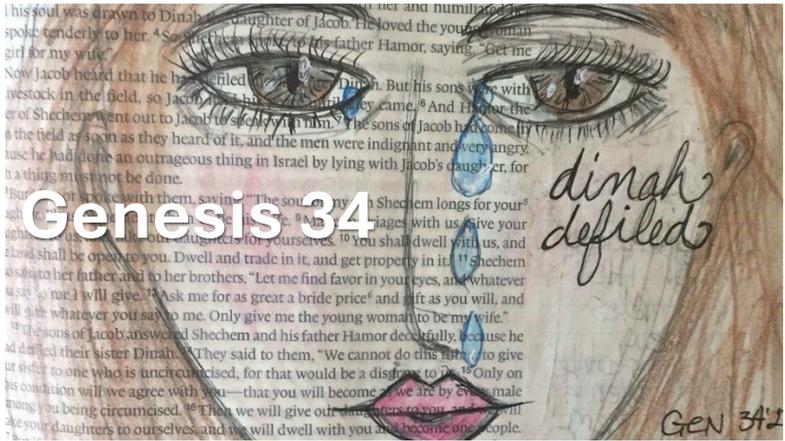




The Bible is full of stories.
 Some are amazing, others are heartbreaking.
 Today's story is painful and tragic.
 Let's read it, and then I'll give you the coffee/question.



There are many things not said in this chapter.
There are many voices not heard.

Dinah was the last child born to Leah.
How old was she when Shechem raped her?

Jacob her father spent 20 years working for her grandfather, Laban,
before he left Paddan Aram and returned to Canaan.
Jacob married Leah after working for Laban for seven years.

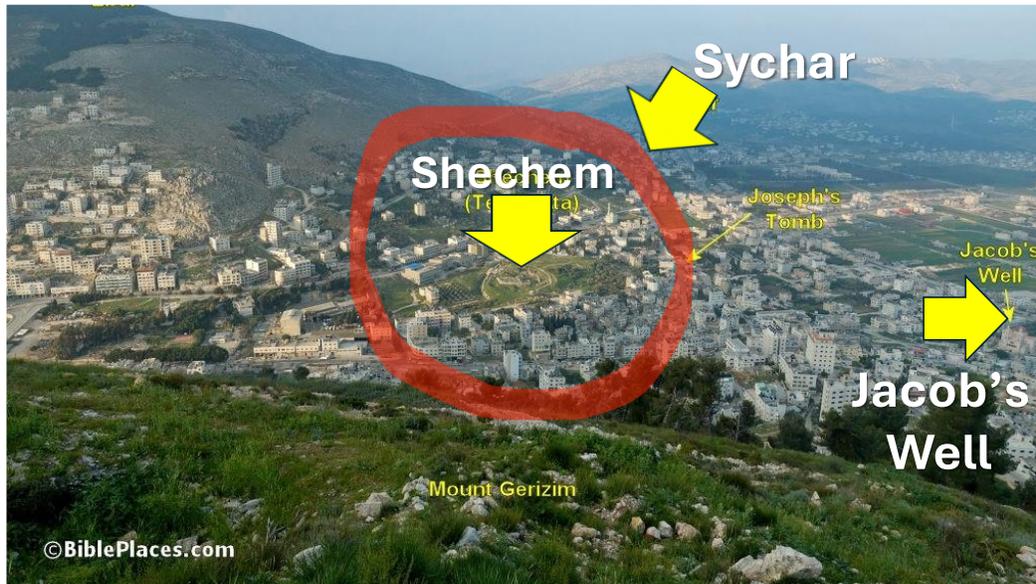
If her mother Leah had a child every year, and she was child #7, then
she would have been approximately six years old when she arrived
in Canaan, and her oldest brother Reuben would have been
approximately 13, Simeon 12 and Levi 11 years of age.

Remember... when Esau offered to accompany Jacob and his
household, Jacob had said...



But Jacob did not go to Mt. Seir where Esau lived, nor did he return to
his father at Mamre, nor did he go to Bethel where God had first
appeared to him and where Jacob had made a vow to God twenty
years earlier.

Instead, Jacob and his family settled within sight of the Canaanite city of Shechem, after purchasing a plot of ground from them, and had lived there for approximately 10 years.



As you will have noticed, the Scripture in Genesis 34 doesn't comment on why Jacob settled near Shechem instead of pressing on to Bethel.

The way Genesis 34:1 reads we are uncertain if Dinah went out on her own visit the women of the land, or if she was accompanied.

