

# Genesis 34 - Rape of Dinah; Negotiations for Marriage; Revenge Plot; Shechem Circumcised; The Shechem Massacre

## II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

(3) Life of Jacob (Gen 27:1—36:43)

(E) Covenant reconfirmed (Gen 34:1—35:15)

(a) Covenant threatened by rape of Dinah (34:1-31)

(i) Rape of Dinah (34:1-5)

(ii) Shechem's request for Dinah (34:6-12)

(iii) Proposal of circumcision (34:13-17)

(iv) Performance of circumcision (34:18-24)

(v) Vengeance of Simeon and Levi (34:25-31)

## Genesis 34

(E) Covenant reconfirmed (Gen 34:1—35:15)

(a) Covenant threatened by rape of Dinah (34:1-31)

(i) Rape of Dinah (34:1-5)

**1** Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land.

**1** Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land.

**1** Some time later, Dinah, Leah's daughter whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land.

**1** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

- Dinah was likely 14-16 years old

— She was probably born in the second year of her parents' marriage; Simeon and Levi were her two full-brothers (21 and 20 years old, respectively)

- Dinah should have never been left alone (12:15; 20:2; 26:7); unmarried women were lawful prey to pagans

— This is the first mention of a Jewess having social contact with the Canaanites

2 When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he **took** her and **lay with her** and **raped her**.

2 When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her by force.

2 When Hamor the Hivite's son Shechem, the regional leader, saw her, he grabbed her and raped her, humiliating her.

2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

- Shechem (the man) was the son of a city king

- "...took" - *laqah*, indicates that an irresistible force was used

- "...lay with her and raped her" - this was forcible rape, no matter that he expressed his love for her in v3

— This action loosened a stone that caused a landslide

— The word *ana*, defiled (AV), indicates dishonorable treatment

— After a woman was debased in this way, she had no expectancy of ever having a valid marriage

3 But he was deeply attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her.

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3 He was attached to Dinah, Jacob's daughter, since he loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her.

3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.

- Dinah was basically a hostage in Shechem's house, kept against her will; during this time, he spoke tenderly to her and began to fall in love with her

4 So Shechem spoke to his father **Hamor**, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."

4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young girl for a wife."

4 Then Shechem told his father Hamor, "Get this young woman for me to be my wife."

4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

- "...Hamor" - that is, "ass"

— His father was to become the negotiator

5 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob said nothing until they came in.

5 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in.

5 Because Jacob learned that Shechem had dishonored his daughter Dinah while his sons were still out with their cattle on the open range, he remained silent until they returned.

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

- Word about Dinah's rape spread quickly to Jacob

— He waited to make a decision on how to react until his sons came home, as they would be part of the decision making process

6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.

6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.

6 Meanwhile, Shechem's father Hamor arrived to talk to Jacob.

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

- While Jacob was waiting for his sons, Hamor came to speak with him about Dinah

7 Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard *about it*; and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a **disgraceful thing in Israel** by sleeping with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing **ought not to be done**.

7 Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard *it*; and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done.

7 Just then Jacob's sons arrived from the field. When they heard what had happened, they were distraught with grief and livid with anger toward Shechem, because he had committed a disgraceful deed in Israel by forcing Jacob's daughter to have sex, an act that never should have happened.

7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.

- "...disgraceful thing" - *nevalah*, 13x in the OT, 8x it is used of sexual crimes (34:7; Deut 22:21; Judges 19:23-24; 20:6,10; 2 Sam 13:12; Jer 29:23)

— It denotes a godless act that polluted the family

— It eventually resulted in the breakup of relationships between tribes and between family members, as well as between God and man

- "...Israel" - this is the first mention of the nation by this name

— Jacob's family now saw themselves as a distinct entity from the rest of the people of Canaan; they had their own ethnic identity

- "...ought not to be done" - this is an understatement; however, the point is that this act should not happen in Israel

— This is similar to Tamar's response to Amnon prior to her rape (2 Sam 13:12)

**8** But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage.

**8** But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage.

8 But Hamor said this: "My son is deeply attracted to your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife.

8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.

9 And intermarry with us; give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.

9 Intermarry with us; give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.

9 Intermarry with us. Give your daughters to us and take our sons for yourselves.

9 And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.

10 So you will live with us, and the land shall be open to you; live and trade in it and acquire property in it."

10 Thus you shall live with us, and the land shall be *open* before you; live and trade in it and acquire property in it."

