

1Corinthians 19-01-20b

Let's pick up our study now. As I said, I want to take one quick final look at these things that we've found in the Lord's discussion with these Sadducees, who not only don't believe in resurrection, but don't believe in angels, and are citing Moses. And yet they don't think that is ever coming back.

They think that the law of Moses is strictly a temporal happening, and they see nothing beyond the moment. And you wonder, if you don't believe in resurrection, and you don't believe in angels, what kind of belief do you really have? And you can see why Paul himself was not a Sadducee, but a Pharisee, because they of course accept all of those things. But as you get back to Deuteronomy chapter 25, the reason given for the Leveret mechanism in the first place is in verse 6. It shall be that the firstborn son, which is born by the union of the brother and the widow, will succeed to the name of his dead brother, in order that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

The word blotted out is Machah, M-A-C-H-A-H. And we're going to take a look at it just for a moment, because think about it. There is a book in heaven, and there is such a thing as having your name blotted out.

What does it mean to have your name blotted out? This concept goes all the way back. The first use of this verb is in Genesis chapter 6. You know your broad Bible navigation. What's in Genesis chapter 6? That's the beginning of the flood idea, right? Giants in the earth in those days, men of renown, and my spirit will not strive with man always, and our discussion of what that actually signifies.

But this is back in the days when God looks down and finds out that the imagination of men's hearts is only evil all the day. And what does he say in Genesis 6-7? I will blot man out. I will blot man out off the face of the earth.

And all but eight souls are blotted out. All but eight people possessing a nephesh are nephesh no more. Blot them out from the face of the earth.

This is repeated again in Genesis chapter 7 verse 4, Genesis chapter 7 verse 23. We can take a look at that one just for reference here, talking about the consequences or the after effects of the flood. He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground, from man and livestock and creeping thing to the bird of the air, and they were blotted out from the earth.

Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained. They were blotted out. So what's left? What future do they have? None.

To be blotted out is to be well and truly gone permanently. In Exodus chapter 17 verse 14, God says, I want you to be sure Joshua hears this, Moses, after the battle where the Amalekites attacked Israel on their way out of Egypt. And you have Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' arms.

He's got the rod of God in his hand. And as long as he can hold it up, they prevail. As soon as he gets tired, they begin to lose.

And so they set Moses on a rock. Aaron gets on one side. Hur gets on the other side.

And they prop up Moses' arms all day long so that Joshua can win the battle, because they are to understand that it is the power of God giving them the victory represented by, symbolized by, the rod of God in the hand of Moses. And without his presence and his enablement, nothing they do is going to prosper. So in order for that to prevail, even Moses, it's not God and Moses.

It takes a team to keep that rod in the air. But because of the nefarious Amalekites attacking Israel when they had just come out of the land, they're disorganized. They don't have any kind of self-defense.

They don't have a national guard. They've got no regiments. They've practiced no troop movements.

And they're attacked right away. And it takes a supernatural intervention to defend them. Afterward, God says in Exodus 17.14, make sure Joshua knows, I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

I will blot it out. Exodus 17.14. When the golden calf incident takes place, the golden egel, remember ma-egel we had in the psalm? It's not a path of righteousness. It is a settling place, a resting place within the camp.

Egel comes from calf. Calf is egel. Ma-egel is the resting place.

It's what the little calves do. Cows don't typically lie down. Sometimes, but not often, do you see cattle lying down.

Mostly, it's the calves that lie down and the mothers are grazing. But in Exodus 32, after the golden calf, and God says, stand back, Moses, because I'm going to destroy this people, and I will make a new people out of you. And Moses interposes himself between the wrath of God and the people, and says in Exodus 32.32, and yet now, if you will forgive their sin, and then there's a long dash.

Moses doesn't know exactly how to follow that. If you will forgive their sin, but if not, blot me, I pray, out of your book which you have written. That's our verb.

Makah, to destroy, to wipe out, to blot out. And this is an utter blotting out. Why is this important? Let's take a look at just one or two more passages.

Turn to Numbers 5.23, because there is a book, and there are names in the book. What does it mean to have your name blotted out? Numbers 5.23, talking about oaths that are going to be written down. Once again, we have a context of marriage here.

