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Let's resume our study now in Genesis chapter 34. We stopped here in the middle of the revenge or the retaliation that is underway, instigated by Simeon and Levi for the defiling of their sister Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor. We pick up here in verse 25.

It came to pass on the third day when they were in pain that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed or massacred all the males. You can imagine that they probably tried to recruit their other brothers, especially the other four brothers of Dinah, the full brothers, but only Simeon and Levi are on this initial excursion. And for whatever reason, Judah and Reuben and Issachar and Zebulun don't accompany, much less the other brothers, Naphtali and the rest of the gang there don't come.

But Simeon and Levi go and they killed Hamor and Shechem, his son, with the edge of the sword and took Dinah from Shechem's house. This is the first time we are told explicitly that all during these negotiations Dinah never came home. After the physical relationship with Shechem took place, she never came back home.

Shechem kept her at his home. And so when the brothers propose and say, if you will not heed us in verse 17 and be circumcised, we will take our daughter and be gone. Well, that's sort of hot air.

They don't have Dinah to take. Dinah is over at Shechem's and they would have had to storm the city with all of them being fully prepared and so on. And the only way they could have accomplished that is if they had been right with God, if they had taken this issue before the Lord and said, Lord, this thing that ought not to be done has taken place and appealed to God for a victory in the name of righteousness.

But this apparently doesn't occur to them. This whole thing is off on the left foot from the very beginning. So they go in and they kill Hamor and Shechem with the edge of the sword.

They take Dinah from Shechem's house and went out. Then notice verse 27. The sons of Jacob, these are the rest of the sons of Jacob, now after the coast is clear and the revenge has been taken, now the sons of Jacob come upon the slain and plunder the city.

They say, well, since the booty lies unprotected here, we'll just go in and aggrandize ourselves. So you have the murder of the males that were circumcised. All of the fighting men have been slain pretty much by Simeon and Levi and their staff, their little militias.

Now the sons come in and pillage and plunder the unprotected possessions of these people. They plunder the city and they justify it in their minds because their sister had

been defiled. So it isn't enough that not only Shechem suffers the death penalty, but his father and all the fighting men of the town, but now all of their possessions.

And this is just unadulterated greed. They've just gone in because this stuff is available. It doesn't belong to them.

There's nothing before or after this time that indicates in the law of God that not only should someone suffer the death penalty, but everyone around them suffer the death penalty and all of their possessions and their orphaned families be plundered. They're taking stuff away from widows and orphans at this point because the fighting men have been killed. So they're coming into the house of a widow and an orphan looking at the slain body of their husband who took upon himself this circumcision and they're just taking their stuff, herding away their sheep and goats, taking their possessions back to the tribe.

It says in verse 28, they took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, whatever was in the city and whatever was in the field, and all their wealth. So not only have these people lost their main provider, the breadwinner, but the stuff that they could have subsisted on is taken also. All their little ones and their wives they took captive.

So now they don't have to, in order to not starve to death, they're enslaved. They're going to become household servants. You remember the household of Jacob is quite large.

There are 12 clans within Jacob, and as these younger sons grow up and get married and so forth, there's going to be this pool of servants. They've taken these people and basically enslaved them. They took them captive and they plundered everything in their houses.

So verse 30, now for the first time in this entire chapter, we finally have Jacob speak up and say something. Jacob says to Simeon and Levi, You have troubled me. Oh, isn't that awful? You have troubled me.

You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. And since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. This is the same state of mind that we found Jacob in a couple of chapters ago when he was anticipating his meeting with his brother Esau.

He heard that Esau and 400 men were coming to meet him and he was afraid. And he said, lest they slay the mother with the child. And he sent all of these gifts and organized himself, divided his people and everything else out of fear.

Now, his one reaction to all of this wrong that has taken place is, Well, now I'm afraid something might happen to me. You've made me obnoxious. You've made me a stench

in the nose of all the people round about.

And since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against... He doesn't say they will gather themselves against you and kill you, his sons. He says they're going to gather against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I. Their response is, should he treat our sister like a harlot? And in Hebrew, like a harlot is the first part of this phrase.

Like a harlot, should he treat our sister? And Jacob apparently has no response. He can't even... he can't answer them why. What happened to that wisdom that God has been building in his soul? The truth that God the Holy Spirit uses to motivate us, to guide us, to give us our sense of right and wrong, and of when to act and when to refrain from acting.

