

Why Keep Simeon?

Genesis, A Teaching Series

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Let's see if that's true. We're going to see why Simeon is chosen by Joseph to stay behind. It's Genesis 39 is where we're looking, forgive me, 37. I just told you 37 and then I changed it on you, sorry about that. So in Genesis 37, then, you see in verse 12, "his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem." Verse 14, Jacob is telling Joseph to go. In verse 15, someone found Joseph walking in circles in the desert and said, "What are you doing out here?" And he said, "Well, this cheese is getting moldy. I'm supposed to give it to my brothers. Okay, they're not over here." And he walks about another 20 miles to Dothan, verse 17. In verse 18, "when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him." A good question right there might be how did they see him coming so far away, but you know, that's probably a good conversation for a different time. Now we don't know exactly who the big idea was from verse 20 at least, "Come now therefore, and let us slay him," so they as a group, at least, we don't know who gets the credit for the big idea, but we know who's against it. Look at verse 21, "Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness." Alright, so we have Reuben and then you might notice that Reuben, verse 29, has gone somewhere and done something because he returns and Joseph is gone.

So maybe you're right, Greg, maybe you're right, but best I can tell from Psalm 105, Psalm 106, Acts 7, Joshua 24, all the rehearsals of this history later in the Bible, I haven't seen Simeon as being one of the people, I haven't seen Simeon as a role-player but that is a good guess. If we don't have a good answer, that's a good guess.

Corbin? ("Well, later in the same passage, he uses Judah as the person ??") Are you talking about in chapter 37 or chapter 42? ("37") 37, could you cite the verse, please? ("26") Okay, "Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?" So Judah, yeah, thank you. Judah is the guy who says, "Let's just keep him alive and make some dollars off him, at least get him out of our hair."

("Now Judah at this time is the third son...") He's the fourth son, right? ("The fourth son, so it's Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah and at the point where we were reading this in chapter 37, Reuben has gone somewhere because he comes back, it says he comes back.

Simeon is the oldest in the group at that point so if there's any responsibility for leadership, it should be the oldest.") Yeah, that's a great point, Brother Dick. Maybe it's because in Reuben's absence Simeon took the... that's a great point. I hadn't thought of the fact that he's the second oldest, Levi being the third, and Judah the fourth. ("And Reuben is not there so...") Now how do we get this, in case you might be new with us in recent weeks, the reason we know the order of the birth is because it tells us in chapter 29, I believe. ("And maybe he was just a waffler. I mean, not everybody that is the oldest or the second oldest is the one that's the leader and maybe Simeon shirked from following or being the leader in this situation. He was waffling and it was Judah that stepped forward and maybe Joseph is thinking back and saying, 'Simeon, you are in charge. You should have been the one that kept them from doing so.'") Yeah, that's right. Now the reason we might be uncomfortable saying that is because we, honestly if you've been in church a while and you've heard the stories of Joseph, we have a hard time saying he sinned and this almost feels vindictive here. I mean, you know, so Simeon was the one who called the shots, Simeon can spend a few more days in Egypt.

("Right, if he looks like he's the oldest ??") What? ("If it looks like he could be the eldest in the group...") To Joseph it looks like he was the eldest in the group? ("He was technically at that point ??") Now that's a great point too, is that, "Look, let me keep your chief here while you go and get..." So these are good points and if we had a reason to pick one over the other, I'd love that but these are great ideas. Two great ideas. Maybe Joseph knows he was the one who made the final call, even though Judah is the one given credit for the big idea, Simeon might have been the one that gave the nod of approval in dad's absence and in Reuben's absence, Reuben was out there smoking marshmallows maybe by the fire. I don't know what he was doing. And then possibly it could be simply because Joseph wanted to keep the decision-maker with him in Egypt and then who would that have left in charge at that point? Reuben again, right? Reuben would have been still there and he would have taken the crew back to Canaan.

Suzanne? We have a Suzanne over here and a Suzanne over here. Go ahead. ("We talked about the story of Dinah and how Simeon and Levi slew all the men, so this kind of fits with his character, that he's a bit violent so he could have been the ??") Yes, that is another good point is that not only was he in charge in selling him into slavery but it might have been his idea to kill him.

Now the reason that I'm interested in that answer is I want to show you a couple of different places here, we'll come back to Genesis 42, I hope you'll keep your spot, but please look at Numbers 26. Numbers 26, it's three books ahead. Leviticus, Numbers, yup, 26, and this is some time in the future. This is, if I were just guessing here, I know that Jacob spent 17 years and then Joseph, so probably just under 300 years are passing between what we've just read and what is about to take place in Numbers 26, okay?