There is an accusation. There is, in verse 11, if a man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him, another man has sexual relations with her, and this is hidden from her husband, and her impurity is undetected, since there is no witness against her, and she has not been caught in the act. Feelings of jealousy come over her husband.

He suspects his wife, and she is impure. This is one of the passages you hardly ever get in church. If he is jealous and suspects her, even though she is not impure, then he is to take his wife to the priest.

He must also take an offering of a tenth of an ephah of barley flour on her behalf. He must not pour olive oil on it, or put incense on it, because it is a grain offering for jealousy, a reminder offering to draw attention to wrongdoing. What does oil represent in Scripture? Holy Spirit.

What is the incense? Typically reflecting prayers and that which is acceptable in God's sight, a sweet-smelling savor, but there is no sweet-smelling savor here. There is no oil on it. This is a tenth of an ephah of barley flour.

This is the cheaper flour, and it is of the earth. This is an earthly thing. The priest shall bring her and have her stand before the Lord.

Then he shall take some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust from the tabernacle floor into the water. Once again, why you've got water, water of the Word. This generally represents truth, the washing of water by the Word.

Wash me and I shall be clean. This is the mechanism by which God cleanses and forgives. We saw this in Psalm 23, being led by waters of restfulness.

It's not only for intake, but also for cleansing, for restoration, restoring our nephesh. So you take the water, but you put dust from the tabernacle floor of the holy place here, and this is inside the floor of the holy place, right? So it's the holy place, but it's the most unholy part of the holy place, right? It's the dust of the ground. When's the last time we saw anything significant in terms of the dust being holy? What does Jesus go on to tell the Sadducees after He talks about they're like the angels and neither married nor given in marriage? What does He go on to say next? When Moses was writing about the bush, what happened at the bush? What's the first thing Moses hears? Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

That's how I learned it out of the King James. The dust is holy that you're standing on. Put off your shoe.

We just saw the kinsman redeemer having to throw his shoe if he doesn't want to take the lever at widow. So dust from the tabernacle floor, what does it mean? This is all of the earth. This is all an earthly Israelite function here.

It is unique to Israel. There's one point you take away this morning about the Sadducee

discussion with the Lord Jesus. It is for Israel.

We can observe, interpret, and apply all kinds of things from Israel, but the literal provisions, the literal requirements were unique at a particular time and a particular place for a particular people, and it is the people of Israel. After the priest has had the woman stand before the Lord, this is Numbers 5.18, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hands the reminder offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse. You take the cleansing water and you take the dust of the tabernacle floor and put in it.

This is now bitter water associated with a curse. What curse? What curse? What's the first curse? Go all the way back. What happened? You had a wife who functioned outside her husband's authority and ate some fruit, and what got cursed? On thy belly thou shalt go, and dust shalt thou eat.

To Adam he says, cursed is the ground for your sake. The serpent glides on the dust. The ground is cursed.

It's going to take the sweat of your brow to bring food out of it. So the dust in the water is a reminder of the curse, of the fall, and how did the fall get started? There was a disruption in the marriage, lack of communication, lack of single-mindedness. One partner did something, the other partner then got put in a tough spot, right? That's what's being harked back here.

That's why putting this dust in the water makes it bitter. Where is the barley coming from? Sweat of the brow. Somebody had to use the sweat of the brow on the cursed ground to grow it.

There's nothing of the Holy Spirit. There's nothing of incense that's acceptable to God. This is all on the curse side, and how did the curse get started? Willfulness.

Accepting the lie. After the priest has the woman stand before the Lord, he shall loosen her hair. You remember earlier in Corinthians, we were talking about women's hair as a covering.

Why does the priest loosen her hair? What's this got to do with anything? Her hair being managed and organized is part of her sign of submission, right? And to loosen her hair, her head covering has to be removed. So by extension, the sign of her husband's authority on her head, the priest folds that back out of the way, and the braiding of her hair and the clasps and things that hold it neatly and organized is taken out, and her hair falls loose. He gives her the barley flower, and she holds it in her hands.

