

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“Violated In Shechem”

Genesis 34:1-31

2003

Introduction

It goes without saying that this is an awful chapter -- not only in the book of Genesis, but in the history of mankind. It is made worse by being the only chapter in the Bible outside the book of Esther, where the name of God is not even mentioned.

Leupold's homiletical suggestions on this chapter includes the following statement:

“We may well wonder if any man who had proper discernment ever drew a text from this chapter.”

Acts 20:27 “For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.”

By way of introduction to Genesis 34, I would like to begin by addressing two important questions:

1. Why does the Bible contain such a sordid story?
 - a. First of all, the Bible is an accurate record of actual events and actual people – the good, the bad and the ugly.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
 - b. Secondly, the story serves to warn us of the high price of compromise

The tragedy that took place was, in no small part, the result of Jacob's failure to be obedient to God's command to return to Bethel (Genesis 24:3; 28:1). That single act of compromise cost his daughter dearly and put the rest of the covenant family of God at risk. ***Half-hearted obedience can be just as deadly as disobedience.***

1 Cor 10:11 “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.”
 - c. Thirdly, it serves as a reminder that the Christian life is not a problem-free life.

John 16:33 “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
2. Why do bad things happen to good people?
 - a. There are no good people!

Eccl 7:20 “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.”

Rom 3:23 “... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

- b. Satan is the ruler of this world. When Adam and Eve violated God's command in the Garden of Eden, they turned the title deed of the earth over to Satan.

1 John 5:19-20 "... the whole world is under the control of the evil one."

In the Bible, Satan is referred to as:

1. The god of this age - 2 Cor 4:4
2. The prince of this world - John 12:30; 14:30; 16:11
3. His purpose is to steal, kill and destroy - John 10:10

- c. The gift of free-will – Deut 30:15-19; John 3:16

The doctrine of free-will states that in order for mankind's love for God to be genuine rather than forced, God has given us the universal opportunity to choose to either accept or reject His authority, Lordship and salvation.

The upside of free-will is that it permits us to yield ourselves to the Creator of the universe and to receive the gift of salvation in Christ and the benefits that accompany that salvation.

The downside of free will is it permits others to reject the authority of God and to live in rebellion to His revealed will -- including committing criminal acts of violence against innocent people

"Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are men who want rain without thunder and lightning." - Frederick Douglass

So if we want rain [free-will], then we have to expect some thunder and lightening [the abuse of free-will].

I The Violation Of Dinah

- A. She **visited** the women of Shechem [Verse 1]

Dinah was probably around 14 or 15 years old when these events occurred. And you can't fault Dinah for wanting to go out and visit with the women of the city.

But the question I have is this, "Where are her parents? Where is Jacob? They knew that Shechem was a corrupt and godless place.

How could they allow their teenage daughter to wander the streets of such wicked place?

1. Jacob was a man of compromise
2. Jacob wasn't a very strong spiritual leader in the home
3. Jacob was a man of blatant favoritism

- B. She was **violated** by Shechem [Verse 2]

1. He saw her

Illustration: David and Bathsheba

2 Sam 11:2-3 “One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing.”

Application:

Luke 11:34-35 “Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness.”

Internet pornography is destroying Christian men all across the nation.

Five suggestions for overcoming sexual temptation:

1. Let your mind be renewed by daily time in the Word of God
Rom 12:2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”
2. Develop your relationship with the Holy Spirit
Gal 5:16 “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”
3. Make a covenant with God and your wife (or a close friend if single)
Job 31:1 “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.”
4. Refuse to allow your thoughts to lead you into sin
2 Cor 10:5 “... take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
James 4:7 “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
5. Deal radically with sexual sin
Matt 5:28-30 “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

2. He took her

3. He violated her

Disturbing Facts:

1. "Sexual assault continues to represent the most rapidly growing violent crime in America, claiming a victim every 4 seconds.
2. Between 15% and 34% of all girls in this country and between 3% and 9% of all boys are sexually assaulted by age 18. [University of New Hampshire, in *Homemade*, August, 1985]

C. She was “**loved**” by Shechem [Verse 3-4]

Loved = 'ahab (aw-hab') = “To have affection for (sexually or otherwise)”

I don't think there is a more twisted, perverted or ruthless expression of love in the entire Bible! This isn't love, this is lust!

Shechem certainly didn't love Dinah with the agape love of 1 Corinthians 13:

- His love was impatient → God's love is patient!
- His love was brutal and violent → God's love is kind!
- His love was vulgar → God's love is not rude or arrogant!
- His love was self-seeking → God's love is self-sacrificing!

1. His heart was drawn to Dinah
2. He loved her and spoke tenderly to her
3. He asked his father to get her for his wife

Judg 14:1-2 "Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife."

II The Reaction Of The Families

A. The family of Dinah

1. Jacob's response: **Passivity** [Verse 5]
 - a. He kept quiet until his sons returned home

Why isn't Jacob more outraged? Why doesn't he act in behalf of his daughter?

Probably for the same reason that $\frac{3}{4}$ of all rapes go unreported today: Shame and embarrassment and the fear of reprisal from the assailant.

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." - Edmond Burke

And Jacob's refusal to do what was right in this situation not only allowed evil to triumph, but also created an enormous leadership vacuum in the family, which was immediately and sinfully filled by his angry sons.

2. Her brothers' response: Grief and **fury** [Verse 6-7]

Grief = 'atsab (aw-tsab') = "To be pained, displeased, vexed or angered"

Fury = Charah (khaw-raw') = "To blaze up, burn with anger, or be incensed"

Application:

James 1:19-20 "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."

Eccl 7:9 "Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools."

