

Matthew 22-04-10b

We're ready now to resume our study. We're looking at Matthew chapter 24 via Daniel chapter 11. And the connection point, as we have so often seen, when you see the Old Testament quoted in the New, it is time to go back, because that's just a hot link.

That is just a footnote that says, go back and remember more about that passage than what is quoted. So in looking at Daniel chapter 11, we have a great insight, not only into what the Lord Jesus is talking about and why He is talking about it, but its application for ourselves. Whether we are looking at the people of God in the Old Testament and seeing that as goes the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, so goes the individual believer in the church age.

We observe, we interpret, and we apply from the history of Israel. The same is true when we look at Israel in the days of the Lord Jesus or when we look at Israel in the future, in the prophetic future. Anything we look at related to Israel is pertinent to us.

Can't go to the Sermon on the Mount and say, well, turn the other cheek and such, being meek and poor in spirit. That's for the millennium. That's not for me.

It is a woeful mistake. All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. I am reviewing that specific doctrine of Scripture because as we return to Daniel 11, verse 32, those who do wickedly against the covenant are going to be corrupted with flattery, but the people who know their God shall be strong and carry out their assignment.

Those of the people who understand shall instruct many, yet for a period measured in days they shall fall by sword, flame, captivity, and plundering. When they fall, they shall be aided with a little help, but many shall join with them by intrigue. They're going to be infiltrated, infiltration for the purpose of betrayal, to be given over for these fates.

Those of understanding cross out some. Those of understanding shall fall. Why? In order to refine them, in order to purify them, in order to make them white.

The time of the end. It just tacks on the time of the end. We are talking about the time of the end because still for the appointed time.

It's measured in days because there is an appointed time for this set of events to take place. There's going to be deception and many will be corrupted. Others who know their God and who have understanding are going to be refined during this appointed time.

Turn over to the next page in Daniel to chapter 12, verse 9. Daniel in verse 8 asks a very similar question to what the disciples have asked in Matthew 24, 3. Although I heard, Daniel says in verse 8, I did not understand. Remember he was just talking about those of understanding are going to be refined. I did not understand what I just heard.

So I said, my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And when you take out everything in italics, what the end of these? What is the end or purpose of these? He gets the reply, go Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. The appointed time is the time of the end and the words are sealed up and closed up. Look at verse 10, many shall be purified, made white and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly.

Doesn't that just reiterate what we saw in chapter 11? God's purpose is that many are purified, made white and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. The wise are going to figure out that whom the Lord loves, He chastens, He purifies.

Notice verse 11, from the time the daily is taken away and the abomination of desolation is set up, 1290 days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1,335 days, but you go till the end. For you shall rest and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.

Chapter 12 begins and ends with a reference to resurrection. 12.1 Michael will stand up, the great prince stands watch over the sons of your people Israel. Time of Jacob's trouble is referenced here.

Time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. At that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament. Those who turn many to righteousness because they are speaking truth instead of being deceived and getting corrupted by flattery will shine like the stars forever and ever. Verse 13, you go till the end, you shall rest and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.

It doesn't say go, you will rest and be in Abraham's bosom and float around in a disembodied state for hundreds of years. You can see I'm prosecuting my personal understanding of that. But it says he's going to rest and will arise.

He's going to go to sleep and he's going to wake up to receive his inheritance at the end of the days. What will be the signs of your coming and the end of the age the disciples have asked? Jesus refers back to Daniel, refers back to this chapter, refers to the abomination of desolation and encourages us to look at it not just to see what is going to happen but why it is going to happen. What is its purpose for the people of God? What is the purpose? A lot of people study prophecy because their purpose is to decide how many rations they need to store and how many bullets they need to make and keep and how many weapons and how far away to get from civilization and how far off the grid to live and try to be ready for the apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic, you know, dark days.

This is not the purpose for any of it. The purpose of it is refining. Now, I said we had good news in the second session and we do.

