

**And the LORD told her, "The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son."**

**Tom Bradford** writes:

What we can readily see here is that Esau had many children, and that it is clearly spelled out that Esau and Edom are

- a) one in the same individual,
- b) that Esau, brother of Jacob, is the founder of all the Edomite tribes,
- c) he is the namesake of the land of Edom,
- d) that Mt. Seir is in the land of Edom, and that the terms "Seir" and "Edom" are interchangeable. That is, when we hear the Bible speak of the Land of Seir, or Mt. Seir, or Edom, it's all basically the same place. And, that place is to the southeastern end of the Dead Sea.

**Genesis 37:2 is the end of the portion of Genesis written on clay tablets. The remaining part of the book was written in some other way and has a distinctly Egyptian flavor.**

## GENESIS CHAPTERS 34-36

34-36 GEN NLT-C  
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Genesis Previously		
Mankind Created	Nations Formed	Abram Covenanted
Abram at War, is Honored, Land Boundaries Specified		
Sarai substituted, then Rejected Hagar; the Lord supported Her Expanded Names given to Sarai and Abram.		
Abraham was Visited and Warned about Sodom Sodom Was Destroyed, but Lot and Daughters Were Saved.		
King Abimelech takes and quickly returns Sarah		
Isaac is born, then Hagar and Ishmael are dismissed		
The near-sacrifice of Isaac and the death of Sarah.		
Isaac Marries Rebecca		
Isaac prays for a son and received two. God blessed Isaac.		
Jacob acquired both the family birthright and family blessing.		
Then Jacob left Canaan to marry. He saw a stairway to heaven.		
Jacob married Leah, then Rachel. He acquired property.		
Jacob returns to Canaan, Laban pursues, but makes agreement		
Jacob reconciles with his brother Esau.		

The flow of the main story is interrupted again, this time to focus on the rape of Dinah.

### DINAH IS FORCED

**(1) One day Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went to visit some of the young women who lived in the area.**

- **Dinah** violated the social and safety rules and went visiting the pagan neighbors by herself. The young lady did not see the problems that she would create for herself and the rest of the greater family. Commentators estimate her age between 13-16. (Notice the "young girl" statement in verse 4 below.)

- The city was named Shechem and the king's son was also named Shechem.

**(2) But when the local prince, Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, saw Dinah, he seized her and raped her. (3) But then he fell in love with her, and he tried to win her affection with tender words. (4) He said to his father, Hamor, "Get me this young girl. I want to marry her."**

- **Dinah** was unaccompanied, so was taken by **Shechem**, son of a member of the royal household. **Shechem fell in love with her** and wanted her as a wife at any price. All that remained was getting the legalities settled. **Dennis Prager** writes: "Although most ancient societies had laws against raping women of their own tribe or clan, there was rarely, if ever, an explicit prohibition against raping women of other clans. Thus, Shechem would not necessarily think that he had done anything morally wrong in violating a foreign woman, but he would surely recognize that Dinah's clan would view his behavior as inexcusable."

### THE FATHERS NEGOTIATE

**(5) Soon Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter, Dinah. But since his sons were out in the fields herding his livestock, he said nothing until they returned. (6) Hamor, Shechem's father, came to discuss the matter with Jacob.**

- Such a heartache for dad! Then came a conference between the **fathers. Jacob** may have held his peace because he was yet a stranger in the land.

**(6) Meanwhile, Jacob's sons had come in from the field as soon as they heard what had happened. They were shocked and furious that their sister had been raped. Shechem had done a disgraceful thing against Jacob's family, something that should never be done.**

### AFTER REBECCA DIED, REUBEN MADE HIS MOVE

**(22) While he was living there, Reuben had intercourse with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Jacob soon heard about it.**

- **Tom Bradford** says: "Bilhah had been Rachel's servant girl. Nothing else is said about this transgression, for now. But, in time, it will prove to have an enormous bearing on the future of Israel." The incest of **Reuben** gets just one sentence, but it cost him his birthright. He would have been the next leader of the family. See Genesis 49:3-4 where Jacob says:

