

May 13, 2007 (LS)

**DISTORTING THE GOSPEL WHEN THE BRIDE IS ATTACKED  
GENESIS 34.1-31**

Connection with previous: Jacob/Israel is to bring in the nations. How do they respond to their calling.

**1. THE HUMILIATION OF DINAH (1-4)**

***Dinah, the sister-bride (1):*** Theme - attack on the sister-bride (affinities with Sarah and Rebekah). Satan is seeking to seize the woman and raise up seed for himself.

Dinah is the “daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob.”(1) This makes Dinah the full-blooded sister of Levi and Simeon, the brothers who will take vengeance later on. (2) She is the daughter of the first-born sister, Leah. Prepared for *replacement* of the firstborn again (cp. Rachel replacing Leah).

Dinah’s going out to see the daughters of the land is not intimidated as being wrong. *Seeing* language may indeed indicate that she is evaluating things.

***The sons of men and the daughters of God (2-4):*** Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, one of the tribes in the land of Canaan, a descendant of Canaan, sees her. Language from here is reminiscent of ch. 6 (only reversed this time): the sons of God *saw* the daughters of men and they *took* them indiscriminately.

Shechem “humiliates” her. This does seem to indicate that this is a rape, not a complicit act.

Shechem is the prince of the land. He is the leader of the tribe of Canaanites called the Hivites. This seems to indicate that this is pretty characteristic of the people of the land. He is their representative.

Shechem is strongly attracted to Dinah. The phrase is more literally, “his soul clung to her.” This is the same type of language used in 2.24 to speak about a man leaving father and mother and “cleaving” to his wife. He “spoke to her heart;” i.e., working to win her affections.

**2. THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH JACOB AND HIS SONS (5-12)**

***The anger of the sister-bride’s protectors (5-7): defiled*** - ceremonial defilement elsewhere in Scripture. Only context used in Gen. Here it is used 3x. (This does not mean that Dinah was to blame for the rape. It simply means that she came in contact with death and she became unclean. You see, elsewhere, esp. in Lev., a person becomes unclean when he touches a dead body, has a flow of blood, eat an unclean/defiled animal, etc.)

Shechem is unclean and has come into intimate contact with Dinah. This has made Dinah unclean. This is not an irreversible condition. It can be remedied.

Jacob waits for her brothers, who are Dinah’s protectors. Jacob has some responsibility, but it is joined with his sons. Brothers negotiate marriages (cp. Abraham & Sarah with Pharaoh & Abimelech; Laban negotiates Rebekah’s marriage, etc.)

Brothers are indignant because Shechem had done a disgraceful thing *in Israel*, something which ought not to be done.

Israel = not merely the man but the people. This is the seed form of the whole nation. This was the people set apart from all the peoples of the world. This was the people who were named at Peniel and given a special calling to the peoples of the world.

What is done here is done as *Israel*, as that people whom God set apart for this special vocation.

The morality of what was done by Shechem is not left in doubt. Shechem is no innocent party. What he did was reprehensible. But he was a Canaanite. And being a prince of the Canaanites, this was probably characteristics of the Canaanites. This kind of behavior cannot be mixed with Israel.

***The temptation for intermarriage (8-12):*** For Shechem to marry Dinah would create an alliance between the two peoples. The two would become one and thus be able to intermarry, etc.

Please remember that Jacob has bought land and built an altar. God has called him to be separate. This doesn’t mean that he can’t

have any interaction at all, but it does mean that there are boundaries. Intermarriage (w/o conversion) is off-limits.

Shechem will pay any amount of *mohar* (trans. “dowry” in NKJ) and give a gift to the family as well. We have run across this *mohar* several times in Genesis. This is money given to the bride for her security in case something goes terribly wrong with the marriage; e.g., death, divorce, etc.

### 3. THE CONVERSION OF THE HIVITES (13-24)

**Preaching the gospel to the Hivites (13-17):** Requirement for marriage: circumcision of all male Hivites. Both sides understood that this was a religious rite and not simply a physical procedure. Cf. Gen 17

The Hivites must convert and submit to the God of Israel in order for there to be this intimate of a relationship between them.

Understand, they could do all sorts of business and trade with uncircumcised people. Later in the history of Israel, people who were outside of Israel could participate in particular sacrifices and feasts with Israel (cf. Num 15.11ff.). But to marry into Israel was to take upon oneself/one’s people the mission of Israel and included (of course) worship of the God of Israel.

This vocation which was at the heart of this covenant was marked by circumcision. These people were “cut off” from the world for the world. That is, circumcision was *unto life or for the purpose of bringing life to the world*.

The sons of Jacob spoke *deceitfully*. Not the same as the deceit of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Hebrew midwives, or Rahab. This was not to save life in loyalty to YHWH but to abuse the faith for personal vengeance.

v. 13 and *defilement*. There are two ways to deal with this type of defilement: (1) cleansing and thus removal of the defilement (which circumcision would accomplish) or (2) total annihilation (holy war and everything devoted to destruction). If Shechem and the Hivites agreed to circumcision that would eliminate the second possibility.

Options for marriage (Deut 22.28-29; Exod 22.16): (a) make Shechem pay the *mohar* and refuse the marriage or (b) take the money and allow the marriage. (These laws were probably already in practice before they were codified here.)

**The Hivites convert (18-24):** Shechem and Hamor are circumcised and convince their city to do the same.

He tells the men of the city that all of the things that belong to Israel and his children will be theirs. Maybe he is saying that they will be able to participate in the blessing of Israel, maybe he is saying that they will take everything that they have. Who really knows?

### 4. THE RETRIBUTION OF LEVI AND SIMEON (25-31)

**Murdering the new believers (25-26):** 3<sup>rd</sup> day - (1) pain most intense; (2) this is supposed to be the day of “life after death.” I.e., 3<sup>rd</sup> day of creation, resurrection. Died in circumcision, now to be raised. Instead the guardians of the covenant kill them.

Now some might want to speculate at this point about whether or not the Hivites had a “heart change.” While they certainly needed to grow into their new faith and believe God, that is not what is emphasized and is not what is of foremost importance here. They have submitted themselves to circumcision. The sons of Jacob were to treat them as having dealt with the defilement that they brought to Israel. It has been handled in a proper way.

**Plundering their brothers (27-29):** If annihilation were an option, then no plunder should have been taken (cp Josh 6-7). All things were to be destroyed. But this is not what Simeon and Levi do.

The point of this is that they were really not concerned about cleansing the defilement. They were out for personal vengeance and they used the gospel message as a pretext for their personal revenge.

**Israel, a savor of death (30-31):** Cp. 2 Cor 2.14-16; Jacob is supposed to be a savor of life, but now he stinks.

Simeon and Levi must be replaced in their positions in the family because of this: Gen 49.5-7. They do repent and play important roles: Levi, priestly tribe; Simeon is incorporated into Judah (cf. Josh 19.1, 9; cf. also Jdgs 1.3, 17).

(1) Using religious pretext for personal vengeance is abominable.

(2) We are called to smell right before the world.