

Jacob's Reign as Patriarch

GENESIS 34 - 50

Opening Thoughts

- * Gen 34-35 marks Jacob's ascendancy to patriarch — arising from his return to the land and Isaac's death ...
- * Though Jacob's reign, his story is primarily recorded through the life and times of Joseph beginning in Gen 37 ...
- * Culminating in the account of Jacob's last days, family, blessing and death in Gen 48-50

Opening Thoughts

- * Chapters 34-35 begin the journey with a pitiful picture of “Worldliness ...”
 - ◆ Focusing first on it’s character — Gen 34
 - ◆ And then it’s cure — Gen 35
- * As we embark upon these two chapters, I want you to note the parallels with Lot
 - ◆ Jacob, like Lot, was drawn to the city ... Shechem
 - ◆ Like Lot, Jacob first settles on the outskirts of the city ... He camped before the city — Gen 33:18-20

Opening Thoughts

- ◆ Like Lot, what started as a commercial transaction (Lot for grazing lands, Jacob buying land) progressed to social interaction
 - Dinah goes to hang out with the “local gals”
- ◆ Like Lot, this led to a crisis ... Dinah’s defilement
- ◆ But here is where the story deviates from Lot — Jacob does not move into, nor become a part of the city as Lot did ...
 - Though the means was a bit dubious ... the slaughter of the city
- ◆ Instead we see God’s “intervention” and cure for worldliness in Gen 35

Opening Thoughts

👉 By way of implication at the outset then ...

* There are many reasons our hearts are drawn to worldliness — *Can you think of some?*

- ◆ Comfort — true Christianity is radically different
- ◆ Conformance — we long to be accepted
- ◆ Contentment — with the world's system ... to which John gives the corrective: "Do not love the world"

The Character Worldliness

GENESIS 34

Structure

- * The pernicious predicament - vv. 1-3
- * The perverted aftermath - vv. 4-7
- * The proposal proper - vv. 8-12
- * The pious "counsel" - vv. 13-17
- * The "pitch" and performance - vv. 18-24
- * The predators - vv. 25-29
- * The pity party - vv. 30-31

READ 341-3

Pernicious Predicament

- * Dinah is between 13-15 years old at this time
- * What are we to say or think of her actions?
 - ◆ Simply curious, or
 - ◆ Bummed she has no sisters to hang with (though likely she had, just not recorded), or
 - ◆ Being rebellious, or
 - ◆ Attracted to the men of Canaan

Pernicious Predicament

- * Whatever her motive, she is being drawn to the world as a “moth is drawn to the light” ...
 - ◆ Which is always the danger when we “flirt” with the world
- * Is Dinah to blame?
 - ◆ I'd say “yes” and “no” ... leaning towards “no”
- * Who is?
 - ◆ JACOB!!

Pernicious Predicament

- * How does Jacob fail Dinah?
 - ◆ He put her in harms way by his choice of “home”
 - ◆ He didn't adequately chaperone her
 - 👤 Parents poor choices and lack of engagement impact their children (Dinah first ... then Simeon, Levi, and Reuben)
- * What are we to make of Shechem?
 - ◆ I'd say bad ... and good
 - ◆ BAD: He is driven by unbridled lust ... and privilege
 - ◆ GOOD: Yet he has genuine and tender feelings for Dinah

Pernicious Predicament

- ◆ AT A MINIMUM ... he has his order of priority backwards and his actions are not a Biblical expression of love
- * What do his actions say about the Canaanites?
 - ◆ Their utter depravity — for which no remorse is expressed
- * The fact of her defilement is not unique in history ... though nevertheless reprehensible
- * The larger disappointment is that the world so easily accepts sin and depravity ... pointing to its wickedness

Pernicious Predicament

- * Before we leave these opening verses — I'm not convinced that Shechem "raped" Dinah
- * The word translated "by force" at the end of v. 2 is better translated as:
 - ◆ He lay with her and "he humbled her"
- * Combining this with the fact that Dinah remained at Shechem's house (cf v. 26) leads me to believe the Dinah was seduced by Shechem

