

A Coming King

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning. We're continuing our series in Daniel's world. We've kind of crossed somewhat of a divide in the book. One to six are fairly straightforward. Seven to twelve, all bets are off.

So we're in seven to eight this morning, and we've called it a coming king. So let me pray, and then we'll get to work this. This will be in two parts.

So we've got a short part trying to get us up to speed with where we are in the book. Then we're going to sing again, and then we're going to dig into Daniel seven and eight.

Okay, so your sleep may be interrupted about halfway through. Let me have, let's have a word of prayer. Father, we come. Lord, we're desperate and needy.

Father, we come to this portion of scripture, Lord, and realize that it's deep and difficult. And so our greatest need now is that you would send your spirit to speak to us, to bring clarity.

[1 : 0 8] Father, to help us fix our eyes on your son. Father, speak to us in a way we can understand. We pray this in Jesus' name and for his glory. Amen.

I guess we're all fairly familiar with this commonly used phrase, this idiom. Sometimes it gets worse before it gets better.

It sums up so much of life. So you get a new job. You didn't like your last job, but you know going to a new job until you're up to speed with the processes, and you know a few colleagues and wherever place to have your lunches, things may get worse before they get better.

I think you could argue that marriage gets worse before it gets better, as you have two individuals who are used to being alone, who have developed certain habits that may not be quite as congenial to the other person as you'd think.

And that first bit's a bit of a struggle. I think Aileen is waiting for the better part and some of the habits that I brought to the party to somewhat disappear.

[2 : 1 8] I guess it's true for things like medical treatments. So people here have undergone or are undergoing chemotherapy, and such is the brutality of the treatment that it often gets worse before it gets any better.

I'm no expert, but pregnancy seems to go that way as well, that things certainly get harder before they get better. Many experiences in life get worse before they get better.

And Daniel 7 and 8 could certainly be a passage that's going to illustrate to us that things are going to get worse before they're going to get better.

It's going to actually be the big theme of the rest of the book, that it's not going to be plain sailing even after the exile. So far in the book, we've learned two enormous truths that Andy and Emma hinted at in their prayer.

The first thing we've been learning is that God is the boss. He is the boss of the entire universe. He is sovereign over it all. He owns it and rules it and governs it and sustains it.

[3 : 31] So a summary verse might be 425. The most high is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. God is the boss.

Daniel has been teaching us. The second thing he's been teaching us is what he will do as the boss. That he will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

An unshakable, eternal, universal kingdom. 244. The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Nor will it be left to another people.

It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end. But it will itself endure forever. God is the boss. And as the boss, this is what he'll do. He'll set up an eternal kingdom.

And we've learned that through six successive narrative chronologically ordered chapters. So in chapter 1, we learned that Daniel and his friends are exiled.

[4 : 32] But even in exile, they excel. They honor God and God honors them. That a difficult situation turns out pretty well as they're seen as people of high distinction.

And given real prowess in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. And then we get chapter 2 where Daniel is the hero. That Nebuchadnezzar has a dream.

He has this picture of a statue made of lots of different metals. No one can interpret it. But Daniel, after an urgent prayer meeting with his friends, saves the day.

And again, is greatly rewarded. Chapter 3, Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego honor God, a throne into the furnace, but God miraculously intervenes, is present with them, and they're saved.

Not even singed by the flames. Chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar is humbled. To eat grass like an ox, his mind goes.

[5 : 34] Because he arrogantly stands before God. And then he acknowledges God and is restored, just as Daniel said would happen.

Chapter 5, we did the egomaniac Belshazzar, who stands in defiance of God, sets himself up against God. And the hand writes on the wall, and Daniel interprets it, and he gets it right.

And that night, Belshazzar is slain, as the Medes and the Persians take over the kingdom. And then last week, with Graham, we saw how Daniel's faithfulness led him into trouble with Darius, because Darius was tricked by the satraps and all the officials, and was thrown as lion food to the lions.

