

CGYG & LIFE Bible Study – Genesis 33:18 – 36:43

Read Genesis 33:18 – 34:31

-Who was Shechem, what did he do with Jacob's daughter Dinah, and why did he want to marry her? (v.1-4)

-How did Jacob and his sons respond to Shechem and Hamor's proposal for marriage, and why did they respond as they did? (v.5-17)

-What was the danger of accepting Shechem's marriage proposal? (v.16-24) (cf. Deuteronomy 7:1-6)

-Were Simeon and Levi right to kill all the men of the city? Why or why not? (v.25-29) (cf. Exodus 22:16-17; Deuteronomy 22:22-29)

-What do we learn about Jacob by his response to his sons' actions? (v.30-31)

Read Genesis 35:1-15

Based on the chronology of events in Genesis 29-30, Dinah was no more than 5 or 6 years old when Jacob returned to Canaan, which suggests he had lived at Shechem for some years by the time the events of Genesis 34 occurred.

-Why did God command Jacob to return to Bethel and settle there? (v.1) (cf. Genesis 28:10-22, 31:13)

-Having traveled hundreds of miles from Paddan Aram, why do you think Jacob settled at Shechem, instead of continuing on immediately to Bethel, which was only about 30 km from Shechem? What does this say about God's command in v.1, and about the events of Genesis 34? (cf. Ecclesiastes 5:4-6)

-What did Jacob do in response to God's command? What were the results? (v.2-15)

-What do we learn in this passage about God, and about the effects of sin among God's people? (you might also consider a similar account, in Joshua 7:1-13)

Read Genesis 35:16-29

-Why did Rachel name her son *Ben-Oni*, and why did Jacob rename him as Benjamin?

Read Genesis 36:1-43

Esau (that is, Edom), settled in the hill country of Seir, to the south of Canaan, where his descendants (the Edomites) ultimately displaced and destroyed the Horites who were inhabiting the land at the time (Deuteronomy 2:12). Though the Edomites were not God's chosen covenant people, they did as kinsmen of Israel occupy a special place in the Old Testament (Deut. 23:7), and God set aside a land for them (Deut. 2:4-6, 22). However, ultimately, they were judged by God and destroyed for their pride and hostility towards Israel, particularly at a time when Israel was being devastated by her enemies (see the book of Obadiah).

-Why do you think Esau had so many descendants and such great possessions even though he didn't receive Isaac's blessing and was (according to Hebrews 12:16) a godless man? What does this teach us about God? (cf. Gen. 26:24; Matthew 5:45; Acts 17:24-27)

Aliens and strangers in the world

Though God had explicitly reminded Jacob of the vow he had made to God at Bethel when instructing Jacob to return to the land of Canaan (Gen. 31:13), Jacob did not fulfill this vow upon his return, but chose instead to settle at Shechem, just a short distance from Bethel. His disobedience had devastating consequences both for his family and for the people of Shechem, and also exposed him and his household to serious danger. In His grace, God visited Jacob in his time of need, calling him to repentance and to renewed obedience. As Jacob and his family repented, purified themselves, and separated themselves from the gods of the surrounding nations, God visited them in power, protecting Jacob's household by striking the surrounding people with fear. When Jacob finally returned to Bethel, God once again blessed him, appearing to him, reaffirming his new name (Israel), and confirming to him the blessings of God's covenant with Abraham.

The account of Jacob in Genesis 34-35 is one of many reminders in Scripture that sin in the midst of God's people can have grave consequences that reach far beyond the lives of those committing the sin. Sin also ultimately deprives us, both individually and corporately, of God's special presence and power in our lives, leaving us vulnerable to the attacks of the world, the flesh and the devil. In contrast, when we confess our sins and return wholeheartedly to God in repentance and obedience, He is faithful to forgive, to protect, to restore, to comfort, to bless. Are you cherishing sinful thoughts or acts in your life? Confess, repent, and return to the Lord. Are you putting off fulfilling promises you made to God, especially your pledge when you first invited Jesus Christ into your life as Savior and Lord, to let Him have full reign in your life? Delay no longer.