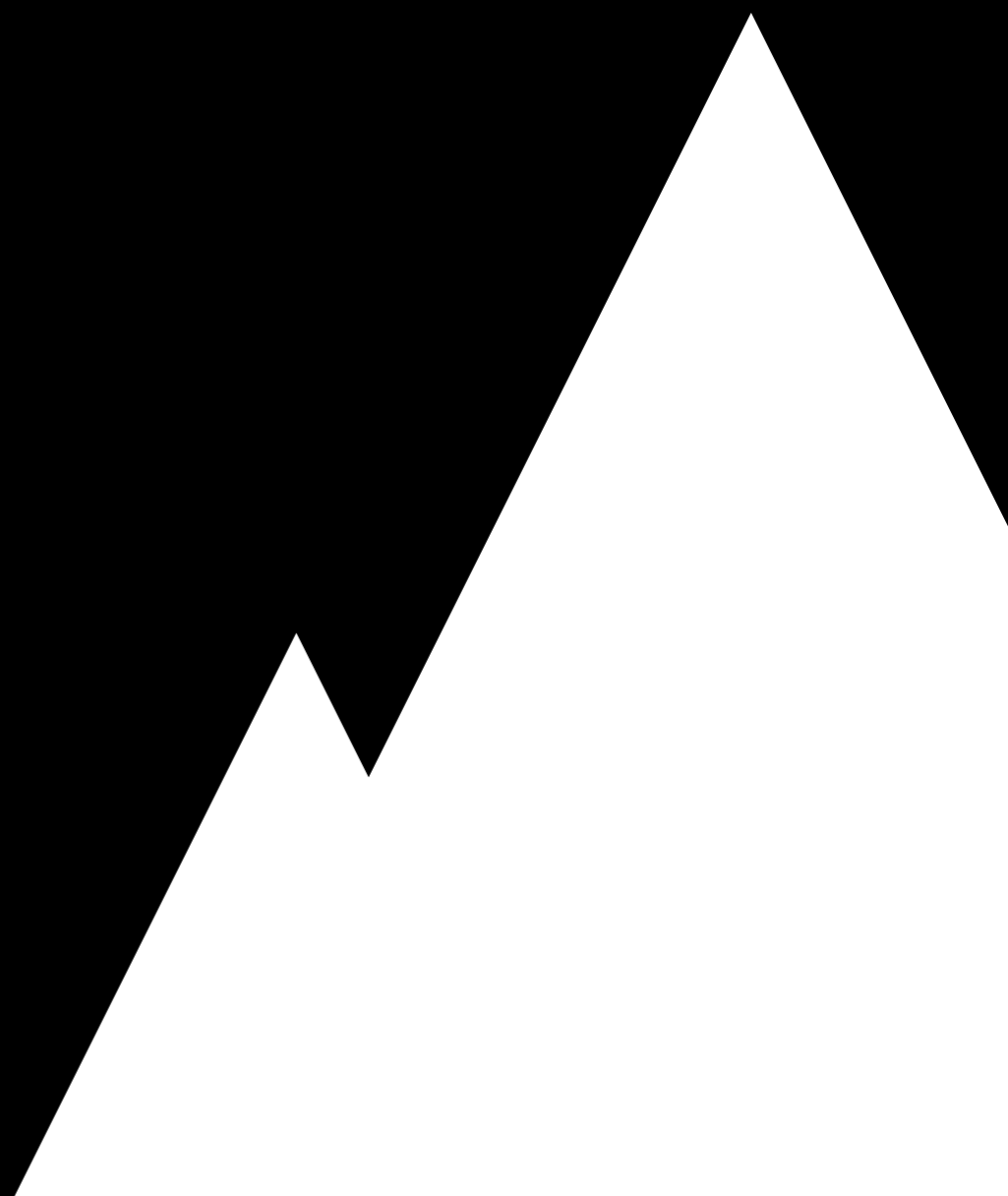


# genesis 22.1-19

*the struggle of commitment  
– or ‘and what do your  
gods demand of you?’*

**go gently**



Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.”

Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about.

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together.

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”

“Here I am,” he replied.