Numbers 26. We know we're far into the wandering, okay? We are 38 years into the wandering, the 40 years of wandering and look what it says in verse 1, "And it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from

twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel." So let's count all the sword-swingers that we have here at our disposal and let's go by tribes. Verse 3, "Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt."

Alright now, Reuben, he's the oldest. It says so, verse 5, "Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben," and I'm going to spare you. Look at verse 7, "These are the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty." Now if we don't have a reference, we don't really know if that's a lot or a little so let's look at the next one.

Look at the sons of Simeon, verse 12, "The sons of Simeon after their families." Notice verse 14, "These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred." So about half of the strength of Reuben. You say, "Oh, that doesn't prove nothing." I'll grant you that doesn't prove anything but look at the next son.

Verse 15, "The children of Gad after their families." Look at verse 18, "These are the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred." Well, lookie there. Tribe 1 that's mentioned in the 40s. Tribe 2 which is Simeon in the 20s. Tribe 3 which is Gad is back in the 40s. So clearly there is a distinction in the size. A person could say that that is a reward or a curse, a blessing or a cursing from the Lord.

Now really the next frame of reference is not all that fair. Verse 19, the sons of Judah, and you might notice verse 22, "These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred." So over 76,000 for Judah.

So you have in the 40s, in the 20s, in the 40s, in the 70s. So already you can see that God is making one of the tribes more prosperous than the others. Let's see if I can just demonstrate this here. You have Judah, and by the way, later on they almost by themselves have as many fighting men as the northern 10 or 11 tribes altogether. By the time you get into the time of the kings, it is striking how huge it is compared to the other tribes put together. So you have Judah here and you have this sort of this average and then you have Simeon. So that is how it's developing as we get later into the Old Testament.

That's not near, in my opinion, as shocking as Deuteronomy 33. Go there with me, please. Deuteronomy 33. I saw this in my Bible reading about 2-3 weeks ago and I thought, "I think we missed someone here." Of course, you know I'm speaking as just a reader trying to come to the text and I was that day in Deuteronomy and I noticed something. So Moses is about to cash in his chips, right? He's about to die, let me see if I can say it that way. Verse 1, "this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death." Deuteronomy 33, "And he," Moses, "said,

The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them." Alright, so he starts verse 4, "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together." Now we have blessings pronounced on people. Here we go, notice verse 6, "Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few. And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people." Verse 8, "And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one." So we have sons 1, 3 and 4 mentioned but there is no Simeon. Then verse 12, we skip around and we get son 12, and verse 13, son 11, and by the way, by the end of the chapter, Simeon is not mentioned at all and he's the only son of the 12 not mentioned as having a blessing and he's not even worth a curse.

So I don't know exactly what's taking place but it seems like whatever attitude God is reflecting through the writer of Moses on Simeon, it is what Joseph had in his opinion in chapter 42 of Genesis. They diminish in Numbers 26 and they're nothing in Deuteronomy 33. I am not saying, I don't think I know enough to boldly say that they are non-existent by the time Jesus comes, but I think it's safe to say that they are becoming pretty insignificant by the time of Christ.

("Well, if you get to Revelation 17, he is mentioned in the tribes of Israel but certainly not in his position ??") Right, I'm glad you pointed that out. ("He is pushed down the list, like number 6.") Right, yeah, and you know, if Deuteronomy and Numbers are not indicative enough, we realize that there is something more than the birth order taking place. But Walt brings a good point and that is in the last book of the Bible, in the end times we expect, at least most of us do, expect to see the literal tribes of Israel reoccur and Simeon is on the list and as many have found in that chapter, there are the other tribes. So there is something to discuss there, in any case, not with Walt.

Go ahead, Brother Everett. ("Just to kind of clarify, back in 37 when he was sold...") Chapter 37 of Genesis? Alright, let's go there together. ("Yes. He doesn't really know, I don't know that he knows Reuben's culpability in all that. It doesn't really say who the bad brother was but back in 42, I think over here Reuben is saying, ??") Yeah, so you're talking about, hang on, chapter 42, verse 22. I want everyone to see it because you're saying some good stuff there, Everett. So 42:22 is what he's talking about and Joseph is listening it says in verse 23. ("So he listens and hears that Reuben may not have taken part in the initial...he may have had some culpability but he wasn't the main one. Then Simeon is being ??") The very next verse. ("Yeah, Simeon is close in age. You know, they probably quarreled a little bit.") Fantastic point, Everett. ("He probably knew that Simeon was the one. If he blamed him as being the one who held the most responsibility, he also, like Suzanne was saying about ??, and perhaps he was the one.") Yeah, I really appreciate you pointing that out. I think it's significant that Reuben tries to clear his name somewhat. In the very next verse Joseph makes Simeon stick behind. I think that is a great great summary. Yeah, I'm just confirming from Genesis 29, Simeon was the second born. So very good. Well, I don't know if you're sold on that answer but I am. So good. Now you can write books and claim them as your own.

