.



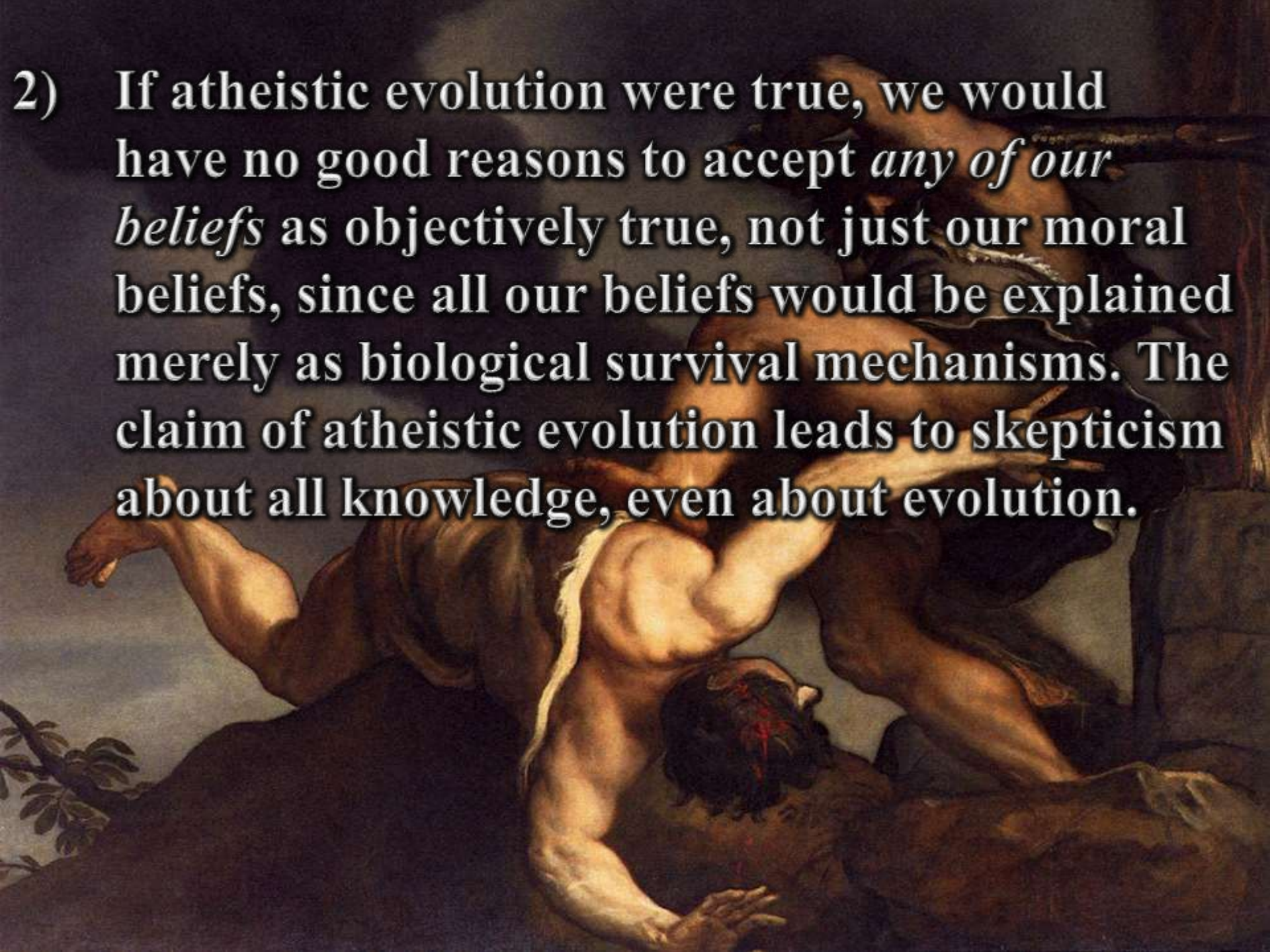
Evidence and reasons for the truth of premise 2:

“Objective moral values do exist.”