Pernicious Predicament

- * This is no less shameful for Dinah — nor for the family ...
- * Nor does it justify Shechem's behavior, but ...
- * It is less damning — and maybe a more honest assessment of Shechem
- * Which v. 3 would seem to support by noting his genuine attraction to her and perhaps his manner of seduction (i.e. spoke tenderly to her)

Perverted Aftermath

- * In vv. 4-7 we get four different responses to Dinah's defilement
- * **First Shechem: What does v. 4 say about him?**
 - ◆ Disrespectful; Arrogant; Entitled
- * **Next Jacob: What does v. 5 say about him?**
 - ◆ Passive; Wimpy; Lack of any outrage
- * **Then Hamor: What about him?**
 - ◆ No sense of guilt at all ... Simply, "let's make a deal"

Perverted Aftermath

- * What's different about the brothers response?
 - ◆ They were the first to show any emotion or outrage
- * Their first response was **grief** — this emotion seems to have taken Dinah into account
- * Their second response was **anger** — this emotion taking either Jacob or the “corporate family” into account
- * Their third response was “**principled**” — demonstrating some sense of morality ... yet their later solution falls short

Perverted Aftermath

- * It is hard to know whether they viewed the offense individually — i.e. against Jacob — or in a broader “national” sense
- * I lean toward them having some sense of their “set apart” position w/r/t the world ...
- * Therefore understanding Shechem's sin as defiling the “nation of Israel” — i.e. the “corporate” entity
- * How would I support this from the text?
 - ◆ Disgraceful thing in (or “against”) **Israel** ... **the target**; By lying with (or “to lie with”) **Jacob's daughter** ... **the means**
 - ◆ Note the TWO DIFFERENT NAMES USED

READ 34:8-12

Proposal Proper

- * What is lacking in Hamor's opening gambit and proposal in general?
 - ◆ Any indication of wrong doing, guilt, or remorse for his son's actions
- * Marriage proposals for Dinah are proffered by father (Hamor) and son (Shechem)
- * What "angle" does Hamor take?
 - ◆ Influence or power ... Marry into the royal line

Proposal Proper

- ◆ Safe and permanent dwelling
- ◆ Free trade
- * What "angle" does Shechem take?
 - ◆ A financial settlement — Name your price, only don't withhold the girl from me!
- * Both father and son have no sense of spiritual matters — though in worldly terms their proposals are exceedingly generous

READ 34:15-17

Pious “Counter”

- * The brothers reject the proposal and counter with “piety” ... which we, the readers, are informed at the outset is not a genuine response
 - ◆ It's not a matter of money they say, rather it's a matter of covenant conviction
 - ◆ How “high-minded” they are — but the apple don't fall far from the tree!
- * What is the essential nature of their counter?
 - ◆ Unless you become “like us” we cannot give our sister to you in marriage

Pious “Counter”

- * What is fundamentally “flawed” with this offer?
 - ◆ True change is more than an external symbol
 - ◆ Additionally, they offer something that is not theirs to give — God made the covenant, and ...
 - ◆ A covenant once ratified cannot be changed
 - ◆ Therefore, there is no force in their offer
- * What would be a NT analogy to their offer?
 - ◆ Be baptized and you will be like us ...

Pious “Counter”

* How would that offer be misleading?

- ◆ Baptism apart from a true relationship with Christ is useless ...
- ◆ Changing nothing but the condition of your clothes

* The bottom line: There is nothing genuine about the offer
— It is wholly deceptive as the text will shortly reveal

* It is also anachronistic with v. 31 ... they would not allow their sister to be treated as a prostitute, but they showed no restraint in prostituting the sign of the covenant!!!

Pitch and Performance

* Verse 18 signals that the proposition is agreeable to both father and son ...

