

# Men of Valor; Women of Honor

by

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AUV	An Understandable Version	Darby:	Darby Bible 1889
BBE:	Bible in Basic English	DHH:	Dios Habla Hoy
Brenton:	Brenton's English Septuagint	DRB:	Douay Rheims Bible
CEV:	Contemporary English Version	ESV:	Eng Standard Version
CENT:	Common Era New Testament	GNB:	Good News Bible
CJB:	Complete Jewish Bible	KJV:	King James Version
CSB:	Christian Standard Bible	Mace:	Daniel Mace NT

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## *A brief Explanation of the use of the Divine Name as employed in this Study*

Throughout this writing, we will employ the divine name of Yahweh written in only the Hebrew characters: יהוה *yod, hay, waw, hay*, as seen above in both the paleo script (ancient: *top*), and the modern script (below). These lower characters are the current text (of the last 2,000 years) as seen directly above our explanation. These four Hebrew letters are known in Greek as the Tetragrammaton: tetra meaning four; and grammaton meaning letters: the four sacred letters. The question is, are those Hebrew letters consonants, or vowels? The paragraphs following this one address that question. Hebrew is read from right to left. So reading from right to left, phonetically, these letters are sounded *ee-ah-oo-ay*, and when combined together, are pronounced as *Yahweh*. In like manner, we honor His Son (John 5:23) who came in his Father's name (John 5:43), by making use of the Hebrew name Yahshua (the abbreviated form of Yahweh: *Yah* with the suffix *shua*), denoting his great work of salvation as mentioned in Matthew 1:21 and Isaiah 53. Most are content with the Hebrew name Yahshua in regard to the Son; others say Yahoshua; and a few even refer to him by the fullest form Yahwehshua. We feel that all three forms are acceptable in much the same way as Jack is a nickname for John, which is an abbreviated form of Jonathon. We do not feel that Messiah is claiming equality with his Father by coming in the Father's name any more than other young men who bear their father's name. Nor are those who use the fullest form of Messiah's name. It is simply a matter of respect and honor shown to them both.

Some have expressed that John 5:43 isn't saying that Messiah meant He came in the actual name of His Father, *but rather in the character*. The latter part of the verse would not make sense, they say, when other *believers* come in their own name to do a work for the Master, that it is not necessary for every *believer* to have the name *Yah* as part of their own name. While the logic of that statement certainly applies *to believers*: that is, *Yah* doesn't need to form part of our own name in order to do a work for Him; a second observation would be that since the Messiah did come in *the* name that is above every [other] name (Phillipians 2:9), that is, the very name of His Father, others who might come *claiming to be messiahs*, could even come in non-Hebrew names and still be accepted... even above the Jewish Messiah who came in the Hebrew name of His Father. A good example would be the name Barabbas (Bar+Abba: Son of the Father). He claimed to be a messiah, and he came in his own name, and even had a following. And though he may have come in the *title* of the Father, he did not come in the *name* of the Father.

The name Yeshua was apparently not used until after the Babylonian exile, as we find in reference to Neh. 8:17, not to mention the 28 other places we find Jeshua, and the one place (1st Chronicles 24:11), wherein it is spelled *Jeshuah*. Although this is evidently the Aramaic form of Joshua (pronounced Yahshua), since we find it these thirty times in Ezra's writings, it too, is an acceptable form of our Saviour's name. Most Messianic believers use this valid form. Many others who insist on the form Yahshua say, because Joshua (pronounced Yahshua), appears over 200 times long before the Aramaic Yeshua, their preference is to that more ancient form, and even disparage Yeshua. But such a quarrel should not be amongst believers: both forms are found in the inspired Scriptures of Truth. Apparently, the name *Jesus* is the Greek attempt to transliterate this form Jeshua. We say attempt, because the truest meaning of the word *transliterate*, is to transfer a name from one language to another *sound for sound*. The *s* on the end of the name *Jesus* is known as a *declension* in Greek, denoting the masculine gender, *but is not pronounced*, in the same way that the *s* is silent in *apropos*, or *rendezvous*, or the *t* on the end of *Chevrolet*. Therefore the actual pronunciation of *Jesus*, is *Jesu*, and since the *J* is only 400 years old, the most accurate form of *Jesus* is *Yesu*, a form that is found in many early hymns and songs, and comes from Yeshua.

Since many computers do not have the Hebrew fonts, in times past we have expressed the four Hebrew characters of the Divine Name by their corresponding English equivalents: *I A U E* (Iaue: still pronounced as Yahweh as previously noted). Josephus, the Jewish historian contemporaneous with the apostles, and of the Levitical lineage, in his famous book, *Wars* 5.5.7, informs us that the Divine Name consists of four *vowels*. He was an eyewitness of the golden crown worn by the high priest, having the revered name of the Creator written upon it. If indeed, this name that is above all names consists of four vowels, then every language on earth should employ *no more than four letters* in expressing The Name, and those letters should be *vowels* rather than consonants (eg. IAUE, as opposed to YHWH). The obvious reason this is important is because, as most are aware of, one can add whatever vowels he may wish to four consonants, and from there may come up with a score of "sacred" names. Those who add an *a* and an *e* to YHWH, as in YaHWeH, have surely found the equivalent of יהוה. Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215); Origen of Alexandria (185-254); Epiphanius of Salamis (320-403); Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457); all of them Greek historians and *Hebrew* scholars, though decades apart from one another, all bear harmonious witness in that the Tetragrammaton, transliterated into the Greek language, consists of the Greek vowels, *iota, alpha, upsilon, eta*, (IAUE) which in English, is *IAUE*. Let us bear in mind that this matter is vital enough that one of the Ten Commandments in the moral law is devoted solely to the matter of addressing it in particular. We say *moral* law with the understanding that it (the moral law), begins in Genesis 1:1, and ends in Deuteronomy 34:12. This is brought forth for the benefit of those who may have thought that only the Ten Commandment portion of the Torah was the moral part.

We are compelled to say at this point, for the benefit of our friends who use a different form than that of Yahweh, or even Yahshua, who do not accept the record of Josephus, or any of the early Greek scholars, when you encounter יהוה, please (as we know you'll do anyway) use the name you believe in, and love; we shall certainly understand. Even if your preference is the LORD or *Jesus*, we'll understand. Just do as you do when you read a Bible, or any other article; replace the words that you are reading with what you are more comfortable with. We encourage you to read not only the entirety of this essay, but even read it more than once, as we believe you may be Scripturally surprised, and hopefully edified. And just in case you may be interested in the research we have done through the years in regard to the Divine Name, you may request our little book entitled, *A Rose by any Other Name*.

As we have endeavored to show due respect and reverence to our heavenly Father by addressing Him in His true name, we also employ the Hebrew title *Elohyim* for the English "God," written in the English lettering, and the term *Messiah* in place of Christ. If the reader is unfamiliar with these names and titles, it will be a good exercise of the mind to do the transfer, but more importantly, we all (the writers, and the readers alike), shall express appropriate reverence to our Creator in so doing. As we would honor a foreign dignitary by addressing him by his proper name and title, though it may initially sound a little strange to our English ears, so

much the more should we do in regard to our heavenly Father, and His only begotten Son. And that, having been said from a Hebrew Messianic perspective, we know that if *God* and *Christ* are the terms one has known and loved all his or her life, we certainly respect your right to exercise what you believe to be the truth. In using the Hebrew terms and names, we in no way mean to discredit or disrespect another's convictions. We are merely following our own. It needs to be understood that we do not claim to be Hebrew scholars, but we are not exactly novice students either.

Most of the Scriptural quotes shall be made from several different versions that are available to most everyone, but we shall state which version we are quoting from. The reason we employ different versions is because as we have found, some hold closer to the original Hebrew language *in certain places*, but not in others. We understand there are over 300 English versions, and we do not have access to but a few really. We believe though, that the Almighty has preserved His Word in spite of man's interference. Many of the translational problems we believe, are not intentional. Some words in Hebrew like *wall* (שׂוֹר שoor), and *ox* (שׂוֹר shore) are so close that we can see how the translators could have gotten them confused, and thereby give an erroneous rendering of what was actually said in the Hebrew text.

When a Greek or Hebrew word is included, a reference number # will indicate that it is taken from the *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. If the reference number is quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures one will find the word in the corresponding Hebrew portion of the Strong's which is the first portion of the Concordance while the Greek is the latter. As is nearly always the case, it is well nigh impossible to avoid the use of certain words that shall be offensive to some. We apologize for this in advance. The term *Holy Spirit* for example, is often replaced by some with the *Set apart Spirit*, but **Set**, being the name of an Egyptian deity, we, by the same principle, do not feel free to utilize that word in reference to the Spirit of Elohim. The term *set apart*, by the way, in Hebrew is פֹּלֵה pawlaw # 6395. The *set apart Spirit* then, would be, *Ruakh HaPawlaw*. It is our aim therefore to do the best we can with this inferior English language with which we have to work. We pray that you, the reader, will bear with us in this.

# Men of Valor; Women of Honor

## Introduction

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Isaiah 40:10, 11 Look! The powerful יהוה Elohym is coming to rule with his mighty arm. He brings with him what he has taken in war, and he rewards his people. יהוה cares for his nation, just as shepherds care for their flocks. He carries the lambs in his arms, while gently leading the mother sheep.

Isaiah 40:13, 14 Has anyone told יהוה what he must do or given him advice? Did יהוה ask anyone to teach him wisdom and justice? Who gave him knowledge and understanding?

Isaiah 40:17 Elohym thinks of the nations as far less than nothing. (CEV)

Proverbs 1:2-5 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain to wise counsels: (CEV)

*“Love is something you do to help and bless others.”* This is the watchword of a husband and wife missionary team in Haiti. It is a good saying, and worthy of our thought as we embark into another Scriptural journey. Sometimes what we may be called to do in our love for our fellow inhabitants of the earth may cut across our preconceived ideas, or what we may have been taught was the right way, when in fact, it was not. During the 50’s and 60’s Bibles were decreed contraband in the communist countries, and were therefore prohibited; but Brother Andrew felt called of the Almighty to *smuggle* them in by the carloads, and eventually the truckloads...into those very countries. He did this in open violation of the civil laws of those atheistic regimes. He even prayed as he approached the checkpoints of the communist borders, *“LORD, you opened the eyes of the blind when you walked on the earth; now I ask you to close the eyes of the seeing that I may get these precious Bibles into the hands of your starving children.”* He was praying for the great King of the universe to help him break the laws of the land! The text above in Isaiah says that no one can instruct the Almighty, that, in fact, He doesn’t ask anyone for advice. He expects us to learn wisdom from Him that we may not misrepresent Him in our own judgment. That being the case, we may see ourselves in His school wherein we escalate ever higher as we approach His mind of Wisdom.

The Scriptures give us a series of stories as a means of testing and perfecting our spiritual aptitude. We are not left to guess the answers however. The great Teacher has given us the Book of Rules. We call it the Law, the Torah, and His Instructions; but perhaps the best definition of all is that it is His *Word*: a transcript of His character. It is a marvelous gift to the world because it teaches us how He views the circumstances of life: His response, or how He would handle a matter. By observing Him, we may learn what and what not to do. The story of Dinah and Shechem is a classic example.

As we approached the end of this writing we were invited to view *The Story of Joseph*, a well-done film presentation by *The Bible Collection Series*. The acting, the costumes, and the scenery were all superb; and if we were not familiar with the actual Scriptural account, we might be misled as to what actually took place under the influence of such a fine portrayal. With all their best intentions (and we’re glad they made the movie), as students of the Scriptures, we must always keep in mind, that movies are not a totally reliable source of doctrine. It says of Joseph in Genesis 39:6:

Potiphar turned over everything he had to the care of Joseph and did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Joseph was well-built and good-looking. (GNB)

The producers found a fine specimen of a young man to play the part of Joseph. When Potiphar comes to interrogate Joseph (in the movie), he asks him how he could violate his trust by attempting to rape his wife? Joseph assures him of his innocence; that because of his commitment to his Elohim and his own abhorrence of such an act, he could never do such a thing. Potiphar then asks Joseph to elaborate, and he tells him of the story of his sister Dinah. The film depicts Joseph's brother Simeon to be of an impetuous, blood-thirsty spirit always with a two-foot blade in his hand. Levi is sly and cunning, also bearing a large knife. They are in constant collision with their righteous, gentle father. Simeon looks like a boxer with a broken nose. But is this a true representation of these two men?