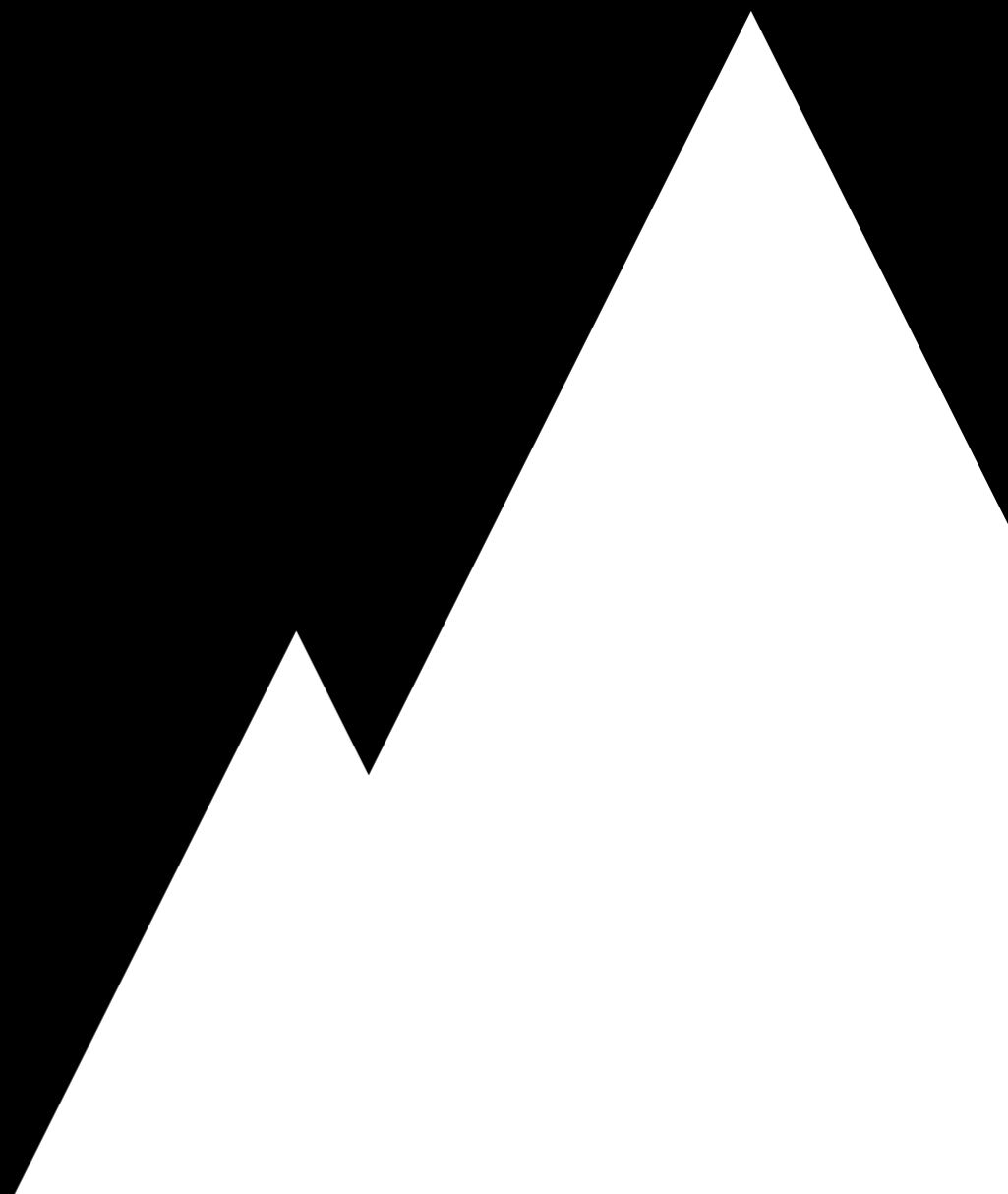
“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, “I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set off together for Beersheba. And Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

