

GENESIS 34: VENGEANCE ON SHECHEM

I. INTRO

- A. Every family has some level of dysfunction
 - i. Some more than others
- B. What have been the consequences of the dysfunction in your family?
 - i. Have you seen God use these consequences for good?

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Jacob's daughter Dinah went out to see the women of the land
 - i. Shechem saw her, took her, and raped her
 - ii. Then he decided he wanted to marry her
 - a. So he asked his father Hamor to negotiate with Jacob for her
- B. So Hamor came to Jacob and asked what price Jacob required for a dowry
 - i. But Jacob's sons heard what happened
 - ii. They told Hamor that he and all his men must be circumcised
 - iii. Hamor and his men agree
- C. Three days after they circumcised themselves, Simeon and Levi invaded
 - i. They killed the males and plundered the city
 - ii. Jacob was not happy about this

III. DINAH – V. 1

- A. The only daughter of Jacob that we know of

IV. WENT OUT TO SEE THE WOMEN OF THE LAND – V. 1

- A. Unsupervised
 - i. Jacob and Leah were not present
- B. Canaanites were a picture of worldly living apart from God
 - i. Dinah was seeking relationship with the world
 - ii. Jacob lived separately from the Canaanites outside the city
 - a. Dinah did not learn this lesson¹

V. THE HIVITE – V. 2

- A. Descendant of Canaan

¹ Armstrong, S. (2012, October 28). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 34A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_34a

- i. Genesis 10:15-17 ***Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites...***
- B. They were one of the Canaanite nations that were to be completely destroyed
 - i. Deuteronomy 7:1-2 ***“When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them.***
- C. The name “Hivite” does not exist outside the biblical record
 - i. Probably a corruption of Horite or Hurrian²

VI. HE SIEZED HER – V. 2

- A. He saw and took like Eve
 - i. Dinah is compared to the forbidden fruit
- B. This is a general word for *take*
 - i. Context led the translators to interpret it this way
 - ii. But the context doesn’t necessarily indicate this
 - a. Nahmanides was one of the first to indicate this may have been rape – 13th century
 - b. Vulgate translates it as “ravishing the virgin by force”³

VII. LAY WITH HER – V. 2

- A. This word is used in reference to sinful sexual relationships

VIII. HUMILIATED HER – V. 2

- A. She was a virgin
 - i. But now she had lain with a man so it would be difficult for her to be married

IX. HE LOVED THE YOUNG WOMAN – V. 3

- A. In contrast to his actions in verse 2
- B. Genesis is painting a picture of the twisted morality of the Canaanites
 - i. Sodom and Gomorrah were completely depraved

² "Hivites." *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Retrieved September 18, 2023 from Encyclopedia.com: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/hivites>

³ Joseph, A. L. (2017). *Who is the Victim in the Dinah Story?*. TheTorah.com. <https://www.thetorah.com/article/who-is-the-victim-in-the-dinah-story>

- ii. Esau's wives brought grief to his family
- iii. Now Shechem treats a woman he loves like a slave
- C. Should give Israel an idea of what they are dealing with 400 years later

X. GET ME THIS GIRL FOR MY WIFE – V. 4

- A. Hamor would need to go to Jacob to negotiate a price

XI. DEFILED – V. 5

- A. Can also be translated *became unclean*
 - i. Unclean refers to how fit a person or object is to be in the presence of God
 - a. Not necessarily sinful or related to sin⁴
 - b. Leviticus 15:18 ***If a man lies with a woman and has an emission of semen, both of them shall bathe themselves in water and be unclean until the evening.***
 - ii. Defiled refers to a sinful act
 - iii. The distinction is important

XII. HELD HIS PEACE – V. 5

- A. He didn't say anything or respond in any way
- B. He was head of the family
 - i. It was his responsibility to do something but he left it up to his sons instead
 - ii. Made a bad situation worse
- C. God places authority in place for a reason
 - i. When that authority doesn't do its job, it creates a power vacuum⁵

XIII. VERY ANGRY – V. 7

- A. With righteous anger

XIV. AN OUTRAGEOUS THING IN ISRAEL – V. 7

- A. Phrasing indicates Jacob's sons had begun to consider themselves a nation
 - i. This act by Shechem isn't an offense against one person
 - ii. But against an entire nation and their customs

XV. MAKE MARRIAGES WITH US – V. 9

- A. Israelites were not supposed to intermarry with Canaanites
 - i. Dangerous spiritually