Our responsibility is to rightly divide the Word of Truth from Hollywood's interpretation. And while it is true, our purpose in this composition is to weigh the actions of all those involved in the story, of deeper significance is our burden to uphold the honor and the dignity of women. We have observed as people move into an understanding and a commitment to the high standard of the Torah, somehow, many men seem to gravitate in a negative direction of minimizing and even depreciating the value and the honor of women. We have even been in some congregations wherein the women and girls were not permitted to utter a sound, or even participate in the singing of hymns. We have seen physical, mental, and verbal abuse, all justified under the cloak of religious zeal for the Torah. We want our statement to be clear from the outset: we completely renounce *and denounce* all such abuse. Therefore, the greater purpose of this writing is to encourage all men and brethren to take a stand with us. We declare that the Torah teaches exactly opposite of such injustice. We encourage men of all faiths to not stand by uninvolved when abuse of any kind is seen. Let us uproot it together, wherever it may be.

We heard the story of a Roman Catholic priest somewhere down in Mexico, who would punish abusive husbands by tying their hands to a pole after having removed their shirt, and give them a few lashes with a horse-whip. He soon brought an end to that sin in his town. Our approach is not quite so severe...in the flesh; *but in the spirit*, we are not one ounce less committed to uprooting this warped view on the part of men. They are not upholding the principles of the Torah: they are grossly *misrepresenting* that high and holy standard. This is a call for men of all faiths and in all places to stand like men in defense of women and children. We are glad that more women are learning to defend themselves against abusive men, but for the most part, women are extremely vulnerable. We have found that men who so freely mistreat the helpless, paralyze when facing a man. Even the Koran teaches respect for women, and Muslim men who do otherwise are misrepresenting their faith. We are thankful for those noble men and women of Islam who take a stand for the righteous principle of justice, kindness, and courage against all criminal activity perpetrated against the innocent and the helpless.

We do not know what Dinah's brothers looked like, but we doubt that Simeon looked like a boxer with a broken nose, and Levi like a cunning fox. Simeon may have had a very kindly face more like Billy Graham's. In our effort to judge everyone righteously, let us not capitalize on their apparent mistakes, nor let us overly praise their good points. Let's compare Scripture with itself in our analysis. In regard to the story of Shechem and Dinah let us bear in mind that we are dealing with the very serious crimes of rape, kidnap, and holding a minor hostage. In the same stroke of the pen, we are dealing with the right and the wrong of how it was resolved. When we are uncertain on how to judge in a matter, our only recourse is to consult the Torah. Christendom is built on a *creed*: a set belief of what constitutes right and wrong; and that belief may not always coincide with what the Scriptures actually have to say on the matter. According to the creed, *it is always wrong to kill*, even in capital punishment. The Hebrew faith on the other hand, is built *on a code*: which calls for the absolute necessity of weighing out everything that may be involved in the picture, allowing the weight of evidence to be the deciding factor. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 13, we have the sad story of David's eldest son Amnon raping his half-sister Tamar. Years passed without David addressing the crime perpetrated against his daughter. Finally Absalom, Tamar's big brother, wrought due justice according to the Word of the Torah. *Our question*: why did David, King of Israel and the supreme judge of the land, refuse to obey the requirements of the Torah? Did he perhaps fear that his own immoral behavior with Bathsheba years before may come into question? Even if such were the case, was not his daughter's honor

of greater value to him than even his own reputation? A criminal had violated her dignity, and her own father just looked the other way. How does that make us feel about David? He once had a man killed so he could have his wife. When the prophet Nathan brought divine conviction to him through his parable, David repented at his own illicit activity. Now he has opportunity to defend an innocent victim, his daughter, against the evil violation of her virgin purity wrought against her by a sinful man, even though he may have been the son of the king. Apart from Absalom's later anarchy against his father and the kingdom, we are compelled to ask, *did he violate the standard of the Torah in finally executing the criminal?* Are we to condemn him by concluding that his solitary motive was nothing more than vengeance, because Tamar happened to be his sister? What if Amnon had raped his wife? What if he had raped one of David's concubines? Would that vindicate in our eyes justifiable homicide on the part of the offended husband? Even the American civil law exonerates a vengeful husband who goes after such a detestable character; *are we to think less of the one who carries out the requirements of the Torah?* Who stood more on the side of justice: brother Absalom, or father David?

In like manner, the patriarch Jacob, revealed an indecisiveness regarding the same violation of his daughter Dinah. And, like Absalom, Dinah's big brothers stepped in and upheld the standard of the Torah. But even though they may have done a good thing in defending the honor of their little sister, *how they did it* is what we need to investigate. In trying to uphold the principle of justice for their sister, did they somehow abort that principle in regard to Shechem? When we compare Shechem with Amnon, we see that he was certainly more irreproachable than wicked Amnon. *Shechem wanted to marry Dinah*, and even submitted himself to the pain of circumcision in his effort to comply with her brothers' requirement. Plus, circumcision has to do with the covenant of righteousness; to employ such a sacred rite as a subterfuge is the epitome of deceit and guile. Was it not cunning for them to create such a ruse as the rite of circumcision as a cloak for a sinister motive? Did they pre-intend to kill all the men in town by rendering them helpless? These are the things we need to determine. The Hebrew code calls for us to weigh out all the factors before giving our verdict. Seldom do we not find some good and some bad in every individual of any given story. Nearly everyone seems to have a little of both.

In our observance of the apparent negligence of defending their daughter's honor, we feel there is a certain factor that seems to influence such an attitude at least in the cases mentioned above. Even though Lot apparently had only one wife, we know that David had several wives and Jacob had four. Could this have encouraged a spirit of devaluation for women in general? Not that all monogamous marriages are perfect, but in those cultures where polygamy is practiced, we see a lack of equality in how the several wives are treated. Even in the case of Jacob, Rachel was loved more than Leah; and Leah was loved more than Zilpah and Bilhah. And so it was with even the children that were born by them. Jacob did not try to hide his paternal affection for Rachel's children above the rest. He evidently loved Rachel's son Joseph more than Leah's daughter Dinah. But even though we find these traits of character manifest in the various players in the great drama of Scripture, let us remember that *the ultimate judgment* lies with the grand Wisdom of the eternal One. He wants to see though, how much of His likeness is in His children who uphold the transcript of His character. That transcript is called in the Hebrew tongue, the Torah. We may faintly grasp a hold of His manner of equity as we examine all the factors of these Scriptural stories, and as best as we can, dismiss all bias and prejudice for or against each player in the script, and attempt to find even the true motives of each, in our effort to be fair. *"To the Torah and the Tehodah (witness of the prophets); whoever speaks contrary to these, it is because there is no light in them."* (Isaiah 8:20).

For the most part, the religious world has disavowed allegiance to His Law, whether nailing it to the cross, or replacing it with the writings of their own sages. Man always needs law however, by which to judge between right and wrong; *but we need right law*. Without right law, we'll wind up calling good evil and evil good (Isaiah 5:20). And so, for all who recognize the true Law of the Almighty, and lean not to their own understanding; i. e. what they were taught in their churches, synagogues, or mosques; they will hone their spiritual skill to the point wherein they will not condemn the righteous and acquit the malevolent.

Proverbs 17:15 יָהִי doesn't like those who defend the guilty or condemn the innocent. (CEV)

If indeed, we pledge allegiance to the Law of יְהוָה, we may still run the risk of misjudging the actions of another. How is that possible? By standing too close to the picture. We often focus in on only one aspect of the scene before us—perhaps only a shadowed portion, and fail to see the brighter side. Although the philosophy of the court may be that a man is held to be innocent until proven guilty, when the judge and jury look upon a man standing before them, perhaps in chains, what is the first impression that runs through their minds? Do they think, “*This man is not guilty of any crime, why do they have him bound?*” Or because he is bound, do they think, “*This man is in trouble with the law—he must be guilty.*” Then if he refuses to raise his right hand and swear or affirm to tell the truth, because to do so would be a violation of his conscience, that only seems to add to the shadow of the picture. But when we “behold the man” standing before us, let us consider, he may be the Messiah “*in His distressing disguise,*” as Mother Teresa put it. Messiah said, “*If you mistreat one of the least of these My brothers, you mistreat Me.*” (Matthew 25:45). If you condemn the innocent, even though he may be declared guilty by an unjust law of man (as was the case with our Lord Yahshua), if the divine Law does not condemn him, then neither can we. And if we do, we’ll stand condemned before the Great White Throne of Judgment ourselves one solemn day.

The Torah says we shall not bear false witness *against* our neighbor (Exodus 20:16). We must not injure the character of another. Can we injure the character of another *by bearing true witness* against him? *Is it ever wrong to tell the truth?* There once was a man who had served some time in prison for theft, but he repented and had a true conversion experience and had become a hard-working contractor. Prison life had instilled within him a quiet reserve—even a shyness. His employees would sometimes ask the foreman why Frank was so quiet all the time and so hard to get to know? Should the foreman, who was a close friend with Frank, tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about his life? Did he even know all the truth about his life? Did they need to know the whole truth about him? Sometimes bearing true witness can be just as injurious to a person as bearing false witness against him. Gossip isn’t necessarily telling lies about someone—it may be the truth: the whole injurious truth. We can see then, there is a time to speak and a time to remain silent; we must educate ourselves into that wisdom to know the difference.

The following is a study on the lives of some of the most valiant men of Scripture, and some unlikely heroes. Sometimes, it requires in-depth research to determine the true nature of the actions of others. We must judge in a righteous manner (John 7:24). When *Christian and Faithful* (in the book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, by John Bunyan) encountered one *Valiant for Truth*, he was covered in blood, and wielding a bloody sword in his hand. The men were aghast at the sight of such an individual, but soon found out that he had just done serious battle with two or three demons, and sent them running. He was a righteous warrior in the cause of truth though his appearance seemed to be quite the opposite. We must not judge according to appearance (John 7:24). As there are ways that may seem right to a person, but are actually wrong (Proverbs 16:25) without righteous judgment, there are also ways that may seem wrong to a man at first glance, but are actually the ways of truth and life. So it is in the matter of our own assessment of others’ words and actions. The popular view may not always be the accurate one or the one that is honored in the sight of Heaven. Messiah said in Matthew 24:24, that if it were possible even the very elect shall be deceived. Let us rightly divide His Word of Truth from man’s erroneous views (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:15).

According to the book, *Half the Sky*, written by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, there are over six million women missing or unaccounted for in the world today. In most of the world, women are viewed as inferior, and in some Moslem countries, quite a number of women are unjustly tried in bogus courts (usually without any representation), are then found “guilty” (under the pretext of having committed adultery), and subsequently executed by the cruel death of stoning. Although very graphic, and not recommended for children’s viewing, we strongly recommend that you, the reader of this commentary, either view the two films, *Not Without my Daughter*, and *The Stoning of Soraya*, or read the books...as well as *Behind the Vail in Saudi*



*Arabia.* It is heartbreaking when we consider the atrocities that are presently being committed against the very ones who should be protected and honored by the men throughout the world. Let us consider how some of the great men of Scripture valued, and protected their women. Though we may be taken aback somewhat by the methods they employed, let us not be afraid to examine their motives, and determine whether they were good or evil. We need to back away from standing too close to the picture in order to be sure we are grasping every detail.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis, we read of how Abraham's nephew Lot, was taken captive into a foreign land, along with his family. His Uncle Abraham, upon hearing of the calamity marshaled his band of 318 warriors, saddled their horses and went out against four powerful kings who had just conquered *five* kingdoms, one of which Lot and his family were citizens.

Genesis 14: 12-16 They also captured Abram's nephew Lot, who lived in Sodom. They took him and his possessions and then left. At this time Abram the Hebrew was living near the oaks that belonged to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his brothers Eshcol and Aner were Abram's friends. Someone who had escaped from the battle told Abram that his nephew Lot had been taken away. Three hundred eighteen of Abram's servants were fighting men, so he took them and followed the enemy as far north as the city of Dan. That night, Abram divided up his troops, attacked from all sides, and won a great victory. But some of the enemy escaped to the town of Hobah north of Damascus, and Abram went after them. He brought back his nephew Lot, together with Lot's possessions and the women and everyone else who had been captured. (CEV)

That it mentions the women in the rescue reveals the value that both Abraham and יְהוָה placed upon our precious mothers and sisters and daughters. Let us be mindful at the same time, to note that it was not without the violence of combat that the victims were redeemed. Because they met with resistance from their adversaries some blood had to be shed. Abraham met the vast throng of warriors with his militia astutely, through guerrilla warfare by night. Guerrilla warfare involves using stealth against the enemy, especially when severely outnumbered.

By reviewing these stories of Scripture, we capture a glimpse of what it means for a man to be valiant: *Men of Valor*. The word valor, H2428 כַּחֲזִיק *khah'-yil*, has more to do with strength of character than mere physical strength.

