

# The Doctrine of Rape in the Bible

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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This study is from the **Basic Exegesis of Genesis Study** Lessons 366–372 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

**Preface:** There are a lot of misconceptions concerning men and women in Biblical times, and the way that men treated women. Hopefully, this will clear some of those misconceptions up.

Interestingly enough, I could not find the *Doctrine of Rape* on any doctrinal website.

## Rape in the Bible

1. So that there is no misunderstanding, rape is considered to be wrong by the Bible and it was punishable by death. Critics of the Bible portray the Old Testament God as misogynistic and the Bible as well, suggesting that women were viewed as property and not afforded any real rights or protection. However, that is clearly not the case (as we will see).
2. There are even some anti-Bible types who think that a man could rape a woman in Bible times, pay her father a few bucks, and keep the daughter as his wife. This narrative of Gen. 34 will show that interpretation of a passage in Deuteronomy to be completely false.
  - 1) As an aside, critics often give a very negative interpretation to various passages in the Bible, and then they criticize the Bible because of how they have interpreted it.
  - 2) In the other hand, this does not mean that the Bible agrees with contemporary society on the issues of the day.
3. In order to understand and appreciate the Bible's approach to this subject, rape was quite unusual because parents simply did not allow their single daughters to hang out with young men. Girls did not date at 14; girls did not date in that era as we think of it at any age. Because of this, there is no actual word for *rape* in the Hebrew.
4. We learn from Gen. 34 that different ancient cultures actually treated rape differently. Dinah's brothers recognize that this is a terrible thing which Shechem has done. Hamor, his father, possibly sees this as a minor infraction which can be solved through marriage and promises of intermarriage between the two families in the future. However, in fairness to Hamor, we do not know how much he knew when attempting to arrange this marriage. Did he realize that his son had raped Dinah, or was he led to believe that this was consensual? In any case, Shechem, who committed the rape, thought it reasonable for him to then marry the woman that he just raped. This suggests great barbarity in his culture and upbringing, as well as terrific personal arrogance.
5. There is an implication in Gen. 26 that Philistines might have taken Rebekah and had their way with her, not realizing that she was Isaac's wife. That suggests that rape, in some instances, was reasonably common enough (in some cultures) for Abimelech to make this statement. This will be examined more thoroughly later in this doctrine.
6. In Muslim countries today, women are considered to be **responsible for being raped** (they can create an uncontrollable sexual urge in the males); and very often, **rape victims are punished** in Islamic cultures.
7. There was often protection afforded women in ancient Jewish culture (and in other cultures of that time period), where women did not easily go out and socialize apart from family members being around. Vestiges of this remained in the 1940's and 50's on chaperoned dates; and this protective approach is enforced by Islamic cultures today. Dinah going out to hang with the women of the land does not appear to be a common experience.
8. Let me suggest, culturally, in ancient Jewish society, that rape was not a common problem. Young, unmarried women were not allowed, generally speaking, to meander off on their own. Nevertheless, that does not mean that rape is ignored in the Bible.
9. There is a lie out there that, a man could rape a woman, then go to her father, pay him a few dollars, and then keep his daughter as his wife. That is simply a mistaken interpretation of Deut. 22 (and it is easy to misinterpret, as some translations actually insert the word *rape* where it does not belong). Here, Moses is teaching the people: "[1] **When it is [that] a young woman—a virgin—[about] to be married to a man, and a man discovers [or, meets] her in the city and he lays with her; then you [all] will bring both of them to the city gate and you [all] will stone them with stones and they will die—the young woman because she did not cry out [for help] in the city and the man because he humiliated the [soon-to-be] wife of his neighbor. [By this] you have removed immorality [lit., evil] from your midst. [2] If the man finds her in the field—the betrothed**

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young woman—and the man has seized her and he has lain with her, then the man who laid with her will die only. You will not do a thing to the young woman, [for there is] no sin [done] by the young woman [worthy] of death; for just as a man rising up against his neighbor to murder [his] soul, so this thing. For he found her in the field—[if] the betrothed woman called out [for help], [there was] none to save her. [3] When a man finds a young, virgin woman who is not to-be-married and he takes her and he lays with her, but they are discovered; then the man—the one laying with her—will give the young woman’s father 50 [shekels of] silver and she will become his wife because he has violated her. He is [therefore] unable to send her away all his days.” (Deuteronomy 22:23-29; Kukis reasonably literal translation).

- 1) In the first two instances, we are dealing with a woman who has been promised to be married. Arranged marriages in the ancient world were common (they are still common in India and other countries today); so it would not be unusual for even very young women to be promised to a man for the future. As an aside, for those of you who think that an arranged marriage is backward or quaint, my educated guess is, the divorce rate is lower among those whose marriage was arranged.
  - 2) In the first circumstance, if a woman, engaged to be married, is discovered to be having sex with another man in a city, both are presumed guilty of adultery (a form of adultery) and both are stoned to death. The logic is, the woman, if she were being raped, would call out for help.
  - 3) In the second instance, the man rapes the woman, as this occurs in a secluded area, and the man’s guilt is assumed and the woman’s innocence is also assumed. This is logical because, if this were an affair, then both partners would have kept quiet about this. No one would know that it occurred. The woman, having been raped, would have reported this to her family.
  - 4) In the 3<sup>rd</sup> situation, rape is not what is being discussed. There was no rape in the first instance, rape in the second, and no rape in the third. So, this is not a man who has raped a woman, and then turns around and decides, “I might want to marry this woman.” There are no words for rape in the 3<sup>rd</sup> case (despite some incorrect translations which are out there, including the generally excellent NASB). *Violating* the woman does not mean that the man raped her; it means that he took away her virginity. I know that in today’s culture, that may not be understood. But in the ancient world, if a woman was not a virgin, then she would not have any suitors.
    - (1) Tamar, the daughter of King David, would be an illustration of this. 2Sam. 13.
    - (2) Ruth, a Moabite, would be an exception to this rule. The Book of Ruth.
  - 5) If you doubt the interpretation here, a very detailed study of this passage is found here: **Deuteronomy 22 (HTML) (PDF) (WPD)**.
10. Based upon the second circumstance above in Deut. 22, the Bible clearly indicates that rape is wrong and punishable by death.
  11. Gen. 26:6–11 is a fascinating story, where Isaac is living in Gerar, and like his father before him, he lies about Rebekah being his wife, saying that she is his sister. When Abimelech, the king, finds out, he chews Isaac out for this, saying, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” (Gen. 26:10b; ESV) There is the suggestion here that the Philistines of Gerar could possibly have raped Rebekah, not realizing that she is married. So, this indicates that some societies in that era did not see rape as a serious crime, even though they recognized that adultery was wrong and that God would punish them for it (which viewpoint is also expressed in this chapter). Some Muslim societies today appear to put the burden of responsibility for rape on the woman,

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**suggesting** that men are overpowered by lust if they find themselves with an attractive, unprotected woman (their explanation is that Allah gave Mohammed, for instance, the **libido of 30 men**).