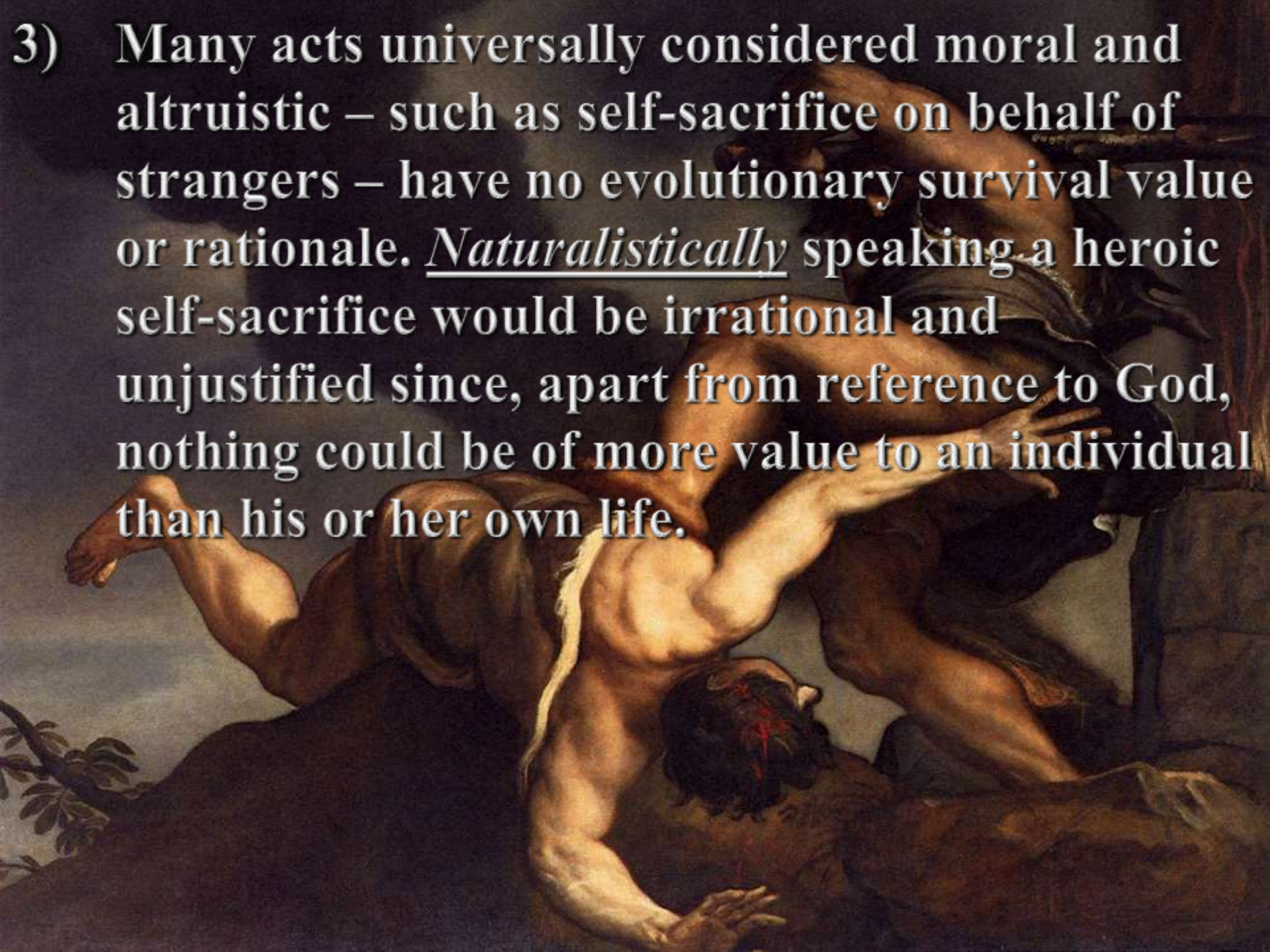
c. The claim that moral beliefs evolved merely as biological survival mechanisms has three problems:

1) This claim *assumes* atheism is true, and *assumes* that therefore objective morals do not exist. But premise 1 concedes that *if* God does not exist, objective morals do not. But the *assumption* that atheism is true is not a *reason* to accept that atheism is actually true. Apart from the assumption that atheism is true, we have no reason to reject our experience of objective morals.

2) If atheistic evolution were true, we would have no good reasons to accept *any of our beliefs* as objectively true, not just our moral beliefs, since all our beliefs would be explained merely as biological survival mechanisms. The claim of atheistic evolution leads to skepticism about all knowledge, even about evolution.



3) Many acts universally considered moral and altruistic – such as self-sacrifice on behalf of strangers – have no evolutionary survival value or rationale. Naturalistically speaking a heroic self-sacrifice would be irrational and unjustified since, apart from reference to God, nothing could be of more value to an individual than his or her own life.



If premise 1 is true:

If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.

And premise 2 is true:

Objective moral values and duties do exist.

