

The Bigger Picture

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[0 : 00] Now, as we'll recap briefly these verses 21 to 28, which encompass part of what we looked at last Lord's Day evening in chapter 42, before we go on to the final verses of the chapter.

We said how it is highly likely that at the time when Joseph was sold into slavery, which was approximately 21 years before this time that we're talking about here, he was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery.

He's now approximately 38. He is 39 when his father and all the rest of his family finally come down into Egypt. We know that and we can calculate that from the number of the famine years and the bumper years and the age that Jacob describes himself as when he stands before Pharaoh.

So we know that 21 years roughly have passed and it is highly likely that at that time, Benjamin was not born. Now, just to recap as we did, if we think back to chapter 37, where we have Joseph being described as the son of Jacob's old age.

He loved him, verse 3, chapter 37, more than all his children because he was the son of his old age and he made him a court of many colours. There's no mention of anyone younger. There's no mention of anybody else.

[1 : 28] Jacob dotes upon Joseph because he is the favourite only son of his favourite wife. And although, as we said, the death of Rachel is described a couple of chapters earlier, towards the end of chapter 35, it is likely that that is sort of described at that stage of the story to bring together that particular narrative, concluding with the death of Isaac there at the end of chapter 35, although at that point when Benjamin was born, it is probably set a good deal later on.

It is set a good deal further on when Joseph is already in Egypt. Because this is probably one reason why he seems surprised that there's another brother anywhere at all.

As far as he knew, there was only himself and his ten brothers when he came down into Egypt. And the fact that they're saying there's another one, it may be legitimate that he is saying, well, I think you're lying because I know for a fact that there's only 11 of us.

If you can prove there's another one, then that's fine. Now, of course, it would be the easiest thing in the world for the brothers to just pluck a child from one of the menservants or maidservants in their large camp.

They would have had a lot of undershepherds and other servants and menservants and maidservants. They could have easily taken one of their little children and said, look, this is our little brother. But Joseph, of course, not being a fool, would be able to look at the child and see if there were any of the characteristics of his father or his mother in that child or not.

[3 : 08] He is probably unaware until they mention that there is another child. Benjamin, of course, they haven't said his name at this stage to Joseph.

But the effect on the brothers after they have been put into prison temporarily is that after this three days in ward, which is described in verses 18 to 20 there, that's when they begin to say, oh, we really messed up.

You know, we are guilty concerning our brother. We saw the anguish of his soul. Why this is coming upon them now? Almost certainly because they themselves have experienced a bit of unjust incarceration.

They are not spies. It is not a true charge that is being laid against them. But they are being unjustly imprisoned, albeit only for three days. Now, when they are reminded of how this feels, they are then no doubt by the Spirit of God pricking their consciences, reminded also how they very readily sold their little brother into precisely this kind of imprisonment.

And slavery, they threw them down a pit. And we're going to leave them there to die rather than sell it initially. So, I mean, their action, which, as we mentioned, last Lord, at the time, they were quite

way back about it.

[4 : 28] They sat down to eat bread. They weren't bothered about it at the time. Now, 20 years later, it comes back to haunt them. The passage of time does not make sin go away, and it does not undo the work of guilt upon the conscience.

They knew not that Joseph understood them, verse 23, for he spake unto them by interpreter. And he turned himself about from them and wept and returned to them again and communed with them and took from them Simeon and bound him before their eyes.

And as we say, we don't know why it was Simeon. It could be that he was the ringleader at the time when Joseph was sold into slavery, or he could be the most indifferent or unmoved just now for whatever reason.

He is the one that is bound and put into war. And Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn and restore every man's money into his sack to give them provision for the way of generosity that he gives them.

They laid out their asses with the corn and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass to the end when he stopped for the night, he espied his money. Now, as far as we can tell from the context, that didn't make the rest of them think, Oh, better look in my sack as well.

[5 : 42] See if there's any money there too. The way it is told, when we look at verse 35, it would appear that just, Oh, Jesus, look, so and so, he's still got his money. Did you forget to give it?

Did he put back? Did you steal it back? Is something else wrong? They didn't go rummaging so it would seem through the rest of their sacks. Or perhaps they did find their money but they just didn't say anything about it until they emptied out their sacks in front of their father.

It's more likely the former. Because the implication of verse 35 is that as they emptied every man's bundle of money was in his sack, as they emptied their sack, when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

It's not just Jacob seeing the money for the first time. It's them too. Now the brothers, in their old character, certainly, if they had found the money, the likelihood is they would have taken it out of the sacks of corn, they'd have stored it somewhere else, and then they'd have come back to Jacob and emptied out the sacks of corn and said, Look, there's all the corn we bought in Egypt.

