

Matthew 21-12-26b

We're ready now to resume our study in Matthew chapter 22. We do not want to be deceived. We do not want to be misled.

We don't want to wander off the path. And Jesus exhorts us, Paul exhorts us, do not be misled. Let no one deceive you.

We've seen this exhortation over and over again. Why does the Bible spend so much time warning us, do not be deceived? Because it is easy to be deceived. And when we're deceived, we don't know we're deceived.

At the point that you realize you're deceived, you're not deceived anymore, right? So only so long as you think you know the truth or you're on the right path, are you deceived when you're not actually on it? And so Jesus says to the Sadducees, the reason you've got this erroneous view of the resurrection is you do not know your scriptures. Now they know the scriptures, they just quoted the deliberate law, but they don't know the purpose. They haven't thought it through.

This is the kind of knowledge Paul says that puffs up where love for God and love for one another, which sums up all the law and the prophets. I would suggest that there's a twisted way in which progressive Christians have smelled the right path. They caught the aroma, they just haven't found the pan of biscuits.

When they're talking about the Jesus hermeneutic, how can you go wrong seeking the Lord and try to see things in the light of the Lord? You know, it's good as far as it goes. And to see Jesus as the bringer of love, the emblem of God's love, the manifestation of God's love, all of that is good. And I am all in favor of that.

I agree with that as far as it goes. Here's where I think they fall off their horse. You stop short.

You haven't gotten all the way there. You've sensed that there is a truth here, but have not quite laid hold of it. And the truth is, yes, Jesus represents, embodies love.

He teaches love. But instead of the Jesus hermeneutic where I'm going to look at what Jesus did or what he didn't do, what he said or what he didn't say about social issues or about specific questions of doctrine or policy, you're on the right track with Jesus, on the right track with love. But it should be the love hermeneutic.

And by that, I mean, when Jesus said, and he's going to be asked where we're coming up on. In fact, just look ahead in our passage, look at verse 34 and following in Matthew 22. Then you can tell my future preparation is leaking into my present class.

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

Well, those Sadducees, you know, they're an easy mark. So one of them, a lawyer asked, testing him, saying, teacher, what is the great commandment in the law? Jesus doesn't tell him you're a bad, he's going to have a lot to say about the Pharisees in the next chapter.

You just glance over the next page or two and, you know, woe to you, woe to you, woe to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites. But here a Pharisee, a law expert comes to him and says, teacher, what's the great singular commandment of the law? Instantly, Jesus just quotes scripture right back at him. You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, all your soul, with all your mind.

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like, and to it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Now, this is a wonderful distillation of what our hermeneutic should be.

Jesus basically says here, if you want to understand the law and you're going to have a hermeneutic, you're going to have an interpretive principle. The principle is love. So if you love God and you see God being angry, if you love God and you see God being judgmental, what would you do? Well, I reject that picture of God because I don't like judgment.

I don't like harshness. I don't like genocide. I don't like slavery.

I don't like tests for virgins. I don't like burning the daughters of priests if they fornicate. I don't like Joshua killing the Canaanites.

I don't like Elijah frying the 50 plus one. I don't like, I don't like, I don't like. So I'm going to subtract that and say, that is not knowledge of God.

What does Jesus say here? Here's the proper way to look at the law and the prophets. Love the Lord, your God, first and foremost. If I love someone and that someone is angry, what do I do? Do I say, I just treat that whole situation as invalid.

I'm not going to consider it. It doesn't count because that's not, that's not the Patty I know. That's not the Kenny I know.

That's not the Matthew or the Daniel or the, you know, fill in your name here. You get really, really angry and do something. I'm not going to try to understand that.

I'm just going to pretend like that didn't happen. I just don't, I'm not going to attach that to you anymore. I'm going to pretend like that's not a part of what's going on.

If you love someone and you see something that initially seems out of keeping, what do you do because you love them? You dig into it to understand it. I want to know its purpose. What is God's purpose in destroying the Canaanites? The more I love God, the

more I'm going to enter into his thinking and come to an understanding of his priorities, his goals, his values, his plan, and his, uh, the, the symbolic value that he attaches to things that he does in Israel.

