

General Comments on Gen. 34 & 38-39

These chapters chronicle events occurring between Abraham's descendants and their neighbors. The events serve to set the context for the subsequent book of Exodus wherein the Israelites are told to take back their lands and expel the current inhabitants, as the current inhabitants are lascivious and depraved. By way of review, here are relevant highlights of the preceding and current chapters:

Ham & Canaan (Gen. 9): Ham is presented as harboring incestuous desires, and Abr. 1 indicates he spread those practices among his children.

Sarai & Rebekah (Gen. 20, 26): Both women are presented as being attractive, and both husbands are presented as in peril of losing their lives because of envy on the part of the local inhabitants. Both women are subsequently put in jeopardy of being violated when among the Philistines, and only Providence spares them.

Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen. 19): Inhabitants indulge in homosexuality and are eager to rape foreigners. They are guilty of crimes of social injustice, of which homosexual rape is presented as the epitome, and God therefore destroys them. Abraham also wants absolutely nothing to do with them (Gen. 14:21-24).

Wives (Gen. 24, 28): Following the theme of Gen. 6:1, the patriarchs are avoiding "daughters of men" and trying to get "daughters of God" for their sons. Both Isaac and Jacob, through different means, end up with "daughters of God" for wives as the result of the requirements of their fathers. However, Esau takes it upon himself to marry local women and they end up being a real problem to the family (Gen. 26:34-35).

Dinah (Gen. 34): She goes out among the "daughters of man" and ends up in a compromising situation which results in her being raped by Hamor the Hivite. The resulting retribution by Simeon and Levi requires circumcision, necessarily implying they were uncircumcised, an innuendo implying general cultural acceptance of sexual immorality.

Judah, Shua & Tamar (Gen. 38): Judah marries a local

Canaanite woman named Shua, even though such things were discouraged by his fathers. Their first two sons turn out to be such that they end up being cursed and killed by God (one of whom it is explicitly stated is killed for failing to uphold the levir's duty, all the while being perfectly willing to bed Tamar anyway). Then Judah ends up bedding Tamar (because he thinks she is a local prostitute) and in subsequently condemning her to death for harlotry, finds out that he is in fact even the more guilty.

Joseph & Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39): Joseph ends up serving in Potiphar's house, where Potiphar's wife is commonly present. Joseph, being a handsome man, becomes the object of her adulterous desire and she repeatedly attempts to seduce him. She becomes extremely aggressive with him, and when rebuffed she takes advantage of the situation to spitefully abuse him for his rejection of her.

This is a sordid set of tales characterizing the local nations as generally lascivious. Whenever the children of Abraham deal with them it ends up trouble of the sexual kind. The moral of the stories is: "Don't mix with Gentiles, they'll seduce you". This theme is repeatedly stated in the subsequent books of the Law as the reason why the Canaanites are being expelled from the land and why it is absolutely necessary to utterly remove them. If they don't the Israelites will be seduced by their lascivious ways (cp. Num. 25, Deut. 7). This kind of morality tale is emphasized in the story of Samson and Delilah (Judges 16).

All of this background material sets the stage for later events in the Torah. We see the Lord judging Israel's Gentile neighbors in Gen. 15:16, Lev. 18:25-28, and Deut. 9:3-5. The ultimate condemnation comes in an extermination order, as we see in Exod. 34:11-16, Num. 25:1-3, Deut. 7:1-6, Josh. 23:9-12.

While the general characterization holds up and ultimately form the substance of a national policy, there are a few examples of local Gentiles who are upstanding. Take Melchizedek, Jethro, and the Abimelechs for example. So, the Torah provides positive examples as well, which mitigate any attempt to substantiate blanket characterizations which could lead to bigotry.

General Comments on Genesis 34

In an effort to make the most sense of the Dinah narrative it is paraphrased below with proof-texts inserted, thus forming an apocryphon. Apocryphons were a common method among ancient Jews of making sense of obscure Scriptural texts. Typically, the apocryphons embellished the accounts by adding material so as to try and explain the obscurities. The apocryphon below keeps as close to the story as possible and adds only what is implied by context. Citations are provided as the story goes, but some of the justifications for the paraphrases is located in the specific comments on the chapter appearing below.

The Dinah Apocryphon

Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah, goes out among the neighboring people to mingle with the other women her age (v. 1). Dinah is an attractive woman who knows she is attractive, and her intent is to check out the competition as well as to check out the local men. In doing so she ends up being abducted by Shechem, the most favored and prominent son (v. 19) of the local ruler, and he rapes her (v. 2), believing he is entitled to do so, and sees nothing wrong with it. Shechem is enamored with Dinah and tries to persuade her with soft words after this violent act, to no avail (v. 3). Shechem then tells his father to arrange his marriage with her, and Shechem is only too eager to cover up his son's act by cloaking it with the guise of marriage. All the while Dinah is not permitted to leave, but rather is kept at Shechem's house (v. 17, 26) in an effort to prevent the word of her rape from spreading.