So let's look now at verse 25, "Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?" Now I just wanted to point something out here real quick, it is about 190 mile journey they had to take before they realized, "Oh my goodness!" One of them gets off at the way stop to water the beast and, "Good heavens, my money is in my bag!" And right now it looks like there's just one brother that fits that description.

Verse 29. Oh, by the way, notice who they gave credit for this kerfuffle, the end of verse 28, "What is this that God hath done unto us?" Um, I don't want to give them too much credit as being respecters of God, they've given me precious little indication that they feared Jehovah, but maybe they have enough sense here to realize that God is behind everything.

Verse 29, "they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell 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 unto him, 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." So one is dead and one is back home with dad.

Verse 33, so we told him this, "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 traffick in the land." You'll be able to have business dealings in the land. You can have food in the land.

Verse 35, "And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold," it wasn't just one dude that had his money back, "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." Now why would they be afraid? Yeah, it looks like they stole it.

("Backing up just a touch to what we were talking about, they said, 'What is this that God has done to us?' Whether they were honestly fearers of God or not, you know how many times people give bad omens or bad events to God and yet when things are going great it's, 'Look what I did.'") Yeah, you're right. A great life lesson.

It's interesting that they are seeing the actions of Joseph, maybe they see themselves as being tricked. I don't know what they're thinking right now. They're afraid, I know that because as far as they know they gave the money to the steward and now they have their money. But it's interesting to note that they don't think that God was behind their selling

Joseph into Egypt but we find out that God was behind. So the author, who is up here, Moses is looking down on the whole story by the Holy Spirit and he says that Joseph knew that God sent him into slavery and here the brothers are saying...by the way, just so you remember that, look at 45:5. After Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, look what he says to them. This is later on. This is 2-3 weeks down the road. Look at verse 5, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." I was sent here to keep you alive. So Joseph was willing to say, "Hey, you brothers did this to me but God was doing it." So there's a lot of respecters of God's control behind the scenes and his brothers are some of them, but only as Brother Dick pointed out, when they were in trouble.

So verse 36, "Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not," and now basically, he's basically saying Simeon is as good as dead. Why is Simeon basically as good as dead?

("Because it looks like they stole and he's not sending Benjamin back.") No, no. I guess Simeon is going to rot in an Egyptian cell because two reasons, one, if he has to see Benjamin, my remaining son from my favorite wife, he's not going; and if we did go back, he would accuse us of theft anyways and then I would basically lose everyone. It's not happening.

So "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not," notice how he uses the same terminology for both of them. Simeon is as good as dead, "and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." And here's what Reuben said, this is interesting to me, "Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee." Right, like Jacob is going to kill two of his grandkids. But what does this tell us about Simeon's father and brothers? I mean, what's the hint?

("They are willing to let him rot in jail.") Well, we know Reuben has children. It's probably safe to assume that Simeon, who is just probably a year, maybe two years younger than him also has children. You know, it's hard for us to think through this but this is not a church youth group missions trip down to Egypt where everyone piles out of the van, you know, taking pictures, smoking and joking with sunglasses on next to the van, you know? We're not doing that. These are 30 year old men and they have wives and children, at least Reuben did so it seems indicative that Simeon is being arrested and his family is frantic back home, wife, children, that kind of thing.

Brother Dick? ("It's a desperate situation. We're talking life and death of the events that are going on here not only because of the issues between the power of Egypt but also a famine. So, you know, if they resist too much going back to get Simeon, they're also facing an issue later on with the famine is going to destroy things.") Yeah. Yeah, that's right and it's really a lose/lose. It's a lose/lose situation.

("He said if they didn't return to Egypt that he would come and kill all of them, right?") That's right, and he said that in verse 20, "bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die." So, "I will find you and kill you if I feel like

you're lying to me." And you'd better know that the lord of the country had the resources to make a 200 mile trip and make it happen. "I'll hang you on posts around the city."

("Egypt was the world-dominating power at that time.") Sure. Yeah.

Verse 38, "he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." What a sad situation and he's probably at this time about 125 years old, since we know from chapter 45, 47, that he is 147 when he dies and he spent 17 years in Egypt and we need some time for some things to develop there.