12. Although this may seem counterintuitive, it is possible to overreact to rape. Gen. 34 is an example of that. However, this chapter clearly indicates that raping a woman is wrong and punishable by death. Jacob's sons went overboard and killed a large number of men who did not rape their sister and who had nothing to do with it. Furthermore, there is no indication that the men of Shechem would have protected Hamor's son under these circumstances. Had the men of Shechem (city) been willing to protect Shechem (the man), that would have changed the situation and justify what the sons of Israel did.
13. Despite having the Law of Moses, some of the people of Israel during the time of the Judges were out of control and lawless. Judges 19 is a very sad story about a man who reunites with his unfaithful mistress, and they are returning to his home, passing through Gibeah of Benjamin. Even though a kindly man takes them into his house, when night falls, they are surrounded by homosexual rapists (much like Gen. 19) who demand that this man be sent out to them. His mistress was sent out instead, and these men rape her until she dies, her hands at the threshold of this house when she died. The man broadcasts his story to all the tribes of Israel (in a rather grisly way), and 400,000 men responded. They demanded that the men responsible be given up, but the people of Benjamin would not. They protected those guilty of rape. Nearly all the men of Benjamin were killed as a result (Judges 20).
14. Homosexual rape is threatened in both Gen. 19 and Judges 19.
  - 1) In Gen. 19, God rains down fire and sulfur products from above (possibly the result of a natural gas explosion), to judge Sodom, Gomorrah and 3 other cities for their sexual degeneracy.
  - 2) In Judges 20, since the men of Benjamin protected the rapists (they raped the man's mistress rather than the man), most of the able-bodied men of Benjamin were killed in battle by the other tribes of Israel.
  - 3) There is no confusion in both passages as to the wrongness of the threat of homosexual rape and as to the degeneracy of the people.
15. 2Sam. 13 gives us an idea as to the normal protections afforded young, unmarried women in the ancient world. This chapter is all about Absalom, his sister Tamar and their half-brother Amnon. Amnon is filled with lust towards Tamar, however, he is unable to secure any time alone with her. Obviously, they knew one another, but the family of David did not allow them to be alone together. This suggests that the culture of that day understood that parents should protect their daughters from unwarranted advances (even from their half-brothers). Although we do not know the ages of these young people, all of the clues suggest that these are middle, late teens, or very young adults. Amnon goes to a terrific amount of trouble to pretend to be ill and to demand and Tamar take care of him during his illness. When she comes to him, he orders everyone out of the house and then he overpowers her and rapes her. Tamar does what she can to try to talk him out of it, but he rapes her. Then, when he is done, Amnon hates Tamar and throws her out into the street. All that happens after that reveals that rape was taken very seriously. It would have been up to King David to prosecute Amnon, but David was too weak and indulgent as a father to do so. As a result, Absalom killed Amnon. This mess continued until Absalom himself was finally killed, having become a law unto himself.
16. In the New Testament, husbands are to give respect and honor to their wives, and not to abuse them (Eph. 5:25 1Peter 3:7). This is because women are equal to men in their response to the gospel and God's resultant blessing to them (Gal. 3:28 1Peter 3:7).

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17. During the Tribulation, armies will line up against Jerusalem, and those who remain in the city will have their homes plundered and their women raped. Zech. 14:2
18. The conclusion is, even though God did not directly speak of rape in the Mosaic Law (Moses did himself in Deuteronomy), the culture of that era were so protective of their women, that this made rape a very rare event. Where the culture did not protect women, the men of that culture were destroyed (examples of Gen. 19 and Judges 20).

Some dishonest critics of the Bible claim that there were instances where Jewish men could rape heathen women; or take heathen women as wives against their will, but that is a misinterpretation of some Pentateuch passages. The **Blaze** actually does an article specifically addressing some of the misrepresentations of various Bible passages.

As an aside, those in the gay movement who try to misuse the Bible, say, “Jesus said nothing about homosexuality” (although He did). Putting that aside, Jesus did not say anything about rape, so does that make rape okay? Obviously not. So, the fact that Jesus does not specifically condemn a particular sin does not remove it from the list of sins.

Many of these passages were suggested by <http://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Rape> (accessed August 5, 2015).

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

## The Addendum

If you have read through this chapter already, you may find this discussion superfluous. However, interestingly enough, there are good Bible teachers who maintain that no rape has taken place here.<sup>1</sup> They understand it as Shechem having seduced Dinah. Therefore, we should determine...

### Was Dinah Raped?

1. First of all, the Hebrew language does not have a word for *rape*. Therefore, there is more involved here than finding and pointing out a word with that meaning.
2. The language here sounds like rape. Gen. 34:2 reads: **And when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and humbled her.**
  - 1) The first 3 verbs are inconclusive. He saw her, he took her and he lay with her. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> verb are found throughout Scripture used in a sexual way, but not necessarily to mean rape.
  - 2) The fourth verb is stronger, but still inconclusive. It is the Piel imperfect of ‘ânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced *ġaw-NAW*], which means *to humble [humiliate], to mishandle, to afflict; to force; to oppress [depress]*. Strong’s #6031 BDB #776. There are other passages where these words can be used, and rape is not involved (Deut. 22:24). We find this same verb in the Piel (the intensive stem) in Deut. 22:29 where rape was not involved (however, this was taking a woman before she is married). Therefore, this word can indicate that the man simply had sex with the woman.
  - 3) Often, the Hebrew language itself solves the problem of *what happened*; but not here.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Evangelical Bible College of Western Australia or the **Song of Songs** website.

## Was Dinah Raped?

3. However, the entire context suggests that rape has occurred. The verbs noted suggest that rape may have occurred, but they are not conclusive.
4. Because of Deut. 22:24, 29, we cannot ascertain from v. 2 that Dinah was raped. The language is strong enough to suggest rape, but not to unequivocally rule out seduction.
5. There is another potentially key element to this story which needs to be addressed, which I have not seen discussed elsewhere—Dinah's age as it relates to rape. In our culture, young women under the age of 16 or 17 (depending upon the state she lives in) are unable to give consent. That is, they cannot have *legally* consensual sex. So, in our culture, regardless of the circumstances, a 16 year old girl can have actual consensual sex with her 18 year old boyfriend, and yet the young man can still be legally prosecuted for rape and be identified thereafter as a sex offender.
6. You may recall that Leupold made a guess as to Dinah's age, guessing her age to be 14 or 15, but we really do not know when Leah gave birth to her. We know Joseph's age on both sides of this event; but that does not give us an exact fix on Dinah's age.
7. In v. 1, Dinah is said to go out and to visit with the *daughters* of the land. This suggests that she is socializing with young unmarried women—which certainly suggests that Dinah is young, but we do not know how young. The biggest problem here is, she is socializing with the heathen of the land. However, whereas that is arguably a problem, it is not really emphasized here.
8. It is actually the Hebrew tense system which most strongly suggests that Dinah has been raped and not simply seduced. When we have a series of *wâw* consecutives followed by a series of imperfect verbs, often this means that we are viewing progressive or coterminous actions. After Dinah goes out (imperfect tense), Shechem sees her, he seizes her, he lays with her and he humbles her (all imperfect tenses in v. 2). Then his soul is drawn to her, he loves her and he speaks to her heart (again, a series of imperfect verbs in v. 3). In a seduction, v. 3 would come first, and then v. 2.
  - 1) As an aside, you will not find this imperfect tense rule in any Hebrew grammar book, insofar as I know. It is a simple observation which I have made after exegeting thousands upon thousands of verses word-by-word.
9. Jacob hears that Shechem has *defiled* Dinah. This verb is in the Piel tense, which is the intensive stem. Whereas, this can simply mean to take her virginity; this, along with the other evidence, suggests rape. 3x this verb will be found in Gen. 34 (although this is not exclusively a verb for sexual defilement). So, the evidence mounts to support that rape has occurred.
10. There is a verb used in v. 7 which suggests that rape has taken place; which verb is unfortunately mistranslated *to do folly* in many translations. It will be discussed in further detail when we come to v. 7.
11. Interestingly enough, whether Shechem's father Hamor fully understands what happened or not is not clearly stated in this narrative. For all he knows, Shechem came across this gal, he's in love; so it is time to arrange a marriage.
12. What seems to be most damning is the response of Jacob's sons to this entire affair. We have had a tradition in the United States called a shotgun wedding (when a man impregnates a gal, they get married to provide for the conceived child); and this appears to be what Shechem is suggesting. Instead, the sons of Jacob will seek to not only kill Shechem, but all of his male relatives as well.
13. Therefore, what seems to be conclusive evidence of rape is, the sons of Jacob are so upset that they will kill the men of Shechem (the city of Shechem).

Interestingly enough, since there does not appear to be a verb for *rape* found in the Old Testament, this requires us to dig rather deeply in order to determine when a rape takes place.

Topics

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

## The Exegesis of Genesis 34:1–31

(This is taken from Basic Exegesis of Genesis Lessons 366–372)

**Genesis 34:1** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

Dinah is one of Jacob's daughters, and the only one of them who is named. Dinah decides that she is going to visit some of the gals in Shechem, where Jacob and company are now all living.