Then the priest shall put the woman under oath and say to her, If no other man has had sexual relations with you, and you have not gone astray and become impure while married to your husband, may this bitter water that brings a curse not harm you. But if you have gone astray while married to your husband, and you have made yourself impure by having sexual relations with a man other than your husband, here the priest is to put the water under this curse. May the Lord cause you to become a curse among your people when he makes your womb miscarry

and your abdomen to swell.

May this water that brings a curse enter your body so that your abdomen swells and your womb miscarries. The woman is to say, Amen, so be it. The priest is to write these curses on a scroll and then wash them off into the bitter water.

The priest is to write these curses on a scroll and then blot them off of the scroll. They are removed from the scroll and washed into the water in the same way that the people were washed away by the flood. These curses are washed away into the water.

And this water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering will enter her because he makes her drink it. What's in this water? There is the written curses. What does the written curse say? It's only a half curse, right? It's only a curse if she's done wrong.

What did God tell Cain? If you do well, will you not be accepted? If not, sin is crouching at the door and there are consequences. So this is a pretty severe case. I wonder how often this happened.

But there is obviously a supernatural intervention of God here, right? There's nothing poison in the dust of the tabernacle floor. There's nothing poison in the ink with which these curses are written on a scroll. She doesn't have to eat the scroll.

This is a liquid. There's another time when people had to drink a liquid that contained a curse. Remember when Moses turned the golden calf into a ugly milkshake, so to speak, and had all the people drink it? The priest then takes a handful of the grain as a memorial offering and burns it on the altar.

After that, he has the woman drink the water. So she's holding the grain. He takes it and puts it on the altar and burns it.

The smoke ascends. What does this represent? This offering implicates and involves God in the process, right? It is an offering. The grain goes to God.

It is as though, Lord, we require your attention here to tend to this matter and to make a judgment. Verse 27, he makes the offering first to be sure God is watching, as it were. Then he has the woman drink the water.

Verse 27, if she's made herself impure and been unfaithful to her husband, this will be the result. When she is made to drink the water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering, it will enter her, her abdomen will swell, and her womb will miscarry, and she will become a curse. If, however, the woman has not made herself impure but is clean, she will be cleared of guilt and will be able to have children.

Now, there's nothing mechanical about this. This works in Israel at this time and in this place for these people because God is present. People forget this all the time when they try to take

Old Testament procedures and principles and carry them across into later times or into our age especially.

This works because God is present. God is active. This was never prescribed for anybody but Israel, and it is during the time that you have the tabernacle.

You can't do this if you don't have the dust of the tabernacle floor. There is no dust in the temple floor. The temple's got paved floors.

So, how long did this pertain? As long as there was a tabernacle and the presence of God above the Ark of the Covenant in the tabernacle. It's narrow. It is restricted.

It is symbolic. It is no different than do we think today that we can win battles by having a guy sit on a hill and hold a stick in the air, and if his hands get tired, we have two guys hold him up. God is there.

God is present, and it is symbolic. It is emblematic. It worked for a time.

The first time a guy gathers sticks on the Sabbath, he gets stoned. Not every stick gatherer is going to get stoned. There are emblematic actions and procedures for this unique period of time, the unique people of God that speak a message.

What is it here? What is blotting out? Blotting here is a picture of removal, of rejection, and here it is very serious, because in the blotting, this transfers the curse from the scroll to the water, which then goes into the woman, which then is activated by God, and God determines the earthly consequence. This is an earthly consequence, right? A curse in Israel is in the land. It's on the earth.

It's on the planet. Having children or not having children is a temporal consequence. Being fertile or infertile, being pure or being clean is a ritual status in Israel.

This then is the law of jealousy when a woman goes astray and makes herself impure while married to her husband, or when a husband thinks it has happened, and he suspects his wife. Notice in verse 30, the priest is to have her stand before the Lord and apply this entire law to her. The husband will be innocent of wrongdoing, but the woman will bear the consequences of her sin.

Now, why is it if the woman is found to be innocent, this water has no effect on her, and she's fine, her abdomen does not swell, how come the husband's not in trouble? It seems to me that if he's falsely accused, then he ought to have to stand there with some grain and drink some water and see if his belly swells up. Regardless of the outcome, she's innocent or she's guilty, why is the husband not accountable? He'll be accountable at some point, but he's not accountable on this occasion. Why? Who's the responsible party for the marriage? Who is held to account at the great judgment for how this thing goes? It is the husband, and he needs to know the status.