**a lot to  
process**

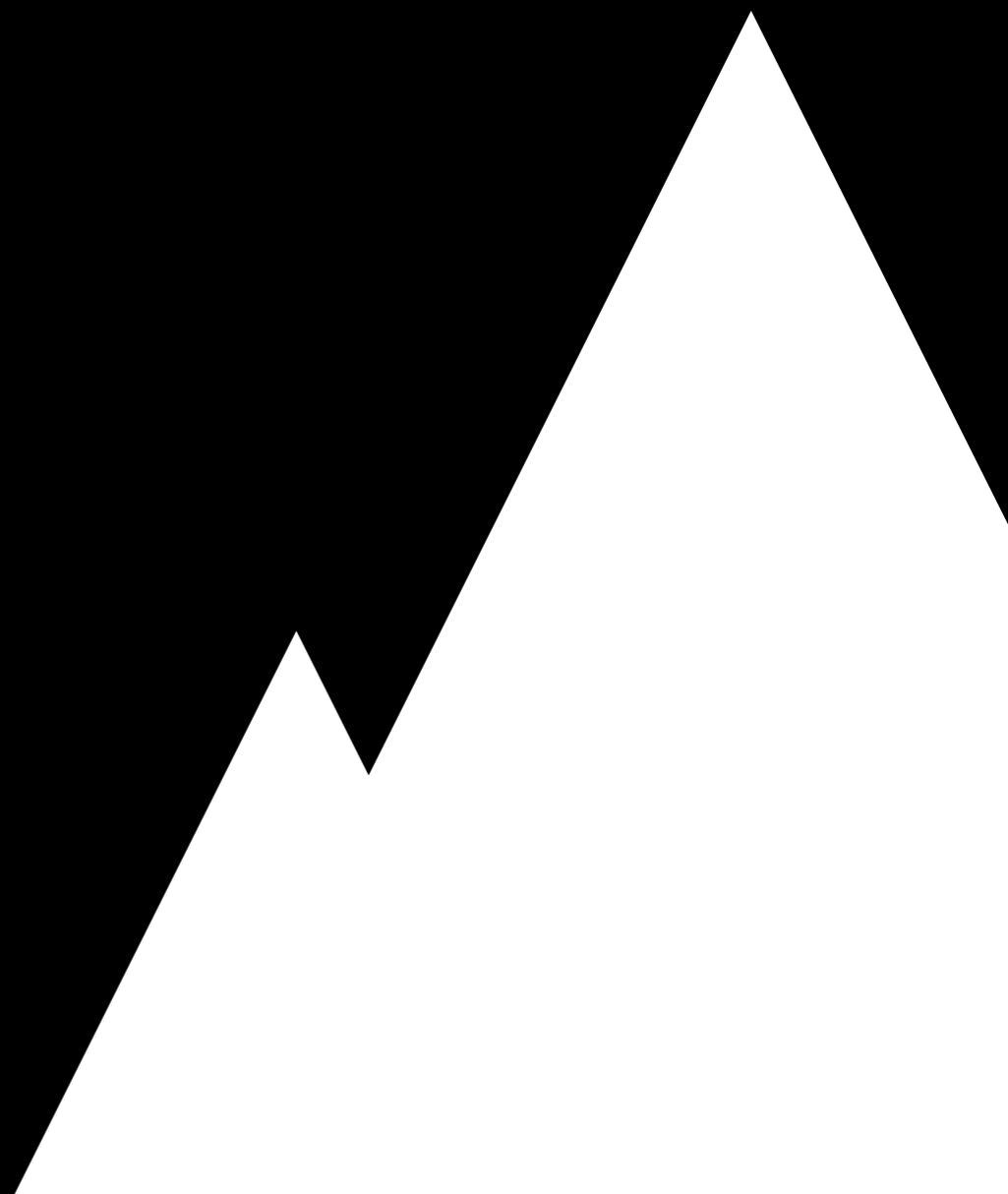




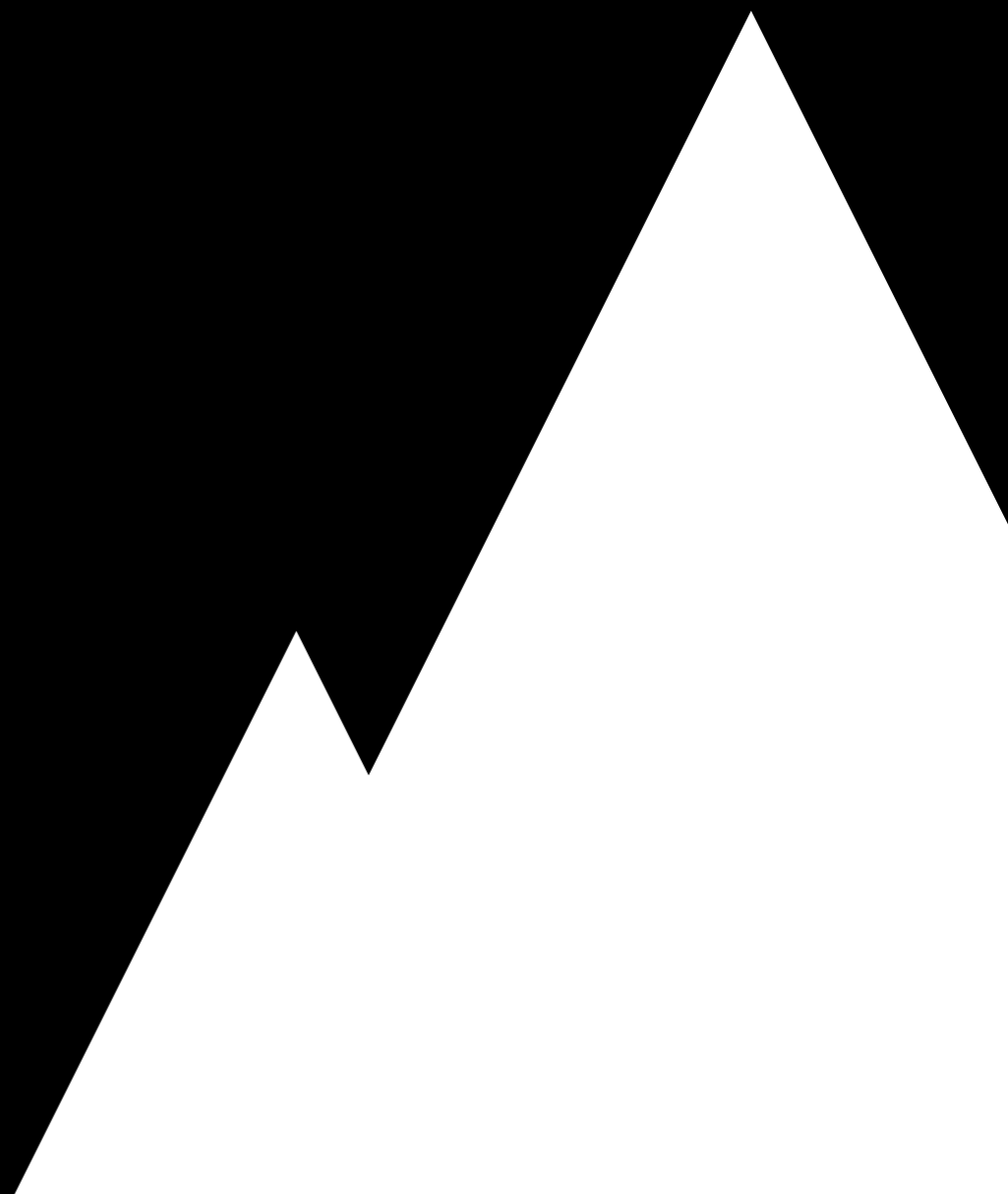
**2 common  
responses**



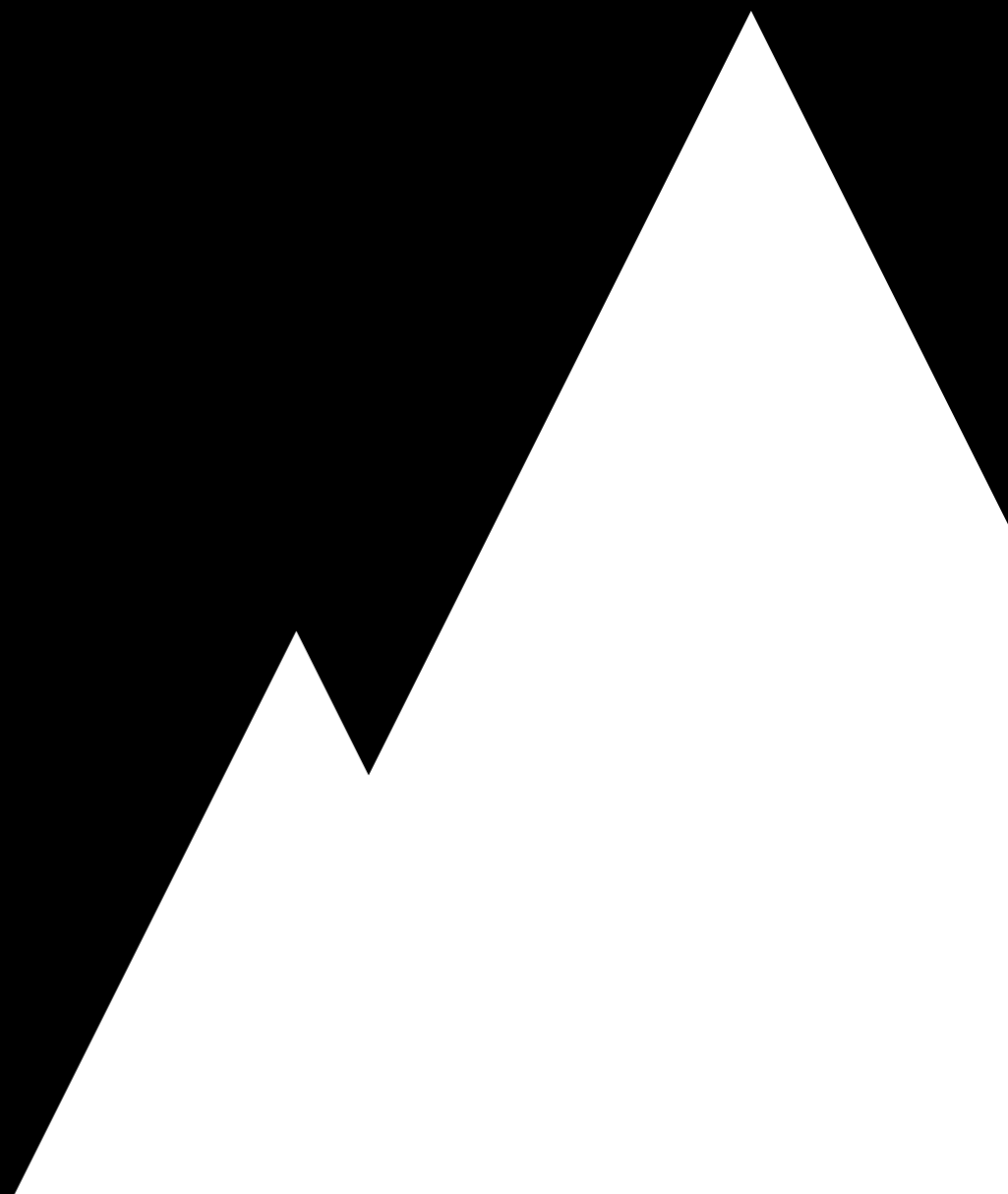
**1. God  
says...**



**2. I just  
know...**



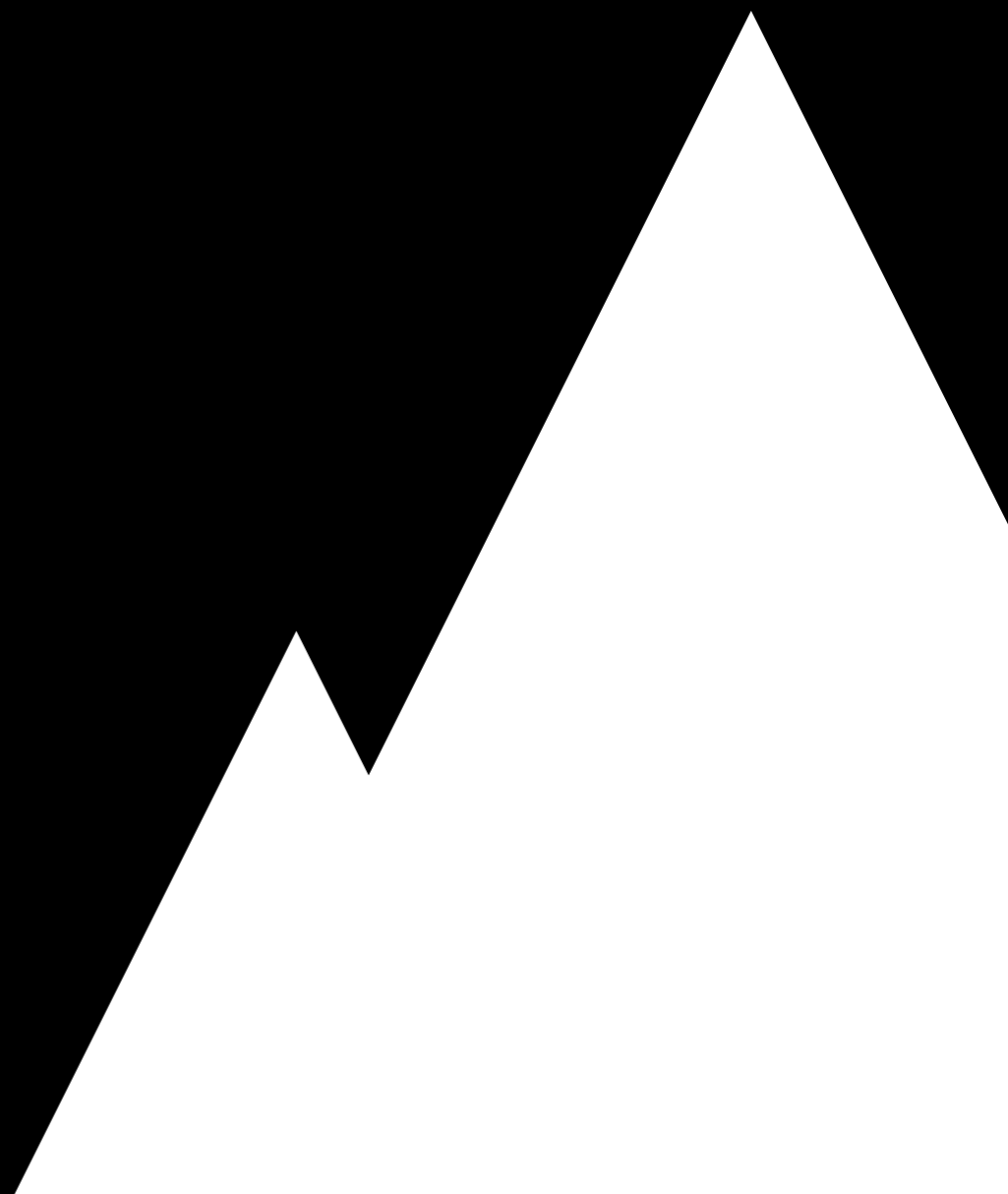
**neither  
satisfies**




**doesn't do  
justice to  
the text**



**does risk  
harm**



**doesn't do  
justice to  
the text  
bible is rich  
& complex**



**does risk**

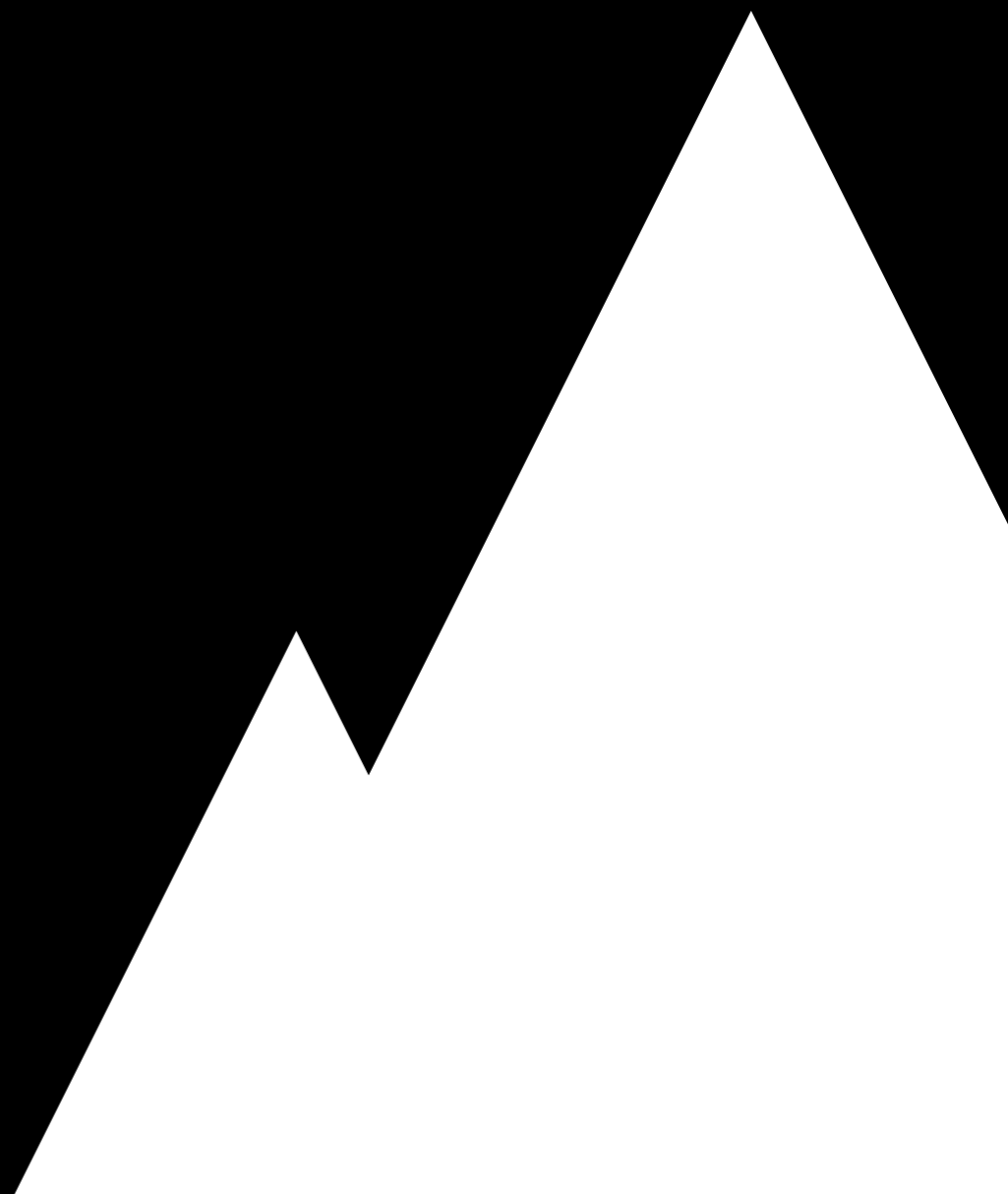
**harm**

**stops nuance**

**& attention**



**where  
instead  
then?**



**exploring  
alternative  
possibilities**





**exploring  
alternative  
