

00-05-28b

Let's resume our study now in the book of Genesis. We're in chapter 43 and 44. And we're looking at the idea of divination and Joseph's cup and why it is mentioned here.

And this has led us to taking a look at this particular Hebrew word, nachash, which is not the only word used. And you'll remember if you look in Deuteronomy 18 that there are a number of different forms of divination and soothsaying and so forth that are prohibited in the nation of Israel. But at this time, it is something that Joseph apparently practices and God reveals truth to him.

You see later on when Israel departs the land of Egypt some 400 years after this, Balaam is going to declare oracles from God and bless Israel and predict their future. Some of those prophecies are even messianic in nature. And there's a lot of different directions that my mind has wandered on this over this past week.

And I will give you just one of several digressions. When we were studying the calming of the winds and the waves in Luke for Friday night, and you remember Jesus in the parallel accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, one of them records His words. He says, Peace be still, but in all three accounts it says the wind and the waves ceased.

And that's a real fascinating word. I didn't have time to go through it and I enjoyed it so much I'm going to give it to you now even though we're not in Luke. But the word there in the Greek is from katargeo.

Katargeo has a range of meanings. A little short summary is it can mean to render ineffective, to nullify, to cancel, to abolish or do away with. In the passive it means to pass away or cease.

And Paul uses it in Galatians 5.4 meaning you are cut off from Christ, you've ceased away from, you've been nullified or canceled out, rendered ineffective. Any one of those range of meanings might be applied there. But what I find interesting is that katargeo, when it is used of the storm that Jesus stills, is in the middle voice.

There are three voices that you find in Greek, the active, the middle, and the passive. And the middle and the passive voice are the same in form but they are different in meaning. And the middle voice is the reflexive voice, something that you do to yourself.

So in the active voice I would still something, I would cause it to cease. I would cut off something with katargeo. In the passive voice I would be ceased or I would be stilled or I would be cut off.

In the middle voice something would cease itself, something would still itself, something would do it. There is a range of meanings for the middle voice also. But you get the idea that it doesn't emphasize the agent as either in the active voice where you say I still, I

cause to cease, or the passive voice where the agent is performing that on me.

In the middle voice it's more the action itself that is in view. And I find that peculiar because it would be so easy to use the active voice and say he stilled the waves and the wind. But it says they ceased themselves, they stilled themselves at his command.

And once again, as I mentioned on Friday night, the idea that perhaps this particular storm on the Sea of Galilee had sentient forces behind it, that this may have been a demonically produced spate of weather since he rebukes it and it stills itself. It's sort of an unusual use of *katargeo* in the middle voice. But what's particularly interesting, and this may be seen as a digression, but like Perry Mason I'll bring us back to where we're going, is this very same word in the very same voice is used in 1 Corinthians 13.

In 1 Corinthians 13.8, after talking about love, love is patient, love is kind, all those things about love, after the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals and so forth, verse 8 of 1 Corinthians 13, love never ends. And the word there translated ends is from *pipto*. And you may remember *pipto* in Greek literally means to fall.

And it says *agape*, *u-de-pote*, never ever falls. It doesn't fall to the ground, it doesn't fail. As for prophecies, they will pass away.

And this is *katar-ge-the-santai*. Weather tongues, *pao-santai*. From *pao-so* we get our word *pause* from *pao-santai* for tongues.

And weather knowledge or *gnosis*, *katar-ge-the-santai*. And so from *katar-ge-o* you have in the passive voice here, they will pass away or they will be caused to pass away by some outside agent. And that's what's true for prophecies and for knowledge.

But when you get to tongues, *glosi*, it's *pao-santai*. And *pao-omai*, if you look that up in a Greek lexicon, has to do with ceasing or coming to an end. Of course there's been a great debate about tongues.

And some people have said, well, they are going to cease themselves or they're going to come to an end on their own in some fashion. And you'd have to read all the commentaries to follow the argument. But that they have a different status than prophecy and knowledge.

And when you get into your charismatic theology, they will try to make a case for tongues based on this difference in vocabulary. But *pao-o*, let me read you this from my little short Greek dictionary here. *Pao-o* means to stop or keep from.

It's used in 1 Peter 3.10. In the middle it is to stop or cease, to cease from or be done with. And so when we find these words used in the middle voice, and it seems like it's a reflexive, that is the term that's used over in Luke chapter 8 when Jesus stills the wind in the waters. Let me read you that right quick.

