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We're ready now to resume our study in Genesis chapter 48, where Jacob, anticipating that he is very near the end of his life, has sent for Joseph and Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and he sits up and begins this formal blessing that is a part of the patriarchal pattern. We saw it most recently with Isaac when he felt that he was going to die. He actually lived quite a few years afterward, but he thought he was going to die, and that's when he called in Esau.

And then we know the story of Jacob sort of usurping the blessing. But when he has his son Joseph and his grandsons, Manasseh and Ephraim, before him, Jacob begins by invoking the name of God, and the name that he chooses out of all the possibilities is El Shaddai, which has been translated in our English Bible, verse 3 of chapter 48 of Genesis, God Almighty appeared to me at Luz. And so we took this opportunity to take a look at this particular name of God as it is discussed in the lexicon and looking at its derivation.

We saw the verb Shaddai, which means to pour forth. In some derivations it means to moisten. We saw where this can be either pouring forth blessing or pouring forth discipline, the rain that is necessary for growing crops can also be the rain that produces the flood.

And the very name God the Father that comes to us from the New Testament from the teaching of the Lord Jesus is a reminder to us that a parent can be both a source of blessing and a source of discipline to children, but it is always done in love. God loves the world. God sent his Son to die for the world.

God made his Son the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. And yet God will not violate his own integrity. He will function in justice and righteousness.

We saw in our scripture reading this morning in the Psalms that David depends on God's faithfulness and God's righteousness and God's mercy. But God's faithfulness and righteousness are also the source of his justice, where he is not remiss to overlook iniquity or to let sin go unpunished. And so we saw that in an alternate possibility for the derivation or at least a related word or something that's related by wordplay, if nothing else, which is the verb Shadad, where we had the verb root for the noun breast or Shad, Shad in Hebrew, S-H-A-D from Shadah, S-H-A-D-A-H.

We have Shadad, S-H-A-D-A-D, which means to deal violently with, to despoil, to devastate, to ruin. And it is found in a number of places in scripture, especially in Ezekiel and a lot of the prophets. One example of this is in Ezekiel 32, 12.

We might take a quick look at that passage, Ezekiel 32, verse 12. The verse says, it's talking about in verse 11, thus says the Lord God, the sword of the king of Babylon shall

come upon you by the swords of the mighty warriors, all of them, the most terrible of the nations, I will cause your multitude to fall. They shall plunder the pomp of Egypt and all its multitude shall be destroyed.

And that word for destroyed is Shadad. And this means to be violently despoiled, to be devastated, to be ruined. If you turn a few pages back to Jeremiah chapter 51, verse 55.

Jeremiah 51, 55. Because the Lord is plundering Babylon and silencing her loud voice, though her waves roar like great waters and the noise of their voice is uttered, because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken. For the Lord is the God of recompense.

He will surely repay. But that word for being plundered in verse 55 of Jeremiah 51 is also our verb Shadad. And there are numerous, it's a very common verb in Hebrew.

Those are just two examples. Another there are many illustrations of that. But this has been suggested as another derivation for Shaddai.

And that's why you haven't translated God almighty, the one who has the power to deal violently, to despoil and to ruin. But it seems to have a negative and destructive connotation. And this makes the idea that that's the primary derivation somewhat uncertain.

I believe that Shaddai is derived from Shaddah, but that there is an intentional association via wordplay with Shaddad. Because to pour forth, you can pour forth blessing, you can pour forth destruction. And it is a reminder both of, as Paul talks about in the New Testament, both of the mercy and the severity of God.

You remember in Romans chapter 9, he talks about God dealing severely with the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, talks about God's mercy in dealing with the vessels of honor. And as Paul's discussion goes forward, he says, paraphrasing, he says, so we see both the severity and the mercy of God. Severity toward those who are disobedient and rebellious and mercy toward those who respond in faith and in obedience to the advances of God, to the call of God.

