

Jacob Learned Shechem Had Raped Dinah

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to develop true fellowship with the Father. Jacob built his first recorded altar and had a desire to really make the Lord his God. However, in this topic we will see what happened in the family of Jacob while they were located near the city of Shechem.

Genesis 34:1-4 says, “Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, ‘Get me this young woman as a wife.’” Dinah had been born to Leah, in addition to the six sons the Lord had given to her. One day, she decided to go and get acquainted with some of the young women from the city of Shechem. However, that decision had serious consequences for Dinah and for her entire family.

Jacob had bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the children of Hamor. Genesis 33:19 says, “And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money.” The son of Hamor was named Shechem. He was considered the prince of the country. He saw Dinah, took her and violated her. The word translated “took” means *to take or to seize*. The word translated “violated” means *to seize, to afflict or to defile*. The word is used twice, in Exodus 22:22-24, where we read, “You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, *and* they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” In these verses, we see that the word afflict is used both times. As a result, the words used make it very clear that he took her by force and raped her.

However, in the process of raping her, he was strongly attracted to her and decided he would like to marry her. In fact, we see that he fell in love with her, and even spoke tenderly to her. Then, he told his father, “‘Get me this young woman as a wife.’” Two different words are translated “young woman” in verses three and four. The word used in verse 3 is also used in 2 Kings 5:2, where we read, “And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman’s wife.” Shechem used a different word when he talked to his father as he used a word that means a girl of marriageable age. This may indicate that Dinah was just barely the marriageable age that was allowed in that culture.

Genesis 34:5-10 says, “And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard *it*; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, a thing which ought not to be done. But Hamor spoke with them, saying, ‘The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and

take our daughters to yourselves. So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it.” In these verses, we see the reaction of the family of Jacob to the rape of their daughter and sister. Jacob heard about what had happened to his daughter while his sons were out with the livestock in the field. As a result, he did not say or do anything until he could talk with his sons.

Hamor went to speak to Jacob because of the desire of his son to marry the daughter of Jacob. In the meantime, the brothers of Dinah came in from the field when they heard about what had happened to Dinah. We see that four words or phrases described what they thought and felt. The first word is grieved. This word speaks of physical pain or emotional sorrow. This is the word that was used of God, in Genesis 6:6, where we read, “And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” In this verse, we see that the sins of mankind caused deep sorrow in the heart of God. This was the kind of sorrow the brothers experienced that day. Second, the brothers were very angry. The word translated “very” means *very, exceedingly or greatly*. The word translated “angry” means *to stir up hot anger*. This is the word that is used, in Genesis 31:36, where we read, “Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: ‘What *is* my trespass? What *is* my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me?’” Jacob was certainly very angry since it caused him to rebuke his father-in-law. That was the kind of anger stirred up in the brothers.

Third, we read that he had done a “disgraceful thing”. This same word is used when Ammon committed premeditated rape, in 2 Samuel 13. In 2 Samuel 13:12-14, we read, “But she answered him, ‘No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you.’ However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.” This act brought great shame on Tamar but it made a fool of Ammon because it was so disgraceful. Fourth, they described what Shechem had done as “a thing which ought not to be done.” The four words and phrases together show that the brothers were extremely upset.

Meanwhile, Hamor had no understanding of the anger of the brothers. He was trying to convince them of all of the advantages of allowing his son to marry Dinah. He said that his son longed for their daughter and sister. He said that they could live together and make marriages with one another. He said that they could live in the land and trade in it and acquire possessions for themselves. We see that Hamor was doing his best to make a marriage sound good to Jacob and his sons. In contrast, Hamor and Shechem told the men of the city, in Genesis 34:23, “‘...*Will* not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs *be* ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.’” However, the sons of Jacob were not convinced.

As a result, Shechem began to speak for himself. Genesis 34:11-17 says, “Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, ‘Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife.’ But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. And they said to them, ‘We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that *would be* a reproach to us. But on this *condition* we will consent to you: If you will become as we *are*, if

every male of you is circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone.” Here, we see that after Hamor spoke, Shechem then told them what he would do to marry their sister. Shechem offered to give whatever the father and brothers asked. The brothers were not deceived by the words of Hamor and Shechem. They were filled with anger and wanted to judge the city for what Shechem had done to their sister.

We see that the sons of Jacob spoke deceitfully. Simeon and Levi were probably the two who spoke for the rest of the family. The brothers said that they could not allow their sister to be married to someone who was uncircumcised. They said that the only way they would allow their sister to marry Shechem was to get all of the men of the city to be circumcised so that the men of their city would be like Jacob and his sons. The word translated “reproach” means *to place shame or disgrace on a person or a group of people*. In Genesis 17:14, the Lord had told Abraham, “...And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.” The sons of Jacob twisted the meaning of circumcision so they could deceive both Shechem and Hamor to get them to convince the other men of the city to be circumcised.

In order to deceive Hamor and Shechem, the brothers promised that if all of the men of the city were circumcised, then they would agree to let Shechem marry their sister. Then, in the future, they would allow the men of that city to marry their daughters and they would also marry the young women of the city and take them as wives. The brothers said that only if the men of the city agreed to this requirement would they be willing to continue to live near their city and intermarry so that they would become one people. Then, the brothers also told the two men what would happen if the other men refused to be circumcised. They said if the men refused their request, they would take Dinah and leave that area. Shechem had promised to pay whatever the men requested in order to marry Dinah. He did not realize that the request would include more than just money. However, we will see in our next topic, that Hamor and Shechem did convince the men of the city to be circumcised so he could marry Dinah.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand and explain why the sons of Jacob were so angry. Such anger can often lead to revenge. Several hundred years later, in Deuteronomy 32:35a, Moses wrote, “Vengeance is Mine, and recompense...” That verse was not written yet so at least two of the brothers were ready to take immediate judgment not just on Shechem, but on that entire city. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain what happens when we act out of anger.