

Genesis 34

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[0 : 00] As we turn to this chapter 34 in Genesis, this is a sorry tale. It's a sorry tale in which there is just sin right, left and centre.

And if we are to say, well, who is most at fault here? And we might say, well, Simeon and Levi are most at fault because they are the ones that visit this murderous slaughter on those who are entering good faith into our covenant with them.

We could say, well, Dinah is at fault because it's her going off, gadding about that brought about this situation. We could say Shechem is at fault because he lay with her, he seduced her and took her when she still was not as yet his wife.

But I would suggest to you that the fault goes further back. The fault ultimately here lies with one who is not recorded in this chapter as having done anything particular amiss, does not commit adultery, does not commit uncleanness, does not slaughter the innocent, does not steal that which belongs to others, but does nothing, does nothing about it all.

The fault, the fault most deeply, I would suggest to you in this chapter, lies at Jacob's door. Jacob is the head of this family.

[1 : 32] Jacob is the one who in previous chapters has wrestled with the angel of God and prevailed. As a prince with God and with men has he overcome.

Jacob, the Lord has gone before him to reconcile him to his brother who with some justification sought vengeance upon him.

The Lord has delivered him out of the hand of Laban. He has delivered him out of the hand of Esau. He has blessed his exile and his banishment with great enrichment.

He has given him his wives, his children, his enlargement, and he has brought him, we suggested last time around, via the land of Baysir, the end of the Dead Sea, back up north into the Promised Land to be reconciled with his father, to settle in the land of Canaan, near to Shechem, as we read here.

And he erected the altar, El Elohe Israel, God, the God of Israel, reminding himself and us that the God of Israel is the glory of Israel.

[2 : 44] Israel's God is Israel's glory. As it is for them, so it should be for us. What happens in this next chapter? Years have passed.

Dinah, one of the youngest of Jacob's children, because if we turn back a couple of chapters, then we read of how when Rachel was desperate to have children, she gave her maidservant, and then Leah gave her maidservant, and then Leah had more children, and afterwards she made a daughter and called her name Dinah, and it is after that that Rachel has Joseph.

So some years have passed. Dinah has grown up sufficiently to want to go off, see how the daughters of the land live. We cannot believe that she has gone completely alone.

She would be accompanied, perhaps, by maidservants or by women companions. But why has she been allowed to go off without any real protection?

Why is she not being protected, escorted? Her brothers that care so much for her honor, why are they not there as a protection for her? Why has Jacob permitted this?

[3 : 58] Why is it that his sons have grown up with this lust for blood and this desire for other men's property for which they are prepared to commit murder, for which they are prepared to commit sacrilege, and use the sacrament of circumcision and the name of God's covenant as a means of obtaining their ill-gotten gain?

And why is Jacob helpless in the midst of all of this? Because I would suggest to you that in the intervening years, the promised land has proved comfortable.

The things of God, yes, once the altar has been erected, have been quietly allowed to slide. A family which has been brought up with the discipline of the fear of the Lord and with the teaching of his commandments will not turn out thus.

They will know the difference between good and evil. They cannot be regenerated in their heart simply by the instruction and teaching and discipline of a God-fearing father. But one who allows them simply to do whatsoever they will will reap the whirlwind as he is doing here.

There is no mention of God in this chapter. There is mention of circumcision, the sacrament of the sign of their covenant with God.

[5 : 29] There is no mention that Jacob has continued to instruct his children in the ways of the Lord when he chides with them at the end of the chapter. He doesn't say, how could you commit this thing?

How could you commit bloodshed and murder against the commandments of the living God? How could you defile the promised land? How could you sow sin against the God of Israel, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob?

No mention of God. Just, you've caused me trouble. Now all the inhabitants of the land are going to turn around and attack me. When he walked with God, that would not have been something that he feared if he knew he had the Lord's protection.