But God miraculously intervenes, and he's saved. And the thing is, is if we left Daniel there at chapter 6, as many people do, we get the impression that Daniel is a very optimistic book.

There's a problem, God intervenes, and everything's alright. That's going to change as we go 7 to 12. We're going to learn that things are going to get worse before they get better.

[6 : 54] Things are going to get worse before they get better. In chapter 7, the mood changes. We've had successive chronological narratives.

We're now moving into apocalyptic literature. We also break the chronology of the book, as we'll see in chapter 7. We're actually going back in time.

But Daniel chapter 7 takes place 10 years before Belshazzar's feast, in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon.

It's a time of transition and uncertainty for Daniel that actually when a new dynasty comes in, everybody else who was involved with the last regime doesn't tend to do so well.

Daniel's also been in Babylon for many decades. He's given up all of his adult life and is now about 75 when this takes place.

[7 : 52] He knows that God has ordained that Judah will be in exile in Babylon for 70 years so the end is in sight. He thinks we're on the home straight.

If we can just see it out, the next few years we'll be back in Jerusalem. I might see that city again. However, with these chapters, with these dreams, with these visions and their interpretations, Daniel's going to learn that the journey home is going to be much longer and much more filled with pain than he ever could imagine.

Just a brief word on apocalyptic literature. The word apocalypse literally means to unveil, to reveal, to draw back the curtain. Martin Luther said of apocalyptic literature, it is a queer way of talking like people who instead of proceeding in an orderly manner ramble off one thing to the next so that you cannot make head or tail of them or see what they are getting at.

It's a real encouragement as we take four weeks to finish off Daniel properly. What happens is we're getting a vision. God is drawing back the curtain and showing us what is happening, what is going to happen, what's going on behind the scenes.

Apocalyptic literature is full of vivid symbolism and traumatic imagery. It's full of dragons and horns and sword and fire and thrones and seas.

[9 : 27] As we're going to see it's full of monsters and outlandish beasts. Most apocalyptic literature contains two great themes.

God's ultimate victory over evil in the end. And secondly, a real call for God's people to persevere knowing that God will ultimately defeat evil in the end.

It's written to suffering people to encourage them to persevere, to keep on going. And I think a great rule when we come to these difficult bits is this.

That the main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things. So not getting totally tied up in detail and what is what and who is who and when is when.

But trying to see what is the big picture. What is going on? The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things. Just to make it slightly more difficult, quite a lot of these visions are what they call trans-temporal.

[10 : 34] is that they move across time. That they can have in view more than one horizon. It can be kind of like a cyclical thing. That the kingdoms that we're going to see today are both imminent in the near future but also cast a long shadow into the far future and in fact the end of things.

This is why interpreting them is so difficult because you have these different horizons so often in view. I think it's helpful to think of apocalyptic literature like surrealist painting.

I love surrealist painting. I think the greatest surrealist painter would be Salvador Dali. In this painting the persistence of memory is more than just a photograph.

There's more going on here. There's meaning behind it. We have a series of melting watch faces all over the picture. showing that time is slipping away.

It's eking away. You'll see that on the back of the watch face in brown that it's ants that are also pulling it apart as we look at decay as an organic process.

[11 : 48] We see this weird thing in the middle of the picture is kind of like a caricature of Salvador Dali himself. So we're not talking just merely about time slipping away.

We're talking about Dali's own mortality and how he sees everything going to decay. And so we see that though it is a picture it's more than a picture there's meaning behind the picture.

This is another Dali painting called The Self-Construction of Boiled Beans. And what it is is it's a body that is quite literally pulling itself apart and arranging itself in a really unhelpful way.

and he painted it to depict the Spanish Civil War because he saw that Spain as a body of people was literally pulling itself apart and was going to arrange itself in a most unhelpful way.

He actually did it before General Franco's invasion so it is somewhat of a premonition as well as a painting. Two things and then we'll sing.

[12 : 55] There's much we can discuss about these visions. It's good to have convictions and opinions about them but I think we should hold them loosely because they're complicated and therefore we can discuss graciously and generously but there is room for disagreement about who is who and what is what and when is when.