If he has reason to suspect, he sees some guy fleeing out the back of the tent flap, it's his responsibility to check into this, to find out, to bring this thing before the Lord, and that's what he's done. He didn't just backhand her in his own tent, he didn't abuse, and what has he done? He's brought this matter before the Lord, and that's what you're supposed to do. If you've got doubts, if you've got questions, if you have uncertainty, if you think something has happened, you bring it before the Lord.

There's all kinds of other things he could do if he chooses. If he's a lawless man, he's not going to bother with the priest, he doesn't know how that thing might turn out, he'll take the thing into his own hands. But this husband has done what is lawful.

He has brought the matter to the priest, he has brought it before the Lord, and for doing that, even if it turns out, praise God, his wife is innocent, he's not in trouble for bringing it before the Lord. And that's the key, it is brought to the Lord. You can have all kinds of tribulation in your soul about what may or may not be happening with other people, but if you take it to the Lord, you yourself will remain guiltless.

It is what we do and why we do it that is judged by God. And that is the case for the woman, and that is the case for the man, the man is the responsible party. So he's the one that has to make this case.

The woman doesn't come in and say, hey priest, drag my husband in here and prove me innocent. This is at the husband's instigation, and it is the function of the priest, and it is in God's place at God's time. Notice in verse 15, he is to take his wife to the priest.

That's how this thing got started, he is to take his wife, and he's the one that brings the offering. It's his responsibility to find out the truth, and this is the way he does it. It's a mechanism for him to find out what's going on.

Well, this is contingent on our study of the Leveret Law and what it is like in the resurrection, and you have other uses of this word which are fascinating to look at. I will just give you one more which is sort of related to our study of the Psalms. Turn to Psalm 51, very first verse.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your lovingkindness, according to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. What exactly would you like to have happen? What would we all like to have happen for our transgressions, our sins, failings, shortcomings, mistakes? How much of that would you like to go away? How far away would you like it to be? Blot out my transgressions is David's prayer. Look at verse 2. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Why? For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done this evil in your sight, that you may be found just when you speak and blameless when you judge. Lead me in the resting places of righteousness for your name's sake.

God's forgiveness and cleansing reflects on his name. It's a part of his character. I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part you will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones you have broken may rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and once again, blot out all my iniquities. Cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

If you think about 1 John 1.9. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me by your generous spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall be turned to you." And so on. Blotted out. In earthly Israel, the goal of marriage and offspring was to not be blotted out from presence in Israel.

You're present in your descendants. Abraham is still present. We are sons of Abraham.

We are sons of Isaac. We are sons of Jacob. To be present.

When God blots out our transgressions, our sins, our iniquities, they are no longer present. They are no longer identifiable. They are no longer observable.

They're gone. What a wonderful, wonderful grace. What a wonderful concept.

But in the resurrection, there is an entirely different paradigm. And you don't have to worry about being blotted out. You don't have to worry about needing somebody to carry on after you're gone.

Because, as Jesus says, and you turn back quickly now to Luke 20, they do not die. This is the final point we'll make from this passage. We have established that in the millennium, there is still death.

Israel comes back in mortal bodies. They sweat. They age.

They can be punished. They can hunger. They can thirst.

They can be in need of clothing. They can be sick and in confinement and be susceptible and helped by a visit. Right? All of these things are true.

But yet Jesus says here, verse 36, nor can they die anymore. So what resurrection age is he talking about? He is talking about the age of immortality. He is talking about the age after the millennium.

And he has sort of cleverly dodged the issue of whose wife will she be in the earthly kingdom. Because there is potential for this hypothetical woman and all seven brothers to be resuscitated

in the millennium. Right? But to agonize on that would be to miss the point.

To try to address that and give the details of how God is going to manage inheritance. Because it depends. Are they going to survive passing under the rod? Will they be in the land or out? Will they be in the darkness that is outside? Or will they be in the millennial Israel? And will they be in Jerusalem? And what if some brothers were and some brothers weren't? What if, what if, what if? Jesus bypasses all of that and goes straight to the kingdom of the Father.