Judges 6:11-16 And there came an angel of יְהוָה, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide *it* from the Midianites. And the angel of יְהוָה appeared unto him, and said unto him, יְהוָה *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

Because Gideon began humble and ever remained humble he remained a man of valor: a mighty man of valor. Before noble deeds can be accomplished, a noble character must we attain. So has it ever been, and so shall it ever be. Thus it was with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham was a quiet man, but when it came to warfare, he became a violent man: but not for evil. War is opposite of peace; war, by its very nature is violent. Men are ordained of יְהוָה to protect their families and homeland by engaging in violent warfare. Man's character must be a perfect balance of peacefulness in peaceful times and yes, violence in times of war. With this backdrop of the Valiant Man who was great-grandfather to the sons of Jacob, let us now begin our story of Dinah, bearing in mind that she and her brothers are the first generation to follow the three great patriarchs of the anointed family. We suggest you first read the entirety of Genesis 34. It will give you the reader an outline of what we shall discuss in detail. In the version below, the word *unattended* is included in brackets, but as the story reveals, the addition is warranted.

Genesis 34:1, 2 NOW DINAH daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out [unattended] to see the girls of the place. And when Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he seized her, lay with her, and humbled, defiled, and disgraced her. (AMP)

## Challenge One: Saints or Sinners?

The proper translation of words means everything. The translation above says that *he lay with her*, and like the KJV, this fails to fully grasp the violence of a man *forcing* a woman (or young 14 or 15 year old *girl* in the case of Dinah), to submit to his unrestrained passions. The Hebrew word for *lay* is *shakhav* שכב, which includes: *to cast down, make to lie down, to ravish*. These words are descriptive of the heinous crime of rape. What does it mean to *defile* her? H6031: ענה *aw-naw'* to *depress* literally or figuratively, afflict; defile, exercise force, hurt, ravish.

We're all familiar with the word ravish. This sinful young man criminally forced himself upon Dinah (whose name by the way, means *justice*). A grave *injustice* had befallen her. Hoping not to be too repetitive in this matter, we need to make a point. There are quite a few translations that do proper justice to the text such as the Contemporary English Version.

She was seen by Hamor's son Shechem, the leader of the Hivites, and he grabbed her and raped her. (CEV)

According to Genesis 37:35, Jacob had more daughters than just Dinah; the reason she is mentioned in the narrative of the Scripture is because of this appalling incident. Regardless how many daughters he may have had, his protective watch care should have applied to them all. Our children are the gift we bring to our Creator:

Psalm 127:3 "See, children are the heritage of יהוה: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

One thing we must not fail to notice: by the account of the story, Shechem had not only raped Dinah, but *was now holding her captive in his house*. He did not return her to her family. Without being aware of this, we may find ourselves being more sympathetic toward Shechem than Dinah and her grieving family. It may be considered somewhat noble that the nefarious young man wanted to marry the girl he had raped, and was even willing to pay a dowry for her, but all things considered, there is nothing noble about Shechem. If he were truly noble, he would have escorted the young girl back to her father and mother from the beginning (without raping her) and then express his desire to marry her, and his willingness to comply with their desires. It says that he was the *most* honorable of all Hamor's sons (Genesis 34:19), but we must ask, By whose standard? Certainly not the standard of the Torah. One can only imagine the disgraceful condition of the rest of the family if he were the *most* honorable.

Before examining Jacob's action to protect the honor and the person of his daughter, let us consider for a moment what he probably would have done, had it been Joseph, his beloved *son* who had been kidnapped and physically abused by a local pervert in the nearby settlement. No doubt, like his grandfather Abraham before him, without considering the odds against him, he would have courageously ridden into town and redeemed his precious son Joseph without further adieu. It may well have involved the violence of a righteous warfare. In fact, it probably would have. And since he would have been outnumbered, he would have had to employ as mentioned before, guerrilla tactics, wherein stealth and covertness become the chief weapons. For as it says in Ecclesiastes 9:18, "*Wisdom is better than weapons of war.*" And we also read in Proverbs 24:11, that it is our *responsibility* to deliver those who have been placed unjustly in harm's way, and that if we neglect to get involved, as it says in the following verse (v. 12),

"You may say that it is none of your business, but יהוה knows and judges your motives. He keeps watch on you; he knows. And he will reward you according to what you do." (GNB). "Don't say, 'I didn't know it!' יהוה can read your mind. He watches each of us and knows our thoughts. And יהוה will pay us back for what we do." (CEV)

Especially to one's own children does the principle of responsibility for their protection apply. If the child or person has been abducted, the family has the supreme responsibility *and the authority* to retrieve him or her at whatever the cost. It is a grievous sin in the sight of heaven. Even the Law of Sinai appoints the punishment of death for man-stealing, also known

today as *kidnapping*. And it may be at this juncture, we should examine that Law we refer to as the Torah of יהוה, to which we have pledged our allegiance. We must equip ourselves with the knowledge of *His* righteous standard if we are to judge correctly. Let us take note of some of the violations of that Law that are punishable by death.

Exodus 21:12-17 Death is the punishment for murder. But if you did not intend to kill someone, and I, the LORD, let it happen anyway, you may run for safety to a place that I have set aside. If you plan in advance to murder someone, there's no escape, not even by holding on to my altar. You will be dragged off and killed. Death is the punishment for attacking your father or mother. Death is the punishment for kidnapping. If you sell the person you kidnapped, or if you are caught with that person, the penalty is death. Death is the punishment for cursing your father or mother. (CEV)

By the “*smiting*” (nakaw נכה) of parents we are not to understand as smiting to death, for in that case muth מות would be added as in Exodus 21:12, but any kind of maltreatment. That is why the child’s early training is so critical: discipline begins in the high-chair, not the electric chair. Murder of parents is not mentioned at all as not likely to occur and hardly feasible; although, we must declare, it is becoming less rare in this present age. The *cursing* (kawlal קלל as in Genesis 12:3 of parents is placed on the same level with smiting, because it proceeds from the same disposition; and both were to be punished with death, because the majesty of the Almighty was violated in the persons of the parents (cf. Exodus 20:12). *Man-stealing* was also no less a crime, being a sin against the *dignity* of man, and a violation of the very image of Elohyim. For iysh איש “a man,” we find in Deuteronomy 24:6 & 7, nefesh נפש “a soul,” by which both man and woman are intended, and the still more definite limitation, “of his brethren of the children of Israel,” (the generic term brethren to be understood as including the sisters). According to Acts 10:34, יהוה is no respecter of persons. The crime remained the same whether he had sold him (the stolen man), or whether he was still found in his possession: he was to be punished by death. Thus we can see יהוה’s position on the sin of kidnapping.

By discussing this, we do not mean to denigrate the character of Jacob as if to imply that he was shirking his parental duty in the case of Dinah, but we do find at times in Scripture a strange indifference of a father’s watch care over his daughters. She no less bears the image of the living Elohyim than do the males, we surely know. When the two messengers came to Lot in Sodom, and the depraved men of the city wanted Lot to send them out from under the protection of his roof so they could abuse them, Lot rebuked them for their wickedness, and then, of all things, he offered to send out his two young daughters instead! He was more interested in protecting his guests than his own daughters! What a hypocrite!

Genesis 19:8 Look, I have two daughters who are still virgins. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do whatever you want with them. But don't do anything to these men; they are guests in my house, and I must protect them." GNB

Genesis 34:4, 5 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. Jacob learned that his daughter had been disgraced, but because his sons were out in the fields with his livestock, he did nothing until they came back. GNB

Knowing that he was far outnumbered by the town of Shekemites, Jacob exercised great wisdom in remaining silent *initially* before these wicked men. For the present, he was harmless as a dove but wise as a serpent. The Scripture says there is safety in the multitude of counselors (Proverbs 11:14), and he was blessed to have at that time, ten strong young sons who were also endowed with wisdom: Joseph was only 14 or 15 at the time (about the same age as Sister Dinah: Genesis 30:21-24), and Benjamin had not yet been born. His birth came soon after this incident. (Genesis 35:16-20). A potential war was at hand and strategy must be exercised in the effort to save Dinah and the unique position and calling of this special family. Much more is involved here than initially meets the eye, and we cannot be careless in overlooking important details. This family alone was called to be the representatives of יהוה on the earth.

Psalm 127:4, 5 The children born when one is young are like arrows in the hand of a warrior. How blessed is the man who has filled his quiver with them; he will not have to be embarrassed when contending with foes at the city gate. (CJB)

Psalm 127:4, 5 The sons a man has when he is young are like arrows in a soldier's hand. Happy is the man who has many such arrows. He will never be defeated when he meets his enemies in the place of judgment. (GNB).

Whatever was going through Jacob's mind at the time, we will never know in this life. We cannot fault him for his initial hesitance. But for those of us who have daughters, especially in such an evil world, we can be thankful if we have at least a few sons or faithful brothers to consult with in times of serious trouble. We are presently living in the time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), and if we remain faithful like he did, we'll be saved out of it as he was. When we think of Jacob's sons, they must have been in that time of manhood wherein they were able to do battle if necessary, but not be brash and lacking in wisdom. After all, they were the progeny of the three greatest patriarchs of the ancient world. We should not doubt their connection with heaven any more than we would their progenitors.

One magnificent thing about the Scriptures: they do not conceal the mistakes and failures of anyone: from the greatest hero to the commonplace person who may be mentioned but once or twice. It is said that a man can build a thousand bridges, but he'll be remembered by the one that fell down. Whatever we encounter in this story of Jacob, his sons, and their sister Dinah, let us resolve to not be hasty in our judgment. We must not jump to unjust conclusions prematurely. Let us not answer a matter before we have fully heard it out (Proverbs 18:13). We must ask, How did [all] the brothers react to the outrage of their young sister's rape by this uncircumcised heathen who was presently holding her as a hostage, probably scared, and terribly shamed by her mistake of trying to make friends with the gentile girls in the nearby village?

And it is right here that virtuous young women of the present age need to take warning: we read in (Amos 3:3), *How can two walk together except they be agreed?* Let not spiritual young women make any compromise whatsoever with the immodest apparel and ways of the world. Be models of Heaven. Let your beauty radiate from within, not so much from without. Consider well young sisters what you have just read. Do not seek to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:14). *"Don't fool yourselves. Bad friends will destroy you."* (CEV); *"Do not be fooled; bad company ruins good moral behavior."* (AUV):1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:33). Dinah not only got herself into serious trouble that day, but she also incurred a tremendous problem for her entire family. Albeit in her innocent curiosity, she ventured away from the safe perimeter of her righteous family. Our only safety is to stay within the perimeters of integrity. Let us continue now Dinah's story in Genesis 34:7. We want to read this passage from three different versions:

(AMP) When Jacob's sons heard it, they came from the field; and they were distressed and grieved and very angry, for [Shechem] had done a vile thing to Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter, which ought not to be done.

(CEV) Just as Jacob's sons were coming in from work, when they learned that their sister had been raped, they became furiously angry. Nothing is more disgraceful than rape, and it should not be tolerated in Israel.

(CJB) Just as Ya'akov's sons were coming in from the field, when they heard what had happened, the men were saddened and were very angry at the outrage this man had committed against Isra'el by raping Ya'akov's daughter, something that is simply not done.

Jacob's name had been previously changed to Israel which means, *a prevailing Prince of the Almighty*. He was now of royal blood. What a high calling and honor for a man and his family! They were *all* called by the name of Israel. In view of this, as grievous a sin as rape is against *anyone* on the earth, it is especially monstrous when a daughter of Israel is thus violated. We pray that no one who reads this piece of writing will in the slightest degree, diminish the magnitude of such a violent crime as rape. When Shechem raped Dinah he may as well have

raped the Queen of England, for Dinah you see, was a royal princess whose father had been appointed by יהוה Himself! In the inequitable manner of man's judgment, many consider it a less crime to rape some poor peasant girl than a queen or a princess, or some other well-known figure in society, so it usually goes unpunished. So we reiterate, *it is always wrong*; but it was יהוה who declared Israel to be *His* chosen people, and that is especially why a crime perpetrated against *any* daughter of Israel is the thing *that should not be done*. But since it had been done, the question now is, What *should* be done by Jacob and his sons in their effort to rectify the titanic calamity the Shekemites had brutally thrust upon them? Should they take a passive stand as do our Amish Brethren, and just pray for their oppressors? *What were their options in this matter?*

The Shekemites, totally oblivious to the high and holy standard of the Torah, proposed that Jacob and his family purchase land, and intermarry with them and be one big happy family, which of course would include observing their pagan festivals, joining in the worship of their defiling idols, enjoying their unclean fare and eventually forgetting all about worshipping יהוה.

The question is, Who were the true owners of that land they were standing on? Who did these gentiles think they were to make such a thoughtless proposal to the chosen nation of יהוה Who had already given the land to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? No doubt, the heart of Jacob and his entire family sank as they stood there that day listening to this insulting proposal from people who should have gotten down on their knees in humility to plead for forgiveness for the crime *they* had perpetrated against the chosen people of יהוה! How unlike the humble Gibeonites who would come to Yahoshua, Moshe's successor, (though initially by craftiness) some four centuries later! They became proselytes to the chosen people, and when the year of jubilee came, and they were free to leave, they never left....*they never left*.