There is a time and a season for everything under the sun, it tells us over in Ecclesiastes. There was a time for Jacob to act. And first of all, being a good father to his daughter, this never would have happened in the first place.

But it is his omission and the vacuum left by his lack of authority into which all of this has been drawn. And now, even when there are consequences to be dealt with, he is ineffectual. You get the idea that he's just sort of a hand wringer here.

Oh, look what you've done. Now bad things are going to happen to me because of you. Why does this take place and how does this fit into the larger picture? You'll recall, I mentioned a week or two back, that as we have seen many times in the book of Genesis, there are structural clues that help us in determining and interpreting the meaning of the things that we study.

God not only gives us content, but also the form in which he communicates it. Some things in the Bible are in narrative. Some of them are in poetry.

Some of them are in prophetic passages. Some of them are in didactic or teaching sections like the epistles. This is narrative, and one of the devices that God uses to teach us in presenting a narrative is structure.

He uses some of the same tools that you'll find used by any good author. The best literature communicates not only at a surface level, but also in other ways, and you will find symbolism and allusion and structure, the balancing. You'll see one character rising as the other falls and comparing those two characters gives you a clue as to what the author's intention is and what he's trying to get across.

God makes use of all of those tools and more in teaching us through narrative. You are more and more familiar as we go through Genesis with one of the most favorite devices, which is the chiasm, where you have sort of like parentheses within parentheses within parentheses, and the outermost set of brackets corresponds to each other, and then the

next inmost two things correspond, and the next inmost two things correspond, and then right at the center you find the point of greatest emphasis. We've seen this even in the earliest chapters of Genesis, and it's the case on a broad scale here, and I want to give you a little more detail on this, and if you'll bear with me, you need to write a few things down or make a note of a few things to see this most clearly.

If you don't happen to be writing things down, just pay close attention, and I'll try to paint the picture for you verbally. But you remember that when we first started studying Jacob, this was back in chapter 25, and this was the birth of Jacob and Esau, and so the first thing you might make a note of is Genesis 25, verses 19-34. This was the first that we saw of Rebekah being with child and the struggling in her womb, and God spoke to her and said, two nations are in your womb struggling.

You have Jacob reaching out and grasping the heel of his brother and all that. You could label that as A, and we will expect on the far outside of this chiasm there's going to be an A' or an A with a little apostrophe after it. That's how the scholars write down a chiasm.

They say, well, A corresponds to A' or A with a little mark next to it. So these two, and when we get through the rest of these, the last thing we'll cover is the thing that's going to correspond to this. This is the outermost bracket of the story of Jacob.

Okay, the second thing, and that, if you want to label it, it's the beginning of the story of Jacob, or this is the beginning with Jacob and Esau, his birth. Then in chapter 26, verses 1 through 23, this is what we would label B. This is Isaac and the Philistines. Remember that entire chapter? Isaac came in and got down there with Abimelech, and he had to live outside the city, and he said, you're too numerous, move further away, and he would dig a well, and the Philistines would come out and say, we need this well, and so Isaac would move further away.

And the Philistines would come and say, that well belongs to us too, and Isaac would go and dig another well, or open up a well of his father. The Philistines would come out and say, that's our well too, and Isaac had to move very far away before he finally could dig a well, and they left him alone, and it was his own well. That was in 26, 1 through 33, so you could just label that Isaac and the Philistines, and that's going to be B, and we'll expect down the way we'll have a B prime.

C here is chapter 26, verse 34, through chapter 28, verse 9. 26, 34 to 28, 9 of Genesis. This is the whole episode where Jacob cheats Esau out of his blessing. Jacob the chiseler.

Jacob big-dealing Esau out of his blessing. That, of course, we're going to label C. 26, 34 through 28, 9. Our D in this structure is going to be chapter 28, verse 10 through verse 22. Remember Jacob had to flee after all of the events of his brother, and he meets God at Bethel.

This is Jacob's ladder. He has the vision laying his head on the stone, and he sees the angels ascending and descending. That's 28, verse 10 through verse 22.

That's going to be D. Jacob meets God at Bethel. E is chapter 29, verses 1 through 14. Jacob arrives at Laban's house.

He leaves the land, and he's up there sojourning with Laban. 29, verses 1 through 14. F, and this is the last of our beginning brackets, is 29, 15 through 30.

