

PART FORTY-THREE

THE STORY OF JACOB: INCIDENTS IN CANAAN

(Genesis 34:1—35:28)

The Biblical Account

1 And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bare unto Jacob went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her; and he took her, and lay with her, and humbled her. 3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. 4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. 5 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; and his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they came. 6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob came in from the fields when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done. 8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you, give her unto him to wife. 9 And make ye marriages with us; give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. 10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. 11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find favor in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. 12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. 13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father with guilt, and spake, because he had defiled Dinah their sister, 14 and said unto

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them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us, 15 Only on this condition will we consent unto you: if ye will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised; 16 then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. 19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was honored above all the house of his father. 20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21 These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for, behold, the land is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only on this condition will the men consent unto us to dwell with us, to become one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. 23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and all their beasts be ours? Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. 24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city. 25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city unawares, and slew all the males. 26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went forth. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28 They took their flocks and

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their herds and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field; 29 and all their wealth, and all their little ones and their wives, took they captive and made a prey, even all that was in the house. 30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me, to make me odious to the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and, I being few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and smite me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. 31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?

35. 1 And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, who appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. 2 Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments: 3 and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. 4 And they gave unto Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hand, and the rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. 5 And they journeyed: and a terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Beth-el), he and all the people that were with him. 7 And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el; because there God was revealed unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. 8 And Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried below Beth-el under the oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bacuth.

9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him. 10 And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called

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any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. 11 And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; 12 and the land which I gave unto Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. 13 And God went up from him in the place where he spake with him. 14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he spake with him, a pillar of stone: and he poured out a drink-offering thereon, and poured oil thereon. 15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el.

16 And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was still some distance to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. 17 And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; for now thou shalt have another son. 18 And it came to pass, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. 19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath (the same is Beth-lehem). 20 And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave: the same is the Pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day. 21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder. 22 And it came to pass, while Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard of it.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: 23 the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun; 24 the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; 25 and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid: Dan and Naphtali; 26 and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid: Gad and Asher; these are the sons of Jacob, that were born to him in Paddan-aram. 27 And Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, to

Kiriath-arba (the same is Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

28 *And the days of Isaac were a hundred and four-score years.* 29 *And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, old and full of days: and Esau and Jacob his sons buried him.*

Jacob at Succoth and Shechem: the Narrative Summarized.

Esau, as we have already noted, returned to Seir and Jacob journeyed on slowly to Succoth (33:18-20). At Succoth, Jacob seems to have dwelt for some time; he then moved on to Shechem, at last *in the land of Canaan*. (*Shalem*, in the A.V., meaning "peaceful," "secure", named as a place near Jacob's well; it could be that Shalem is not a proper name. The A.R.V. renders it "Jacob came in *peace* to the city of Shechem." The R.S.V. gives it: "Jacob came *safely* to the city of Shechem." Cf. John 4:5-6: Sychar used to be identified with Shechem. It is now thought to have been about half a mile north of Jacob's well, and a short distance southeast of Shechem). Near Shechem Jacob bought a field of Hamor, the prince of the region, and pitched his tent there and erected an altar. Here Dinah, his daughter by Leah, having mingled with the daughters of the land, was carried off by Shechem, the son of Hamor. The young man wished to atone for his unseemly conduct by marriage, and both he and his father endeavored to propitiate Jacob and his sons. The brethren of Dinah, *with guile*, agreed to the alliance, but demanded the circumcision of the Shechemites; and on the third day after the ceremony Simeon and Levi fell upon the city, slew all the males, including Hamor and Shechem, took Dinah from the house of the young prince, and carried off the women, children, cattle and all material possessions of the Shechemites. Jacob rebuked his children for this cruel and

treacherous act, and remembered it in his death-bed predictions regarding Simeon and Levi (33:18-20; ch. 34; also 49:5-7).