He has allowed his relationship with the Lord to grow cold. That coldness has infected his family such that when he chides with his own sons for what they have done, the murder they have committed, the theft and slaughter that they have visited upon innocent, trusting neighbours, neighbours, all they apply is, should he deal with our sister as will in Harlot?

Not saying, well actually, father you have that. We shouldn't have murdered these guys and we should have had a bit more feed of the Lord. No. The defiance is there. There is no sense of honour for their father as the head of their household.

[6 : 48] There is no respect. There is no feed of the Lord. There is nothing. God is conspicuous by his absence in this entire chapter. Not because God is not there, but because Jacob has allowed the presence, the worship, the fear of the Lord to quietly seep out of his family and of his settlement.

You see the contrast in chapter 35. God speaks again to Jacob. He says, go back to Bethel. Let's start again. When I appeared to you, when I spoke to you, put away the strange gods that are among you.

And so Jacob says to his feet, you know, take away the strange gods. Obviously there are idols, false gods amongst his household and up to now he has done nothing. You see the killing, killing effects of neglect of the Lord here.

To do nothing is not neutrality. It is inviting disaster where the Lord is concerned. And as with everything else in nature and in the world, God has arranged his creation in such a way that the things which are of this world, which are physical and material, speak to us of spiritual truths. We are sustained in our bodies by food and drink. What happens if you take some milk out of the fridge and you leave it, or even if you leave it in the fridge for longer, if you stick it on the kitchen table and you leave it, you don't add dirt to it or dust or smoke or weed or anything like that.

[8 : 32] You just leave it. It goes off, it goes rotten, it stinks, you can't drink it, you can't use it. What happens if you take a loaf of bread, fresh from the baker, but still warm, leave it on the side there and just don't touch it.

It grows moldy. It goes hard. It becomes inedible, unusable. Likewise, vegetables will rot. Likewise, fruit will rot.

All that which could have been for our good, for our benefit, for the sustenance of our bodies becomes unusable, not because we have poured dirt on it or infection or rubbed it in the mud or anything like that, but simply because having received it, we have neglected it.

We have left it alone and done nothing with it. We have not used it for the purpose, the health-giving benefit that it was intended for.

Likewise, if you have property, and you know, we've been examples of this here in the island, you know, in different parts of the island, property that is neglected, you don't have to hit it with a wrecking ball, you don't have to bulldoze it over, you just leave it.

[9 : 42] And eventually, the windows fall out and the roof falls in and the stones begin to fall down the wall and the weeds spring out through where the cement would have been. And it becomes a ruin, not because anybody set out to vandalise it or destroy it, just through neglect.

Property dilapidates. If you had a farm and a croft and it was well-worked and furrowed and beautiful green grass and well-turned earth and maintained dykes and then somebody dies, you move away and you leave it, what happens?

It just goes back into the hill. It just reverts to the wild. The wall becomes broken now. The land becomes rough again. You don't have to do anything to it.

You just have to neglect it. Things don't become easier the less often you practice them. They become harder, more difficult to do.

They only become easier the more often you do them. Jacob has allowed the worship and teaching and discipline and practice of the Lord in the midst of his family to slide.

[10:52] He has left it and he is reaping now in his family the fruit of the absence of the Lord. God has not gone away but Jacob has not cultivated that presence of the Lord in his family.

That leavening influence, that wholesome benefit of receiving God's gifts, using them for the good of our soul just as the food that he gives and we are to use for the good of our bodies.

And the more you neglect these things, the harder it becomes. And I get examples from life teachers that one of the jobs I have in the house is cleaning out the fire and then once it's got to be lit and then you set it, you stack it, you light it and so on and sometimes in winter you're doing that every day.

You're cleaning out the ash, you put it in a bucket, you sweep it out, stack it up again. You're doing it every day so you don't think too much about it. But then some days maybe you don't have the fire on for a few days and you walk past it and you think, oh, I thought I've cleaned it out again.