29, 15 through 29, 30. This is Jacob marrying Leah and Rachel, but what I'd like you to label this is, Laban deceives Jacob. Remember that? He agreed to work the seven years, worked those seven years, thought he was marrying Rachel, and he actually got Leah.

So this is Laban deceives Jacob in the course of his getting married. Okay, so that's A, B, C, D, E, F. And now we come to the very center most element in the chiasm. Remember that the center of the chiasm is the point of emphasis.

And this is 29, 31 through chapter 30, verse 24. 29, 31 to 30, 24. This is the story of the birth of Jacob's sons.

How did we get the 12 sons, the 12 tribes of Israel? That's in that section. And that's the highlight, the point of emphasis. Chiasm, the name chiasm, of course, comes from the Greek letter chi, which is a big X. And if you turn an X on its side, you have outermost things converging to a center, and then they diverge back out in a symmetrical fashion.

Right? Why are you smiling? Yeah, well, and so now we're going to, the first thing we're going to have after this center most element is going to correspond to the thing just before it. The thing just before it was point F, Jacob being deceived by Laban. And what happens? You can label the next line after the birth of Jacob's son, this is going to be, or sons, chapter 30, verse 25 to chapter 31, verse 1. This is going to be F prime, or F with a little superscript 1, or a prime mark, an apostrophe type of thing.

Jacob outwits Laban. Remember, Laban goes to shear his sheep, and Jacob slips on out of there. Well, actually, in this section, he outwits him by amassing his wealth, by getting the, peeling the stripes of bark, and getting the spotted sheep and the spotted goats.

And he outwits his father-in-law, Laban, and aggrandizes these great flocks and herds. Herds. So, initially, Laban has the upper hand in foisting his two daughters on Jacob in reverse order.

Now Jacob outwits Laban by growing his flocks and herds. So that's F prime. Now we're going to come back to what? E prime.

And this is chapter 31, verse 2, all the way up to chapter 32, verse 1. And this is Jacob leaving Laban. If you've got room on one side or the other of these lines, you can start

drawing brackets, because Laban outwitting Jacob corresponds to Jacob outwitting Laban at the F level. If you go to the E level, Jacob arrived at Laban's house.

This is how he got there. Now we have how he leaves Laban's house in E prime. The next line is chapter 32, verses 2 and 3. This is Jacob's encounter with the angels at Mahanaim.

Remember the two camps? He sees the angels there, and he's going to have the encounter with wrestling with the man and so forth, which takes place shortly after this time. There's kind of an overlap here between this line and the next one. But Jacob met God at Bethel.

Now Jacob meets angels at Mahanaim. And, of course, he's going to meet God in the form of the man that he wrestles with in this same section as well. So that would be D prime.

The next line that we have to contend with, the next episode, is in chapter 32, verse 4 through chapter 33, verse 20. And this is Jacob meeting up with Esau, and Jacob returns Esau's blessing. Remember how he keeps sending the parties ahead of him, the sheep and the goats and the herds and flocks, in waves ahead of him.

And then he puts his family out there, and he returns the blessing. And he says, let me give you these things. This barak, and he uses the term barak for blessing.

So this corresponds to when he cheated Esau out of his blessing up there in C. So this is C prime. He cheated Esau out of his blessing. Now he's attempting to return the blessing to Esau in this section, 32.4 through 33.20. Then the second to the last here is chapter 34, verses 1 through 31.

This is the episode with Dinah and the Shechemites, also known as the Hivites. But the specific ones we're dealing with here are the people in the town of Shechem. So this is the Dinah incident.

And that's going to be B prime. And then the very last one is what we're going to see in chapter 35, which is the journey's end for Isaac and for Jacob. This is going to complete the Jacob story.

We'll be moving into the Joseph story after chapter 35. And that's going to be A prime. Now, when we try to think, well, what is the significance of this chapter? Why does God include this whole episode of Dinah, her defilement, and the revenge taken by the brothers, and so on? Well, one thing that helps us is looking at the structure.

We can see very clearly the correspondence between a lot of these other things. Deception being reversed. Laban outwits Jacob.

Jacob outwits Laban. Jacob arrives at Laban's house. Jacob departs from Laban's house.

Meeting God two different times. Cheating Esau out of the blessing. Returning the blessing.