## Challenge Two: Peace or War?

Genesis 34:13-17) Then Jacob's sons gave Shechem and his father Hamor a misleading answer because he had dishonored their sister Dinah. They said, "We can't do this. We can't give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised. That would be a disgrace to us! We will give our consent to you only on one condition: Every male must be circumcised as we are. Then we'll give our daughters to you and take yours for ourselves, and we'll live with you and become one people. If you won't agree to be circumcised, we'll take our daughter and go."

Many have mistakenly assumed that it was only Simeon and Levi who spoke to Shechem and his father in a misleading way, using the sacred rite of circumcision, the seal of the covenant of righteousness as a ploy to bring about their sinister design. If we read the context of Genesis 34 however, Simeon and Levi did not even come directly into the narrative until the last seven verses of the chapter. True they went to the town and had to *break in* so to speak, since the city gate was locked; true they had swords in hand, but since they intended to rescue their little sister, they had to be prepared to defend themselves, and secure their objective. They knew they had but a one-chance opportunity and they could not afford to fail. When we read the full narrative, we find that it was *all* of Jacob's sons who addressed their adversaries in a misleading way. No doubt one of the brothers (perhaps Reuben being the eldest, or Judah, the two who spoke up in Joseph's defense) initiated the issue of circumcision as a counter insult to the offensive proposal being offered them from these heathen. Even though they were a royal king and a crown prince, it meant nothing to the chosen family of the patriarchs; in their eyes they were uncircumcised, and therefore unclean and unfit to marry their princess sister.

Were the sons of Jacob trying to convert these evil doers into the Hebrew faith by their proposal that they become circumcised? Scripture says that they were all enraged so it is highly unlikely conversion was on their mind. Were they laying a trap for the Shekemites? They were the ones in the trap! But one thing about big brothers vehement over the violation of their little sister—they are not afraid to insult the offender; more than likely that was their initial motive in bringing up circumcision. They probably all wanted to execute Shechem right then and there...Joseph included! However, they were probably in full view of the on-looking men of the city nearby perhaps standing on the wall and ready for any trouble that may develop. When Hamor and his son seemed amenable to what they took to be the prerequisite, at that point Simeon and Levi probably looked at each other and realized there may be a way to retrieve their sister in spite of the overwhelming odds against them.

Some have mistakenly thought that the sons of Jacob arbitrarily overrode their father's authority regarding the decision of Dinah's "marriage" to Shechem. But according to the Torah, brothers had equal say *with their fathers* in regard to the marriage of their sisters. When Abraham sent his trusted servant to fetch a wife for his son Isaac, we find that Laban, *who was Rebecca's brother*, gave equal consent to the servant's proposal (See Genesis 24:29-60). While Bethuel her father, is mentioned *one time* as giving his consent to the servant (v. 50), Laban is mentioned both directly and indirectly nearly a dozen times. Without question, he plays the leading role in the matter of his sister's marriage. The reason this mutual authority existed was to have an emergency back-up system in place. Under normal circumstances, upon the father's death the eldest son was to assume the role of priest and head of the house. And if he should die, the next eldest son would take his place. Such a system ensured the survival of the family and maintained the family structure. So Jacob's sons were not out of place in addressing the problem that was forced upon them. More than likely they concluded that since these men did not bring their sister with them, they were not to be trusted at all. Not only is abduction involved in this case, but also the rape of their sister, and Jacob's daughter; and now this ultimatum from the abductors. However things may go in their negotiations with Dinah's family, it was clear they were not planning to take No for an answer. They were holding Dinah hostage.

Let the Reader bear in mind that Jacob and his family were living in peace with their neighbors up until now. Jacob and his sons did nothing to provoke this conundrum. If there were fifty to a hundred men or more living in the Shekemite city, they would not be able to wage

war against such odds. To do nothing would be to turn their sister over to a heathen family perhaps never to see her again; *does anyone care?* To demand her immediate return would doubtless have been considered a declaration of war, which would have been catastrophic for them under their present circumstances. The Shekemite tribe, very likely would have been predisposed to annihilate a small family of nomads who would not submit to their selfish agenda. Somehow, the family of Jacob needed to devise a plan quickly to rescue their sister from such a plight as a forced marriage into an idolatrous gentile nation. If ever they needed wisdom and courage, it was now. According to the Scriptural narrative, they spoke to their adversaries “*with deceitfulness*” (Genesis 34:13 KJV).

But then, *what were the options before them?* Should they just obey the law of the land, and file a lawsuit in a Shekemite court, and hope for a fair trial? Could they hope for justice being the foreigners there? Could they hope for the safe return of their sister and daughter without further defilement? Had Jacob’s family tried Shechem by the Torah, what could *he* expect? Since he not only had violated her through rape, but had also kidnapped her and was now holding her hostage as we have already pointed out, he stands guilty of the death decree on all three counts. Some may argue, this took place over 400 years before the Torah would be given at Sinai, but we remind the reader that the reason Abraham (200 years before this incident) was called the Friend of Elohim, was because “*Avraham heeded what I said and did what I told him to do—he followed my mitzvot, my regulations and my teachings.*” (CJB). (Genesis 26:5). The KJV, has for “My teachings,” *My Law*, which is from the Hebrew *Torah*. The principles of the Torah were understood from the beginning long in advance of the written transcript. Think it through: *was it not wrong to kidnap and rape an adolescent before the Torah was written out?*

Deuteronomy 22:23-29) If a man is caught in town having sex with an engaged woman who isn't screaming for help, they both must be put to death. The man is guilty of having sex with a married woman. And the woman is guilty because she didn't call for help, even though she was inside a town and people were nearby. Take them both to the town gate and stone them to death. You must get rid of the evil they brought into your community. If an engaged woman is raped out in the country, only the man will be put to death. Do not punish the woman at all; she has done nothing wrong, and certainly nothing deserving death. This crime is like murder, because the woman was alone out in the country when the man attacked her. She screamed, but there was no one to help her. Suppose a woman isn't engaged to be married, and a man talks her into sleeping with him. If they are caught, they will be forced to get married. He must give her father fifty pieces of silver as a bride-price and can never divorce her. (CEV)

Since Shechem was more than willing to pay the dowry, some would argue, should he not then be pardoned (and still get his own way)? Would her family be invited to the wedding? For all who are Hebrew minded, such is faulty reasoning. The obvious answer is, no, he should not still get his own way; he can be *forgiven* if he repents and makes amends, but he definitely cannot be permitted to have the princess of Israel. Even though Dinah was born within a year or so of Joseph, and was therefore about 14 or 15 at the time of this incident, she could well have been betrothed to a first or second cousin in her extended Hebrew family. We are not told. One thing however, is very clear: the Torah was written for a chosen people who were in covenant relation with יהוה. In effect, all of Israel was betrothed *to Him*, and the Torah was the marriage covenant between them. The sacredness of the Torah must never be contaminated by the heathen. And all who are Torah observant must be protected in like manner. The passage above is mandating what to do when a *Hebrew* man deals unjustly with a Hebrew woman in the Hebrew community. The provision for the dowry was referring to the Hebrew man, not to a heathen man. Essentially, Jacob had no options, and his sons knew it. *Now enters the question of morality:* Is it always wrong to use subterfuge? *Is it ever right?* Have there been cases that we know of in Scriptural or secular history wherein people have conveniently left something unsaid, or have perhaps said something in a way that may even be true, but was said in a manner intended to mislead? Let us consider a couple of Scripture based examples that may shed some light on this question. When Rahab hid the two spies in Jericho (Joshua, ch. 2), and told the authorities who were seeking their lives that indeed, they had been there but left, did she tell the

truth? Did she tell a lie? *What is a lie?* Generally speaking, a lie is a willful distortion of the truth with a malicious intent to harm the innocent. What if we're trying to *protect* the innocent? How does יהוה view Rahab? Does He look upon her as a lying whore, unworthy of His grace and doomed to hell? One thing about our benevolent Father, His ways and His thoughts are far above our best thoughts and ways. What we may consider right He may consider wrong, and what we may consider wrong He may consider right. The only way we can hope to know what He thinks is to lay aside our own impressions, however lofty and puritanistic they may seem to be, and just read the transcript of His written Word. He'll tell us therein what He thinks. Reading now from the books of Hebrews (11:31), & James (2:25) respectively:

Rahab had been a prostitute, but she had faith and welcomed the spies. So she wasn't killed with the people who disobeyed. (CEV)

So also with Rahab the harlot--was she not shown to be justified (pronounced righteous before God) by [good] deeds when she took in the scouts (spies) and sent them away by a different route? (AMP)

We also read of the Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1:15-21) who did not tell the truth in order to protect the innocent lives of the Hebrew baby boys born in murderous Egypt. According to the Torah, those deceiving midwives are counted *among the righteous*. How would we judge them? What, in fact, does the ninth commandment *really* say? Does it say, "Thou shalt not lie?" The ninth commandment says, "*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor*" (Exodus 20:16). Is it possible to bear false witness *to protect* your neighbor? Many righteous Europeans did so in their effort to protect their Jewish neighbors in the Third Reich under the Hitler regime. In fact, on January 12, 2010, the woman who hid the family of Anne Frank and later saved her papers and her diary for posterity, Miep Gies, died at the age of 100. During the Nazi occupation of Holland, the Austrian-born Dutch woman risked her life daily to hide Anne Frank and her family from the Nazis for two years in Amsterdam (1942-44). When interrogated about her knowledge of any Jews in hiding, she constantly denied having knowledge of what she herself was guilty of. *And that raises the next question:* Is a person "guilty" of protecting the innocent, even though an evil regime declares it a crime to do so? Are they guilty of breaking the ninth commandment? *Does a righteous person owe a murderer the Truth?* That is what the German Theologian and Lutheran Pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer asked himself when being interrogated for his opposition to the murderous Hitler administration. He said, "*We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.*" He was martyred for his faith: hung to death in a Nazi prison. We recommend that all obtain a copy of his 300-page book, "*The Cost of Discipleship.*" On his opening page he writes, "*When Christ calls a man, He bids him, Come and die.*" He well related to his own words that he wrote in his book. When it came to defending innocent people like Anne Frank, he was not shy. Anne Frank, by the way, young Jewish girl that she was, was taken to a heathen Nazi death camp at the age of 14 or 15, much like our Princess Dinah. *But no one came to save her.* What would we think though of her brother who may have had to use some violence in order to save her life?

We mentioned earlier that Jacob's name had been changed to Israel. What does Jacob mean? Mr. Strong tells us it means "heel-catcher," (#3290 From [H6117](#); *heel catcher* (that is, supplanter)). The word supplant is from the Hebrew עָקַב *akav*, to defraud, deceive, to supplant, i.e., "*to overthrow a person by tripping up his heels.*" Hence this name was given to Jacob, because it was found he had laid hold on his brother's heel as they were departing the womb, which was figurative of his supplanting Esau, and *defrauding* him of his birthright. This is the general consensus of most commentaries, but we do not concur with them that he *defrauded* his brother out of the birthright. Peaceful man that he was, he offered a mutual exchange to Esau: a pottage of lentils for the birthright: a possession that was already *his* by divine decree, a fact which undoubtedly the whole family was well aware of, Esau included. We say a mutual exchange in that, as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so is value in the heart of a buyer. Esau made a sober choice: he was not coerced into anything. He valued a pottage of lentil stew more



than his birthright, and he therefore sold it for what he wanted more. Jacob valued the birthright as equivalent to eternity, and no doubt would have been willing to give all his earthly possessions in exchange for it. The fact that Esau sold it for a mere pottage of lentil stew reveals how little he valued it. He *despised* his birthright to have sold it for so little. It was trivial to him, like a joke. He had no interest in being the spiritual leader of the family. He loved hunting, and heathen wives. We can see that the birthright meant less to him than a home-cooked meal. That is why we can say it was a mutual exchange. Jacob was in effect, showing his elder brother respect in this transaction. Rather than just step up and receive what normally would have gone to the eldest, he converted the whole thing into a natural business deal: something Esau could relate to. *Esau was a natural man*: he could not relate to spiritual things; he was totally disqualified to be a priest of anything. He was not an outlaw; he was simply not spiritual. And that being the case, Jacob opened to his elder brother an honorable way of escape, and he took it. There's a lot of ego involved in being the "elder" brother, even if one is only seven minutes older. Probably sisters don't have that problem. Jacob confirmed the covenant by having Esau swear that he, of a sound mind, did indeed sell his birthright to his brother on that very day (Gen 25:33). He thus appealed to the Almighty as a witness of the transfer. And so, Jacob availed himself of this opportunity to gain by Esau's *consent* what was destined for him by divine decree. He left Esau to follow the dictates his own free will in the matter. There was neither deception nor fraud in his securing what was his all along: that is, the birthright. Let the reader be aware that we are not yet addressing the deception Jacob used in securing the paternal blessing; that came later. We're only talking here about his personal dealing with Esau at this point. We're talking about the birthright; not the blessing.