And because you haven't done it for a wee while, the thought of cleaning it out becomes, oh, such a burden. But when you're doing it every single day, you just do it. You don't think about it too much. Maybe if somebody's a real fitness enthusiast, maybe go to the gym.

[12:13] First time you go to the gym it must be really hard and embarrassing because everybody seems so much better than you are. But, you know, you keep going, you keep plodding away on the running machines or the bikes or whatever it is or the climbing bars or whatever people do at gyms and you keep doing it and you keep doing it and it gets easier.

But you neglect it, you leave it for a few weeks and, boy, it'll be hard to go back again. And so it is with everything in life. Yeah, okay, from time to time if I'm on holiday or something, I'll let the stubble grow.

Give my face a rest from the razor and I'll do that. And then it becomes a real chore to have to shave again. Now, in my father's day, he never had a thought of that. My father would shave every single day in life regardless.

Every day he'd be down at breakfast clean shaven, beautiful, smooth, clean. Never gave it a thought. It was routine to him. You got up in the morning, you shaved, you went down. Simple as that. Wasn't a big deal to him.

It was automatic. It was routine. To me, it's a big deal. It's a hassle. It's a difficult day. But because he's doing it all the time it wasn't a problem to him. Now, the more often we have something as routine, the more natural it becomes.

[13:21] The more regular, the less problematic. It maintains a level of healthier tension, diligence, and yes, safety. You see, it's not for nothing that Paul writes to Timothy when he says that a bishop or an overseer, a leader in the church should not just be a novice, but rather also one that rules well his own house.

having his children in subjection with all gravity. But if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Jacob hadn't ruled his own house.

He had left them to their own devices. That is why they consider it's okay for his daughter to wander off to a strange city and expose herself to all manner of danger.

that's why his sons plot in their mind about deceit and bloodshed. That's why when Hamor comes out to treat with him about a prospective marriage, he doesn't have a thing to say about it until the boys come home from the field.

Why doesn't he take charge? Now, some people would say and some commentators might say with some justification that in a situation in that culture where there was, you know, a mixed number of wives, different wives, and so on.

[14:34] Then if there was a question about a sister in that way, it wasn't the father so much that had the responsibility. It was the brothers who were full-blood brothers with the sister. That's as maybe, but that's not, never mind culture, heritage, or tradition.

That is not what God in his word has set out as the order for families in God's covenant. Why didn't Jacob take charge? He has abrogated responsibility here because he has neglected not by intention we can be sure.

Just let it slide. Just let the things of the Lord go by the board as if they will just take care of themselves naturally.

They don't. And the reason they don't is because in this fallen world, nature is not neutral. Nature is not indifferent. Nature is always going downstream, going against the direction that the Lord wants us to take.

When the Lord intervenes in our lives, it is not natural, it is supernatural. It is overcoming our natural inclinations. It is giving our spirit power over our flesh.

[15:48] It is reversing the trend of decay. Just like if you're taking a croft or a farm out the hill and working it and making it, just like when you're cleaning out the fire or cutting the grass or shading or whatever it is, you have to put work in to get the end safe result.

And this Jacob has not done. We can say with certainty, this he has not done because there is no mention of God in this chapter from start to finish. He has not put the Lord at the heart of his family and that is the ultimate reason for all that happens here.

It doesn't excuse all those who are likewise guilty. But at the same time, it means that responsibility must rest at the head and at the heart of this family and not with the lesser members of it.

So Dinah, the daughter of Leah which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. We don't know exactly all that that entailed. No doubt to converse with them, to interact with them or whatever, but obviously she wasn't just going to see.

She was partly perhaps David B.C. She must have been pretty and attractive because the prince of the land, he sees her, he wants her. And no doubt because they were pagans, the Hivites, that is one reason why he wanted her so he just took her.

[17:13] But this isn't just a case of having his pleasure and then discarding her. Nor is it a case of like Amnon, Absalom's brother, David's eldest son, who desired his half-sister and then he had her, then he forced her, he effectively raped her and then abandoned her.