And just not say anything about the money that they had. They were quite happy, remember, just to pocket the money they got from the Midianites for selling Joseph. Why not this money too?

[6 : 57] Why not just make it quietly disappear? But no, the likelihood is they didn't know about the other ten sacks. So the other nine sacks here of corn and the money that was in that.

But it causes them instead to be afraid. What is this that God hath done unto us? Now you see what is happening here. Even when there is a kindness.

Even when there is something good, something positive that is done. It causes them to be afraid.

Because they know that the government of Egypt has dealt with them, you could say harshly.

They might be thinking that, oh, thank goodness we're away from him. Thank goodness we got free and clear out of Egypt. Too bad about Simeon. But at least we're all clear. And then they discover the money.

And they don't know whether Egyptian riders are going to come after them over the hill in the desert. Or whether this is now an excuse to hunt them down. Or whether it's going to be an excuse when they come back.

[8 : 00] Then to re-arrest them all. Or whatever. What they do know is it gives the governor of Egypt a handle over them. Whether they are guilty themselves. And of course they're not actually technically guilty of this.

But it gives him power over them. It also causes them to be afraid. Who could have done this?

Because they know they handed over their money.

They know they paid for so much corn. Here they've got the corn and here's their money back again. This man seems to be able to control them and their thoughts.

He is bringing back memories and consciences that maybe they haven't thought about seriously for like 20 years. Suppress these memories. But now it's all coming back to the surface.

And this is part of the thing about the way God's perfect justice works. He causes even those to whom he gives everything that they thought they wanted.

[9 : 01] Not the ease to enjoy it. They went down to Egypt for corn. They've got corn. They've got everything they wanted.

Not only have they got everything they wanted. They've got it for nothing. They haven't had the part with so much as a penny. Joseph has given it to them effectively for free.

They have got exactly what they went for. Why aren't they happy? Why aren't they turning cartwheels and saying, Yeah, not only have we got the corn. We've got all our money too. But there's something that makes them troubled here. Something that makes them afraid. The generosity of God. The kindness of God.

Who of course is working through Joseph Eve as well. Is something which ordinary fallen man in his normal estate cannot fathom. And because he cannot fathom it.

[9 : 57] Because he cannot work it out or recognise it. It troubles him. It worries him. It doesn't just make him curious. It makes him afraid. And yet such is the love of God.

That he desires us to have his blessings. Without cost to us. Remember what Isaiah says in chapter 55. Oh, everyone that thirsteth.

Come ye to the waters and he that hath no money. Come ye buy and eat. Yea, come buy wine and milk. Without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfies not. Hearken diligently unto me. And eat ye that which is good. And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear and come unto me. Hear and your soul shall live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you. Even the sure mercy so paid.

[10 : 58] Now, when a person's heart is touched by grace, they receive that kind of a message with thankfulness, with reverence, with godly fear.

The unconverted soul that receives such a message thinks, okay, what's the catch? What is it you really want? Okay, what have I actually got to pray? Where do I sign? What is it that I'm to give? Come on. Tell me the details. Tell me the small part of this contract. Contract. That I'm to enter into with god. I understand you want something from me. Okay. I understand that I want something from you.

You need something from me. What am I going to do? How are we going to make a quid pro quo between me and god? You can't. There is no levelling of the score between us and god.

There is nothing we can give to god to enrich him. In a very real sense, Joseph doesn't need their money. He has all the wealth of Egypt at his disposal.

[11 : 55] A few measly bags of Canaanite gold is not going to enrich Pharaoh's treasury significantly. He can give it back if he wants. Even if he gave it out of his own personal money or whether he gave the same money back again.

It doesn't matter. He's got all the wealth of Egypt at his disposal. He controls all the granaries. He could sell it for a huge price if he wanted. He's got the chariots, the horses, the gold, the city stores. He has everything at his disposal. These ten brethren have nothing we can give him in which he has any interest save themselves.

He wants to be reconciled to them. But he doesn't want them to come in pride saying, It's okay, Joseph. We're entitled to the corn you give us because we pay for it.

We don't owe you a thing. They owe him everything. They have wronged him. They have sold him. They have, as far as they know, sold him into death.

[12 : 55] They know that they are guilty. He does not need their money. He doesn't even need their repentance. What he wants is to be restored to them.

