

PostExilicProphets 22-01-26b

Let's resume our study in Zechariah chapter 12. We're looking at verse 11. We have seen the value of this mourning.

That's the reason there are four verses here dedicated to telling us that once the spirit of grace and supplication is poured out and the ability to grasp divine truth is given in a fulsome form. It's not that Old Testament saints couldn't understand. It was just limited.

We saw this in Ecclesiastes where Solomon kept bumping his head against the earthliness and the ephemerality of life in the Old Testament age and knew that there was something more. Well, the spirit confers that something more, that entrance into the life of God, into the mind of God through his word. And when that is available, the first response is grieving, intense grief.

Now, this is not going to last throughout the millennial kingdom, but the first recognition is how far short the people of God have fallen, how much potential was unexploited and unclaimed. And so it is compared in verse 11, this great mourning in Jerusalem, which is where the advanced class is. We've seen this in the Mount of Transfiguration with the lesson we heard this past Sunday, remembering the casting out of the demon from the little boy at the foot of the Transfiguration Mount.

And if anyone is further along, it is those three that Jesus took the top of the mountain, Peter and James and John. They get to enter into truths that the nine below are not ready for. These in Jerusalem, when they receive this spirit of grace and supplication, it has a powerful effect on their perception.

And the response to that perception initially is grief. It's one of the reasons we look forward to the day when God is going to dry every tear and there will be no more crying, there will be no more tears and so on. So this great mourning in Jerusalem is like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

What is going on with this? First of all, Rimmon in Hebrew is the word for pomegranate. And if you look up pomegranates in your Bible dictionary, you find the, for example, the New International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. I've got a little excerpt from it here.

It's a characteristic near eastern tree, the *Punica granatum*, native to Persia and India. It was grown in Palestine at an early period. Moses told the Israelites that pomegranates along with wheat, barley, vines, and figs were to be found in the promised land.

This is really interesting because when they are delivered from Egypt and go out into the wilderness, the longing for the food that they had back in Egypt, in Numbers chapter 20, verse five, the Israelites longed for the grain, vines, figs, and pomegranates of Egypt. So there are pomegranates where they're going and there are pomegranates where they came from. But on the journey, they don't have any pomegranates.

Rather than saying, Moses said there's pomegranates in the land, let's move forward. They say, remember those pomegranates in Egypt, let's go back. And this gets to attitude.

And I could do a whole lesson just on pomegranate theology. But just think about that. Do you want to try to seek pleasures in Egypt where you are a slave? Or do you want to seek those same pleasures in the land? It's the very same list of wheat, barley, vines, figs, and pomegranates.

They're in the land. You're not going to lose anything by moving forward in the deliverance and in the grace of God. Oh, but I experienced those things back in Egypt.

Let's go back there. It's just scary. When you get to Joel 1.11 and following, pomegranates and their withering, loss of these pleasures is a metaphor and an object of lamentation.

There's great lamenting because the pomegranates are withering. It's Joel 1.11 and following. The tree is shrub-like, may occasionally attain nine meters, 30 feet in height.

It bears bright green oblong leaves, brilliant scarlet blossoms. And so we saw them referred to in the Song of Solomon in chapter four, verse 13, and in chapter seven, verse 12. The ripe globular fruit contains an acid pulp in which red seeds are embedded.

In antiquity, the expressed juice was made into a sweet wine. Pomegranate rind is rich in tannic acid. And in ancient Egypt, it was burned in temples and houses as a fumigant, as kind of a perfume.

Rimmon, R-I-M-M-O-N, means pomegranate. Pomegranate flowers were popular decorative motif. They were on Aaron's garments, Exodus 28, 33 and following, and Exodus 39, 24 and following.

They were also in the brass work of Solomon's temple. You find this various places. I won't give you all the references.

There are localities that were doubtless named after pomegranate trees. So you have a town called Gath, Rimmon, in Joshua 19.45. Rimmon, Perez, Numbers 33, 19.

In Rimmon, and Rimmon, Joshua 19, verse seven and verse 13. Again, you can get all this out of the New International Bible Encyclopedia. And they go on to talk about some Greek mythology.