Shechem and Hamor waste no time and travel the very same day as the rape occurs to Jacob's house in order to arrange the marriage (v. 6). However, unknown to them Jacob is somehow already aware of Shechem's rape of Dinah (v. 5). When approached by them, Jacob remains silent on both their proposal of marriage as well as the issue of the rape (v. 5). Rather, he chooses to wait until his sons are summoned from the field, and these sons are angry about what has happened to Dinah when they show up (v. 7). After the sons arrive Hamor makes his offer of marriage between Shechem and Dinah, and he attempts to sweeten the proposal by offering them lands which are under his influence (v. 9-10). Naturally, Hamor, like any good politician, omits the matter of Shechem's rape of Dinah from the conversation. Rather, he focuses on how fond he is of Dinah and how the sons can marry the women of his city as well (v. 8).

Shechem, being used to getting whatever he wants because he is the son of the local aristocrat, can no longer restrain himself and makes exaggerated offers of fabulous wealth in exchange for Dinah (v. 11-12). While it is in the guise of bride-price, the brothers, knowing he has raped Dinah and is unwilling to admit to it, consider it an odious bribe.

The brothers, displeased not only over the rape but also over Shechem's attempt to cover it up with marriage, are not impressed with his ardor for Dinah and cunningly plan retribution of the most ironic type (v. 13). They use their tradition of circumcision, one easily verified if questioned, to require they do the same. In the face of such a seemingly daunting requirement, the sons post the ultimatum that Hamor and Shechem and all of their people either do it or they will take back Dinah from them, leaving no room for bargaining (v. 14-17).

In doing so, the sons force them to either circumcise themselves or release Dinah and therefore expose the rape. The irony is extreme as if they accept the circumcision, then they are punished in the instrument of rape. Furthermore, Shechem is effectively prevented from violating Dinah again as he would not be able to while healing from the circumcision.

Shechem and Hamor are pleased they have seemingly obtained a means of obtaining Dinah and therefore avoiding the issue of rape (v. 18), so they travel back home thinking all is well. Shechem wastes no time at all in going through with the circumcision, and in doing so he sets the example to the other people of the city (v. 19). The next day Hamor and Shechem then set about convincing the rest of the people in the city that they need to circumcise themselves as well (v. 20-23). Like any good politician, Hamor presents the positives of the union with Jacob's family and omits the negatives. He emphasizes how wealthy Jacob and his family are and how the people will inherit that wealth by intermarrying (v. 23). But, he conveniently omits the fact that they will then have to give up some of their land and grazing rights and so forth which he promised Jacob (v. 10). The people are convinced the deal is in their best interest, so they agree to go through with the circumcision (v. 24).

The following day Simeon and Levi, the two full brothers of Dinah who would naturally be most incensed at her being raped, take advantage of the incapacitated the males to go in and exact revenge (v. 25). They take their swords to the town and kill all of the males working their way towards Shechem and Hamor's house. When they arrive there they kill both Shechem and Hamor and take back Dinah (v. 26). Afterwards, the other sons of

Jacob go and take everything, including the cattle, wives, and children, as the punitive bride-price for Dinah's rape. Simeon and Jacob abstain from the plunder to indicate their only interest in the matter was the vindication of Dinah.

Afterwards, Jacob learns what his sons have done, and he disapproves of their actions. Jacob fears the locals will combine against them and destroy them as a result of the sack of the city (v. 30). Simeon and Levi demand the principle of protecting the sanctity of one's sister justifies their actions (v. 31). Later, in his final blessing upon his sons, Jacob denounces the action of Simeon and Levi as hot-headed and without his approval (cf. Gen. 49:5-7).

Conclusions

This story recounts an entire course of events starting innocently enough with a young lady out to flirt, and ends in near complete disaster. The only way things could have turned out worse is if Jacob's fears had come to fruition and his neighbors combined against him and wiped out his whole family. Thus, the story is a warning to the women of Israel, that they ought not to mingle with the locals, as nothing but trouble will come out of it. All of this happened simply because she was feeling a bit vain. Had she restrained herself and acted with greater decorum, none of this would have happened. It parallels ch. 38 which serves as a warning to the men of Israel.

