

Genesis Chapter 34

Verses 1-31

The tawdry details of the abuse of Dinah and the revenge of Levi and Simeon are hereby recounted in full.

Perhaps in order to highlight for the readers about to enter Canaan how easily Abraham's descendants might intermingle and marry with Canaanites, contrary to patriarchal desires (24:3; 27:46; 28:1).

And God's will (Exodus 34:6; Deut. 7:3; Josh. 23:12-13; Nehemiah 13:26-27).

Genesis 34:1 "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land."

"And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob":

She is observed to be the daughter of Leah, partly that the following miscarriage might bring to mind her forwardness to intrude herself into Jacob's bed, and be a rebuke unto her.

And partly to account for Simeon and Levi being so active in revenging her abuse, they being Leah's sons.

"Went out to see the daughters of the land":

Of the land of Canaan, to visit them, and contract an acquaintance with them.

And she having no sisters to converse with at home, it might be a temptation to her to go abroad.

According to the Targum of Jonathan, she went to see the manners, customs, and fashions of the women of that country.

To learn them, as the Septuagint version renders the word; or to see their habit and dress, and how they ornamented themselves, as Josephus observes.

And who also says it was a festival day at Shechem, and therefore very probably many of the young women of the country round about might come to that place on that occasion.

And who being dressed in their best clothes would give Dinah a good opportunity of seeing and observing their fashions.

Which, with the diversions of the season, and shows to be seen, allured Dinah to go out of her mother's tent into the city, to gratify her curiosity.

Little did Dinah (see 30:20-21), realize that her jaunt to the nearby city to view how other women lived would bring forth such horrific results.

Dinah had probably, already been acquainted with these girls and she was most likely visiting with them.

Genesis 34:2 "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."

"And when Shechem the son of Hamor":

From whom the city had its name, near which Jacob and his family now were.

"The Hivite, prince of the country":

Hamor was an Hivite, which was one of the nations of the land of Canaan, and this man was the prince or a principal man of that nation, as well as of Shechem.

Josephus calls him a king.

"Saw her; that is, Dinah, what a beautiful person she was, and was enamored with her.

"He took her":

By force, as the Targum of Jonathan.

"And lay with her, and defiled her":

Or "humbled" or "afflicted her".

And it is a rule with the Jews, that every such act, which is done by force, is called a humiliation and affliction.

The child begotten in this act of fornication is said by them to be Asenath, who was had into Egypt, and brought up by Potipherah's wife as her daughter, and afterwards married to Joseph (Genesis 41:45).

Scripture classifies Shechem's action as forcible rape, no matter how sincerely he might have expressed his love for her afterwards (verse 3), and desire for marriage (verses 11-12).

Other expressions in the account underscore the clearly unacceptable nature of this crime, such as "defiled".

Verses 5, 13, "grieved and very angry" (verse 7), "a disgraceful thing ... ought not to be done (verse 7), and 'treat our sister as a harlot' (verse 31).

There are several things to notice about this relationship.

Dinah should not have ventured out on her own.

She knew these people were not living the type of holy life that was required of her people.

Dinah's curiosity would cost her greatly.

The age of Dinah at this time was questionable.

We may assume that she was perhaps between thirteen and seventeen, because her nearness to age of Joseph.

Joseph was sold into captivity, when he was about seventeen.

Shechem was a prince, so he should have had more honor than to do something like this.

Especially to a guest in his country.

Had he thought at all, he should have realized that this would cause a great rift between his people and Dinah's people.

Rape was punishable by death in those days.

If it occurred with the girl's permission, they would both be stoned to death.

The fact that he took her, indicated that it was against her will.

Even after she had been defiled, Shechem wanted to marry her (verses 3-4).

Genesis 34:3 "And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel."

"And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob":

His inclination was to her, she was always in his thoughts; it was not a mere lustful desire that was suddenly raised, and soon over, but a constant and continued affection he bore to her.

"And he loved the damsel":

Sincerely and heartily.

"And spake kindly unto the damsel":

Or "to the heart" of her, such things as tended to comfort her, she being sad and sorrowful; or to soften her mind towards him, and take off the resentment of it to him, because of the injury he had done her.

And to gain her good will and affection, and her consent to marry him; professing great love to her, promising her great things.

What worldly grandeur and honor she would be advanced to and how kindly he would behave towards her.

