

Stories from EXILE





Jeremiah Called to Prophesize
Babylonian Invasion
Babylonian Exile
Babylonian Assimilation
Jewish Resistance
Babylonian Persecution
God's Faithfulness
Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem
Chaos in Babylon
Persian Takeover

Ezra 1:1-4

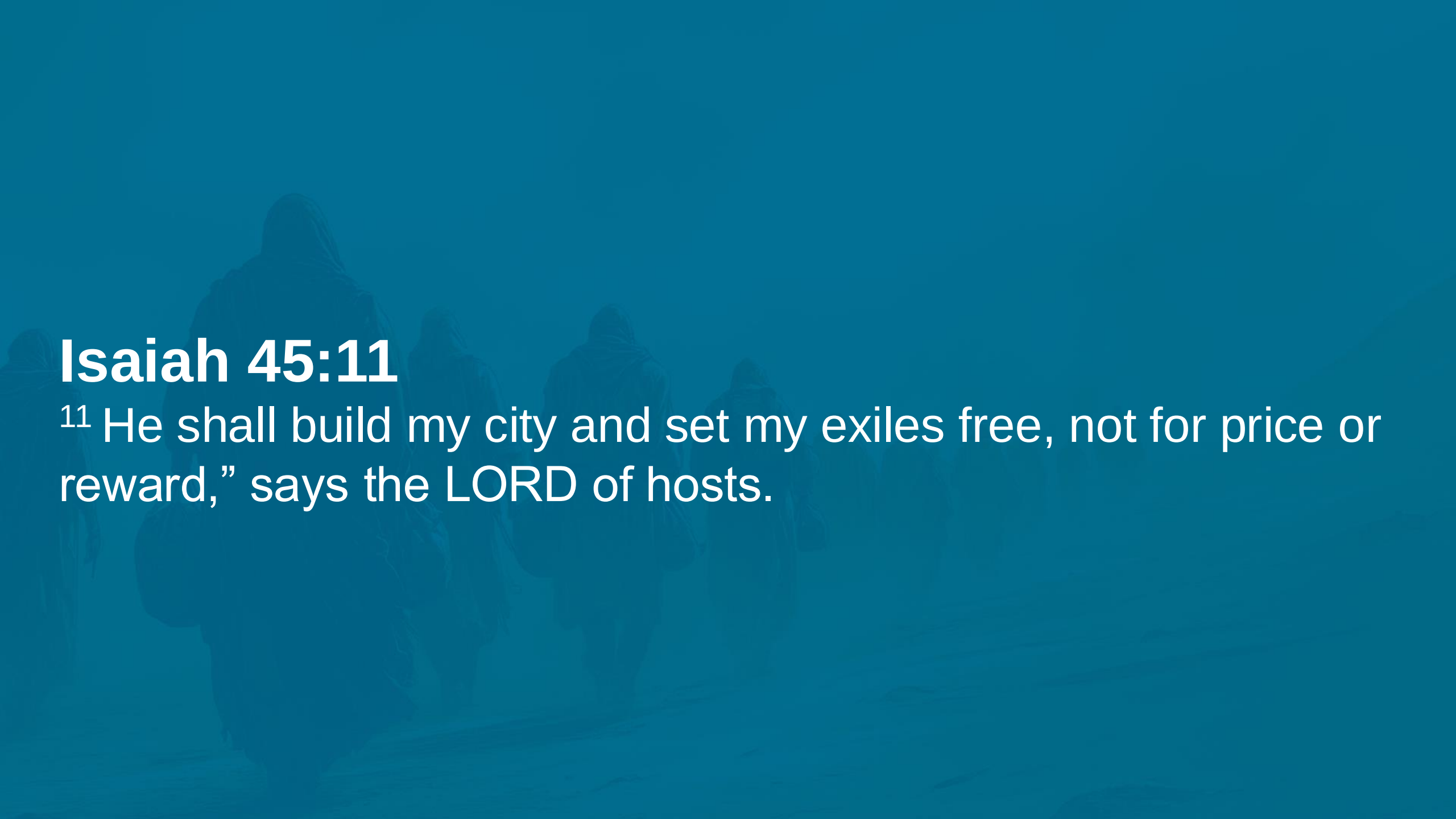
¹ In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, the Lord fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah. He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom: ² “This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: “The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

³ Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you! ⁴ Wherever this Jewish remnant is found, let their neighbors contribute toward their expenses by giving them silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock, as well as a voluntary offering for the Temple of God in Jerusalem.”



