DINAH AND THE SHECHEMITES

GENESIS 34:1-31
DINAH AND THE SHECHEMITES

Text:

Genesis 34: 1-31,

1. Now Dinah, Leah’s daughter whom she bore to Jacob, went to meet the young women of the land.
2. When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that area, saw her, he grabbed her, forced himself on her, and sexually assaulted her.
3. Then he became very attached to Dinah, Jacob’s daughter. He fell in love with the young woman and spoke romantically to her.
4. Shechem said to his father Hamor, “Acquire this young girl as my wife.”
5. When Jacob heard that Shechem had violated his daughter Dinah, his sons were with the livestock in the field. So Jacob remained silent until they came in.
6. Then Shechem’s father Hamor went to speak with Jacob about Dinah.
7. Now Jacob’s sons had come in from the field when they heard the news. They were offended and very angry because Shechem had disgraced Israel by sexually assaulting Jacob’s daughter, a crime that should not be committed.
8. But Hamor made this appeal to them: “My son Shechem is in love with your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife.
9. Intermarry with us. Let us marry your daughters, and take our daughters as wives for yourselves.
10. You may live among us, and the land will be open to you. Live in it, travel freely in it, and acquire property in it.”
11. Then Shechem said to Dinah’s father and brothers, “Let me find favor in your sight, and whatever you require of me I’ll give.
12. You can make the bride price and the gift I must bring very expensive, and I’ll give whatever you ask of me. Just give me the young woman as my
wife!”
13. Jacob’s sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully when they spoke because Shechem had violated their sister Dinah.
14. They said to them, “We cannot give our sister to a man who is not circumcised, for it would be a disgrace to us.
15. We will give you our consent on this one condition: You must become like us by circumcising all your males.
16. Then we will give you our daughters to marry, and we will take your daughters as wives for ourselves, and we will live among you and become one people.
17. But if you do not agree to our terms by being circumcised, then we will take our sister and depart.”
18. Their offer pleased Hamor and his son Shechem.
19. The young man did not delay in doing what they asked because he wanted Jacob’s daughter Dinah badly. (Now he was more important than anyone in his father’s household.)
20. So Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city,
21. “These men are at peace with us. So let them live in the land and travel freely in it, for the land is wide enough for them. We will take their daughters for wives, and we will give them our daughters to marry.
22. Only on this one condition will these men consent to live with us and become one people: They demand that every male among us be circumcised just as they are circumcised.
23. If we do so, won’t their livestock, their property, and all their animals become ours? So let’s consent to their demand, so they will live among us.”
24. All the men who assembled at the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem. Every male who assembled at the city gate was circumcised.
25. In three days, when they were still in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and went to the unsuspecting city and slaughtered every male.
26. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword, took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and left.
27. Jacob’s sons killed them and looted the city because their sister had been violated.
28. They took their flocks, herds, and donkeys, as well as everything in the city and in the surrounding fields.
29. They captured as plunder all their wealth, all their little ones, and their wives, including everything in the houses.
30. Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought ruin on me by making me a foul odor among the inhabitants of the land—among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I am few in number; they will join forces against me and attack me, and both I and my family will be destroyed!”
31. But Simeon and Levi replied, “Should he treat our sister like a common prostitute?” (NET)

Commentary:

Genesis 34 provides us with a sad look at rape, revenge and murder. Dinah, Jacob’s daughter by Leah, went into the city of Shechem to see the daughters of the land. Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite took her by force and raped her. He loved her and asked his father to arrange a marriage with her. At the time Jacob heard about what had happened his sons were in the field keeping the cattle. He waited for them to return so he could have their advice and assistance before any action was taken. The reaction of those involved differed greatly. Hamor, the father of Shechem, came to Jacob to see if he could arrange the marriage. Jacob seemed to have talked peaceably with him. Jacob’s sons said Shechem had “wrought folly in Israel” and that he deserved punishment. Hamor purposed to Jacob and his family that they become one people. This would be accomplished by intermarrying their sons and daughters, trading together and living together in the land. The Devil is constantly searching for ways to overthrow God’s plan. Shechem asked Jacob’s family for
grace and forgiveness. He also promised to pay the necessary dowry. Jacob’s sons were deceitful with Shechem and Hamor his father. They agreed to accept their offer if the men of Shechem would be circumcised. All the men of Shechem were circumcised and “on the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.” After they killed the men they took Dinah out of Shechem's house. The sons of Jacob spoiled the city and took “all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.” Jacob did not agree with their actions and he told Simeon and Levi that they had made his name to stink in the land. They excused their wrong actions by the wrong actions of Shechem saying, “Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?”

Shechem raped Dinah and then wanted to marry her -- Genesis 34:1-5:

Jacob and Leah had six sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun and a daughter named Dinah. In Genesis 46:15 we read that Jacob had daughters. “These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three.” It is possible that Jacob had other daughters and only Dinah is named in the Bible or this expression “daughters” could actually refer to granddaughters. Dinah went into the city of Shechem to see the daughters of the land. This example teaches us that too much liberty or freedom might be given to young people. There might have been something in the city that she wanted to see or to be a part of. Whatever the case, she put herself in danger and she was abused by the wicked actions of a non believer. Shechem took Dinah by force and raped and defile her. He loved her and his soul clave unto her and he wanted to marry her. Even after the horrible hurt he had done to her by the rape he still spoke kindly unto her and tried to gain her love and respect. The Bible says, “his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.” Shechem asked his father Hamor to arrange a marriage with Dinah for him. He loved her and wanted to
marry her but he had no understanding of God’s plan. Jacob somehow heard that Shechem had defiled Dinah his daughter. He decided to wait for his sons to return home from keeping the cattle before he took any action. He must have wanted their advice and assistance.