*The only question remaining to be asked*: Did Jacob to some degree, by this effort on his part, *intervene* in the Providence of Elohyim? Did he have to do anything at all? Was there some doubt in his mind that unless he did *something* on his part, the divine promise might fall by the wayside, and wind up in the sullied hands of his worldly brother? We all know that יהוה is omniscient, and He is omnipotent. *He doesn't need our help. At all.* So why does He just stand back and let us intervene like we do? Is it because what we're doing is close enough to the way He would have done it anyway, and He is just leaving well enough alone? Why does He so often let us come to the very brink of chaos, almost forcing us to step in and exercise some heavenly ingenuity? After all, we are created in His image, after His likeness, aren't we? Don't we sometimes come up with some amazing solutions? What about Jacob later securing the paternal blessing? Didn't that blessing *accompany* the right of the firstborn? What was father Isaac about to do giving that special blessing to Esau, knowing that Jacob should be the one receiving it instead!? Did Jacob employ a little subterfuge in that transaction with his father? After innocent Esau returned with the venison his aging father had requested as the prerequisite to receiving the blessing (belonging to the firstborn), only to learn that his crafty brother had been there already, what did he cry out in anguish? "*Is he not rightly named?!*" Notice how the following two versions have Genesis 27:36:

Esau replied, "My brother deserves the name Jacob, because he has already cheated me twice. The first time he cheated me out of my rights as the first-born son, and now he has cheated me out of my blessing." Then Esau asked his father, "Don't you still have any blessing left for me?" (CEV)

'Esav said, "His name, Ya'akov [he supplants], really suits him - because he has supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright, and here, now he has taken away my blessing!" Then he asked, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me?" (CJB)

We've been told that the reason Jacob had a hold on his brother's heel as they were departing the womb, was because "*Esau was trying to crush Jacob's head while still in the womb.*" All we can say to that story is, a tale such as that can neither be proven nor disproven. We do know on the other hand, that his name implies deceit, and the record of Scripture indicates that in fact, he did make use of some trickery in securing the blessing. Isaac knew that the birthright *and* its blessing were to be given to Jacob (Genesis 25:22, 23). He knew also that

the blessing was to come not from the favoritism of the father, but from the Spirit of Elohyim guiding him, and therefore when so conferred could not be revoked. But had Jacob, knowing that his father was about to bestow the birthright blessing on his brother, gone to him while Esau was out on his hunting expedition, and reminded him of the divine decree, would that not have been a better course to follow? We know that our all wise Father is able to bring about His will on His own. We do not presume to justify any form of deceit. If man will only wait upon the Father, he would be surprised at the thousand and one ways he can bring about His will.

As believers, we must remember to judge not according to popular opinion, or even in harmony with civil law if such law stands in opposition to the moral law of  $\text{יהוה}$ ...but judge in a righteous manner (John 7:24). When Messiah said, “*No man can serve two masters*” (Matthew 6:24), He meant for us to understand that there are two kingdoms in opposition to each other, and that we are called upon to decide between them in the way we judge the lives of others. If Rahab and the midwives stood today before the Great White Throne of Judgment in the Heavenly Tribunal, would they be condemned, or declared righteous? To our utter amazement, we have encountered zealous people who adamantly proclaim, “*They’ll burn in hell!*” We can only wonder at the willful blindness of people. Would they also consign Brother Jacob to the lake of fire for his questionable conduct? In view of the aspect of Jacob actually saving his brother’s life, though Esau probably never figured it out, can we not see that we are in need of a deeper insight in this matter of moral judgment? The crystal clear statements of Scripture declaring Rahab and the midwives to be upright matters not one iota to them. Their mind is made up and they don’t want to be confused by the Truth. So it is regarding the dilemma into which Jacob and his outnumbered family were plunged. The Shekmites forced them into an impossible set of circumstances. They would not compromise the Torah, and they could not abandon Dinah. As far as they could see, they were left with only one odious option.

Genesis 34:20-31 Then Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their [enclosed] town and discussed the matter with the citizens, saying, These men are peaceable with us; so let them dwell in the land and trade in it; for the land is large enough [for us and] for them; let us take their daughters for wives and let us give them our daughters. But the men will consent to our request that they live among us and be one people only on condition that every male among us be circumcised, as they are. Shall not their cattle and their possessions and all their beasts be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell here with us. And all the people who went out of the town gate listened and heeded what Hamor and Shechem said; and every male was circumcised who was a resident of that town. But on the third day [after the circumcision] when [all the men] were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's [full] brothers, took their swords, boldly entered the city [without danger], and slew all the males. And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house [where she had been all this time] and departed. [Then the rest of] Jacob's [eleven] sons came upon the slain and plundered the town, because there their sister had been defiled and disgraced. They took their flocks, their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the town and in the field; All their wealth and all their little ones and their wives they took captive, making spoil even of all [they found] in the houses. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, You have ruined me, making me infamous and embroiling me with the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites! And we are few in number, and they will gather together against me and attack me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my household. And they said, Should he [be permitted to] deal with our sister as with a harlot? (AMP)

At this point, as we can see, the focus is inevitably upon the violence of Simeon and Levi. There are commentaries that use the word *murder* in reference to the brothers of Dinah. While it is not true that all is fair in love and war, and there have certainly been horrific cases of murder in the name of warfare, such as in Hitler’s holocaust; when a legitimate soldier (such as Audey Murphy) takes the lives of the enemy forces, that by no means is murder. Consider the case of Phinehas. When Israel had fallen under the bewitching spell of the Midianitish prostitutes, Phinehas ended the curse when he drove a spear through an offending couple. He killed them by an act of bloody violence. He was the grandson of Aaron the high priest, and Moshe was his uncle. What verdict did the Torah demand for such a ruthless murderer as some would call him?

Numbers 25:5-13 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, Let everyone put to death those of his men who have had relations with the women of Moab in honour of the Baal of Peor. Then one of the children of Israel came to his brothers, taking with him a woman of Midian, before the eyes of Moses and all the meeting of the people, while they were weeping at the door of the Tent of meeting. And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, seeing it, got up from among the people and took a spear in his hand, And went after the man of Israel into the tent, driving the spear through the two of them, through the man of Israel and through the stomach of the woman. So the disease was stopped among the children of Israel. But twenty-four thousand of them had come to their death by the disease. And the Lord said to Moses, Through Phinehas, and because of his passion for my honour, my wrath has been turned away from the children of Israel, so that I have not sent destruction on them all in my wrath. So say to them that I will make with him an agreement of peace: And by this agreement, he and his sons after him have the right to be priests for ever; because, by his care for the honour of his God, he took away the sin of the children of Israel.

*Is there a time to kill?* Is violence, when used to defend the honor of יהוה wrong? What about to defend the honor and person of a child of יהוה, or of the people of Israel? Some have errantly felt that when Jacob was dying, he cursed his two violent sons, but a closer reading will prove that it wasn't his sons he cursed, but rather he cursed their wrath... *for it was cruel.*

Genesis 49:5-7 Simeon and Levi are brethren: vessels of iniquity waging war. Let not my soul go into their counsel, nor my glory be in their assembly: because in their fury they slew a man, and in their selfwill they undermined a wall. Cursed be their fury, because it was stubborn: and their wrath, because it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and will scatter them in Israel. (DRB).

Genesis 49:5-7 Simeon and Levi are brothers; deceit and force are their secret designs. Take no part in their secrets, O my soul; keep far away, O my heart, from their meetings; for in their wrath they put men to death, and for their pleasure even oxen were wounded. A curse on their passion for it was bitter; and on their wrath for it was cruel. I will let their heritage in Jacob be broken up, driving them from their places in Israel. (BBE)

Because the Hebrew word for *wall* is shûr H7791 שׂוּר ; and the word for bullock, or *ox* is shôr H7794 שׂוֹר; *ox* is sometimes used by mistake for wall and some versions try to paint a worse picture of Simeon and Levi than is actually there. They did not mistreat animals; they were farmers; they simply had to dig down a portion of the enclosed city *wall* in order to retrieve their sister. The account states simply that “they *took* their sheep, and their oxen.” Upon entering the city they may have encountered some resistance, or perhaps they realized that if they didn't slay the men of the city then and there, after the Shekemites had healed up they would have come back for Dinah, as well as for vengeance for her brothers rescuing her from their hands. But her brothers were not the villains. True, Jacob was shocked at what they did, but he was also speechless a few days before in the conversation with the Shekemites, and should in reality, thank his two warlord sons for their valor, and for pursuing the only course left to them. As Dinah had placed her family in jeopardy (in her innocence), Shechem placed his entire village in jeopardy by his wickedness. In World War II, many merciful American soldiers, out in the countryside and unable to keep German prisoners of war, just set them free (weaponless of course) out into the woods. This saved these German soldiers from facing an American firing squad, but what did they do in return for the kindness shown them? They made their way back to their own units and before long, they would be right back again, engaged in battle with the very ones who had set them free, and they cut their benefactors to pieces. So it is in war. It is suicide to permit the enemy to go free.

**Isaiah 26:10** Let favour be shewed to the wicked, *yet* will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of יהוה.

Let it not be forgotten that יהוה destroyed the entire antediluvian world in the days of Noah. Why would He have done such a thing? It was because their thoughts and ways were only evil continuously. At one time Ahab was delivered out of the hands of the Arameans, and had their king in his custody, and when the king begged for mercy, *Ahab called him his brother and let him go!* A couple of years later, that same king returned and waged war again with Ahab, and he was killed in that battle. When we are confronted with evildoers, we must know that we are not dealing with nice people. If the most honorable son of Hamor was a rapist of unprotected adolescent girls, no doubt the entire village was full of equally vile citizens.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 2:23, 24, we have the story of the prophet Elisha who had just received a double portion of Eliyah's spirit, approaching Bethel. One of Jeroboam's golden calves was in this town, and the townspeople did not want prophets there to disturb their pagan worship. These people were training their children to be disrespectful of the prophets of יהוה, and as Elisha was nearing the town, forty-two young people came out mocking him, and he probably gave them a stern look to dissuade them at the first, but since they persisted in their disrespect of this holy man, he then pronounced a curse upon them and two bears came out and killed them all. He did this in the name of יהוה. This strange act was not borne of personal vengeance but rather it was borne of a righteous indignation. Parents should be careful how they train their children. Our point is that the Almighty endorsed the prophet's actions. Too long believers have slumbered in a spiritual lethargy and have often wound up taking their Master's name in vain with their sleepy passivity. We're on a battlefield.

When King Saul disobeyed the express command of יהוה to destroy the Amalekites (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15), permitting the king to live, Samuel rebuked him and killed the wicked king himself. We must remember that Yahshua said He came not to send peace on earth, but rather a sword, and that a man must defend his household: *his family*.

The substance of the dreamy ideal of just loving everybody can be tested: in fact, this very chronicle we're discussing affords us the perfect scenario to test our love to determine if that love is sanctified or not. To love poor Shechem who lost his life for trusting those deceiving brothers of Dinah, and just let Dinah go ahead now and become another heathen, is a fatal love indeed. Dinah was the victim of adolescent abuse, kidnap and violent rape. *Who loves her?* Her brothers loved her, and were willing to risk their lives to rescue her. *Who loves them?* Evidently not many. Most *believers* denounce them as wicked. But if, as they are depicted to be, Simeon and Levi are indeed the villains of the story, then they should be loved all the more; they are the "one lost sheep" the good shepherds of Christendom should go to find. Thus shall our love be tested. Ironically, we find a strange similarity between the mindset of "believers" and that of Moslems. They both manifest more love for the violent rapist than the innocent victim of such vicious maltreatment. Their tender mercy for Shechem and apparent indifference toward Dinah proves the point. We have *Women of Honor*; where are the *Men of Valor*?

Moreover, how many fathers *in the faith* at this present time, would stand by, knowing the whereabouts of their kidnapped adolescent daughter, and just pray that she'll be alright? Or maybe dial 911? Is that the kind of love our Master told us to have for our enemies? Would our children feel secure under such a love as that? We need to examine ourselves to be sure that we are truly in the faith. That is the counsel of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:5; and we'd better know the faith.

### Challenge Three: Good or Evil?

As we have shown, the Torah demands capital punishment for such crimes as kidnap, murder and rape. We ask the question: Why are American prisons filled with such criminals today? It is because of religious groups who deny the Torah and protect them from the death penalty. Obedience to the Torah eliminates the need for prisons, and the incentive for criminals. And what are they doing in the prisons? They are carrying on their wicked lives at the expense of the hard-working taxpayer, committing crimes against young inmates who may be there for petty theft or some lesser crime. How is it in a society that promotes justice, we see just the opposite? Who is it that should be defended: the criminals, *or the victims* of their crimes? In saying that however, we hasten to add that many an inmate who committed some heinous crime in the foolishness of their youth, have since repented and surrendered their lives to the Messiah to walk in the light they understand, and that is commendable. Yahweh's government is founded on justice but His heart is founded on mercy. And so should it be with us. For the incorrigibles, those who reject His offer of mercy, all that is left for them is retributive justice: and it should definitely follow. It is interesting that one of the last victims the wicked Ted Bundy raped and murdered was a Jewish girl; then he went to the electric chair. Was it providential?