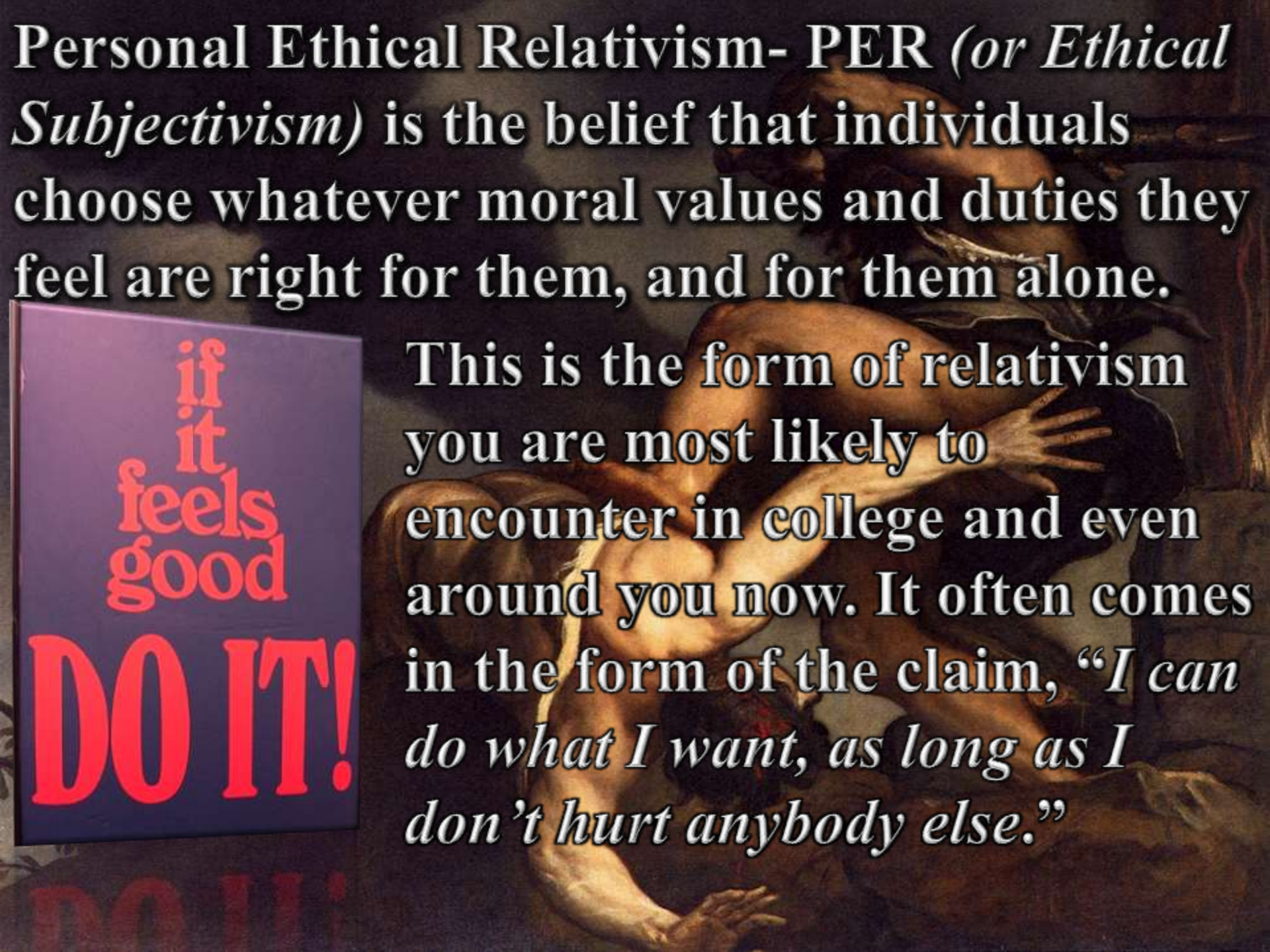
Then the conclusion must be true:

Therefore, God exists.



The Moral Argument is often met with the counter-claim that all morality is *relative*; there are no absolute, objective moral values or duties. Moral relativism comes in three forms: *Personal Ethical Relativism*, *Cultural Relativism*, and *Conventionalism*.





Personal Ethical Relativism- PER (*or Ethical Subjectivism*) is the belief that individuals choose whatever moral values and duties they feel are right for them, and for them alone.

