

The Dinah Fiasco 10-28-07

Genesis 34

You can't help but be amazed at the Bible's honesty to present the historical past. If it was an effort to create a religion from fabricated stories, who would make their founding fathers murderers and tell of the rape of their sister? This is man uncensored. This is our dark heart in the full light of honest history. This is our lust, our deceitfulness, and our vengeance unmasked. (Jeremiah 17:9) It is the natural outworking of the descendents of fallen ancestors who refused the goodness of God and chose to rebel. (Romans 5:12) In other words, the story is consistent with the fall of man in Genesis 3. In fact, if the Bible told any other story, if it was full of perfect super-heroes, then it would be inconsistent. In all these Genesis stories of all these different people, we only had one super-hero so far, Enoch. (Genesis 5:24) The surprising thing is that there are only a few verses on him.

We should not be shocked when in our day we hear the ugly details of horrific crimes against children. When men incite their followers to strap bombs on their bodies surrounded with nails and walk into crowded shopping areas and kill themselves and as many innocent people as possible, it is merely the darkness of fallen man's heart expressing itself. (Jeremiah 17:9) Selfishness, hatred, greed, and lust should be expected from any soul that has not been transformed by saving grace of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul calls it the works of the flesh, or sinful nature. (Galatians 5:19)

My wife and I were discussing our disappointment with the way some believers were behaving, then we related it to the unredeemed. If people who know the saving work of Jesus can act out of selfish interest, why would we expect anything else from those who don't know His forgiveness and grace? Try as we may to cover and discipline our heart, only the work of Jesus can transform it! (Romans 13:14) Even when transformed, the old is ever waiting to pull itself off the cross and reassert its role as master over our thoughts and actions. (2Peter 2:22) Someone has said that the problem with living sacrifices is they have a tendency to climb off the altar. This story is a clear picture of man without God.

It begins with Jacob, who is now Israel, moving to Shechem. It is somewhat reminiscent of Lot pitching his tent near Sodom (Genesis 13:12), and even more so of Abraham moving near Gerar (Genesis 20:1), which was later repeated by Isaac (Genesis 26:1). All of these moves were no doubt made for purposes of trade, but all resulted in the compromise of their testimony. Each told the world that even if a person is in a relationship with God, he or she is still weak and fallible. (1Corinthians 10:12)

¹ Now Dinah, the daughter Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land. This young lady wanted to be with other girls her age and talk about what young ladies talk about. We don't know if she sneaked out of

Commented [notes1]: 9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Commented [notes2]: 12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--

Commented [notes3]: 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

Commented [notes4]: 9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Commented [notes5]: 19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

Commented [notes6]: 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Commented [notes7]: 22 Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."

Commented [notes8]: 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.

Commented [notes9]: 1 Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar,

Commented [notes10]: 1 Now there was a famine in the land--besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time--and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar.

Commented [notes11]: 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

camp or had permission, but she went on her own. The wording reminds us of a teenager looking for trouble.

It may have been the cause and effect of this story that resulted later in an Israelite custom to not allow young women to be alone with a male. It is certainly a struggle for parents today to know how much freedom to give their children. We know the dangers that lurk in the world and we want to protect them, but neither do we want to stifle them and make them completely dependent on us. Each child is unique, and my opinion is that each one has to have rules that fit their tendencies, weaknesses and strengths. Parents need to be led by the Spirit and to ask God for wisdom and discernment. (James 1:5)

² *When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of that area, saw her, he took her and violated her.* This guy reminds me of Ude and Kuse Hussein. He was a spoiled prince with unbridled passions. He saw what he wanted and took it. Rape is such an ugly crime. It devalues human life nearly to the extent that murder does. It affects the victim for the rest of their life. The one that commits the crime takes a human being as an object of satisfaction, instead of as an eternal soul. The text really tells us nothing about Dinah's resistance or willingness. Without the parents consent to marriage it was still violating her. Quite a difference from the world's perspective today!

³ *His heart was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her.* After he violated her, he decided he wanted her as his wife. That is rarely the case. More often than not, they end up despising the one they took advantage of as was the case with Amnon. (2Samuel 13:15) Shechem must have seen something in Dinah that he had not seen in other girls and decided he wanted her for his own. It would also make an alliance with the Isaac's clan and add to the town's strength and financial base, as we'll see him argue for later.