Can it be possible that we who call ourselves Messianic, Hebrew Roots believers, to some degree, vindicate the criminals and condemn the righteous whose hand has been forced by the wicked? We have read commentaries on this story of Dinah that say nothing negative against Shechem (indeed, he is described as most honorable!), and paint the brothers who protected their little sister and rescued her from a life of bondage to a heathen culture as "*murderers of a whole city of honorable and innocent people*" (Adam Clarke). If Jacob's family took the pacifist stand, as is popular in much of Christendom in this present age, and remained in that territory in hopes of getting to see Dinah from time to time, would they just wait until their next sister or wife face the same maltreatment as Dinah? Passivity only serves to encourage criminals. Adam Clarke merits a strong rebuke for his odious statement. Of course he may be a Shekemite at heart, so little wonder for his statement. We have no doubt that we'll continue to see an unwarranted bias against the defenders of justice, such as the commentary mentioned above.

What Simeon and Levi did is almost identical to what their Great-Grandfather Abraham did. His family members were being held captive in a Gentile city. He and his militia, with sword in hand, went forth to save his family from further abuse and possibly death. He had to kill some of the enemy in order to accomplish his goal; probably quite a few: he went against four kings. Do we call faithful Abraham a vicious murderer? Who came to meet him soon after his conquest over the enemy? Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness; and He received the title of Abraham! And had communion with him, offering him bread and wine (Genesis 14:17-20). Melchizedek blessed that Man of Valor. How confused are the Commentators who libel Simeon and Levi as "murderers" for doing the very same thing that righteous Abraham did!

One can only wonder at the strange silence concerning Dinah's fate? Did anyone think to ask her if *she* wanted to be married to the gentile infidel? Does she not have any rights? We have wondered if these commentators have any daughters. Dinah needed to come home and she had the right to come home. She was not permitted to leave on her own. Someone had to rescue her. If sadly, it required bloodshed to accomplish that goal, so be it. They were now involved in a war, like it or not. When a princess is abducted, that is a declaration of war and how that war is conducted is up to the fighting men, not the theologians. Even if they had to run the risk of being misunderstood and condemned by their own father, and the entire world for that matter, so be it. We have wondered if Dinah was standing nearby when Jacob spoke so ill of her hero Brothers. It would have been nice, after pronouncing a curse upon their *righteous indignation*, if he would have just added something like, "*But angry though my sons may have been at the time, one thing is for certain: they surely knew how to rescue my precious daughter Dinah!*" How she would have glowed to just know that her father, though disapproving of how they may have brought it about, beyond any shadow of a doubt, was overjoyed that they retrieved their little sister Dinah that momentous and critical day: the daughter that *he* almost lost forever, but now had back in

his presence...thanks to the Simeon and Levi Company: *two mighty Men of Valor!* And it was Dinah, we must not forget, who was one of the tender daughters of Jacob, who soon after this trying incident, comforted her aging father when the men brought back the coat of many colors: the coat of his favored son, Joseph (Genesis 37:35). What a hard life this patriarch had to lead, from beginning to end. Born right on the heels of his brother Esau; he later had trouble securing his birthright and blessing from his aging father; trouble with his only brother wanting to assassinate him; trouble with his in-laws, who happened to be his employer; trouble securing his wages; trouble resigning; trouble leaving the farm; trouble sleeping at night; even angels of heaven fighting with him when he's trying to pray at night; trouble walking; having to face an approaching army with his vengeful brother at the lead; trouble with his daughter wandering off and getting into even more trouble; trouble with his sons declaring war on his neighbors; and now his favorite son has apparently been torn to shreds by some wild beast. Trouble, trouble, trouble. Poor man. And finally, upon his death-bed in the land of Egypt, he gives his closing testimonial to his sons gathered around him. Consider what he said.

Jacob denied Reuben his firstborn the blessing of the birthright because he defiled Bilhah (whose name means *Timid*), one of Jacob's concubines (Genesis 49:3, 4). The manner in which he secured his own birthright however, was not exactly on the up and up, as we have previously discussed. But why would he be so denunciatory toward his eldest son (who didn't abuse any children) for his wrongdoing, and ironically, just as denunciatory toward his next two eldest sons for punishing a city of unscrupulous men for defiling his own fifteen year old daughter? Since Hamor was the king and Shechem therefore the crown prince, in order to inflict due punishment on the prince, they would first have had to face all his protectors: the rest of the men of the town. This is what Dinah's big brothers had to face. If they would have had no intention of punishing anyone, and their only motive was to retrieve her, they would still have had to face the same thing. She was locked away in the city whose gates were barred. That is why her brothers had to tear through part of the wall. Is this the way their new in-laws should be treating them?

The family birthright of course, went to righteous Joseph and his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. It is interesting to note that "all eleven of Jacob's sons" participated in the gathering of the spoils of war from the defeated Shekmites. This would of course include 15 year old Joseph, who undoubtedly would have been equally enraged at the terrible abuse and disgrace brought upon his sister. Though the other nine may not have joined in the execution, was their presence there not a statement of endorsement? Did they thus share with their father in his condemnation of their warrior brothers? Since they participated, should they not have perhaps offered a word of defense in support of Simeon and Levi? Did Jacob somehow forget that *all* his sons expressed openly their rage against this atrocity, and that all his sons participated in the plundering of the city after the conquest wrought by Simeon and Levi? And most importantly of all, did יהוה *even once* express any hint of condemnation against any of the *eleven* sons of Jacob for their first battle to defend the honor of their sister, their family, their nation?

Patriarchs are not infallible. Even righteous Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael out into the desert with just a little bread and a bottle of water (Genesis 21:14). Would someone try to make a case in support of that just because it is our beloved Patriarch? These righteous men did nearly everything else right, but sometimes their judgment might have faltered. Was Jacob always in the right? We don't know how many days had passed from the time of her abduction until Hamor and Shechem came to negotiate with Jacob, *but we can add three days to that* from the time they left till Dinah was returned by the hand of her courageous brothers. Did Jacob know right away what was involved in her rescue? Did it dampen the joy of the reunion with his daughter if he did know? Did he chastise his sons in her presence, expressing his great fear of how the other people in the area might think now about him and his family? Is it not interesting however, that, to the contrary of his unwarranted fears, though a small family in a heathen land, *they* were the ones greatly feared by the surrounding nations? Notice Genesis 35:5:

And they journeyed; and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. (Darby)

According to this, it was not the fear of Simeon and Levi that fell upon the surrounding Canaanites, but rather the fear of the living Elohyim. Was this a statement from יהוה that *He* did not censure the violence of Dinah's brothers? Did Jacob deny them their part in the inheritance of the great Promised Land by the way? He prophesied in Genesis 49:7 that he would divide them in Israel, and even scatter them there; and sure enough, the tribe of Levi was scattered into 48 cities: six of them cities *of refuge*, and Simeon was the inheritor of the southern portion of the country. What does refuge mean?

H4733 מִקְלַט *miqlaṭ mik-lawt'* in the sense of *taking in*; an *asylum* (as a *receptacle*): - refuge.  
Numbers 35:24 Then let the meeting of the people be judge between the man responsible for the death and him who has the right of punishment for blood, acting by these rules. (BBE)

The case of the innocent slayer is here contemplated. In a doubtful case there would necessarily have to be a judicial decision as to the guilt or innocence of the person who claimed the right of asylum.

Numbers 35:6 And among the cities, which you shall give to the Levites, six shall be separated for refuge to fugitives, which he who had shed blood may flee to them: and besides these there shall be other forty-two cities. (DRB)

The Levitical cities in a special sense belonged to יהוה; and therefore the places of refuge, where the manslayer might remain under the protection of a special institution devised by divine mercy, were appropriately selected from among the twelve tribes. No doubt also the Priests and Levites would be the most capable persons to administer the Law in the doubtful cases which would be sure to occur. And lest it be overlooked, it is the very tribe of Levi that יהוה chose to be the spiritual *guides* for the rest of the tribes!

These six cities of refuge were perfectly situated throughout the Promised Land, from north to south; east to west, so as to be a mere half-day's journey on foot from any point in Israel. Three were on the west side of the Jordan, and three on the east side. The first one to the northwest was called Kedesh. But it is the second one that we will find to be of greatest interest out of all the six put together. The second city of refuge was none other than Shechem, the very place where the patriarch Levi had to slay the men of the city in order to liberate his sister Dinah! And what's more, the Levites were to be the judges to decide the guilt or innocence of the manslayer in this city of refuge. Where was this mysterious city located? Directly in between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim: the famous mounts of Blessings and Curses (See Deuteronomy 27:13). Do we recall what יהוה said to Abraham in Genesis 12:3?

To them who are good to you will I give blessing, and on him who does you wrong will I put my curse: and you will become a name of blessing to all the families of the earth. (BBE)  
I will bless those who bless you, I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you. (CSB)

He said these words to Abraham in his homeland just prior to his departure for the Promised Land. Are we aware that the very first place he encamped in that Promised Land was Shechem (Genesis 12:6)? It was a type of the saints entering the heavenly Canaan Land. They first had to rid the Promised Land of the defiling heathen nations that were presently occupying the land promised to faithful Abraham.

Matthew 11:12. From the time of John the Baptizer until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful people have been seizing it. (GW)

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. (KJV)

It appears there is a place for sanctified violence. The Samaritans and harlots, whom the Pharisees thought had no right to the kingdom of the Messiah, filled with consecrated zeal and earnestness, seized at once on the offered mercy of the Gospel, and in that manner, take the kingdom as by force from those learned doctors who claimed for themselves the highest places in the kingdom. Yahshua said, "*The tax-gatherers and harlots go before you into the kingdom of Elohim.*" He that will get possession of the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy, must be in earnest: the kingdom of darkness will oppose him in every step he takes; and if a man be not absolutely determined to give up his sins and evil habits and even friends, and have his soul saved at all perils, he will surely perish. This requires a violent earnestness of the soul and the spirit. So it was with the Promised Land; it was there for the taking, but not without first waging war and routing out the giant inhabitants of the land who had no thought of handing it over to the invaders. It is folly to think that by just quoting the Sinner's Prayer, that is all that is Heaven requires to inherit such a valuable treasure as eternal life in such a wonderful kingdom as Paradise! It amounts to little more than the Protestant Rosary. When the rich young ruler came running and kneeled down before the Master, he asked Yahshua what *he* must do to inherit eternal life (Mark 10:17). The Messiah told him that if he truly wants to enter eternal life he must make a commitment to walk with his Maker in obedience to what He commands, and come and follow Him. (Matthew 19:17). To know Him is to obey Him. Profession without obedience will prove fatal in the final end of it all.



## Challenge Four: In the Final Analysis

Psalm 119:18 Let my eyes be open to see the wonders of your law. (BBE)

Unveil thou mine eyes, and I shall perceive wondrous things of thy law. (Brenton)

Abre mis ojos, para que contemple las maravillas de tu enseñanza. (DHH)

Dear reader, if you are one of those curious souls who seek to know the conclusions of the author in advance by reading the last chapter first, then this chapter is definitely for you. All we ask is that, at the very least, you read the entirety of this chapter. It may inspire your curiosity to even greater heights to see what was said in the preceding chapters. In our humble opinion, we have built a very strong case in support of some truly Valiant Men, who far beyond their time, in a culture that minimized the value of women, demonstrated the Spirit of Integrity in charging forth to rescue a young Princess of Israel. Their venture came at a very high price however. They suffered the censure of their own father and perhaps most others down through time who may not know the whole truth of their story. Nevertheless we would venture to say that they probably won the admiration of their mother, as well as all their sisters and nieces and female cousins. To them, they were probably their knights in shining armor. So this Grand Finale is a summary of all that we endeavored to present before you in the previous pages: not merely to pass your time, but rather for your appraisal. You might consider it a test of your overall view of our compassionate Father, and how He would judge in this otherwise difficult drama. The last of the three versions above for Psalm 119:18, of course is the Spanish, *Dios Habla Hoy*, which translates: *🔥🔥 Speaks Today*. The Spanish directs us to contemplate the marvelous wonders of His *teachings*. These stories are given to us as lessons with the purpose of teaching us to look beyond what we thought were the obvious answers (perhaps with negative conclusions), to answers far above and beyond what we had imagined. Life is the only school in which we are tested first and then get the lessons afterward. Did we learn our lesson? Even if you have no particular interest in religion dear Reader, but in harmony with us, have a strong burden for women's rights and respect and protection, then beyond the religious setting in which we were compelled to write this exposé, you may be edified in your spirit nonetheless.