And it's really good news. I can't tell you how relieved I was when I was working my way through all this. I thought, boy, we're going to have to, we're going to have to really be Calvinist here and just prepare for some sturm und drang and it's going to be a rough road.

But in the end, it'll all come out okay. But in the meantime, we're just going to suffer, suffer, suffer. I have good news.

I bring you good news. This is the gospel, the good news, the euangelios. There are two kinds of purification spoken of in scripture.

What is the message in Daniel chapter 11 to which Jesus directly refers? We saw it in chapter 11, verse 35. We saw it again in chapter 12, verse 10. Purification, being made white.

We know from Revelation that the saints, how do you make your robes white? They are washed in the blood of the Lamb, right? Now, here's my question, just before I even launch into our biblical support. You remember, we've seen it dozens of times in Revelation. Who are these white-robed throngs? What is the answer that John receives in Revelation? Without even looking, you know this.

What is the answer he gets? These are they who have done what? Washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. It's counterintuitive. Until the advent of modern detergents, you've got blood on something white, you could have like a permanent stain.

How do you wash a linen garment in blood and it comes out white as snow? It's because we're not talking about literal blood, we are talking about the words and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word, the washing of water by the Word. He is the incarnate Word, capital W, and it is His blood by which we are sanctified.

The blood of the covenant. Remember in Hebrews, the one who counts the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified, a common thing, does despot to the Spirit of grace. Hebrews 10, oh my goodness, it's scary.

Those who do not pay attention to the Holy Covenant are in dire trouble. It goes back to Daniel 11, it's in Hebrews, it's in Paul, it's in the words of the Lord Jesus, it's in Revelation, it's everywhere. But washed in the blood of the Lamb.

What can wash away my sin? I was recently reminded. Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Right? So, here's my question. Pop quiz, without looking at Revelation. How did these

robes get washed? Who is the agent that gets these robes into the blood so that they are clean and white as snow, gleaming with God's righteousness? Who washes the robes? Who washes them? Is it the angels? Is it Jesus himself? Is it God the Father? Is it a washing agency to which you take your robes and say, I know you've got a vat of blood in the back, wash these, hand them back to me.

Who washes the robes? We wash our robes. These are they who have washed their own robes in the blood of the Lamb. Oh, this is an important distinction to make.

How is purification accomplished? And in scripture, there are two distinct ways by which this purification is accomplished. One is akin to what we have just seen, looking at the saints that appear in glory in Revelation. And this is depicted in a number of scriptures.

And this is where we sanctify ourselves using what God has provided to us in grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. So there are ways that God accomplishes the cleansing. And he is the agent by which his people are cleansed.

So we have two. We can do it ourselves, or we can have it done to us by God. One or the other.

We must be washed. We must be cleansed. We must be sanctified.

And it is exclusively through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ by which this is done. But there are two different agents spoken of in scripture by which this work is actuated, is accomplished. So if you look at Job, and you will want to write these scriptures down and revisit them later.

I don't have time to do them in detail. Job 23, verse 10. He knows the way that I take.

When he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. What is Job saying here? God is putting me through a process. And when I emerge from that process, I shall be refined like gold.

Make sense? The refiners fire, the dross surfaces and is scooped away. And what is left is refined gold. Job 23, verse 10.

Psalms 66, verse 10. Everybody good so far? God refines his people, puts them through a process over which they really have no control. Silver doesn't get to say, you know, like a rabbit, don't throw me into that briar patch.

I mean, if you get thrown into the pot, you're going to be in the pot. It's going to melt. The impurities are going to leave.

Proverbs 3, verse 12. For whom the Lord loves, he corrects, just as a father, the son in whom he delights. The father corrects the son in whom he delights.

Isaiah 1, verse 25. God says, I will turn my hand against you. Remember the first 39 chapters of Isaiah? We slogged through that for months.

So depressing. Faithless Israel. God sending Isaiah, just hammering on them.