What does the Dinah incident correspond to up there in line B? Very strange. Isaac and the Philistines. Why on earth would this chapter with Jacob and the Hivites correspond to Isaac and the Philistines? What is the connection? We almost seem to have created more work for ourselves instead of solving our problem.

But if you go back and look at Genesis chapter 26 and recollect what we studied there, remember after the Abimelech episode where he said, My wife is my sister. In chapter 26 he was afraid. He had fear.

And Isaac's fear caused him to repeat a mistake that his father Abraham had made. He was in a foreign country dealing with a king and he tried to pass off his wife as his sister. And it worked for a while.

But you've got this wife-sister idea going in the beginning part of chapter 26. We also have the wife-sister idea going in the Dinah episode. And what was the motivation? What was the problem? It was fear.

What engendered the difficulties in chapter 26? It was Isaac's fear. He wasn't trusting the Lord. It was not faith.

It wasn't confidence and faith in the promise of God and application of that promise to his immediate circumstances. It's one thing to have the promise and to know it. It's something else to live in the light of it on a daily basis.

And this was the mistake that Isaac made. He had the covenant promises of God confirmed to him just as they had been confirmed to Abraham. But Isaac was afraid when he was with Abimelech and he thought, these people might kill me.

That's exactly what's afflicting Jacob. He says, you've made me a stench in their nose, they're liable to kill me. He hasn't shaken this fearful spirit that he was living under when he was going to meet Esau.

That's the reason he doesn't tangle with Hamor and Shechem. That's probably the reason he doesn't want to rock the boat. He doesn't want to make waves.

He doesn't want to point out. We had a great conversation during the break about the responsibility that we as believers and that the church at large has for pointing out the things that are wrong in the world, in our society, in our culture. Someone needs to be a lamp on a lampstand.

Jesus said, you are the light of the world. If you put the lamp under a bushel, the light is not going to shine. We become complacent and we tolerate and we say, well, that point

has been made.

There's no point in rocking the boat. We're just going to offend. We'll make ourselves a stench in the nose of others to keep on pointing out the terribly lewd and bad content in television programs and in the things that are put on the news and the things that are put on magazine stands and the things that are taught in our schools and are put into our laws.

They're trying, as they have over the last 10 or 15 years, to legitimize homosexual marriages. They started in Hawaii and then revoked it. Now there's something going on on the eastern seaboard, Vermont or someplace.

They're trying to put that back in the books. We have a responsibility as American citizens and as believers to point out, this is a wrong behavior. People come out openly and declare their homosexuality.

They declare their relationships without the benefit of marriage and children that they have without the benefit of marriage. And it's greeted with a silence, almost an indifference anymore on the part of the church. We don't stand up and say, and we don't have to necessarily go into the public forum and raise cane, but we certainly need to point out to our children, to our young people, this is sowing to the flesh and these people of the flesh are going to reap corruption.

That's the word of God. That's the law of God. Don't tolerate this.

Don't follow this example. Don't think that it's okay. It's not.

And certainly within our own ranks and in our own environment, we need to make this point. We have not been given a spirit of fear. God has given us a spirit, Paul told Timothy, a power of love and of a sound mind.

And that's what we need to emphasize and stand up for. And if someone asks us, well, what do you think about this that's going on? What do you think about the behavior of leaders in high places in their private lives? We should stand up and say, it's wrong. It's an abomination.

It's a violation of the law of God and it is a sowing to the flesh and there will be a reaping. But that spirit of fear invaded Isaac in chapter 26 and it invades Jacob's thinking in this corresponding section. But remember the last part of chapter 26 because after this issue with Rebecca is resolved, Isaac gets her back.

She comes out of the harem of Abimelech and all is well and he goes to dwell. He is side by side with the inhabitants of the land, in this case, the Philistines. Jacob, in the section we're looking at, is side by side with the Shechemites, the Hivites that live in the city of Shechem.

Same situation. What does Isaac do? Well, he began to prosper. He continued prospering in verse 13 of chapter 26 until he became very prosperous.

So, the material belongings of Isaac are an issue in chapter 26, as are the material possessions of Jacob over in chapter 34. Isn't this the bait that Shechem puts on the hook for his own people? Let them intermarry and let's give our daughters to them because we will acquire their possessions. Let them come into our land and we'll siphon away all of this wealth that they've got.