The story also serves the purpose of showing how a coquettish woman can inspire passion and violence in men. In the case of Shechem, her actions inspired lust and rape. In the case of Reuben and Levi, their passion for retribution and self-styled justice ended in them sacking the entire city. Thus, the power of women over men to inspire their passions is presented as powerful and potentially disastrous.

Theology

This chapter presents the actions of people entirely absent the involvement of God. After several chapters where the Lord was clearly involved in guiding the people and outcome, in this chapter nobody prays, no angels are sent, no covenants are made, no providential intervention is made, there is no thought at all of asking God for help or guidance. Instead, it is people doing bad things all around, which is bad for everyone involved, entirely absent God's assistance or intervention.

The providential peace of the preceding chapter is

shattered by the violence and destruction in this chapter, which is entirely man-made. If Jacob was under the impression that moving back home would lead to a peaceful life, after being under Laban's thumb and fighting with him and his sons, this episode makes it clear that will not be the case.

Jacob's rejection of this kind of violence comes immediately after he and his family were spared the threat of violence from both Laban (cf. 31:22-42) and Esau (cf. ch. 32-33). The promises made to Abraham about a great posterity (cf. 15:1-5) are jeopardized by the violence committed by men, no matter how the men might seek to justify themselves.

Comments on Gen. 34

The story revolves around the verbs "went out" and "taken". It is fashioned in such a way as to end up being a morality play and therefore a warning to the women of Israel.

Dinah "went out" to see the daughters of the land and in doing so puts herself in jeopardy (v. 1)

Dinah is "taken" by Shechem (v. 2)

Hamor "went out" to obtain Dinah for Shechem to satisfy his desire for her and to cover up the rape (v. 6)

Shechem tells Hamor to "take for me" Dinah (v. 4)

Ultimatum given "circumcise or we take back Dinah" (v. 17)

Simeon and Levi "take" their sword to the city (v. 25)

Simeon and Levi "take" back Dinah (v. 26)

The going out and taking are presented as being reactionary to each other. Dinah's going out and subsequent rape leads to Hamor's going out and trying to cover up the rape. Shechem's taking leads to Jacob's son's taking, and so on. Overall, the intent is to show a set of connected causes and effects that all lead back to the actions of Dinah and Shechem, and indicate how the actions of one or two people can affect many others. Had Dinah not played the flirt and had Shechem not subsequently given into his lust, none of this would have happened.

Another potential underlying issue is that Shechem and Hamor might not have even considered what Shechem did to Dinah as wrong. If they consider rape to be normal or a non-issue, then they wouldn't even consider it something that had to be dealt with in the subsequent negotiation of marriage. Their kidnap of Dinah suggests they know it is at least problematic, but, clearly, Hamor is unwilling to rebuke his son over the rape, and wants to legitimize the act with a formal marriage.

1 AND Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. 3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. 4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. 5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

v1-5 Dinah, daughter of Jacob, goes out with the local women (v. 1) and is seen by Shechem, the local prince. He captures and rapes her (v. 2). He desires her and attempts to soften the harshness of his actions by ingratiating himself (v. 3). He then tells his father to arrange marriage for them (v. 4). Jacob gets word of Dinah's abduction and rape, but since his sons were all away from the house he waits for them to arrive before doing anything (v. 5).

v1 "went out", Sarna in his JPS Torah Commentary on Genesis writes:

Girls of marriageable age would not normally leave a rural encampment to go unchaperoned into an alien city. The text casts a critical eye upon Dinah's unconventional behavior through the use of the verbal stem *y-ts-*, "to go out." Like its Akkadian and Aramaic equivalents, the verb can connote coquettish or promiscuous conduct.

"went out to see the daughters of the land", Alter says of this phrase:

The infinitive in the Hebrew is literally "to see," followed not by a direct object, as one might expect, but by a partitive (the particle *be*), which suggests "among" or "some of." Although the sense of the verb in context may be

something like "to make the acquaintance of" or "travel around among," the decision of several modern translations to render it as "to visit" is misconceived. Not only does that term convey anachronistic notions of calling cards and tea, but it obliterates an important repetition of terms. This is one of those episodes in which the biblical practice of using the same word over and over with different subjects and objects and a high tension of semantic difference is especially cruel. Two such terms are introduced in the first sentence of the story: "to see" and "daughter." Dinah, Jacob's daughter, goes out among the daughters of the land, and identity of terms that might suggest a symmetry of position, but the fact that she is an immigrant's daughter, not a daughter of the land, makes her a ready target for rape. (In the Hebrew, moreover, "sons" and "daughters," *banim* and *banot*, are differently inflected versions of the same word, so Dinah's filial relation to Jacob is immediately played against Shechem's filial relation to Hamor, and that in turn will be pointedly juxtaposed with the relation between Jacob and *his* sons.) Shechem's lustful "seeing" of Dinah is immediately superimposed on her "seeing" the daughters of the land. (Robert Alter, *The Five Books of Moses*, page 188).