So that is very well captured in the term Shaddai. There is a third suggestion, which is something more in the realm of conjecture, but that it may have originally been Shed or Sheddai, S-H-E-D. You know that the vowels are not a part of the oldest Hebrew text.

The vowel and vowel points were put there by the Masoretes to make more consistent and certain the reading of individual words and phrases in Hebrew. But the old manuscripts only had the vowels and the vowel points were added later. So a lot of times what a word is depends on how it's pointed.

And we have basically the tradition of the Masoretes. It is itself an interpretation. And we

occasionally come to the continental text and repoint it to get a better sense and to get a sense that is consistent with the context and consistent with parallels.

And we sometimes realize that the Masoretes tradition didn't get it quite right and we repoint. And so if you think about Shaddai, the consonants there are the Sheen. You remember Mr. Spock when he holds up his hand and says, live long and prosper.

And he makes a division between his thumb and his first finger and then a division between his ring finger and his middle finger. And all the other fingers are stuck together. Well, that's actually an imitation of what the Hebrew rabbis and before them the priests would do when they pronounce a blessing.

They hold it up and that's supposed to represent the letter Sheen, which looks like a pitchfork with three tines pointing upward. You make a U and then put a line in the middle, kind of like a W in the sense of having three upward singular strokes. But that's the letter Sheen.

And so Shaddai is basically Sheen, Dalet, and Yod, or S-H-D-Y. Well, what are the vowels that go with that? We have the Masoretes telling us that it's an A, Shad, which implies in the immediate context breast, but before that the idea of pouring forth or something which pours forth a liquid, something that moistens. And then the Y indicating that this is not just the noun, but that there's more to it than that.

But if it is S-H-E-D, this has the idea of sovereignty or sovereign lord, which is suggested from cognates in other languages. And also in Deuteronomy 32.17, you have this idea used of foreign gods or deities associated with the pagan nations. Deuteronomy 32.17, they sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they did not know, to new gods, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear.

And that word translated demons there is actually Shed-I, Shed-I, because Shed in some of the cognate languages is the word for spirits or demons. And if we turn back to that in the lexicon here, S-H-E-D, they say it's apparently demon. It's a loan word from the Assyrian Shedu.

Well, what is the source area from which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, that family, where do they derive? Where is Ur of the Chaldees? It's over back in the Assyrian region. And so the ancient derivation, if it's Shed-I, and if Shed is a word in that language that means a demon or a spirit, then Shed-I would be a multiple or perhaps a plural of majesty talking about the idea of being a spirit. And this is where when it says in Deuteronomy 32.17 that they sacrifice to demons or to spirits.

Well, another suggestion has been made that El Shed-I is the God of spirit. And you'll remember a scripture reading this morning in the Psalms where David makes reference to the fact that God is a spirit and that it is God's spirit that sustains him and so forth. So

it's been suggested that this could possibly be the derivation, that it might have originally been Shed-I, meaning God who is beyond the physical.

He is the God of spirit. I don't think that's quite as likely, but it is interesting because of the similarity. And sometimes God is purposely vague and allows for all of these ideas to be suggested within a word and all of them give us fruitful subjects for meditation, fruitful grist for the mill there.

There is also an ancient word for mountain that is Shadu, S-H-A-D-U. Worship on the high places, getting closer to God or the gods in the minds of the ancient Near Eastern, the God of the mountains or the high God. This would get more at your El Elyon idea where he is the God on high or the God of the mountains.

Of course, there are legitimate references to all of these principles in God. And so without discounting any of these, I think that the particular construction of the word with the Y following S-H-A-D or S-H-D suggests most closely the idea of the one who pours forth. And we're helped in this by looking at the uses of the word.

Where does it show up in Scripture? Well, the first occurrence of this is found in Genesis 17. Hopefully out of our study of Genesis, you will remember Genesis 17 as one of the high chapters, one of the prominent chapters in the account. When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, what? What does it say in Genesis 17? One, I am almighty God.

I am El Shaddai. God originates this name for himself. When he speaks to Abram in Genesis 17, one, God says, I am El Shaddai.