**"Reuben, you are my firstborn, my strength, the child of my vigorous youth. You are first in rank and first in power. But you are as unruly as a flood, and you will be first no longer. For you went to bed with my wife; you defiled my marriage couch.**

**(22b) These are the names of the twelve sons of Jacob: (23) The sons of Leah were Reuben (Jacob's oldest son), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. (24) The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin. (25) The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant, were Dan and Naphtali. (26) The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant, were Gad and Asher. These are the names of the sons who were born to Jacob at Paddan-aram.**

- **Jacob's** family structure is recorded for all generations to see. He arrived about the time of his father Isaac's death.

### Chapter 36

We will not go into the usual detail with this chapter. It is devoted to the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in the land of Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea. The genealogy represents the fulfillment of the promise that Esau would be the head of a nation Genesis 25:23:

## RACHEL DIED GIVING BIRTH TO BENJAMIN

(15) Leaving Bethel, Jacob and his clan moved on toward Ephrath. But Rachel went into labor while they were still some distance away. Her labor pains were intense. (17) After a very hard delivery, the midwife finally exclaimed, "Don't be afraid—you have another son!" (18) Rachel was about to die, but with her last breath she named the baby Ben-oni (which means "son of my sorrow"). The baby's father, however, called him Benjamin (which means "son of my right hand").

- The midwife tried to cheer Rachel by reporting a son. Rachel named him **Ben-oni**, *son of my sorrow*. Jacob renamed him **Benjamin**, *son of my right hand*. This is son number twelve.

(19) So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). (20) Jacob set up a stone monument over Rachel's grave, and it can be seen there to this day. (21) Then Jacob traveled on and camped beyond Migdal-eder.

- **Rachel** was Jacob's favorite person.
- Verse 19 contains a comment by a later editor because the name **Bethlehem** was not in use yet. It appears in Judges 17:7 as the town name. It was in use before this, so Moses or Joshua, as editors, may have known of it.
- **Rachel's** tomb is shown to tourists yet today. There has been an effort to destroy the tomb, but it may not be authentic as well.



- Dinah's brothers were **shocked and furious**. **Tom Bradford** fine-tunes the picture:

"In verse 7, the last few words say that this thing . . . this rape . . . was "a thing not to be done". To try and find a husband for a girl, who had lost her virginity, was near to impossible. And, in a few more verses we're going to see the King offer a great deal more than the normal bride-price for Dinah, not out of a sense of responsibility, but because he was legally obligated."

(8) Hamor tried to speak with Jacob and his sons. "My son Shechem is truly in love with your daughter," he said. "Please let him marry her. (9) In fact, let's arrange other marriages, too. You give us your daughters for our sons, and we will give you our daughters for your sons. (10) And you may live among us; the land is open to you! Settle here and trade with us. And feel free to buy property in the area."

- **Hamor** addressed the men in the family. The immorality and lawlessness are not faced. "My son wants her for a wife" is the main argument. Meanwhile, she was being held in their city and not allowed to return home. It's a common human trait to minimize our misbehavior or that of a relative (especially a child).
- **Hamor** wants to blend the two peoples by intermarrying and free **trading**. However, the intermarrying would have destroyed this plan of God for a distinct people who worship Him.

(11) Then Shechem himself spoke to Dinah's father and brothers. "Please be kind to me, and let me marry her," he begged. "I will give you whatever you ask. (12) No matter what dowry or gift you demand, I will gladly pay it—just give me the girl as my wife."

- The rapist **Shechem** was also on hand and offered the men any bridal payment and **gift**. There is no ceiling!

## REVENGE PLANNED BY SIMEON AND LEVI

(13) But since Shechem had defiled their sister, Dinah, Jacob's sons responded deceitfully to Shechem and his father, Hamor.

- Deceit is still in the family, just as it had been with Jacob, Rebekah and back up the family line.

(14) They said to them, "We couldn't possibly allow this, because you're not circumcised. It would be a disgrace for our sister to marry a man like you! (15) But here is a solution. If every man among you will be circumcised like we are, (16) then we will give you our daughters, and we'll take your daughters for ourselves. We will live among you and become one people. (17) But if you don't agree to be circumcised, we will take her and be on our way."