It is the kingdom of the Father where they cannot die anymore and are equal to angels. Because this is the ultimate destination. And the intermediate, he doesn't talk about the church age here either, does he? He doesn't say, well, you know, it will be different in a few years after the day of Pentecost and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

You have to know what points to argue and what points to lay aside. Jesus is able to successfully stop the mouths of his opponents here by not dissembling and dissolving in details. He focuses on the thing that counts.

And the thing that counts is the ultimate destination, not the intermediate circumstances. Where will you be in the resurrection age of the Father? That's when they're like the angels. That's when they do not die anymore, being sons of the resurrection, children of the resurrection.

Then look quickly at 37 and 38. Even Moses showed, and notice how many italics there are here, Moses showed in the bush that the dead are raised when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And this is shorthand for, as they've fleshed it out here, the burning bush passage.

Notice burning isn't in the original, but in the episode of the bush at the time when he conversed with God at the bush. And this is scholarly shorthand. These people had discussions all the time, and when you mention the bush, they know exactly what you're talking about.

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him. All live to him. Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies and you have almost a reverse order response, he answers their question about the woman and the men, and then he goes back to Moses.

If you're going to quote Moses writing about the Levirate Law, didn't Moses also record that the great I Am is the God of the living and not the dead? And they cannot answer this. So, back to 1 Corinthians 15 and Resurrection, what is our conclusion? Context, context, context. All of us who love our spouses and are in a wonderfully God-blessed marriage speculate, well, will we still be married on the other side of the Resurrection? I will affirm 100% confident in my affirmation that whatever our status is will be of God and will be great.

I will also suggest that you can't draw conclusions about what our particular status will be like based on what Jesus told Old Testament saints about the function of marriage under the Law of Moses and that that would no longer pertain in their future more than a thousand years, hence

Resurrection. You can't draw conclusions about us. We are unique.

We are a special people. We are a gift from God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we don't marry and give in marriage on the Old Testament basis. Our marriages are defined by love and by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the relationship.

It's unique to our age. They didn't have Jesus Christ in the center of their marriages as believers in the Old Testament age. We have that opportunity.

We have that potential. We have that encouragement, and that's an entirely different thing. The relationship between Christ and the church is different than the relationship between God and Israel, and marriages in that age reflected, and God talks about Israel as an unfaithful wife.

Remember that? And I took you after you were unfaithful, oh Israel, and brought you back and cleaned you up, and then you became unfaithful again. What am I going to do with you? That's a picture for them, and that's what Jesus is talking about. So you can't, you've got to be careful if you're going to try to draw any conclusions about what our status will be in our resurrection.

It's a different marriage. It's a different day. It's a different group, and we are uniquely the possession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having said that, let's at least introduce 1 Corinthians chapter 16. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so must you do also. On the first day of the week, let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

Now concerning the collection, the word collection here is interesting. It is *logia*. It's related to the word *logos*.

When you speak and you collect words, the sum of them communicates thought, and there may be a little bit of cross-connect here with a verb that sounds the same but is different, but this is actually concerning the *logia* for the saints, and it does mean collection. Interestingly, it is used only here in Corinthians, this collection for the saints. Paul says, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also.

I have given instructions. I have given orders, and this is a pretty strong word for directions. Let me just say that whatever it is that we're going to learn from this chapter is not what most churches and most believers think it is, and it is failure to read closely.

There's a lot of talk about giving. There's a lot of talk about supporting the local church. There's a lot of talk about tithing.

There's a lot of talk about giving, but notice what Paul says. What kind of collection is this for the saints? This is a collection for the saints. Which saints? We know from context and other places that these are the saints in Jerusalem.

Look at verse 3. When I come, whoever you approve, I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. This is a gift, a gift that is collected from multiple people in Corinth. Each of you individually is going to set something by.

We will take what you have set by as much or as little as you set by according to your prosperity, verse 2, storing up as he may prosper. If you prosper and you've got some extra, set it aside once a week is the idea here. We'll take a little closer look at that next time.

Notice day is in italics there. This is the first of the seven. It's actually Sabbath.

