

The Stay at Shechem

Genesis 34:1-31

I. THE CAUSES FOR THE BLOODSHED (Genesis 34:1-5, 7, 13, 27)

A. Bad Passion

1. This immoral act was an act of passion on the part of Shechem and was the chief cause of the massacre.
2. As we have already well established in our study of the book of Genesis sin will take you further than you ever thought you would go.
3. Had this passion been kept moral, no massacre would have occurred.
4. The intimacy was forced—*“He took her, and lay with her, and defiled her” (Genesis 34:1)*. The wording tells us exactly what we need to know to determine the kind of act we are dealing with. *“He took her”* suggests that he forced her, and the word *“defiled”* really makes the case how far he went, it was rape.
5. The intimacy was filthy—*“Defiled” (Genesis 34:1)*. This word defined means to be made unclean or polluted. Three times when this word is mentioned in this chapter it is spoken of as uncleanness. Immorality is filthy.
6. The intimacy was foolish—*“Wrought folly in Israel” (Genesis 34:7)*. Sexual immorality is described in this chapter as folly. Understand that such immorality is always folly as it not only hurts those directly involved, but those indirectly involved. It defiles a land, it hurts future generations in many cases, etc.
 - a. Moses called such actions *“folly”* (Deuteronomy 22:21)
 - b. It is called *“folly”* twice in the book of Judges (Judges 19:23; Judges 20:6).
 - c. Tamar told Amnon that if he committed such an act with her that *“thou shalt be as one of the fools of Israel” (2 Samuel 13:13)*.
 - d. The simple and fool are connected in the book of Proverbs (Proverbs 1:32; Proverbs 8:5), the simple are warned of such sinful conduct (Proverbs 7:4-27) and are warned that if such conduct is committed it is done so against one’s own flesh (see Proverbs 6:32).

7. This intimacy was forbidden—“*Which thing ought not to be done*” (Genesis 34:7). God has forbidden sex outside of marriage.

B. Bad Person

1. Shechem was simply a bad man. A good man does not do such an act.
2. Some of the things mentioned in scripture of Shechem gives us an instructive picture of the work of sin.
 - a. His appeal—
 - (1) He had position – he was a member of the ruling family (Genesis 34:2)
 - (2) He was popular – he was highly esteemed of his position. Note: Sin likes to be attractive for it makes it that much more appealing.
 - b. His adulteration— She was “*defiled*” by Shechem (Genesis 34:5, 13, 27)
 - (1) Shechem defiled Dinah by his relations with her.
 - (2) Such is the course of sin, it only debases those that it touches. It never cleans up character, rather it corrupts it (James 1:15).
 - c. His affection— Time and time again the scripture speaks of his affection of Dinah.
 - (1) “*His soul clave unto Dinah*” (Genesis 34:3)
 - (2) “*He loved the damsel*” (Genesis 34:3)
 - (3) “*Longeth for your daughter*” (Genesis 34:8)
 - (4) “*He had delight in Jacob’s daughter*” (Genesis 34:19)
 - (5) Note: Sin, like Shechem, wants you to believe it is so loving and caring when all the time it is ruining you.
 - d. His articulation— “*He... spake kindly unto the damsel*” (Genesis 34:3)
 - (1) He spoke kindly to Dinah but did not treat her kindly. Beware the smooth, sweet-talking of sin.
 - (2) The adulteress is one whose “*mouth is smoother than oil*” (Proverbs 5:3); “*But her end is as wormwood*” (Proverbs 5:4). Sin beguiles with the tongue.
 - e. His aggressiveness— “*He took her... Get me this damsel to wife*” (Genesis 34:2, 4).
 - (1) Shechem was forceful in his conduct.
 - (2) Sin does not play games; it is aggressive. Therefore, to fight sin effectively, you must fight it earnestly.

C. Bad Place— “*The Land*”

1. Simply put, Shechem was not where Jacob should have been. God wanted him and his family in Bethel.
2. If Jacob had obeyed God’s command and moved to Bethel (see Genesis 31:13), as he will be exhorted again to do so after this evil occurrence, he

could have avoided all of this. Thus, it is in many Christians' life and it is found out too late.

D. Bad Path— *“Dinah the daughter of Leah... went out to see the daughters of the land.”*

1. Dinah's path was another cause of the massacre. She went out to see the daughters of the land. In this we see a great picture of the young people of Christian homes today, they get intrigued by the things of the world and think they are “missing out.”
2. She yielded to the tug of the things of the land (of the world), unfortunately, she learned too late that when you lie down with the world you will get dirty.
3. Separation, while not popular, is necessary if you desire to live a pure life for the Lord. Lack of separation will bring a ruined character.