But for that to happen, there has to be a change in their hearts. It will be the easiest thing the world can do to throw them into prison. And then declare, say, I'm Joseph.

See, you are bowing down to me now. And I can make you grovel lower. I can have you tortured. I can sell you into slavery. I can make it so you disappear. I can make it so you never get the chance to do to me again what you did before.

He's not interested in that. He's already got everything he could want and more. What he wants is to be reconciled. But that's something that money can't buy. That's something that all the gold in all the world cannot purchase.

That which the Lord desires to give us is something which we cannot write a check for. We can't flash out a gold card.

[13 : 57] We cannot pay and make it right. He controls the heavens and the earth. He already owns all the diamonds and gold in all the world. What does he need us for?

And yet being restored to us and with us is what the Lord, for whatever his purpose is, whatever his meaning, whatever his heart's thoughts are, he desires it.

And because he desires that reconciliation with fallen sinners, that is the only thing which will cause his own heart, if I can say it reverently, to be complete when all his chosen children are one with him at last.

That which he freely offers, he gives us without money and without price. And the worldling cannot fathom that.

He or she cannot grasp it, can't unlock that. But when a heart is touched by grace, they're enabled them to know, yes, this is the way the Lord works.

[15:02] This is how the Lord deals with souls like us. My money is restored. And Lord is even my sack. And their heart failed them and they were afraid, saying one to another, what is this that God hath done to us?

We have all the things we thought we wanted in the world. And supposing you climb to the top of your profession, and supposing you become the most widely respected and faithful individual in all the country, or in all the world, it won't last long, but even if you did, even if you could, you have everything you thought you wanted and all your money back.

Why doesn't it make you happy? Why doesn't it satisfy? Because man is not simply body and flesh. He is spirit and soul as well.

And the soul will never be satisfied nearly with bread, nearly with money. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

My money is even in my sack. What is this that God hath done unto us? What is this free gift that we have been given?

[16:24] And they came unto Jacob, their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that he fell unto them, saying, The man who is the Lord of the land spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.

And we said up there, We are true men. We are no spies. We be twelve brethren, sons of our father. One is not, and the youngest is this day, with our father, in the land of Canaan.

And the man the Lord of the country said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men. Leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone, and bring your youngest brother unto me.

Then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men. So will I deliver you, your brother, and ye shall trap it in the land. You'll have everything you want, and if you just do this one little thing that I ask.

He's not asking for Benjamin to come and become his slave. He's not even asking for Simeon to be put to death. He's keeping one brother as a hostage. Anything less, it would just be, it would be almost an insult to his own justice.

[17:26] He is being as generous. He is being as benign as it is possible to be. Initially, he was going to keep all of them and send one home to bring Benjamin.

But, as he said to them before, this I will do, verse 18, for I fear God. He is acknowledging and stating to them that I, the Lord of Egypt, fear God.

You, my brothers, did not. And maybe this is a factor in pricking their conscience and reminding them. Take food for your households, and be gone.

Bring your youngest brother unto me. Then shall I know that ye are no spies, but be to your true man. Came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack.

And when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob, their father, said unto them, Me have ye believed? You notice that the of my children is in italics.

[18:22] That means it's not in the original wording in the Hebrew, so it's just originally, me have ye believed? But it means of my children. As it puts there, and he says, Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and he will take Benjamin away.

Now, of course, as we say, it was 20 years plus since Joseph had disappeared. But notice how the wound is still raw with Jacob. He clearly blames the brothers.

He obviously doesn't think they killed him, but he knows that he was fine when he sent him off. And that the last thing he knew about, when he went to find his brothers, he holds them responsible for the fact that Joseph disappears.

As far as his knowledge is concerned, he's probably doing so unjustly. If something befell Joseph in the way, if a wild beast had killed him, that wouldn't be the brothers' fault.

But he holds his brothers responsible. Possibly because he knows their character. Possibly because he knows some of them, at least to be untrustworthy.

[19 : 27] He is clearly assuming that either they have provoked the Egyptians in some way, or perhaps they have brought this kind of wrath down in their own heads, or perhaps he's not even ruling out the possibility that they might have stolen the money back.

But the fact that they are as shocked and frightened by it as he is, ought to rule that out. clearly he has no high opinion of his own children.

Now that is a terrible state of affairs for a patriarch like Jacob to be in, that he considers his own sons to be so low and untrustworthy. He blames them for the loss of Simeon.