But what is significant here is the desire for this as a fruit, as a benefit, as a source of pleasure. Whether it is perfume, whether it is sweet wine, whether it is the blossoms or the presence of the trees themselves, the fruit was something available in Egypt and available in the land to which they were going. But they had to do without it on the journey.

And this was a cause of complaint. So which direction are you going to look? That's really our first point about Rimmon. The second point is mourning at Hadad, Rimmon, in the plain of Megiddo.

There is no known town called Hadad, Rimmon, in the plain of Megiddo. Hadad is not a Hebrew word. Hadad is a Syrian king title.

It's like Pharaoh, Ben-Hadad. Remember him? Hadad, Ben-Hadad. So turn with me back to First Kings chapter 22, verse 30.

It will be worth the trip. First Kings chapter 22, verse 30. Now you already know in First Kings, the latter part of that book from 17 on, you've got Elijah and you've got Ahab and Jezebel.

That's the milieu that we're in. These are the days of Elijah, Ahab, and Jezebel, right? So what you find, if you look at the beginning of chapter 22, your new King James will helpfully tell you, this is the place where Micaiah warns Ahab. Remember that there is war.

After a three year subsiding of war, it came to pass in verse two, in the third year that Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, went down to visit the King of Israel. The King of Israel is Ahab. And the King of Israel said to his servants, do you know that Ramoth and Gilead is ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the King of Syria.

So he gets Jehoshaphat to throw in with him. They're going to combine forces to go take Ramoth and Gilead. Jehoshaphat says in verse four, I am as you are.

My people are your people. My horses as your horses. And is this a good idea for Jehoshaphat? Not really.

This is kind of like going back to Egypt for your pomegranates. So anyway, you remember this. We don't have time to review the whole scene where they call Micaiah because all the prophets are saying, oh, yes, go.

It's going to be a great success. And when they call Micaiah because he's the contrary prophet, he says, oh, yeah, go. It's going to be a great success.

And they say, come on, quit being flippant and sarcastic here. Tell us what you really think. And so.

He says in verse 17, the king says to him in 16, how many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord? So Micaiah says, I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains as sheep that have no shepherd. And the Lord said, these have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.

So the king of Israel, Ahab, says to Jehoshaphat, did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil? I wonder why. Your people are your people. Your wife is Jezebel.

How can God possibly prophesy good for you? And that goes on. You remember this. So you get Micaiah being struck on the cheek in verse 24.

And then in verse 29, the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went up to So they're

going to ignore Micaiah's word and go fight to take the city from the Syrians anyway. Now, the king of Syria is Hadad. That's his name, Ben-Hadad.

You can get his name from any number of places. Turn back just a few pages to 1 Kings 15, 18. And this is important because this bears on our passage.

1 Kings 15, 18. King Asa needs to buy off the Syrians and get them to go attack Northern Israel to get them off his back. So there's war in verse 16 between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel, all their days.

Baasha, king of Israel, came up against Judah and built Ramah that he might let none go out or come in to Asa, king of Judah. So Asa took all the silver and gold left in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and the treasuries of the king's house, delivered them into the hands of his servants. And king Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad, the son of Tav-Rimon, Tav-Rimon, Hadad-Rimon, Ben-Hadad, Tav-Rimon.

You take out the Ben and take out the Tav and you've got Hadad-Rimon. So this refers to the king of Syria, basically, the son of Ezeon, king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus. This is the same guy in our passage in chapter 22, where Ahab and Jehoshaphat are going to go try to fight this guy.

He's still in power. And so when it says the king of Syria, they went up to Ramoth-Gilead, look at verse 30, the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you put on your robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

All right. You know, the onward progress of this story, a guy is going to pull a bow at a venture in verse 34 and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. Turn around, take me out of the battle.

I'm wounded. He bleeds in the chariot. The dogs lick up the blood.

You remember this. This is how Ahab dies. So how does Ahab die? Who kills him? Who's the king whose forces defeat Ahab and Ahab while in disguise is killed? Hey, dad, Ramon, right? Now, turn in your Bible to 2 Chronicles, chapter 35, verse 22.

2 Chronicles 35. Yeah, my Bible doesn't have a crease there either. 2 Chronicles 35.

You find that this chapter is about good King Josiah. Remember all of the things that he does. He restores true worship.