Walk before me and be blameless. And I like the idea. I say, I like.

I think it resonates here when God says, walk before me, El Shaddai, and be blameless. I am the God who pours forth. If you walk before me and are blameless, I'm going to pour forth blessing.

I will make my covenant between me and you and will multiply you exceedingly. My covenant is with you and your descendants to be your God and your descendants after you. Down in verse seven, I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you were a stranger, all the land of Canaan.

I will be giving it to you as an everlasting possession for you and your descendants, and I will be their God. Then in verse nine, God said to Abram, as for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. He talks about circumcision.

Verse 14, the uncircumcised male child who is not circumcised in the flesh or his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant. And

the rest of this chapter talks about the establishing of the covenant and the blessing that God is going to pour forth on Abram and his descendants.

And so he is El Shaddai. And he is powerful, yes. He is the source of blessing, yes.

He is the God on high before whom Abram is to walk. So all of those ideas, I think, can certainly be suggested in that name that God assigns to himself. The next place that we find this term for God used is in Genesis 28, verse three.

We've seen it associated with Abram. Now in chapter 28, when Isaac called Jacob before him, this is after the fiasco with Esau and the skins and the blessing going to the wrong son, supposedly, and so on. And it is determined that Jacob needs to leave.

Isaac calls him and blessed him and says, you'll not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. Then he pronounces a blessing.

He's already given him the blessing that belongs to the firstborn. But now as he departs Isaac's household, Isaac blesses Jacob. And what does he say? May God almighty bless you.

May El Shaddai bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you that you may be an assembly of peoples and give you the blessing of Abraham to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you're a stranger, which God gave to Abraham. So on the lips of Isaac, we find this same name for God. Where did Isaac get that name? From Abraham, because Abraham told him what God said when he appeared to him in Genesis 17.

And he said, El Shaddai appeared to me. And this is the promise that he made. Isaac knows that name for God and repeats it to his son Jacob and ties it back to Abraham and to the covenant that was given, the blessings that God is going to pour forth on them and on their descendants.

So it's associated with Abraham. It's associated with Isaac. It is communicated to Jacob here.

And then when you go to chapter 35 and verse 11, we find this name for God occurring again. And in the return trip, after spending all those years up with Laban in Paddan Aram, Jacob returns to the land. They journey and come through.

And in verse six of chapter 35, Jacob came to Luz, that is Bethel, which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, God, the house of God, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother. That's the place where he saw the Jacob's ladder vision.

And now that he has returned to that place, God had made him a promise that he would be with him wherever he went. And now he's back and he stops and worships at that place and names it once again. He named it Bethel when he left.

He names it El Bethel and builds an altar there when he returns. It tells about the death of Deborah. Then in verse nine, then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan Aram and blessed him.

And God said to him, your name is Jacob. Your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name. So he called his name Israel.

Also God said to him, what? I am El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply. These first three occurrences of El Shaddai have been immediately followed by be fruitful and multiply.

The blessing that God pours forth is for fruitfulness and multiplication. A nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I give to you and to your descendants after you.

I give this land. Now this is the specific episode to which Jacob is referring as he speaks to Joseph and he says, El Shaddai appeared to me at Luz. So that's Genesis 35.11. And this is the next occurrence that we have here in Genesis 48.3. So to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, God has manifested himself and declared himself to be El Shaddai.

We might peek forward just a little bit in Genesis and look at chapter 49 and verse 25. We will get here in the not too distant future. But in the blessings on the various sons that Jacob is going to give in the next chapter, when he gets to Joseph in verse 22 of Genesis 49, Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well.

His branches run over the wall. Archers have grieved him, shot at him, hated him. His bow remains strength.

The arms of his hands remain strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. Well, by the God of your father who will help you and by the almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lie beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb, the blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors.

Well, when he says the almighty who will bless you in verse 25, that is El Shaddai. And of course you have reference to the breasts. And we'll get there when we study this chapter.

