

# Genesis 34-35

Bible Study

## Review

Jacob—feared his meeting with his brother and prepares to offer many gifts to Esau in hope of reconciling with him

Jacob wrestled all night with God—who blessed him and changed his name to Israel

Jacob and Esau reconcile—Esau even embraced Jacob and wept, not even desiring Jacob's gifts

God brought Jacob safely to **Shechem** in the land of Canaan (where he built an altar to God)

Chapter 34

## Chapter 34

(Barnes) “Six or seven years must have elapsed before the events [of this chapter took place] In the interval, Jacob may have visited his father, and even returned the visit of Esau”

(Barnes) “It is probable that Dinah was in her 13<sup>th</sup> year”

### Genesis 34:1

<sup>1</sup>Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

(Word) “though *went out to see the daughters of the land* sounds innocent, the terms may suggest Dinah’s imprudence, if not impropriety.

- Abraham and Isaac had warned about mixing with the Canaanites

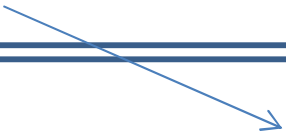
<sup>2</sup>And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, **prince** of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her.

**Hivites** were descendents of Canaan (chapter 10: 15-17)

Upon entering the promised land the Hivites were one of seven Canaanite nations that God said he would drive out (Ex. 3: 8,17; **34:11**). They were noted for their detestable and pagan practices

<sup>3</sup>His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman.

<sup>4</sup>So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, “Get me this young woman as a wife.”



He needed permission from Dinah’s family

<sup>5</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.

v. 5 (last part) “Jacob held his peace until they came” (Jacob controlled)—Why?

- Character development
- The Hivites were a powerful, unscrupulous tribe and Jacob was cautious

v. 6 Both fathers-- Hamor and Jacob negotiate

<sup>7</sup>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.

“**in Israel**” —first mention of the nation by name...used here to designate the **descendants**

<sup>8</sup>But Hamor spoke with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife.

<sup>9</sup>And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves.

<sup>10</sup>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.”

Hamor makes a proposal to make an alliance by marriage...to share the land and buy and sell

➤The ‘**land**’ would be given **by God** though, and not Hamor

Hamor however is going to be proven deceptive...he wants Jacob's possessions (v. 23)

<sup>11</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup>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.”

(BKC) “Shechem offered to pay Jacob and Dinah’s brothers whatever price for the bride they suggested, trying to buy his way out of trouble”

<sup>13</sup>But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke **deceitfully**, because he had defiled Dinah their sister.

(Barnes) “They are in presence of a superior force, and therefore they resort to deceit

Jacob’s sons propose a deal not expecting it to be fulfilled by Hamor and his people



<sup>14</sup>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.

(BKC) *uncircumcised* “this word in Heb. Also suggests being impure and **describes** the Canaanites well”

<sup>15</sup>But on this *condition* we will consent to you: If you will become as we *are*, if every male of you is circumcised,

<sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone.”

v. 15- 17 Jacob’s sons said that if they all would be circumcised they would accept their deal to dwell in the land and share everything, including intermarrying

Hamor and Shechem accept the proposal to be circumcised


<sup>18</sup>And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor’s son.

<sup>19</sup>So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob’s daughter. He *was* more honorable than all the household of his father.

<sup>20</sup>And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying:

<sup>21</sup>“These men *are* at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land *is* large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters.

The Hivites are persuaded to accept the proposal to mutually share, intermarry, etc...then the bomb is dropped on the men



<sup>22</sup>Only on this *condition* will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they *are* circumcised.

The real motive to why they would consent to circumcision is revealed in verse 23



<sup>23</sup>*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.”



<sup>24</sup>And all who went out of the gate of his city **heeded** Hamor and Shechem his son; **every male was circumcised**, all who went out of the gate of his city.

<sup>25</sup>Now it came to pass on the third day, **when they were in pain**, that two of the sons of Jacob, **Simeon and Levi**, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males.

<sup>26</sup>And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out.

19 and 20 years old (Barnes)

Simeon and Levi were brothers of Dinah through Leah--probably with many of Jacob's men... slaughter the men of the city while they were in pain and vulnerable

(NSB) "Most likely Jacob's other sons joined Simeon and Levi in plundering the city. Jacob's sons let righteous anger over sin turn into unrighteous, unforgiving vengeance"



**27**The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled.

**28**They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what *was* in the city and what *was* in the field,

**29**and **all their wealth**. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and **they plundered even all that *was* in the houses**.