1. *The Rape of Dinah*, vv. 1-31

The immediate objective of Jacob on his return from Paddan-aram was Shechem in the hills of Palestine, just as it had been that of his grandfather Abraham (Gen. 12:6). He encamped east of the city and bought a parcel of ground from the sons of Hamor (Benei-Hamor) evidently the tribe that had established itself there. Their tribal deity seems to have been Baal-berith; this is how they are known to us in the story of the conquest of central Palestine under Joshua (cf. Josh. 8:33). (Cf. Judg. 9:46: it seems that for the Israelites later, on drifting into idolatry—in this case as generally—meant drifting into the usual “mode of cultural absorption” whereby they acquired the name El-berith, El having been to the Hebrews the short form of Elohim, God.) Jacob’s purchase of a field is in a certain sense parallel to Abraham’s purchase of the field and cave at Mamre (cf. 23:18 and 33:19).

The outstanding event—and the most interesting, from various points of view—of the prolonged sojourn of Jacob and his household (clan) in Shechem is the dramatic episode about the treachery of Simeon and Levi, and its backdrop, so to speak, in the rape of Dinah by the prince of Shechem. Speiser comments pointedly on these incidents as follows: “The narrative is unusual on more counts than one. For one thing, it is the only account to concern itself with Jacob’s daughter Dinah, who is otherwise relegated to two statistical entries (30:21, 46:15). For another, Jacob himself has a minor part, while the spotlight rests on the next generation. For still another, there is a pronounced chronological gap between this section and the one before. There, Jacob’s children were still of tender age (33:13); here, they have attained

adulthood. Most important of all, the history of Jacob has hitherto been in the main a story of individuals. This time, to be sure, personalities are still very much at the forefront of the stage; but their experiences serve to recapitulate an all but lost page dealing with remote ethnic interrelations. The account, in other words, presents personalized history, that is, history novelistically interpreted. And since we have so little evidence about the early settlement of Israelites in Canaan, the slender thread that we find here assumes that much more importance. By the same token, extra caution is needed to protect the sparse data from undue abuse" (ABG, 266). Again: "The story before us is a tale of sharp contrasts: pastoral simplicity and grim violence, love and revenge, candor and duplicity. There is also a marked difference between the generations. Hamor and Jacob are peace-loving and conciliatory; their sons are impetuous and heedless of the consequences that their acts must entail. The lovesick Shechem prevails on his father to extend to the Israelites the freedom of the land—with the requisite consent of his followers. But Dinah's brothers refuse to be that far-sighted. After tricking the Shechemites into circumcising their males, and thus stripping the place of its potential defenders, they put the inhabitants to the sword. Jacob is mournful and apprehensive. But his sons remain defiant and oblivious of the future" (*ibid.*, 268).

This may well be described as the story of a "generation gap" of the "long, long ago."

Note that Dinah is specifically mentioned as the *daughter of Leah*. "Like mother, like daughter." Of Leah it is said, *And Leah went out to meet him* (30:16), and now her daughter went out. She is described as Leah's daughter in order to draw attention to the fact that she was the full sister of Simeon and Levi who avenged her (v. 25) and *whom she had borne unto Jacob*

is added to indicate that all the brothers were jealous for her honor" (SC, 205). Dinah, we are told, went out to see the daughters of the land, that is, she evidently went into the city (Jacob had pitched his tent outside it). And Prince Shechem saw her, and, like the pagan he was, *took her and humbled her*. "The verb always implies the use of force. Although Shechem was a *prince of the land*, she evidently did not submit of her own free will" (SC, 205). "Though freed from foreign troubles Jacob met with a great domestic calamity in the fall of his only recorded daughter. According to Josephus she had been attending a festival; but it is highly probable that she had been often and freely mixing in the society of the place, and that being a simple, inexperienced, and vain young woman, had been flattered by the attentions of the ruler's son. There must have been time and opportunities of acquaintance to produce the strong attachment that Shechem had for her" (Jamieson, CECG, 219). It is useless to speculate as to whether she was prompted by mere idle curiosity, in this instance, or whether she went without consulting her parents, or whether she even went forth contrary to their wishes. We have no means of knowing to what extent she was at fault, if at all. "In any case, it seems she should have known that Egyptians and Canaanites (12:15, 20:2, 26:7) regarded unmarried women abroad in the land as legitimate prey and should not have gone unattended. Shechem happens to find her. The fact that he is the son of Hamor, a Hivite, prince, seems to make him feel that he especially has privileges in reference to unattended girls. We are not told whether she was pleased with and encouraged his first approaches. At least the young prince was bent upon seduction. This his object was accomplished, whether she resisted or not. If 48:22 informs us that the inhabitants of Shechem were Amorites, the apparent contradiction seems to be solved by the fact that the general name for the Canaanite tribes