Why would these men submit to circumcision? They don't even know about Dinah and Shechem's love for her and they probably wouldn't be motivated just to please him to get themselves circumcised. There's got to be something in it for me, they're thinking. Well, what isn't for them? Wealth.

They're going to be able to trade daughters for goods. So, material goods are an issue in both places. Verse 14 of chapter 26, Isaac had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants.

So the Philistines envied him. The Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham. This is Genesis 26.15. You want to make a note of that verse.

The Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father and they had filled them with earth. Abimelech said, go away from us, you're too strong for us. Isaac departed in verse 17, pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar and dwelt there.

And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father. For the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. How many different times and ways is the story going to tell us that Abraham dug wells, the Philistines stopped them up and Isaac unstopped them? It says it about 12 different times and 12 different ways in here, doesn't it? Why? Because it's an exceedingly important point.

Make a fist with your knuckles and wrap yourself on the head. These wells are important. Why? What does this correspond to over in chapter 34? The daughters that belong to Israel versus the daughters that belong to the Hivites, the Canaanites, the people of the land.

The daughters become the wives and that is the well spring from which the nation emerges. The people continue because of these marriages. Remember our scripture reading this morning over in Proverbs chapter 5. What is the symbolism used by David and Solomon in that chapter? Drink waters from your own cistern and waters from your own well.

In the context of not going after the immoral woman, not going after the woman dripping honey from her lips and so forth, he says keep your own wife. The well and the cistern there, the fountains of water, he says why should you go out in the street to get your water? Why should you go down in the common places, in the public places? You have your own well. You have your own cistern.

That's the place to refresh yourself with this water. That's the place where life and the future will come from. So the wells and the wives are linked through that symbolism and they're linked here as well.

Now what is it specifically in this case? What does Isaac do? Does he go in and deceive and fight Abimelech to get that well that his father had dug? He doesn't, but he's not afraid of him either. He's not acting in fear, but he doesn't go in anger and rouse up the militia and go and fight and slay. He doesn't engage in deception.

What does he do? In a sense, Isaac turns the other cheek. He says well, if they're going to claim this, I'll move away. There's plenty of land here.

There's plenty of wells. I'll move away. And this conflict tells Isaac that coexistence is not a good idea.

And so he moves further and further away. And this conflict, Isaac interprets it. When he gets this circumstance in his life, he says this well is becoming a bone of contention.

I'm going to move further away. I'll dig another well. I'm not going to fight these people, but I'm not going to coexist with them.

I'm not going to enter into a treaty with them. I'm not going to negotiate. And he doesn't also go into anger like the sons do with Dinah and go in and start a big battle and have bloodshed.

He moves away. It's a wise thing to do. He goes back to his father's other wells.

And he finally goes through this process until he gets, in verse 22, to a well where they did not quarrel. And he calls that well Rehoboth because he says now the Lord has made room for us. Now we have a place where we're not in conflict.

We shall be fruitful in the land. He finds his own well. He doesn't have to share.

He doesn't have to fight over it. It's his own well. He says the Lord has led us to a place that has a well.

This is where we will be fruitful. This is what should have happened with Jacob. When Jacob buddies up here and pitches his tents next to Shechem and there starts to be conflict and envy of his possessions and so forth, rather than staying there, letting his daughter mingle with the daughters of the land and having this whole bad episode of

chapter 34 happen, Jacob should not be there.

Where should he be? He needs to be back at Bethel. That's the house of God. And that's where he's eventually going to go.

He doesn't have any business sticking around here. And he says, well, but this is where Father Abraham built the altar and worshiped God. But if you go back to Genesis chapter 12, when Abraham first got into the land and came to this place near Shechem and built this altar, he kept right on going.

He didn't camp there. He didn't pitch his tents there and stay there for any length of time. Abraham moved on south.

And he's going to go all the way down through the land and he's going to end up all the way down in Egypt, having his own little wife deception scheme going on down there. But he did not stop and dwell at this place. And this is Jacob's mistake.

He stops and he builds up the altar and that's well and good. This is sort of an homage to his grandfather. But then he stays there.

And he is afraid. He's got sort of a love-hate relationship with the Hivites. Apparently he likes being there.

But he's afraid of them and he abdicates his responsibility because he's in that vicinity and he should have moved on. And you see this in Isaac's case. And so contention over wells, contention over wives, this is the issue.

