

The Slaughter at Shechem by Simeon and Levi

34: 25-29

DIG: What does the slaughter and looting of the city tell us about the spiritual condition of Jacob's family?

REFLECT: Where do you need to make sure that anger does not get the best of you? How does a desire for revenge affect you and your faith in God?

The result of the plot was tragic and cruel. Three days later, while all of them were in the greatest amount of pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and went from one house to the next, attacked the unsuspecting city, killing each and every male until they were all dead. Adult circumcision is painful and would virtually incapacitate the men of Shechem for several days. In addition, the fever that would develop as a result of the cutting would only make them more vulnerable. The men of the city couldn't really defend themselves. The brothers came upon them like vultures landing on lifeless corpses.⁵²⁸ They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword and took Dinah from Shechem's house and left (34:25-26). They reasoned that because Shechem had taken Dinah to his house by force, they were prepared to take her from his house by force. They avenged sin by greater sin.

Simeon and Levi further reasoned that if their father was not going to defend the honor of his daughter, they would defend the honor of their sister. It was bad enough that she was raped and treated like a prostitute, but their father's indifference about the whole situation made them even more furious. They all felt slighted because Leah was their mother. Jacob's favoritism towards Rachael and her children was wearing very thin on Leah's side of the family. Once again, Jacob's favoritism was causing much pain.

Archaeological excavations have discovered that Shechem was a city of about six acres and therefore was probably occupied by between five hundred to a thousand people. The two brothers could not have possibly slaughtered everyone by themselves; therefore, their servants probably assisted them. Looting followed the killing.

The sons of Jacob came upon the dead bodies and looted the city where their sister had been raped. Only Simeon and Levi did the slaying, but all the other sons probably helped in the looting. They seized their flocks and herds and donkeys and everything else of theirs in the city and out in the fields. It was ironic because the men of

Shechem had planned on seizing all of **Jacob's wealth**, however now all **their wealth** belonged to the Hebrews! **They carried off all their wealth and all their women and children, taking as plunder everything in their houses (34:27-29)**. So the combination of a passive **father** and vengeful, cruel **brothers** was a deadly combination for **the men of Shechem**.

Ya'akov probably didn't realize what had happened until **he** saw the captives and the **plunder** coming back from **Shechem** with **his sons**. **Dinah** accompanied **them** and was no doubt in a state of shock. Although **he** must have been horrified with the magnitude of what had happened, **Jacob's** lack of leadership had given the opportunity for **Simeon and Levi** to demonstrate that they were really **men** of treachery and not justice. **Jacob** would never forget it. On **his** deathbed he would say to them: **Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Ya'akov and disperse them in Israel (49:7)**.