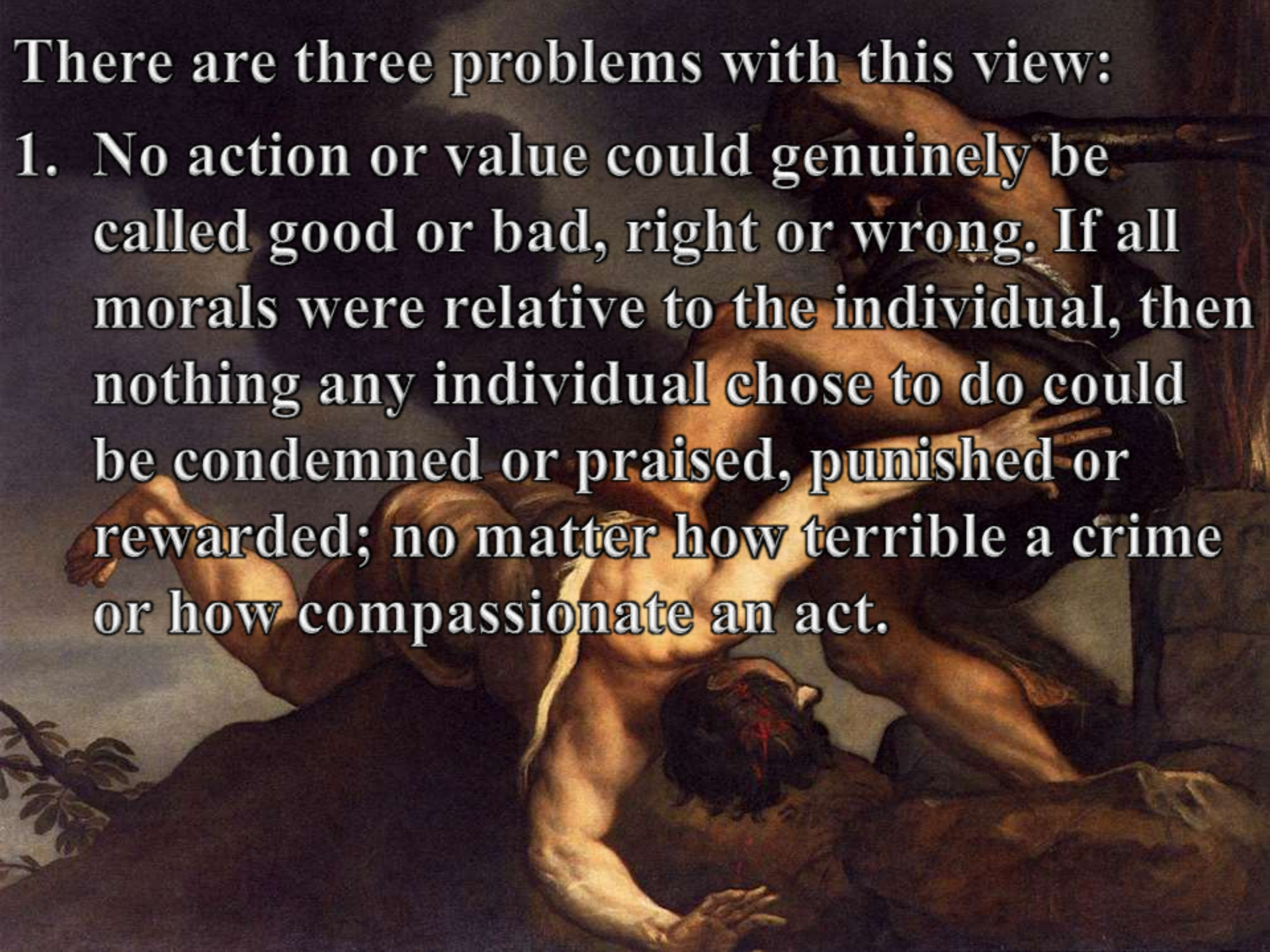
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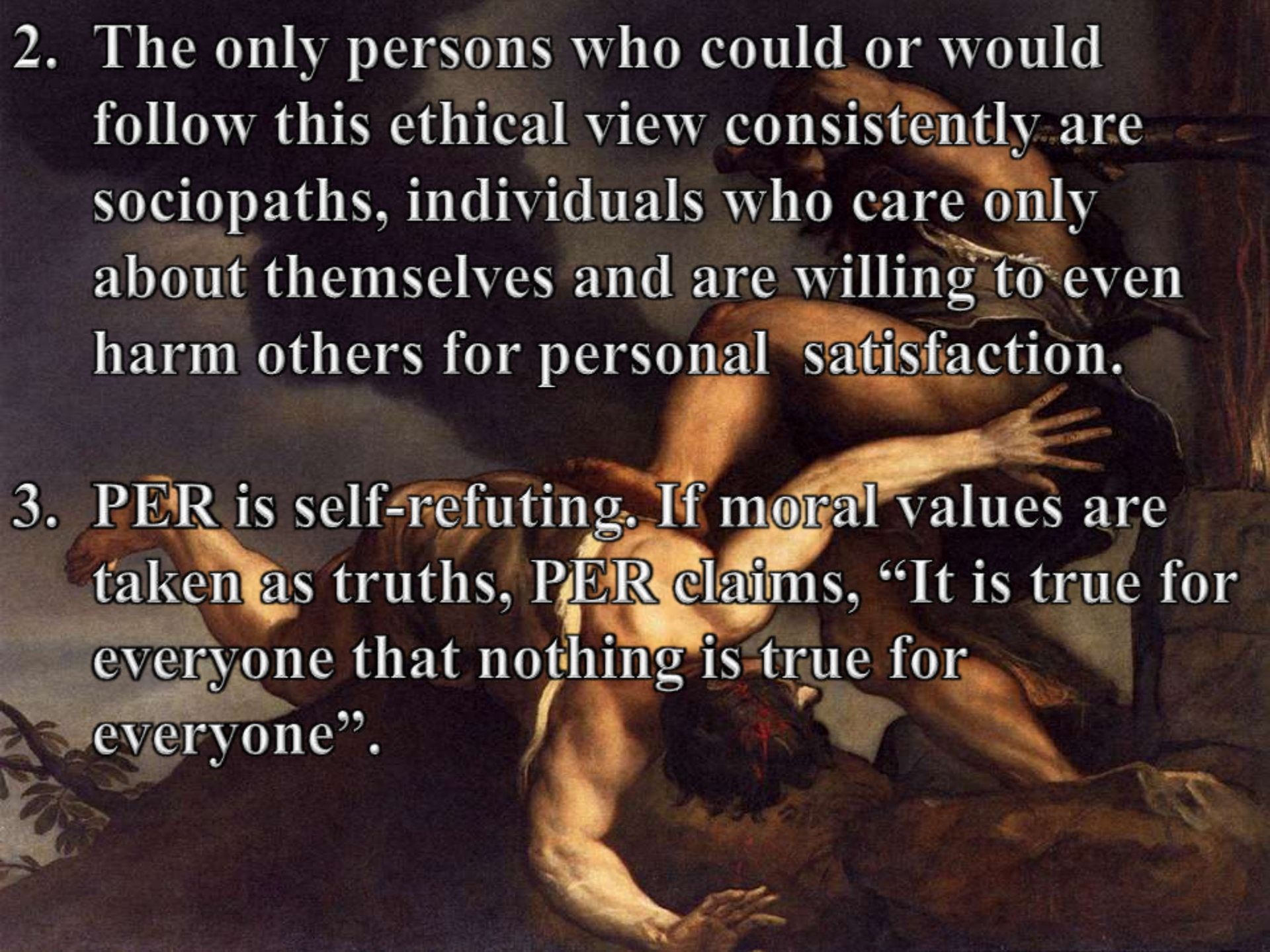
DO IT!