What appears to be the case in the ancient world is, most young women were carefully guarded and protected by their families. Although it was a custom for women to be taken into the families that they married into, the father often received a sizeable dowry for marrying off his daughter (Laban got 7 years of work per daughter from Jacob). If a young woman has been defiled in any way, then the parents will end up supporting that daughter for the rest of their lives. Therefore, it would be normal for parents to protect their daughters from men until they are married.<sup>2</sup> Because of the clear understanding of marriage and fidelity in this era, men would expect to marry a virgin (and vice versa). In our society, that probably seems rather quaint, but it is not quaint—it is God's perfect plan.

This incident does not mean that Jacob's family was remiss here; it simply suggests that they felt relatively safe.

There are discussions on whether or not Dinah is violating her parents' rules—but that is quite irrelevant.

**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 humbled her.

Shechem appears to have been either settled originally by Shechem or by Hamor who names the city after his son (Hamor is called the father of Shechem in Gen. 33:19—which could mean *ancestor*).

The fact that we keep speaking of the sons of Hamor rather than the sons of Shechem, would imply that Hamor actually settled this area, naming it after his firstborn (an assumption that I am making). It could be the other way around as well. The son may have been named after the existing city as well. Or, in the alternative, the first son and the city could have been named, more or less, simultaneously by Hamor.

It is actually Shechem, the son, who is involved here. He takes Dinah and he lays with her.

Although this chapter is often entitled *The Rape of Dinah*; that aspect of the story is only in the first 4 verses. Most of this narrative is about the response of Jacob's sons and the decisions which they make after the rape has occurred.

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<sup>2</sup> As has been discussed previously, the stained bed sheets of the marriage-bed were gathered and kept by the woman's father.

**Genesis 34:1** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

It is guessed that Dinah is probably in her middle teens and that this takes place perhaps 10 years after moving to Shechem. This would mean that Jacob's family is settled in, that many of the boys are in their teens and 20's (meaning they lack judgment and fear very little for their own lives); and they would all be settled into Shechem. On the other hand, the people of that land would still see them as newcomers and outsiders.

It was normal in that era for parents and brothers to protect the females in the family. Dinah wandering off to see some other gals may or may not have been allowed by her family. Regardless, this did put her into danger.

These points are taken from a much larger summary of the first two verses by Pastor Ron Snider.

### **Contemporary Lessons Found in Genesis 34 (mostly from Snider)**

1. The Canaanites were under a curse (Gen. 9:25), and the prophecy of Gen. 15:16 indicated that it was merely a matter of time before their evil reached a maximum, demanding God's judgment.
2. As undesirable as they were, Jacob chose to settle very near to these people, which, in itself was not necessarily a problem. God did want the patriarchs to walk through the land (Gen. 13:17).
3. Whether or not he emphasized the doctrine of separation to his children or not is unknown, but his very geographic proximity to the Hivites was potential trouble.
4. Jacob's teenage daughter apparently lacked sufficient parental supervision, and associated with the Canaanite girls. Gen. 34:1
5. Jacob may have known well enough not to closely associate with these people, but he did not make certain that his daughter knew the same thing.
6. Dinah, being somewhere between 13-16, was maturing physically and was apparently quite attractive.
7. The problem is that girls of this age are naive, undiscerning, immature emotionally and mentally.
8. The parent's responsibility is to keep a very short leash on a child of this age, and especially if the child is a female. Apparently, Dinah lacked someone to ask her, "Where are you going, What are you doing, and Who are you doing it with?"
9. In our society, which is similar to the Canaanite culture in many ways, too much freedom is given at far too young an age. The parents must stress the doctrine of right man/right woman, which teaches the boy that he is protector of any girl he dates, and teaches the female to be very wary of boys.
10. The fact is that most males at that age are predatory and have no norms and standards regarding this issue. Our own society sends out the message that sex between teens is normal, natural and that there is little that we can do about it, apart from giving children condoms.
11. The only thing which stands between children and potential disaster is the parents, their training, their guidance and their protection.
12. No matter what the cosmic system (that is, contemporary culture) says or thinks, each parent is responsible before the Lord to keep a very tight rein on their young, stupid children.
13. Another issue which clearly surfaces here is that Dinah was socializing with the wrong friends. This does not mean we cannot ever allow our children to be out in the world; it simply means that we need to exercise judgment and restraint.
14. We must inculcate our children to understand that other young people in the cosmic system are not, and can never truly be friends with the spiritually mature believer. Whatever norms and

## Contemporary Lessons Found in Genesis 34 (mostly from Snider)

- standards unbelieving children have are suspect.
15. When a child has the desire to win their friendship of unbelievers, to where their own norms and standards are compromised, that young believer can become an enemy of God. James. 4:4 1John 2:15ff
  16. Recognition and praise of the world will not make one's child healthy, happy or more well-adjusted, but the Word of God states that it destroys them spiritually. We are not put on earth to seek the favor of men. Gal. 1:10 1Thess. 2:4 Rom. 2:29 As an aside, Christian believers are not to be isolationists. This doctrine is about exercising reasonable care regarding your own children.
  17. Do not let your child associate with the typical Canaanite type, who: (1) Is not interested in spiritual values. (2) Has no concept of right man/right woman. (3) Pursues the opposite sex at an early age. (4) Is not demonstrating positive volition by attending Bible class.
  18. Better to go through life with few associations, than to be ruined spiritually by the wrong type of people. Negative volition is not neutral when it comes to Bible doctrine, they are against the principles we believe and teach.
  19. Although the child of this age is naive and undiscerning, they are deluded and often think that they are smarter than their parents.
  20. They demonstrate their arrogance by talking too much and listening too little.
  21. They also show their sinful trend by the rejection of authority, battling with the parents over these very issues.
  22. They think that know what is right and best for them and that their parents just don't understand. Like Dinah, pride goes before a fall, and an arrogant spirit before destruction. Prov. 16:18 11:2-3 44.
  23. Like Dinah, young people think that it won't happen to them, yet it happens every day. Furthermore, even though it is rape which is discussed in this chapter, probably a much greater contemporary problem today is drug usage (which can be used to knock down the sexual standards of the young believer).
  24. Parents are to teach and insist that children not put themselves into potentially compromising situations.
  25. They should be taught the principle to avoid even the appearance of sexual impropriety. Unchaperoned affairs at an early age, unmarried people spending the night together, etc. This is often thought to be a rite of passage for prom night. Believing parents are not to adopt these cosmic system values.
  26. The Word of God does not say whether this is an isolated incident in Dinah's life, or habitual activity.
  27. As Dinah is out in the wrong place, with the wrong people, the predatory male spots her and moves in.
  28. Shechem is concerned with nothing of her rights and person, he is merely concerned with satisfying himself.
  29. Since his father was a powerful person in the region and he has no scruples about this sort of activity, he rapes Dinah. It is possible that the people of Canaan and Egypt regarded unmarried women who are out and about as legitimate prey.
  30. Whether that assumption of their values is true or not, Dinah should never have left the house unescorted.
  31. Most males today have no norms and standards in regard to right man/right woman.
  32. Many young men are arrogant and assume that they are God's gift to women and they have no problem manipulating young women.

## Contemporary Lessons Found in Genesis 34 (mostly from Snider)

33. Such men are often impressed with their own looks, physique, details, income, car, etc. and are certain that women are equally impressed.
34. It is not completely clear how the society of Shechem viewed the status of single women. Did Shechem take this woman by force because he could, because society approved or because his father was the local leader? We have no idea.
35. In any case, there are many points of similarity between our society and that of Shechem's. Therefore, it is not out of the question that your virginal daughter can go out one day, and return not a virgin.
36. As believers, we are not to be gullible and think that people in the cosmos think like we do about these principles.
37. Young, immature girls often put themselves in extremely compromising positions and often end up paying a horrible price. This could just as easily be with a popular boy from the football team, or the quiet, sensitive young man.
38. Again, it is up to the parents of such a one to protect, guide and teach the young woman about the opposite sex.