Verses 4-5

"Jacob ... held his peace":

In the absence of further data, Jacob's reluctance to respond should not be criticized.

Wisdom dictated that he wait and counsel with his sons, but their reaction, grief, anger and vengeance hijacked the talks between Jacob and Hamor (verse 6), and led finally to Jacob's stern rebuke (verse 30).

Genesis 34:4 "And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife."

"And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor":

And told him the whole affair, at least what a strong affection he had for Dinah.

"Saying, get me this damsel to wife":

By which he meant not only that he would give his consent that he might marry her, but that he would get her parents' consent unto it, and settle the matter with them.

By which it appears how early, and that even among Heathen nations, consent of parents on both sides was judged necessary to marriage.

It seems by this as if Dinah was now detained in the house of Hamor or Shechem, and was upon the spot, or near at hand, when Shechem addressed his father about her (see Gen. 34:26).

Here we see even though Shechem raped Dinah, he did love her and wanted to marry her.

This however, was no excuse for his act.

He should have used more self-control and married her first.

Shechem was selfish and inconsiderate, and he would pay for his actions.

Genesis 34:5 "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."

"And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter":

That is, that Shechem had defiled her; the report of this was brought him very probably by one of the maids which attended her to the city.

It was hardly to be thought that she should go there alone, and which must be very distressing to Jacob to hear of.

This was his first affliction in his own family, but it was not the only one, nor the last, others quickly followed.

"Now his sons were with his cattle in the field":

He had bought, or in some other hired by him for his cattle, feeding and keeping them.

Being arrived to an age that was fit for such service; here they were when the above report was brought to Jacob.

"And Jacob held his peace until they were come":

Neither murmuring at the providence, but patiently bearing the chastisement.

Nor reflecting upon Leah for letting Dinah go out, or not keeping a proper watch over her.

Nor saying anything of it to any in the family; nor expressing his displeasure at Shechem, nor vowing revenge on him for it, nor taking any step towards it until his sons were come home from the field.

With whom he chose to advise, and whose assistance he would want, if it was judged necessary to use force to get Dinah out of the hands of Shechem, or to avenge the injury done her.

Jacob was not provoked to go and take the law into his own hands, even though he heard of the indiscretion toward Dinah.

He would wait and talk to her brothers, who were, also, children of Leah.

They would have a say in what action they would take against Shechem.

Verses 6-10

The prince of Shechem painted a picture of harmonious integration (verse 16, “become one people”).

However, Shechemite self-interest and enrichment actually prevailed (verse 23).

Genesis 34:6 "And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him."

"And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob":

Unto the tent of Jacob without the city.

"To commune with him":

To talk with him about the affair of Dinah, to pacify him, and try to gain his consent, that his son might marry her, and to settle the terms and conditions of the marriage.

Hamor had gone to Jacob to try to keep down trouble, and to purchase Dinah for Shechem.

This was the custom in the land in those days.

The fathers of the bride and groom to be would strike a bargain, and make the arrangements for the wedding.

Genesis 34:7 "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."

"And the sons of Jacob came out of the field, when they heard it":

Either by a messenger Jacob sent to them, to acquaint them with it, or by some other way.

However, be it as it will, as soon as they heard of the abuse of their sister, they immediately left their flocks to the care of their servants, and came to their father's tent.

"And the men were grieved and were very wroth":

They were grieved for the sin committed against God, very probably, as well as for the injury done to their sister, and they were wroth against Shechem the author of it.

"Because he had wrought folly in Israel, in lying with Jacob's daughter":

All sin is folly, being a transgression of the law of God founded in the highest wisdom, and particularly uncleanness, and that branch of it, deflowering a virgin.

This action being committed on Jacob's daughter, whose name was Israel is said to be "in", or rather "against" Israel, to his grief, and to the reproach of him and his family.

Already Jacob's household is being called by the name God had given him as father of the coming nation (32:28).

Though these words may be rather the words of Moses, than of the sons of Jacob; or however are expressed not in the language used by them, but in what was in use in the times of Moses, when Israel was the name of a nation and church.

Whereas it was now but a personal name, and at most but the name of a family.

"Which thing ought not to be done":

Being against the law and light of nature to do such an action by force and violence, and against the law of nations to suffer it to go with impunity.

These sons were grieved over what had happened to their sister.