He says to them, in chapter 8 verse 24 of Luke, He awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased. And I think I told you that was kadargeo, but that's the one from 1 Corinthians. This is apausanto, which is from pao-o.

And so the pauso in 1 Corinthians is used of tongues. It's the same word that Jesus uses of the wind and the waves. And it has been pointed out that this use by Jesus, or in connection with Jesus, obviously what made the wind and waves stop? Did they just stop themselves on their own, or did Jesus speak and stop them? So the use of the middle voice doesn't imply that there was not an agent.

And that's the argument that the charismatics use for tongues, is that because it's pao-o in the middle voice, that it's in a different category than these other things that are used in the passage that are stopped by command of God. That tongues are going to somehow go on, because they don't quit until they stop themselves, and they haven't stopped themselves, or some such thing. But here's the point.

Whether you're talking about the wind and the waves, or whether you're talking about tongues, it says they cease, and it's in the middle voice. And tongues and prophecy and knowledge in 1 Corinthians 13 were something that were legitimate for a while in terms of giving the ability to predict the future. What was the purpose of prophecy? What was the purpose of tongues? What was the purpose of knowledge as a gift in the early church? It was to give information that you didn't currently have.

When you look at the examples in Acts, Agabus predicts what's going to happen to Paul. There's a prophet that stands up and predicts a famine in the land. It was for guidance and for knowing what to do next in the church when people stood up and manifested these gifts.

It was to predict the future, which is the stated purpose for divination, to foretell the future. The means was somewhat different, but these came to a stop. They stopped themselves in the same way that the wind and the waves stop.

And how do those things stop? It's at the behest of the Lord God. When He decides something has served its purpose and it's going to stop, it stops. It was in use in the early portion of this age, these gifts that gave knowledge and gave revelation of future things.

They came to a certain point and stopped. In the same way, in these inceptive or early days of Israel, with the patriarchs, Jacob and Joseph, you have the use of supernatural revelation to reveal the future, whether by dreams or by divination. And our whole point is here, having this silver cup doesn't make Joseph a pagan.

It isn't any different divining the future by using this cup than it is by interpreting dreams. It's just another method that God used to reveal the future to Joseph. And it's

possible that God gave him information of a more daily and routine nature to help him become the great administrator and the great supervisor that marked him out for promotion every place that he went, whether it was in the house of Potiphar, in the prison house, the roundhouse, or in the house of Pharaoh, that God used this revelation of future things through trivial means to give Joseph information that he needed to do a good job.

Keep in mind also how large, how thick is Joseph's Bible. Several hundred years before the law of Moses is going to come into existence, the book of Genesis hasn't been written. What does Joseph have? What do any of these early patriarchs have in terms of the Word of God? Basically, at this point, oral tradition and perhaps a few clay tablets recording their family history.

So, is God free in these early days where there is not much written revelation, if any, to use other means to reveal his will and to give knowledge that's necessary to further his plan? There's nothing wrong with it. Why would God later in Deuteronomy and in Leviticus proscribe or forbid divining and necromancy and so forth? Because now they've got the book of Genesis. They have the books of the law from Moses.

They have the record of the Word of God to use to guide them. And that is sufficient. The revelation that God has given them is sufficient.

They no longer need to look to other means. And if they are looking to those means, they're not looking for truth from God. They're looking to other gods or other forces or they're believing in fate or nature gods and this sort of thing.

And so, it isn't that the means is illegitimate. It's the thinking behind using the means. If Joseph is discerning the will of God using his silver cup or analyzing dreams, that's fine.

Joseph, obviously, we were talking about this during the break, he's one of the few in the Bible that you really can find no fault with in terms of his dedication to God and his faith. So, if Joseph is using this cup, is he trusting in mysticism or magic? He's going to understand that whatever he finds in that cup is going to be coming from God. And he will thank God for it and honor God.

You see him mention this when he stands before Pharaoh. He says, I can only speak what God tells me. God will interpret your dream.

So, I say all of that to say that it's a little bit startling when you come along and find out that Joseph has a divining cup. And you say, wow, divining, isn't that a sin in the law of Moses? It is, but there's a reason. Things have changed.

Divining as a means of ascertaining the divine will, except in extraordinary circumstances, has come to a halt because you've got the written revelation. And for your ordinary run-of-the-mill Israelite, you don't need to go to a soothsayer or an

astrologer or a necromancer or anybody else to try to divine the will of God. If someone is doing that, they're doing it for wrong reasons.