He blames them for the loss of Joseph. He blames them for having spoken so unguardedly that now the Lord of Egypt knows they have another little brother, his little ewe lamb, as it were, his last precious reminder of his favourite wife, Rachel.

And now he stands to lose him too. He does not believe that if Benjamin goes, that he will ever come back safely. Me ye have believed of my children.

[20 : 39] Joseph is not. Simeon is not. You will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me. Now, this we have to recognise is partly an indication of how difficult it can be even for those who are godly and God-fearing and faithful souls, how difficult it can be to see the Lord's gracious providence in certain things that happen.

How difficult it can be to submit to God's great grace. He says, all these things are against me. But this is only because of his lack of knowledge.

We are reminded, of course, of what the Lord says to Ezekiel in chapter 36 when he addresses the people of Israel poetically in terms of being the mountains, the land of Israel.

It says, but ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people of Israel for they are at hand to come for me. Behold, I am for you and I will turn unto you and you shall be tilled and sown.

I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it, and the cities shall be inhabited. Behold, I am for you. This is how the Lord speaks poetically to his people, addressing them as the land of Israel.

[22 : 02] But the truth is an eternal truth. It is the voice of God to sinners. Behold, I am for you. If you end up in a lost eternity, it will not be my doing.

It will not be because I have condemned you from all eternity. It will be because you have chosen sin over salvation. It will be because you have chosen the way of the world over the way of Christ, over me, over all that I offered you, my free gift.

You would not have it. I sent my only son and you nailed him to a cross. You put him to death. You put me and my love away from you.

But I am for you. For behold, I am for you and I will turn unto you. This is the Lord's answer to fallen sinners. God is not against us.

God is for us. We think of God so often, even perhaps in a state of grace, we may still think of the Lord as disapproving.

[23 : 07] Disapproving of how we, if we're real Christians, we should have done better than we have. We shouldn't have fallen on this thing. We shouldn't have failed on that thing. You shouldn't have fallen into this sin or this one or this one.

Call yourself a Christian? What kind of Christian can you possibly be? You let the Lord down this time, this time, this time, in this time, as though the Lord is always finding fault. I would suggest to you, it is not the Lord finding fault.

Sometimes it will be our awakened conscience and that is not a bad thing. Sometimes it will be the voice of the serpent hissing out the air, reminding us simply of the truth of our own failings, telling us falsely that God cannot possibly love such a sinner, such a failure as we are.

But the truth of the matter is that it is for sinners that the Lord has come. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. Jacob believes all these things are against him.

But in reality, it is, as Paul writes to the Romans, we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.

[24 : 25] Now, just before we leave that verse in Romans, notice what it says. All things work together for good. If all things are doing that, it doesn't mean, well, most things are there's a few left over and there's a few spare at the end of the day.

You know, at the moment, one of the things that's being done in a man's family over the time of the holidays is trying to do a jigsaw. But there's a problem with a jigsaw because some of the pieces are missing. We don't know whether they've gone under the settee or whether they've just gone missing in a corner or somewhere.

Two or three little pieces are missing. And it's so infuriating, isn't it, when you've got a couple of wee pieces missing from a jigsaw and you've got the rest of it all done and all the picture is there but there's two or three wee pieces that are missing.

You can't say it's finished. You can't say it's done. And that is what it's like with the Lord's works and providence in our lives. It is not a case of, well, a few things will combine and that will make it all work out.

It's not a case of, well, shrug your shoulders and it will all turn out fine in the end. If it is, as God's word says, all things work together for good, it means that there is a place for every single piece of the jigsaw of your lives.

[25 : 37] It means that every little detail, every tear drop, every sigh, every providence will in some way work together to complete the picture of the whole.

And if it has not yet completed the picture, if it is not yet finally done, well, the answer is obvious, isn't it? Your life is not yet over. Your time is not yet done because when it is complete, you will see the last piece of the jigsaw put into place.

You will see the last thing fit together and say, I understand why that had to be so. And even if we breathe our last without fully comprehending it all, it doesn't mean that it is not so.

We shall understand hereafter, it shall be made clear hereafter, all things, not just some things, not just a majority of things, not just a few things, all things, every last stitch and drop and detail of your life will work together to effect the work of God to bring together the final completed picture of all that he intended to do in your life.

All things work together. They all have a part to play. And sometimes we think, oh, I don't see how this picture is coming together.