possibilities  
3 starters**

**1. Hagar sobs**



God orders Ishmael's expulsion (21:12–13) // God orders Isaac's sacrifice (22:2)  
Food and water taken (21:14) // Sacrificial material taken (22:3)  
Journey (21:14) // Journey (22:4–8)  
Ishmael about to die (21:16) // Isaac about to die (22:10)  
Angel of God calls from heaven (21:17) // Angel of the LORD calls from heaven (22:11)

“Do not fear” (21:17) // “fear God” (22:12)  
“God has heard” // “You have obeyed (heard) my voice” (22:18)  
“I shall make into a great nation” (21:18) // “Your descendants will be like stars, sand,”  
etc. (22:17)  
God opens her eyes and she sees well (21:19) // Abraham raises his eyes and sees ram  
(22:13)  
She gives the lad a drink (21:19) // He sacrifices ram instead of son (22:14)

‘...she thought, “I cannot watch the boy die.” And as she sat there, she began to sob.’

- *genesis 21.16*

# 2. Words change



elohim / YHWH

‘son whom you love’  
» ‘your son’

‘the two of them  
walked together’  
» ‘walked together’



# **3. What's missing**



‘...but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached him and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked’  
– *genesis 18.22-25*

“Father, if you are  
willing, take this  
cup from me...”