From **Makairos Bible Church**;<sup>3</sup> accessed November 11, 2015; and edited.

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

**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 humbled her.

The patriarch of that family appears to be Hamor and he also appears to be in charge. We have no idea as to his age or Shechem's age.

**Genesis 34:1–2** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and humbled her.

We have determined that a rape has occurred, and have drawn several principles from this so far.

**Rape of Dinah by Alexandre Cabanel** (a graphic); from the **Song of Songs**; accessed November 11, 2015.



<sup>3</sup> This is a Word document that will open up on your computer.

The narrative is more subtle than we might realize.

**Genesis 34:3** And his [Shechem's] soul clung to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke to the heart of the girl.

There are certainly different kinds of rape; and degrees of rape. Shechem may have taken Dinah forcefully, but, at the same time, he found her to be a very attractive and compelling woman. He began speaking tenderly to her, either during or after the rape (*wâw* consecutives combined with a series of imperfect verbs often suggest a series of consecutive or coterminous actions).

This is obviously a man of few social skills. Had he not raped her, and had he used the right approach, he might have legitimately married Dinah. This incident would have ended quite differently had Shechem merely exercised minimal self-control. Jacob's sons understood what he did was completely wrong; Shechem himself does not appear to fully appreciate that.

What is suggested in this chapter—that these two peoples intermarry and become one people—could have been the end result. However, Shechem's very character makes this end impossible.

**Genesis 34:4** And Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl for a wife."

All of this takes place in the city of Shechem; but this verse suggests that Shechem is not the founder of the city, as he goes to his father to enact this marriage. So that we are not too judgmental, bear in mind that Abraham sought a wife for 40 year old Isaac.

Shechem apparently did not have much luck speaking with Dinah directly, even though he spoke to her *tenderly* (after the rape). So he asks his father to look into this for him. His father is to determine if there is a way to get this marriage thing to work out.

It appears from the English translation that Shechem wants his father to go out and get this woman to be his wife—referring to Dinah as if she is back at home. However, the Hebrew text suggests rather that Dinah is right there with them or she is nearby—perhaps in Shechem's tent—so Hamor is not going to go get this woman; he is going to go and work out a deal whereby Shechem can take her in marriage.

It appears that, for the most part, marriages in that era were worked out between families. We saw this with Isaac's marriage; but not with Jacob's. However, had Jacob's marriage been arranged between families, then he would not have awoken the next morning with the wrong woman.

In any case, what Shechem was asking was legitimate for that era, setting the rape aside for a moment.

Shechem knows all of what happened; but it is not clear that he told his father Hamor everything. I have not discovered any clues in Gen. 34 which tell me that Hamor knew or did not know about the rape. Similarly, there is no indication that others in the Hamor family knew what Shechem had done.

Dinah also knew all that happened; and she was probably aware that she was sought as Shechem's wife. Even though she appears to be trapped there, it would be reasonable that she understood what was going on (she either pieced things together or asked questions of those bringing her food). And, because she did have female friends among these people (v. 1), it would seem logical that she would attempt to get a message to her family as to her circumstances. We are not given any information

regarding how a message was gotten to her family; but they clearly understood what had happened before Hamor came to them.

**Genesis 34:5** And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. And his sons were with his cattle in the field. And Jacob kept silent until they had come.

The word *defiled* is *ṭâmê'* (טָמַא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*], which means *to declare or to pronounce unclean; to defile (sexually, religiously, ceremonially); to profane (God's name)*. Strong's #2930 BDB #379. So again, the preponderance of the evidence is that Dinah had been raped.

It is interesting that we do not have a specific word for rape in the Hebrew language that I am aware of. Rape as a crime and a sin is recognized by Scripture, but in somewhat of a convoluted way. In the Mosaic Law, a woman who has illicit sex with a man is considered guilty if this takes place in a populated area; but innocent if this takes place in an isolated area (the reasoning being that, the woman can cry out for help in the populated area).

I believe that rape was less of an issue in the ancient world because women in that culture tended to be carefully protected by family. There were fewer opportunities for rape to actually occur, given the family protection, which was simply a cultural norm. The exceptions to this would be when an entire city goes wrong (like Sodom).

How did Jacob come about this information? It is not clear. Did Hamor tell him, "My son just had sex with your daughter; and he wants to marry her." Did Dinah somehow get a message back to her family? We do not know for certain; but it seems more likely that Dinah would have gotten a message to her family than Hamor. Would Hamor go to Jacob and say, "My son raped your daughter; but it is okay, because he wants to marry her"? We do not even know if Hamor knows what happened.

It does not appear that Dinah spoke with her father directly; at least, the way that this reads, someone else appears to have told Jacob about the rape. Jacob says nothing about it until his sons come to him.

It also appears that Dinah is with Shechem's family at this time (vv. 17, 26). We will discuss that later on.

Although it appears that this is given in chronological order, even that is not entirely clear. We have *wâw* consecutives and imperfect verbs most everywhere (which often indicate chronological order) except in v. 5. In fact, this is striking and it stands out in the Hebrew; but not in the English.

The verbs in v. 5 are all in the perfect tense, which does not indicate a time frame for those actions. Read it again, and bear in mind that there is no chronology hidden in the Hebrew here.

**Genesis 34:5** And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. And his sons were with his cattle in the field. And Jacob kept silent until they had come.

When we start up with v. 6, we are back to a set of verbs in chronological order.

**Genesis 34:6** And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.

Hamor clearly said something along the lines of “My son is interested in marrying your daughter,” which is what fathers would do in that era. Jacob is aware of the rape; it is unclear whether Hamor is or not. Therefore, it is unclear how Jacob is made aware of what happened.

Dinah appears to be back in Shechem (the city), so it seems unlikely that Dinah told Jacob, her brothers or anyone else directly. What seems to be most likely is, Dinah somehow got a message out to her family, even though she was being kept at Hamor’s homestead.

**Genesis 34:7** And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard. And the men [Dinah’s brothers] were furious, and they were very angry, because he had done folly in Israel, in lying with the daughter of Jacob. And it ought not to be done so.

Apparently, Dinah’s brothers knew that she had been raped. Who told whom and when Jacob became aware is not entirely clear. Exactly how the brothers knew and how Jacob knew is not known to us (as are many details in this narrative). Because of the mixture of the imperfect and perfect tenses in v. 6, we do not know what came first: the proposal of marriage by Hamor or knowledge of the rape in Jacob’s family.

The primary topic here is rape and how the sons of Israel should respond to it, but there is one item which requires some commentary first—something that possibly has never been discussed before. We have the phrase *because he had done folly in Israel*. It is easy to misinterpret this verse, particularly because it is incorrectly translated. It sounds as if this reads: *because he had done folly in [nation] Israel*. However, there is no nation Israel at this time in history; nor do Jacob and his sons understand their little clan to be a national entity.

Throughout this study, I have originally used the Modern King James Version, which is a good translation. Here, they do not quite get it right. What is done is *n<sup>e</sup>bâlâh* (הִלְבֵּן) [pronounced *n<sup>eb</sup>vaw-LAW*], which means *deceit, deceitful act, senseless deed, vile act, disgraceful thing; punishment for a vile or shameful act*. It is much stronger than *to do folly*, as is found in the KJV (*he had wrought folly*); the KJV2000, the MKJV, the WEB translation, the UPDV translation and Green’s literal translation. The KJV often has a powerful impact on modern translations perhaps for many decades still to come, resulting in the occasional toothless translation, as we have before us. Strong’s #5039 BDB #615.

The next word to consider is a tiny, but very significant, preposition, not even assigned a number by Strong: the *bêyth* preposition *b<sup>e</sup>* (ב) [pronounced *b<sup>eh</sup>*], which means *in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*. No Strong’s # BDB #88. At this point, I do not know that I can point to a single translation which gets this right (I have around 30 different English translations of the Old Testament on my **e-sword**, and none of them get it right). Shechem has not committed this shameful act *in* Israel; he has committed this vile deed *against* Israel (who is the father of Dinah; *Israel* is the name which God gave to Jacob). That is the proper way to understand this sentence from the Hebrew.