He keeps the Passover. They have a glorious service prepared. They do all of these things.

We get down to verse 20 of 2 Chronicles 35. After all this, after the big revival, after keeping the Passover, everybody's hands are in the air. Wonderful celebration.

Aren't we all back to God? And so on. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple,

Necho, king of Egypt, Necho, by the way, means lame. So this is this is the lame Pharaoh.

This is the limping Pharaoh, Pharaoh, Pharaoh, the lame. Necho, king of Egypt, came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him. And so Necho sends messengers to Josiah saying, what have I to do with you, king of Judah? I've not come out against you this day, but against the house with which I have war.

God commanded me to make haste, or the gods, you know, the Egyptian gods, refrain from meddling with the gods who are with me, lest he slash they destroy you. Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him, but did what in verse 22? You don't get this in second Kings 23, but you get it here in Chronicles. How did Josiah go into battle? He disguised himself.

Josiah disguised himself so that he might fight with him, did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight where? In the valley of Megiddo. Megiddo.

So think about this now in Zechariah chapter 12, verse 11, mourning, like the morning at Hadad-Rimon in the plain of Megiddo. Hadad-Rimon kills a disguised king. And because of that, remember the prophecy of Micaiah, they're, they're leaderless.

They've got no leader. And there's a great cry that goes up in Israel and everyone returns to his house. They're, they're defeated.

Their objective is not met. They all just straggle back. And it's a, it's a time of sorrow.

You get to second Kings 35, I'm sorry, second Chronicles 35, and look at the result of Josiah being killed. Verse 23, the archers shot King Josiah and the king said to his servants, take me away for I am severely wounded. Both of them die by a random arrow.

They are not killed because they're the king. They are killed in spite of being the king. They are not recognized as the king.

Are you with me? A king who is not recognized as a king dies one at the hands of Hadad-Rimon and the other in the valley of Megiddo, both of them not recognized as the king that they are. And they are almost inadvertently slain. Why? Because it is the will of God that they die.

Ahab disregards the word of the Lord via Micaiah. Josiah disregards the word of the Lord that comes to him from a Gentile source from Pharaoh Necho. But scripture explicitly says he was warned from the mouth of God and disregarded it.

And so a disguised king, unrecognized king dies by a flying arrow, which tells you that this was not the will of man. This was the will of God. It was Ahab's day to die.

It was Josiah's day to die. And there is disobedience to the word of the Lord involved in these stories. It is disobedience to the word of the Lord on the part of the king.

When it comes to the Lord Jesus, who comes as an unrecognized king and dies because it is the

will of God, it is disobedience to God's word on the part of the perpetrators rather than the victim. But it's the concepts, it's the weaving together of the concepts that is at work. As we saw the combination of the potter, the potter's field, the 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave, these concepts were woven together in our earlier reference.

And it's not a one-on-one correspondence. This is advanced class stuff. You don't just get a simple one-for-one.

They have ciphers, they have codes that are just a one-for-one substitution. They used to put the crypto quote in the daily paper, they may still. And you just have to figure out that A equals E and Q equals R. It's a one-for-one substitution.

Many times the archetypes and the foreshadowing symbols of the Old Testament have a one-for-one correspondence. You look at the Passover lamb, you look at Azazel, you look at the doves that were slain in the cleansing of a leper in Leviticus 14, and you can get a straight one-for-one correspondence. That's like basic class stuff.

When you get to the potter's field and the 30 pieces of silver and the price of a slave, and it doesn't go one-to-one. You've got, this is a tougher code to crack, but the concepts are there and it's tantalizing. And you say, you know what these do? I don't need a one-for-one correspondence because the episodes are tied together.

They don't have to match. They just have to have these common elements. Where do I have 30 pieces of silver? I have it in the price of a slave.

I have it in the prophecy of Jeremiah. I have it in Zechariah, whether it's the potter or the buying a field and the promise of God being hidden, the deed being put away so that it can be dug up later. And the concepts travel across these lines of connection, but it's not like the red wire and the white wire of an audio cable where they have to plug into the right port or they don't work.