("If you think back, think of the deception that has gone into all of this that started with the way they deceived his father and his brother.") Yes. Yeah, really, I mean, the title of this could be "Who's the dummy now?" I mean, he really sowed in the wind, as Hosea would say, and reaped in the whirlwind. We really often think that there is some connection, maybe I can control this thing and keep my harvest from blossoming because I didn't like the seeds I planted, maybe I can take measures, and what we should be able to see from this is God's superintendence to make sure that we reap what we sow. Jacob is going to pay. He's paying dearly for the shenanigans he played on his dad, right?

("And yet if we jump forward in the story, Joseph is very blessed at the end of his life, I mean, Jacob is blessed when he sees what comes out of his family. It's really out of Jacob's family that the nations grow, that the nation of Israel grows.") Right. Yes. Well, out of Jacob's family? ("Out of Jacob.") Yeah but it is the nation of Israel. ("Right, but I'm saying it's not...we think of Abraham and Isaac but there were two sons born to Isaac, Jacob and Esau, and so it's through that lineage Jacob really sets the blessing of Israel, he is Israel, but it is through his family, through some of the worst issues and some of the most glorious of issues that that family faces and he is the father of one of the greatest nations of God's lovely people. Even in his sorrow, even in his tough times, even in the reaping.") Yeah, it probably didn't look like it from his viewpoint at this point but you're right.

Let's look at chapter 43, verse 1, "And the famine was sore in the land." So they are still in Canaan and it's one of those things, you're like maybe if we put this off another week we won't have to make a decision. I don't know if you're like that, I am. Let's sleep on it one more time. And the famine was still there.

Verse 2, "And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spake," no, it's madness, "spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel," that's Jacob, remember his name was changed in chapter 32, I believe, "said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me," tell me again, how did this happen, "as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?" Can you please tell me how this happened

again? They already did that because it said earlier in the previous chapter, verse 29, they told their father all that befell them. So they've already told the story and Jacob, also know as Israel, is making a fundamental problem that most people do today, "If I just had better understanding, I'm sure the problem would go away. If I just understood and knew how, if I understood why, if I understood everything behind it, I'm sure it would feel better." No, it won't feel better just because you know why or how something happened. Not always. I hope you see that. "I don't know why my husband did that. If I just knew." It won't make it any better.

?? Okay, hold that thought. There's a reason. I can't wait. It'll be good.

Look at verse 7, "And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel his father," I mean, we were small-talking, dad. "And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me." Now okay, how old is Benjamin at least? Well, he's at least 20 because he's been gone 20, he was born before Joseph was sold into slavery so Jacob is old enough to where a 20-something year old is a lad. Now hold that thought. Have you go it?

Alright, hold your place here, look back at chapter 22. This is super. This is the Bible interpreting the Bible. I love this. I really do. So we are backing up pre-Jacob. Isaac was how old when Jacob was born? Alright, we've got to do this, folks. How old was Isaac when Jacob was born? He was not 40, Isaac was 60. So we have 60 years old, so Isaac is 60, 60 years have passed. So we don't know how old Isaac is exactly in this passage but we do know that Isaac is 60 and we mentioned in a previous lesson that he's about 170 when he died. So we know that about 110 years previous, plus the amount of years between this time, remember he was married when he was 40, Isaac was, so 20 years at least. So we have plus 20 because that brings us to 40. So Isaac is married when he's 40, Jacob is born when Isaac is 60, he lives another 110 years after Jacob is born, so we're at 130 years at least between the two episodes we're looking at today.

Having said that, look at chapter 22 of Genesis and we know the story. "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." By the way, you should see that that's kind of a pattern. Remember? The third day. The third day. The third day. Remember it was three days, Laban took off three days after Jacob had left his place. Joseph had a new idea after three days, "I'm going to keep Simeon." So three days is kind of a big deal in Genesis.

Verse 4, "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." So just in case you're already wondering, that is the same Hebrew word describing Isaac here and Benjamin, the 20+ plus year old here in chapter 43. Now that doesn't mean he's 20 but it does mean he could have been in his 20s, Isaac could have been, and since we're not told between chapter 21 and chapter 22 of how much time passes, you need to understand that Isaac could have been as old as a late teenager, early 20s, when dad is putting him down on the altar and tying him down. Now that is phenomenal because it not only speaks of the culture of the day but it speaks to the submission of Isaac which speaks greater of Christ. Beat you to it.