We tend to think that death is the most heinous, horrifying thing in the world. We think pain is the most heinous, horrifying thing in the world. God says, you know, there's a gospel song on a gator video.

Death ain't no big deal to God. It's, it, it's almost as trivial as turning off your computer. My computer is alive.

It's running programs. It's doing pictures. I'm getting a lot of useful work out of it.

And then I turn it off. Where's my computer? Where are the programs? Well, it, as a computer, it has ceased to be. It's a hunk of plastic metal and silicon and chips and gold traces and such.

But the, the thing that makes it a computer, which is the computing isn't happening. That computer can sit there. What did I do? I just fired up something, uh, that, that I haven't, I haven't fired up in, in years, but you hit the button and when life enters it, when the electricity passes the switch and gets into those circuits and it loads up, uh, okay, I'm not a microwave.

I'm not a phone. I'm a computer. Now it's purpose can be fulfilled once again.

And it is, uh, similar in my mind being a modern guy or a postmodern guy for resurrection. God can turn the machine off. The machine is not gone.

It's just not running. And at the point of God's choosing, when he's ready to raise the saints, hits those power buttons up, we come and maybe we've been transferred to some better hardware. It runs faster and it doesn't have the glitches and the, the problems and the limited Ram and the limited disk storage.

And the, uh, you know, I've had computers that were prone to failure of various kinds because they were earlier architecture. And as they've gone along now, when you turn them on, wow, it's fast, it's clean. It never fails.

You can leave it on for weeks and it's great. And it, I think it's easier in the modern day to understand what resurrection is going to be. Um, and, and you can even infer some things about the intermediate state, but here's the point.

It is love for God that prevents us from deciding that the accounts of God in the old Testament, uh, depict a monster and a volcano God who demand, who demands a virgin sacrifice and so on. If you love God, you say that is not a right understanding. God did in fact, command his people to go in and, uh, eliminate these people from the land by the

sword, including women and children.

And that's harsh. Do you think that sending the flood and drowning everybody on the planet, except the eight people in the ark, weren't there any babies? Weren't there any young children, you know, is drowning a fun way to die. God did that all by himself.

You don't have to blame David or Joshua or any of the others. Uh, one of my favorite guys in the old Testament, Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, what a great guy. I so look forward to meeting him, you know, 980 years into the millennium.

I've stood in line. I and so many others, you want to see Caleb, um, and Joshua himself. Only those only two guys, how can you disparage Joshua? Jesus is named for him.

I just, it, my, I've got duct tape around my head so it doesn't explode. Um, but the, the, here's the saving grace. This is what Jesus tells the Sadducees and the Pharisees.

Your knowledge of the scripture has to be, uh, in the light of its purpose. And you can only understand its purpose when you love God. If you love someone, you figure out why they are doing what they're doing.

You don't just abandon the enterprise and say, well, I got nothing more to do with you. Love. Love is the great commandment.

Love the Lord your God. What does love mean? I am going to pursue understanding. I want a deeper, uh, appreciation.

I want to think more like God. I want to represent God more fully and be able to speak on his behalf. I'm the body of Christ.

Jesus was here speaking for himself. He left and put us here to be him to speak. I want to do that.

Well, if I love him, I'll know how to speak for him. And I will speak for him because I love those around me. So if you want a hermeneutic, don't stop with a Jesus hermeneutic.

Get Jesus his own hermeneutic, which is love. Jesus loved his father. That's why he did the will of the father.

That's why we can do the will of the father because we love him and love one another. All of the law and the prophets are summed up, right? The harshest, most obscure passages in the law and the prophets you use the love hermeneutic and you can figure it out. The truth that we need, the truth that has a purpose for us.

Do I really need a full understanding of the, uh, passages that are called a virginity test in the law of Moses for the people of Israel? Um, somebody wants to bring that up and say, this is just mysticism. And it's, there's God that can't be God. That can't be scripture

that, you know, that, uh, this, uh, bring out the, bring out the cloth, you know, the way she's not pure.

And then all of these consequences and so on. You remember our study when we went through that and how fascinating it was, it's got nothing to do with what people say it does. But if you don't love God enough to go in and investigate his purpose in giving that to Israel and the beautiful picture of the protective love of the father for his daughter and how carefully he preserves her reputation by maintaining those virgin garments at his house.

