

The Day Everything went Wrong

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Gen. 34:1-31

1. A chapter without God
2. Genesis 33 mentions God blessing Jacob and family, and Jacob and Esau building an altar to God and calling it by His formal name
3. Genesis 35 begins with God
4. But no one in Genesis 34 acts with any consideration for God and His will. Everyone acts without and apart from God. It was a day when everything went wrong.
 - a. One wouldn't expect respect for God from the pagan Canaanites
 - b. But Jacob and his sons were raised with the Lord's direction.
 - c. When believers live apart from the will of God, they will have the same kind of troubles that plague unbelievers.
 - d. While godlessness is a curse to the lost, being a believer doesn't protect one from the consequences of his sins.

B. Have you ever gone a whole day without thinking about God or His will?

1. How many chapters of your life have no mention of God?
2. There are many challenges associated with enduring life in contemporary culture. These challenges draw us in to a life increasingly centered around ourselves. Eventually our lives become indistinguishable from unbelievers around us

C. There are four profound lessons in this chapter for believers and unbelievers:

1. Dinah traveled down a path without God by taking reckless liberties.
2. Shechem and Hamor pursued abusive lust and greed.
3. The sons of Jacob enacted cold, malicious vengeance.
4. Jacob abdicated his leadership responsibilities.
5. Everything that could have gone wrong that day did go wrong because God was not invited into the matter.
6. And everything that did go wrong could have gone right if each one had remembered God and did His will.

I. DINAH TOOK RECKLESS CHANCES

A. She ignored great danger to do what she wanted to do - Gen. 34:1

1. They were nomads in a troubled, lawless land; women never went anywhere without women as chaperones and men as armed guards
2. It would be the equivalent of a teenaged girls slipping out at night and going into a gang infested urban neighborhood
3. There are places God's children should not go, especially alone, and people that are harmful influences on the vulnerable and young.
4. There are people who have no respect for God or humankind.

B. Young people are eager for freedom from restraints, but have little knowledge of danger or experience with risk. Their judgment is limited and they have not developed healthy inhibitions

1. Dinah's desire for freedom created a lot of pain for herself and it spread to many people around her. She was assaulted.
 - a. I am not blaming the victim for suffering assault; I am saying that she needed to trust and listen to her parents and not engage in high risk behavior
 - b. Many people not involved in her assault died; one man committed assault; two men committed conspiracy; two men murdered dozens of injured men; ten men lied and robbed a city; and, one righteous man abandoned his leadership
 - c. All in response to a teenager who wanted her freedom
- C. We must live our entire lives within boundaries set by others.
 1. God, parents, civil government, elders, employers, etc.
 2. We are accountable to God and others to live within established boundaries, not only for our own safety and well-being, but for the safety and well-being of others

II. SHECHEM AND HAMOR INDULGED IN LUST AND GREED

- A. Shechem saw Dinah and he wanted her, so he committed the crimes of kidnapping and rape by violent force to get what he wanted - Gen. 34:2-4
 1. As the son of a city-state king, he was used to getting his way and being covered by daddy's power
 2. Shechem later tried to make it right, but it was far too little, too late
- B. Hamor his father reduced the matter to financial terms: merger and acquisition
 1. Gen. 34:6-12
 2. He made no acknowledgement of wrongdoing on his son's part.
 3. He assumed Jacob had the same value system that he had, and negotiated for Dinah as if bargaining for a yoke of oxen.
 4. There is no mention of God and His will
 5. Money or secular agreements will never resolve a single sin
 6. 1John 2:15-17; James 4:1-4

III. JACOB'S SONS ENGAGED IN EVIL REVENGE

- A. When they learned what had happened to Dinah, their reaction was natural and expected: grief and anger
 1. Sometimes anger is an appropriate response, as long as one is angry without sinning - Eph. 5:26-27
 2. The command is to control anger, not to pretend it doesn't exist; Anger turned inward creates malice, bitterness, and paranoia
 3. Even God becomes angry at times - Num. 22:22; Zech. 1:2-3
 4. We experience a number of causes for anger: the murder of 4,400 babies daily in American abortion clinics, terrorism from Islamic extremists, evil words and behaviors of our civil leaders, drug violence, gossips who destroy the reputations of good folks, the erosion of morals by the entertainment industry, et al
- B. However, the brothers generated an evil plan of revenge - Gen. 34:13-17

1. They used circumcision, the sign of God's covenant, in a blasphemous and devious manner.
2. There was no prayer to God or inquiry into His will, just unrestrained revenge - Gen. 34:25-29
3. God reserves vengeance for Himself, because only He can do it right - Deut. 32:35; Psalm 7:9; Prov. 16:2
4. No matter how evil our adversaries, how painful the sin committed against us, or how angry and grieved we become over it, we may not sin in return - 1Peter 2:21-23

IV. JACOB NEGLECTED LEADERSHIP OVER HIS FAMILY

- A. He did not show leadership before or during the events of Genesis 34
 1. He was there when she went off on her own, but did not stop her.
 2. He didn't react or send for his sons when he heard the report of Dinah's assault.
 3. He did not manifest leadership during the negotiations.
 4. He did not demand justice when approached by Shechem and Hamor.
 5. He passively listened to the secular offer made by the offenders.
 6. He did not instruct his son to react without sinning
- B. Jacob's passive inaction must have disappointed Dinah's brothers.
 1. Had Jacob stepped up at any point in this matter, the outcome could have been completely different
 2. Sometimes evil has to be confronted whether we want to or not.
- C. Jacob did not show good leadership after his sons sinned; he was only interested how it affected him - Gen. 34:30-31
 1. Because Jacob failed to exercise his rightful leadership, he bears some of the responsibility for what happened to Dinah, Shechem, Hamor, the men of the city, and his sons.
- D. Fathers have no choice; they must actively lead their families; they cannot leave it to their wives, the elders, or school system - Deut. 4:9, 6:7; Eph. 6:4

Conclusion:

- A. See what happens when God is left out of any chapter of human life; it generates days where everything goes wrong
- B. What might have happened if God had been in this chapter?
 1. Perhaps Dinah would have asked permission and an escort before leaving to meet up with other young folks
 2. Perhaps Shechem would have respected the rights of Dinah and properly asked Jacob for her hand in marriage.
 3. Perhaps Hamor would have punished his son and involved Jacob and Dinah in the matter
 4. Perhaps the sons of Jacob would have asked their father to help them deal with their anger and to give them a proper way to handle this
 5. Perhaps Jacob would have been a truly righteous man and good father and guided his daughter, sons, and neighbors in the will of God
 6. Rom. 8:5-7