("I was going to say it, the rest of that passage in chapter 22 is obvious that Isaac understood what was going on. He wasn't just kind of dumbfounded, 'What is this?'"
Yeah, "Okay, dad, we've got the wood and we have the fire. Where's the lamb?" ("Right. He knew what they were doing.")

("I mean, can you attribute belief with that as well?") There is some form of belief. ("There is something going on.") Because Isaac heard probably his dad, "Okay, I can't say that." There's a chance that Isaac heard his dad in verse 5 tell the young men that were with him, "We're going to go and worship and then we'll be back." Well, Isaac is doing the math, "We're going to worship and dad promised those men that we would both go walking down the hill," right? So there is a level of faith here because, remember, I mean I know it's been like three years since we taught this lesson, okay it hasn't been that long, it just feels like it. There is a measure of faith here because, remember, we're not just talking about sprinkling powdered sugar on something. We're dealing with burning them up into ashes on rocks. This is a burnt offering and somehow it was going to make sense that they were going to both go walking down the hill after they worshiped, whatever that meant, but Isaac did have a level of faith. But I wanted you to see just a simple word behind the word "lad" in the King James anyways, is really something.

So back to chapter 43. I want to cover one more thing before we go which is incredibly shy of everything that we've brought today, but oh well, we'll pick it up again next week, which by the way, is fifth Sunday, so it will be half as long of a lesson and bring something to pass and be prepared to talk, okay? Fifth Sunday fellowship, that means that we enjoy each other's company and we look at people's faces and we actually eat a little bit and so we'll do a devotional and then we'll enjoy some refreshments. So please be here for that.

Verse 9, here's what Judah said, Judah said in verse 8, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever." Alright, this is incredibly, this is a big word here, incredibly Christological. It's incredibly forecasting of Jesus Christ.

?? Exactly. You know, it's really the first time Judah shines.

("Because he was the one who didn't want to make money off of him.") Yeah, you're right. In chapter 37 I'm assuming that maybe, how about maybe we just read back onto that chapter, maybe Judah was trying to just keep Joseph alive and he thought the best way to keep Joseph alive is to make my brothers profit somehow from not killing him.

("On the flipside, maybe he's just hungry and he knows his family is going to die anyway, so what has he got to lose?") That's true. Yup. But one thing about it is Judah...he's finding the cloud on every silver lining. But no, that is correct. What did he have to lose at this point? But he is willing to say, "Dad, I'll die if I don't bring Simeon back, if I don't bring Benjamin back. If I don't bring the whole shooting match back, I'll bear the blame for that."

Verse 10, "For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time." I mean, that's usually what I hear when I'm waiting to turn left and there's a new driver in the seat behind me. "I could have gone four times!"

Verse 11, "And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels." Now remember, it's not a total famine, there's still fruit but if you eat fruit.... Alright, so there is a certain limit to how much fruit and nuts you want to ingest, okay? Business will pick up for you if you overdo that, okay?

Moving on, "and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight." Maybe it was just an oversight. "Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: And God Almighty," now this is interesting, this is where we're going to land the plane this week, "God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

Two things here. 1. Why do you suppose he's using the term El Shaddai, or God Almighty? This is the first time Jacob has ever spoken that name for God, at least in our biblical record. Why is he now deciding to use that name to speak of what God may do, what we hope he does?

?? Right, so it sounds like he is doing those inversely proportional things. He is acknowledging his lack of control and acknowledging God's great control. God Almighty and I am not. And how do we see that again? "If I am bereaved, I'm bereaved." There is this balance. Remember we seem to think, especially if you have children who are feeling emotional at the time, it's like there are these two extremes and you have to pick one. No, you don't. You don't have to be either anxious and flippant and hurrying or fatalistic, "Well, whatever happens happens. Whatever happens." Okay, there's a lot of difference between that and trying to make everything happen right now. I mean, manipulate the situation, right? There's a big difference. There's a lot of room in between there and I think Jacob is finally realizing, "Well, if we don't go, we starve. If we do go, we may die.

Let's just see what God does." So El Shaddai is the Hebrew term there and it's God Almighty.

Any comments or questions? Sorry I didn't get to that thing I wanted to tell you about but we'll get to it. Yeah, I'm sorry. It's 10:29. Any other comments or questions? Alright, so let's see here. I'll send out an email this week to remind everyone about maybe bring something small to munch on next week. If you find yourself running late, it's like 9:20, "Oh, I forgot!" Alright, come anyway. We want you here and try to meet with someone tonight at that backyard barbecue. Try to gather with people. We've been talking about that for a few weeks and it's going to be good. Hope you are enjoying looking forward to being with some Bereans.