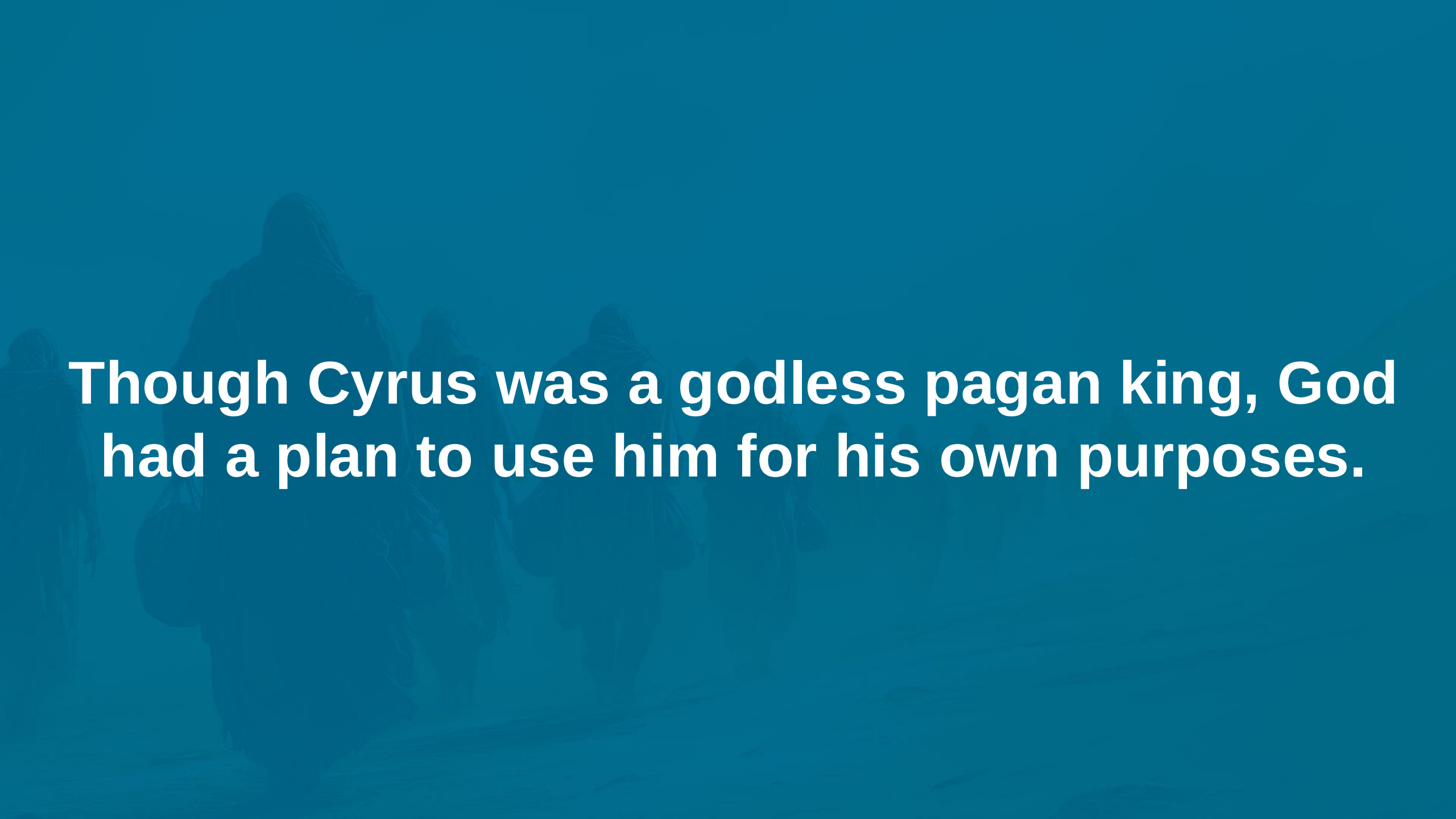
Isaiah 44:24, 28

²⁴ Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself...²⁸ who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’

The background of the slide features a photograph of a group of people, likely refugees or migrants, walking away from the camera on a dirt path. They are carrying bags and wearing head coverings. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent blue overlay, which serves as a background for the text.

Isaiah 45:11

¹¹ He shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,” says the LORD of hosts.



