

GENESIS 34

Simeon and Levi

¹ Dinah was the daughter Leah bore to Jacob. She went out to see the daughters of the land. ² When Shechem, the son of Hamorⁱ the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, lay with her, and defiled her. ³ And he longed for Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. He loved the girl and spoke kindly to her.

⁴ So Shechem told his father Hamor, “Get me this girlⁱⁱⁱ as a covenantⁱⁱⁱ blessing of marriage.”

⁵ Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. But since his sons were with his cattle in the field, Jacob kept quiet until they came. ⁶ Now Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out to Jacob to discuss marriage arrangements with him. ⁷ And the sons of Jacob were coming in from the fields. When they heard about what had happened, they became furiously^{iv} angry because he had disgraced Israel^v by defiling Jacob’s daughter. Such a thing must never happen.

⁸ Then Hamor talked with them. He said, “The heart of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please let her marry him. ⁹ Make marriages with us. Give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.^{vi} ¹⁰ You can live with us. The land will be before you. Live here and trade with us. Own property here.”^{vii}

¹¹ Then Shechem said to her^{viii} father and her family, “Let me find grace in your eyes and I will give^{ix} you whatever you ask. ¹² Name your dowry or gift, and I will give according as you say. Please let the young woman marry me.”

¹³ But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. ¹⁴ So they said to them, “We cannot give our sister to anyone who is uncircumcised. That is a reproach to us. ¹⁵ We will consent to you on one covenant^x condition. You must become as we are by circumcising all of your males. ¹⁶ Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us. We will live with you, and we will become one people. ¹⁷ But if you will not listen to us and do not circumcise yourselves, we will take our daughter and leave.”

¹⁸ And their words pleased Hamor and his son Shechem. ¹⁹ The young man did not hesitate to undergo circumcision because he was in love with Jacob’s daughter. He was more honorable^{xi} than the rest of the household of his father. ²⁰ So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke with the men of their city. They said,

²¹ “These men are at peace with us. Therefore, let them live in the land and trade in it. For look. The land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us for wives and let us give them our daughters. ²² But the men will consent to live with us and be one people with us only if we agree with them on one thing. We must circumcise every one of our males just as they circumcised themselves. ²³ Won’t their cattle, substance, and all their animals become ours?^{xii} Let us agree with them, and they will live with us.”

²⁴ All those who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and his son Shechem. So they circumcised every male, all those who went out of the gate of his city. ²⁵ Three days later, when they were sore, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi,^{xiii} Dinah’s brothers, took their swords. They went boldly into the city and killed all the males. ²⁶ They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword. Then they took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and went out. ²⁷ When the sons of Jacob came upon the dead, they spoiled the city because Shechem had defiled their sister. ²⁸ They took their sheep, and^{xiv} their oxen, and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field. ²⁹ They took all

their wealth, and all their little ones, and all their wives captive. They took everything that was in the houses.

³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me. You’ve made me stink to the Canaanites, the Perizzites, and all the people of the land. We are only a few in number. If they join forces to attack me, they will slay me. I will be destroyed, both me and my family.”^{xv}

³¹ But the brothers said, “Should he treat our sister as a harlot?”^{xvi}

i The Hebrew for Hamor is חָמֹר. It sounds a lot like the Hebrew word for a donkey חֲמֹר (*ch^a-mor*). We smugly call a donkey an “ass.” But in that culture, a donkey was a prized asset. It was a symbol of wealth.

ii The Hebrew יָלֵדָה (*yahl-dah*) refers to a female child not yet of marriageable age.

iii The Hebrew נָחַץ is a Zayin-Aleph-Tav. Its basic meaning is to cut, either as a blessing or a judgment. This translation routinely renders this 3-letter word in terms of covenant. See the article “The Aleph-Tav.”

iv The Hebrew מְּוֹד (*m^e-od*) means vehemently. Synonyms include very, greatly, exceedingly, fervently, passionately, violently, intensely, much, mightily, and vigorously.

v The family has adopted Jacob’s new name. This is the first place where Israel is used in reference to the small but growing family.

vi Danger! This is death by assimilation. Lucifer is trying to thwart the Gen 3:15 Messianic prophecy. God’s small covenant nation is in danger of disappearing off the pages of history.

vii This is the sweet side of a con. The dark unspoken side is that they wanted to keep Jacob there so that they could take his wealth. They openly acknowledge this in verse 23.

viii Dinah.

ix The Hebrew נָתַן is an Aleph-Tav-Nun. It refers to giving when referring to an oath, covenant, or promise. Shechem is willing to give Jacob whatever he asks so that he can establish a marriage covenant with Dinah. See the article “The Aleph-Tav.”

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xi The Hebrew כָּבֵד (*kaw-vahd*) literally means “heavy.” Many translations render it “important” or “respected,” but it may also imply commendable character or moral weight. Here it conveys figurative weight, indicating that Shechem was distinguished in character.

xii Finally! We now can see their previously unspoken motive. These people have a devious agenda. They intend on robbing Jacob of all his wealth.

xiii Leah gave birth to Simeon, Levi, and Dinah. They were full-blooded siblings. They commit unthinkable murder. Neither one fare well in Jacob’s deathbed prophecies (Gen 49).

xiv The literary technique of Polysyndeton uses multiple “and their”s (or other conjunctions) in a series. It slows the reader and gives emphasis to each item. The brothers took everything.

xv Jacob is right. If the family is destroyed, the promised Gen 3:15 “Seed of the Woman” will never be born. Mercifully, God Himself intervenes and gives them their desperately needed protection (Gen 35:5).

xvi At the end of chapter 35, we see Jacob’s family splintered into four groups — one group for each of the four mothers.