[26 : 59] Oh, I can't possibly do this. Oh, this is all a disaster. It's all against me because we only see part of the picture. Oh, we only have some of the pieces in our hands and perhaps the pieces for this bit of the picture are completely the wrong pieces and we have to look somewhere else.

Jacob is convinced it's a disaster because he can only see some of the pieces. In fact, the things that he says are against him are in fact working for him.

I'll say that again. The things that he thinks are against him are in fact working for him. May he have bereaved of my children will actually know they haven't.

He thinks they have but he's wrong. Joseph is not. He thinks he's dead. That's what it means.

Joseph is not. Joseph is dead. No, he's not actually.

He's lord of all Egypt but Jacob doesn't know that and the brothers don't know that. Simeon is not. Simeon is just being held temporarily in custody. He's not dead.

[28 : 03] He's under the hands of somebody far more benign than Joseph was ever under the hands of with Potiphar or in Pharaoh's jail. He's under the hands ultimately of his brother who loves him despite how he has treated him in the past.

Simeon is not. Well, he's not gone. He's not dead. He's in custody. And he'll take Benjamin away. Well, yes, they will but why don't they take Benjamin away? Benjamin is going to be treated as the honoured guest, as the celebrity in Egypt far more than the other brothers are.

Benjamin's not going to die or not there then. Simeon is not dead. Joseph is not dead. All these things are against me. The appearance of Benjamin which convinces Joseph that this actually is his little brother, that his brothers have done as he said, is finally the thing that reconciles him to that.

It is the thing that completes the picture for him that causes him to open his heart up to his brothers and to show to them, you meant it for evil but God intended it for good.

All these things are against me. Actually, Jacob, all these things are for you. And it may not seem that way to you just now in your life.

[29 : 22] You may think, well, this is against me, that's against me, the Lord has turned against me for this and this and this. And all these things are going wrong. all these things may not be going as

you would hope and intend.

But it doesn't mean they're wrong. It doesn't mean that God has somehow lost control or the reins have been plucked out of his hands. God knows exactly what he is doing. Every stroke of the paintbrush, every stitch in the tapestry, every drop of blood and tears, he knows exactly where and how to apply it.

All things work together for good. And if the good is not yet completed, it is because not all things have yet been brought into play.

The things which will cause Jacob to finally see the good that the Lord is doing have not yet unfolded. He feels a worst case scenario which is not, in fact, accurate.

that you and I cannot see the end from the beginning. We may see the beginning in our memories and we may see the place where we are now and we may recognize some of the steps by which we have been brought, but we cannot see the reasoning behind why those steps were taken and why the Lord turned us out of a certain path at a certain time and into another stream or another channel because he knew what he was doing far better than we knew ourselves.

[30 : 57] The Lord is in sovereign control of all his providences. And when we submit our lives to him without waiting for him to sort everything to our satisfaction first, this is part of it.

This is part of the surrender to the Lord. The worldly you see wants to say, well, if God does this, this, this, and this, then I might condescend to believe in him.

If God will meet my criteria and if he will tick my boxes and if he will do the things that I think he should do and that I want, then I might condescend to put my faith and trust in him.

Then I might become a believer if I feel like it. And the worldly demands that God grovel at his feet and that God meet him on his terms. It doesn't work that way.

When we come to the Lord, we come as supplements. We come on our knees. We come in a state of need and we come in a state of final repentance.

[31 : 56] When we are finally saying, whatever it takes, Lord, whatever you want to do with me, whatever the purpose or the reasoning for all this, I don't understand it. I don't see how it's all fitting together.

I don't honestly know, Lord, why you've done what you've done with my life. I don't see how my heart is going to stand another breaking, which it seems to me you have inflicted on it, but I submit to you.

I submit to your providence and your grace and I believe that all that you have done, you have done because you love me. Now take me and use me as you would for your purpose, for your kingdom, for your life of faith.

all these things are against me. No, all these things are for you because God is for you and God will unfold his purpose, his providence.

He will bring the all things together when all things are not yet in place, but they will be in the fullness of time and you will see his purposes unfolded.

[33 : 10] you may do that on the right side of the Jordan or on the wrong side. You may do that from the position of having lived and died as his enemy and then say, oh, if only I had known that he would in fact do all things.

If I had known that I would have committed to him ages ago, but then you wouldn't have been walking by faith, would you? You would have been wanting to walk by sight. Yet if you do it on the right side of the Jordan, having committed yourself to the Lord without knowing what he was going to do, without seeing what the future was, then walking by faith, walking with trust in the Lord and saying, ah, Lord, I see it all now.