Mend your ways, look at what you're doing. You're wicked, you're faithless, you've abrogated the covenant, you've ignored the covenant, you're insensitive to one another. You do not love God and you do not love each other, right? So in Isaiah 1, verse 25, God says, I will turn my hand against you and thoroughly purge away your dross and take away all of your alloy.

God says, you are full of impurity. I am going to remove it with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 48, verse 10.

Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver. I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. The furnace of affliction separates out what is valuable, what reflects the glory of God from its shiny surface and what does not.

Jeremiah 9, verse 7. Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, behold, I will refine them and try them for how else shall I deal with the daughter of my people? How can I continue a covenant relationship if the daughter of my people is not refined? Ezekiel 22, verse 20. As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace to blow fire on it, to melt it, so I will gather you in my anger and in my fury. I will leave you there and melt you.

Do you begin to detect that the reason God is the agent of this refining is because his people are unwilling to refine themselves? They need refining because they are not purifying themselves. Zechariah 13, verse 9. We saw this just a couple of months back. I will bring one third through the fire.

I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name because this is my people and each one will say the Lord is my God. Zechariah 13, verse 9. After the refining, what's left? Those who God can acknowledge and who acknowledge God.

Malachi chapter 3, verse 3. We will see it soon. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver. Remember the first two chapters of Malachi that we've already seen? How pure, holy, happy, in the first two chapters of Malachi.

They are getting a pasting through the word of the Lord for their corrupting of sacrifices and desecration of the covenant and of the things that are holy. They won't even eat the meat that they're offering to God. Malachi 3, verse 3. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver.

He will purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver. Those priests that are

condemned and called out in chapter 1 for mismanaging and just despising their office in offering the sacrifices of the Lord. I will purge them as gold and silver so that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.

1 Peter chapter 1, verse 7. The genuineness of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ at the time of the end. 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 12. Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you.

This is not abnormal. And God is going to purify His people. Now when you look at Israel in the Old Testament, how does God purify His people? How is He going to purify the people of the kingdom in the millennium? How is it that there is going to be a wonderfully holy and peaceful environment for all but the last short time of the millennial kingdom? 999 years worth that wonderful holy precinct in Jerusalem and around the temple.

Why is that entire nation going to be such a great place to dwell? How did God purify the kingdom? Jesus has talked about it in the parables we've seen in Matthew. The wheat is gathered into the barn. The tares is gathered into bundles and burned.

Only those who pass under the rod and are approved by God all of this that we've seen in God purifying Israel is separating the faithful from the faithless. It is the faithful remnant that is going to inherit, is the faithful remnant. The aggregate nation of Israel is going to be refined.

The millennial kingdom. Many will come to me in that day, Lord, Lord, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity.

Saying Lord, Lord, acknowledging Jesus as Lord, advertising Him as Lord will not qualify those people to enter the millennial kingdom. It is those who do the will of the Father who will be accepted. So, once again, this is God actively purifying His people.

What's our common rule of interpretation? As goes the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, so goes the individual believer. And there are parts of us that need refining out. In the nation of Israel that is my soul, how many faithless, apathetic, unrepentant, indifferent, self-seeking, self-gratifying portions have I got? It's me.

It's a constituent part of me just like these people in Israel were constituent sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Belonging to tribes, having clans, assigned places in the original distribution of land in Israel. And yet, by ignoring the covenant, not honoring the covenant, they are purged.

They are refined out so that the faithful are the ones who go in. They did not refine themselves. They did not cleanse your hands, you sinners, purify your hearts.

They didn't avail themselves of the grace of God that was available to cleanse and purify. And so God is going to purify them out. Now, I said there are two kinds of purification.

This is where we do cleanse ourselves. 2 Kings 5, verse 14. If you remember the map of 2 Kings, you remember 1 and 2 Kings divide pretty much between Elijah and Elisha, right? So by the time you get to 2 Kings 5, you know it's Elisha.

And in those early chapters, many wonderful things. Elisha never makes a mistake. He's never guilty of anything.