Now, when there is a rape resulting in death in the book of the Judges, we have nearly the exact same phrase (Judges 20:6), and there it means *to perform a disgraceful act in Israel*, because there was an established nation of Israel at that time. So, even though we have nearly the exact same Hebrew words in both passages,<sup>4</sup> they are properly translated differently, because of the overall context.

<sup>4</sup> The words are in a different order and Judges 20:6 adds an additional word.

This can be very difficult for some literalists to understand. They believe that, if *abc* is translated as *xyz* in one passage, then it should be translated *xyz* everywhere it is found, but this is clearly not the case. The difference is, in Gen. 34:6, *Israel* is a person; and in Judges 20:6, *Israel* is a nation (even though it is the same word). The correct understanding of the word *Israel* along with the context, determines the proper use of the bēyth preposition.

If this bothers you, you have been recognizing that exact same distinction in this passage that we are studying: *Shechem* can refer to the city where the sons of Israel are living (Gen. 33:18); and *Shechem* can refer to the rapist in this passage (Gen. 34:2, 4). Same word; different reference.

Dinah's brothers, Jacob's sons, were quite upset upon hearing this. Having their sister being taken by this man was undeniably wrong.

Jacob is also upset, but he does not determine what ought to be done. His sons almost immediately formulate a plan.

There is so much detail left out of this. Do the sons of Jacob come up and start swearing at Hamor for what happened? Do they stand off and quietly speak with bitterness amongst one another? Do they follow their father's lead and hold their peace?

Gen 34:5–7 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. But his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. The sons of Jacob had come in from the field as soon as they heard of it, and the men were indignant and very angry, because he had done an outrageous thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing must not be done.

We have no clue who informed Jacob and his sons as to what happened. Although Shechem and his father Hamor may have told them, it would have logically been in the text (*Hamor informed Jacob that Shechem had taken his daughter*). But we do not find that.

Furthermore, even though Jacob and his sons are clearly upset over this situation, they do not reveal this to Hamor and Shechem (compare vv. 5, 11, 13).

We have been studying the rape of Dinah, and although we have clarified one minor aspect of this narrative, we are left with many more questions.

**Genesis 34:8** And Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him for a wife.

Hamor appears to be making the best of a bad situation. The fact that his son has raped this woman is glossed over; he does not make an issue of it. He talks instead about how his son feels.

To be fair to Hamor, it is possible that his son did not give a fully truthful account of his encounter with Dinah. It is not out of the question that a man might lie to his father about his own wrongful behavior.

**Map of the Prevalence of Rape and Sexual Assault of Woman** (a graphic); from **The Muslim Issue** (which has a number of interesting graphics). Accessed August 5, 2015.

**Genesis 34:9** And you make marriages with us, giving your daughters to us, and taking our daughters to you.

The father continues, saying that they can intermix, the two peoples—and this appears to be a fairly common thing in the ancient world. Two families are geographically close to one another; and, if they get along, often they will intermarry.

Genetically, this is actually a healthy thing, for people who are not closely related to intermarry.

However, there is a problem here. God has not raised up the family of Jacob to be intermingled with some random, heathen family. The

people of Abraham are set apart, even though Jacob's sons would marry women whose backgrounds are unknown to us. The sons of Jacob must survive and remain as a separate racial entity. This does not mean that they cannot marry Hivites, or Canaanites or Girgashites; but whoever marries the sons of Jacob must become a part of their family and worship their God.

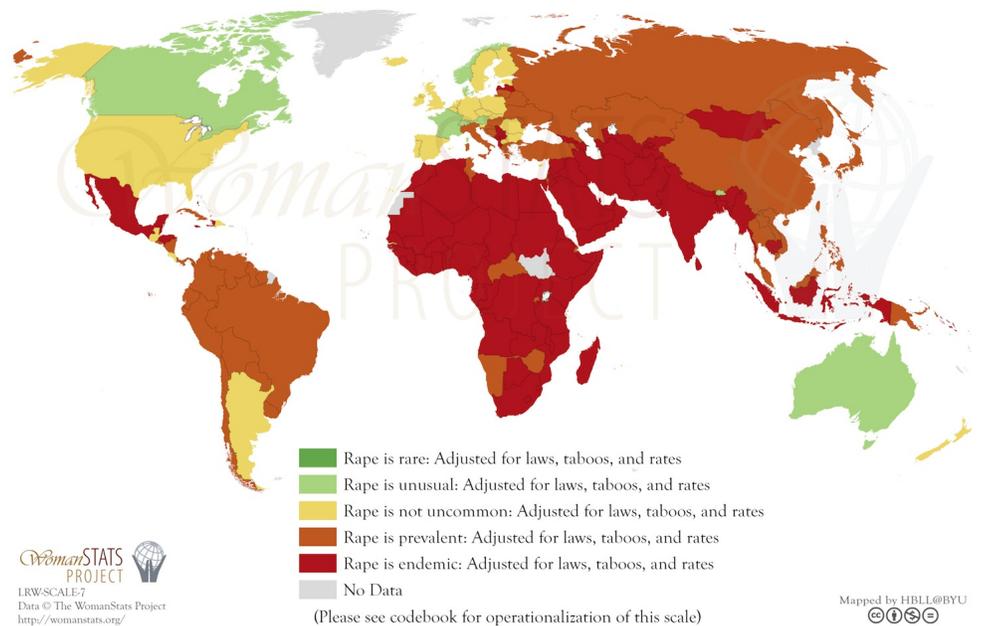
Something about the Canaanites ought to be said as well. God gave the land to Jews and not to the people living in the land of Canaan already. Some of these people are quite degenerate and others are not. Sodom, as we have studied, had become so degenerate that God destroyed them. However, Abraham and Isaac's interaction with the people of Gerar indicated to us that some of them had some moral sensibilities.

My point being, we cannot judge this family of Canaanites based upon the actions of Shechem. Furthermore, despite what has happened, even Shechem himself is not completely lost morally. He clearly raped Dinah; it is clearly wrong. Yet he does want to marry her. I realize that is not a ringing endorsement of his character; but I am trying to differentiate between him and the animals who raped the woman in Judges 19 and killed her through their multiple rapes.

**Genesis 34:10** And you will live with us. And the land will be before you. Live and trade in it, and get possessions in it.”

Hamor is still speaking, trying to convince Jacob to intermarry with his family and for them to all become one people.

Combined Scale of the Prevalence and Sanction  
of Rape and Sexual Assault of Women  
Scaled 2011



Even though Jacob is hiding how he feels about Shechem—he is probably not sure how he wants to react to all of this—Hamor no doubt senses some apprehension, and continues to try to convince Jacob of the mutual benefits they would all enjoy.

The people of Hamor were not necessarily guilty of trying to undermine God's plan; however, Satan was certainly attempting to undermine God's plan. Therefore, he is reasonably the inspiration here for the commingling of these two peoples.

*Leupold: Naturally, where two tribes freely intermarry they will "live with" one another. This again was quite feasible because larger stretches of unclaimed country still lay available here and there in those days: "the land lies open before you." Then Hamor tries to paint an attractive picture of the advantages accruing to Israel from such an alliance: they "may dwell" in the land, "travel back and forth in it" (sachar, however, implies travelling mostly for the purpose of trading) and they "may establish themselves in it," departing from their more nomadic way of life and adopting agricultural habits. In v. 5v. 8 "Shechem" stands first—nominative absolute—his attitude is primarily under consideration.<sup>5</sup>*

Sometimes a family line or a people seem to disappear or they appear to become associated with another people. This simply describes the process. Sometimes two families or even two tribes are dwelling near one another and they decide to band together rather than to go to war.

However, the problem is, in the end, we would no longer have the sons of Abraham, but we would have this intermingling of this whole other family which has a clear identity. This is certainly not God's plan for Jacob's family. The sons of Jacob could marry a variety of women, but God could not allow them to become completely intermixed with another people.