It would probably be safe to say, that the majority of female abuse in the world today is due to confused religious views. This confusion is not limited to radical Islam interpretations of the Koran. It is just as strong in fundamental Christianity. How is it that religious ideals, whose intended function is to elevate the lot of humanity, actually serves to pull it down at times? When we read in the Hebrew Scriptures the numerous accounts of the apparent *inequity* of the female, do we perceive that to be the standard we are to follow, or is it perhaps written to arouse a righteous sense of indignation? Men fight wars with one another for numerous reasons, and bloodshed adversely affects the thinking of people. But when men abuse women or children, be they male or female, it is like a cancer eating away at the very nerve and sinew of a rational society. It is a disease that must be dealt with in strong measure. To not deal with it is to nourish it. And how it is dealt with may not always be under the blessing of the religious community, but sometimes it is better to take a step into the dark in an effort to do the right, and make a mistake, than to take no step at all. Sometimes it seems that people are more concerned for the welfare of the violator than that of the victim. But not all are of that mind. We may thank the heavens above for courageous souls, who were unafraid to step up to the plate so to speak, and say No, we will not stand by and permit you to presume to take possession of the life of your captive. We are here to intervene, and we mean business. We may be small compared to you, but we have principle on our side; and with that powerful force, we now step forward. And so it is with this story we have examined from the Scriptures.

By now it is obvious our position in regard to Simeon and Levi. We do not share in the majority consensus against these two elder brothers of Dinah. Condensed story as it is, and knowing that they did employ some deception with their adversaries, if we haven't made it clear by now, we emphasize: we do not endorse the practice of deception. In order to give a fair judgment of these two men however, we have taken into consideration the intense pressure they were under to accomplish a tremendous task that only they had the vision and perhaps the

necessary courage to perform. We ask all to place themselves in their sandals for those heart-pounding moments in which life and death decisions had to be made. What do you do when you are outnumbered perhaps a hundred to one, and still you know you cannot fail in your one-chance mission of mercy to save your little sister from the hands of wicked men who are holding her hostage behind locked doors? Messiah taught us to be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Did He mean that we are *never* to lift a hand to protect the helpless and the innocent, especially when they happen to be our own flesh and blood? Did He not say, “*When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace?*” (Luke 11:21; CENT). We can hear Simeon and Levi saying, “*Amein Brother; we’re in full agreement with You.*” When we consider the nature of serpents, we know that for the most part, they make no sounds, and are mainly reclusive, avoiding trouble. But when they are confronted with trouble they are well able to strike in their own self-defense. They are able to kill their victim with their powerful strike. They do not go looking for trouble and try to avoid it; but if called upon to protect themselves, they are well able to do so. Messiah told us to be like them: avoid conflict but don’t run from it. Be wise to find the best course of action.

Consider further how that not only were Simeon and Levi thrown suddenly into the complexity of having to rescue their captive sister; they had to keep their plan concealed from their fearful father, now well over a hundred years in age...who may have wound up bringing disaster in the place of victory should he venture to interfere. Jacob was not a fighting man: when it came to warfare, he was only harmless as a dove. Evidently, Rueben the eldest, was more of his father’s retiring nature as well. The next two in line though, were not exactly as harmless as doves, especially under the dire straits they were presently in. We must not surmise however, that they had all the details of their plan worked out in their minds. Did they *initially plan* to go and slay all the men of Shechem? We feel secure in saying that their original motive was not to wreak vengeance as much as it was to redeem their sister. Had she been returned to them safe and sound in the first place, they probably would have tried to just break camp and move on—shamed yes, but still intact. Hopefully that would have been the end of the sad story. But as we know, Shechem did not leave them that recourse: he was determined to keep Dinah right there forever more and convert her to heathenism. Reading Genesis 34:12 from the CJB:

“Ask as large a bride-price as you like, I’ll pay whatever you tell me. Just let me marry the girl.”

As these rugged shepherds looked at Shechem and his father, probably dressed in their fine regal robes, the idea of this pampered prince wanting to purchase their sister, and him becoming their future brother-in law, did not set well with them at all. The dowry was to be given to the bride’s parents to be held by them in trust. It was enough to support her for a full year in case he would wind up divorcing her later. It was not a disguised business transaction for female slavery. No doubt Shechem was used to getting whatever he wanted, and his extravagant offer to purchase their sister served only to add to their rage. If he thought he was impressing Dinah’s brothers, he was wrong. There was no decency exercised in this matter. If Jacob could not discern the true spirit of these men, his sons could. They were not fooled by a pretended spirit of generosity when heartfelt repentance was lacking. Some things cannot be purchased, and their sister was one of them. Although it was unknown to the family of Jacob in that initial visit, Hamor and Shechem had some ulterior schemes of their own. Genesis 34:23 from GNB:

Won’t all their livestock and everything else they own be ours? So let us agree that they can live among us.”

They would not find this out till later. It will be interesting to realize the only way they could possibly have come to know of this hidden motive of theirs. Stating again our position that quite likely, Simeon and Levi did not know exactly how they would redeem their sister, and probably had no intention in the early stages of their plan to slay every able-bodied man in town, we offer this following possible scenario. We say *possible*, and when we give it much thought, more than likely it was probable.

Going back to the meeting with Hamor and Shechem, we see the entire family enraged at the regrettable incident; but above all, the sons were in need of restraining their anger, knowing that a soft answer turneth away wrath (Proverbs 15:1). Silence is golden; and one of the first steps in being as wise as a serpent is to avoid being hasty in our speech. The older brothers explain why they cannot intermarry with those lacking in understanding and commitment to circumcision. They were in need of finding some advantage over the situation, thus permitting them to at least get to their sister; and since the offenders were willing to negotiate, this was the only possible avenue they could see open to them. Realizing that this first stage of the plan was working, the next thing they had to do was find a weak spot in the wall, and with some iron mattocks, dig through the wall, *still wanting only to reach Dinah*. Perhaps their first time in the city, and not knowing for sure where she would be, but figuring that she was probably held in the harems' quarters of the palace, they had that as their primary goal. Knowing that they would need the light of the day in order to get around, they began their work on the wall early in the morning before daybreak. The impossibility of getting through the wall in silence arouses the night watchmen who begin calling for several other men to come to their aid. Circumcision does not diminish testosterone; and even though the fighting men are unable to adequately defend themselves, they attempt to put up a good front nonetheless. By now the sun has risen and Simeon and Levi have entered the city. Perhaps they try to assure the men they're only there to retrieve their sister, but Shechem wails out in protest and the battle is on. Of course it is a battle easily won under the circumstances, but it was not a battle they wanted.

Were they violent against helpless men? Yes. But we must balance that question with the following: Did not Shechem exercise his violent strength against a helpless adolescent? Is rape not an act of violence? Where is the rationale in focusing so hard on the brothers' violence against lawless men to the outright neglect of the criminal's violence against a helpless girl; why does no one hard-focus on that? *There are consequences to evil*. Little wonder that people esteem Dinah's big brothers so poorly if they cannot speak a word in *her* defense! Did they overdo it? Perhaps. We are not told how many men Abraham had to kill in order to redeem his nephew and family. Did he employ violence and guerilla warfare in his mission of mercy? Yes. That is the nature of war—it is never a pretty task. Our personal preference would have been that only Shechem be punished for his grievous sin without any deception on either side, and without anyone else suffering too. Reality though, seldom ministers to our preferences. It is doubtful that Hamor the king would have submitted to his most honorable son being punished for what was probably common practice in their culture; especially would it have been offensive for the crown prince to be punished by a band of nomads living in tents! It is doubtful the men of the city would have stood by to witness the punishment of the king's son. Some of them may not have objected so much to the idea—if some of their own daughters had been raped by him or his royal brothers. But on the other hand, maybe the violation of their daughters was not so great a sin in that time and place. For men of integrity though, it is *always* a grievous sin. While Jacob was obsessed with fear, Simeon and Levi did not care what the surrounding Canaanites thought about their perilous mission. Their powerful argument was made firm and clear by their eloquent response to their father's chastisement: "*Should he treat our sister like a harlot?*" (Genesis 34:31). What else needed to be said? What more could be said? We find in their simple but solid reply the spirit of true manhood to defend the helpless and the innocent.

Let the student of Scripture recall how nearly the whole Israelite tribe of Benjamin was wiped out by the other tribes of Israel (Judges 19 & 20) for what a few of them did in raping the Levite's concubine to death. Why did all the tribe have to suffer when only a few were guilty? Because the rest of the tribe (evidently apathetic toward the wicked crime of these infidels), was intent on protecting its "brethren," and thereby foolishly stood in the way of justice. They went out against their fellow Israelites, and in two days killed 40,000 men of Israel. The following day, 25,000 of the tribe of Benjamin were killed. That is 65,000 men of war lost, for the offence of defending a handful of wicked men who were the only ones who should have died for their own sins! And the issue was over a woman who had been abused to the point of death. May the Father bless those 40,000 men of Israel who fought in her defense; and regarding the 25,000 of

the tribe of Benjamin who stood in defense of the criminals: we leave their punishment in the hands of the eternal Judge of the Universe.

The true nature of this writing you see, is not totally about Simeon and Levi merely, but rather it is a defense for the honor and dignity of women. And deeper still, it is about the honor of our Creator, in whose image and likeness the woman was created. Messiah said, “*The way you treat My sisters, that is the way you are treating Me.*” (Matthew 25:45—my paraphrase).

We stand confounded at the blindness of men who are hasty to stone to death a woman *accused* of adultery, but slow to defend her when she has been raped! In the book, *Behind the Vail in Saudi Arabia*, by Jean Sasson, we read of a 13 year old girl who had been raped and impregnated. On the day of her delivery, she had to leave her baby in the arms of a crying nurse (who alone raised her voice in protest), and walk down the hallway of the hospital in chains, and out to her place of execution, without even a trial, where she was stoned to death. Forgive us dear Reader for bringing such a perplexing story to your attention; we realize such things are disturbing to our insulated lives here in the Home of the Brave and the Land of the Free. But please consider, if Dinah’s two big brothers did a few things wrong in order to do something right, while the rest of the family stood by, without any plan or strategy, let us not be too hasty to chastise these two men. Let us ask ourselves if the passive attitude to injustice as taken by many in Christendom and Islam, rightly represents the standard of יְהוָה? And if we discover that the answer is no, then let us be equally sure we are not falling into alignment with that substandard. For as we surely must know, we’ll all stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment one day. Like Rahab and the Hebrew midwives, when Simeon and Levi are weighed in the scales of righteous judgment, how will יְהוָה see them? That is the question.

We mentioned earlier that we hoped we would not be too repetitive over some of the various points of this story, but because so much is involved, we need to be sure that we leave no stone unturned. Going back to the extravagant dowry offered by Shechem, we mentioned that the brothers were not impressed. They could see that he was too proud to say he was sorry for his dreadful sin against them and their little sister (who was still being held captive in his palace). They could see also in his offer that they ask however much money they wanted, his attitude that he could buy his way out of his sin. They could see through his pretense of an honorable dowry for a Hebrew virgin, that it was nothing more than his depraved opinion of females, that they could be bought and sold like cattle. This is what prompted Simeon and Levi to respond to their father’s rebuke with, “*Should he treat our sister like a harlot?*” Whatever else we may find to reprimand them over; their closing argument even silenced their worried father. Is there not a solitary word *of applause* for their resolute commitment and loyalty to their sister? They’re still surrounded by more heathen nations, perhaps allies of the Shekmites, *but they have their sister back*; they’ll deal with everyone else after the celebration. At least their mother was smiling.

If we could pull back the mysterious veil that hides the unseen from the seen, and look down through the corridors of time, when Simeon and Levi victoriously present Dinah back to her rejoicing family, with tears and hugs and kisses, let us imagine for a moment another scene of the heart. In the midst of all the glad rejoicing, as it begins to dawn on Jacob what all was involved in getting his daughter back home, and anxiety comes over him like an ominous cloud threatening an impending storm, and the glad songs of rejoicing begin dying down, we see young Joseph clasping the hand of his beloved sister Dinah. Joseph, we must remember was the favorite (and most honored) son of Jacob. Probably even right then, he is wearing his regal coat of many colors. He would be sold to the caravan of Ishmaelite’s in less than two years. Jacob was already making the mistake of building a wall between him and his older brothers. They probably never forgot how, when their Uncle Esau was coming to decimate the family, Jacob set the least favored children to the forefront, to be the first in the line of attack, with Joseph in the most protected position all the way back next to him. But in spite of his father’s look of worry right now, Joseph is looking at his two big brothers Simeon and Levi with deep admiration; for Dinah, you see, had been his lifelong childhood playmate, and now these two big brothers of his not only make no apologies for doing what they had to do; they boldly express no fear of any surrounding nation who might want to retaliate! A man with a purpose is an army; the world steps aside for a man who knows where he is going. And two are better than one.