They suggest. Does that make sense? You understand what I'm saying so far? Because you could still be saying, well, okay. So maybe a knowledgeable and faithful and seeking Old Testament saint might say, you know, when the Messiah comes, he's likely to be pierced.

He is likely to be wounded and bruised, rejected and despised and not have an appearance that attracts people. He has no comeliness that we should desire him. By his stripes, we are healed.

You could get a long ways down the road there. Then you come to Zechariah and you see pierced. Wow.

What is the common method of execution in our day? It is not stoning. It is crucifixion. And Jesus brow is pierced.

His hands and his feet are pierced and his side is pierced. You don't get much more piercing than that. Jesus died by piercing.

His back was pierced by the flagella at the end of that cat of nine tails with which he was flogged. And the combination of that brutality, that piercing killed him physically. His spirit, he dismissed of his own volition.

But you can see the ties to this. And with that in mind, we've got one more passage to go to. We're still thinking about Rimmon.

We're thinking about the pomegranates. And we're thinking about this name and this place so when you look at this in our original passage, turn now to Judges chapter 20. Once again, if you remember our study of Judges, kind of like, you know, at the end of first Kings, you're going to have Elijah and Ahab and Jezebel at the end of Judges.

Judges chapter 19 has a link to Genesis chapter 19, where you've got a big problem with people doing or wanting to do sexual abuse. So you remember the man that is traveling with his concubine and she is raped and dies from the experience. It begins in Judges, you know, you have the Micah and the idolatry in chapter 18.

And so then in 19, this Levite goes from Ephraim and he took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem, but he ends up in Benjamin. He's going to lodge and came opposite Jebus, that is Jerusalem in verse 10, with him were the two saddled donkeys. They were near Jebus.

The day was far spent. Let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it. But his master said, we will not turn aside into a city of foreigners, not of the children of Israel.

We will go on to Gibeah. So come, let us draw near to one of these and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah. So in verse 15, they turn aside to go into lodging Gibeah.

Gibeah is in the territory of Benjamin. Remember this? So verse 16, the last part of the verse, he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place were Benjamites. So verse 22, certain men of the city, perverted men surrounded the house, beat on the door.

They spoke to the master, bring out the man who came to your house that we may know him carnally much as they do in Sodom with Lot. Very similar scene. The man, the master of the house went out to them and said, no, my brethren, I beg you do not act so wickedly.

This man has come into my house to not commit this outrage. Look, here is my virgin daughter and concubine. Let me bring them out now.

Humble them and do with them as you please. But to this man, do not do such a vile thing. Of course, you know, this is the horrific patriarchal men are worth a lot.

Men are worth a little attitude that is spoken of so much in the modern day. You can't have the Old Testament because look at the denigration of women and so on. Talk about that another time.

The men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine, brought her out. They knew her

and abused her all night until morning.

When the day began to break, they let her go. The woman came as the day was dawning, fell down at the door of the man's house where her master was until it was light. Of course, she is dead.

As a result of this, the man cuts her in pieces and sends the pieces out to the tribes of Israel. And he, verse 29, he entered his house. He took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, divided her into 12 pieces, limb by limb, centered throughout all the territory of Israel.

So it was that all who saw it said, no such deed has been done or seen from the day. This results, as you may remember, in chapter 20, with the rest of Israel getting so disgusted by Benjamin that they go in there and nearly wipe them out. This tribe is almost completely gone.

It is at a heavy cost, though, because the Benjamites are extremely valiant, courageous and skilled warriors. In verse 18 of chapter 20, the children of Israel went up to the house of God and inquired, which of us shall go first to battle against the children of Benjamin? The Lord said, Judah first. So they rose in the morning and camped against Gibeah.

The men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin. The men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight them. The children of Benjamin came out at Gibeah and on that day cut down to the ground 22 battalions, 22 Alephs of Israelites led by Judah.

God told them to take point. They do. And this is a huge cost in lives.

So the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and formed a battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day. Verse 23, they went up and wept before the Lord until evening. They got decimated.

They think they're doing the will of God and purging out these Benjamites. And so shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin? The Lord says, go up against him. So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day.

Benjamin went out, verse 25, from Gibeah on the second day, cut down to the ground 18 more battalion size units, 18 Alephs. It says here thousands. It's probably not a thousand in the battalion size unit, but there were a lot.

