

**Esau Approaches (Gen. 33:1-21)**

*1 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. 2 And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last.*

- Jacob divides the family up and sends them across in groups.
- Moses skillfully uses foreshadowing to show us the seeds of trouble that lie ahead in the family relationships. There is clear favoritism towards Rachel and Joseph.

**Together At Last (Gen. 32:3-7)**

*3 Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. 4 But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. 5 And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, “Who are these with you?”*

*So he said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” 6 Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. 7 And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.*

- Jacob gives another display of deference, by bowing seven times. This was probably the type of bowing that someone would perform to a superior.
- Perhaps to everyone's total surprise, Esau comes running. The Lord has done some kind of work in Esau's life, and has turned his heart towards Jacob.
- Esau seems to be dumbfounded at the prosperity of his brother.
- Jacob again refers to himself as Esau's servant, and the others follow his lead.

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**No, I Insist! (Gen. 32:8-11)**

*8 Then Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?"  
And he said, "These are to find favor in the sight of my lord."*

*9 But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."*

*10 And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. 11 Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took it.*

- Esau questions the gift, and Jacob very plainly says that they are to win his favor.
- Esau replies that he himself is also wealthy, or at least satisfied with what he has, and so he really doesn't need anything from Jacob.
- We don't know who these 400 men are.
- Jacob replies (jokes?) that seeing his brother is like seeing the face of God.
- Finally, Esau relents and takes the gift. This is a kind of awkward exchange, but it likely meant they were now to be considered friends.

**To Ride Together Or Not? (Gen. 32:12-17)**

*12 Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you."*

*13 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. 14 Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir."*

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*15 And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." 16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. 17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.*

- Jacob was glad at this unexpected turn of events, but that didn't mean he *trusted* Esau. He didn't want to travel together with Esau, nor did he want any of Esau's people to remain with *his* people.
- It's also been pointed out that Jacob was acting a little bit like his old "Jacob" self here, indicating that he was going to join Esau, but going the other way instead.
- Significantly, there is no mention of a covenant needing to be made.

### **A New Home And An Altar (Gen. 32:18-20)**

*18 Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. 19 And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. 20 Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.*

- Jacob returns to the good old habits of his grandfather Abraham, by not settling in the city. He is going to dwell in tents with all his livestock, outside the city.
- In order to have a little piece of land for himself, he buys a certain quantity of land from the offspring of Hamor for 100 pieces of money.
- These are Canaanite people, and the Hebrew people, wandering people such as Jacob would have wanted to stay away from them and their immoral customs.
- This can get a little confusing because Shechem is the name of the city or the region, and also the name of a young man, the son of Hamor.

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## **Shechem: A Key City**

Shechem was tremendously important to the patriarchs. Shechem was Abraham's first real stop in the Promised Land, all the way back in Genesis 12.

- Shechem was a Canaanite city. We have historical records of them fighting against the Egyptians way back around 1850 B.C.
- The "Canaanites" were composed of a number of small tribes who, over time, would of course become very hostile to the people of Israel.
- Hamor was a prince or a king of the *Hivites*, one of the Canaanite peoples. The Hivites lasted all the way into the time of Joshua, and beyond.

## **Building An Altar**

Jacob begins his stay in the Promised Land by building an altar to the Lord at Shechem. He has come full circle, and is back where Abraham built his first altar in the land.

- Jacob calls this altar by the name *El Elohe Israel*: "God, the God of Israel."
- Was this an evangelistic act on Jacob's part? The generic name for God in this part of the world was El. Perhaps by naming this altar *El, the God of Israel*, Jacob was saying that this God whom you worship as El is my God.

## **Trouble For Dinah (Gen. 34:1-4)**

*1 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to 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 violated her. 3 His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. 4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."*

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- This is the second time Dinah is mentioned. Her name means “judged,” in the sense of being acquitted or vindicated.
- Shechem rapes her, and then he says, “I have to have her!”

**The Worst Proposal Ever (Gen. 34:5-10)**

*5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. 6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob’s daughter, a thing which ought not to be done. 8 But Hamor spoke with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. 9 And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. 10 So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it.”*

- We don’t know how Jacob heard about the rape, but now he is in a terrible spot.
- Dinah’s name becomes a play on words here. How will she get justice?

**A Counter-Proposal (Gen. 34:11-13)**

*11 Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, “Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12 Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife.” 13 But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. 14 And they said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us. 15 But on this condition we will consent to you: If you will become as*

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*we are, if every male of you is circumcised, 16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone.”*

- Shechem’s statements might also have been viewed as an additional insult.

**The Hivites Agree (Gen. 34:18-24)**

*18 And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor’s son. 19 So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob’s daughter. He was more honorable than all the household of his father.*

*20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: 21 “These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. 23 Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.” 24 And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.*

- The king and his son agree, and Hamor is so eager that he seems to have undergone circumcision right away. These men go to the gate of the city, which is where business was always done, and they the plan before the men of the city.

**Simeon And Levi’s Treachery (Gen. 34:25-29)**

*25 Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came boldly*

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*upon the city and killed all the males. 26 And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. 28 They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in the field, 29 and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that was in the houses.*

- Simeon and Levi kill the men, who are unable to move about easily. Apparently the other brothers join in looting. They take everything, even the people.
- We don't know if Dinah was herself a captive or now there voluntarily. In any case, this was a zealous and gross overreaction to the rape of Dinah.
- We will see at the end of Genesis that Jacob will prophetically limit the prospects of Simeon and Levi by giving them a poor blessing. His words came to pass in that their two tribes would not have true portions in the Promised Land.

### **Jacob's Fear (Gen. 34:30-31)**

*30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I." 31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"*

- The brothers justify themselves by saying that they have in essence have stood up for their sister's honor, albeit in a grossly excessive way.
- Jacob is looking at the bigger picture, and so he becomes afraid.
- This is a terrible picture of the power of anger and rash decision-making

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