⁴ Steiner, V. J. (2021, February). 'Clean' and 'Unclean' in Leviticus: A Theological Summary. The Emmaus Institute for Biblical Studies. https://www.emmausinstitute.net/_media/documents/Clean_and_Unclean_in_Leviticus.pdf

⁵ Guzik, D. (2018). Simeon and Levi Massacre the Men of Shechem. Enduring Word. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-34/>

- ii. It would lead them into idolatry and immorality

XVI. GIVE YOUR DAUGHTERS TO US, AND TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS FOR YOURSELVES – V. 9

- A. This is a generational proposal
 - i. It would result in the Israelites eventually becoming assimilated into Canaanite culture⁶
 - a. When we compromise for the purpose of making peace with the world
 - b. The world's influence on us is greater than our influence on the world

XVII. THE LAND SHALL BE OPEN TO YOU – V. 10

- A. Israel was not to acquire the land through compromise with Canaanite tribes
 - i. It wasn't the Canaanites' land to give
- B. This is an assault on God's covenant promise
 - i. Marriage and land were the two ways the inheritance could be compromised

XVIII. LET ME FIND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES – V. 11

- A. Jacob was previously obsessed with finding favor in Esau's eyes
 - i. Now Shechem wants to find favor in Jacob's eyes

XIX. I WILL GIVE WHATEVER YOU SAY TO ME – V. 12

- A. This offer sounds generous
- B. But it was actually insulting
 - i. Implies that money and marriage can make the problem go away⁷
 - ii. He was treating Dinah like a prostitute who can be bought
- C. Contrasted with how Abraham negotiated for the burial ground for Sarah
 - i. Genesis 23:8-9 ***And he said to them, "If you are willing that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and entreat for me Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as property for a burying place."***
 - ii. Abraham made the offer with the intention of paying the full price
 - iii. Hamor made the offer with the intention of economic gain later on

XX. DECEITFULLY – V. 13

- A. Jacob's sons come up with a plan that would make Jacob proud
- B. They planned this in advance

XXI. THAT WOULD BE A DISGRACE TO US – V. 14

⁶ Guzik

⁷ Guzik

- A. Jacob's sons masked their planned sin with false righteousness

XXII. EVERY MALE AMONG YOU BEING CIRCUMCISED – V. 15

- A. This would not make them like Israel's sons
 - i. Because they did not receive the covenant
 - ii. Other ancient cultures did this so circumcision itself accomplished nothing

XXIII. ONE PEOPLE – V. 16

- A. This was the same goal of those who built the tower of Babel
 - i. Genesis 11:6 ***And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them."***

XXIV. THE MOST HONORED – V. 19

- A. So the people of the city would be likely to listen to him

XXV. AT PEACE WITH US – V. 21

- A. Other translations say *friendly*
 - i. It's dangerous to be friendly with the world
 - ii. John 17:14-18 ***I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.***

XXVI. THE LAND IS LARGE ENOUGH FOR THEM – V. 21

- A. Contrasted with previous times when the land was not large enough
 - i. Genesis 13:5-7 ***And Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents, so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together, and there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were dwelling in the land.***
 - ii. Genesis 26:19-22 ***But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel***

over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, “For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

- iii. Previously led to quarrels
- a. So the opposite is implied here

XXVII. TAKE THEIR DAUGHTERS AS WIVES – V. 21

- A. Intermarriage with Canaanites was forbidden for Abraham’s family
- i. Intermarriage with the world is a dangerous thing

XXVIII. ONLY ON THIS CONDITION – V. 22

- A. Circumcision would have been very painful for grown men
- B. But the benefits would be worth it

XXIX. BE OURS – V. 23

- A. The men of Shechem intended to absorb the wealth of Jacob’s family into theirs
- B. Israel would have lost more than just material wealth
 - i. They would have lost eternal wealth⁸
 - ii. We risk losing eternal wealth when partnering with the world

XXX. WHEN THEY WERE SORE – V. 25

- A. Probably sleep deprived and feverish as well

XXXI. DINAH’S BROTHERS – V. 25

- A. Simeon, Levi, Dinah were all children of Leah
 - i. Leah and her children were mostly ignored
 - ii. Jacob had shown that Rachel and Joseph were favorites when meeting Esau
 - a. He did nothing to protect Dinah or defend her when Hamor came to negotiate
 - iii. Years of family neglect turned into boiled over rage⁹
 - a. They murdered an entire city
 - b. They brought pagan women and children into their family