But just be aware that what was spoken to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob is now spoken to Joseph. And that same name for God is going to be declared to Joseph by Jacob in the same way that it was declared to Jacob by Isaac. So one of the things this tells us is that El Shaddai is closely associated with the covenant of God to the seed of

Abraham.

And it is first and foremost a name of God for Israel, for the physical seed of Abraham. It doesn't mean that we don't gain any benefit from it or that it's not one we should use. But in the same way that the term king as applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, you have Bill Gaither.

They have the little Gaither special every week on our religious channel here, Channel 29. Every Saturday night they show a Gaither video promotion for half an hour or so. Well, last night it was the Bill and Gloria Gaither special.

It was about them. One of his most famous songs is, The King is Coming. And that's great, and we understand that Christ is king.

Mashiach is the anointed one, Messiah. But he's the king of Israel. We understand and appreciate the royalty of the Lord Jesus Christ, but king is not the first and foremost name for Jesus relative to us.

The New Testament does not present the Lord Jesus Christ to us as our king. He is our Savior. He is our high priest.

He is our Lord and our shepherd. He is the vine and we are the branches. He is the husband and we are the bride.

He is a lot of things to the church, but he is the head of all things to the church. But the specific term king as applied to the Lord Jesus Christ relates him to Israel, not to the church. And so it is helpful to keep that in mind when you sing hymns such as Crown Hymn and The King is Coming and claiming Christ my king and so forth.

We just need to do that intelligently. I'm not discouraging you from recognizing Christ as king, but remember this is a term that relates Jesus Christ to Israel as Messiah. In the same way that we don't say Jesus is my Messiah, is he an anointed one? Yes.

Is he an anointed high priest after the order of Melchizedek? Yes. But Messiah is a term that relates him to Israel. King is a term that relates him to Israel.

In the same way, El Shaddai, look at its uses in Genesis. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. It's primarily a name of God that relates him to the seed, the physical seed of Abraham.

And certainly we see applications of God's dealing with the physical seed to the spiritual seed that Paul points out in Romans. In the same way that all of Romans chapter 4 uses Abraham as the example of faith and righteousness by faith. I'm not trying to say, well, that's all Israel and nothing of the church.

Everything related to Israel has application to the church. That's why we have the Old Testament to study and why we enjoy studying the Old Testament. But just bear in mind,

keep a perspective.

I personally would not write a song for the church called El Shaddai, except by way of illustration. I would not claim God as my El Shaddai, as my first choice. It reflects the attributes of God.

It reflects the nature of God toward all of mankind. But when you look at the word of God, it relates God specifically and first and foremost to Israel, just as Messiah and King relate the Lord Jesus Christ first and foremost to Israel. In so far as Messiah and King describe the sovereignty and the all-powerful rule of the Lord Jesus Christ under which we all fall, that's great.

But we're trying to have some discernment. We're trying to see the specific things that the word of God says relative to Israel and relative to the church and distinguish between a primary and a secondary application. And I would say that El Shaddai, in terms of God the Father for us, is a secondary application rather than a primary.

We learn it as we see God's dealings as El Shaddai with the physical seed of Abraham, as traced through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. So this is the heritage. This is the hereditary privilege of covenant from Abraham and Isaac that Jacob now declares to Joseph and to his sons.

And that's where we find the resonance as Jacob talks to his son and grandsons here. Jacob said now in Genesis 48.3, El Shaddai appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me and said to me, and once again, just as we've seen in every other use of El Shaddai in Genesis, be fruitful, multiply, make you a multitude of people, give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession. Multiplication of physical seed and possession of the land have been associated with the name of God, El Shaddai, every place it's found in Genesis.

Every place it's found in Genesis. And these are the specific covenants to Israel, to the physical seed of Abraham. Not just to the physical seed, but to the obedient physical seed.

As we know, Esau, Ishmael, and others are also physical seed, and it doesn't necessarily mean that they're automatically going to be beneficiaries of that covenant, but that's what qualifies them in an initial way. So, he appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. He blessed me and said to me, I will make you fruitful and multiply you.