Shechem asked his father Hamor to arrange a marriage. ⁷ *Now Jacob's sons had come in from the fields as soon as they heard what had happened. They were filled with grief and fury, because Shechem had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter--a thing that should not be done.* Not only was this a violation of their sister, but it was a disgrace to the family. It was treating them with the ultimate lack of respect. The family of Shechem asked for the favor of marrying Dinah to their son and in effect joining the two families.

⁹ *Intermarry with us; give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves.* ¹⁰ *You can settle among us; the land is open to you. Live in it, trade in it, and acquire property in it.* Why did he say "your daughters"? Jacob only had one daughter. He was trying to spin the violation into a positive thing. If the city could provide brides for the sons of Jacob, the two clans would become one. They could buy property and settle down. Sounds great, only it all started with their daughter being violated. It's more like buying their way out of a crime. Can

Commented [notes12]: 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Commented [notes13]: 15 Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"

you pay for what was done to Dinah? Isn't that what we call prostitution? Can you pay your way out the insult to the parents?

¹¹ Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and I will give you whatever you ask. ¹² Make the price for the bride and the gift I am to bring as great as you like, and I'll pay whatever you ask me. Only give me the girl as my wife." Shechem was really smitten, or perhaps we could say he was really in hot water. He had done something that could have incited a war and he wanted to buy his way out of it with his dad's money. Money does not solve all problems, nor can it buy security. (Psalm 49:5-9)

¹³ Because their sister Dinah had been defiled, Jacob's sons replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor. They made an issue out of their tribes custom of circumcision, saying that the only way they could join clans is if the men of Shechem were all circumcised. All the while, they were planning to attack them in their moment of weakness as retribution for what was done to their sister and the insult to their family. They added a closing threat to clinch the deal. ¹⁷ But if you will not agree to be circumcised, we'll take our sister and go." Accept the deal or we leave with Dinah.

Shechem immediately made the pitch to the men of the city. He appealed to them on the basis of greed. If they would just be circumcised the clans would be one and "won't their livestock, their property and all their other animals become ours?" Shechem was able to convince the men of the city to cooperate. One man's desire was presented with such political rhetoric that the whole town was convinced. (1Timothy 6:10)

I'm continually amazed at how contemporary these 4000-year-old stories are. Are we not dealing with the same problem today? Politicians are still promising us everything our greedy hearts could desire and implying that someone else will foot the bill. In the end, many of them are only after the power and prestige their position affords them. They know they can't deliver on what they promise, but they also know what we love to hear. (2Timothy 4:3) We make the sacrifice and they get what they want. Certainly that is not true of all politicians, but it is true of way too many. God bless the godly leaders who really have righteousness and the interests of the people at heart.

²⁴ All the men who went out of the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male in the city was circumcised. ²⁵ Three days later, while all of them were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male. The deceit of the house of Laban continues to sow destruction. Because they were too small in number to demand punishment for the crime against their sister, they deceived the leaders into an agreement that gave them the upper hand. They broke their promise and slaughtered the men of the city. (Proverbs 6:34-35) They murdered the innocent only because of a loose association with the guilty party.

Commented [notes14]: 5 Why should I fear when evil days come, when wicked deceivers surround me--
6 those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches?
7 No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him--
8 the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough--
9 that he should live on forever and not see decay.

Commented [notes15]: 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Commented [notes16]: 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

Commented [notes17]: 34 for jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.
35 He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse the bribe, however great it is.

Where was Jacob during the agreement? It seems like the sons orchestrated it. Was he really willing to combine clans? Wasn't this contrary to the call on the family to be a separated people? Surely this was a common city of the time filled with idolatry. Jacob didn't seem to be watching his daughter or sons closely enough, and is uncertain about how God was going to make them into a great nation. Though he recognized the true God and knew that blessing came from Him, he was still making decisions without looking to God. (Psalm 31:3)

Commented [notes18]: 3 Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

²⁸ They seized their flocks and herds and donkeys and everything else of theirs in the city and out in the fields. ²⁹ They carried off all their wealth and all their women and children, taking as plunder everything in the houses. After the murder of the men of the city, the other sons of Jacob joined in plundering the city of everything of value. It was ironic that those who were talked into entering into the agreement out of greed were the ones who were dead and lost everything. Jacob's sons had shown themselves to be deceitful thieves executing vigilante justice in a way that was excessively brutal and unjust. These are the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Job 20:5)

Commented [notes19]: 5 that the mirth of the wicked is brief, the joy of the godless lasts but a moment.