They were also ashamed.

This was the first time Israel was used for the name of the family.

These Israelites were under obligation to God to live holy lives, and because they were the covenant people.

This brought extra shame.

In fact, this act was not just against Dinah, but Israel's family.

Genesis 34:8 "And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife."

"And Hamor communed with them":

With Jacob and his sons, who came in just at that time.

"Saying, the soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter":

The daughter of the family and the only daughter in it; for her Shechem had a vehement affection and a strong desire to marry her, and could not be satisfied without her.

"I pray you, give her him to wife":

He not only requests the consent of the parents of the damsel, but of her brothers also, which in those times and countries, seems to have been normal to ask (see Gen. 24:50).

Genesis 34:9 "And make ye marriages with us, [and] give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you."

"And make ye marriages with us":

There was no objection on their side, it lay on the other.

Abraham's servant was charged by him not to take a wife of the Canaanites to his son Isaac, and the same charge was given Jacob by Isaac (Gen. 24:3).

Therefore Jacob would never agree that his children should marry any of that nation; and marriages with them were afterwards forbidden by the law of Moses (Deut. 7:3).

"And give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you":

At present, there were no other daughters in Jacob's family, yet there might be hereafter.

The request is, that for the future there might be intermarriages between them, as would be practicable in a course of time.

Hamor did not apologize for the terrible thing his son had done.

He believed that the offer to marry her would be sufficient for the crime.

He even went so far as to offer his daughters in marriage to Jacob's sons.

Hamor wanted inter-marriage between the two tribes, but God said, do not be unequally yoked to those of unbelief.

Genesis 34:10 "And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein."

"And ye shall dwell with us":

Peaceably and quietly, not as sojourners only, but as inhabitants.

"And the land shall be before you":

To choose what part of it they pleased to dwell in, and which they should have in their own power and possession.

"Dwell and trade you therein":

In any sort of traffic and commerce the land would admit of, and they should best choose.

"And get you possessions therein":

Buy houses and land, and enjoy them, they and their posterity.

These are the arguments used by Hamor to gain the consent of Jacob and his family that his son might marry Dinah, and the proposals are honorable and generous.

Hamor was purposing a peace agreement where Israel's family would then live in the land of Hamor's family.

Peace is difficult when two families, so different, try to live in a small area.

Genesis 34:11 "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."

"And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren":

To the father and brethren of Dinah; he then had addressed them after his father Hamor had finished speaking.

"Let me find grace in your eyes":

Forgive the offence committed, the injury done to Dinah and grant the request of her marriage and it will be considered as a great favor.

"And what ye shall say unto me, I will give":

To her, to her parents, to her brethren and relations.

Let what will be fixed, shall be given which showed great affection for her, and that he was willing to do anything to make amends for the injury done.

He cared not what it was that might be demanded of him, so be it that she became his wife.

Genesis 34:12 "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."

"Ask me never so much dowry and gift":

Or "multiply them exceedingly", fix them at as high a rate as may be thought fit.

The "dowry" was what a man gave to a woman at her marriage; for in those times and countries, instead of a man having a portion with his wife, as with us in our times, he gave one to his wife, or to her parents for her.

And especially in after times this was used, and became a law in Israel, in the case of a debased virgin (see Exodus 22:16).

"The gift" was either of jewels and clothes to the women or of such like precious things to her brethren and friends (see Gen. 24:53).

"And I will give according as ye shall say unto me":

Determine among yourselves whatever shall be both the dowry and gift, and it shall be punctually observed.

"But give me the damsel to wife":

Only agree to that, and I care not what is required of me.

Shechem was in love with Dinah.

He was telling Jacob and Dinah's brothers that anything they would ask would not be too much to give for the hand of Dinah in marriage.

No amount of money, or property, would be too much.

Verses 13-17

Feigning interest in the proposals put forward and misusing, if not abusing, the circumcision sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (see notes on 17:11-14).

Jacob's sons conned both father and son into convincing all the men to submit to circumcision because the outcome would be to their favor with marriages (verse 9), and social, economic integration (verse 10).

Genesis 34:13 "And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:"

"And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor deceitfully":

Proposing the marriage of their sister on terms after mentioned, when they never intended it should ever be: Onkelos, Jonathan, and Jarchi interpret it, "with wisdom", as if they answered wisely and prudently, but the word is never used in a good sense.