"daughters of the land", a non-complimentary title per Gen. 24:3, 37; similar to the phrase "daughters of man" from Gen. 6:1. These were not "daughters of God".

v2-3 These two verses are arranged in a parallelism (I dislocated the first person pronouns and isolated them from the verbs to make the pattern more obvious) where the act of physical violence is ironically contrasted with his affectionate behavior afterwards:

And when Shechem
the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country,
saw her, he took her, and
lay with her, and
defiled her.

[Dinah
the daughter of Jacob]
And his soul clave unto [her], and
he loved the damsel, and
spoke kindly unto the damsel.

Had he been genuinely affectionate and loving in the first place he would not have raped her. The affection afterwards seems to be an attempt to justify the rape. It shows how insane the Canaanites had become, with rape preceding romance and courtship.

v2 "Hamor", Fox states "Heb. 'Donkey.' Some take the name to prove that they were donkey-drivers, while others see it as an insult to the character"

"took her, and lay with her, and defiled her", the Jewish Publication Society translation renders this "took her and lay with her by force" making it unmistakable it was rape and not simply her being taken advantage of in a compromising situation. The Hebrew term in question is "va-ya`anneha", which denotes physical maltreatment and humiliation, cp. Deut. 21:14, Deut. 22:24.

v4 At that time it was customary for the father to arrange the marriages, as was the case with Abraham sending his servant to obtain a wife for Isaac.

"get me", literally "take for me", tying in with the rhetoric of the various "tak[ings]" in the chapter, particularly the taking in v. 2. His sense of entitlement is that he can rape Dinah and then have his father make she he gets him what he wants, which is Dinah as wife.

v5 "Jacob heard", unfortunately the text does not inform us how Jacob heard the news so quickly. The Hebrew term definitely favors the hearing as being a physical hearing of something audible and not revelation per se. Since Dinah was out to meet "daughters of the land" perhaps Dinah went out with another lady friend or met or made a friend in Shechem's town, and after Dinah's abduction the friend immediately went to inform Jacob. If this is the case, then perhaps this is why when Simeon and Levi sack the town they leave the women alive and kill only the men, returning the favor to the woman, or women, of the town did for Dinah.

"defiled Dinah his daughter", the text is unambiguous in identifying Shechem's actions as morally and religiously repugnant, echoed in v. 7, 13 and 27.

"Jacob held his peace until they were come", Shechem and

Hamor were in his presence well before the sons arrived, and Jacob felt it best to keep his cool on the matter of the rape and the marriage until his sons show up. It is clear from Hamor's and Shechem's lack of disclosure they do not want to deal with the issue of rape. It is safe to conclude Jacob's silence is used as a tool against them to discern their true motives. So, not only are they not disclosing that Shechem committed the rape, Jacob is not disclosing he already knows of that fact.

Jacob's concern is also obviously about starting a full-scale war to the death with this other family (cf. v. 30-31), so his silence is in part diplomatic as well.

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard [it]: and 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. 8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. 9 And make ye marriages with us, [and] give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. 10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.

11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. 12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: 14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that [were] a reproach unto us: 15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we [be], that every male of you be circumcised; 16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. 19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter:

v6-19b Hamor and Shechem go to see Jacob. Hamor proposes marriage between his son and Jacob's daughter, choosing only to point out the financial benefits of such an arrangement (v. 6-10). Shechem promises any bride-price demanded and pleads with Jacob for him to permit the marriage (v. 11-12). The sons of

Jacob refuses to permit the marriage unless Hamor and Shechem and all their people circumcise themselves (v. 13-17). Shechem and Hamor are so pleased to have been granted the terms for marriage they agree even to circumcision.

Note Hamor and Shechem avoid any mention of or apology for rape, instead choosing to focus on the potential for commerce and wealth.

v7 "when they heard of it", Jacob would surely have summoned them immediately upon hearing of it himself.

"wrought folly in Israel", this phrase becomes a standard textual phrase in the Hebrew Bible to identify something morally repugnant or anathema among Israelites, cf. Deut. 22:21, Jer. 29:23, Judges 19:23

v8-12 Following right on the heels of the condemnation of fornication in v. 7, Hamor and Shechem try to cover up the act by failing to confess their sin, deliberately omitting it from their marriage proposal (i.e., Hamor could have taken Jacob aside and confessed that his son has violated his daughter and the right thing to do was for them to marry), and instead appeal to materialistic means to persuade them.