We use the word *mistake* for the wall of variance Jacob was building between Joseph and his brothers, but consider dear Reader: Joseph was destined to be the great commandant of Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh as a savior to his family. He was divinely ordained to this office because, of the twelve sons of Jacob, he possessed the most sterling character of all. Had Jacob not caused the ten older sons to be jealous of, and angry toward Joseph, they would never have sold him into slavery, the very catalyst that propelled him to his destiny. They were angry at his dreams with their sheaves of grain bowing down to his lone sheaf. And when the seven-year famine came twenty years later, and the brothers had no sheaves at all, *they* came to Egypt and bowed down to *him*. We read in Psalm 76:10, that “*even the wrath of man praiseth יהוה.*”

When Joseph had become the viceroy of Egypt, his sheaf of grain was standing tall. And now, the second year into the famine, we find his ten elder brothers bowing down before him, not realizing yet who he was. Joseph, knowing that his dreams were prophetic, and that there were *eleven* sheaves bowing down to his sheaf, he knew that in order for the prophecy to meet its fulfillment, Benjamin, his younger brother had to come to Egypt as well. He further knew that since his mother Rachel was the most beloved by their father, he needed to test his older brothers to be sure they were not equally jealous of Benjamin as they had been of him. Would they fight to protect this last son of Rachel, or would they abandon him also? This is what Joseph needed to know. And so, as the story goes, he accuses his brothers of being spies coming to assess the weakened condition of Egypt. In their desperate attempt to defend themselves, they assure him that it is not true: never would ten *brothers* go on a spying campaign together! This common sense reasoning then leads them to give even more details, revealing that in fact, they still have one younger brother, and another brother “is not.” This of course, refers to Brother Joseph. They couldn’t bring themselves to say he was dead, knowing their own guilt regarding him, so they simply said *he is not*. All of the ten brothers held fast to this story, perhaps ashamed of telling this stranger the truth of the brother who was not. How hard it is to confess one’s own sins.

Since they ventured so far into their story, revealing the fact that they had yet a younger brother at home with their aging father, Joseph then demands for them to prove that they are telling the truth by producing this younger brother they claim to have. This will then clear them of the charge of being spies. Of course they try to tell him of the impossibility of bringing the younger brother to Egypt, because of their father, but Joseph holds one of them as hostage until they bring this younger brother. We ask, which of the ten elder brothers did Joseph detain? None other than his childhood hero Simeon. Though the record doesn’t tell us, we can imagine Joseph visiting Simeon (with a translator of course in order to keep his true identity concealed) from day to day, perhaps inquiring if he might also have *any sisters*, in hopes of hearing the story again of how he rescued Dinah from the Shekmites, and inquiring further of her life over the past 22 years. No doubt he saw Simeon and Levi as visionaries, who alone could see the long term effect of their sister’s captivity had no one intervened in her behalf, and their immediate need to devise a plan for her rescue. He knew their father disapproved of how they brought it about, but in his own heart, through the years, he knew that his brothers were not ruthless murderers. They were farmers: quiet, gentle farmers...until their sister had been abducted and violated. Neither were they skilled military men, accustomed to devising strategies against an enemy force. From beginning to end, their hand was forced, and they did what they thought was the best thing to do all things considered. It is so easy for well-dressed ministers to stand behind the safety of a pulpit in an air-conditioned church, with soft pews for the sleepy congregation, colorful carpeted flooring, and stain-glassed windows, and pass condemnation on two men facing the gargantuan trial of their lives. Hard-working, honest-hearted, quiet-spoken shepherds, coming home to face a tremendous test of their character, their courage and their love. Simeon and Levi. When all is said and done, there’s usually more said than done; but not so with Dinah’s brothers.

By all means his elder brothers had anger. All of them did, Joseph included. Righteous indignation can be a powerful motivation to get people moving, and get things accomplished. In the same way that his brothers’ anger served to praise the Almighty in his own case (though perhaps no one could see it at the time), יהוה had His eye on young 17 year old Joseph: bound

like a slave, perhaps riding on a camel, headed for the mysterious land of the Nile. What appeared to man to be an impossible contradiction of the very will of Elohyim, was in truth, right on course and in precise harmony with the divine purpose, *including his brothers' anger*. It took 22 years for everyone to see the fulfillment of Joseph's prophetic dreams, but though the vision seemed to tarry, still it came, and right on time.

Habakkuk 2:3 At the time I have decided, my words will come true. You can trust what I say about the future. It may take a long time, but keep on waiting— it will happen! (CEV)

Reflecting back on the dilemma of Dinah many times through the years, perhaps especially during his own time spent in an Egyptian prison, a captive no less than she, Joseph understood what his two brothers were up against in that difficult time. And though he loved his aging father, he more than likely didn't share in his reproach against them. Indeed, Joseph shared with his brothers in their anger, although he himself was too young at the time to do much to help his captive sister. Everyone could see that Jacob was more focused on Rachel's son than on Leah's daughter. Young Joseph was safe at home while Dinah was being held in a heathen city. Though it was part of the plan, Jacob lost his favorite son for 22 years of his life. Perhaps through that time he reflected on his own failure over Dinah's tragedy. Though he cursed the wrath of his two sons, yet the wrath of man praised Elohyim, and served His purpose.

Would יהוה have delivered Dinah had Jacob and his family done nothing but enter a time of prayer and fasting? We must ask the same regarding Abraham in the case of Lot, or David in the case of his family in Ziklag (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 30). On the other hand, does Elohyim sometimes use ways and means totally foreign to what we think He should do? Doesn't He have the right and the authority to do whatever He pleases? With or without our approval? Did not a deceiving spirit go forth from the presence of יהוה to convince Ahab to rush into his own demise, and at the same time teach King Yahoshaphat to be more careful with whom he associates? (See 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:21-2). יהוה doesn't ask our advice, and it is doubtful He ever will.

One thing is clear: it was not the will of the Almighty that His chosen people intermarry with idolaters. It was totally *against* His will. Solomon is a perfect example of how important this matter is. The worship of יהוה isn't merely another religious philosophy in the world. It is a totally distinctive way of life unique to Him alone. People may borrow certain aspects of that lifestyle such as the dietary laws, but mix it with their own pagan festivals, etcetera. And marriage, that most intimate relationship between a man and a woman, must be within His parameter. Even then there are times when He makes an exception, such as with Ruth and Boaz. But we must understand her purpose in the divine order. In her own idolatrous community, she publicly renounced her false religion and proclaimed her deep love for the Elohyim of Israel. She followed Naomi to the Promised Land because only there could she now find peace and fulfillment in her life; she never wanted to leave His Presence.

It was evidently clear to the sons of Jacob on the other hand, that the Shekemites were not of a mind to love the Elohyim of the Hebrews and learn to obey His Torah. They probably considered their prerequisite of circumcision a meager enough proviso in lieu of what they were willing to pay, and of course, would gladly comply, but their heart was not in it. They only wanted Dinah, and perhaps any other pretty young virgins that may be in the encampment. The fact that they did not bring Dinah with them reveals their conniving spirit. They were keeping her bound in the city just in case her family members were not willing to come to terms with them. She could then be used as a leverage to get not only her, *but even more*. By the unfolding narrative of the story, we will come to see that the Shekemites had some ulterior motives of their own...beyond Dinah.

Genesis 34:29 All their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses, they captured and plundered. (ESV)

Some have said that Simeon and Levi were no different than Shechem by their taking the women and the children, but let us take a few things into consideration. When a city-state was

conquered in ancient times, and the men were all slain, the women couldn't get welfare, food stamps, or disability checks. They could plant seeds in the ground, but only after the men had plowed the fields with teams of oxen. In other words, they would be left to starve to death if someone did not offer to help them. Usually, heathen men of war would slay all the women along with the men (conf. Esther 3:13), with the exception sometimes of the young virgins; but this is not what the sons of Jacob did. No, the account declares that they took all the women and children. *They took them to care for them.* The women of Shechem knew how their king's most honorable son had abducted and raped the shy daughter of the quiet shepherd family living nearby. They were used to men abusing them, and robbing them of their dignity. They could see the difference between the men of their city and these *truly* honorable men of the living Elohim. *"And now, here they are, risking their lives to rescue their little sister, and are even willing to take care of us poor widows."* At the conquest of the Shekemites, no women were abused by Simeon and Levi, nor by any of their brothers who joined in the crusade. The women and children were taken, not to be made slaves and held against their will, but to be introduced to the living Elohim of Israel. The sons of Jacob had a reputation for miles around as peaceful, gentle men. Not only did the Shekemite women have Dinah there to teach them for a few days prior to her deliverance, but even the men of the city had to acknowledge the same. In fact, it was their peacefulness that made the Shekemites think they could easily be taken advantage of. They, like many today, confused meek for weak.

After speaking with Jacob and his sons, Hamor and Shechem probably had a good laugh with the men of their city later that day, at the naiveté of the gentle unassuming family living in tents. *"How easily,"* they probably reasoned, *"shall we profit from these simple-minded farmer neighbors of ours."* But while they made sure to keep Dinah from hearing their scheme, they probably didn't consider that any of their own women would later betray them, so their presence at the city gate that day went unnoticed. These faithful, upright women were the only ones who could have afterward related that plot to Simeon and Levi, sometime following the conquest.

One thing we must remember: gentle Jacob, unlike Grandfather Abraham before him, did not accompany his sons in the liberation of Dinah. Maybe he didn't even suspect their plan to redeem her. Without a plan himself, and perhaps thinking that his sons were out tending their flocks as usual, what a surprise it must have been to him to see them carrying their sister back home. He would only later learn of the battle that ensued. Let us take careful note that he didn't reproach them for their subterfuge, but rather for the fierce anger they must have had to kill an entire village of men! He knew that they were not the only ones involved in the subterfuge. How shocking it must have been to his sensitive soul! How unlike any of his sons to do such a thing! What will now become of his good reputation? None of his sons had ever killed anyone before this. What on earth could have come over them? Was it an evil spirit of murder as some obviously think? Or could it have been on the other hand, a spirit of selfless-defense? Once again, even circumcised men, perceiving an invasion of an enemy force will try to preserve their own lives: especially against an invasion of a mere two men. Even if Simeon and Levi tried to assure them they were only there for Dinah, once the shouts of battle began, trying to shout a terror-stricken mob is an effort in futility. They were now in dire need of defending themselves. Depending on how many they were outnumbered by, they could well have suffered a few battle wounds that day themselves. So it nearly always goes in a skirmish. What may have started out to be a simple quest to do a good thing, can easily escalate into an all-out war within minutes! The best-laid plans of men and mice sometimes go awry. When we read that the sons of Jacob answered Hamor with deceitfulness, how easily we tend to jump to exaggerated conclusions, as if to say they intended to kill all the men in town, or they intended to kill Shechem in order to take out their vengeance upon him. The account doesn't even presume *to tell us their motive.* We must be careful to not add to the Word, nor diminish aught from it. We must prove all things. *Speculate within the perimeters of Scripture...* if you are prone to speculation.

And so the question is rightly asked, What Simeon and Levi did, was it righteous or evil? As we have learned, all of this painful story would never have happened had a rich young prince not attacked a daughter of Israel. That evil act set the proverbial ball to rolling. In all fairness to these brothers of Dinah, let us not be negligent to also ask, *What Shechem did, was it good or*

*was it evil?* In the final analysis, we must ask not so much, What they did, was it right or wrong? But rather we should ask, *What they did, Was it the will of יהוה being performed, or was it not?* Was it the will of Elohyim that Dinah remain in a heathen harem, or be delivered? Imagine if no one did anything deceptive, violent, or in wrath, and Dinah not be delivered, and perhaps in time converted to heathenism? So we would read her sad story and move on to chapter 35, maybe never giving it a further thought. That is truly sad to contemplate. If it could have been done any other way, we would certainly rejoice. But it wasn't. Now we must render our judgment upon Simeon and Levi, just as we must regarding Rahab, the midwives, and yes, even Abraham; indeed the erstwhile deceptive Jacob himself. We can see that wherever this family went, יהוה struck terror in the hearts of all who presumed to harm them. That is a strong statement on the part of Elohyim. But let us not think that even Jacob had only curses for his two warlike sons:

Genesis 49:28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spoke to them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. (KJV)

Revelation 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Revelation 7:7 Of the tribe of **Simeon** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of **Levi** were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 21:12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Please consider if the liars and murderers are cast into the lake of fire, and Simeon and Levi are among the sealed, and their names are even written on two of the pearly gates, this would indicate that their names are also written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Shechem's name is certainly not written on any of the gates, and unless he repented of his wicked sin against one of the princesses of Israel, neither is his name is not registered in the Lamb's book of Life.

We hope we have covered the ground in our effort to help all who seek the truth to find it. If the eternal Judge opens heaven's gates to anyone, we certainly do not want to close them do we, especially if their names are written on those gates?

Let us judge righteously. **Shalom.** שלום