E. Bad Parents

1. The parents of Shechem gave him no moral compass by which to live.
2. It also seems that Jacob and Leah failed Dinah in not restricting her; Dinah did what she pleased.
3. Such is true with parents today... a child left to themselves will bring parents to shame (Proverbs 29:15).
4. Their leniency cost them the virtue of their children.

F. Bad Prince

1. Bad government will always produce evil.
2. Hamor, the prince and father of Shechem, shows no remorse or unfavourable feelings toward Shechem's actions.
3. He makes no apology to Jacob or his sons for his son's conduct.
4. Hamor's attitude is classic of the world's governments today. Their position today toward sin is the turning of a blind eye, especially when a profit can be made of it (i.e., state lotteries, gambling houses, alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, etc.).

II. THE CRAFTINESS FOR THE BLOODSHED (Genesis 34:6-24)

A. The Rage for the Craftiness (Genesis 34:7)

1. *“The sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth.” (Genesis 34:7)*
 - a. The brothers of Dinah were extremely upset over what Shechem had done to their sister Dinah. The word “grieved” and “wroth” indicate this fact.

- b. The rage however was not so much about virtue as it was about vindication. The act was an embarrassment to the family. The brothers were not on a campaign of righteousness; as later they would sell Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37:28), Rueben was immoral with one of his father's handmaids (Genesis 35:22), and Judah was immoral with his dead son's widow (Genesis 38:6-26).
- c. These brothers obvious rage was because it was their sister who was defiled, and thus it was a reproach unto them. They were more concerned about their honour than they were about holiness. Thus is the way of mankind now, man can show great indignation against evil, but it's not necessarily because it is evil but because it has caused them a loss of gain or glory.

B. The Request Inspiring the Craftiness (Genesis 34:8, 9, 12)

- 1. The request for Shechem to marry Dinah inspired the sons of Jacob regarding how they scheme in tricking Shechemites for slaughter.
- 2. This request on the part of the Shechemites was wrong on several fronts.
 - a. It was an unhindered request (Genesis 34:4, 6) – *“Shechem spake unto his father Hamor; saying, Get me this damsel to wife ...”*
 - (1) Shechem's father did not hinder or restrain the request.
 - (2) Practically, his father had never told him “no.”
 - b. It was an unholy request (Genesis 34:8, 9)
 - (1) This request was unholy as it urged God's people to marry worldlings.
 - (2) Note: Abraham had forbidden Isaac a Canaanite bride.
 - (3) For the NT Christian today, we are instructed to not be yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14).
 - c. It was an unsparing request (Genesis 34:12)
 - (1) Shechem was very promising, he was willing to give any kind of dowry for Dinah.
 - (2) Just like Shechem, sin is always full of promises for great gain if we will do as it says (James 1:15), however, sin never tells you about all the victims it has taken down in the process or the pollution involved in sinning.
 - d. It was an unblushing request
 - (1) There was absolutely no evidence of shame in Shechem or Hamor for the despicable act.
 - (2) Like the Israelites later, *“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush”* (Jeremiah 6:15); *“thou hast a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed”* (Jeremiah 3:3).

- (3) It is bad enough to have committed the act, but then to show no shame, this tells just how bad the heart has turned from the things of God (see Jeremiah 5:3; Zechariah 7:11-12).

C. The Requirement in the Craftiness (Genesis 34:13, 15, 18)

1. The corruption in the requirement
 - a. *“The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully” (Genesis 34:13).*
 - b. The answer that the sons of Jacob gave Shechem and Hamor was one full of craftiness.
 - c. They feigned acceptance with a requirement of circumcision.
2. The completeness of the requirement
 - a. *“Every male of you be circumcised” (Genesis 34:15).*
 - b. Circumcision not only was required for Shechem, but for all the males of the Shechemites.
 - c. As we will see later, this was necessary if the sons of Jacob were to bring about a great massacre of the Shechemites.
3. The contentment with the requirement
 - a. *“Their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor’s son” (Genesis 34:18).*
 - b. Those who have given themselves to sin and who condone sin will be deceived with sin. They will rejoice in that which will kill them (i.e., alcohol, drugs, fornication, adultery, etc.) (see Proverbs 7:23).