In the same way, and I think you can draw an analogy, there's been a lot of arguments about whether tongues and prophecy and so forth are legitimate gifts in the church age today. Well, not that that means is inherently wrong, that it's a bad thing to speak in tongues or that it's a bad thing to have a word of knowledge or a prophetic vision. The question is, is it something that God uses to communicate His will now? Because, obviously, these things were legitimate in the early church.

And Paul talks about, I will show you a more excellent way. And we are now encouraged to pursue the more excellent way because we have the completed canon of Scripture, which, by the way, the early church did not have. In the same way that there wasn't much written revelation of Old Testament truth for the patriarchs, there's not much written revelation of New Testament truth for the church in its first few generations.

And so you had these supernatural means of communicating. And now that we have the written record, these others are unnecessary, it can be argued. Now, there are people that argue the other way.

I will also say that I think that perhaps people with good intentions have misinterpreted 1 Corinthians 13. Because as you look at that passage, he says, whether there are prophecies, they will fail. This is the passive of *kadargeo*.

They will be caused to cease. They will be ceased, literally. Whether there are tongues, they will *pao'o* in the middle voice.

They will stop themselves. And it's the very same word that's used of the wind and the waves. Apparently a command will be issued and they will stop.

They will be no more. Whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. Why? In verse 9. We know in part and we prophesy in part.

And that's the thing about these temporary gifts in the early days of the church, is it was for a specific situation, a specific circumstance or instance. Agabus telling Paul, you're going to go to Jerusalem and be bound. The other prophet, whose name I don't recall, who said there was going to be a famine coming.

This was specific knowledge. It was partial. And he goes on to say, when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

The argument in conservative evangelical circles is, well, the word of God is that which is perfect, and so these partial prophecies will be done away. And I think that that is true in principle. I think the principle is true.

And we have complete revelation in the sense that we have everything that God wants for us, and we don't need to look to some other form of revelation. When we hit a specific circumstance, what people argue now is, well, in a specific situation, the Bible doesn't say, well, should we buy this property and build this new building? Or should we add this man to the board of deacons or whatever? We need specific guidance. And so we still need prophecy and tongues and so forth to reveal God's specific will in specific situations.

And what this is, is an admission of an inability to apply the word of God and its principles and its doctrines to specific situations. And while we can't figure out what principles apply, we just want God to give us the answer. Just give me the answer sheet for this multiple choice question.

But here's the thing. When he says we know in part and we prophesy in part, when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. And I think that there is an application of this principle to the word of God versus the signed gifts.

But when he says in verse 11, when I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things. And by the way, he uses *kadargeo* there again, to put away childish things. He says, I caused them to cease.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Well, my apologies to the evangelical theological community, but even with the word of God, we are not seeing face to face. And when that which is perfect comes, we will see face to face.

So that which is perfect in the literal first sense that's in this passage is not the word of God, because we're not seeing face to face. Absent from the body is face to face. That's what Paul says.

So when he says that which is perfect has come, that is the millennial kingdom. That is the presence of Christ. Face to face is the presence of Christ in the literal sense.

And when that which is perfect has come, that's what that is. By application, I think we can still say that for all intents and purposes, the temporary revelatory gifts have ceased. But all of that has to do with Joseph's divining cup.

Because this cup represents something. It is not an idle choice. Joseph could have put a bracelet or a sterling silver table knife or something from the dining hall that was on the table of his guests into Joseph's sack.

Why is it this particular silver cup? And it's not a cup. It's the cup. It's Joseph's cup.

He's sitting apart. How could they have even gotten to it when they're at separate tables, as it were? And Joseph could have picked something that was within their

periphery that you could make a case that they had stolen it. Why does he put his silver divining cup? And why does he make reference to divining? It's one thing to say it's a divining cup in the mouth of the servant.

But when he comes back, he says, Do you not know that I have the power to divine? And this repetition tells us that this is a significant fact. So back again in chapter 44, we have in verse 5, This is the cup from which my Lord drinks, and with which He indeed practices nachash, divination. You have done evil in so doing.

And then down in verse 15, Joseph said to them, What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice nachash, divination? Well, we have already noted in this placing of the cup in Benjamin's sack and tracking them down and confronting them with the possession of something and accusing them of stealing it when they didn't in fact know it was there, with when Jacob left Laban's household and Rachel had stolen the teraphim. And Jacob doesn't know it. And he says, If you find your stuff in our camp, sentence of death on the person who has it.

And Rachel has to pretend that she's at that time of the month and sit on top of the camel saddle with the teraphim hidden underneath to keep her father from finding it. But let's think back about this idea of divination. If our understanding of the use of the verb nachash is correct, back in Genesis chapter 30, where Laban says, I perceive by divination that my blessing from God comes through you, Jacob.