The Bible is very careful, particularly in these early years, of the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to present them as a separate people. Very little is said about the wives of 12 sons of Jacob (at this point, some of the males are barely old enough to marry—however, they will all have families by the time that we get to Gen. 46). The wives and their children will all be seen as descendants of Abraham.

They will continue to act like a family unit. Even though they are related to Esau and to Ishmael, as well as to the Ammonites and the Moabites, the sons of Jacob and their sons will remain together, moving and relocating as a group; and functioning as a family or clannish unit, separated from the rest of the peoples of the land.

When they move as a group to Egypt, they will become even more isolated as a clan. In fact, they will grow into a population of 2 million, and yet remain completely separate from the Egyptians (although, there will be some sympathizers).

**Genesis 34:10** And you will live with us. And the land will be before you. Live and trade in it, and get possessions in it."

Notice what they are being offered by Hamor—everything that God has promised them about the land, Hamor is promising them.

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<sup>5</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxv.html> accessed October 6, 2015.

The ESV; capitalized is used below; quotation marks are added when this is spoken.

Hamor was making very similar promises to those made by God. Obviously, he may not realize what God has promised the family of Jacob.

### Shortcuts in the Spiritual Life

What Hamor is Offering	God’s Promises to Abraham
Marriage into a royal family.	“I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing.” (Gen. 12:2)
Genetic prosperity (the opportunity to have a lot of children as a result of intermarriage)	“I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the shore of the sea.” (Gen. 22:17b)
Residing in the relative safety of an established race.	“I will make your seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can count the dust of the earth, then your seed also will be counted.” (Gen. 13:16)
Acquiring and owning real estate.	“I will give this land to your seed.” (Gen. 12:7b)
Economic prosperity.	“...afterward they shall come out with great substance.” (Gen. 15:14b)

Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim had made similar promises directly to Jacob: “And, behold, Jehovah stood above it and said, I am Jehovah the God of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying, I will give it to you and to your seed. And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your Seed. And, behold, I will be with you and will guard you in every place in which you may go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not forsake you until I have surely done that which I have spoken to you.” (Gen. 28:13–15)

God’s promises are always greater than the promises of the world.

Most of the first column was taken from **Ron Snider**.

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

A similar approach is taken by Satan when he tempted Jesus in Matt. 4. All Jesus had to do was step outside of God’s plan, and Satan would give Him anything—even all the kingdoms of the world.

Now, think about what we are studying, because there is this parallel throughout. Shechem is shortcutting the normal marriage process. He is supposed to see this woman, fall in love, possibly speak to her from time to time, and have his father ask Dinah’s father to give his approval for marriage. Shechem did not do this; he bypassed the civilized process of marriage.

Hamor is suggesting to Israel’s family that they bypass the timeline of God, and to receive the things which God has promised them by intermarrying with his sons. What God has promised, Hamor is offering to Jacob. All he has to do is overlook the sin upon which this will be based.

Ron Snider: *[Similarly,] Satan offers cosmic convenience, safety and prosperity to the believer who will compromise with him.*<sup>6</sup>

What has happened so far is, Shechem, the firstborn son of Hamor, raped Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. He had decided that he really liked her, and took her home to her family, insisting that his father work out a deal so that they could marry.

He and his father went to Jacob, suggesting that their two families intermarry. At this point, Hamor and Shechem are discussing this marriage and possibly intermarriage between the two clans, which would have made them one family (or, clan).

Even without the rape having occurred, there is a problem with this whole proposal. God had set the family of Abraham apart from all other races/families/clans for special blessing. People would be brought into their family (that is, wives), but there was not to be a coalition with another clan.

Although we do not know about the rest of the Hivites, we know about Shechem and how he seems to think that what he did was okay. Nowhere does he explain himself or apologize. What he is willing to do is, cough up as much money as would make Jacob and his family accept the situation. Furthermore, he is not even coughing up his own money; that is why his father is along. His father has the checkbook.

**Genesis 34:11** And Shechem said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find grace in your eyes, and whatever you will say to me I will give.

This is the first time that we know that Shechem is here. Shechem looks to his father, but the proposal is being made to the brothers of Dinah. Whether or not his father knows, Shechem may even think that Dinah's brothers do not know what happened. It appears that Dinah has been with the Hamor clan since this incident first occurred.

Throughout this interaction, neither Hamor or Shechem admit that any wrongdoing has occurred. Dinah's brothers are also playing their cards close to the vest; they are not revealing that they know what happened and how upset they are.

Shechem has raped Dinah, but he hopes to marry her and make everything all better.

Leupold indicts<sup>7</sup> the entire Canaanite race based upon this incident, but we really do not know how many relatives of Shechem know what he did. When someone has done wrong, it is not normal for them to go around and brag about what they have done (unless they are proud of having done wrong, which is then an indictment of his society).

Whereas, Shechem obviously feels some guilt, based upon his offering any dowry necessary; there is nothing in this narrative that indicates the Hamor knows what happened. There is no indication that anyone else in his family is aware of what he did.

On the other hand, Jacob and his sons know what Shechem did.

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<sup>6</sup> From [www.makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen34.doc](http://www.makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen34.doc) accessed November 17, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxv.html> accessed October 6, 2015.

**Genesis 34:12** Heap upon me ever so much price and dowry, and I will give according as you will say to me. But give me the girl for a wife.”

Shechem believes that he can solve this problem with money. He will give as much money as is necessary in order to fix things. He is obviously quite taken by Dinah, despite the fact that he is a barbarian (I mean that in the general sense).

Here, we might be able to draw **Some Conclusions About Shechem** based upon the text:

1. Shechem would have been seen as a desirable bachelor. His father is the ruler of that area, and it is possible that the city was named for him.
2. Many times, when a person is the son of someone who is rich and famous, he ends up being spoiled as a result. Much of this can occur because of the neglect of his father, not by the training of his father. Good parenting can overcome any obstacle of poverty or wealth.
3. We will see this with King David and his sons from his first wives. They grew up to feel entitled and lawless, despite the fact that David was a godly man.
4. Shechem appears to have a great deal in common with King David’s sons (Amnon and Absalom). He wants what he wants when he wants it. And he is willing for his father to part with any amount of money to make it happen.
5. However, this chapter also indicates that he has some conscience; that he understands that there is some protocol involved in taking a wife.
6. My point in all of this is not to present Shechem as a sterling citizen; but to recognize that his degeneracy is not on the level of the rapists in Sodom or in Gibeah (in Judges 19), or even of Amnon, King David’s son.

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

**Genesis 34:12** Heap upon me ever so much price and dowry, and I will give according as you will say to me. But give me the girl for a wife.”

This is one of the few times there is an inkling of Shechem’s guilt. He tells Jacob’s family, “I will agree to whatever price you want.” The money is not just about recognizing the value of Dinah, but it is guilt money for what Shechem has done (this is an assumption that I am making). This suggests to me that Shechem has a conscience, despite all the negative things that we know about him. This also suggests that he has a sense of entitlement. These two things can exist simultaneously in the same person.

It is worth noting that this money that he is willing to pay, may come from his father’s pocket.

**Genesis 34:13** And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, speaking with deceit because he had defiled Dinah their sister.

Whereas, one would expect the fathers to sort out a possible marriage, first Shechem and then the sons of Jacob decide to speak. However, it appears that the sons took an active part in the affairs of the family. Back when Abraham sent his servant to get a wife for Isaac, the brother of Rachel (Laban) seemed to be just as involved in the proceedings as his father was.

That the sons of Jacob are speaking with deceit suggests that they did not let on that they were upset, that they knew about the rape, and that they were plotting evil in their hearts. They could not reveal their anger. So these are not honest negotiations on their part. They have a whole other agenda planned.

Apparently Jacob's sons have formulated a plan, which they will lay out. This suggests that, at whatever point they became aware the Shechem wanted to marry Dinah, that they huddled and decided what they would do. None of this is in the text. We have to get that from v. 14, which is the basis of their plot against Shechem and his family.