Jacob's sons had been deceptive—to propose a treaty confirmed by circumcision....have it accepted... then to turn on the other party with slaughter

(BKC) “Later the nation of Israel was instructed to avoid defilement with the Canaanites. Israel’s foreign policy was to destroy them completely ...before they could defile the Israelites. (Deuteronomy 20: 16-18)



(BKC) “In this story the instinct of Simeon and Levi was correct, but because of their unbridled passion they were later passed over in Jacob’s blessing (49: 5-7)

### **Genesis 49:5, 7**

<sup>5</sup> “Simeon and Levi *are* brothers; Instruments of cruelty *are in* their dwelling place.

<sup>7</sup> Cursed *be* their anger, for *it is* fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.

<sup>30</sup>Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have troubled me by making me **obnoxious** among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I *am* few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I.”

Jacob considered the possible repercussion from other Canaanite tribes upon his family for what had been done

(NSB) “The Hebrew word [for **obnoxious** ] means ‘to stink’. Jacob’s sons had become an embarrassing odor to their neighbors.....something that needed to be scorned”

(NSB) “Sadly, Jacob’s sons did not repent, instead they protested their father’s rebuke”



<sup>31</sup>But they said, “Should he treat our sister like a harlot?”

## Chapter 35

(BKC) “**Two themes** run through chapter 35: **Completion and Correction**”

**Completion** because Jacob was back home in the land of promise.

**Correction** because the family had not completely held to the walk of faith: idols had to be buried and Reuben had to be dealt with”

First time a patriarch is commanded to build an altar

### Genesis 35:1

<sup>1</sup>Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, **go up** to **Bethel** and dwell there; and **make an altar** there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.”

“**go up**” (Word) ‘has overtones of pilgrimage. One went up to the Feast at Jerusalem [Ps. 24:3] So here Jacob is reminded of his religious obligations’

God gives Jacob assurance not to be afraid—he refers to his deliverance from Esau

**He is to complete his vows** he made to God earlier (Gen. 28: 20-22)—God was to be his God/ make Bethel God’s house/ give the tithe to God



**[Genesis 28:20-22]**

<sup>20</sup>Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on,

<sup>21</sup>so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God.

<sup>22</sup>And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”

<sup>2</sup>And Jacob said to his household and to all who *were* with him, “Put away the **foreign gods** that *are* among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments.



**Psalms 24:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?

<sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.

v. 2 To honor God’s promise of protection he tells his family to put away their foreign idols and purify themselves, put on proper clothes in order to come before God

**Foreign gods:** These are most likely the idols that Rachel had taken from her father (possibly for inheritance rights)

**and** possibly some that Simeon and Levi had taken in the plunder of Shechem (Gen. 34: 29) “and they **plundered** even all that was in the houses”

30 miles south of Shechem (JFB)

<sup>3</sup>Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.”

<sup>4</sup>So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which *were* in their hands, and the earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which *was* by Shechem.

v. 4 ‘hid them’= buried  
‘the earrings’ were probably associated with the idols

‘terebinth tree’ (Barnes) “This may have been the oak of Moreh, under which Abram pitched his tent (Gen. 12:6)

<sup>5</sup>And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

(Word) “divine terror struck the surrounding cities so they did not pursue...once again , Jacob’s experience anticipates that of his descendents when they conquered the land, confronting Jacob and Joshua, the Canaanites were paralyzed with fear”

<sup>6</sup>So Jacob came to Luz (that *is*, Bethel), which *is* in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who *were* with him.

<sup>7</sup>And he built an altar there and called the place <sup>£</sup>El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

Jacob built an altar as God had instructed him (v. 1)  
And finishes his vows which he had made twenty-six years earlier (Gen. 28: 20-22)

**El Bethel=**  
(Companion) “GOD of the House of GOD”

<sup>8</sup>Now Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called <sup>£</sup>Allon Bachuth.