**Jacob’s sons made an insincere agreement -- Genesis 34:6-17:** Hamor went to Jacob at his home to try to arrange a wedding between his son, Shechem and Jacob’s daughter, Dinah. He was a brave man to face the father of a girl that had just been raped by his son to request the opportunity for him to marry her. When the sons of Jacob heard what had been done to their sister they were very angry. They said Shechem had committed an act that had brought disgrace and injury to the family of Israel. These men said that such actions must not go unpunished. Hamor purposed that his people and the children of Israel become one people. The way he thought this could be accomplished was to allow their families to marry one another and trade together. He wanted them to become one people. He suggested that they purchase any part of the land they wished to and dwell there. Shechem pleaded for the opportunity to marry Dinah. He vowed that he would do anything to be allowed to marry her. Jacob’s sons wanted to hurt Shechem and his father because of what had happened to their sister. They deceived them by saying that it would be a disgrace for Dinah to marry a man that was not circumcised! They lied by saying that if all the men would be circumcised then they would accept Hamor’s plan for marriage and for becoming one people. They were very strong in saying that if all the men were not circumcised they would take Dinah and leave that place.

**Shechem and his father were respected in the city -- Genesis 34:18-24:** Hamor and Shechem liked what Jacob’s sons said and agreed to it. It may seem strange that they agreed so quickly. But, we must remember how much Shechem loved Dinah. They likely also saw Jacob’s wealth and knew this would enrich, strengthen and bless their nation. Shechem was a very honorable
man in his family and among his people. So he went quickly to arrange for the men to be circumcised. Hamor and Shechem met with the other leaders of their city in the city gate. This was where all public business was transacted. Such a serious matter as this would require the consent of all the men. They use many arguments to persuade the people. They said, (1) These men are peaceable, (2) They can bring trade into the land, (3) The land is large enough for all, (4) Our families can marry into theirs, and theirs can marry into ours, (5) We will get their property, as well as their flocks and herds, and (6) They only ask that our men be circumcised like their men. “And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.”

**Simeon and Levi took revenge and killed all the males in the city -- Genesis 34:25-31:** Two of Dinah’s full brothers, Simeon and Levi, took revenge on Shechem and his people. On the third day, when the men were sore from the circumcision and experiencing the greatest pain and anguish these two sons of Jacob, slew all the males in Shechem, including Hamor and Shechem. They slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, where it seems she remained, after the rape he had committed. Shechem had kept her there because he was in hope that there would be a marriage. The women and children were spared when the men were killed. Then the other sons of Jacob came after the slaughter and helped to plunder the city. They were also guilty of wrong doing. Much wrong and guilt is seen in these events. The people of Shechem did not deal with their prince who had raped this girl. Now Simeon and Levi were guilty of several murders and the other sons guilty of the plunder. The horrible things that had happened to their sister did not justify the actions of these men. These men took sheep, goats, donkeys, and everything else that was in the town or the fields. They even dragged away the wives and children of the men that Simeon and Levi had killed. Jacob told Simeon and Levi that they had caused him a lot of trouble. He said they had made it unsafe for him to dwell in the land where he
had hoped to settle. He told his sons, “Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land.” People would now look upon Jacob as a murderer, a robber and a breaker of his word. These young men did not consider the fact that the Canaanites and the Perizzites would now likely retaliate against Jacob and his family who would be very much outnumbered. Their defense was given in the simple statement, “Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?” They seemed to say that if Dinah had prostituted herself to Shechem that they would have had no right to do anything to him. However, they felt that because he had forced her and raped her that they were right in making war against Shechem and his people. They knew Shechem would not be dealt with in the courts of the land so they took vengeance into their own hands.

Christians must learn to leave vengeance to God. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19) Since God is going to take up your cause and see to it that justice is done, you can leave it with Him. You do not have to carry around anger, bitterness, resentment and revenge. Jesus warned that an unforgiving heart will destroy you eternally. (Matthew 6:15) To become a Christian hear the word of God (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus (John 8:24), repent of sins (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10) and be baptized into Christ. (Galatians 3:26-27) Let us be righteous and live for the Savior and let us live with the Savior.

By Charles Box, Walnut Street Church of Christ, 306 Walnut Street, Greenville, Alabama, 36037 USA
Questions

on

Genesis 34:1-31

1. Why did Dinah go into the town of Shechem? ______________________
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   _______________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
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2. Do we see this behavior today? ______________________________
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3. Did Shechem have any remorse for his sinful act of raping Dinah? ______
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4. What did Jacob do when he discovered that Dinah had been raped? ______
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   _______________________________________________________________
5. Hamor presented an offer to Jacob for him to allow Shechem to marry Dinah. What seemed reasonable to Hamor was not reasonable to Jacob. What was wrong with the offer? ________________________________

6. How did Shechem appeal to Jacob to convince him that he really did love Dinah and wanted to marry her? ________________________________

7. Jacob’s sons demanded one condition before giving their consent. What was the condition they placed on them? Were the sons speaking truthfully? Was the plan acceptable to Shechem and Hamor? ________________________________

8. The men of Shechem all agreed to be circumcised to allow intermarriage with Jacob’s clan, but there may have been another motive besides acquiring
brides. Explain what that motive may have been.

9. When did Simeon and Levi attack the men of Shechem? Where had Dinah been all this time?

10. What did the sons of Jacob do in retaliation?

11. Did any other sons of Jacob join them in this raid?

12. What was Jacob’s reaction when he learned about the retaliation?
13. How did Simeon and Levi respond to Jacob? Was this answer acceptable?

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14. In the end, who was the most honorable, Shechem or Jacob’s sons? ______

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