was Amorites" (Leupold, EG, 897). (Surely our present-day knowledge of the gross immoralities which characterized the Cult of Fertility so widespread throughout the ancient pagan world (cf. Rom. 1:18-32) would cause us to think that Shechem would have had no scruples against seizing and violating the young maiden the first time he ever saw her. We see no point in "sugar-coating" this plain case of rape, or the acts of presumption, treachery and violence which ensued as consequences of it. The Bible, it must be remembered is a very realistic book: it pictures life just as people lived it.) It should be said, however, in favor of the young prince, that he really loved the maiden: *his soul clave unto her* (v. 3). Of course Dinah would have been only one among the many others of his harem, if the marriage had been formalized. "It was in some degree an extenuation of the wickedness of Shechem that he did not cast off the victim of his violence and lust, but continued to regard her with affection . . . addressed to her such words as were agreeable to her inclinations (v. 3, *spake to the heart of the damsel*) probably expressing his affection, and offering the reparation of honorable marriage, as may be legitimately inferred from what is next recorded of his behavior" (PCG, 405).

How old was Dinah when this incident occurred? We suggest the following explanation of the chronological problem here: "Dinah was born about the end of the fourteenth year of Jacob's residence in Haran. She was thus about six years old at the settlement at Succoth. The sojourn at Succoth appears to have lasted for about two years. Jacob must have spent already several years at Shechem, since there are prominent and definite signs of a more confidential intercourse with the Shechemites. We may infer, therefore, that Dinah was now from twelve to sixteen years of age. Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold by his brethren (37:2), and at that time Jacob

had returned to Hebron. There must have passed, therefore, about eleven years since the return from Haran, at which time Joseph was six years of age. If now we regard the residence of Jacob at Bethel and the region of Ephrata as of brief duration, and bear in mind that the residence at Shechem ceased with the rape of Dinah, it follows that Dinah must have been about fourteen or fifteen years of age when she was deflowered. In the East, too, females reach the age of puberty at twelve, and sometimes still earlier (Delitzsch). From the same circumstances it is clear that Simeon and Levi must have been about twenty" (Lange). Again: "If Dinah was born before Joseph (30:21) she was probably in her seventh year when Jacob reached Succoth (33:17); but it does not follow that she was only six or seven years of age when the incident about to be described occurred (Tuch, Bohlen). If Jacob stayed two years at Succoth and eight in Shechem (Petavius), and if, as is probable, his residence in Shechem terminated with his daughter's dishonor (Lange), and if, moreover, Joseph's sale into Egypt happened soon after (Hengstenberg), Dinah may at this time have been in her sixteenth or seventeenth year (Kurtz). Yet there is no reason why she should not have been younger, say between thirteen and fifteen (Keil, Lange, Kalisch, Murhpy, *et alii*), since in the East females attain to puberty at the age of twelve, and sometimes earlier (Delitzsch)" (PCG, 404). With reference to the statement in v. 1, Whitelaw comments: "it is not implied that this was the first occasion on which Dinah left her mother's tent to mingle with the city maidens in Shechem: the expression is equivalent to 'once upon a time she went out' (Hengstenberg)—*to see the daughters of the land*—who were gathered at a festive entertainment (Josephus, *Ant.*, I, 21, 1), a not improbable supposition (Kurtz), though the language rather indicates the paying of a friendly visit (Lange),

or the habitual practice of associating with the Shechemite women (Bush), in their social entertainment, if not in their religious festivals" (PCG, 404).