(Companion) “We hear no more of Rebekah from the time Jacob left home [Ch. 27:45], not even of her death!  
Deborah may have come with a message, or she may, on Rebekah’s death, have joined his [Jacob’s] household”

Allon Bachuth= oak of weeping  
(JFB) “The nurse in an Eastern family was an important personage, and always held in high esteem”

<sup>9</sup>Then **God appeared to Jacob again**, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him.

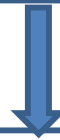
‘when he came from Padam Aram’

(TEV) “When Jacob returned from Mesopotamia, God appeared to him again and blessed him”

“God appeared to Jacob again”

God renews his covenant with Jacob

(NSB) “This is the eight passage dealing with the Abrahamic covenant”



<sup>10</sup>And God said to him, “Your name *is* Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but **Israel** shall be your name.” So He called his name Israel.

“Israel” (Barnes) “At Bethel he renews the change of name, to indicate that the meetings here were of equal moment in Jacob’s spiritual life with that at Penuel “



God gives again the promise of a line of kings, but something is added for the first time in scripture

➤ The promise of a great single nation and a company of nations to come from his descendents



**11** Also God said to him: “I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; **a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you**, and **kings** shall come from your body.

“I am God almighty”

(NSB) “This is the third use of the name El Shaddai, God Almighty. [17:1; 28:3]  
God used his great name to attest to his strong relationship with Jacob”

“a nation and a company of nations...”

In chapter 48- the birthright passes to Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh

Manasseh will become the great single nation and Ephraim will become the company or assembly of nations

**12** The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.”

**13** Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him.

“Then God went up”

(NSB) “The living God had made His will known to him and now returned to His abode. This is one of the rare expressions in the Bible of God ascending [Acts1: 9]

<sup>14</sup>So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.

<sup>15</sup>And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

‘A pillar’ or a consecrated monument-- [poured wine and oil over it]

(NSB) “This is the second pillar Jacob set up to commemorate God’s revelation at Bethel. [28: 18]

<sup>16</sup>Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored *in childbirth*, and she had hard labor.

<sup>17</sup>Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, “Do not fear; you will have this son also.”

<sup>18</sup>And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name <sup>£</sup>Ben-oni; but his father called him <sup>£</sup>Benjamin.

<sup>19</sup>So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that *is*, Bethlehem).

<sup>20</sup>And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which *is* the pillar of Rachel’s grave to this day.

v. 18 Rachel—*Ben-oni* = son of my sorrow

Jacob—*Benjamin* = Son of the right hand

(NSB) “Rachel was the only one of the principal characters in Abraham’s family of promise who was not buried at the cave at Machpelah...

Jacob set up pillars to mark the great works of the Lord in his life. He erected a pillar (v.20) to mark his sorrow”

<sup>21</sup>Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

<sup>22</sup>And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard *about it*. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

**Reuben**—Jacob's firstborn by Leah

Being firstborn would normally give him the double-portion of the birthright inheritance

Because of this sin of defilement and adultery the birthright passed to Joseph



**1 Chronicles 5:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he *was* indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright;

<sup>2</sup>yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him *came* a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's

(NSB) "Reuben, Jacob's firstborn son, may have been asserting his right to be principal heir. Maybe he felt slighted by Jacob's implication that the youngest son Benjamin was the son of his right hand.

By sleeping with his father's concubine, he was asserting that he would succeed his father. Ironically, this very action caused him to lose the blessing he desired"

<sup>23</sup>the sons of Leah *were* Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun;

<sup>24</sup>the sons of Rachel *were* Joseph and Benjamin;

<sup>25</sup>the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, *were* Dan and Naphtali;

<sup>26</sup>and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, *were* Gad and Asher. These *were* the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

<sup>27</sup>Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba<sup>f</sup> (that *is*, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt.

Twenty years had passed since Jacob had last seen his father 'Mamre'—(Hebron) where Isaac grew up with Abraham

<sup>28</sup>Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.

<sup>29</sup>So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, *being* old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

(NSB) "Jacob and Esau joined together to bury Isaac with his father and mother in the cave at Machpelah. [49: 29-32]. Leah and Jacob would be buried there also"

## Lessons

Jacob's sons took vengeance violently –instead of letting God handle the situation  
➤ God is in control, trust him to help in difficult situations

God's people need to set a good example—Jacob's sons did not to the Canaanites

God requires pure worship of him—not defiled hands with foreign gods