10 Live with us anywhere you want. Live, trade, and grow rich in it."

10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.

- The marriage offer included citizenship, something the nomads of this period wanted badly; the offer also included ownership in the land

— There were many nomads, who lived just outside these various city-states, who hoped to become citizens (Cf. Lot in Sodom, who was eventually granted citizenship)

— The Land would eventually be given to Jacob by God, not by Hamor

11 Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find favor in your sight, and I will give whatever you tell me.

11 Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "If I find favor in your sight, then I will give whatever you say to me.

11 Shechem also addressed Dinah's father and brothers. He told them, "If you'll just approve me, I'll give whatever you ask of me.

11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.

12 **Demand of me ever so much** bridal payment and gift, and I will give whatever you tell me; but give me the girl in marriage."

12 Ask me ever so much bridal payment and gift, and I will give according as you say to me; but give me the girl in marriage."

12 No matter how big or how extensive your demands are for a dowry and wedding presents from me, I'll provide whatever you ask. Only give me the young lady to be my wife."

12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

- "Demand of me ever so much" - Shechem offered to forego that which the groom normally had the right to expect: he will not demand a dowry for her to bring into the marriage, nor a gift

— Instead, Shechem will do all the giving; the only thing he wanted was the girl

— While the moral standards of the Canaanites was low, Shechem was being very generous in his offer

### (iii) Proposal of circumcision (34:13-17)

13 But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit, because he had defiled their sister Dinah.

13 But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit, because he had defiled Dinah their sister.

13 But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceptively, because Shechem had dishonored their sister Dinah.

13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:

- Jacob's sons wanted revenge on Shechem, but they went about it deceptively, seeking to trick him into a compromising situation

14 They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, *that is*, give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us.

14 They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us.

14 They told them, "We can't do this. We can't give our sister to a man who isn't circumcised, because that would be insulting to us.

14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us:

- The brothers took the lead in the negotiations for Dinah, which was not unusual

15 Only on this *condition* will we consent to you: if you will become like us, in that every male of you will be circumcised,

15 Only on this *condition* will we consent to you: if you will become like us, in that every male of you be circumcised,

15 But we'll agree to your request, only if you will become like us by circumcising every male among you.

15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;

- Jacob's sons demanded that Shechem, and all males in the entire city, become circumcised; only then would they agree to give Dinah for marriage

16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people.

16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people.

16 Then we'll give our daughters to you and take your daughters for ourselves, live among you, and be as a united people.

16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

17 But if you do not listen to us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go."

17 But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go."

17 But if you won't listen to us, then we're going to take our daughter and leave."

17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

- If the condition of circumcision was not met, they would take Dinah and leave

#### (iv) Performance of circumcision (34:18-24)

18 Now their words seemed reasonable to Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son.

18 Now their words seemed reasonable to Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son.

18 What they said pleased Hamor and his son Shechem,

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son.

- Hamor and Shechem agreed to the circumcision requirements by Jacob's sons

19 The young man did not delay to do this, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father.

19 The young man did not delay to do the thing, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father.

19 so the young man did not delay the matter any further, since he was delighted with Jacob's daughter.

Now Shechem was the most important person in his father's household.

19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father.

- The reason the city agreed to be circumcised, in spite of the pain it would cause, was because Shechem was the most honored in the royal house

20 So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the people of their city, saying,

20 So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying,

20 So Hamor and his son Shechem entered the gate of their city and addressed the men of their city.

**20** And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

21 "These men are friendly to us; therefore let them live in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. We will take their daughters in marriage, and give our daughters to them.

21 "These men are friendly with us; therefore let them live in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters in marriage, and give our daughters to them.

21 "These men are at peace with us," they announced. "Therefore, let them live in the land and trade in it. Look! The land is large enough for them. Let's take their daughters as wives for ourselves and let's give our sons to them.

21 These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

22 Only on this *condition* will the men consent to us to live with us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised just as they are circumcised.

22 Only on this *condition* will the men consent to us to live with us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised.

22 "However," they added, "only on this condition will the men consent to live with us and be united as a single people with us: every male among us will have to be circumcised just as they are.

22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.

23 Will their livestock and their property and all their animals not be ours? Let's just consent to them, and they will live with us."

23 Will not their livestock and their property and all their animals be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will live with us."

23 Shouldn't all their cattle, acquisitions, and animals belong to us? So, let's give our consent to them, and then they'll live with us."