Many great theologians over the centuries have interpreted the details of these visions differently and so if we hold absolutely dogmatically and insist on a specific interpretation I think we're in real danger.

We can have convictions but I would suggest we should hold them loosely and discuss them graciously. Just see what happens to Daniel when he has these visions.

Look with me at chapter 7 verse 15. I Daniel was troubled in spirit and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. Look at chapter 7 verse 28.

This is the end of the matter. I Daniel was deeply troubled by my thoughts and my face turned pale but I kept the matter to myself. Look at 827. I Daniel was worn out.

[14 : 13] I lay exhausted for several days then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision. It was beyond understanding.

So I think if that was Daniel's experience I think we should be hesitant about being overly glib about this and making it clear and obvious. Let's stand shall we and sing Behold our God and then we'll look at the first 14 verses of Daniel chapter 7.

Let's stand together. Please take a seat and let's read Daniel 7 together. In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed.

He wrote down the substance of his dream. Daniel said in my vision at night I looked and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts each different from the others came out of the sea.

The first was like a lion and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were turned off and it was torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being and the mind of a human was given to it.

[15 : 24] And there before me was a second beast which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told get up and eat your fill of flesh.

After that I looked and there before me was another beast one that looked like a leopard and on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads and it was given authority to rule.

After that in my vision at night I looked and there before me was a fourth beast terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left.

It was different from all the former beasts and it had ten horns. While I was thinking about the horns there before me was another horn a little one which came up among them and three of the first horns were uprooted before it.

This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I looked thrones were set in place and the Ancient of Days took his seat.

[16 : 34] His clothing was as white as snow. The hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing coming out from before him.

Thousands upon thousands attended him. Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated and the books were opened.

Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain. and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. The other beasts had been stripped of their authority but were allowed to live for a period of time.

In my vision at night I looked and there before me was one like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

He was given authority, glory and sovereign power. All nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

[17 : 47] Well there's no getting away from it, it's weird. It's like the most outlandish zoo you've ever been to with lion eagles and leopard birds. As previously mentioned it takes place ten years before Belshazzar's feast.

And for the first time in the book it is Daniel who has a vision who then needs an interpretation. All the other times the three other visions it has been the king that's had the vision and Daniel who's had the interpretation.

The literary form seems to suggest that this is a vision for all of the people reading this book. So in Daniel chapter 7 verse 16 Daniel approaches one of the people standing before the Ancient of Days and says what does it mean?

In chapter 8 verse 16 it's the angel Gabriel himself who gives the interpretation of the vision. There is a strong parallel between Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 2 that it seems that those two visions are kind of paralleled in many ways.

They both end in the same place. There is this succession of four things that are happening and particularly in beast number 4 the idea of iron is repeated.

[19 : 07] So what on earth are we to make of Daniel's Babylonian zoo dream? Well I think the first thing is this. The kingdom of beasts in verses 1 to 6.

Rising out of the great sea, churned up at God's behest by the four winds from heaven, heaven, we get three terrifying beasts rising up out of this tumultuous sea, this symbol of everything that's chaotic and decreed from Genesis 2.

We learn that they're kings and kingdoms from chapter 7 verse 17. The four great beasts of four kings that will rise from the earth. The first one we get is a lion eagle.

I like to think of it as illegal in the way we get a zebra and a horse being a zorse. This is a real symbol of Babylon.

Along the high street in Babylon there were loads of statues of these lion eagles. If you go to the British Museum in London they've got two of them and they are terrifying.

[20 : 20] It would make for a terrifying safari wouldn't it if lions could fly. You wouldn't be going in an open top jeep ever again. After the lion eagle or the legal we get just a bear but a pretty ferocious bear.

A bear that is raised up on one side. This seems to fit in the imminent sense with the Medo-Persian empire because it's not an equal kingdom. The Persians are a lot bigger deal than the Medes and therefore that would create this disparity.