I will make of you a multitude of people and give this land to your descendants after you. What land? The land of Canaan. Where are they currently located? The land of Egypt.

This is a reminder that there is an unfulfilled promise, even though they have a permanent possession in Goshen, even though everything is great and they are in a period of great prosperity, this world is not my home. I'm just passing through. And Jacob

reminds Joseph that as great as things are, their citizenship, their everlasting possession is not in Egypt, but in Canaan.

There's a very direct application to us. Even when we live in relative prosperity and enjoy blessing and fruitfulness here on earth, this is not our permanent possession. Our citizenship is heavenly.

Our possession is in the heavenlies and in the eternal realms. And we shouldn't get so attached to things in this life that we lose sight of the fact that our destination is ultimately the promised land of the eternal kingdom of the Father and the thousand-year reign of the Lord Jesus Christ before that. So, I will give you this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.

Then in verse five, now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine. As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Reuben and Simeon, Jacob's true firstborn and secondborn by Leah, he says, Ephraim and Manasseh are of equal standing as sons.

If you go to some of the ancient law codes that are from somewhere in the vicinity of this time, it's actually a little bit later, but the code of Hammurabi, if you go read that, which is circa 15, 16, 17 hundred B.C., you have this idea that if a man has children with a slave of his, and he ever says to them, this is the code of Hammurabi, if a man who has had children with a slave ever calls them my children, they are now equal in standing to the sons that he has had with his wife. If he calls them my children, they become his children. So, this is a form of adoption.

And when he says, your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt are mine, just as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours. And this suggests to us that perhaps Joseph may already have or is going to have other children with his wife, Asenath.

But these two have an equal standing with the 11 brothers of Joseph. And what this basically does is double Joseph. This is the assigning of the double portion that would normally belong to the firstborn to Joseph.

Joseph, instead of having a single inheritance among the sons of Jacob, has a double portion because Jacob takes his first two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and says, they are mine. So now, there are going to be 13 portions of the inheritance of Jacob, and Ephraim and Manasseh are going to share equally with the other 11 brothers of Joseph. So Joseph is, in essence, getting twice as much as his brothers.

Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours. They will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. This tells us almost certainly that Joseph did have other sons who themselves had offspring, and these became clans and so forth in

Israel.

But they are numbered as either Ephraimites or Manassehites. Any other sons that Joseph is going to have are not going to also share an equal portion with their uncles. They are going to be assigned to either Ephraim or to Manasseh and be absorbed into those.

So all of the offspring of Joseph are going to be in one of these two lines. So Joseph is effectively doubled. Whatever sons he has, they are going to be either Ephraimites or Manassehites.

They will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. Then this declaration takes a very curious turn. What an odd place for this to be brought up.

This seems like a non-sequitur when we read it. But as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath. And I buried her there on the way to Ephrath.

And then you have an editor's note that is Bethlehem. Obviously Bethlehem didn't exist in these days. It was only Ephrath.

But a later hand has, for the sake of those who don't know that Ephrath has long since disappeared, and the town that's there now is known as Beit Lechem. Lechem meaning bread, Beit meaning house, the house of bread, Bethlehem. That's where Ephrath used to be in Jacob's day.

So he's in the middle of blessing his grandsons and assigning them an equal portion with their uncles, with Joseph's brothers. And then he says, as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way. And I buried her there on the way to Ephrath.

Well, what is the link? Why does this subject come up on this very formal occasion where God's name is invoked as El Shaddai and the assignment of inheritance rights and blessings is being given? Well, what's in the immediately preceding context? In verse 5 and 6, it's all about the offspring of Joseph, isn't it? Your sons Ephraim and Manasseh were born to you in the land of Egypt. They are mine, just like Reuben and Simeon. Your offspring whom you beget after them will be yours.

They'll be called by the names of their brothers. As for me, I will have no more offspring. Rachel is dead.

