

Genesis 34

Genesis 34 tells the troubling story of **Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah**, and the violent revenge carried out by two of her brothers, **Simeon and Levi**. It is one of the darkest narratives in Genesis. The chapter does not explicitly approve the actions of any of the people involved; rather, it records what happened and the tragic consequences.

Dinah is violated (Genesis 34:1–4)

Dinah goes out to visit the women of the land near Shechem. Shechem, the son of Hamor, sees her, seizes her, and has sexual relations with her. Most English translations describe this as rape or sexual assault. Afterward, Shechem becomes emotionally attached to Dinah and asks his father to arrange a marriage with her.

Jacob hears what happened but waits until his sons return from tending the livestock. Hamor approaches Jacob with a proposal:

- Let Shechem marry Dinah.
- Let the two peoples intermarry.
- Let them live together and trade freely.
- The land will be open to Jacob's family.

Shechem even offers to pay whatever bride-price Jacob's family requests.

Jacob's sons answer "deceitfully" because of what had been done to Dinah.

They say they cannot allow Dinah to marry an uncircumcised man. They propose that every male in Shechem be circumcised. If they agree, then the families can intermarry. Hamor and Shechem persuade the men of the city to undergo circumcision, partly by promising economic benefits from joining with Jacob's wealthy household.

Three days later, while the men are recovering from circumcision, Dinah's full brothers, Simeon and Levi, attack the city.

They:

- Kill every male.
- Kill Hamor and Shechem.
- Rescue Dinah from Shechem's house.
- The other brothers then plunder the city, taking livestock, possessions, women, and children.

Jacob is not pleased. He fears their actions will unite the surrounding Canaanite peoples against his family:

"You have brought trouble on me..."

Simeon and Levi answer with a question:

"Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?"

The chapter ends without resolving who was "right." That resolution comes later.