It has three ribs in its mouth. We know from history that when Medo-Persia rules the world they overtake three kingdoms. The kingdom of Babylon which we'll see in Daniel chapter 5.

The kingdom of Egypt and the kingdom of Lydia. So that seems to fit but as said these can be trans-temporal they can be both immediate future but also casting a shadow long into the distance.

the third animal. The leopard bird. Kind of a real weird animal because it's got four heads.

[21 : 35] And again this would sort of fit with Greece because we know that after Alexander the Great in terrifying speed has conquered everything from Spain to India dies and his kingdom is divided into four.

His four generals. So what I'm saying loosely is that it seems to fit with what's going to happen in the media but can also cast a shadow long into the distance.

This transition between Medeo-Persia the bear and Greece the leopard is also the subject of Daniel chapter 8 where we get another really strange vision but this time not a zoo but kind of farmyard animals.

We learn about Medeo-Persia being a two-horned ram. We're very confident of that because it says that the two-horned ram is the king of Medo-Persia so we're on pretty safe ground there.

And again its horns are not the same length because it's not an equal kingdom. And it rushes to the west and the north and the south as it conquers and the kingdom is expanded.

[22 : 47] But then when it's at its power there rises a shaggy goat, a hairy goat which is more like a unicorn goat because it's got one big horn out the front.

Think of a rhino goat. And it rushes against the long horned ram and completely destroys it. Then in its prime the horn is broken off and four horns grow in its place.

similarly illustrating that Alexander would be broken off in his prime in his early thirties and his kingdom will be divided between his four generals.

I think looking at it historically that fits but I hold it loosely thinking that it can be trans-temporal as well. So what are we to make of this?

Well I would suggest that we move from human to beastly in these three progressions. If you look at the lion eagle the legal it has its wings torn off it stands on its two feet like a man and is given the mind of a man.

[23 : 59] Kind of human-ish. Then we move to the bear which stands on its two hind legs but has nothing like the mind of a man.

And then we have the leopard bird. leopard and the leopard bird is all beast. I think this makes an important point for us.

That when God wants people to rule his creation under his care who does he appoint? He appoints humans to be good stewards of the earth to have dominion over everything.

But after the four so much of that rule will not be human. It will be beastly. It will be not doing out of honour and respect for God but it will be to get to the very top.

So we see that there's this downward spiral that's going to happen. A cyclical decline where some kingdoms will be ruled by men in a good fashion.

[25 : 06] But other kingdoms will come and resemble beastly rule. Looking over history you can see that these features are prevalent.

Some kingdoms rule with righteousness and justice, treat their citizens with dignity and respect, with their tolerance.

Others though are beastly in their treatment and oppression and despotic dictatorship and cruel stamping down of their own people.

For Daniel this would be a troubling vision. A troubling vision because in his hopes and his dreams he thinks if we could just get out of Babylon we'll be safely home.

And a real expectation that when they're safely home God's kingdom will be established. And this vision seems to suggest oh no. That actually when you get home there'll be this succession of kingdoms that are still to come.

[26 : 15] And some will be reasonable and some will be beastly. That it's not the end. It seems that things really are going to get worse before they get better.

then we move. Verse 7 we move to the kingdom of monsters. Because the fourth beast is very different to the other beasts.

There seems to be a new phenomenon. Terrifying, frightening, and very powerful with large iron teeth and ten horns.

this kingdom is altogether more destructive. It crushes and devours its victims and tramples underfoot whatever was left.

This is total annihilation and utter domination. this would certainly fit, I think, with Rome.

[27 : 19] Certainly fit with this kingdom, this city state that would rule and spread out and absolutely dominate with ruthless efficiency and terrifying mercilessness.

beast. A monstrous beast. A boastful kingdom.

And then we get this weird thing in verse nine about this little horn. This little horn that rises, three of the other horns are uprooted. And this horn has eyes and a mouth and it uses these eyes and a mouth to speak blasphemously against God.

a figure orientated against God. There's much speculation over the history about the identity of this little horn.