And if anybody questions her virginity, the father comes out and speaks for her. It's not wedding night sheets. It's her, it's her virgin clothing.

She has a virginal outfit that she wears and her father guarantees her purity. And when he enters into this transaction with his future son in law, he vouches for his daughter. I have kept her under my roof.

I've done the provision and the protection. I declare to you, she is pure. And my word is good.

And if there's ever a question about that, if the husband comes after the honeymoon and says, Hey, I think I got a lemon here. The father comes out and says, sorry, no, you see this right here. This is the pledge.

And that answers all objections. And there is no recourse in the law. When the father brings out that garment and vouches for his daughter, there is no recourse in the law to do anything, but accept her as a virgin.

It's the word of the father that she's good almost whether she is or not in the same way that when the father vouches for us and puts us in the garment of the righteousness of Christ, any question, the father just comes and says, sorry, no, I don't care what you think she's done. I say she's virginal and my word is good and the court accepts it. And there is no appeal.

There is no other option. It's a fascinating thing. If you haven't, if you weren't here for that study, go back and listen to it.

I love that because it takes one of the things that people think are the most problematic in the law of Moses and reveals God, but it does so because we love God. And we say, I know you didn't put something silly in your law. And because I love you.

And because I know you, I'm going to look for what you were really doing. And when you find it, it's seeking as for hid treasures, seek it as silver. Remember Proverbs chapter two, my son, if you will receive my words, hide my commandments with you so that you incline your ear and apply your heart.

If you lift up your voice and cry out, if you seek it as silver and search for it as for hid treasures, it's an increasing level of aggressiveness. At first, you just incline your ear. At first, you just apply your heart.

Then it gets to the point where you are digging with your spade and your pygmatic and your shovel. And it's never far below the surface for those who are willing to look. But the motivation for that is love.

God loved us and gave himself for us. Uh, remember, uh, God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He knew that there were so many people who were of goodwill, but trapped and enslaved in sin.

And he sent his son while we were still his enemies, commended his love toward us, Christ died for us. And for those who are of goodwill and who accept the proffered gift, the proffered grace, we can return that love, but we've got to return the love. And if you start looking at scripture as something to pick apart, you'll, you'll convince yourself you've picked it apart.

You've, you've denounced it, trounced it, uh, rebutted it. Uh, and therefore it's not scripture. Well, you can strut off into your little corner.

And like Jesus said about the Pharisees strutting their righteousness in front of people, you've got your reward because you're sure not getting any other, but for those who seek, uh, God can be found. So you look a little further down here. The greatest command is love, love for God.

If the Sadducees had truly loved God, they would have gone back and seen. And this is, I preview that because when you come back here to verses 31 and 32, we've seen the marriage. If you understand that the purpose of the Levirate law was procreation, then you wouldn't try to invoke it in the resurrection because procreation is not an issue in the resurrection.

So it, it wouldn't matter. Uh, and so she doesn't need to be anyone's wife in the resurrection for that purpose. Now I will say, and this just to give you a sample.

And so you can be kind of not caught off guard. If you investigate Christ progressive Christianity's take on this particular episode. And when they look at Jesus' response and they say, Jesus basically says she won't be anybody's wife.

They view this in terms of, um, marriage as the woman becoming the man's property. And that the quit once again, that the, that the purpose of the law, because they misunderstand it, the purpose of the Levirate law was to make sure that somebody got this property, which was the So if the husband dies and the property comes free, well, then the brother should take ownership of the property. And so Jesus is speaking against people owning each other and, you know, propertizing each other by saying, um, you're

mistaken.

Uh, people shouldn't own other people as property. And they, they read all of this into it, which do you get that from the context? Do you get that from anything other than social justice? Uh, does the Bible ever, ever talk about, uh, it is a sin to treat another person as property. There's an uncountable number of sins that are specified in scripture.

There are a lot of sins that can be committed. If anybody has any power over anybody else, there is all levels of control and, uh, and all levels of authority. There's all levels that are susceptible to abuse, but in the same way that you don't condemn a steak knife because somebody stabbed somebody else with it, it's the person who misused the knife, the idea of authority, even the idea of ownership.

