

Genesis 34:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.

Analysis

And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and... This passage belongs to the Jacob narratives which demonstrate God's sovereign election overriding human merit and the transformation of a deceiver into Israel, the father of the twelve tribes. The Jacob cycle shows how divine purposes advance through flawed individuals whom God graciously transforms.

Key themes include God's sovereign choice ("the older shall serve the younger"), the consequences of deception and family dysfunction, exile and return patterns, wrestling with God leading to blessing, and covenant renewal across generations. Jacob's character development from manipulative deceiver to mature patriarch demonstrates sanctification's lifelong process.

Theologically significant aspects include:

1. divine election based on grace not merit (Romans 9:10-13)
2. God's faithfulness to covenant promises despite human unfaithfulness
3. discipline as evidence of divine love and means of transformation
4. generational patterns of sin requiring divine intervention to break
5. prayer and wrestling with God as legitimate expressions of faith.

Jacob's limp after wrestling God symbolizes how divine encounters leave permanent marks, transforming our approach to life and dependence on God rather than our own cunning.

Historical Context

The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about Dinah's Defilement emerge from this passage?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?
3. How does understanding Christ as the ultimate fulfillment illuminate this passage's meaning?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי	בֵּי יוֹם	הַשְּׁלִישִׁי	בְּהֵיוֹתָם	כְּאֵב יָם
H1961	day	And it came to pass on the third	H1961	when they were sore
	H3117	H7992		H3510

וַיִּקַּח וְ	שְׁנֵי	בְנֵי	יַעֲקֹב	שִׁמְעוֹן	וְלֵוִי	אֶחָיו	דִּינָה
took	that two	of the sons	of Jacob	Simeon	and Levi	brethren	Dinah's
H3947	H8147	H1121	H3290	H8095	H3878	H251	H1783

אִישׁ	חֶרֶב וְ	וָיָבֹאוּ	עַל	הָעִיר	בְּטָח	וַיַּהַרְגוּ	כָּל
each man	his sword	and came	H5921	upon the city	boldly	and slew	H3605
H376	H2719	H935		H5892	H983	H2026	

זָכָר:
all the males
H2145