Then what is the likely means that Laban uses to practice divination? It is probably the teraphim, which along with necromancy and rhabdomancy and bellomancy and the hydromancy, which is the liquids in the cup. Hydromancy would be what Joseph is alluding to here. Liquids in his silver cup would be a form of telling the future.

And this is why we begin to get some additional insight beyond what we've already seen about why Rachel might take the teraphim. We talked about the fact that there was status involved with this. But if the teraphim are Laban's means of divining, of finding out the truth and telling where people have gone, for example, then what better way to keep him from following them and finding them than to take the teraphim so that her father is more or less blind and can't figure out where they went.

And so if she takes the teraphim, and perhaps Rachel herself may have had a belief that there was the ability to use these teraphim to divine the future. And this is suggested by the fact that when she has Joseph and names him, she says, I will have another son. And she's predicting the future.

She's engaging in some sort of prediction there. So it's suggested, it's hinted at. But one thing is certain.

This episode with the cup in the sack, if the cup is a means of divining, and if the

teraphim were a means of divining, this is an even stronger reminder to the brothers. It's a clue. In our recent family history, old dad, when he came down from Laban, got stopped and investigated for the theft of a divining tool that he didn't know he had.

Who would know this? What should this be harking back to? This is a clue to Joseph's identity. If they just stop and think, this has to be more than coincidence. That here's another divining tool that's been hidden by somebody who didn't know they had it.

The only difference is, in this case it was found, where in Rachel's case it was not found. But this causes us to go back and think, now what is Joseph really up to in putting this particular cup in the sack, this divining cup, which he apparently does use for hydromancy. Hydro meaning liquid or water.

And the way this would work is, people would fill a cup with a liquid, such as water, and then put an object or some other liquid of a different color in and watch the swirls, not unlike tea leaves. The tea leaves arrange themselves because they're moved around by the liquid. And the liquid was thought to be somehow influenced by the, whatever, the god you believe in or the forces that you think are at work to give you a clue as to the future.

So, finding this cup and Joseph's putting it in the sack, why does he pick this particular object? Well, we talked about those threes and about the tests that Joseph is giving to his brothers to determine if they have truly had a change of heart. The first witness, the first evidence is their acknowledgement and their confession of guilt to one another when he says he's going to penalize them and prove whether or not they're spies. The second proof is when they come back with Benjamin and they've safeguarded him and they're anxious to take care of him.

And so, after that second proof, Joseph needs one more testimony before he is going to reveal himself. He wants three proofs that they have in fact changed and that he can embrace them and commune with them and bring them to live with him, basically. And so, what is that third test? Well, when he puts the divining cup in there and they return and it's in Benjamin's sack.

Benjamin is the favored son. Benjamin is the other son of Rachel. Joseph knows his father and knows that Benjamin will have been receiving all of the dotage.

He will be the object of the brothers' attitudes in the same way that he once was. And so, how far will they go for Benjamin? Will they give him up and say, Good riddance, you know, that favored son like Joseph. Here's a ready-made... We don't even have to make up a story this time.

We can just let the Egyptian take him and lock him up or kill him or make him a slave. And we can go back to father and it will all be done with. But what happens in this case?

When Judah and his brothers come to Joseph's house in verse 14 of chapter 44, he was still there.

They fell before him on the ground. Once again, they're on the ground in front of Joseph for a second time. As the dream foretold, Joseph said to them, What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination? Nachash.

Then Judah said, What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? How shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. Here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found. But he said, Far be it from me that I should do so.

The man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. As for you, go up in peace to your father. He's giving them the chance to repeat history here and return home with all of their stuff.

Go in peace. Take the grain. Everything's fine.

They just can't take Benjamin back. This is the ultimate test because if they're willing to abandon Benjamin to save their skins, they can rationalize and say, We've got the grain. We've got our lives.

Can we go back to Jacob without Benjamin? And then in verse 18, we have the beginning of Judah's speech. As I mentioned last time, this is the longest and most eloquent, the most impassioned speech in the whole book of Genesis. It is the climax of suspense of this visit of the brothers to Egypt and the encounter with Joseph and the whole Joseph story.

This is really the pinnacle and the climax right here and it's marked by this great speech that Judah makes. And this speech is the clincher. This is the third piece of evidence.