D. The Ratifying in the Craftiness (Genesis 34:19, 20, 23, 24)

1. The assembly for the ratifying
 - a. *“Came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city” (Genesis 34:20).*
 - b. The request had to be ratified by all the men of the city.
 - c. So Hamor and Shechem made that their next move in bringing this requirement to fruition.
 - d. At the *“gate”* official business was transpired.
2. The advocates for the ratifying
 - a. Hamor represented the government as he was the *“prince.”*
 - b. Governments often advocate programs which will destroy their people.
3. The avarice for the ratifying
 - a. *“Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us” (Genesis 34:23).*
 - b. The bottom line in advocating circumcision was greed.

- c. Hamor and Shechem saw profit as the big result in sanctioning circumcision for the male population. But their greed resulted in the annihilation of the populace.
4. The action in the ratifying
 - a. *“The you man [Shechem] deferred not to do the thing” (Genesis 34:19). “Every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city” (Genesis 34:24).*
 - b. There was considerable swiftness in conforming to the requirement of circumcision. Note: when someone pressures you into making a hasty (quick) decision it more times than not is for the wrong thing.
 - c. Note: Sin always places you on the fast track in a downward spiral to degradation and destruction. That is why we must deal with sin early.

III. THE CASUALTIES IN THE BLOODSHED (Genesis 34:25-31)

A. The Slayers of the Casualties (Genesis 34:25)

1. Done at a most susceptible time (Genesis 34:25a)
2. Simeon and Levi (Genesis 34:25b)
 - a. Simeon and Levi, full brothers of Dinah, their mother being Leah.
 - b. This evil massacre by Simeon and Levi was remembered later by Jacob when he blessed and prophesied of his sons years later upon his deathbed (Genesis 49:5-7).

B. The Slain in the Casualties (Genesis 34:25)

C. The Saved from the Casualties (Genesis 34:26)

1. *“They... took Dinah out of Shechem’s house.”*
2. This wording is interesting in that from a practical standpoint one sees that sin will take away your freedom and take you captive.
3. Sin will tell you that being a Christian takes away your freedom, however, nothing could be further from the truth, it is this world, the devil, and sin that takes you captive and makes you a prisoner, taking away your freedom (Romans 8:2; Galatians 3:28; Galatians 5:1).

D. The Spoil from the Casualties (Genesis 34:27-29)

1. The Shechemites had planned to take the wealth of the family of Jacob (Genesis 34:23), however, it was the Shechemites that instead lost everything that they had.
2. *“Those who unjustly grasp at that which is another’s justly lose that which is their own”¹*

¹ Analytical Bible Expositor, vol. 1, Genesis to Exodus, John G. Butler, pg. 333

3. This truth does not acquit the sons of Jacob, but it does show the truth what happens to those that are greedy of gain.
4. The participants in the spoiling— *“The sons of Jacob... spoiled the city”* (Genesis 34:27)
 - a. While it was Simeon and Levi that slew the people, it was all the sons of Jacob that spoiled the city of its goods.
 - b. So, while the other sons were not guilty of bloodshed, they were still guilty of profiting from the crime. Therefore, they were accessories to the crime.
5. The plentifulness in the spoiling—*“They took... all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives”* (Genesis 34:28, 29).
 - a. The text indicates that it was a complete spoiling of the city.
 - b. The children and wives became servants.

IV. THE COMMENTS ABOUT THE BLOODSHED (Genesis 34:30-31)

A. The Complaint Over the Bloodshed (Genesis 34:30)

1. The character of the complaint
 - a. The statement—*“Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me.”* (Genesis 34:30a).
 - b. Jacob was hypocritical in that he blamed his sons for his trouble.
 - c. In reality, If Jacob had been obedient to the Lord, none of this would have happened.
2. The concerns in the complaint (Genesis 34:30b)
 - a. Jacob voiced two major concerns in verse 30.
 - b. The concerns that Jacob voiced said much of his character in the situation.
 - (1) His concern of **honour**— He voiced his concern over the loss of honour—he would *“stink.”* Note: People will complain about the loss of honour quicker than they will over the loss of holiness.
 - (2) His concern of **harm**—He voiced his concern of harm. Jacob feared that the Canaanites would harm him. He was more concerned about physical harm than moral harm.

B. The Condoning of the Bloodshed (Genesis 34:31)

1. Levi and Simeon said, *“Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?”*
2. This response rebuked Jacob for being more concerned about his honour and harm than Dinah’s holiness, but did not justify their bloody massacre.