There's no other distribution of inheritance blessings. Why? For whatever reason, perhaps Leah as the older sister has already gone through her childbearing years and is no longer capable of having children. Rachel as the younger sister, obviously she was still in her childbearing years when she died some years before.

We know that it's been 20 years since Joseph was 17, and we know that there would have been another 10 or 15 years. I haven't sat down and done the math, but this would have been on the order of maybe 30, 35 years earlier that Rachel had died. And so what he says is, there are going to be no more offspring.

When I make this declaration, that's it. The complement of heirs is complete. And he emphasizes that by stating that any ability that he may have to generate additional heirs is over with because Rachel died.

So that's why he says in verse 7, as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath. And I buried her there on the way to Ephrath. And the burial of Rachel is an indication that that's it in terms of sons for Jacob.

He's going to declare these sons of Joseph to be his, and that's it. So then Israel saw Joseph's sons and said, who are these? Now we know that his eyesight is failing and so on, but it's not as though he doesn't know who they are. This reminds us of the wedding ceremony.

Who giveth this woman in marriage? And the father says, or should say, I do. Well, it isn't out of ignorance that the clergyman or whoever's presiding over the wedding asks this question. It's a formality that someone identifies themselves.

When you go sit in the witness chair in a court, state your full name for the court. Well, they already know who you are. They've already called you up as a witness and given your name, but you state your name as formal identification.

And that's what's taking place here. And you see this in Isaac's blessing. When Jacob walks in, in the guise of Isaac, he says, are you my son Esau? And tries to verify his identity before he gives the blessing.

This is a formality. Joseph said to his father, they are my sons. This is actually backward from the Hebrew.

And this is the way the Hebrew would normally say it. They are my sons. But here in the Hebrew, for emphasis, it says, bene ele.

My sons are they. And he says, my sons are they. They belong to me.

And this emphasizes the fact that they belong to Joseph, just grammatically, whom God has given me in this place. And so Joseph, he doesn't mention Asenath, he doesn't mention Pharaoh or his father-in-law or anybody else. He says, God has given me these sons in this place.

So then he says, please bring them to me and I will bless them. And this goes into the

formal part of the blessing. But I wanted to also take a moment, since we're looking at names and their significance, because as you will remember, in fact, we'll go ahead and read this in verse 10.

Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, I had not thought to see your face, but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring.

So apparently by getting close enough to kiss their faces, he can actually make them out enough to say, I have seen your offspring. So he's not completely blind. It's just, his eyes are dim with age.

And apparently he's can't see very much of a distance. So in verse 12, Joseph brought them from beside his knees and he bowed down with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand and brought them near him.

So you get the picture here that Jacob was probably sitting on the edge of his bed. He's got his knees out there and he brought them close to his knees so that Jacob could kiss them. And now he pulls them back from his knees and they're sitting to where he can reach out and place his hands on their heads.

And so Joseph very carefully, obviously Joseph's left hand is going to be on the same side as Jacob's right hand. That's where he puts Manasseh because Manasseh is the firstborn. And then under Joseph's right hand, which is Jacob's left hand, he places Ephraim.

Well, the right hand, as we know, is associated with blessing. You know, the right hand of fellowship. The right hand, even in Latin, you have sinister and dexter.

Dexter, where we get dexterious, that's associated with the right hand. Sinister originally just meant left in Latin, but we use it for all kinds of criminal underhanded activity, sinister doings. Well, that's why he puts Manasseh, the firstborn, under his father Jacob's right hand.

Verse 14, Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly for Manasseh was the firstborn. And then he's going to give this blessing. And once he starts the blessing, you remember that Joseph is going to object.

And then verse 17, Joseph saw that his father put his hands on the wrong heads. He takes his, he took hold of his father's hand and tries to move it to the right place. And Joseph says to his father in verse 18, not so my father, this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head.

But his father refused and said, I know my son, I know. And then he goes on to

pronounce blessing again, but he does it on purpose. Why does he cross his hands? Well, let's go back to their names.