In our study of the Book of Acts on Wednesday nights, we have just covered the sermon of Stephen. He was accused of speaking against the Law. Genesis is one of the books of the Law. He used the stories right out of the Law to show the Sanhedrin that their ancestors were consistent in rejecting God's will and ways. His point was the same one Jesus made, "they always resisted the Holy Spirit". (Acts 7:51) The Holy Spirit would have restrained Dinah's brothers from that slaughter, but they resisted Him. Though we haven't murdered anyone, we have all resisted the Holy Spirit.

Commented [notes20]: 51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

It isn't just the condition of the Jewish people; it's the condition of mankind. Vengeance and greed are two of the most common crippling agents known to man. (Ezekiel 25:15; Matthew 23:25) Whether it is murder or the slander of someone you think deserves justice, in the end the problem is resisting the Holy Spirit. God has not given you or me authority to execute justice upon individuals. He gives that authority to governments. (1Peter 2:13-14) We try to get around it with slander. If we can't kill the person, we think we will ruin their reputation, and so Jesus equated slander with murder. (Matthew 5:21-22) God declares that vengeance belongs to Him. He will repay. (Hebrews 10:30) He is the only One that can do so justly. Man will always be too lenient or too severe. Leave it to God.

Commented [notes21]: 15 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and took revenge with malice in their hearts, and with ancient hostility sought to destroy Judah,

Commented [notes22]: 25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Commented [notes23]: 13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land. We are few in number, and if they join forces against me and attack me, I and my household will be destroyed." Jacob warned his sons that they should have considered that other people might execute justice upon them. It is a statement that ignores the promises of God, but it may be that he was trying to tell them that they should have feared reaping what they had sowed. (Proverbs

Commented [notes24]: 21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Commented [notes25]: 30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." [

22:8) He rebuked them for their actions, which he wouldn't have had to do had he intervened in the negotiations and refused to compromise.

Commented [notes26]: He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

³¹ *But they replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"* Justification for sin only reveals our own distorted sense of right and wrong. Shechem offered to pay for his crime. That is tantamount to prostitution. Killing all the men of the village was not warranted; that was mass murder. Endangering the lives of the whole clan was thoughtless and rash. Certainly Shechem was guilty, but because they could do nothing about it except trust God to exact justice, so they justified the massacre. (Proverbs 12:15)

Commented [notes27]: 15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

You may have heard people say, "I guess we'll just have to trust the Lord." Oh, my goodness is it that bad? When there is no righteous recourse that the Lord directs you to, yes, you do have to leave it in God's hands. We say it like it is almost hopeless. That shows how little faith we have. We expect God to make us reap what we have sown, but we don't expect God to cause those who have sown harm into our lives to reap the same. God is just. Trusting in the Lord is the first thing we should do. We should say it with confident assurance. (Psalm 125:1)

Commented [notes28]: 1 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.

The man that showed us how to do this, how to refrain from resisting the Holy Spirit was Jesus. Isaiah prophesied of Him, ¹⁸ *"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.* Matthew 12:18-20 In the face of injustice and adversity, He trusted His father. He asked for forgiveness for those who had wronged Him. (Luke 23:34) He is the only man that ever lived a life in complete harmony with the Holy Spirit. He is the only One to never act out of vengeance or greed. (Acts 7:52)

Commented [notes29]: 34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Commented [notes30]: 52 Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him--

The patriarchs show us again and again that we need a Savior. The best of men resist the Spirit of God. The best of men have desires for vengeance, selfishness, moments of fear and greed. Only the God-man Jesus Christ was able to live a perfect life and yet received the justice we deserve that we might have peace with God. (Romans 5:1) He offers His righteousness to us in exchange for our sins so that we might have a home in heaven.

Commented [notes31]: 1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

As we look at the patriarchs, I hope none of us are saying, "Oh my, look how evil they were." Instead, we should be saying, "Look how evil we are." We should be seeing our urgent need of a Savior, because we, too, resist the Holy Spirit. For those who have received Jesus, we should be thanking God for the covering of righteousness that Jesus is to us. That is what this patriarchal family is really all about. Through them, the Messiah was coming to rescue us from the evil in our own hearts.