It's the word Sabbath. On the first Sabbath, on the first of the Sabbaths, it's a plural and it bears some scrutiny. It's easy to say, oh, they worshiped on Sunday, so they took an offering every Sunday.

Notice what doesn't happen here. On the first of the seven, or the sevens actually, the first of the sevens, let each one of you lay something aside. Each one of you lay something aside as you have prospered.

Lay it aside where? Does it say bring it down to the church and have it collected? Does it say bring it into the synagogue? Do you guys count it? This is para plus the dative here. Para is alongside. Parallel or two lels, side by side, two lines, right? A paraclete is a helper that comes alongside.

So, this literally means, set aside. At the first of the sevens, set aside something and store it up. Who's doing the storing? The setting-asider, right? Not the church.

Says nothing about the church taking this collection. Individuals are going to set aside for themselves so that it's already identified when he comes. And there's no pressure.

Well, Paul is here, don't you think you ought to give? You think about it now. Why are they setting something aside? For the operating expenses of the church? For the salary of the pastor? For the electric lights? For the note on the piano or the organ? Why are they setting aside? It is a gift for needy saints far away. That's the occasion.

There is a specific occasion. Now, are the saints in Jerusalem always needy? Is this something they are going to do month by month or year by year? This is a one-time shot, right? When I come, I'll send whoever you designate by letter with this special gift on this occasion to these needy people in Jerusalem. How many times have we noted a need near or far and been able to pool our resources and help to meet that immediate need? We don't put a needy person on salary.

We don't start giving them a regular check from the church every month, right? But there are times when we hear that somebody is in a bad way. Something has happened. A disaster has befallen.

There's a famine. There's hard times. Do you remember how many times in Acts it talks about Agabus and others coming and saying there's going to be a great famine? Well, the famine seems to have hit particularly hard in Jerusalem.

And there are brothers and sisters in Christ down there who are really in a bad way. And notice this doesn't even say money. It has been suggested, and I think it has merit, that the first of the sevens – you remember at Pentecost and you had the Feast of Firstfruits and then you have seven sevens all the way up from Passover until Pentecost? That is seven sevens.

It's the 50 days. Seven sevens plus one. And Paul is going to later talk about coming and visiting the saints in Corinth.

Look at verse 7. I do not wish to see you now on the way. I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits, but I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. So, in the context, what is the first of the sevens? Paul has communicated even to the Gentiles in Corinth.

They know all about the feast schedule in Israel. That's why he can say Pentecost and they know exactly what he's talking about. But it has been suggested that as the crops come in, and as grain is either purchased or grown and harvested, that they set aside each week.

It's an ongoing harvest. And at the beginning of the sevens, when the firstfruits come in, they set something aside. It doesn't say weekly or every Sabbath or every first of the week.

He says at the first of the sevens, set something aside. Just set it aside, put it in the storehouse. When I come, we'll gather it.

This may be a caravan of grain that goes. It says nothing about money. It says, as you prosper, what kind of harvest did you have? And to the extent that you had an abundant harvest, this is a perfectly plausible interpretation here concerning the collection.

We always assume it's money. It doesn't say money. When I come, whomever you approve by your letters, I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

This may well have been food aid. It's a one-time thing. It meets a specific need.

It's going to be carried on a one-time basis to Jerusalem by designated representatives. They've heard of the need. Paul doesn't have a lot of money to buy grain himself, and so he has appealed to people, if you've got some left over as you've prospered, let's bring it together.

There are people, he says, in other places, we'll see next time, who sacrificially have given more than they really needed to, or from a human standpoint should, but we're going to pool all of this and take it to Jerusalem. That's all he says. What is it not? It is not, you need to put something in the plate every week for your local church.

It is not a specific percentage. It is not even to be used or applied or taken up locally. Each of you set it aside yourself.

When I come, you and I, so to speak, will find these designated individuals who will take charge of it at that time, go to Jerusalem. Interesting. We'll read this a little bit before next Sunday, and we'll continue in 1 Corinthians 16 next time.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for the presence and power of your spirit. We pray that you'll bless our understanding, bless your word to our hearts.

May we find ways to put it into practice in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.