B. The family of Shechem

1. The offer of Hamor [Verse 8-10]

"Hamor's response to his son's violent crime serves to illustrate the low standard of morals prevalent among the Canaanites. Any unattended female could be raped,

and in the transactions that ensue neither father nor son feels the need of apologizing for or excusing what had been committed." (Leupold)

- a. He **requested** Dinah for his son
- b. He offered intermarriage between their families

Deut 7:3-5 "Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you."

Application:

2 Cor 6:14-15 "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? ... What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"

I don't know why Christians think they will find a godly spouse in a singles bar or at a worldly party. If a man or woman wants to find a godly spouse, they need to look where godly Christians should be. And if a person wants a godly spouse, he or she needs to be the kind of person a godly spouse would be looking for.

- c. He offered them **land** and opportunity

1 John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world -- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

2. The offer of Shechem [Verse 11-12]

- a. He requested Jacob's favor
- b. He wanted Dinah at any **price**

Price = Mohar (mo'-har) = "Dowry"

Shechem probably thinks this is a very generous offer -- as if money and marriage would take away her reproach!

III The Plans For Revenge Are Laid

- A. Jacob's sons replied **deceitfully** and conditionally [Verse 13-17]

Deceitfully = Mrmah (meer-maw') = "Fraudulently, treacherously"

It is interesting to note that these words are attributed to "Jacob's sons" rather than to "Dinah's brothers." The reason, I believe, is to show that they were following in their father's deceitful footsteps.

Luke 6:40 "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."

And so, in the tradition of Jacob's scheming character, his sons consult together and plan their revenge: In order for them to consent to giving Dinah to Shechem ...

1. The people of Shechem must be circumcised

Circumcision = It was an outward symbol of an inward commitment to the covenant of God (Gen 17:10). But Simeon and Levi, feeling justified by the violation against Dinah, prostituted the symbol of God's covenant in order to take advantage of the men of Shechem.

But notice Jacob's silence here! He apparently is willing to intermarry with the Canaanites even though this is contrary to the purposes and promises of God in the Abrahamic covenant as well as a direct violation of the instructions which his father had given him in Genesis 28:1-4.

B. Hamor and Shechem **agreed** to be circumcised [Verse 18-23]

1. The proposal seemed good to them

Now, why would Hamor and Shechem ever agree to this?

The text itself tells us, but not before inserting a very shocking bit of information:

a. Shechem was the most **honored** in his father's house

Most honored = Kabad = "To be heavy in honor"

If Shechem is the most honored in Hamor's house and Hamor was the founder and leading citizen of Shechem that tells us something about the utter depravity of the place!

Prov 29:16 "When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall."

2. They went to the gate of the city to present the deal

a. These people are friendly toward us

b. We have plenty of room

c. We can intermarry with them

d. Their livestock and property will become ours

Ex 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

C. The men of the city agreed to be circumcised [Verse 24]

Shechem was eager to comply with the proposal because of his attraction to Dinah, but the other men of the city were convinced on financial grounds. Circumcision was a small price to pay if it resulted in a huge financial windfall.

1 Tim 6:9-10 "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

IV The Deadly Trap Closes

A. Simeon and Levi attacked and **killed** every male [Verse 25-26a]

1. Including Hamor and Shechem

Weakened by pain that follows circumcision, the men of the city were virtually helpless when attacked by Simeon and Levi. It was brutal slaughter.

Prov 4:14-17 “Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. For they cannot sleep till they do evil; they are robbed of slumber till they make someone fall. They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.”

B. They rescued Dinah [Verse 26b]

C. They **looted** the city [Verse 27-29]

1. They seized the flocks and herds of Shechem

2. They took the women and children

3. They plundered everything in their houses

The rape of Dinah was a disgraceful, evil act. But the wholesale murder of the men of Shechem, the looting of the city and the imprisonment of the women and children of the city was inhumanly excessive. The punishment clearly did not fit the crime.

D. They were **rebuked** by Jacob [Verse 30]

Notice, Jacob expresses no concern for the injustice of the rape of his daughter or the death and plunder of the people of Shechem. Sadly, Jacob seems only to be concerned with himself.

1. “You have brought trouble on me”

1 Kings 18:18 “I have not made trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the LORD’s commands and have followed the Baals.”

2. “You have made me a stench to the people of Canaan”

Stench = Ba'ash (baw-ash') = “To be offensive or odious”

Ex 5:21 “You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

3. “You have put our family at risk”

a. “We are few in number”

b. “We could be destroyed”

Isa 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

“Jacob preferred peace to purity, prosperity to piety, and safety to spirituality.”

E. They were **offended** by their father Jacob [Verse 31]

1. “Should Shechem have treated our sister like a prostitute?”

Simeon and Levi were correct that Dinah had been treated like a prostitute. In fact, worse than a prostitute! But their reaction was inexcusable!

When Jacob was about to die, he prophesied over each of his 12 sons. This is what he said about Simeon and Levi:

Gen 49:5-7 “Simeon and Levi are brothers -- their swords are weapons of violence. Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstringed oxen as they pleased. Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel.”

He saw Simeon and Levi for who they were, but he rebuked them far too late in life and failed to provide them with a reliable model of a godly life.

Conclusion:

What should you do if you have suffered injustice in this life?

1. Don't take things into your own hands - Romans 12:17-21
2. Confront the sin biblically - Matthew 18:15-17
3. Report criminal matters to the governing authorities - Romans 13:1-5
4. Entrust yourself to God who judges justly - 1 Peter 2:21-23

*Copyright, Bob Hallman, 1996-2020, All Rights Reserved.
Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the
New International Version ©1984 by International Bible Society.*