Elijah, remember he fled in fear and I'm the only one left and angels have to feed him. He's got some problems. God finally hauls him off in a fiery chariot.

But not Elisha. Elisha has a double portion. Elisha is an anticipation of the time of grace initiated by the Lord Jesus Christ where Elijah largely represents the Old Testament day where it's difficult to be obedient.

It is difficult to function. Elijah, he's a great prophet. Don't get me wrong.

But when he murders all those prophets of Baal, he had no legal authority or justification for doing that and he paid for it later. But Elisha is great. And so in 2 Kings 5, you figure okay, just my general Bible knowledge, I'm going to be doing something that is going to make me feel like I'm going to be the king of the world.

But in 2 Kings 5, Elisha, he's not a prophet. He's a leader. And he's a prophet and he's going to be the king of the world.

So he's going to be the king of the world. So he's going to be a king of the world. And I think he's going to be some great thing, would you not have done it to be free of your life?" All he says is go dip.

And so he says, well, okay. And he does. So Naaman, 2 Kings 5, verse 14, went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan.

Notice, Elisha does not grab a bucket of Jordan water and douse him. Elijah doesn't take him down like John the Baptist, Elisha rather, and does not, you can see my mental link between Elijah and John the Baptist. Elijah doesn't do this for Naaman.

It could have easily been that way in the Bible. It is Elisha. And in the days of Elisha, he does not take Naaman down and baptize him in the Jordan.

Can't you imagine what a great Bible picture that would have been? And it is a great Bible picture because he does not baptize him. What does he do? You go baptize yourself seven times in the Jordan because he's not Elijah. He's got the double portion of the spirit.

And so Naaman baptizes himself in the Jordan. Not just once, not just twice, not five times, seven times. And it is not until the seventh time.

What does this speak of? Why seven times? Seven is a wonderful number of perfection, but so what? Why seven times? Why didn't he just dip once and come up and he's made whole? Jesus spoke a word and blind people saw and lame people walked and dead people, Lazarus come forth and out he staggers. Why seven times? It's a process. It doesn't just happen in one go.

It takes time. It takes repetition. It takes ongoing faith.

Can you imagine if you're Naaman and you dip yourself down in the Jordan, what's he gonna do the first time he comes up? Did it happen? Am I getting any better? Oh, wait, he said seven times. So he dunks himself again and he comes up and he's looking. And every time he's looking, can you imagine after the sixth time what he's thinking? He's dripping wet, muddy Jordan, river water all over him.

Might've been, you know, the springtime when that river was, I mean, after the springtime when it runs kind of slow, but when he comes up the seventh time, he's got skin like a newborn baby because he stuck with it. He went to the end of the obedience. He didn't stop halfway and say, this ain't working.

Complete obedience over time repeated. That's the picture. So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan according to the saying of the man of God, speaking the word of truth, obeying the word of truth.

And his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean and he was clean. He cleansed himself. It is the power of God.

Dipping, you can dip yourself any number of times, but it is obedience to the word of God that brings the power of God to bear. It is always, it is, Lewis Perry Schaeffer wrote a book, All of Grace. It is all of grace, but the Calvinists get it wrong when they think you just sit there on your camel and wait for God to strike you with healing lightning and then you're not leprous anymore.

And he may do it and he may not according to his inscrutable will. No, we respond in faith and obedience to the word of God and the grace of God does the supernatural work of cleansing. But we have to obey.

We have to hear and obey. We do according to the word of the man of God. Second Chronicles chapter 34, verse five.

I skip, cross that one out. That's talking about the king burning the bones of people who were disobedient. It's also an instance of cleansing, but I wrote that down and then I crossed it out and then I didn't look at my note.

Isaiah chapter one, verse 16. Remember when we read Isaiah chapter one and God said that he is going to refine his people? Here in that same chapter, Isaiah 1, 16, wash yourselves, make yourselves clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes.

Cease to do evil. Isaiah 1, 16, wash yourselves, make yourselves clean so that God does not have to come in and throw you in the pot, heat you up and separate out everything that is rejected. Jeremiah chapter four, verse four.