So verse 26, all the children of Israel went up and came to the house of God. And what did they do? They wept. They mourned.

The first ones that they sent in from the house of Judah, the leadership tribe got decimated 22 battalions. They go the second day and they lose another 18 battalions. They wept the first day.

They're weeping the second day. They are weeping before the Lord at the cost of this purging out of the evil in their midst. Why are they so intent upon eradicating Benjamin? They came and wept before the Lord.

Verse 26, until evening offered burnt offerings, peace offerings before the Lord. The children of Israel inquired of the Lord. The Ark of the covenant was there in those days.

Phinehas is there. Shall I yet again, go out to battle against the children of my brother, Benjamin, or shall I cease? The Lord said, go up for tomorrow. I will deliver them into your hand.

So Israel set men in ambush all around Gibeah. The children of Israel went up against them on the third day, put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at other times. Children of Benjamin went out.

And if you remember this story, they basically draw them out away from the city. And there's an ambush that slips in behind them and sets fire to Gibeah. And in verse 36, Benjamin sees that they're defeated.

The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites. They relied on the men in ambush set against it. They rushed into Gibeah.

They spread and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword. Goes on to talk about the smoke rising in verse 40. The Benjamites look behind them and there's the whole city going up in smoke to heaven.

So they panic. They saw that disaster had come upon them. They turned their backs to the men of Israel.

Battle overtook them. Whoever came out of the cities was destroyed in their midst. And so they are just decimated.

And verse 44, 18 battalions of the Benjamites fell. All were men of valor. Then they turned and fled toward the wilderness to where? The rock of Rimmon.

The rock of Rimmon. They cut down five more battalions on the highways. They pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom and killed two more battalions.

All who fell of Benjamin that day were 25 battalions of men who drew the sword. All men of valor. They were outnumbered by Israel, but they were such great warriors that that Israel got defeated the first two days.

600 men turn and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon. And they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months. So there were 600 of them that survived.

The men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin and struck them down with the edge of the sword. Every city, men and beasts, all who were found set fire to all the cities they came to. They had sworn an oath, verse one of chapter 21, saying, none of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife.

The people came to the house of God and remained before the Lord till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly and said, Oh, Lord, God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel that today there should be one tribe missing in Israel? The next morning, the people rose early, built an altar, offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So, verse six, the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin, their brother, and said, one tribe is cut off from Israel.

And it goes on to explain how they resurrected the tribe of Benjamin by finding some women that they could arrange for the Benjamites, the survivors, the few survivors there were. They found a way to provide wives for them without violating their oath. And, you know, this is a very vexed subject.

We went through it when we did judges. You can that if you're curious. But look at the entangled themes.

The third day, there is a necessary slaughter. It costs Israel a price to rid Israel of this evil. This evil has to go.

These perverts and those who tolerate them and refuse to give them up. Israel said, give up these perverts so we can wreak judgment on them. Benjamites said, no, they're our brothers and we're not giving them up.

We side with them. So now all Benjamin must go because there were no Benjamites who said, hey, we don't want any part of this. But the ones that were spared and they're down to 600 and there are no women and children left.

All of the cities have been burned by implication. All of the families have been wiped out. You've got 600 men at the Rock Rimmon and there's this attachment to Rimmon.

There is grief. There is a necessary price that has to be paid by the good guys to get rid of the bad guys. And it is at God's behest.

He says, go up. But the first two days you're going to be defeated and it is not until the third day that you're going to be victorious. You could look at the first two years of Jesus' ministry where his message is defeated and it doesn't become victory until he triumphs over death on the third day in the third year.

So Rimmon is entangled both back here in Judges with grief and mourning over loss due to sin and the price that has to be paid to remedy that evil. With the entanglement of Haddad Rimmon and Ahab, who is perhaps one of the most wicked kings, certainly had the most wicked wife. And then you have Josiah in Judah, who was a good king, but both of them die in a similar fashion.

They go into an ill-advised battle, warned against doing so, but they do it anyway, in disguise, flying arrows that were not aimed at anybody in particular come down and kill them, which is obviously the will of God that they die. They both bleed into their chariots and say, carry me

away. I am wounded unto death.

