

**God's Refining Grace:
Disastrous Consequences of a Seemingly Small Compromise
Genesis 34
September 21, 2022**

As we return to our study of Genesis, we would agree that as we've studied the past 20 years of Jacob's life, we've witnessed highs and lows and many in-betweens.

The experiences that would be categorized as the highs would likely be:

- God's providence
- God's provision
- God's protection
- God's revelation

And as the lows we'd likely remember:

- The constant current of deceit both committed by and committed against Jacob.
- His 20 years of hard labor and changing wages under his deceitful uncle Laban.
- His unwanted marriage to Leah and the favoritism showed to Rachel.
- His running from Laban and the tremendous fear he experienced as he pondered his meeting with Esau after 20 years.

Genesis 33 was another high point as Jacob and his estranged brother reconciled. After reconciling with Esau God's promise to bring Jacob back to Canaan was fulfilled in Gen 33:18.

I. Displaced and Depraved Desire (1-4)

Verse 1 of the chapter is the nexus, or flashpoint, for all that transpires within the chapter. In verse 1 we're told that Dinah, the daughter of Leah went out to see the women of the land.

Outside of the city of Shechem where Jacob settled upon his return to Canaan and as we read here he bought a plot of land and erected an altar to commemorate a meaningful event in his life. The name that was given to this altar was God, the God of Israel, his new name. And as mentioned in our last study, the building of the altar was a good, religious thing to do.

Bethel was 20 miles away or a one-day journey from Shechem and some would ask, "Isn't that close enough?" But as we see Dinah going out to see the women of the land, the answer to the question is a definitive "No."

Verse 2 displays the disastrous consequences of the seemingly small compromise of Jacob's not settling in Bethel.

Verse 2 says that Shechem, the prince of the city, a member of the family from whom Jacob purchased land, saw Dinah, seized Dinah, lay with her, and humiliated her. The quick succession of the words displays the impulsiveness of Shechem's actions. Gen. 34:6, Ja. 1:14-15.

II. The Disturbing Aftermath (5-12)

In verses 5-12 what do the responses of Jacob, Hamor and Shechem, and Jacob's sons to Dinah's defilement reveal about them?

III. A Diabolical Response and Retribution (13-29)

In verses 13-17 what was diabolical about Jacob's sons' response to Hamor and Shechem's offer?

And just as Jacob's sons' response was diabolical, we next see Hamor and Shechem's deceit of their own people.

Notice that there is no mention of Shechem's assault of Dinah and their attempt to make amends for this assault via their negotiations with Jacob's sons. Also note that they appeal to the greed of the city leaders indicating that they will gain the wealth of Jacob and his clan.

In verses 25-29 we see the truth of Ja. 1:19-20 displayed.

We see great evil is being brought upon this city in response to a great evil that was done, which renders the question, how do we respond when a wrong is done to us? Matt. 6:12, Rom. 12:17-21.

IV. Displaced Priorities (30-31)

What is Jacob's focus in verse 30?

Note the sons' question – "Should *he* treat our sister like a prostitute?" The question is an acknowledgement that one was responsible for this act but how many lives were taken because of Shechem's act and the brothers' unbridled anger?

When something is displaced, it's means that something has been moved from its proper or usual place. What was missing and what has been moved from its proper place in the words of Jacob or his sons? Anything about God or His honor.

What are points of application that can be drawn from Genesis 34 by the first hearers and by us?