- *luke 22.42*

***your turn***



## **what if it's...**

allegory

satire

parable

joke

myth

poetry

provocation

midrash

test

song

fable

## **as seen from...**

the attendants

abraham

the knife

god

the ram

isaac

the mountain

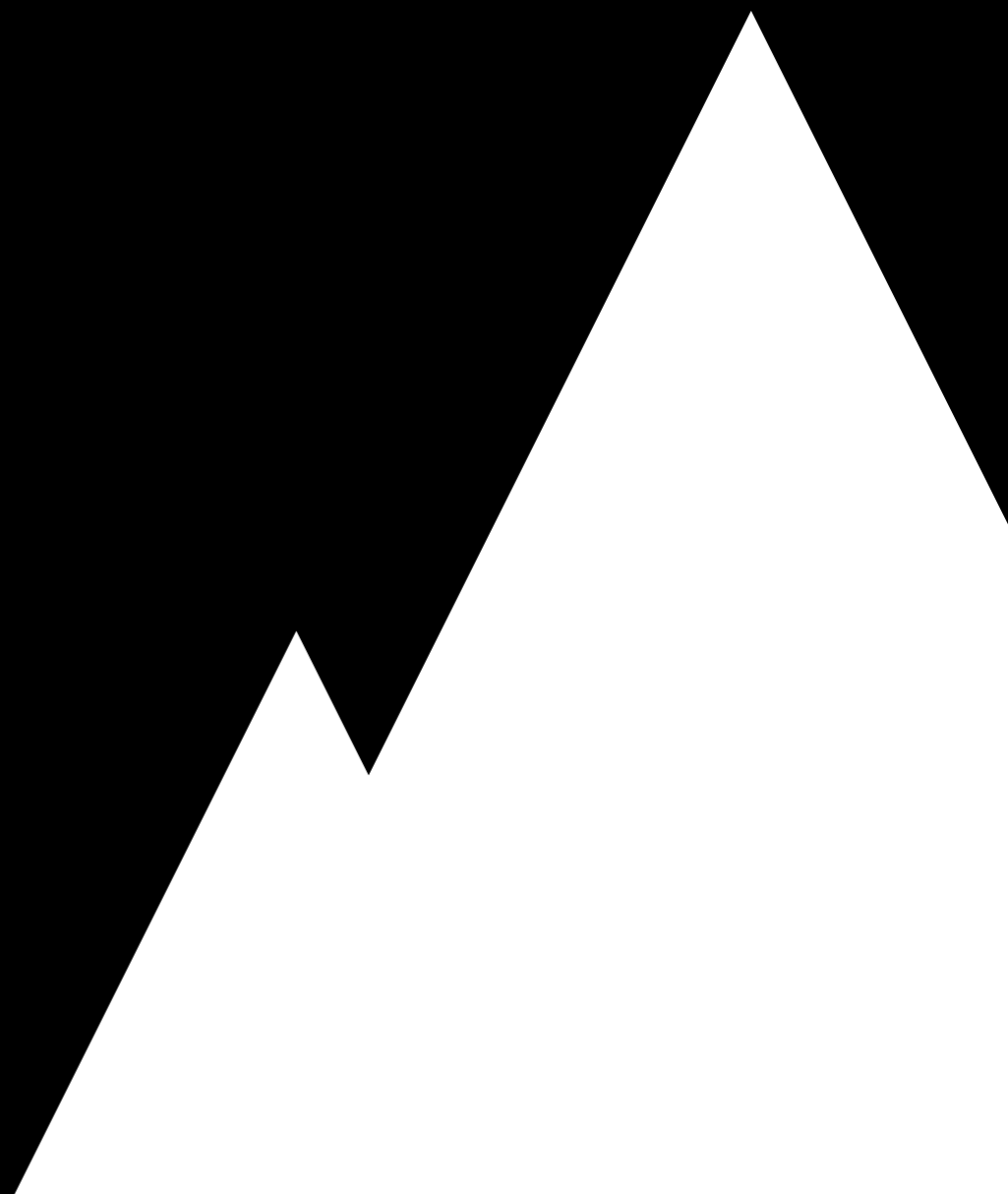
sarah

the altar

**what to *do*?**



**a 'twist in  
the tale'  
telling?**



A stylized graphic of a mountain range. The foreground features a large pink mountain peak on the left and a white mountain peak on the right. The background is black, with a white mountain peak visible behind the pink one. The text 'another mountain' is centered in the black area.

**another  
mountain**





the 'expected'  
ending



**(genesis does  
do this)**

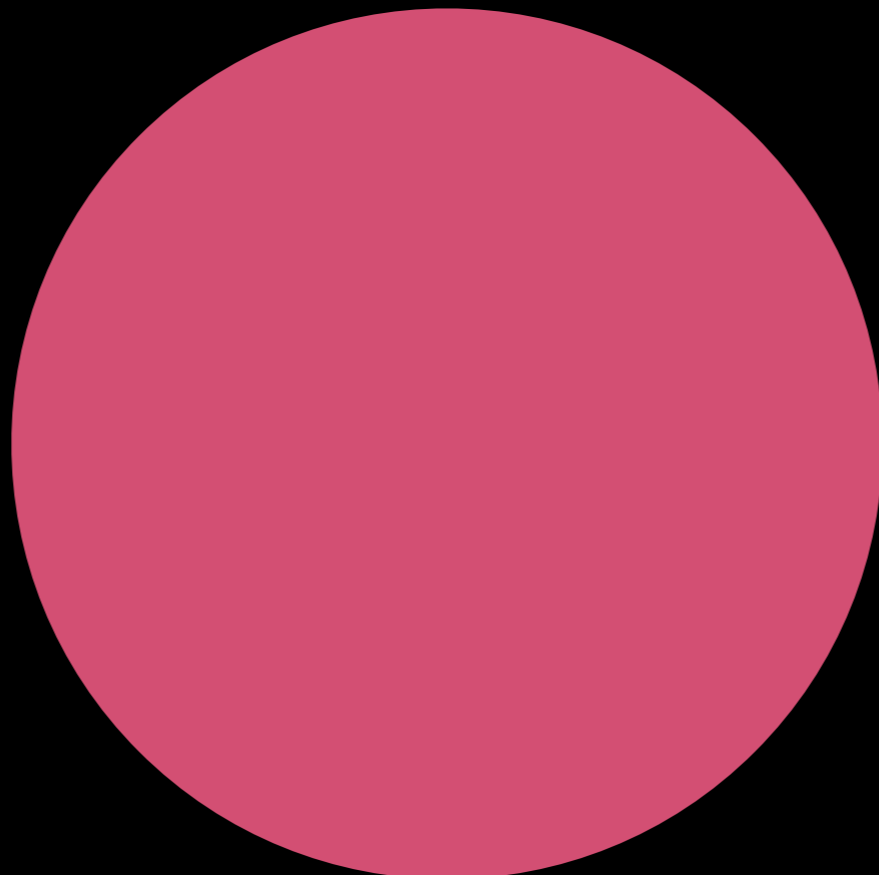
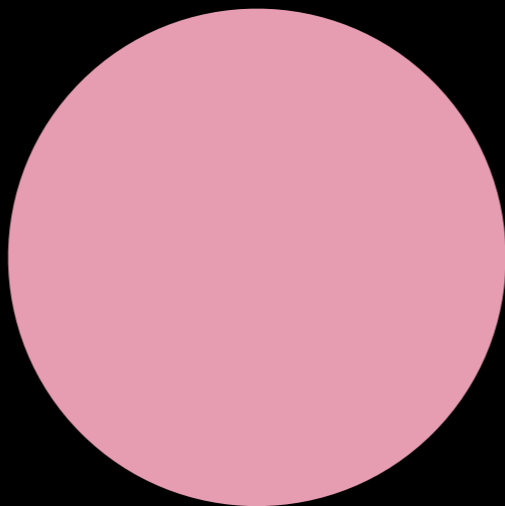
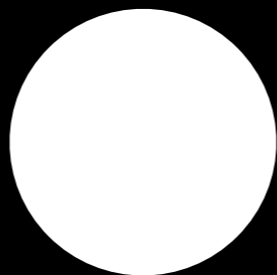