And they needed to separate. Even after Dinah gets inveigled into a relationship with Shechem, why do they not go to God? Why do they not say, Lord, what should we do? We have suffered a wrong. Why does he not fall down on his face before the Lord? Why does he not offer sacrifice? Why does he not gather the troops the way Abraham does when Lot is captured and go forth and fight in the name of righteousness and fight in the name of the Lord? Instead, Jacob does nothing.

His sons fight out of anger, out of revenge. Even if it is a right thing to go in and punish these people, a right thing done in a wrong way for wrong reasons is wrong. And to do it out of anger, to do it out of hatred.

We made this point not long ago. In fact, I was talking to somebody over the Christmas break that was asking questions, a young man who was wondering about the things of God and so forth. And he said, Well, I wonder about the idea that it's just whether or not you believe in Jesus as to whether you're saved or not.

And that it doesn't matter what you do. How can a terrible person believe in Jesus and go to heaven and somebody who's really nice and moral and lives a good integrity life,

God's going to put them in hell? He says, I just don't understand that. And so I was explaining very briefly to him the idea of motivation.

That man looks on the outward appearance and God looks on the heart. And God is looking at why we do what we do. And if you don't have a relationship with God, the reasons for which you do things are always going to somehow, somehow be corrupt because they come from a corrupt nature.

And I told him, something can have the appearance of good. You look at someone, this was my example, you look at someone in the uniform of their country. Here's an army soldier.

He's in Vietnam. And he grabs his M-16 and his helmet and several magazines of ammunition and goes out there and starts shooting North Vietnamese. Well, we say, well, you know, we know that murder is premeditated, cold-blooded murder and killing in battle is okay.

Maybe, maybe not. You can be in the uniform of your country in a war, but if you have hate and revenge in your heart, every time you pull the trigger and kill an enemy soldier, it's murder. And you're sinning.

Just because you put on a uniform and a helmet doesn't make it right. It's why we do what we do. That's where we are judged.

And only a sanctified heart, only a cleansed and purified heart can produce things that are pleasing in God's sight. Whatever is not of faith is sin. If you're a believer and you understand the principle of military defense of your nation, you can be pulling the trigger and saying, blessed be the Lord who teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight.

And it's glorifying to God. Somebody right next to you who's also a believer can be committing a terrible sin every time they pull the trigger because their motivation is all wrong. What's the point? We are judged on the thoughts and intents of our heart.

It's why we do what we do. You can say, well, Simeon and Levi, in fact, the rabbis, the old Hebrew scholars, in many cases, commend Simeon and Levi for this action. If you read, for example, the book of Jubilees or the Testament of Levi or the book of Judith in the apocryphal books, these were written even before the time of Christ, they commend Simeon and Levi and say this was a wonderful, righteous thing that they did.

And they miss the whole point. Even if Shechem was worthy of death, not this death, not in this way, because it is the product of anger, it's the product of wrath, it's the product of deceit. In the same way that Jacob should have received the blessing, God said the elder shall serve the younger, but the way that he got his blessing was wrong.

To lie to his father, to manipulate his brother, it was a right thing gotten in a wrong way.

And Jacob gets to keep the blessing, but he pays a price for the means. The revenge is taken, but Simeon and Levi are going to pay a price, as is Jacob, for the means.

This is going to cost them because consequences will come forth. If you look over toward the end of the book, in Genesis chapter 49, when Jacob is saying his final farewells and blessing his sons, look at verse 5 of Genesis 49. Simeon and Levi are brothers.

Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let not my soul enter their council. Let not my honor be united to their assembly.

For in their anger they slew a man. And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. Now for a long time, in fact all the way up until this week, whenever I thought about that hamstrung an ox, I thought that was a reference to the plundering and what they did when they were sacking the town of Shechem.

But if you look at this, who is hamstrung here? Whose power is reduced? It's Jacob. Jacob is the ox hamstrung by this action. If you keep your finger here and turn back to what Jacob says to them after they commit this action, he says, You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

Since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed. What he can do in this area is diminished greatly.

In fact, he's going to have to leave this area to avoid being attacked. He's basically run out of town here. Why is Jacob upset with Simeon and Levi? He doesn't say, You've gone around my authority.

He says, In anger you slew a man. He goes on to say in verse 7, Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce. And their wrath, for it is cruel.