It seems as if she was alone, v.2, when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of the area... saw her... took her... and raped her. But then, why hadn't she gone home after the attack?

Did Dinah think she couldn't go home?

Did she think she was somehow at fault for what Shechem had done to her, and that she had no other option but to marry him?

Or was she kept against her will?

The answer to all of those questions and I'm sure you have more.... is.... we don't know.

What else catches the reader off guard is that while so little is said about how this attack impacted Dinah, verses 3-4, give us insight into what was going on in Shechem heart and mind.

The text says his heart was drawn to Dinah.

The text says he loved the woman.

The text says he spoke tenderly to her.

The text says he told his father, "Get me this girl as my wife."

v.19 adds – he was **"delighted with Dinah."**

This doesn't make sense.

Shechem had grievously harmed Dinah.

He had taken from her what was not his to take.

The reader can't help but think if what Shechem perceived as love, was really only lust.

Shechem may have been as v.19 says, **"the most honored of all of Hamor's family,"** but what he did was so wrong on so many levels.

v.5 says that Jacob heard about the rape.

Who told him?

The reader is not told.

I don't think it was Dinah.
She was at the home of Shechem.
It had to have been someone else who was aware of what had happened and who sent word.
But the passage doesn't say who.

v.6 reads as if Shechem and his father came to Jacob and his sons that very same day with a marriage proposal.

v.8 – **“My son Shechem has his heart set on your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife.”**

This too is messed up.

Hamor asked permission... for Dinah to be Shechem's wife, when Shechem had taken... without permission... Dinah's virginity.

Hamor's proposal to Jacob and sons went even further than Dinah marrying Shechem.

Hamor invited Jacob and his household to become a part of their community. Hamor said... v.9...

**“Intermarry with us;
give us your daughters
and take our daughters for yourselves.
You can settle among us,
the land is open to you.
Live in it; trade in it
and acquire property in it.”**

The offer was for the people groups to become one.

I remind you that the Canaanite culture, though technologically advanced, morally was on a downward trajectory that would reach unthinkable levels.

This invitation, if accepted, would have been disastrous for the family of Jacob, the descendants of Abraham. Assimilation with the Canaanites would have resulted in the whole family being spiritually raped.

Just as Shechem had done one thing with Dinah – assaulted her... and then spoken to her tender words, so his father did one thing – extend an invitation to become one people... and then spoke quite another thing to the men of Shechem.

Hamor’s invitation to Jacob and his sons seemed genuine. But Hamor’s true intent was revealed in what he said to the men of the city...

“These men are friendly toward us. Let them live in our land and trade in it; the land has plenty of room for them. We can marry their daughters and they can marry ours. But the men will agree **to live with us as one people** only on the condition that our males be circumcised, as they themselves are. Won’t their livestock, their property and all their other animals become ours? So let us agree to their terms, and they will settle among us.”

What Hamor and the men of Shechem wanted was the wealth of Jacob’s household – their livestock, their property, their animals, their daughters.

The response of Jacob’s sons to Hamor’s proposal was as abhorrent as the proposal itself.

Though shocked, furious and outraged, the sons of Jacob, responded to Hamor with deceit and cunning.

They said they couldn't accept Hamor's proposal for marriage and integration.... without the men of Shechem all being circumcised. Hamor and Shechem agreed.

Three days later, Simeon and Levi attacked the city of Shechem, wreaking horrific revenge upon all who lived there, and with the help of the rest of the sons of Jacob, they stripped the city of its wealth and took as plunder all the women and children.

This is one of those stories in the Bible that is uncomfortable to read.

It's story that can lead a person to draw wrong conclusions about God.

Though God did not speak in Genesis 34, he is a God who has repeatedly spoken throughout history.

In the pages of the Bible, we hear God's voice regarding injustice; we read his promises that he will defend the helpless and the vulnerable; he reveals what is right and he promises to bless obedience and judge disobedience.