Once again, our trustee BDB, Brown, Driver, and Briggs. And let's look up Manasseh. Manasseh as a tribal name is derived from the verb, the verb mana, M-A-N-A.

There are a couple of different ways to signify a word ending in a vowel. You can put an aleph, which is a guttural or a kind of a placeholder for a vowel, or you can put an ayin. And I always think of the, the, uh, the evil ayin because the word for, uh, for evil, ra'a, uh, has, has an ayin in it.

And then there's a verb ra'a, which means to see that has an aleph in it. And so I always think about the evil ayin. It helps me remember some things about it, but this word ends in ayin.

So it's M-A-N-A. And the verb means to withhold or to hold back. And the noun Manasseh is derived from this verb.

So, I mean, how, how could you have a more appropriate name? The one who is withheld or the one who the blessing is held back from. Ephraim, we turn over to the, uh, words that begin with aleph, uh, Ephraim begins with an aleph, not an ayin. Manasseh, uh, has an ayin in it from manna.

Ephraim starts with an aleph. That's, that's the good letter. We like aleph.

And it is from A-P-H-A-R. I was talking during the break about the fact that, uh, Shaddai has two Ds. In Hebrew, there's only one dalet, but it has a, um, a peak or a vowel point.

It's not a vowel point, but it's a mark that indicates that it's a hard consonant and indicate that in English, we double it. Well, in the same way, Afar, the letter Peh is a P-H sound or an F sound when it's by itself. If you put a dot in it, it becomes a hard P. Well, this is the soft Peh.

So it's A-P-R, Afar. Uh, and Afar as a verb means, uh, to be agile or to envelop, to enclose. Uh, it's used to, to wrap something around something.

You get the idea of a big hug. It's used, uh, as a word, uh, Afar, A-P-H-E-R means a covering or a bandage. Uh, in, uh, cognate languages, Arabic and Aramaic and so forth, it has the idea of a mantle or a turban, something you wrap around your head or something you wrap around your body.

It has the idea of being embraced or wrapped around. It's used of a, uh, tent or a, uh, a litter bed, a palanquin that has the curtains all the way around, something that encloses and envelops. And that's where Ephraim's name comes from.

So the younger son Ephraim is embraced and enveloped. The older son Manasseh is

withheld or held back. Why is that? Well, how many other places have we seen this in Genesis? Uh, Seth over Cain, Isaac instead of Ishmael, Jacob instead of Esau.

Remember, uh, the sons of Judah by Tamar are twins. And the first one sticks his hand out and they, they'd wrap a string around it, but then his younger brother comes out first. And now we have that same theme once again.

Well, we're virtually out of time for this morning and we'll talk about that theme of reversal, uh, once again, uh, during our summary of the book of Genesis. But here, once again, Jacob knowingly guides his hands and it harks back to the blessing of his father, Isaac, that it is not just the rite of birth that makes the difference. By rite of birth, Manasseh would receive the right hand.

When we study the blessing, we'll see that both boys essentially get the same blessing. He doesn't distinguish one over the other in the blessing. It's simply who has the right hand.

And, uh, that's what Joseph objects to. The blessing is really no different. But the, uh, the pronouncement of blessing, uh, that, that continues after Joseph's question distinguishes the two brothers and says that Ephraim will be more numerous and that the blessing will be greater in his case.

And he gets the right hand as the younger son. And there is significance. Jacob understands that it's not just rite of birth.

Why are there distinctions between Israel and the church? Israel being God's firstborn and we being the younger Johnny-come-latelys? All of these are wrapped up in that principle that God honors those who honor him. And there is knowledge in the names of these sons. The one who embraces will be embraced.

The one who withholds and holds back, God will withhold and hold back from him. We've seen God as El Shaddai, the one who pours out. He can pour out blessing or he can pour out discipline and judgment.

It's our choice. Let's close here in prayer. Father, we thank you for the wonderful place that we occupy in your plan.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will prompt us and remind us of our opportunities each and every day, that we will be faithful, that we will be obedient, and that we will reflect your glory in our lives. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.