And, you know, I can fry in social media hell for saying this, but the evil is not in the institution. The evil is in the people who used it to abuse and who twisted scripture to support it when there wasn't that kind of support in scripture, but how many people in the Bible, especially in the old Testament had slaves. How many of them are condemned for it? When God speaks to Abraham on the top of the Mount and says, stay your hand.

I see that you love me and you don't have to slay your son. And by the way, all those slaves you've got, you need to let them go. Um, there are regulations for slavery.

There are protections for slaves throughout the law, but, but it tells you that like the car, like the steak knife, like many other things, the evil is not in the thing itself. The evil is in what people do to it or with it. And it's easy, you know, how easy is it to let everyone off the hook when you say, well, it's an evil institution.

Sorry. No personalize it. I am an evil person abusing this institution.

Marriage is a wonderful thing. Is there abuse and evil that happens because people abuse their position in it, uh, in, in all different directions. There are parents who abuse their children.

There are children who wildly abuse their parents. Um, and family, nobody says, well, family evil. Well, actually they do now, but I digress.

So in verse 31 concerning the resurrection of the dead. So Jesus shifts subjects here. First of all, he says your error in not knowing the scriptures is you don't know their purpose and you are not interpreting them out of love for God.

You're not trying to vindicate God's provision for his people. And you certainly are not, uh, being kind one to another as you're coming here, testing me, trying to shame me, embarrass me and deflect me from my God given mission. But secondly, and you have this adversative at the beginning of verse 31 concerning the resurrection of the dead.

Now let's talk doctrine. So they, they present him with an old Testament doctrine and they say, this makes no sense. Therefore it can't be true.

He says, well, okay, you want to talk doctrine concerning the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Have you not read what was spoken to you by God? If you're a progressive deconstructing Christian, I feel sorry for you. As you look at the red ink words of the Lord Jesus, who defines your hermeneutic when he says the old Testament is God speaking.

It's not the journal of Moses experiences with what he thought was God. It's not a diary of what Abraham thought was happening in his life and his, his notions of God, his fantasies of God, his perceptions or impressions of God. Jesus himself says the old Testament scripture is God talking.

Have you not read what was spoken to you by God saying, I am the God of Abraham. Where is this found? Well, you, if you have a new King James, you've got the Texan out there. Um, that, that tells you that this is out of Exodus.

I think these letters are too small for me here. Um, three, six and 15, right? So turn back to Exodus three, our famously fruitful rule is anytime you see the new Testament allude to the old Testament, it is like a footnote that says, go there and read more Exodus chapter three. It's a, it's a hyperlink.

You don't just read the link. You read the whole context Exodus chapter three. You see, this is Moses tending the flocks of Jethro and he sees this burning bush, but the bush is not consumed.

We just talked about that in the last week or so. Uh, does a flame consume normally or not? So verse three, Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great site. Why the bush does not burn because things thrown into the fire are supposed to be consumed and almost all cases they are.

So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush. So what is God's purpose in making a bush that does not burn? Here's a truth. There was once upon a time, a bush on fire that didn't burn.

What or whatever happened to that bush after Moses leave, did it just go out? Did it continue to burn there for how long? What was its purpose? It is there specifically for Moses and it specifically represents and communicates the personal presence of God. The only thing that does not burn in fire is that which partakes of God. God's presence in the midst of the flaming stones of heaven, in the midst of the seraphim, the seraphim do not burn up.

The cherubim do not burn up. God himself does not burn up. Uh, the Lord Jesus with eyes like a flame of fire and his feet of burnished bronze that reflect that light.

The presence of God is the, is what does not burn in the fire. Gold, silver, and precious stones. Righteousness from God does not perish in a flame.

What does perish in a flame? Anything that does not partake of God. Right? So think about that. So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush.

Now at the risk of pressing a point, of course, you never hear me do this, press a point. But remember when the disciples were rowing and and they couldn't get across. Jesus had sent them hours earlier and then he came walking on the water.