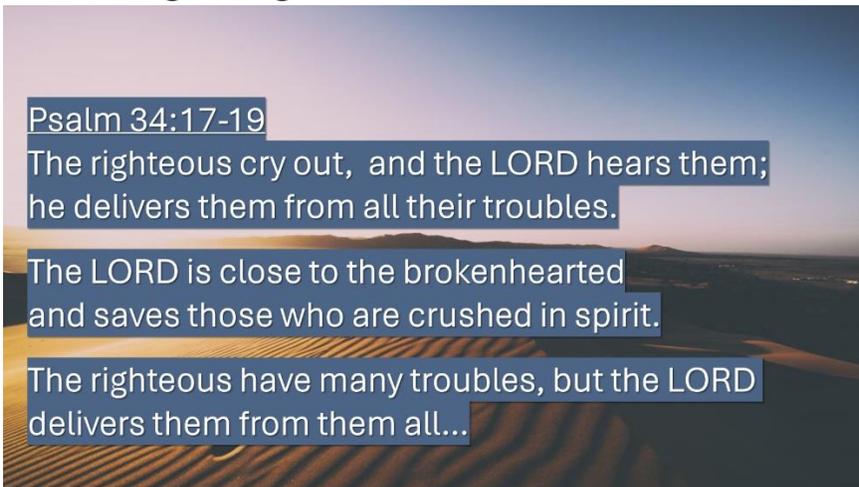
What does God say to the brokenhearted like Dinah?
to the angry like Dinah's brothers?
to those whose lives change because of the cruelty of others, as happened to the women and children of Shechem?



Psalm 34:16

...the face of the LORD is against
those who do evil...

This is the posture of God, not some of the time, but all of the time. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... does not... let the cries of the wronged... go unheard or unanswered.



Psalm 34:17-19

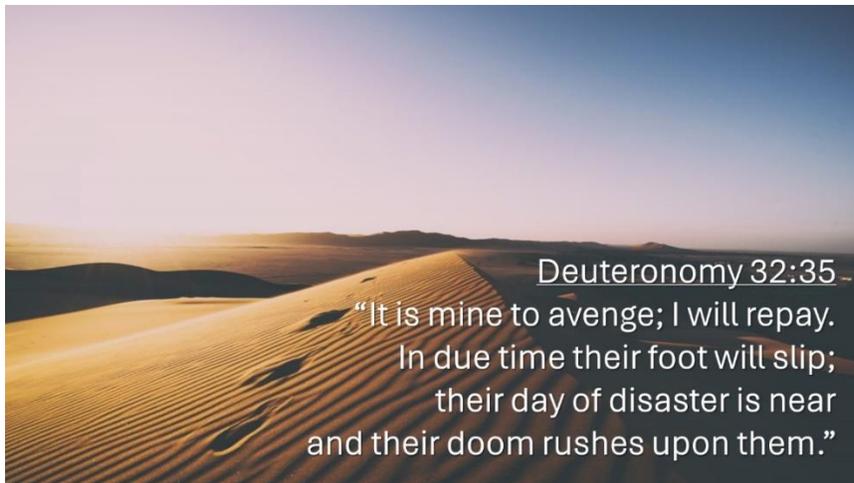
The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The righteous have many troubles, but the LORD
delivers them from them all...

For those like Shechem, who take what is not theirs to take, and who violate others with no remorse, who refuse to admit their guilt, judgment from God is certain.

The Lord who created the ear, hears... and the Lord who formed the eye, sees... and he made this promise regarding those who do evil...



God will repay.

Those who do wrong will not escape justice.

Bryant Golden writes:

We ache for justice.

We want the swift hand of God to stretch down... and to turn... this wrong... into right.

We want God to deal with sin... right now.

But God's justice, is typically slow and measured, preceded by warnings and repeated calls to repent.

The Old Testament prophets often became impatient waiting for God's justice.

Remember Habakuk?

Others thought God was too lenient and too slow to deliver justice on their enemies for the evil done to Israel.

Remember Jonah?

But God promises... he does not leave the guilty unpunished.

He will repay.

For the Dinah's who have been grievously wronged... who have experienced the horror of rape, the Lord not only assures he will repay, but he also promises that he is near and will... parent the broken hearted.

<https://bryantgolden.org/do-we-want-biblical-justice-or-do-we-just-want-revenge/>



God promises that sorrow will give way to joy.



The LORD will come, and he will act justly on behalf of his people, and will lavish upon them his goodness.

To those who have suffered senseless violence, the Lord promises that he is near to the broken hearted.

But what about those who are the perpetrators of wrong?

At the cross of Jesus there is hope...

There the justice of God was satisfied.

And the sentence now pronounced upon all who come to God through faith in Christ, is one of mercy.