How glad I am that I put my faith and trust in you. How glad I am that I didn't listen to my hard heart, but rather I followed the leading of thy spirit upon my soul.

Joseph is not, but he is actually. And Simeon is not, but he's actually safe and sound. And you will take Benjamin away?

Well, yes. But it will be the means of saving all of your lives. All these things are against me? No. All these things are for you.

[34 : 25] All these things in your life. As in Jacob's, God has not forgotten you. God has not turned away from you, but submit yourself to the Lord.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you and put your trust in the Lord. As this year draws to its close, you cannot go back into this year.

You cannot turn the clock back. You cannot relive any of its days. All that you may live in this world is ahead of you. It is forward. It is over the threshold of the year that awaits if we be spared to see it. Don't allow yourself to go on forever in the dark. Reuben still, still fumbling around in the dark, speak unto his father, say, slay my two sons if I bring him not to the year.

That is really going to help, isn't it? Oh, I am already bereaved as I see it of two sons and I am about to lose another one. Oh, yeah, killing my two grandsons. That is really going to help. But what he means is, this is how serious I am about bringing back Benjamin safe and sound.

[35 : 36] No doubt he was very proud of his two sons. We don't know whether it's just his two eldest sons or whether it is that, as we've mentioned in the past, at the moment he only had his two sons.

We know that in the list that is given of all Jacob's children as they come down into Egypt in the flows of time, in chapter 46 verse 9, four sons are listed for Reuben Hanath and Phalop and Hezron and Kami.

And presumably it's the two first men which he's saying, slay my two sons. Now, if he's got four sons, say, well, why is he stopping at two? The other implication might be the other two aren't born yet, or it might be that the oldest two are his pride and joy.

Almost certainly the list that is given later is, how can I put it, a list written with hindsight, of all those of that first generation that came down into Egypt.

Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee, deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he, that is Jacob, said, my son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone.

[36 : 46] This is how little trust he puts in his other sons. He believes that if Benjamin goes, Benjamin will die. He is left alone, his mother is dead, is what he means.

His brother is dead. There's only little Benjamin. The fact he's got another ten brothers means nothing to Jacob. He is left alone. If mischief befall him by the way in which you go, then shall he bring down my great ears with sorrow to the grave.

I think it wouldn't be unreasonable to interpret that in modern terms as if anything happens to him, I would never forgive you. I would die grieving for Benjamin, just as I have half died grieving for Joseph.

At this stage, Jacob is determined that he would rather die than let Benjamin go. As we will see in subsequent chapters, once that possibility of starving to death becomes a grim reality, he is forced even to part with that which is most precious to them.

Now it may be that in your life or mine there is some last little Benjamin to which we are clinging. There may be some precious thing that we do not want to let go of, but which until we do, our safety, our future will never be secured.

[38 : 10] Maybe that which we consider to be a legitimate object of love and devotion may have become to us a little idol. For all that we know, what we do know with regard to Jacob is he is currently calling it wrong because he doesn't know all the facts.

And with all love I can state without fear of contradiction, I do not know all the facts and with love to you also, you do not know all the facts either.

Whatever it is that you have in knowledge, you don't have all the facts of your life at your fingertips, but God does. God also knows what it is that may or may not be holding back the full feeding of your soul, the safety of your own loved ones or family.

Maybe there is something that you must still let go of. I don't know because I don't know your heart, but God does. But until Benjamin was let go, they could eat what they had, they could eat the corn, they could be satisfied for a little time, but that would run out and the day would come when Jacob with his incomplete knowledge would be compelled to choose.

That day will also come for us. The fact of the matter is the sooner that we choose for Christ, the sooner we submit and surrender to him, the more blessed will be not only our souls, but our lives in this world too.

[39 : 47] Not only will be our spiritual condition, but our material blessing as well. The sooner we submit to Christ and hand over our lives to him and hold nothing back from him, the greater will be the blessing on all of our lives.

All things will work together for good. All have not yet happened. All have not yet unfolded, but they will.

Where do you want to be standing when they do? With Christ or apart from him? When you see that he was right all along, when you see the last piece of the jigsaw clicking into place, when you see the picture at last complete, where will you desire to be safe in Christ's arms, or watching from a distance like the rich man in the parable, seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, but being in a place of torment, to be without Christ in time is foolishness.

To be without Christ for eternity is the worst torment you can imagine. This is one reason become hell.

Thank you. Thank you.