**the horror of a  
merciless god**



**this  
mountain  
exists. we  
walk up it  
daily.**

the merciless  
god 'growth'









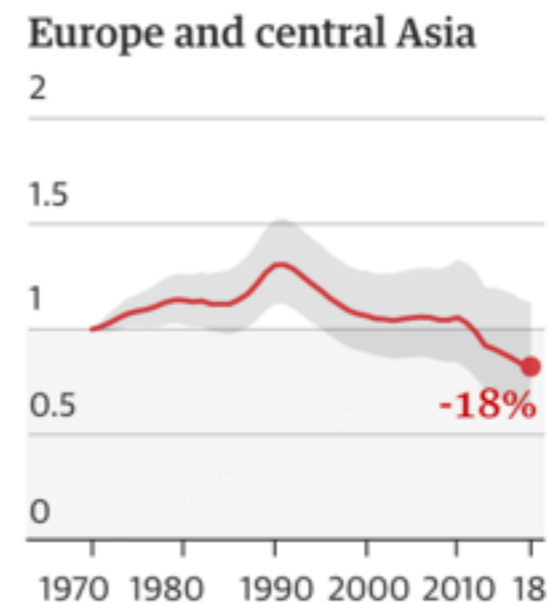
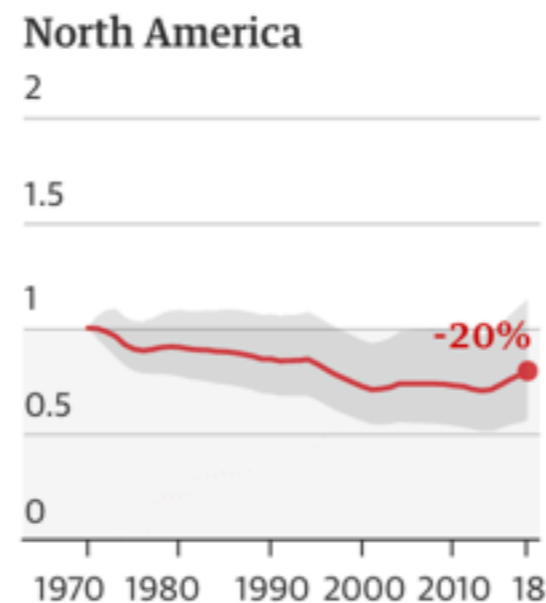
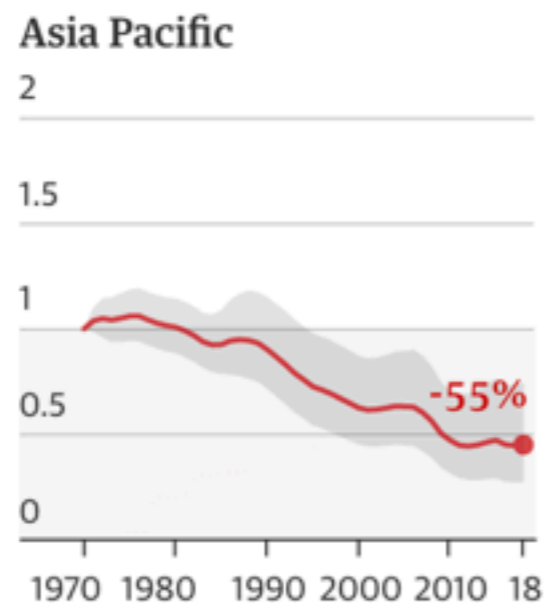
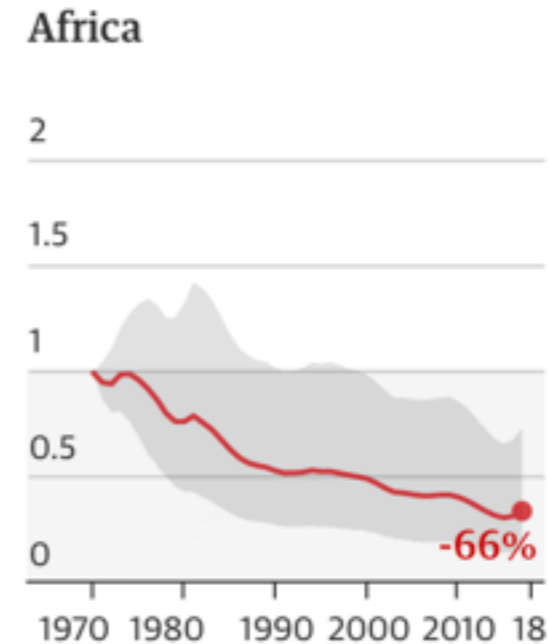


## The age of extinction

# Animal populations experience average decline of almost 70% since 1970, report reveals

**Huge scale of human-driven loss of species demands urgent action, say world's leading scientists**

**Between 1970 and 2018 Latin America and the Caribbean had the steepest decline in biodiversity**  
Index 1970=1



In the UK now: record number of billionaires, the richest 250 people have wealth of £710bn.