This is the form of relativism you are most likely to encounter in college and even around you now. It often comes in the form of the claim, *“I can do what I want, as long as I don’t hurt anybody else.”*

There are three problems with this view:

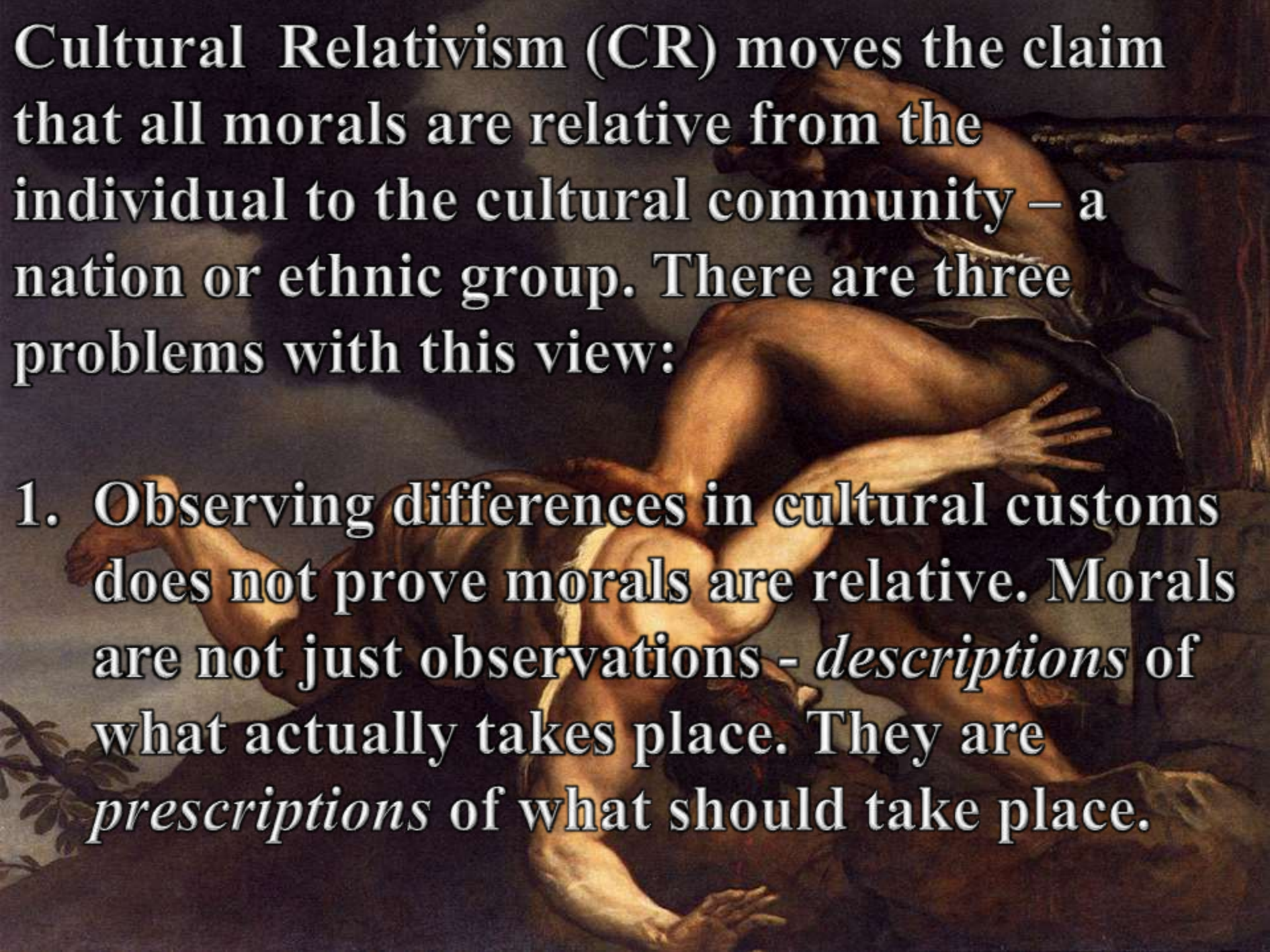
1. No action or value could genuinely be called good or bad, right or wrong. If all morals were relative to the individual, then nothing any individual chose to do could be condemned or praised, punished or rewarded; no matter how terrible a crime or how compassionate an act.