If it was wisdom, it was carnal wisdom and wicked cunning, and was disapproved of by plain hearted Jacob.

"And said: or spoke in this deceitful manner":

But this idea was a deception on the part of the sons of Jacob, because they "answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully."

It was also a demeaning of the rite of circumcision.

"Because he had defiled Dinah their sister":

And therefore were filled with indignation at him, and filled with resentment against him, and vowed within themselves revenge upon him.

Genesis 34:14 "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:"

"And they said unto them":

Levi and Simeon, to Hamor and Shechem.

"We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised":

Not that there was any law against it at that time.

There were, on the other hand, precedents for it both in Isaac and Jacob, who had married the daughters of uncircumcised persons.

Nor indeed do they plead any law, only that it was not becoming their character, nor agreeably to their religion, nor honorable in their esteem.

"For that were a reproach unto us":

And they should be reflected upon for the slighting of the institution of circumcision, which was of God.

So they pretend that it might be interpreted, should they enter into affinity with any uncircumcised persons.

Genesis 34:15 "But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we [be], that every male of you be circumcised;"

"But in this will we consent unto you":

Upon the following condition, that Dinah should be given in marriage.

"If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised":

As the sons of Jacob were, according to the command given to Abraham their great grandfather. (see Gen. 17:10).

This proposal was accepted, provided that Hamor's family submits to circumcision.

These sons of Jacob, who were Dinah's brothers, were driving a very hard bargain with the men of Hamor's family.

This was an improper thing to bargain with.

The things of God were not to be taken so lightly, to use them to trade for marriage agreements.

Genesis 34:16 "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."

"Then will we give our daughters unto you":

Meaning Dinah, whom they call their daughter, Genesis 34:17; because she was the daughter of their family.

And because they were asking in the name of their father, and in conformity to the language used by those they were dealing with (Gen. 34:9).

"And we will take your daughters to us":

In marriage for wives.

"And we will dwell with you":

Not as sojourners but as fellow citizens.

"And we will become one people":

Being so nearly related by marriage, and professing one religion, alike submitting to circumcision, which was the distinguished badge of Abraham's seed.

Genesis 34:17 "But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone."

"But if ye will not hearken to us to be circumcised":

Will not agree to this condition, circumcision.

"Then will we take our daughter": By force, as the Targum of Jonathan adds.

"And we will be gone":

Depart from this part of the country, and go elsewhere.

This proposal was sinful.

These sons of Jacob had no right to offer heathen people the sign of God's covenant.

That was only God's to give.

It seems, Dinah was still in Shechem's house.

She would, probably, have to be taken by force.

Genesis 34:18 "And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son."

"And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son":

The condition proposed was acceptable to them both, and they agreed to comply with it.

Hamor, because of the great love he had for his son; and Shechem, because of the great love he had for Dinah.

Genesis 34:19 "And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he [was] more honorable than all the house of his father."

"And the young man deferred not to do the thing":

To be circumcised himself, and to get all the males of the city circumcised.

He delayed not a moment, but made all the haste he could to get it accomplished.

"Because he had delight in Jacob's daughter":

He really loved her, and delighted in her person and company: it was not the effect of a brutish lust, but a true affection he bore to her, that he desired her in marriage.

"And he was more honorable than all the house of his father":

Meaning that the men agreed to such an excruciating surgery (verses 24-25), because they had so much respect for him and because they anticipated mercenary benefit (verse 23).

He was honorable in keeping covenant and compact with men; and was honest, upright, and sincere, to fulfil the condition imposed.

For though he had done a vile thing in defiling Jacob's daughter, yet in this he was honorable, that he sought to marry her, and to do anything that was in his power to recompense the injury.

And he had agreed to, as well as he was in greater esteem among the citizens than any of his father's house, which made it the easier to him to get their consent to be circumcised.

They having a very high and honorable opinion of him, and ready to oblige him in anything that they could.

This was acceptable to Hamor and Shechem.

To Shechem because he loved Dinah, but also to Hamor, because these Israelites themselves were blessed of God.

Hamor thought this act would bring blessings of God to his family, as well.

Genesis 34:20 "And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,"

"And Hamor and Shechem his son went unto the gate of their city":

Where courts of justice were held, and all public affairs respecting the common interest of the city were transacted.