And we read all about that, you know, in 2 Samuel chapter 13. The minute that he had had his way with her, he just pulled her and go. He wasn't interested in her anymore. He was embarrassed, he was ashamed of his own weakness before, so he blames her, gets rid of her.

Now that's not what's happening here. What's happening here is that Hamor, Hamshechem, the son of Hamor, having seen Dinah, having lain with Dinah, seduced her, no doubt, his heart cleaves to her, his soul cleaves to her.

He wants her for his wife. He wants to act honourably. Now, yes, he has been dishonourable in the eyes of Jacob and his family, in the eyes of the Lord, but he's a pagan.

You could say, in one sense, he doesn't know any better. That's not really an excuse. He would have known that that wasn't the right thing to do, but it's done. And the case is, what do you do now?

[18:24] God is a God of reality. He's a God who deals with us as we actually are. God knows human frailty. He knows human sin. And he knows the effect of human sin on human relationships.

What does God say in such a case? Later on, when the Lord gives his laws to Moses, he says in Exodus 22, verse 16, he says, If a man entice a maid that is not betrothed and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.

If she's already betrothed to somebody else, well, that's adultery and they both get put to death. But if she's not betrothed, she's not already, you know, given to somebody else in marriage, and Dinah is not given to anyone else in marriage, here's another feeling perhaps.

Abraham goes out of his way to get a wife for his son Isaac from the other side of the country, the other side of the desert, hundreds of miles. Huge, long journey to go into Syria to get a wife for Isaac from amongst the covenant people.

Jacob, likewise, when he goes to the same area, he gets a wife from amongst Abraham's own relations who at least know of the living God, even if they don't perhaps worship him as faithfully they ought.

[19:37] But they know something of the Lord. What arrangements has Jacob made for his own family? Here's Dinah, clearly of manageable age. Has he sought a husband for her from amongst his more distant relations?

Has he sought that she should be safely settled with someone who would love her and care for her honorably? No. Has he taken wives for his sons as far as we know? No.

Has he overseen the safety and care and protection and future of his family in those terms of those relations? No. Just let everything drift, let everything slide.

What do you expect is going to happen? She's in danger here that she doesn't even know about.

And sure enough the danger happens. But Shechem desires to act honorably.

He spaked to his father saying, get me this damsel to the wife. Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah and his daughter. It's not entirely clear in this chapter whether having taken Dinah she then remained in his house and he seeks to go out to Jacob to regularize the incident and then make her his wife officially so she just stays there in his house or whether it's after they come to the arrangement that she goes back to his house once they're all going through the process of circumcision that they're keeping their part of the bargain and supposedly Jacob and his sons are keeping theirs.

[21 : 00] So we don't know for sure whether Dinah comes back between times or whether she remains in the city of Shechem. But at any rate Jacob here it's perhaps from the female companions who were there with Dinah perhaps from whoever was escorting her and we think well if she was being escorted how did it even happen?

Even if it was female companions she was with if the prince of the city decides he wants this girl what strength have they got against him and no doubt his armed guards or whatever the case may be.

So he is seeking to make Dinah his wife. Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter and now his sons over his cattle in the field and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

Why? Well maybe to include that in the discussion but it also betokens the same weakness. Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

The sons of Jacob came out of the field and they heard that the men were grieved and they were very wroth because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter which thing ought not to be done. Absolutely quite right things way up but at the end of the day if they cared so much about the honour of their sister why hadn't they protected her better?