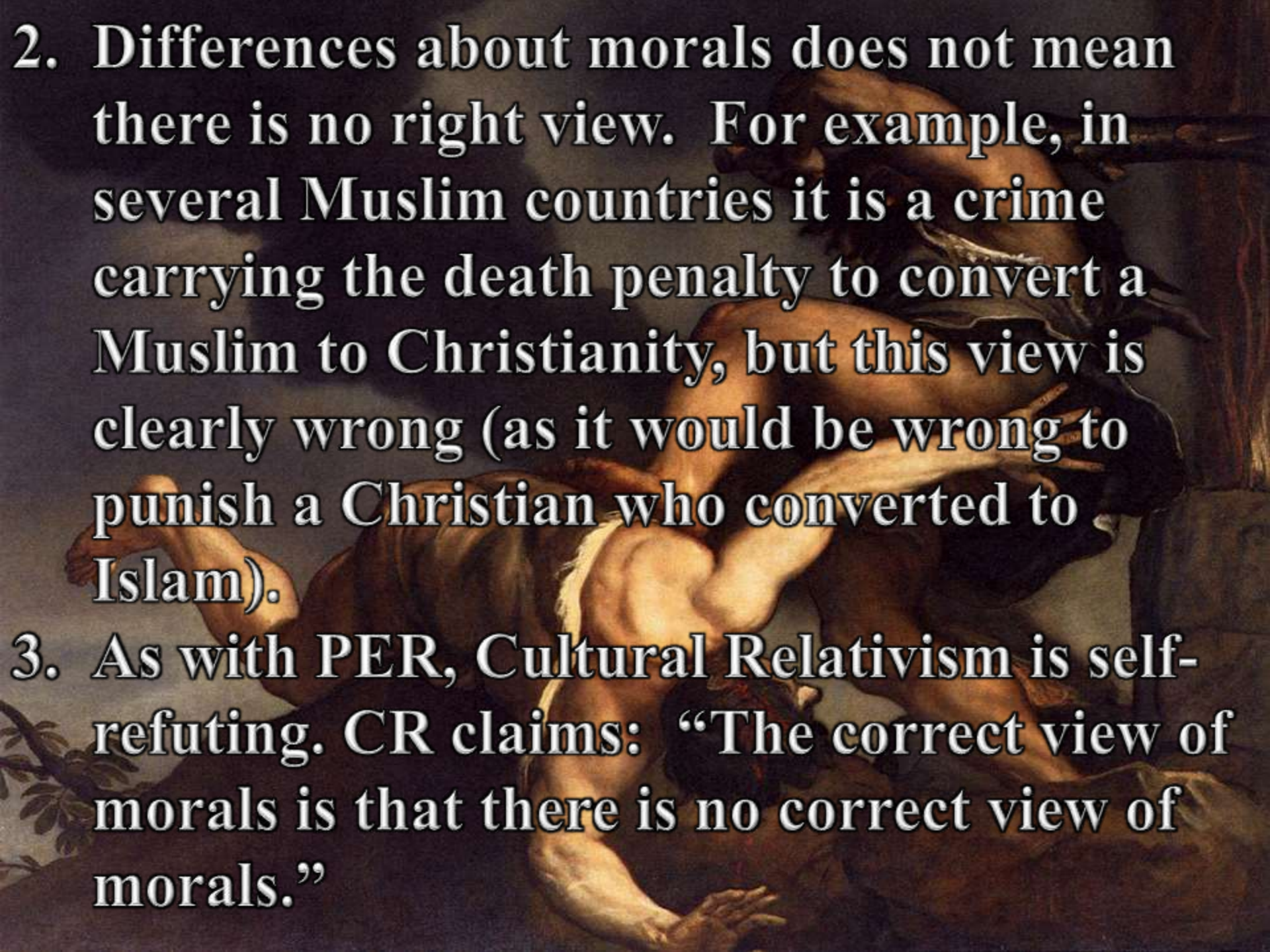
2. The only persons who could or would follow this ethical view consistently are sociopaths, individuals who care only about themselves and are willing to even harm others for personal satisfaction.