Circumcise yourselves to the Lord. Take away the foreskins of your hearts, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my fury come forth like fire and burn so that no one can quench it because of the evil of your doings. Either you purify yourself, you dedicate yourself.

What is circumcision? Why does he mention that? It's a little bit off-putting. What originated circumcision in Israel? When you go back to Genesis 17, it's the sign of the covenant. Covenant, holy covenant, Daniel 11.

Do you care about the covenant? Do you care about the new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ enough to purify yourself or does God have to send forth his purifying fire? It is us or it is him. One way or another, purification is going to take place and we either are the silver and gold and precious stones or we are the dross that gets thrown out and is of no further use in the plan and purpose of God. Dross is not shiny.

I've done it. I've heated lead any number of times. Pure lead is just shiny.

You can look down, it's like a mirror. But the stuff that comes out of it, especially when you got it off of somebody's roof and it's got asphalt and gravel and dirt and no end of other impurities, sand and stuff that's stuck to the tar with which it was applied, apply the heat, all of that stuff comes to the surface, scoop it away, heat it up a little hotter, keep scooping until you can see your face in the surface of that molten metal. That's what God's looking for.

We are made in the image of God. When God looks at us and sees his own image, purification is complete. But that which does not reflect is going to be scooped away and discarded.

Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. So circumcise yourselves. Pay attention to the Holy Covenant with which you are sanctified and entered into relationship with God.

Otherwise, my fury will come forth like fire and burn so that no one can quench it because of the evil of your doings. It's your fault. God's not arbitrary.

He's told you ahead of time the conditions. Jeremiah 4.14, O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within

you? Your evil thoughts.

Jerusalem, wash your heart. Jeremiah 4.14. Acts 22.16, now, why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of our Lord. You get up.

You participate in baptism so that your sins can be washed away. You take action. He didn't just stand up there and say, as many of you as are foreordained to be saved, I pronounce you now saved.

He says, get up. Do something. It's on you to respond to the offer of the grace of God.

First Corinthians 5.7, therefore purge out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump. Doesn't say sit there and wait for God to miraculously purge out the leaven. You purge out the leaven.

Purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump since you truly are unleavened for indeed Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Coming up this week, Friday is the Jewish Passover. Second Corinthians 7.1, therefore having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Second Corinthians 7.1. Having these promises, this is the word of the Lord preached from the scriptures. The man of God has communicated the prophecy, whether it's Daniel, whether it is Jeremiah, whether it is Elisha, whether it is any of the human authors of scripture speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves.

Second Timothy 2.21. Remember this? This is my famous response to Romans 9. God has endured with great patience the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction so that he can show his grace to the vessels of honor that are gonna shine in glory. And Calvinists go to Romans 9 and say, well, you know, God just made some of you vessels of honor and some of you dishonor. I, of course, happen to be one of the vessels of honor.

Sorry for you, but I'm in, you're out. But they don't go over and read Second Timothy 2.21. I have these verses in the margin next to each other. In Romans 9, I've got Second Timothy 2.21 and vice versa.

Talking about those who are practicing evil in the preceding context, Paul says, if anyone cleanses himself from these latter evil things, he will be a vessel for honor. If he cleanses himself, he will be a vessel for honor. Why are people a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction? Because they do not cleanse themselves and God has to do the purging.

Second Timothy 2.21, put Romans 9 out beside it. If anyone cleanses himself from the latter, this list of bad things up above, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the master, prepared for every good work. Remember, be diligent to show yourself

approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Word of God is alive and powerful, profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the person of God will be mature, thoroughly equipped for every good work. But that's not the only condition for being thoroughly equipped for every good work, is it? You can be aware of doctrine, you can be reproofed, you can be corrected, and you can be instructed, but if you do not implement that correction and instruction and purge yourself, cleanse yourself from those things that defile, those things that corrupt, those things that distract, only when we do that are we a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the master, prepared for every good work. It's not enough to try to avoid evil and it's not enough to know the word of God, we have to do both to be equipped for good works.