And they later expire. There's just a lot of connection here. And all of that is tied together in this section of Zechariah chapter 12, mourning over the one who is pierced.

When you're pierced, you bleed, whether you're pierced by nails, pierced by thorns, pierced by a sword, or pierced by arrows, pierced by your brothers. You know, I've been wounded in the house of my friends. My brother has lifted up his heel against me.

These themes, these elements, as I say again, this is not a one-for-one correspondence. It's not simple. It is a thematic connection, not an analogy or a symbol, the way Joseph, being sold into slavery by his brothers and ultimately becoming their deliverer, that's a much more straightforward, almost metaphorical, symbolic anticipation of what Jesus is going to do for his people.

His brothers are going to basically kill him, as far as the father's concerned, when the bloody coat is brought. There's blood on the coat. My son has died.

And yet Joseph rises from the dead to be the deliverer. And the first advent is when he tries to benefit his brothers by taking them food and they sell him into slavery and tell his father that he's dead. First advent, when he is the vizier in Egypt and is the means of their life from death and their transfer to a better place where there is no famine and there's bounty and provision.

It's a picture of the second advent. One is before death. One is after death.

Much more of a straightforward connection here. These are thematic elements. So in conclusion, what is our point of application? We are drawn to the character of God, which is grace.

It is love that enables us to approach with our supplications. Again, in everything, give thanks. By prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known to God.

Jesus modeled prayer to his disciples. Approach the father. Give him glory.

Anticipate the time when his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven, which is future, second advent expectation. But for now, give us the bread that we need for today and forgive us as we forgive others. That's the connection.

Mourning is going to be deep and intense, whether you're thinking about the price that had to be paid for Benjamin's sin, whether you think about the price that was paid with northern Israel losing their king. The rapid spiral downward after Ahab is profound. We saw that in our Kings and Prophets study.

If you thought Jezebel was bad, look at what happens later on. So much so that God has to take them out with the Assyrians within a generation. Then you look at Josiah, who prefigures that Judah is about to go out because their protestations of revival and interest are so shallow

and so temporary and short-sighted.

You basically go from Josiah to Hezekiah to captivity. That's about it. And both of those kings provide leadership, but they themselves go awry.

And Hezekiah's wound unto death that Isaiah talks to him about. Josiah's foolhardy attempt to take on a foe that he had no business messing with. There are harbingers and foreshadowing of the distraction and the self-interest that will characterize the generation when Messiah does come and he's going to be missed.

He's going to be pierced. When the people of God recognize that at and after the second advent, when the spirit is poured out, this intense grief sets in. And it is going to be in Jerusalem and in and among the most faithful families.

There is a place for godly sorrow about our failures. There is a place for examining ourselves, identifying where we went wrong and where we missed the grace of God, and asking God to create in us a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within us. These examples were written for our instruction.

And to miss it is going to be as tragic and will be the cause of a day of sorrow in the future. If we don't sorrow now, we will surely sorrow later. Now is the appointed hour.

Now is the day of salvation. We don't need to drop into wilderness. The book of Hebrews launches with this idea.

God has spoken to us by a son and we have the Holy Spirit to reveal him to us, him who was pierced, who has borne our sins and our sorrows. And by looking to him and availing ourselves of grace and supplication, we can grieve now so that we can rejoice and serve and reflect the glory of God later. Well, I thought that was really fascinating.

I didn't know I was getting a tiger by the tail when I started looking at Rimmon, but it's an exciting thing to see the interweaving that God does throughout his word. It is of a piece. You can tell it has a divine author because of the way it connects in ways that a human mind would never do.

And sometimes a human mind has trouble following, but that's why we have the spirit. And what a wonderful opportunity it is. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer.

When we pick up next time, we'll get into the second part of this final burden in chapter 13. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, who is the comforter that the Lord Jesus himself has asked for and sent to us.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths, that we will find ourselves encouraged and given insight and understanding of our own hearts so that we can walk in love, so that we can fulfill the righteous requirement of the law as we walk in faith and in the spirit. We pray that in all

things the Lord Jesus will be glorified in our lives, that others will see that light and be drawn to ask us a reason for our hope. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.