**Genesis 34:14** And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised. For it is a reproach to us.

Their demand seems simple; they have a fairly small religious requirement—they ask that the men of Hamor be circumcised. They are not even requesting animal sacrifices, a pledging of allegiance to their God; just circumcisions for the males.

We have studied circumcision in the past, and the idea is, the "dead" skin is cut away, and from this comes new life (Abraham was circumcised to represent this new life; because he and Sarah could not have children due to their advanced years). Abraham's circumcision represented new life in the Lord Y<sup>e</sup>howah; and all of his sons were circumcised as an identifying mark and as a testimony to their new life (that is, they were born again).

There is no indication that they explain much about their relationship to God; and it is possible that Jacob's sons themselves did not really appreciate the unique relationship with God that they had.

### The Sons of Jacob Conspire

1. There is more in this chapter that we do not know than what we know.
2. There is great pain associated with circumcision in an adult and a recovery period; this will be used by Jacob's sons against the males of Shechem.
3. There is reasonably a plan put together by the sons of Jacob, which would have been put together after they knew about the rape and about Shechem's intentions.
4. At what point they knew both of these things is unknown to us. Much of that depends upon who informed Jacob and who informed the sons of the rape—something about which we can only speculate. What seemed to make the most sense is, Dinah, being held somewhat as a captive in Shechem, was able to find a sympathetic ear and to get a message out to her family as to what had happened.
5. It would make sense that the requirement of circumcision be made *after* a plan had been formulated. However, the circumcision was not designed to bring the families closer together to one another through God; the circumcision was designed to weaken the males of Hamor's clan.
6. When the sons huddled and discussed this plan is unknown to us.
7. Sometimes conversations in the Bible are presented as a continuous discussion, when they are not. Did the sons say, "Let us go aside and discuss this"? Did Hamor say, "How about if I return in the morning and you give me your answer then"?
8. It is possible that this intermarriage idea was proposed, the family of Jacob said, "Let us sleep on it" and then they came up with a plan.
9. In any case, it is logical that, at some point, before the sons came up or in the midst of the recorded conversation, a plan was put together.

The sons of Jacob are using their spiritual heritage in order to take their revenge. This is reprehensible!

## Topics

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

**Genesis 34:15–16** But in this we will agree with you, if you will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will live with you, and we will become one people.

Jacob's sons have all been circumcised; and this is a part of their sacred relationship to God. However, here they will use circumcision in order to accomplish nefarious ends.

Remember what kind of a person Jacob has been? He is a manipulator and a *heel-grabber*; and his sons have continued with his characteristics. They are going to be sneaky and underhanded as well.

There is not a hint to Shechem that Jacob's sons know what has transpired. They don't indignantly proclaim, "But you raped our sister; it will be a cold day in hell before we ally ourselves with you." Instead, they carry out a plan, which plan requires cool deception and a united front.

Shechem is immediately put at ease. He assumes that they do not know what he has done (he has their sister at his compound). If he noticed any reticence, it was because of the peculiar religious practices of these men (I am making these logical assumptions based upon the narrative).

**Genesis 34:17** But if you will not listen to us, to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will go."

"Look, if you are not interested, then, no problem. We are out of here."

Shechem apparently has Dinah. It is possible that Shechem raped her and then brought her home, all the while speaking tenderly to her. This makes the most sense; it is less likely that Dinah would be raped, returned home, and then brought to Shechem's at a later time.

She is called a daughter here, simply because that appears to be a general designation for the female portion of a group.

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

What appears to be the case is, Hamor has never told his son *no*. Whatever he has wanted, Hamor, as his father, has come through on that request. Being the father of that clan, Hamor could choose to do whatever he wanted and to give his son whatever he wanted. However, he did not develop any character in his son; he did not, apparently, teach him right from wrong.

This seems like true acceptance to Hamor and Shechem. They are becoming a part of the faith of Abraham. They really don't know anything about that faith, because none of Jacob's sons have demanded anything beyond circumcision. To Hamor and Shechem, this is simply a religious ritual, but without any clear significance.

Very likely, Shechem is certain that they do not know that he raped Dinah. She has apparently been with his family the entire time. This is why Shechem feels reasonably safe. How word was brought to the family of Jacob is unknown to us; but they do know what happened.

You will notice what is emphasized is the ritual, but not the God of Abraham. Furthermore, this ritual is being used by the sons of Jacob not to bring these people into their family, but to deceive them.

One of the concepts of circumcision is, this separates the people of Israel unto God. This incident is all about keeping the people of Israel from being assimilated by the people of the land of Canaan.

Even though the sons of Jacob are using circumcision in an unauthorized way, the overall theme of this chapter is still preserved. “Despite who you are,” God is saying, “I am going to keep you separate to Myself.”

Shechem has raped Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and the sister of Leah’s sons. Although we do not know every detail, it appears that Shechem took her immediately to his home, where she has been kept for the past several days. Shechem asks his father to see about getting her hand in marriage.

When Shechem and his father Hamor go to speak to Jacob about Shechem marrying Dinah, we knew the following things:

### Summary of Genesis 34:1–18

1. Dinah went to visit the daughters of the land, and Shechem raped her. Gen. 34:2
2. Dinah appears to be kept at Shechem’s compound after the rape. The sons speak of taking her home with them, which implies that she is not with them. Gen. 34:17
3. Shechem knows that he raped her; Jacob knows that Dinah was raped; and his sons all know that she was raped. It is not clear if Hamor, Shechem’s father, knows this. Gen. 34:2, 5, 7
4. Therefore, there was to be some way in which Jacob and his sons found out about the rape and they seemed to know about this before their meeting with Hamor and Shechem. The most logical explanation is, Dinah found a sympathetic ear at Shechem’s compound, and sent a message to her family, telling them of what she has endured. That is not in the text; it is something I have assumed.
5. The sons of Jacob have formed a plan. At some point, they had to have huddled together and worked out a plan amongst themselves (apart from their father, who takes no action and who knows what has happened, but says nothing about it). Gen. 34:13–17
6. The sons say that they cannot allow their sister to be married to a man who is uncircumcised; and that they cannot agree to intermarry with a clan of uncircumcised men. Gen. 34:15–17
7. Therefore, the men of Shechem would be required to all be circumcised, or they would just take their sister back home. Gen. 34:17
8. The sons of Jacob are using the trappings of their faith to destroy the family of Shechem. This suggests that they do not really take their faith in Y<sup>e</sup>howah seriously.
9. Shechem and Hamor are pleased with this decision and they agree to be circumcised. Gen. 34:18
10. In this final section of Gen. 34, Jacob’s sons will use the recovery period from circumcision as a time to attack and kill all of the males in Shechem. So that there is no misunderstanding, God is *not* presenting this as stellar behavior among the sons of Jacob.

The end result will be, the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will remain pure and not intermixed with another family line.

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

The Modern KJV reads: **And he was more honorable than all the house of his father.** However, this confusing sentence is cleared up by other translations: **Now he was more respected than all the household of his father.** (The Scriptures) **Now he was the most honored of all his father's house.** (ESV)

So, the Bible is not calling this man honorable; but among his family, he is the most respected or honored person. This appears to be a backhanded way of saying, "His family is far worse than he is, and he is a rapist."

This also indicates that, he had great influence in his family. That is, he could make demands upon the rest of the family, and they would be considered carefully, due to his position in the clan.

We see this in politics all the time. In the Senate or House, relationships are built up over a period of time, so that, Senator A could offer a bill or an amendment, and if he has the right relationships, many would support him. However, if he is a brash, first year Senator, who puts forth a bill (or amendment)—which may be good for the country, but he has no relationships established in the Senate—that bill (or amendment) will probably go nowhere.

In politics, the relationships that have been built up—which can include relationships with donors and lobbyists—can be far more important in what gets done in Washington, than whether or not a bill is actually good for America.

We see this in office politics all of the time—those with the right relationships are given preferential treatment over those who might be more competent and harder workers.

**Genesis 34:20–21** And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and talked with the men of their city, saying, "These men are at peace 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 to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

This circumcision needs to be sold to the men of this area. Shechem is getting a wife out of this deal; but Hamor and Shechem need to convince the other males that they will in turn receive benefits from this relationship as well.