- This is a ruse and the brothers have no intention of allowing this marriage or any other marriages.

(18) Hamor and his son Shechem agreed to their proposal. (19) Shechem wasted no time in acting on this request, for he wanted Jacob's daughter desperately. Shechem was a highly respected member of his family, (20) and he went with his father, Hamor, to present this proposal to the leaders at the town gate. (21) "These men are our friends," they said. "Let's invite them to live here among us and trade freely. Look, the land is large enough to hold them. We can take their daughters as wives and let them marry ours. (22) But they will consider staying here and becoming one people with us only if all of our men are circumcised, just as they are. (23) But if we do this, all their livestock and possessions will eventually be ours. Come, let's agree to their terms and let them settle here among us."

- The young man was highly-motivated and respected by his countrymen. Hamor and his son both made the pitch to

## GOD RENAMED JACOB TO ISRAEL

(9) Now that Jacob had returned from Paddan-aram, God appeared to him again at Bethel. God blessed him, (10) saying, "Your name is Jacob, but you will not be called Jacob any longer. From now on your name will be Israel." So God renamed him Israel. (11) Then God said, "I am El-Shaddai—'God Almighty.' Be fruitful and multiply. You will become a great nation, even many nations. Kings will be among your descendants! (12) And I will give you the land I once gave to Abraham and Isaac. Yes, I will give it to you and your descendants after you." (13) Then God went up from the place where He had spoken to Jacob.

- Jacob's name is officially changed to Israel.
- The events here are similar to those of a previous appearance of the Lord. Renewal is the key word now.
- The Lord affirms his power: **Almighty**.
  - Jacob's people are to have children.
  - They will form **nations**.
  - Some will be **kings**.
  - The **land** promise is reaffirmed to Jacob just as it had been said to Abraham and Isaac. Giving the **land** to Jacob includes giving it to his **children** and their **children**.
- God's first appearance here had been in a dream, but this one appears to be in broad daylight.

(14) Jacob set up a stone pillar to mark the place where God had spoken to him. Then he poured wine over it as an offering to God and anointed the pillar with olive oil. (15) And Jacob named the place Bethel (which means "house of God"), because God had spoken to him there.

- Setting up a **pillar** (or standing stone) was a way to mark important events. Otherwise they are soon lost to memory. This was a visual aid.
- Once again, Jacob named the place **Bethel**.

- **Jacob's** clan had expanded recently with the addition of the women and children from Shechem. Without a doubt, they were pagans, worshiping other gods.
- **Jacob** required that **all** members of his household and staff:
  - **Get rid of all your pagan idols.**
  - **Purify** themselves personally.
  - Put on **clean clothes.**
  - The **earrings** were probably charms connected with idol worship.
- The household moved to **Bethel** where **Jacob** would build **an altar.**
- The people all turned in their **gods** and **earrings** and **Jacob buried them** before they moved.



(5) As they set out, a terror from God spread over the people in all the towns of that area, so no one attacked Jacob's family. (6) Eventually, Jacob and his household arrived at Luz (also called Bethel) in Canaan. (7) Jacob built an altar there and named the place El-bethel (which means "God of Bethel"), because God had appeared to him there when he was fleeing from his brother, Esau. (8) Soon after this, Rebekah's old nurse, Deborah, died. She was buried beneath the oak tree in the valley below Bethel. Ever since, the tree has been called Allon-bacuth (which means "oak of weeping").

- God made a way for **Jacob's** greater family to travel without threats from the **cities** they passed near.
- Notice the work of an editor in verse 6.
- This **nurse** (verse 8) was highly regarded by the greater family. **Rebekah**, Isaac's wife, had died earlier.

the **men** of the city. The **land** has room for further expansion. They saw economic benefit for their city.

- The one condition: **circumcision** of all males. No spiritual reason is mentioned. They were *not* doing this to enter the covenant of Abraham or obey the Lord. Instead, sons of Jacob were intending to disable their enemies. The majority were deceived and next we see they lost their lives.