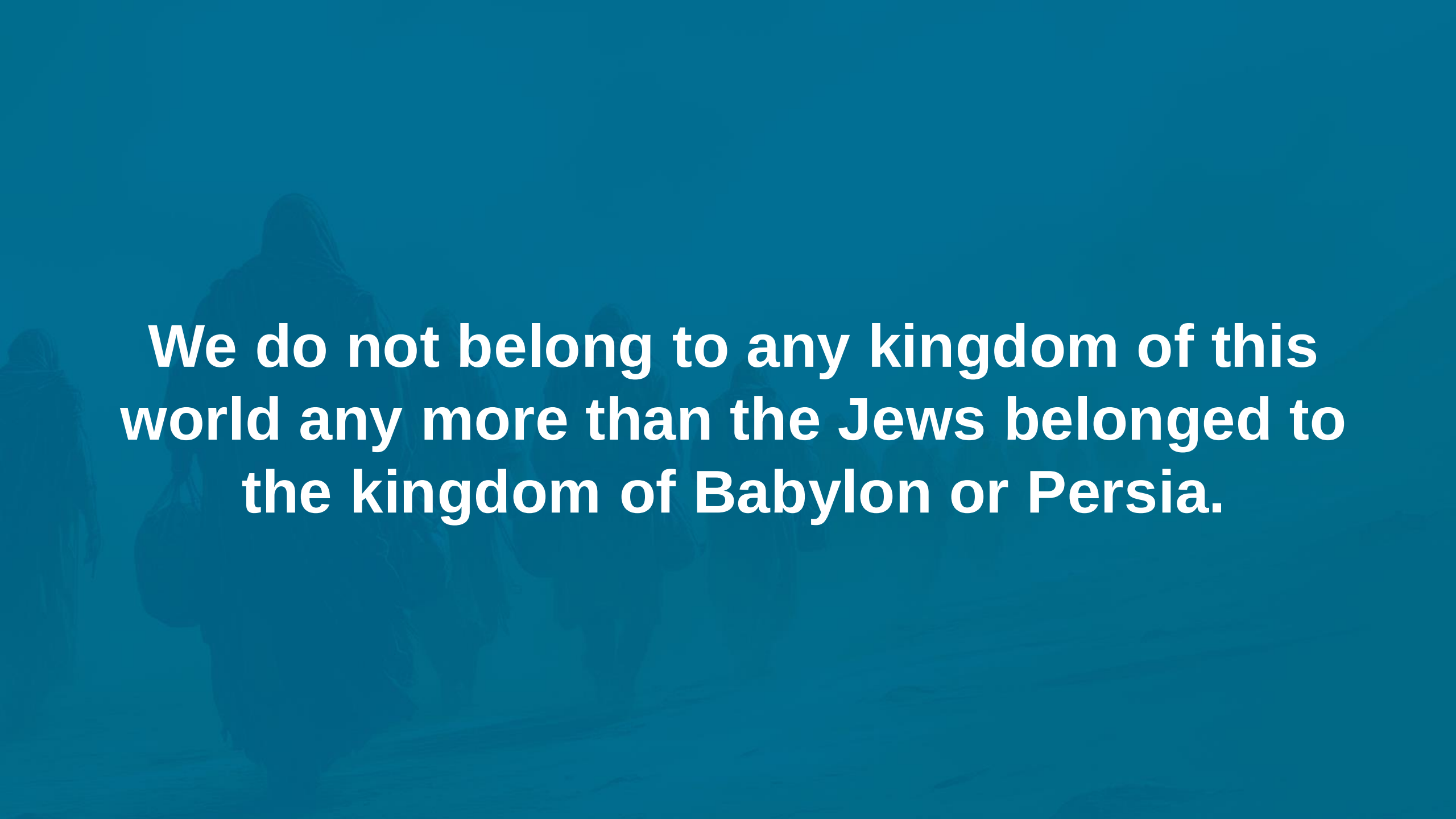
Though Cyrus was a godless pagan king, God had a plan to use him for his own purposes.

John 18:33-37

³³ Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. “Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked him. ³⁴ Jesus replied, “Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?” ³⁵ “Am I a Jew?” Pilate retorted. “Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.” ³⁷ Pilate said, “So you are a king?” Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. ²¹ He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

A group of people, seen from behind, walking away in a desert landscape. They are carrying bags and wearing traditional head coverings. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

We do not belong to any kingdom of this world any more than the Jews belonged to the kingdom of Babylon or Persia.