[22 : 12] No it's their own pride their own family name their own reputation but they are more concerned about. Hamor communed with him saying the soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter I pray you give him her to what and make he marriages with us and give your daughters unto us take our daughters unto you now remember that the prohibition has not yet been formalized that the Israelites were not to intermarry with the Canaanites and the nations of the land yes Abraham has gone to some nights to make sure that Isaac doesn't take a pagan wife Esau of course it went ahead did what he liked but Jacob was likewise instructed to go and take a wife or rather he went and he took wives from his own God knowing or Lord acknowledging relatives in Syria but here there's no prohibition as yet but if Jacob cared about his family why hasn't he made more arrangements so make marriages with us take our daughters you and your sons and so on and make an alliance with us you'll dwell with us the land shall be before you dwell and make trade you get your possessions to them in other words if she can say well there's room enough for you and us let's be friends let's unite together we want you to be amongst us and we want to be amongst you and Shechem my son he really loves your daughter come on let's do this let's come to some arrangement let me find grace in your eyes what you shall say unto me

I will give ask me never so much dowry and gift and I will give according as you shall say unto me but give me the damsel to wife now this is the point at which they could have said we want all your cattle all your sheep all the spoil of your city we want everything you've got and they said ok well it's a heavy price but yep she's worth it so here take it all they could have had it honestly they could have had it openly he was ready to pay anything he was ready to do anything and in case you're thinking nah he wouldn't do that he wouldn't spend that much you'd be amazed how much powerful and rich men will part with to get the girl or the woman on whom their heart is fixed and on whom by whom they are just smitten in love men do completely illogical hugely expensive things when their hearts are completely out of it smitten with the person that they love and here we have Shechem he would part with anything just so long as he gets done and the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully and said because he had defiled down and their sisters we cannot do this to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised for that with a reproach unto us is this the point at which Jacob has said because the Lord the God of Israel has taught us we must

have this sign the sacrament of the covenant it's a mark of our set apart of our deliverance in God's covenant the covenant of blood the covenant of being special set apart of the Lord this is what shows us to be covenant people and you're not so we can't do this the equivalent nowadays would be saying to somebody of another religion you know a Buddhist a Muslim or something you say well you've got to be baptized if we're going to do this and you say well what do you mean by that well you get a minister or somebody you put some water on your head you say a few words and you answer some questions and that's it hey presto that's it that's all we've got to do just get water on our heads say some words and that's it done and dust it yep that's all you've got to do now as far as Christian teaching is concerned baptism is meant to be the entry point into the Christian church it's meant to be a sign and symbol of what we believe and who we believe in the mere outward ordinance if it is divorced from the spiritual reality is not only meaningless it becomes almost a blasphemous sacrilegious abuse of a holy thing and that is what Jacob's sons are doing here they are making a sacrilegious abuse of a holy thing of the sign and seal of the covenant of grace if you in this we will consent on you if you will be as weak every male you be circumcised then when we give our daughters to you we will take your daughters to us we will dwell with you we will become one people but if you will not hearken unto us then we will take our daughter and we will be gone there's the threat they found the weak point they've pushed the right button we'll take Diana back the thing that you love most we'll take it from you it's fine no bother now we can only assume that in that particular time and culture and situation that you know without in days before there was medical care anesthetic or antiseptics or anything like that people put up with an awful lot more by way of pain wounding injury suffering it was more routine for them then we have to assume that it would be for us nowadays if you went to a gateload of elders in a city and say look this is what we're going to do my son really wants this girl for his bride but you know you've all got to be circumcised they'd probably say get lost you know take her and go not a chance no way are we going to do this but they thought okay we can see that these guys well this is obviously a big thing with them they are gods whom this is part of the right the ritual they have to do he's obviously blessed and look how rich they are look how much cattle and sheep and flocks and herds they've got you know so if it works for them well maybe it will work for us too and the fact of what you're going to go through well you know they obviously knew about what it was it didn't have to be explained to them and they thought okay well it's been enough yeah okay it'll work for a while but you know we'll be okay afterwards and they just went ahead and did it now some commentators have suggested that it may be that when verse 24 for example unto Hamor and Shechem they said hearkened all that went out of the gate of the city they just all agreed to it that there must have been some sense in which Hamor and Shechem are not just people trying to persuade equals of a good thing to do now there's a sense in which they are the prince and his father saying this is what we are going to do if you don't like it you must have a really good reason for it it's going to bind us all together with them we're going to get richer by it it's going to be for the good of the city my son really wants this to happen any questions you think of a situation like a little bit later on where Pharaoh is having the dream explained to him by Joseph and we read in Genesis chapter 41 for example where after he explains it to Joseph and the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants now Pharaoh was an absolute ruler an absolute monarch if he said jump everybody jumped if he said put that man to death they wouldn't even hesitate so when Pharaoh thinks it's a good idea it's not exactly a surprise if all his servants say yeah absolutely brilliant idea Pharaoh we're going along with that no problem who's the one that's going to say well actually sorry I don't agree I don't think we should appoint this guy to look after Egypt and its food stores and everything else I beg to differ nobody's going to do that not with Pharaoh and it's possible that maybe a similar situation here that the men of the city are in some way beholden to Shechem and his father they are not as free as they might seem to say no way we're not doing this okay well you weigh up all the pros and cons fair enough okay let's submit to this and hopefully we'll gain from it they don't really question that much they just go ahead and do it we'll have to assume different time different culture different situations different pain thresholds perhaps of what people were used to it's a serious operation in the days before anesthetic and antiseptic it could often be fatal it would certainly incapacitate the person who was undergoing that particular surgery for approximately a month to a greater or lesser extent and they would be helpless effectively for the next while until proper healing took place so when it says that later on [30 : 40] Simeon and Levi go through all the city killing all the males oh come on somebody must have speed up to them if all the males are effectively incapacitated nobody can stand up to them