3. PER is self-refuting. If moral values are taken as truths, PER claims, “It is true for everyone that nothing is true for everyone”.

A classical painting depicting a muscular man wrestling a lion. The man is in a dynamic, athletic pose, leaning forward with his arms around the lion's neck. The lion is also muscular and appears to be in a struggle with the man. In the background, a woman is visible, looking on. The scene is set outdoors with some foliage and a dark background.

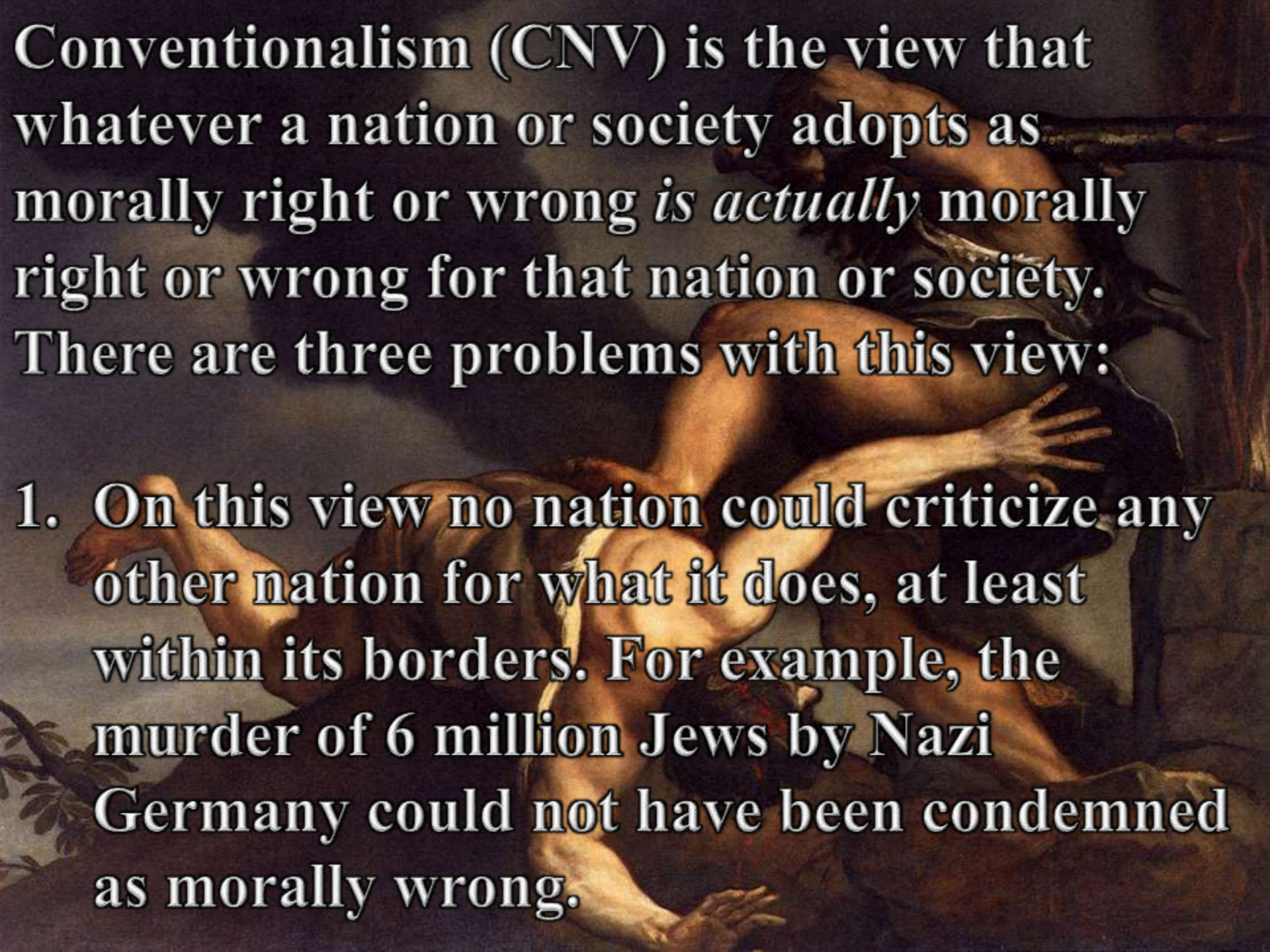
Cultural Relativism (CR) moves the claim that all morals are relative from the individual to the cultural community – a nation or ethnic group. There are three problems with this view:

1. Observing differences in cultural customs does not prove morals are relative. Morals are not just observations - *descriptions* of what actually takes place. They are *prescriptions* of what should take place.