“Jesus and Paul were telling the people that they must live here with their identities as aliens. They must live by the rules of heaven amid the violent earthly powers. And to claim that one's citizenship is in heaven is to say that you pledge allegiance not to any of the kingdoms of the world but to Jesus and the body of those who take on his suffering, enemy-loving, posture toward the world.” – Shane Claiborne



I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE
TO THE FLAG OF THE
**UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA**
AND TO THE REPUBLIC
FOR WHICH IT STANDS,
ONE NATION UNDER GOD,
INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY
AND **JUSTICE FOR ALL**

No matter who holds earthly power they can and will ultimately be used by God to accomplish His purposes.

We don't belong to the kingdoms of this world any more than the Jews belonged to kingdom Babylon.

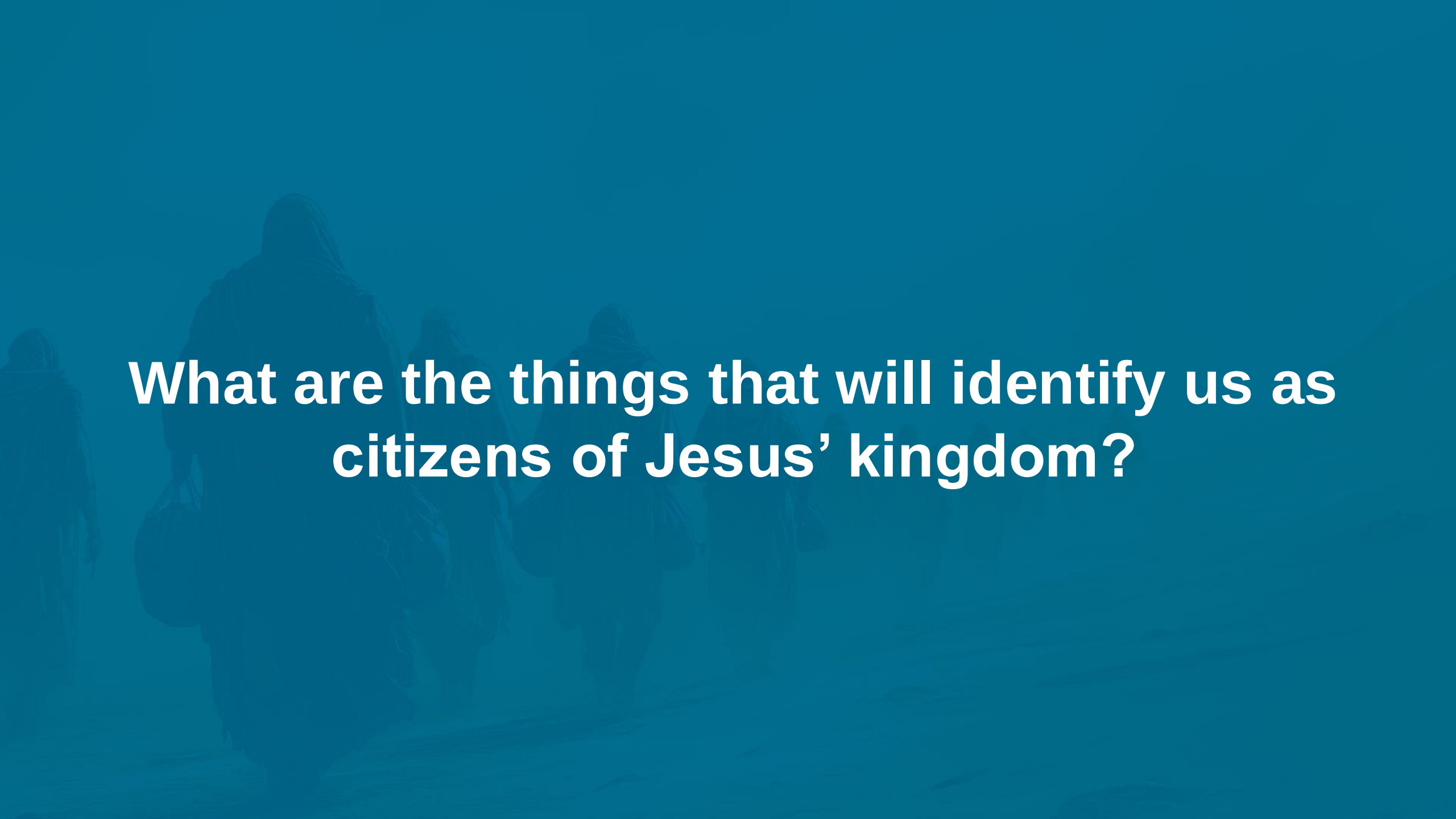
We need to view our location, not as our identity, but as our mission.