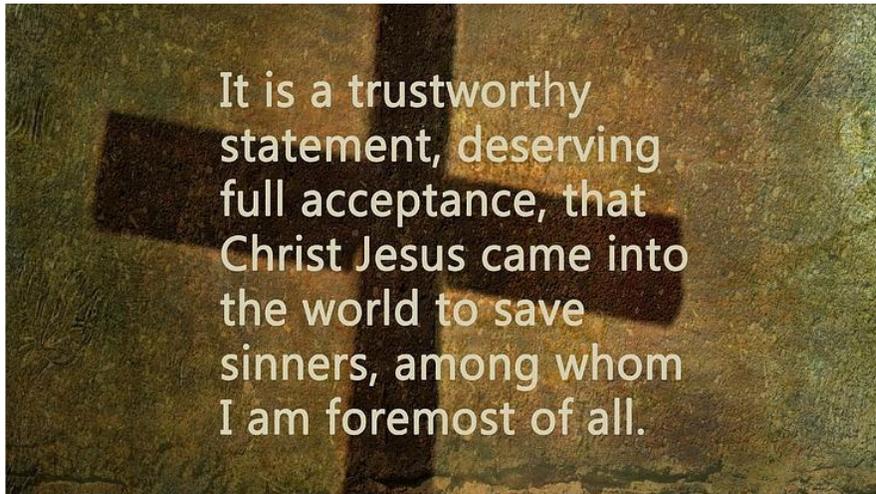
In Jesus there is the hope of forgiveness.

In Jesus there is the hope of a new beginning.

In Jesus there is the hope of a new destiny.

In Jesus there is hope... for the greatest of sinners.

Paul wrote to Timothy and said...



Next week we will study Genesis 35.

In this chapter God spoke twice and what he said is crucial to how his people live when disappointment, disobedience and grief come upon them.

But our passage for today has one more implication for us.

It provides a word of warning to parents, and particularly fathers.

While it is much easier to receive a word of encouragement, a word of warning is as equally valuable.

Remember 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11-12?

1 Corinthians 10:6, 11-12

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warning for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall.

We are warned in Genesis 34 that the failure to obey God can bring bitter consequences, not only upon our lives, but also upon the lives of our children.

Had Jacob continued on to Bethel, to fulfill the vow he had made there 20 years earlier... instead of buying land near Shechem, ... instead of putting down roots there for 10 years, the tragedy that befell his family would not have happened.

Parents, our obedience to God brings blessing upon our children. And conversely, our disobedience puts our children in jeopardy. This warning is serious.

In Genesis 34 Jacob's passivity is particularly revealed.

He failed his daughter Dinah.

He did not speak up for her.

He did not insist upon justice for her.

He did not call out Shechem for his behavior.

Jacob also failed his sons.

He did not restrain them.

He did not act as the patriarch of the family in dealing with Hamor, but allowed them to take the lead.

In this regard there is a word particularly for men:
your children need you to show them... what it means to love God
with all of your heart, soul and strength;
they need you to be a man who is noted for his obedience to God.

They need you to be courageous in your faith... and to be bold in its
defense and in your defense of them.

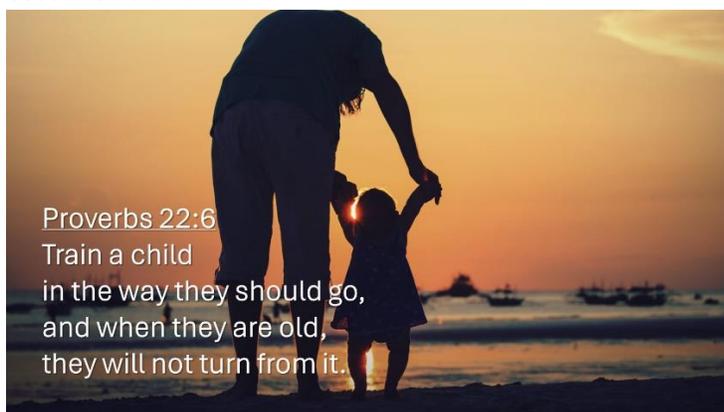
Your children will learn to live in a culture of moral ambiguity as they
see you focus... all that you are... on the living God.

But if you take shortcuts you can count on it... so will they.

If you compromise in your faith and the lifestyle that comes out of
obedience to Jesus... so will they.

Your children need to see that your devotion to God is not simply
words, nor is it peripheral, or one day a week... but is at the core of
who you are and what you do.

Men, and women, as you parent, in dependence upon the Spirit of
God who lives in you... the triune God will help you to raise children
who love God.



And when we fail?

There is the hope of the cross... there is forgiveness... there is grace
to start again.