### TREACHERY AT SHECHEM

(24) So all the men in the town council agreed with Hamor and Shechem, and every male in the town was circumcised. (25) But three days later, when their wounds were still sore, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, who were Dinah's full brothers, took their swords and entered the town without opposition. Then they slaughtered every male there, (26) including Hamor and his son Shechem. They killed them with their swords, then took Dinah from Shechem's house and returned to their camp.

- All of the men bought into the plan and were **circumcised**. The plan disabled the warriors. **Simeon and Levi** killed all of the men of the city while they were still in pain, then **Simeon and Levi** retrieved their sister **Dinah** from **Shechem's house**. These men were **full brothers** and **Dinah** was their **full sister**.

(27) Meanwhile, the rest of Jacob's sons arrived. Finding the men slaughtered, they plundered the town because their sister had been defiled there. (28) they seized all the flocks and herds and donkeys—everything they could lay their hands on, both inside the town and outside in the fields. (29) They looted all their wealth and plundered their houses. They also took all their little children and wives and led them away as captives.

- Simeon and Levi took their **flocks, herds and donkeys**. They were going to make money out of this rescue. They enslaved the **wives** and **children** of the town of Shechem.

## THE OBJECTIONS OF JACOB

**(30) Afterward Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have ruined me! You've made me stink among all the people of this land—among all the Canaanites and Perizzites. We are so few that they will join forces and crush us. I will be ruined, and my entire household will be wiped out!" (31) "But why should we let him treat our sister like a prostitute?" they retorted angrily.**

- **Jacob** objected because of possible attacks by other people groups in the area. **Jacob** did not speak against the indiscriminate slaughter and theft by his sons. But when the family blessings were being handed out by **Jacob** at the end of this life, this brutal event was remembered:

Genesis 49:5-8 NLT:

**Simeon and Levi are two of a kind;  
 their weapons are instruments of violence.  
 May I never join in their meetings;  
 may I never be a party to their plans.  
 For in their anger they murdered men,  
 and they crippled oxen just for sport.  
 A curse on their anger, for it is fierce;  
 a curse on their wrath, for it is cruel.  
 I will scatter them among the descendants of Jacob**

The tribe of **Levi** became priests and tenders of the temple. They did not receive an allotment of land. They were **scattered** throughout the other tribes. The property of the descendants of **Simeon** received an inheritance totally surrounded by Judah and were dispersed among them.

- In the present, **Jacob** was concerned about **destruction** of their small nation. **Simeon and Levi** justified their deceitful attack because of the treatment of **Dinah**. (Is there anything that can't be justified?)
- The Lord is not mentioned in the chapter. There is no hint of seeking God's will. These men acted rashly to save their

honor and that of Dinah. The violation could have been handled in some other way without leading to a war that killed every man in Shechem, and brought their widows and children into slavery. But as the story unfolds, the will of God will be done in Jacob's life and God's hand in history will be clearly seen.

## JACOB MOVES BACK TO BETHEL

**Burton Coffman** says: "This chapter is a collection of somewhat miscellaneous items, some of them out of chronological sequence, but all of them pertinent to concluding the personal history of Jacob, reaching a climax in his accession to the patriarchal preeminence inherited from Isaac as head of the Chosen People."

**(35:1) Then God said to Jacob, "Get ready and move to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother, Esau."**

- The Lord told **Jacob** to move his family to **Bethel**.
- God orders Jacob to move to Bethel, the place where so many years earlier Jacob had stopped on his journey **out of** Canaan, on his way to Mesopotamia, and saw the vision of the angels ascending and descending on the stairway between Earth and Heaven.
- God reminds **Jacob** of the promise that he had made some thirty years before. Genesis 28:20-22.

**(2) So Jacob told everyone in his household, "Get rid of all your pagan idols, purify yourselves, and put on clean clothing. (3) We are now going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to the God who answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has been with me wherever I have gone." (4) So they gave Jacob all their pagan idols and earrings, and he buried them under the great tree near Shechem.**