There was very little that passed for law and order in those days from without. Being closely allied with another group of people provides some sense of additional protection from without. A society may be reasonably well-ordered from within, but people from outside that society may be quite a different matter altogether. So, the larger a clan is, the better off they were with regards to security.

The coalescing of two families sounds quite normal, and we must assume that this sort of thing occurred a great deal in the ancient world (we will see this with the clans of Edom and Seir in Gen. 36).

However, bear in mind that Shechem raped Dinah. It's not like he met her and fell in love, and wants to do the right thing. He met her, raped her, fell in love, and now wants to do the *right* thing. It is not surprising that her brothers are quite miffed.

**Genesis 34:22** Only on this condition will the men agree to us, to live with us, to be one people, if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised.”

So, they agree to be circumcised, and all of the males are circumcised. Notice that there is no discussion here of the Revealed God; there is no discussion of the God of Abraham. The emphasis is upon the ritual, which for them, has no meaning. They might as well be getting matching tattoos.

This also suggests that circumcision has little religious significance among Jacob’s children. Why would they suggest such a thing, if they understood how this tied them to God?

It is hard to come up with a similar situation in today’s world, but let’s say you attend church for business reasons. You make contacts within the church, and these contacts become business opportunities. What is being taught in the church may have little importance to you; but the business contacts that you make are what is key.

It is just like a woman who goes to a church to meet a mate, knowing that there are better men to choose from than what can be found in a bar. The doctrine being taught may mean very little to her, except that there is some level of morality that is found in the church, clearly superior to that found in a bar. Jesus Christ dying for her sins and the spiritual life may mean very little to this young woman.

**Genesis 34:23** Will not their cattle and their substance and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will live with us.”

Shechem continues to try to convince his brothers. He explains that, if they become attached to this family, they will have all of their wealth as well. Jacob and his family have considerable wealth, as God has blessed them.

All of this is about allying these two families together. Shechem has to really sell this, because he is asking all of his brothers to be willing to be circumcised in order for this to happen.

**Genesis 34:24** And all that went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to Shechem his son. And every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

This is a city (we might think of it more like a hamlet); and there is a city gate, and Shechem and his father are out there at the city gate. They are speaking to men 1 at a time, or 2 or 3 at a time. They are there all day long. Obviously, Shechem and Hamor are well known, as Hamor is the father of many of the men in their city. Shechem is the firstborn.

They have sold the idea; now they are circumcising the males in the city.

**Genesis 34:25** And it happened on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took each his sword and came upon the city boldly, and killed all the males.

We have no idea how many males that we are talking about, but Simeon and Levi then came into the city and killed all of the men, who were still in pain from being circumcised a couple days previous.

**Genesis 34:26** And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

These are murders which are taking place. The Bible offers up no justification for them. Throughout Scripture, men do wrong things—including the patriarchs. The relevant information is included, but not to excuse these actions.

This had not been clearly revealed before. Dinah has kept in this household this entire time. With the circumcision, Shechem would not have had sex with her again.

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

This sounds like the other sons of Jacob came into this city and plundered it. In the Judges incident, the people of the city protected the rapists. This made the people culpable after the fact. However, we do not know this about Shechem. It seems unlikely that anyone knew what Shechem had done (although it is likely that some sympathetic soul spoke to Dinah and got a message off to her family early on). We have no reason to think that the other men of that land were protecting Shechem or would have protected Shechem had they known what he had done.

All of the men of the city did not violate Dinah; only one man had. V. 27 simply offers up their rationale for the murders that they committed.

**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.

These are the sons of Jacob. They took all of the livestock in Shechem. The sons of Jacob are inflicted great harm upon this people. So there is no misunderstanding, this is not justified; it is just stated.

**Genesis 34:29** And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, they took captive, and plundered even all that was in the house.

These sons of Jacob appear to have taken everything. Their wives and children would have been taken as slaves. It is possible that some of the female children may later have become wives to some of Jacob's sons.

**Genesis 34:30** And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me, to make me stink among those who live in the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. And I, being few in number, they will gather themselves together against me, and kill me. And I will be destroyed, my house and I."

Jacob, the father, is rightly upset. These men would have been known, and possibly liked, by the other heathen in the land, and the sons of Jacob have gone in there, killed all of the males, and have taken everything that belonged to them.

However, God cannot allow him to be destroyed because there are promises that should be fulfilled. When Jacob verbally worries that he might be destroyed, he indicates that his faith in the promises of God is fairly weak.

*Leupold: the entire Pentateuch aims to set forth how God's gracious care led on the undeserving people of His choice from grace to grace.<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxv.html> accessed October 6, 2015.

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

Their excuse was, “Should we allow our sister to be treated like a whore?”

The problem is, Shechem’s treatment of Dinah did not justify their killing all the males of the city of Shechem; nor did it justify the enslaving of their wives and children and the taking of all their stuff.

### Closing Points to Genesis 34

1. The Bible never sugar-coats the faithlessness of Jacob or the violence committed by his sons.
2. None of what Simeon and Levi did is presented as good or as justified.
3. There are times when God will command the destruction of a nation or clan, and that is because their degeneracy reaches a crisis point. That is not what has happened here.
4. Shechem was clearly a primitive who believed that he had special privileges and standing; and that whatever mess he created, his wealthy father would buy the solution to that mess.
5. Shechem acted out of lust, without thought for the future.
6. Levi and Simeon acted from their mental attitude sins, also without any thought of the future.
7. Despite their sinful behavior, God has made promises to Abraham, and He will fulfill those promises.
8. Despite David’s great sins, God will fulfill His promises to the line of David, which would lead to the humanity of Jesus Christ.
9. God’s blessing is a thing of grace; it is not earned or deserved.
10. Jacob will remember this incident for the rest of his life, and because of what Simeon and Levi did, would pronounce judgment upon their lines.
11. We needed to know about this incident, in order to understand Jacob’s final blessing to the lines of Levi and Simeon.

When we study the life of Joseph, the younger brother to these men, their mental attitude sins will also play a prominent part in his life.

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

Those who try to treat Judaism and Christianity as equivalent to Islam, often say, “Yes, there is a lot of murder and mayhem in the Koran; the same is true of the Old Testament.” There are some major differences here: (1) Not every incident of violence is presented as acceptable in the Old Testament. (2) Justified acts of violence against heathen in the land of Canaan are a result of their iniquity being full (that is, they have reached a point of lawlessness and immorality similar to that found in Gen. 19). (3) God carefully directed the violence against heathen peoples in the Old Testament (heathen groups were never attacked simply because they were heathen). (4) Israel lived side-by-side many heathen nations—this is how Solomon got so many heathen wives. Israel remained at peace with them as long as they did not attack Israel. David was at war with many peoples, but not without provocation. As a result, Solomon had a reign of peace.

Simeon and Levi believed that they were getting the last word, but they did not. Jacob would have the last word.

What happened as a result of this is found in Gen. 49:5–7, where Jacob is saying his last words and essentially telling these two what would happen to them: **“Simeon and Levi are brothers; their knives are**

vicious weapons. May I never enter their council; may I never join their assembly. For in their anger they kill men, and on a whim they hamstring oxen. Their anger is cursed, for it is strong, and their fury, for it is cruel! I will disperse them throughout Jacob and scatter them throughout Israel.”

These two are cruel sons. Jacob looks back to this incident, and Simeon and Levi acted in concert to inflict great harm upon this tribe. What would happen to these two tribes? Levi would become the priestly tribe, and they would never actually own land, but they would be scattered throughout Israel, living on lands that are not theirs. Simeon, quite conversely, was given a particular plot of land in the midst of Judah; and they slowly but surely lost their tribal identify. At some point in time, even though Judah remained as a tribal and land-owning entity; Simeon no longer enjoyed this as a distinctive tribe. They appear to have been scattered throughout Judah, losing all tribal identify as well as losing their land and their distinctiveness as a tribe.

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