XXXII. KILLED ALL THE MALES – V. 25

- A. No one was spared
 - i. Probably around 50-100 men¹⁰

⁸ Armstrong, S. (2012, November 4). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 34B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_34b

⁹ Armstrong, S. (2012, November 4). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 34B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_34b

¹⁰ Armstrong, S. (2012, November 4). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 34B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_34b

- B. They used the sign of God's covenant for violence, deception and revenge

XXXIII. HAMOR AND HIS SON SHECHEM – V. 26

- A. God used the sin of Simeon and Levi to keep His promise to Abraham
 - i. I will curse those who curse you
- B. God uses wicked men and wicked acts to bring about His purposes

XXXIV. OUT OF SHECHEM'S HOUSE – V. 26

- A. Shechem had apparently been keeping Dinah there
 - i. In addition to raping her

XXXV. PLUNDERED THE CITY – V. 27

- A. They took everything
 - i. Flocks, herds, donkeys
 - ii. Wives, children, all the wealth in their homes
 - iii. There was nothing left inside or outside the city

XXXVI. YOU HAVE BROUGHT TROUBLE ON ME – V. 30

- A. Jacob was more concerned about the consequences he would face
 - i. Instead of being concerned with the injustice that his sons had done

XXXVII. MAKING ME STINK – V. 30

- A. Figure of speech
 - i. Offense taken through nose or sense of smell
- B. Jacob had just built an altar to worship God before the Canaanites
 - i. Now his sons were acting like the Canaanites
 - ii. They were hurting his testimony as a God-fearer¹¹
- C. This is exactly what God intended
 - i. There was significant risk of corrupting the family of God
 - ii. Now no Canaanite city will want to interact with them
 - a. Ensures they will remain separate from the Canaanites¹²

XXXVIII. I SHALL BE DESTROYED – V. 30

- A. Jacob still didn't trust God with his safety

XXXIX. OUR SISTER – V. 31

¹¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (2010a). *Be Authentic: Exhibiting Real Faith in the Real World: OT Commentary, Genesis 25-50*. David C. Cook.

¹² Armstrong, S. (2012, November 4). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 34B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_34b

- A. Instead of Jacob's daughter
- B. Simeon and Levi had to defend her because Jacob refused to do anything¹³

XL. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. The Promised Seed must remain separate from the seed of the serpent
 - i. This chapter presented a threat to the integrity of the seed
 - ii. If Jacob's sons had accepted Shechem's proposal the family line would have been corrupted
 - a. Supports interpretation that Shechem raped Dinah
 - iii. First of three incidents involving the sin of Jacob's sons
 - a. Also in Genesis 37 and 38
 - b. All three incidents put integrity of the chosen family at risk
- B. Simeon and Levi were the second and third born sons
 - i. Reuben was the firstborn
 - a. He will lose the blessing later on
 - ii. Simeon and Levi would be next in line for the blessing
 - a. But Jacob refused to give it to them because of their murders
 - iii. So the blessing fell to Judah who was the ancestor of Jesus

XLI. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. What do we risk when we try to get too close to the world?

- B. Was Jacob's sons anger justified? How do you think they should have dealt with their anger?

¹³ Armstrong, S. (2012, November 4). Genesis 2011 - Lesson 34B. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_34b

- C. What do you think the proper response should have been from Jacob and his sons to Shechem's marriage proposal?

- D. In what way do Gentile Christians identify with Hamor and his sons in this chapter? See Ephesians 2:11-13. What was God's solution to this?

- E. How does Jacob's sin and poor choices earlier in his life affect his children in this chapter?

- F. Why does God call us to be separate from the world? What are some areas in your life that you need to separate from the world?

XLII. FURTHER STUDY

- A. Why is it a bad idea for followers of Jesus to partner with the world? See 2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

- B. What happens when a believer becomes a friend to the world? See James 4:4.

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- C. God commanded Israel to completely destroy the Canaanite cities in Deuteronomy 20:16-18. What is the difference between this command and what Simeon and Levi did in Genesis 34?

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- D. Read 2 Kings 10:1-31. What are some similarities between this story and Genesis 34? What does this tell us about how God accomplishes his purposes?

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- E. What is the proper way to retaliate against evil? See Romans 12:17-21.
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