This is the third witness that convinces Joseph that he really can reveal himself and he really can reunite with his family because there has been a genuine change of heart. Look at what Judah says beginning in verse 18. He says, Oh my Lord, please let your servant speak a word in my Lord's hearing and do not let your anger burn against your servant for you are even like Pharaoh.

My Lord asks his servant saying, Have you a father or a brother? We said to my Lord, we have a father, an old man and a child at his old age who is young. His brother is dead and he alone is left of his mother's children and his father loves him. Then you said to your servants, Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.

We said to my Lord, the lad cannot leave his father for if he should leave his father, his father would die. But you said to your servants, Unless your younger brother comes

down with you, you shall see my face no more. So it was when we went up to your servant, my father, we told him the words of my Lord and our father said, Go back and buy us a little food.

But we said, We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down, for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us. Then your servant, my father, said to us, You know that my wife bore me two sons.

Notice, my wife bore me two sons. Where does this put the other ten brothers? This is really a slap in the face, isn't it? He's not acknowledging their mother as his wife. He's not acknowledging them as his sons in this speech.

He says, My wife bore me two sons, and the one went out for me, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces, and I have not seen him since. You begin to get the idea that maybe Jacob has some doubt as to the ultimate fate of Joseph, because he just doesn't say he was torn to pieces by wild beasts. He says, He went out, and I said, Surely he is torn to pieces, and I have not seen him since.

But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore, Judah says, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever. Now therefore, Judah says, please let your servant remain instead of the lad, as a slave to my Lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me? Lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father.

How many times does Judah mention Jacob in this speech? Over and over and over. Is it loyalty to Benjamin? Oh, I couldn't bear to see my younger brother become a slave. I couldn't bear to leave him behind.

We'd all miss him so much. Benjamin is not really the issue here, is it? What is uppermost in the minds of the brothers, and especially as evidenced here in the speech of Judah? They love their father. They will do anything to avoid hurting their father.

They'll leave Simeon down in Egypt, supposedly rotting away in prison for a year, rather than take Benjamin away from their father. When their father says, go back to Egypt, they have to cajole and provide all kinds of surety and promise their father that they won't bring his gray hair down to the grave. Notice what happens after Judah gives this speech in chapter 45.

Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him. He cried out, make

everyone go out from me. So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

And he wept aloud. This is the third time that Joseph weeps because this is the evidence he was looking for. There was such a callous disregard of Jacob.

Joseph had loved his father and had a close relationship with his father from the beginning, but the brothers did not. The brothers resented their father. They were angry at him over the Dinah incident.

They were callous and insensitive to his feelings when they sold Joseph into slavery. But what has changed in the last 20 years? Now Judah is willing to make himself a slave rather than break his father's heart. He does nothing but argue for Jacob's well-being.

It's all about the father. And when the brothers of Joseph manifest and put themselves on the line because of love for their father, now Joseph knows that this is what they have in common. Whatever their other differences might be, they all love their father.

And so this is the third piece of evidence and the passing of this final test. And Joseph can restrain himself no longer. He has seen their contrition and their acknowledgement of their guilt.

He has seen their obedience in the second case when they bring Benjamin back and when they are not jealous of him even though he gets five times as much food at the table. They don't grouse and complain. All of these things together witness to the change of heart and the new attitude and perspective that his brothers have.

And so he can restrain himself no longer. And he wept aloud. The Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

He must have really been carrying on. For a man to cry is one thing, but for everybody in the house to hear it, this must have completely overwhelmed him. And then Joseph is going to reveal himself and we'll look at that in a moment.

But when you think about the larger picture that is in view and the events that this story so obviously foreshadows, you think about Joseph as a Christological type. Isn't it interesting that he is estranged from his brothers? You get the idea that the brothers... Of course, Benjamin is not involved in that. He's not old enough.

It's the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. It's the sons of Leah who sell Joseph into slavery as his brethren symbolizing or foreshadowing the nation of Israel, crucifying Christ, one of their own, on the cross, rejecting Him, being jealous and bitter because of his relationship to the Father and thinking that they are not receiving their just desserts from the Father because of Him. Then Joseph going away with nothing but the bloodstained coat to speak of his fate before the Father.

And then when the brothers come down and as they begin to manifest change of heart, change of mind, acknowledgement of guilt, obedience and care for their father and ultimately this great impassioned speech by Judah that is all about the Father. This is when they are now... Remember all the things that Jesus said about His Father. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father.

He is the personification of everything that the Father stands for. And if you knew the Father, you would know Him and so forth. But it's interesting to me that Joseph's brothers do not recognize Him on the first occasion or the second occasion or the third occasion when these encounters take place even though they are given clues just as Jesus gave clues and harked back to Old Testament prophecy again and again when He came in His first advent.