they take the women and the children and they go with all the cattle and the sheep all the men are effectively helpless because they have acted in good faith and they have kept their word and the pagans have proved more honourable than those who ought to have been the people of God because when you take God out of the picture those who are meant to be the church of God have no more honour or decency or goodness in and of themselves even then paid it still and in this instance even less it is God who is the glory of his people it is the Lord God of Israel who is the glory of Israel who is the power of Israel who is the protection of Israel who is the conscience of Israel take the Lord out of the picture as he is taken out of the picture in this chapter and whose supposed people descend to the level of bloodthirsty savages that is what we have here with

Jacob's sons came to pass on the third day when they were sore that two of the sons of Jacob Simeon and Levi and his brother took each man his sword and came upon the city some have pointed out that you know Jacob was meant to be the one who lived plainly and intense with the shepherds crook and with the peaceful pastoral means of building up his possession Esau was the one who lived by his sword why have his sons got swords suddenly but here they have as though they're the sons of Esau not the sons of Jacob they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword they slew all the males they took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went down in verse 27 it's not quite clear whether the sons of Jacob simply referred still to Simeon and Levi remember it won't just be physically the two of them even in a small city and remember that city just means a gathering of dwellings which is encircled by a city wall it doesn't mean something the size of Aberdeen or Glasgow or whatever it's a small settlement but it has its own city wall so they slew everybody all the males in Shechem they would have had their servants with them it wouldn't just be physically the two of them they'd have their servants with them it's not quite clear verse 27 well that means the rest of the sons of

Jacob when they heard what had happened thought oh well let's go and get the cattle and let's go and get the sheep let's go and get all the spoil of the city of whether sons of Jacob simply refers just to Simeon and Levi why they took their sheep, their oxen, their asses that which was in the city, that which was in the field all their wealth, all their little ones, their wives took their captive and spoiled even all those in the house and Jacob said to Simeon, Levi you have troubled me to make me distinct among the inhabitants of the land among the Canaanites of Pethizzite and I being few in number oh poor me, look at what you're going to do to us they're all going to try on us, they're all going to destroy us and it'll be your faults woe is me, not what have you done how is this going to be in the eyes of the Lord

