

# Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

## Genesis 34:1-31

"Don't Repay Evil With Evil"— July 16, 2023



### **Introduction**

This chapter in Genesis is a very dark chapter. It is shocking to read. It involves deceit, greed, lust, and murder. Not one time is God mentioned in this passage. He was not sought after or prayed to. No one came to God.

2 Timothy 3:16 says that all scripture is breathed out by God, and ALL Scripture is beneficial and useful for us. Sometimes life is dark. Dark texts like this are a gift for us to show us a path back into the light.

Jacob got through life as a con artist. In order for Jacob to experience the blessing that God had for him, he needed to trust God not himself. Jacob wrestled with God in chapter 32, and God changed his name to Israel. He reconciled with his brother Esau in chapter 33. We expect that he will go back to Bethel and live out his days in peace and blessing. But he doesn't; he goes to Shechem. Why did he settle for partial obedience? Shechem offered an attractive compromise - it was an opportunity for him to get rich.

He had been a sojourner for so long. It was hard. But this world was not his home, and it is not ours either. (Hebrews 13:14) God is a jealous God. He will not settle for having half of our heart. Jacob had settled for partial obedience, and his spiritual compromises bore bitter fruit. One of the lessons from this text is that when temptation whispers to us - it is a lie. Sin is deadly. This is a loving warning to NOT settle for partial obedience. The Lord disciplines those He loves. Remember this! See God's love. Heed God's warning. Run with endurance.

### **Sermon Outline**

1. Scene One: Dinah's Defilement - vs. 1-4
2. Scene Two: A Hardened Heart - vs. 5-12
3. Scene Three: Deceit and Violence - vs. 13-30
4. Scene: God's Mercy - 34:31-35:1

### **Read & Discuss**

#### **1. Read vs. 1-4**

Dinah was Jacob's daughter by Leah, the unloved one. On her way to see the women of the land, she met Shechem who sexually assaulted her. How does something this wretched happen? Do you find yourself asking this question about our world today? Does the news you hear and read surprise you, anger you, discourage you? How do you make sense of it? The secular world doesn't have an answer for this brokenness, but the Christian worldview does. Shechem saw her, took her and defiled her. It is the same language that Moses used in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve believed the lie of Satan, took the fruit and ate. It didn't make things better - it made it worse. Horrible things happen because of sin. Sin twists and warps God's good gifts.

#### **2. Read vs. 5-12**

Shechem showed no sense of guilt for what he had done. Hamor didn't hesitate to go to Jacob to get Dinah for Shechem's wife. He went to Jacob with a sweet deal, promising Jacob things including land - land that God had already promised to Jacob. Hamor is offering Jacob a sinful shortcut.

Jacob settled in Shechem and didn't seem motivated to leave in spite of God's command to go to Bethel. Unchecked sin deceives us and hardens our heart. The deal that Hamor offered should never have been considered. God's people were not to marry outside of their own people, but a hard heart is in danger of spiraling into more sin. Jacob did NOTHING when he heard what had happened to his daughter. Do you think that his indifference was because Dinah was Leah's daughter? Was Jacob more concerned about something else? Jacob displays the signs of a hardened heart.

This side of heaven, you will sin. What matters is how you respond to sin. Do you belittle, rationalize and normalize your sin? Or do you repent, go to war with and put that sin to death?

#### **3. Read vs. 13-30**

There is a contrast between Jacob's response and that of his sons who were angry. They knew that this should never have been done. (vs. 7) Rather than going to God for wisdom and justice, they took matters in their own

hands. They used circumcision as a tool for revenge, and the men of Shechem were convinced to follow through with the plan because of greed. What are some things that make you want to take justice into your own hands?

The violence of the sons of Jacob was unbridled. They killed all the men and plundered everything. It may seem to us that their angry response was appropriate - justice demands punishment. Their deep hatred of Shechem for what he had done led to a blind rage and even greater injustice.

God's people are called to be holy, distinct and different. In their blind rage, Simeon and Levi became like the one they hated. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant. It showed that God's people were different. This sacred sign was used in order to get revenge. They drug God's name through the mud.

Today, water baptism is that sign for us. It shows that the one baptized is set apart, and it is a boundary line meant to show people a different way to live. Baptism, church membership, and the Lord's Supper matter. When doing these things in the right, loving way clarifies to the world what a Christian is. These protect and display the gospel that we cherish.

Jacob's response to the violence of Simeon and Levi showed how self-consumed he was. He was trying to protect his reputation.

#### **4. Read 34:31-35:1**

If you are completely honest, don't you see a bit of Jacob in yourself? Our growth in Godliness is not a straight line - it is up and down. In spite of his continuing failure, Jacob was not rejected nor put on a shelf. God told Jacob to go up to Bethel. God's mercy abounds.

What about Dinah? What about justice for her? Her father and brothers failed her. Have you ever felt like you were failed by your family? ([Psalm 27:10](#)) We can take comfort because there is One Who is not ashamed to call us "brother." That One is Jesus, and He is the God who will not fail us. ([Hebrews 2:11](#)) He would come for His people – people who have sinned and been sinned against.

The last verse of chapter 34 is an unanswered question. How should we deal with sin? Is there a better answer to the problem of sin? Is there a way that treats sin with proper seriousness and still reaches out to redeem the sinner? Thanks be to God there is! Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The wages of sin is death, but Jesus is the King Who died to pay the price and give life. ([Romans 6:23](#))

We must overcome evil with good because we believe that God cares more about justice than we ever could. ([Romans 12:19](#)) Unrepentant sinners will experience the wrath of God, but when a sinner turns to Christ in faith and repentance, they will find God welcoming them with open arms in mercy and love. The demands of justice were satisfied in the cross of Christ. All who turn from their sin and trust in Christ alone will find life in Christ - eternal life. Have you repented and trusted in Christ?

The cross shows us God's heart. God is good, just, present, and loving. As we weep with those who weep, we can point them to God who is good, just, present, and loving. On the cross, Jesus bore our sin and shame. He took our defilement. He defeated the enemies who shame us and destroyed the lie that the one defiled is damaged goods. ([Psalm 22:5](#)) How have you been encouraged by this message today? Do you know someone who needs to hear the truth and comfort of the gospel?

#### **Prayer of Response**

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at [fbcum.org](http://fbcum.org)

<b>Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <a href="#">Genesis 35:1-36:43</a> "Jacob Becomes Israel"
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