James 4, 8, draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Why is it not the reverse? Well, you know, God has drawn near to me and I was just inevitably attracted, he's the magnet, I'm the steel, he came down near and up I came. It's not what James says, you draw near to God, he will then draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, purify your hearts, you double-minded. 1 John 3, 3, everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he the Lord is pure. We purify ourselves.

So the big choice here, as you think about this time of Jacob's trouble and the suffering that is going to characterize that period, even the wise, even those who have awakened and have latched onto the truth and have knowledge and are strong in the Lord, are going to suffer this time of trouble. They will be given a little strength, but many of them are going to fall, why? It's the same reason God's two witnesses are going to fall. It's the same reason the Lord Jesus suffered.

It's the same reason the apostle Paul suffered. There is a time and there is an appointed time when God uses the suffering of faithful believers to make a point, to advance his cause, to accomplish his purpose, and to demonstrate the quality of faith. You can study, study, study and say, I know this subject, I've memorized the chapter, I understand it all.

But until you take the exam, it's really just your word that you know it. The exam, the test, proves what you're made of, proves the strength of your understanding, the strength of your knowledge. And in the case of spiritual things, the strength of our faith.

How can you distinguish seed that is planted in shallow soil from seed that is deep in the soil and has taken firm root unless the sun shines on the field? How would God know the difference? The testing of your faith produces patience. Let patience have its perfect work in you that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Thoroughly equipped for every good work.

If we purify ourselves, God doesn't have to use purification to sanctify us because we have voluntarily baptized ourselves. We have washed our own robes. We have eliminated that which corrupts and defiles within ourselves.

Then if we do suffer, it is strictly for the glory of God and the demonstration of our faith. Look at the Apostle Paul. Do you think he would take away his shipwreck or any of his 40 stripes minus one, his imprisonments, his hardships, demonstrating his love for God first and foremost, his love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and then by extension, his love to the church, his love for the good news, his desire to proclaim it to anyone who would listen, his willingness to endure? Are his stripes and his scars not badges of honor? What does he call those marks? I bear in my body, what? Marks of persecution? Is that what he calls them? Let no one trouble me for I bear on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

He wouldn't trade those stripes for anything. I think his resurrection body is gonna have them just like the resurrected body of the Lord had nail prints. So we do not need to fear hardship.

It is an opportunity. It is a cup that is full of potential blessing. God before us who can be against us, what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

We have no reason to fear, particularly if our testing is for the purpose of approval. That's what dokimazo means. Your faith has tried to demonstrate its quality.

What an opportunity. It's like being well-prepared. I know somebody who took a test yesterday and passed it with flying colors because he was well-prepared, knew the material, had no trouble answering the questions.

You come away from that feeling good. I took advantage of what was taught to me and I demonstrated that I've really got it. That's a privilege.

That's a blessing. And it will shine as a reflection of the glory of God eternally. Not just now, not just in the moment, forever.

It makes a permanent change. It's permanently reflected in our future appearance, our future location, our future opportunities for service and so on. So nothing to fear so long as we cleanse ourselves.

Head for the muddy Jordan, plunge on down in and do it seven times. God's grace and God's power will cleanse what defiles and prepare us for service. Remember when he grabs that dirt? And takes it back to the place of his service and says, I don't wanna forget where my cleansing came from.

That can be us. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the truth of your word.

We thank you for the wonderful way that it convicts us and stirs us and energizes us, motivates us to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ, to take up our cross and go where he went. For the joy before him, he endured the cross. He did not let the shame of it discourage him.

And he is now seated at your right hand, representing us, making intercession for us. We pray that we can be worthy of that representation, that we can in turn represent the Lord Jesus here on this earth as his body and communicate the same message of grace, atonement, cleansing, and opportunity for relationship with you and the blessings that attach for the remainder of our time in this world. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.