Here, no doubt, Hamor their prince summoned them to come, by the usual method in which the citizens were convened on certain occasions.

This was the normal place for public gatherings.

"And communed with the men of their city":

Upon the subject of entering into an alliance with Jacob's family, of admitting them to be fellow citizens with them, and of their being incorporated among them, and becoming one people with them, taking no notice of the true reason of this motion.

Genesis 34:21 "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."

"These men are peaceable with us":

Meaning Jacob and his sons, pointing to their tents which were near their city.

No doubt more was said than is here expressed, and that these words were introduced with a preface, in which notice was taken of Jacob and his family, and their names mentioned, as here their character is given.

That they were men of peaceable dispositions, harmless and inoffensive, as appeared they had been since they came into these parts.

And there was a great deal of reason to believe they still would be which was an argument in their favor, and so to admit them as residences among them.

"Therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein":

Give them leave to dwell where they please, and carry on what trade and traffic in the land they think fit.

Since they are not likely to be quarrelsome and troublesome, but will deal honestly and honorably, and pay duly for what they agree for or merchandise in.

"For the land, behold, it is large enough for them":

There is room enough for them to dwell in, and pasturage enough for their cattle, and land enough to manure and till, without in the least inconveniencing the inhabitants.

Yea, it is likely to be to their advantage, since they would pay for what they should purchase or hire, and would improve the land which lay uncultivated.

"Let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters":

This was the thing principally aimed at; and the rest, both what goes before, and what follows after, were in order to this.

Here, Hamor and Shechem were trying to convince the men of the city that this would be advantageous to them, also.

Genesis 34:22 "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."

"Only herein will the men consent unto us":

The only term or condition insisted upon, to come into an alliance and common interest with us.

"For to dwell with us, to be one people":

To become one body of an action, is the following one.

"If every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised":

Submitting to this rite, they agree to take up their residence with us, and be incorporated among us, and become one people.

Genesis 34:23 "[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."

"Shall not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of theirs, be ours?"

Which would in course come into their families in process of time, by intermarrying with them, or, being more numerous and powerful than they, could seize upon them when they pleased, and take all they had.

Thus, they argue from the profit and advantage that would accrue to them by admitting them among them, upon their terms; and this argument, taken from worldly interest, they knew would have great influence upon them.

"Only let us consent unto them":

In the affair of circumcision.

"And they will dwell with us":

And what by trading with them, and marrying among them, all their wealth and riches will come into our hands.

Genesis 34:24 "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."

That is, all the inhabitants of the city who came to the gate of it, upon the summons given them, and departed from thence to their habitations, having a great opinion of their prince and his son.

Moved either with awe of them or love to them, and influenced both by their arguments and example, they agreed to what was proposed to them.

"And every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city":

All the men citizens; and not only the adult, and who now went out by the gate of the city (19:1 and Lot).

And all their male children were circumcised that "every male among us be circumcised."

These people had the idea that all of Jacob's wealth would be shared by them, as well as being able to intermarry.

They were persuaded by Hamor and Shechem that this was a good deal for all of them so they all consented, and every one of them were circumcised, old and young.

Verses 25-29

A massacre of all males and the wholesale plunder of the city went way beyond the reasonable, wise, and justly deserved punishment of one man, this was a considerably more excessive vengeance that the Mosaic Law would later legislate (Deut. 22:28-29).

Genesis 34:25 "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."

"And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore":

Or in "pain".

When their pains were strong upon them, as the Targum of Onkelos; or when they were weak through the pain of circumcision.

They were circumcised; but on the third day when the men were suffering from fever and inflammation, Dinah's brothers attacked and killed them (verses 25-27).

As the Targum of Jonathan; for it seems that the pain of circumcision was more intense on the third day, and the part the more inflamed, and the person more feverish, and which is observed by physicians of other wounds.

Therefore, Hippocrates advised not to meddle with wounds on the third or fourth days, or do anything that might irritate them, for on those days they were apt to painful or be inflamed, and bring on fevers.

In this case, not only the wound was sore and distressing, but being in such a part of the body, motion must give great uneasiness.

Nor could persons in such circumstances easily arise and walk, and go forth to defend themselves; and of this Jacob's sons availed themselves.

"That two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren":

By the mother's side as well as the father's, being Leah's children, and so most provoked at this indignity and abuse of their sister.