* Though likely for different reasons

- ◆ Hamor likely had visions to power & financial gain, while ...
- ◆ Shechem was just smitten with Dinah

* Shechem’s “not delaying” does not mean he submitted on the spot, but rather he did not delay to get the townsmen’s buy-in to the terms of the deal

Pitch and Performance

- * The final part of v. 19 leads us to believe that Shechem would succeed in his appeal owing to his prominence in Hamor's household
- * The appeal proceeds in three parts:
 - ◆ Part 1 conveys the terms of the deal - v. 21
 - ◆ Part 2 conveys the condition of acceptance - v. 22
 - ◆ Part 3 conveys the "incentives" of accepting - v. 23
- * Verse 24 records the ratification and execution

Pitch and Performance

- * What is interesting about the first part of v. 21?
 - ◆ Apparently Hamor & Shechem were fooled by the sincerity of the brothers and their offer
- * The terms include:
 - ◆ Dwell and trade in the land (owing to its sufficiency)
 - ◆ Intermarry between the clans
- * The condition is circumcision — we must become "like them" ... at least superficially

Pitch and Performance

- * The incentives appeal to their worldly greed — and expose Hamor's core motivation, namely ...
 - ♦ Won't we — being superior in number — subsume them and their "assets"
 - ♦ The Canaanites were interested in their property and intermarriage over any "spiritual relationship"
 - ♦ Which is always the way with the world — they may want our "stuff" ... but they don't want our God!
- * Apparently H&S's arguments were persuasive leading to their total acceptance and immediate execution

Predators

- * Well — clearly the brothers had no real interest in a relationship of ANY sort either
- * Owing to my belief that Shechem did not rape Dinah ... I find the events of these verses damning of the brothers versus being sympathetic to a view they were defending their sister's (and family) honor
- * Regardless of the Canaanite motives in agreeing to the deal ... they fully honored the terms

Predators

- * Simeon and Levi — on the other hand — perpetuate the family DNA of “deceitful dealings”
- * At the height of the Canaanites pain & incapacity, two of Dinah’s “blood brothers” (S & L) come upon the city “unawares” and massacre every male
- * They reclaim their sister — and depart
- * But that’s not the end of it ...

Predators

- * Their opportunistic brothers get in on the act by doing what?
 - ◆ They totally loot the city, taking ...
 - ◆ All the Canaanites material possessions — **BIG** (i.e. flocks) and **SMALL** (i.e. their household items)
 - ◆ All of their women and children — presumably to become slaves
 - ◆ They swept it clean like a cloud of locusts

Predators

- * Its hard for me to find anything sympathetic or excusable in the brothers actions
- * We see pre-meditated murder — followed by a total plundering of the city
- * Accordingly, Scripture offers no commentary — good or bad, perhaps trusting us to judge the deeds rightly
- * Add to this a completely passive patriarch throughout it all — who only now speaks up in the closing verses

Pity Party

- * What's wrong with Jacob response?
 - ◆ Just like Hamor and Shechem he accepts no responsibility — nor shows any remorse, regret or repentance for his lack of leadership ...
 - ◆ Rather he wallows in a self-centered "pity party"
- * The chapter ends as sordidly as it began with Jacob rebuking Simeon & Levi ...
- * He rightly notes the probable response to their actions, but instead of wise counsel he resorts to self-pity

Pity Party

- * Stung by their fathers self-serving rebuke, the boys respond with hyperbole — wrongly characterizing Shechem's actions
- * Perhaps it is an attempt to save their consciences or justify their actions, but ...
- * Either way, all have performed poorly arriving at a spiritual low point
 - ◆ The brothers have exhibited prideful deceit and callous actions
 - ◆ And Jacob remained silent — only to speak up in self pity when all is complete

Closing Thought

- * If there ever was a chapter that thoroughly explains and proves the veracity of Scripture, Genesis 34 has to be ONE of the leading candidates!
- * There is nothing redeeming, or even remotely complimentary, in this chapter
- * Who then ... other than the one true God ... would ever record such a sordid account about His chosen people?