You remember what it says in Mark? He would have passed by. He was, he was just going to pass him and let him row the rest of the way. What stopped him? What made him turn aside? They called out to him.

Scripture says Jesus intended to pass them by. He didn't intend to come and deliver them. He intended to pass them by.

They called out to him and he responded to their call. Same thing here. God would not have called out to Moses from the bush except that Moses turned aside to see it.

Moses had a sense that there was something going on here. A bush that does not burn. This is a miracle.

Where do miracles come from? God. Why would God have a burning bush in this place? I need to go investigate because this suggests to me God is either here or doing something here. There's no such thing as a bush that does not burn up unless God is in it and here literally.

So Moses turns aside because it is the miraculous and he knows from his infancy where the miraculous has its source. So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, this is a conditional conversation. Who makes, God puts the bush there, but God doesn't say anything.

God puts the bush where Moses can find it. Moses has to decide, am I going to look at this bush or not? If I'm spooked by the supernatural, I'm going to run the other way and I'll tell it right. I thought I saw a bush that didn't burn up.

Who knows what was, it might explode. I ran the other way. He turns aside.

God respects our free will, which is a gift from him and is a part of his image. So when God saw Moses turn aside to look, then he calls him from the midst of the bush and says, Moses, Moses. Now Moses knows this is God because who's going to be in the midst of a burning bush and call his personal name? Moshi Moshi.

This is what the Japanese say. My dad would quote this all the time. He'd answer the

phone and say, Moshi Moshi.

So God says, do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet for the place where you stand is holy ground. Moreover, he said, I, the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God. The Lord said, I've surely seen the oppression and so on. I am the God of your father.

You skip down to, uh, verse 13. Moses said to God, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you. They'll say, what's his name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Which becomes Yahweh. I am that I am it's the future.

Perfect. I will be what I am. And so on.

It's, it's a really complex form in Hebrew, but it's boiled down to the personal covenant name of God, which is Yahweh. I am who I am. He said, thus, you shall say to the children of Israel.

I am has sent me to you. Moreover, God said to Moses, thus, you shall say to the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name forever.

And this is my memorial to all generations, not just citing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name now. And every subsequent generation, I still am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Why doesn't future generation refer to him as the God of Moses? Why don't they get a little further down and say, well, he's the God of Joshua. Why don't they get a little further down and say, he's the God of David? Why don't they get a little further down and say, well, he's the God of Ezekiel or he's the God of Daniel, or he's the God of Haggai or Zachariah, or he's the God of Jesus because all of those parties are dead and gone. And what does it matter? The present tense.

I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is said to every generation, implying the continuity of God's people and the affirmation of God's promise to Abraham, which was never fulfilled in his lifetime. If I am the God of Abraham and I made promises to Abraham that he would possess the land. If I made promises to Isaac and to Jacob about the land and about their posterity, they have to come back to see them.

If I am the God of Abraham, then I'm the God that promised Abraham that he would be a blessing and a light to the Gentiles. And when you look at God's words to Abraham, if

he's the God of Abraham, then what he told Abraham has to come to pass. And the resurrection and the coming back of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is implicit.

By the way, it's even more clear when you get down to the words of David. Job understood this. I know my Redeemer lives.

Worms may eat my flesh, but I know I will see him with my own eyes. Where did Job get that? Well, the law of Moses wasn't around yet, but they knew Abraham and they knew Isaac. And I think they knew Jacob.

Anyway, Jesus refers to this and he says, you don't know the scriptures because when you read what was spoken to you by God saying, I'm the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You could say, well, isn't he just saying I was the God of Abraham? No, I am the God of Abraham.

If I am Abraham's God, Abraham has to be around for me to be his God. And he has to be coming back for me to be his God. And there is life in God, not death.

This is another thing that is missed in the current day by progressive Christianity is viewing God as a God of death. Well, they recite in many ways that horrible characterization of Richard Dawkins. He's a genocidal, maniacal, you know, I don't even like repeating that thing.

But even if there's not a cloud in the sky, I fear lightning talking that way. But they'll repeat this. Well, it's genocide.

God commanded genocide. You know, that can't be the God of Jesus when he is the present tense God of Abraham. He is a God of life.