They should have known from Old Testament prophecy who He was. And Joseph begins giving clues. Remember the first time when they showed up? As soon as they came and acknowledged their guilt, the signs of mercy began to show up.

Instead of all the brothers being held and one being sent back, all of the brothers are sent back except Simeon. And this is just pure grace on Joseph's part. Their money is restored and they find their money in their sacks.

They end up getting the grain for free. They don't have to pay for it. They are given provisions for the journey when you look at 42-25 after the first visit to Egypt.

This should have awakened them that something unusual is going on. But of course, they don't have any way of recognizing Him at that point. Then when they come back and they bring Benjamin, they get a special meal at his house.

They are brought into his house. They are seated in birth order. Who but someone in their family would know their birth order? Benjamin receives five times as much food as anyone else at the table.

More and more obvious hints that something is going on. They receive this undeserved favor. They get their money back.

When they leave, they find not only the original payment but the double money they brought for the next batch of grain. So they've got three times their money, another three by the way, in their sacks. When the steward goes and chases them down and begins opening the sacks looking for the cup, he starts with the oldest.

So each one opens his sack and here's three times the money in the sack. Simeon opens his sack three times the money. Levi opens his sack three times the money.

On and on. Judah opens his sack three times the money all the way down until they get to Benjamin. And here's three times the money and the silver cup.

And the silver cup, it's the divining tool. Who but Joseph would know about the incident with Laban where the divining things were hidden and searched for by someone who pursued and caught up with them after they left. So as they are tested and as they begin to manifest and demonstrate their change of heart, when is it that Joseph reveals himself and comes right out and says, I am Joseph? It's when they clearly manifest and demonstrate their love for his father.

And when that takes place and when he sees that, he cannot restrain himself, he weeps out loud because now they are his brothers indeed. They share his love for the father. And it's demonstrated in their willingness to give their life on behalf of a brother.

Remember what Jesus says over in John 15, 13, Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friend. And the love that we have for one another as believers should be a manifestation of our love for the father. We love one another because we love the father.

We love Christ because we love the father. And the Lord Jesus Christ will manifest Himself to us when we manifest love for His father. So it's a wonderful picture and you can extend that somewhat when you think about Joseph and Benjamin being more closely related than any of the other brothers as a picture of Christ and the church.

Because Benjamin isn't involved in the selling into slavery. He comes along after the fact. But the last brother is the one that is honored and most closely associated with Joseph in the same way that the church comes after the nation of Israel, but it is closely associated.

We are His body and His bride. And we receive great blessing because of our close union with Jesus Christ. And in the millennial kingdom and in the eternal future, the fact that this close relationship exists will not be a source of jealousy or bitterness as it was in the early days of the church where the Jews threw rocks at the church and refused to accept it and wanted to go back to the law of Moses.

There is no animosity on the part of Joseph's brothers toward Benjamin when they see his favored status. He gets five times the food. He is going to get five times the clothing here in the next chapter.

But there is no animosity because they all love the Father. And they don't harbor a grudge. They don't bear ill will.

And this is going to be the mark of Israel in the millennial kingdom and beyond. They are going to recognize their place in God's plan and that their relationship with the Father is what counts. And if God has given the church as a gift to the Lord Jesus Christ to be the firstborn among many brethren and to be his own peculiar possession, great.

There is no jealousy. There is no sour grapes involved. Just as Joseph's brothers have

reached this place where they don't resent Benjamin and they don't resent the relationship between Joseph and Benjamin anymore.

Well, we are going to have to pause here and resume our study next week. But it is a wonderful thing to recognize that in the plan of God all things work together for good. And sometimes we see that it appears as though someone has gotten the precedence or someone has gotten a head start or a great blessing of some sort.

But when we focus on the Father and our relationship with the Father, that is the key. Because all good things can come to us. And the great revelation of Jesus Christ Himself to us is going to come when we develop our love for the Father.

And that is a truth that we will explore more fully next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank You for the clear communication of Your Word and Your will that we find in the pages of Scripture.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will use it to improve and bolster our faith as we determine what is real in life. To restore and flesh out our hope as we formulate our expectations and our goals in life. And our love, which even our love for one another we know is ultimately a measure of how close we are to You.

We pray that as we meditate on these things God the Holy Spirit will strengthen us and build us up and transform us by the renewing of our minds so that we will reflect the character of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself is the embodiment of love for you. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.