23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

- Their pain (of circumcision) will also come with gain (Israel's wealth)

— This, however, was never brought up in the negotiations with Jacob's sons, showing the motivation is materialism more than anything

24 All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

24 All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

24 All of the males who heard Hamor and his son Shechem, who had gone out to the city gate, were circumcised.

24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

#### (v) Vengeance of Simeon and Levi (34:25-31)

25 Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons—Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers—each took his sword and **came upon** the city undetected, and killed every male.

25 Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male.

25 Three days later, while they were still in pain, Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi, two of Dinah's brothers, each grabbed a sword and entered the city unannounced, intending to kill all the males.

25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.

- Simeon and Levi were Dinah's full brothers
- They attacked Shechem on the third day after the mass circumcision, at the point the pain was at its height
- "...came upon" - *batach*, root for the word "security"; they came upon the city boldly, without fail, with full "security," knowing that the defenders of the city were incapacitated
- They murdered all the males of Shechem

26 They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and left.

26 They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went forth.

26 They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with their swords, took back Dinah from Shechem's house, and left.

26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

- They also murdered the males of the royal house, including Shechem and Hamor, and captured Dinah and returned home

27 Jacob's sons came upon those killed and looted the city, because **they** had defiled their sister.

27 Jacob's sons came upon the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister.

27 Jacob's other sons came along afterward and plundered the city where their sister had been defiled,

27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.

- After all the males were dead and Dinah was rescued, they plundered the city
- "...they" - Simeon and Levi held the entire city responsible for the rape of Dinah, since the whole town failed to act responsibly

28 They took their flocks, their herds, and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field;

28 They took their flocks and their herds and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field;

28 seizing all of their flocks, herds, donkeys, and whatever else was in the city or had been left out in the field.

28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field,

29 and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even everything that was in the houses.

29 and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even all that was in the houses.

29 They carried off all their wealth, their children, and their wives as captives, plundering everything that remained in the houses.

29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.

- The wholesale plunder of the city, including women and children, and the murder of every male, went way beyond the reasonable, wise and justly deserved punishment of one man  
— This was excessively more vengeance than the Mosaic Law would later legislate (Deut 22:28-29)

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me repulsive among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since my men are few in number, they will band together against me and attack me, and I will be destroyed, I and my household!"

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and my men being few in number, they will gather together against me and attack me and I will be destroyed, I and my household."

30 Then Jacob told Simeon and Levi, "You have certainly stirred up trouble for me! You've made me despised by the Canaanites and the Perizzites who live in this territory. Because I have only a few men with me, they're going to gather themselves together and attack me until I am totally destroyed, along with my entire household!"

**30** And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

- Jacob points out the danger now facing him because of the irresponsible actions of Simeon and Levi

— He rebukes Simeon and Levi for giving him a bad name, but he doesn't rebuke them for the sin that they have committed

— For this, Simeon and Levi were passed over in the blessing with the birthright (49:5-7)

- Moreover, a deceptive covenant was not to be dangled before the pagans
- On occasion, however, God used a Simeon and a Levi, and a Jehu (2 Kings 10:11-14,17-31), as His instruments of judgment

31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?"

31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister as a harlot?"

31 "Should he have treated our sister like a whore?" they asked in response.

**31** And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

- Simeon and Levi argue that Jacob's concern was misplaced. They showed moral indignation.

— When Shechem offered to pay for Dinah, he basically turned her into a prostitute

— They felt Jacob was too willing to compromise, and they defended their action in defending their sister as correct

- The problem was, they went far beyond what they should have. Their actions were correct, but they should have stopped much shorter than the murder of every male in the city

## Lessons

- There was to be no intermarriage with the Canaanites because this would destroy Israel's distinctive identity
- The Canaanites must be destroyed (Deut 20:16-17a)
- There must be no assimilation with the Canaanites

## The Consequences

- In 49:5-7, in Jacob's blessing, these two sons will be cursed in that they will not receive their own territory in the Land.
- In Joshua 8:30-35, Joshua took Shechem without a fight because it was now recognized by the local population that Shechem belonged to Israel by right of conquest under Jacob's sons. So while Joshua had to fight for other territories, he did not need to fight for Shechem.
- The contrast between Gen 34 and 35. In Gen 34 there is absolutely no mention of God, no reference to God whatsoever. But in chapter 35, the word God will be mentioned eleven times by itself, and God's Name will be found eleven more times in connection with specific names.