"Took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly":

Not fearing the inhabitants of it, and their rising up against them to defend themselves, knowing in what circumstances they were.

Or "upon the city that dwelt securely"; as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; for the men of the city had no suspicion of any such attempt that would be made upon them, and therefore were quite easy and secure, not expecting nor fearing anything of this kind.

"And slew all the males":

The males that were grown up, for the little ones are after said to be carried captive (Gen. 34:29); Josephus takes no notice of this circumstance of their being circumcised, but represents them as surprised in the night of their festival, overcharged with feasting, and their watch asleep, who were first killed.

Though only two of Jacob's sons were mentioned, they might be assisted by the rest; at least, no doubt, they were attended with servants, who were aiding: in accomplishing this cruel and bloody attempt.

These two sons, who were Leah's sons and Dinah's full brothers, caught the men when they were incapacitated and went in and killed all the men.

It must have been a small town, and these two men caught them one at a time away from the group and killed all of them.

They were taking vengeance for Shechem's rape of their sister.

Genesis 34:26 "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."

"And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword":

Whom they had been just treating with in a seeming friendly manner: Shechem was the chief aggressor, and his crime was very heinous.

Considering that he did all he could, after the fact, to make recompense for the injury done, he deserved other treatment, at least mercy should have been shown him.

Hamor was too indulgent to his son.

He secretly allowed his sin, and did not punish him for it; and may be, approved of it, and now dies for it.

"And took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out":

Where she was kept from the time of her being ravished by Shechem, with an intention to marry her, could the consent of her parents and relations be obtained.

For it does not appear that he kept her to carry on a criminal conversation with her, but a courtship in order to marriage.

It seems Dinah had been held against her will in Shechem's house.

Her brothers killed Shechem and his dad, and took Dinah home.

Genesis 34:27 "The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister."

"The sons of Jacob came upon the slain":

That is, the rest of them, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrase it; understanding what their two brothers had done, they came and joined them, and helped strip the slain of their clothes, or from them what they found of any worth about them.

Simeon and Levi set in motion the barbarity of that day and attention validly falls upon them in the narrative (verses 25:30; 49:5-7), but their brothers joined in the looting, thereby approving murder and mayhem as justifiable retribution for the destroyed honor of their sister (verse 31).

"And spoiled the city":

Plundered it of all its goods and substance, spoiled all the inhabitants of it of their wealth.

"Because they had defiled their sister":

One of them had done it, which is imputed to them all, they not restraining him from it, when it was in their power; and perhaps approving of it, and made a laugh of and jest at it; or however did not punish him for it.

Genesis 34:28 "They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which [was] in the city, and that which [was] in the field,"

"They took their sheep, their oxen, and their asses":

The Shechemites hoped to have the cattle and substance of Jacob's family, and in a hypocritical manner submitted to circumcision, for the sake of worldly advantage.

For that, and pleasing their prince, seem to be the only views they had in it; wherefore, in this there is a just retaliation of them in Providence.

"And that which was in the city, and that which was in the field":

The cattle that were kept at home, and those that were brought up in the field, all became a prey.

Genesis 34:29 "And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that [was] in the house."

"And all their wealth":

Or "power" or "strength":

Everything that made them mighty and powerful; their gold and silver, their jewels, and rich furniture of their houses, their arms and weapons of war, their goods and substance, in which they trafficked.

"And all their little ones and their wives took they captive":

They spared the women and children, as was usual war, and in the plunder of towns and cities.

"And spoiled even all that was in the house":

Of Shechem or Hamor or in any of the houses of the inhabitants; they rifled and plundered everyone, and took away whatsoever they found in them.

But as Jacob disapproved of this unjust, cruel, bloody, and treacherous action, so no doubt, as he set the captives free and restored to them their cattle and substance.

The sons of Jacob took everything and everyone that had belonged to these men.

They even spoiled their families.

Jacob's sons had lied to these men about the treaty, and killed them, and then had taken all their worldly possessions.

They used the excuse of getting even, but that was not God's way.

Genesis 34:30 "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."

"And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi":

Who were the principals concerned in this affair.

"Ye have troubled me":

Because of the sin they had committed, because of the dishonor brought upon religion, and because of the danger he and his family were hereby exposed unto; it greatly disturbed him, made him very uneasy.