God just isn't in the conversation Jacob however never forgets it years later, decades later when he has been brought down into Egypt, when he pronounces his blessing or his parting shot to each of his sons this is what he says about Simeon and Levi chapter 49 verses 5 to 7 Simeon and Levi are brethren instruments of cruelty are in their habitations oh my soul come not thou into their secret unto their assembly my honour be not thou united for in their anger they slew a man and in their self-will they dig down a wall cursed be their anger for it was fierce and their wrath for it was cruel I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel now of course Simeon ends up being one of the ones that gets put in prison by Joseph as a hostage for Benjamin Levi we don't hear a great deal about later on there are good Levites later on

New Testament times Barnabas the last Levite that we're ever told about John the Baptist was a Levite Samuel the prophet was a Levite from the tribe of Levi there come good men but the Levites what was their inheritance to be in the fullness of time those who had so neglected the Lord what was their their lot in the end they didn't get so much as a square inch of tribal land to call their own they had subsistence levels around the city patches they could cultivate but their inheritance was to be the Lord the tabernacle the worship of God the things of God they who had so neglected God this was to be now how they were to serve throughout the rest of Israelite's history the Levites lost any earthly inheritance they might have had what about Simeon well if you've got maps at the back of your Bible sometimes these maps show coloured shaded areas from where the different tribal inheritances fell out if you look at that for Simeon you'll see that it's like a little splodge down in the deep south of the Holy Land it is surrounded by Judah

[36 : 39] Simeon doesn't even have his own coastline his own border you've got all the land of Judah and there in the middle you've got the little splodge that is Simeon divided in Israel their inheritance diminished that which they sought to take by violence and by their own strength the Lord ended up draining away from their successor of their descendants but the real problem here is

not simply that Dinah has been treated as a harlot she hasn't really she hasn't been paid for services she hasn't been you know permanently disfigured there's no suggestion that she was forced she was seduced rather than forced but you know Shekhar wants to marry her he wants to make it honourable he wants to try and make amends he is doing his best here and they murdered him and all his city whenever something was disproportionate losing complete track of the sin that he's done against him yes it's a sin yes it's a crime yes it is falling in Israel but my goodness the punishment of men is way out of proportion to what God would require at their hand

God says when such falling happens let them marry sort it out put right that which has been wrong Simeon Levi slaughter everyone supposing that gain is part of their inheritance with the Lord when Paul wrote to Timothy of course he knew about this kind of problem he wrote in chapter 6 of 1st Timothy that perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds destitute of the truth supposing that gain is godliness from such withdraw thyself but godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out and having fruit and raiment let us be there with content but they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition here we have Simeon Levi effectively drowned in perdition and bloodshed but we keep coming back to this fact what is the root cause of the evils of this chapter it is the neglect of the Lord it is the absence of God from the day to day running and living of Jacob's camp his sons have been allowed to grow up without the fear of the Lord his daughter has been allowed to grow up without provision being made for her for a suitable husband without being taught about the dangers of the loss of chastity of protection and so on all of these things because Jacob and that's where the responsibility if not the greatest crime and sin in practice the responsibility must lie

Jacob has allowed things to drift and nobody becomes more godly more faithful more obedient more in tune with the Lord more close to the Lord just by drifting our relationship with the Lord like every relationship in this world has to be worked at it has to be given time it has to be given discipline and in the case of the Lord who is the most important person in our entire lives bar none or ought to be if we claim to be a Christian that is what we're saying Christ is more important than anybody else there is Christ first and then there is my husband or wife or children after that then there is my home my work my possessions my money Christ first if we are truly his but that has to be worked out that priority has to be maintained everything in nature will militate against that that is why we need that which is supernatural to overcome it the power of God the power of grace the power of prayer the power of staying close with the Lord otherwise all these things seep in little by little sin is no accident it is our natural state grace is an infusion an injection of God's power God's mercy God's love which we neglect at our peril and the responsibility for which ultimately rest with heads of families but for which ultimately each of us must in the end answer for ourselves let us pray to go to throw get to chapter if a you know in or as as you in you you you you you you you you you you you you you you