I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. He doesn't say, Cursed be Simeon or cursed be Levi. It would be pretty hard for the tribe of Levi to be priests in Israel if they were under an abiding curse.

What is cursed? It's their wrath. It's their anger. This is the great sin.

He doesn't even say, You should not have attacked. These men should not have died. It isn't the fact that this justice was rendered.

It is the fact that it was done in anger and in wrath with a sinful motivation. And he says, I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. What is the fate of these two tribes in the later history of Israel? If you think about this, it's easy to remember what happens to Levi.

How much inheritance of land do the Levites have in Canaan? Zero. They don't own any

land. They are not assigned a tribal area because they are the servants of the tabernacle.

They are the servants of the temple. Their possession is the service. And so they dwell as sojourners.

They dwell as tenants within the land that belongs to the other tribes. And they have no land of their own. And so they are scattered in Israel.

They live hither and yon. There are some areas of concentration. But they are scattered throughout the land.

And they are hosted by their brethren. What about Simeon? And of course, it is poetic justice that the reversal that takes place, we've seen reversal over and over with Jacob. He deceives others and he winds up being deceived by Laban.

He is the younger and wants the things that belong to the elder. And he gets married to a woman who is younger and wants the things that belong to the elder. And he has to put up with Rachel beefing year after year after year about having the children and wanting her husband's affection and so forth.

And so he learns a lot of these things by reversal. Here you have Simeon and Levi going in and slaying these people and plundering all of the goods. And Levi's descendants are going to be the ones slaughtering the animals and being servants to their brethren in the worship.

And so he says, well, you like going in and slaying and killing? You can just do it for a living. And so every day the Levites are in there cutting the carotid arteries of the bullocks and the goats and the lambs and splitting the birds apart. And they get a surfeit of blood and gore because they did that in anger.

But now they are going to do it in worship. They are going to do it unto the Lord, hopefully. And so that theme of reversal finds its match in the priestly service of Levi.

But what about Simeon? If you look over in Joshua, the assignment of territory for the tribe of Simeon, over in Joshua chapter 19, the tribe of Judah is not all that large, but the assignment is made by lot. They cast the lots and this determines what patches of ground in Canaan are assigned to what tribe over in Joshua 18 and 19 and around in there. And when it comes time for Judah to get their territory, they are assigned a great big patch.

And you know roughly where Judah is. You've got Jerusalem and to the south there, Bethlehem and that region is all the land assigned to Judah. Well, the tribe of Judah is not nearly so numerous as to be able to occupy all of that land.

So when the lot falls on Simeon, they're assigned land within Judah's area. And if you look on a colored map, most of your Bibles in the back will have Canaan is divided among the 12 tribes. You'll see Judah down there and then there's a little spot in the center of Judah and that's assigned to Simeon.

Well, what happens over the course of time? The Simeonites are completely surrounded by Judahites. And by the time you get down to the divided kingdom, northern Israel and southern Israel, the northern tribes are... Simeon is not up there and he's not in the south either. You have Judah and Benjamin and Simeon kind of drops from sight because they've been absorbed.

Talk about being scattered in Israel. You can't even find Simeon by the time of the divided kingdom. They've just kind of been absorbed away.

Get a concordance and look for Simeon or the Simeonites in the later history of Israel. And once in a great while, it'll say someone was a Simeonite, but they contribute nothing. There are no great judges from the tribe of Simeon.

No leaders. They don't raise any armies and do anything. They just disappear from sight.

They're scattered in Israel, just as foretold by Jacob. So, in terms of both taking these possessions, they wind up with no possessions. The Levites have no possessions in Israel.

The Simeonites wind up with no possessions in Israel. The slaughter that they perpetrate is reflected in the slaughter of the animals and the priestly service. But the single biggest thing to remember out of this whole episode is a lot of things in the nation of Israel are prefigured or foreshadowed in the life of Jacob.

What happens when Hamor and Shechem come and confront the family of Jacob? There is a covenant that is made. They make a treaty. They say, if you will be circumcised, we will join with you.

We will unite with you and become one people. But even as that covenant is being made, Simeon and Levi are betraying it because it is deceit on their part. And they are violating it even as it is being made.

And as a result, great slaughter and destruction results comes from it. What is the great treaty or covenant that is made in the later nation of Israel? It is when they come to Mount Sinai and they make a covenant with God. And even as the covenant is being made, even as the law of God is being made,