Jeremiah 29:5-7

⁵ “Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. ⁶ Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! ⁷ And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.”

John 17:14-18

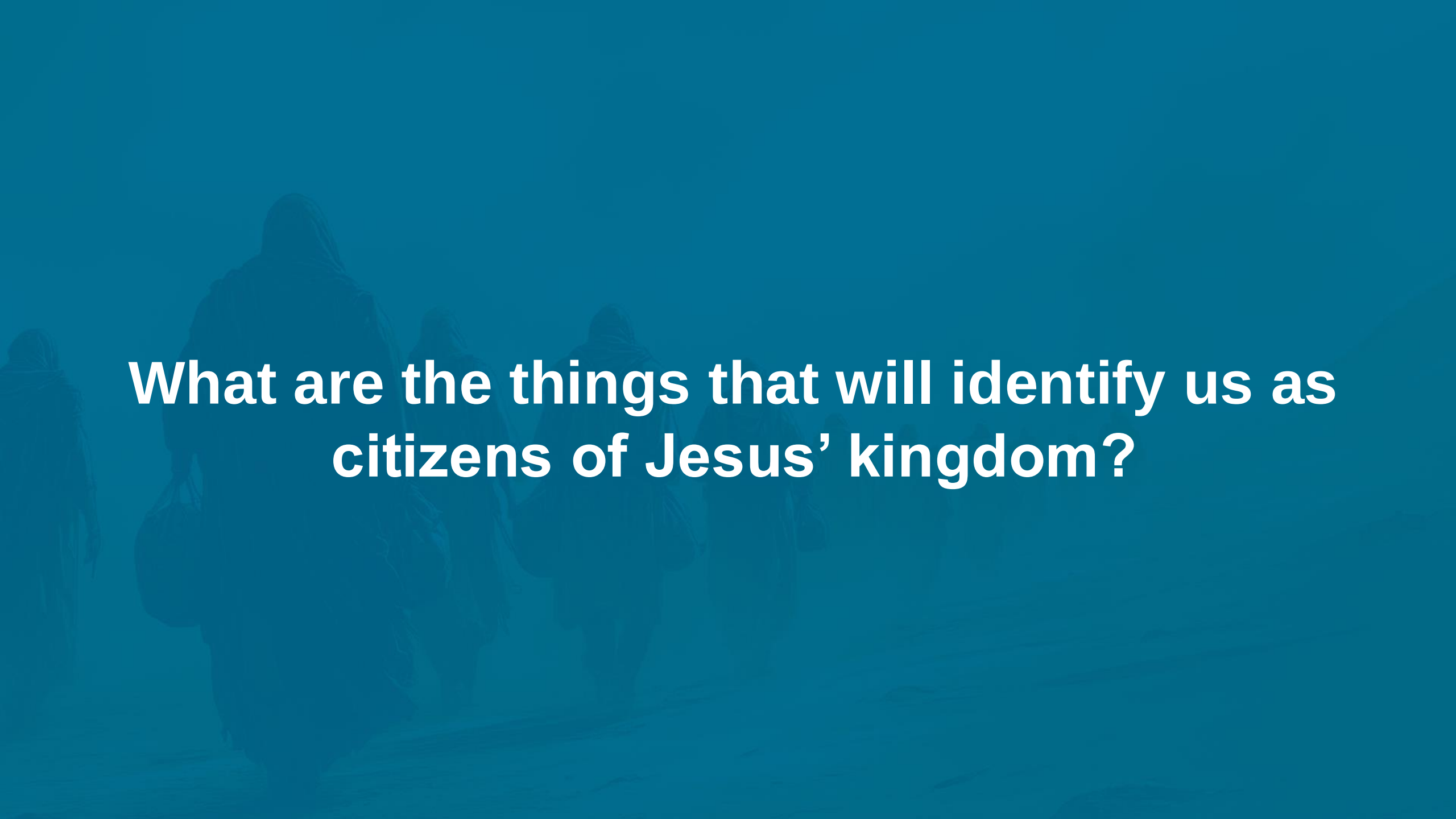
¹⁴ I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶ They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. ¹⁸ Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

The background of the slide features a blue-tinted image of several people walking away from the viewer. They are carrying bags, suggesting a journey or pilgrimage. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the white text to stand out clearly.