He was at his wit's end almost and knew not what to do, what course to take to wipe off the scandal, and to defend himself and his family.

Vengeance exacted meant retaliation expected.

Total loss of respect (“making me repulsive”), and of peaceful relations (verse 21), put both him and them in harm’s way with survival being highly unlikely.

This threat had tested God’s promise of safety, giving Jacob cause for great concern (see 28:25; 32:9, 12).

"To make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land":

To make him detestable and abominable, to be hated and disgusted by all the people round about, and to be looked upon and treated as a deceitful, treacherous, and double dealing man, that had no regard to his word, to covenants and agreements made by him.

As a cruel and bloodthirsty man that spared none, made no difference between the innocent and the guilty; and as a robber and plunderer, that stopped at nothing, committing the greatest outrages to get possession of the substance of others.

"Amongst the Canaanites and the Perizzites":

Who were the principal inhabitants of the land, the most numerous, and the most rustic and barbarous, and perhaps nearest, and from whom Jacob had most to fear (see note on 13:7).

"And I being few in number":

Or men of number; he and his sons and servants, in all, making but a small number in comparison of the nations about him.

"They shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house":

Not that Jacob was afraid that this would be really the case, for he knew and believed the promises of God to him, of the multiplication of his seed, and of their inheriting the land of Canaan, and of the Messiah springing from him.

But this he said to aggravate the sin and folly of his sons, in exposing him and themselves to so much danger, which not only on the face of things appeared probable, but even certain and inevitable, without the interposition of divine power and Providence.

“Simeon” and “Levi” were the guilty ones, killing all “the males” (note that is found in condemnation in 49:5-7).

Jacob was displeased with the action of his sons.

They had done something that would surely anger God, by using circumcision to get revenge on these men.

They had, also, endangered their family, by their provoking the anger of the Perizzite and Canaanite neighbors.

Jacob reminds them that his family was few in number compared to the large groups in these other tribes.

Genesis 34:31 "And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?"

"And they said":

Simeon and Levi, in a very pert and unseemly manner.

"Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?"

Make a whore of her, and then keep her in his house as such?

Is this to be put up with?

Or should we take no more notice of his behavior to our sister, or show no more regard to her than if she was a common prostitute, whom no man will defend or protect?

So say the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, "nor let Shechem the son of Hamor mock at us, or boast and say, as a harlot whom no man seeks after, or no man seeks to avenge her; so it is done by Dinah the daughter of Jacob".

Their manner insinuates as if Jacob had not regard for the honor of his daughter and family, and showed his resentment at the wicked behavior of Shechem, as he ought to have done.

It is observed that there is a letter in the word for "harlot" greater than usual, which may either denote the greatness of the sin of Shechem in dealing with Dinah as a harlot, or the great impudence and boldness of Jacob's sons, in their answer to him, and their daring in justifying such lack of morals and cruelty they had been guilty of.

Jacob was alarmed and "troubled" at their action; but he did not answer their question, "Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?"

The son's answer was that they were protecting their sister's good name.

Whether this was right or not, would be left up to God.

Genesis Chapter 34 Questions

1. Whose daughter was Dinah?

2. Where did Dinah go?
3. Who defiled Dinah?
4. What rank did he have?
5. What nationality was he?
6. Who was his father?
7. What mistakes did Dinah make in this?
8. What age was Dinah.
9. What was the punishment for rape?
10. What would get the girl stoned to death?
11. What attitude did Shechem have toward Dinah?
12. What did Shechem ask his father Hamor to do?
13. When Jacob heard of this, where were his sons?
14. Why did Hamor come to Jacob?
15. What was Jacob's family called for the first time here?
16. Why was Jacob's family obligated to live holy lives?
17. What proposition did Hamor make to Jacob?
18. What did Shechem offer the father and brothers of Dinah?
19. What did Dinah's brothers require all the men to do?
20. Was God pleased with this?
21. What lie did Simeon and Levi tell these men?
22. Where was Dinah all this time?
23. What did Shechem and Hamor tell the men would be theirs, if they made this agreement?
24. How many of these men were circumcised?
25. Why did Jacob's sons attack on the third day?
26. What did these sons of Jacob do to all of these men?

27. What property did they take as well?
28. What did Jacob say to Simeon and Levi?
29. What excuse did they give Jacob?