Everyone's got their ideas. I think the figure of General Titus who invades Rome in AD 70 fits, who mocks God on the holy site of the temple, who worship Roman gods and sacrifices to them right in the temple place before eventually destroying the temple himself.

[28 : 35] However, I think this idea of the little horn also superimposes itself on any ruler who rises up and sets themselves up against God, whose ambitions are so aligned with the chaos, blasphemy, and agenda of Satan.

I think the little horn is not one person, but it is a series of people. Even in verse eight we get a little horn, but rising out of the Greek kingdom.

So it seems that little horns tend to be kind of everywhere. This guy as well would seem to fit with another historical character, the guy of Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the later rulers after Alexander the Great who takes over in the Seleucid Empire.

He gives himself Antiochus Epiphanes, that word epiphanes, meaning a vision of God himself. And in AD 175, he invades Jerusalem, he takes over the temple, he puts a statue of Zeus right in front of the altar, he puts a statue of himself.

Right next to it he sacrifices a pig on the very altar of God. So we see these little horns come thick and fast, they come from everywhere.

[29 : 56] It seems clear that the Roman Empire, the Seleucid Empire and regimes like that will be coming down the line, that it will not be plain sailing for God's people, even when they're back in God's place.

And all of them cast this shadow that the spirit of lawlessness is alive in the world, that there will be many Antichrists, people who will set themselves up against the very God of the universe, all finding fulfillment in one character, he will be the ultimate personification of all that a little horn will be.

And again I think we can see why Daniel is so depressed, exhausted and troubled by what he sees. That the end of the exile isn't going to be the end of suffering and turmoil.

In fact compared to what seems to be coming down the line, Babylon has been a stroll in the park, somewhat of a holiday for God's people. It is very clear in the vision that there will arise kingdoms and empires, rulers and authorities who will hate God and hate God's people.

We get some detail in chapter 7 that these little horns are ones that wage war against God's people and exhaust them. And that's what Daniel sees.

[31 : 17] So far in this vision we're utterly depressed just as Daniel was. But I think we finish on a really positive note with the kingdom of God.

There is a glorious character who arises in chapter 7 verse 9. We see the ancient of days. It's not this kind of old man image we have but somebody who is the founder of time itself.

Who was there before the beginning ancient. He was there before the beginning. He has white clothes and white hair because he is spotlessly pure and resplendently holy.

He's sitting on what at first reading seems like a wheelchair but it is not. It is a blazing throne because he is holy and he is the one who will judge.

And this throne is on wheels because his rule is not fixed. It is everywhere. It is the everywhere-ness rule of God. There is a river of fire that goes out before him showing that he is the source.

[32 : 30] He is from where everything else finds its place. And we see that he has thousands and thousands attending to him and standing before him ten times ten times times a thousand as many.

And it's a courtroom scene. And the court is in session. God is the judge and the books are opened.

This is a depiction of judgment falling. And in verse 11 we see that this little horn is still speaking boastfully against God in God's very presence.

repentance. And in the course of one verse these boastful words this horn that has set itself up against God is utterly destroyed.

Judgment falls. The little horn spewing blasphemy and boasting from its mouth is judged. Justice is done. The ancient of days dispenses with this little horn as easily as we would stamp on an ant.

[33 : 43] The other beasts are stripped of their authority but their empire continues in some kind of remnant form. It's a stunning depiction of what absolute sovereignty looks like.

That God's greatest enemy speaking boastful and blasphemous words against God is simply snuffed out. Just like that. In the course of a verse it is not a fight.

It is perfect justice falling from an almighty God. Then in verse 13 we get the ancient of days described. A character approaches the throne.

One like a son of man. One with a human form. Whereas we looked at the rules of beasts and monsters before. This is the perfect human and yet more than a human coming on the clouds of heaven.

One who stands before the ancient of days and is given authority, glory and sovereign power over absolutely everyone, absolutely everywhere for absolutely ever. This is the personification of the stone that annihilates the statue and becomes a mountain that dominates the whole earth from chapter 2.