He is the God of Isaac. He is the God of Jacob and he is a God of life. He didn't slay Abraham.

He didn't slay Isaac. He didn't slay Jacob. He promised them life in perpetuity.

Their descendants represent a kind of life, but their personal life as well. So when they hear this, they're astonished at his teaching because by getting at the purpose of the truth, the purpose of God making promises to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob wasn't just for them personally, but to all of the generations that would follow and find the God of life depicted and memorialized. This will be my name as a memorial throughout all generations, God says in verse 15 of Exodus 3. And to see God's purpose in communicating the truth to be the God of life, the God of the living and the God that brings life into our souls.

This transcends these petty squabbles about, well, but don't I have a argument? Can't I legitimately say that, you know, God should stop the suffering, famine, deaths of

children in Afghanistan. And if he's all powerful, why can't he do it? And these rational arguments about how can an all powerful God who claims to be love allow evil in the world, the problem of theodicy. If you love God, you will search for him in his word and you will find why God allows these things.

And because God is the God of life, there is no death that he cannot reverse. There is no loss that he cannot restore a hundredfold. There is no suffering.

And this is why Paul can say this momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory. That's the God of life. That's the God we love.

That's the God we trust, even when we don't fully understand his purposes, because we know he is the God of love. We know he is the God of life. And if he does harsh things, we know that it is for the ultimate good.

God works all things together for good to those who love him. Romans 8.28, people are so anxious to get to the Calvinist interpretation of predestination that they miss the love in Romans 8.28. God works things together for those who love him, who are willing to endure with great patience. There are tribulations.

You have need of patience. After you have suffered a while, you will inherit the promises because God is a God of love and a God of life. And if we could be half as patient with each other as God is patient with us because he loves us, if we could be half as patient with difficulties in scripture because we love God and we say, if I'm misunderstanding this, I'm the one that needs to work.

I'm the one that needs to dig because I know God is a God of love and he's a God of life. So my suggestion is in the coming year, you want a good new year's resolution, use the love hermeneutic, love for God, love for one another. Love covers a multitude of sins.

Walk in love. How many one another commands do we have? There's 65 one another commands in the New Testament, at least. And most of them implicate love.

Be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you. Why did he forgive us? Because he loves us. Why does he honor the work of Christ? Because he loves him.

Why did Christ go to the cross? Because he loves his father and he loves us. Love is the glue that holds everything together. And the progressives are on the right track when they focus on the love of Jesus.

But you can't turn Jesus into a cardboard cut out of love because he is also the coming one and his righteousness and his justice. And by the way, his ultimate elimination of evil from the universe and from the new heavens and the new earth, when he sends his angels, the son of man will send forth his angels into the field that's sown with the wheat

and the tares. What does he do? He will send forth his angels to gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend.

And he will set them in a corner and stare at them in love until they change. Sorry, no, they are gathered in bundles and burned. And when you come the next day to look for the tares that used to be in the field, they're not in the field and they're not in a bundle and they're not anywhere else.

They have been burned and they're gone. In love, God is going to sacrifice a part of his creation that has gone bad to preserve and bless and dwell with the part that is eudokia. He initiates, he puts the fire in the him as silver and search for him as for hid treasures.

We will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Well, that's the answer to the Sadducees. We'll pick up next time and look at the lawyer asking his question.

We've covered it partially, but then we'll move on into verse 41. The Pharisees gather and Jesus asks them a question. This I love.

He's been getting tested and asked questions all day long. He's going to turn around and ask them a question. Jesus often answers a question with a question, but here he proactively asks a question and it's a fun passage to look at.

So we'll see both of those when we meet next week, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for revealing yourself to us so beautifully, so wonderfully in such detail in the old Testament scriptures and in the new. And of course, most pertinently and most fully in your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our savior.

We pray that as we reflect on these things and look at their pertinence in our own lives, that your Holy Spirit will enliven them, use them as a fire and a hammer to break the hard rocks of our impenitence and our short-sightedness apart so that we can shine as lights in the midst of our generation, that people will be inspired to ask us a reason for the hope that is in us. And we'll be able to share the wonderful good news of your love for us through the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name.

Amen.