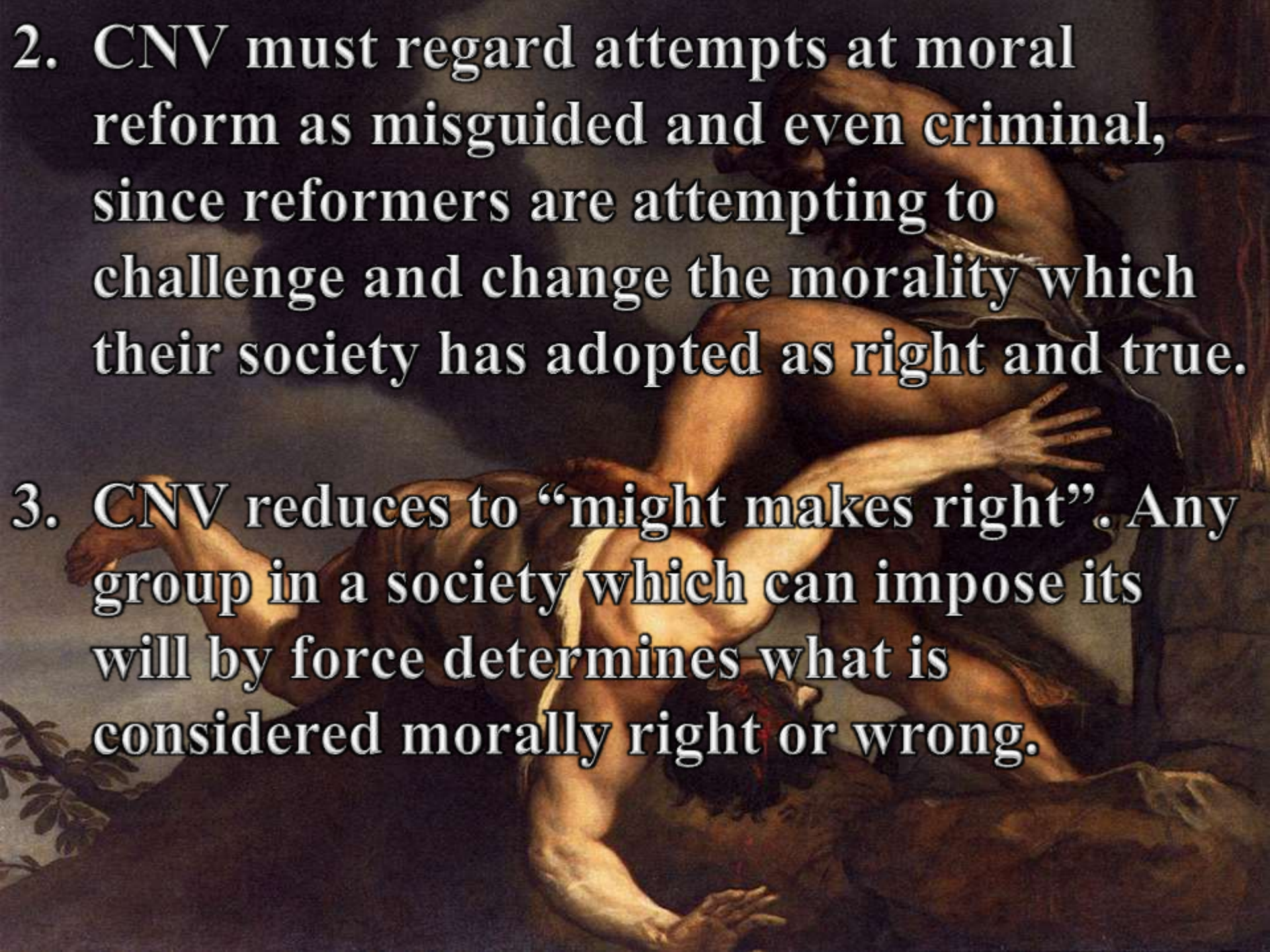
2. Differences about morals does not mean there is no right view. For example, in several Muslim countries it is a crime carrying the death penalty to convert a Muslim to Christianity, but this view is clearly wrong (as it would be wrong to punish a Christian who converted to Islam).

3. As with PER, Cultural Relativism is self-refuting. CR claims: “The correct view of morals is that there is no correct view of morals.”



Conventionalism (CNV) is the view that whatever a nation or society adopts as morally right or wrong *is actually* morally right or wrong for that nation or society. There are three problems with this view:

1. On this view no nation could criticize any other nation for what it does, at least within its borders. For example, the murder of 6 million Jews by Nazi Germany could not have been condemned as morally wrong.



2. CNV must regard attempts at moral reform as misguided and even criminal, since reformers are attempting to challenge and change the morality which their society has adopted as right and true.

3. CNV reduces to “might makes right”. Any group in a society which can impose its will by force determines what is considered morally right or wrong.