16m people live in poverty. 2.5m rely on food banks. Malnutrition affects over 3m. Every hour 10 people die from poverty.



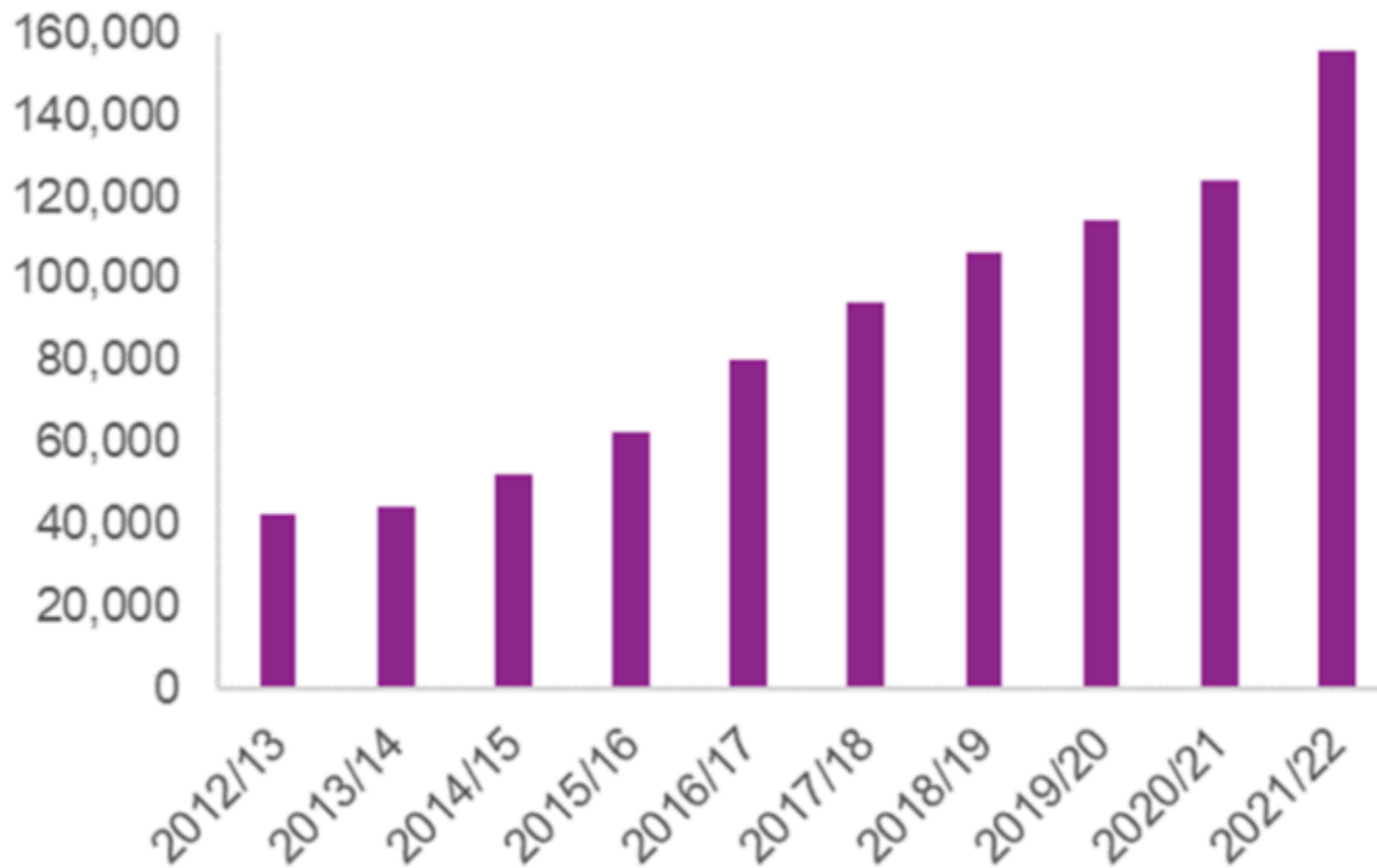
# How far have Russian troops advanced?



Source: Institute for the Study of War (21:00 GMT, 10 March)

## Key results

- in year ending March 2022, there were 155,841 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, a 26 per cent increase compared with the previous year
- this was the biggest percentage increase in hate crimes since year ending March 2017, when there was a 29 per cent rise



**all symptoms  
of a grasping  
grab to be the  
last man  
standing**

**merciless**

**‘growth’ is**

**everywhere**





**we walk up  
this mountain**

The background features a teal color palette with abstract geometric shapes. A large pink triangle is on the left, and a white jagged line is on the right. The text "good news" is centered in white.

**good news**

The background is a solid teal color. On the left side, there is a large pink triangle pointing upwards. On the right side, there is a large white triangle pointing downwards. The text is centered in the teal area.

**it doesn't have  
to be that way**

**we know other  
mountains,  
other gods**



the urgent call  
of the way of  
calvary



**the way of the  
crucified and  
resurrected god  
opens up a  
different possibility**



don't  
need  
greed



‘in humility value others  
above yourselves, not looking  
to your own interests but  
each of you to the interests of  
the others.’

- *philippians 2.3-4*





**‘not something  
to be grasped’**

+++

**‘the last shall  
be first’**



loved, always

+++

how do we  
live on *this*  
mountain?



***your turn***