What it boils down to is Hamor is trying to protect his son's reputation, and his own in the process, as well as avoid any illegalities of the issue. While it is speculative, it seems Shechem is an impetuous spoiled son of a wealthy, powerful and indulgent father. Shechem is only interested in gratifying his desires, and Hamor is only interested in avoiding the real issue.

v13-14 Since Shechem and Hamor are being completely deceitful over the situation at hand, the sons resort to clever tactics to prevent Dinah from being raped again. They tell them they must be circumcised, which would effectively prevent any further raping. It also clearly serves as punishment to them as they must inflict pain on themselves in the source of the crime. And clearly, they had additional ulterior motives as well as is evidenced in v. 25.

v17 The sons, knowing about the rape, know they can force Shechem and Hamor to accept their terms by proposing this ultimatum. If they reject it, then they will go and take back Dinah from their own house thereby exposing the rape in the full view of the town. Any attempt to prevent the brothers from

taking back Dinah would surely cause a very public scene in town. Jacob and sons have the upper hand and take advantage of it.

and he [was] more honourable than all the house of his father. 20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21 These men [are] peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, [it is] large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they [are] circumcised. 23 [Shall] not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs [be] ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. 24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

v19c-24 Shechem is well respected among his people (v. 19), so he and his father are successful at persuading their people (v. 20-22) to go through with the circumcision (v. 24). The means of persuasion is they tell the people that by doing this they will benefit materially from it (v. 23).

v19c "and he [was] more honourable than all the house of his father", a poor translation in the KJV. A better translation would be something like "Shechem was the most prominent one in Hamor's house" meaning Shechem was well-respected among his people.

v23 Hamor presents another biased account of the attempted union between the two parties. Here he only mentions that they will obtain Jacob's wealth, he fails to mention they will have to give up some of the local land in order for Jacob to settle there. The land is big enough for everyone, never mind you will have to give up some of yours.

Hamor knows what motivates most people, and plays on that to achieve his own ends. He promises Jacob his people's wealth, and then promises his people they will have Jacob's wealth. Hamor is clearly unethical and manipulative when it comes to getting what he wants, or what Shechem wants. The text is clearly cynical when it comes to this character.

v24 "all that went out of the gate of his city", i.e., all adult males.

25 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. 26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which [was] in the city, and that which [was] in the field, 29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that [was] in the house.

30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I [being] few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. 31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

v25-31 Taking advantage of their self-inflicted injuries, Simeon and Levi attack the city and kill all the men and rescue Dinah (v. 25-26). Then the rest of the sons of Jacob loot the town and take all of the women and children for themselves (v. 27-29). When Jacob learns what they have done he chastises his sons for their brash actions because they jeopardize the safety of all of their family (v. 30). The sons then seek to justify their actions by asking what else they were supposed to do to people who had raped their sister (v. 31).

v25 "on the third day", the whole story has elapsed in a matter of three days. It is safe to assume day 1 contained Dinah's rape and the subsequent appeal to Jacob by Shechem for her hand in marriage. Day 2 would be Shechem's return to town and the convincing of the townspeople to circumcise and follow through. And day 3 would be the sack of the town.

"Simeon and Levi", among the brothers only these two had both the same father and same mother as Dinah, so the implication is their interest in her vindication and release is made all the more keen as a result of closer family ties. However, note throughout the story leading up to this point, it is the brothers in general who are presented as angry about the matter and not just the two of them. The other brothers do care, it is just these two are most angry over it and most prone to take action over it.

"took each man his sword", they take their sword to avenge

the taking of their sister.

v27 "because they had defiled their sister", in the case of rape, the one who did it was required to pay the bride price and marry her unless the father rejected the marriage. In which case, the bride price was still required, cf. Exod. 22:16-17.

v31 Simeon and Levi get the last word in this story (but, Jacob gets the final word in 49:5-7) and it is a rather thought provoking rhetorical question, "Should our sister be treated like a whore?" The author's intent is to get the reader thinking over the whole matter, weighing out the different character's actions and analyzing them. Was Dinah's behavior appropriate? Was she acting like a whore? What about Simeon and Levi's reactions of sacking the entire village, was their retribution a fair one in that they put all of the males of the town to the sword? Does Shechem raping Dinah justify Simeon and Levi turning into vigilantes and killing all males in the entire town, and the their brothers pillaging it? Are Simeon and Levi murderers? The text asks the reader, "What do you think?"

But, aside from the rhetorical question, the clear implication is women in Israel are not to be treated the way Dinah was treated by Shechem. The problem is the way Simeon and Levi dealt with it jeopardized the very existence of Israel.

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