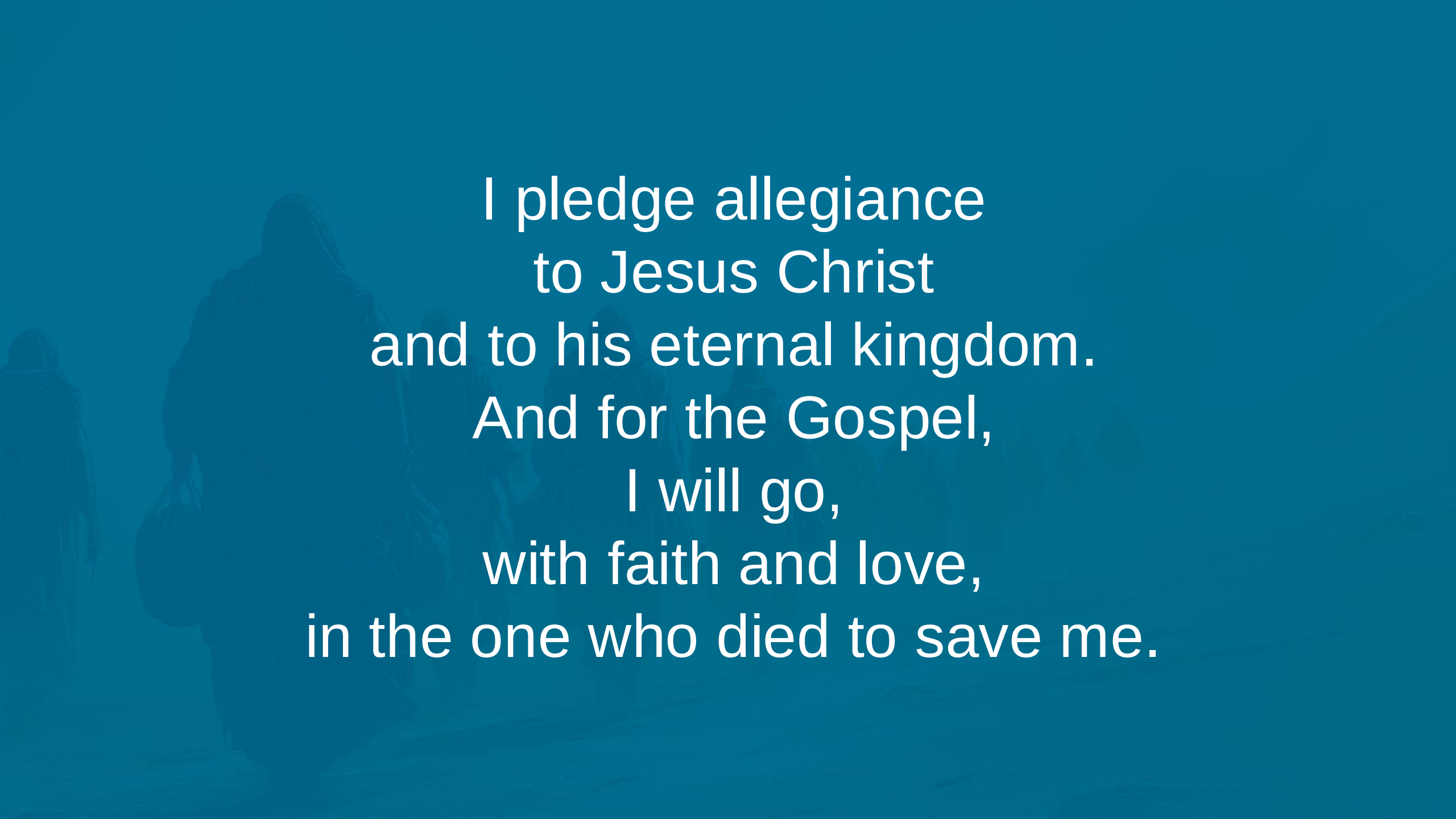
**What are the things that will identify us as
citizens of Jesus' kingdom?**

WATCH THIS CLIP ON YOUTUBE:
<https://youtu.be/o5OnF3sg0cY?si=8qAvnvl-ls-T4OTW>



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**What are the things that will identify us as
citizens of Jesus' kingdom?**



I pledge allegiance
to Jesus Christ
and to his eternal kingdom.
And for the Gospel,
I will go,
with faith and love,
in the one who died to save me.