[34 : 59] this is the end of the matter, the final destiny of the world. Once all the kingdoms have risen and fallen and all the rulers are spent, all that will remain is the kingdom of this son of man.

It is a terrifying and tumultuous future that Daniel sees but it ends at a glorious climax with God's king ruling absolutely everywhere, absolutely everyone for absolutely ever.

It is a terrifying future but an eternal and glorious end. And so Mark chapter 14 when Jesus stands trial before the Sanhedrin and they try to ask him, are you the character, are you God's king from Psalm 2, are you the son of the blessed one?

And Jesus says this, I am, and you will see the son of man sitting at the right hand of the mighty one and coming on the clouds of heaven.

That Jesus identifies himself with this character, one with absolute dominion, absolute glory, power, to be worshipped by absolutely everyone for absolutely ever.

[36 : 18] Well the Sanhedrin hear enough, they tear their clothes, they slap him, they spit on him, and they continue their plot to execute him, failing to realize that it is in Jesus' death that this ultimate plan of ultimate dominion will be set into course.

That this Jesus now has all of these things by faith. As he sits at the right hand of God, one day soon he will have all of these things by sight as he rules forever.

Things will certainly get worse before they get better. Things will get worse before they get best. If it was an orange advert, the future is bleak, the future is glorious.

Three things in closing and they're very quick. The way home is long and filled with pain, that's what Daniel's learning. It's true for Israel as they go on from here, it's true for God's people over all of history and it'll be true for us as the air turns increasingly toxic and hostile to Jesus and faith in him.

Daniel 7 and 8 forewarns us so we can be ready and not surprised by the trouble and tribulation that comes. That it's not plain sailing, it never was, it never will be, but it will be great in the end.

[37 : 44] That God warns us through his word this will be the case. Secondly, the only way we'll get home is to trust in God's sovereignty. Unless we have pictures like Daniel 7 that show us the end of the story, we'll be completely lost and crushed in the middle of the story.

So when these beasts arise, we will think, God, have you gone AWOL? Is your out of office on and we're left to our own devices? But if we understand that in the wisdom and sovereignty of God, he lets these things rise and in the end will bring about the kingdom of his perfect son forever.

And the last point is this, the only hope of finally being home is to believe in the Son of Man. If this is the destiny of all things, that they will be brought together under the feet of the Lord Jesus, then the most important thing we can ever do is to love him and trust him now, to have him as our king by faith now, so that he will be our king by sight then.

That if this truly is the destiny of everything, then to know this Jesus is the most important thing, because when he comes there will be no chance to change allegiances, to lay down arms and accept the peace terms of the gospel now, before it's too late when these things fully and finally happen.

this is what we're supposed to take from the chapter, I think. It's repeated three times. Chapter 7, verse 18, but the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever, yes, forever and ever.

[39 : 28] Chapter 7, verse 21, as I watched this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High God.

God, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. Verse 26 and 27, but the court will sit and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.

Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High God. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom and his rulers will worship and obey him.

And even in chapter 8, verse 14, He said to me, it will take 2,300 evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary will be re-consecrated.

There will be an end and Jesus will win. Let me pray. Father God, we thank you that you are in control. Father, that history is not going off plot, that chaos will not reign.

[40 : 34] But one day soon, Jesus Christ will reign in absolute sovereignty in a kingdom of perfect justice and righteousness. A kingdom that will not be beastly in nature, but a kingdom that will be perfect where sin is no more, where death is no more, where mourning and oppression are banished.

And so, Lord, we pray you would give us faith in the meantime, to trust that you know what you're doing, to keep on going, to keep on loving and trusting your Son. And Father, that we would do it in such a way that ourselves and many people in our lives would change allegiances, would lay down arms and hostility towards this King Jesus and trust him so that they can be in his kingdom forever.

Father, bless these things to us. Sear them on our hearts, we pray, those that are from you and useful. And build us up and transform us according to your word, we pray. Amen.