Vv. 2-4. "Shechem was captivated by Dinah, the daughter of Jacob; he fell in love with the young girl and comforted her. Accordingly Shechem said to his father Hamor, 'Get me this young girl, I want to marry her'" (JB rendering). (Cf. Samson's request, Judg. 14:2). Vv. 5-7: Jacob somehow heard of the incident, but took no steps to redress the wrong until Dinah's brothers—Jacob's sons by Leah and probably by Zilpah—came in from the fields. It is interesting to note that the brothers of the daughter had a voice in all important concerns relating to her (cf. 24:50ff.). In the meantime Hamor, Shechem's father, consulted with Jacob about the incident. When the sons came in from the field, and were told what had occurred, they *were very wroth* because Shechem *had wrought folly in Israel by his act . . . which thing ought not to be done*, etc. This idea of folly in Israel seems to have been that of Jacob's sons, though the manner of expressing it seems to have been that of the historian, as usual in his time: folly or wickedness in Israel, where God ought to be revered and obeyed. As we know that the Canaanites were steeped in immorality: *ought not*, etc. refers to Israel: it was repulsive to the house of Israel. (It is a matter of note that this is the first use of the new name in the Old Testament). *Folly*: "this is a standing expression for crimes which are irreconcilable with the dignity and destiny of Israel as the people of God, but especially for gross sins of the flesh (Deut. 22:21, Judg. 20:10, 2 Sam. 13:12), but also for other great crimes (Josh. 7:15)." "The sons of Jacob were enraged; they burned with anger; *it was kindled to them*" (Gosman, in Lange, 560). In this case the dishonor was a double impurity, because it was an uncircumcised person who had dishonored the maiden. Moreover, She-

chem's special wickedness consisted in dishonoring a daughter of one who was the head of the theocratic line, and therefore under peculiar obligations to live a holy life.

Vv. 8-12: Hamor, the king, now offers Jacob and his sons the full rights of citizens in his little country. The son offers to fulfill any demand of the brothers as to the bridal price and bridal gifts. The king offers them the privilege of unrestricted movement throughout his domain, with the right of establishing settlements, carrying on trade, and acquiring property. (Perhaps it should be stated here, parenthetically, that we do not know what happened to Dinah after this incident. "Dinah was in Shechem's house all this time, and although he believed that he could have her by force, being the son of the prince of the land, he spoke thus because he wanted to win her by consent. Scripture does not record what happened to her afterwards; she probably remained 'a living widow,' i.e., unmarried, descended to Egypt with the rest of the family, died there, and her body was brought back by Simeon and buried in Canaan. According to tradition, her tomb is in Arbeel. Sforino suggests that he [Shechem] offered the large dowry and gift as an atonement" (SC, 206). Hamor seems to have taken a rather "broad" view of the matter: in addition to offering to arrange this particular marriage, he proposes an amalgamation of the two ethnic peoples, thinking, apparently, that the advantage to Jacob would be adequate compensation for the offense. His son's offer, obviously, related only to his own private affair with respect to Dinah. (The Hebrew law of compensation for seduction is given in Exo. 22:15ff. . . . the price paid to the parents (Exo. 22:16-17, 1 Sam. 18:25) . . . and the gift to the bride, are virtually distinguished in Gen. 24:53).

The story of the fanatical revenge of the sons of Jacob follows, vv. 14-31. The sons of Jacob answered the king and his son with guile, i.e., with duplicity. As noted above,

they were consumed with rage: *it burned them greatly* (cf. 31:36, 1 Sam. 15:11, 2 Sam. 19:43). "Michaelis mentions an opinion still entertained in the East which explains the excessive indignation kindled in the breasts of Dinah's brothers, viz., that 'in those countries it is thought that a brother is more dishonored by the seduction of his sister than a man by the infidelity of his wife; for, say the Arabs, a man may divorce his wife, and then she is no longer his, while a sister and daughter remain always sister and daughter'" (PCG, 405). Some writers express the opinion that the refusal lay basically in the proposal itself, that is, if they had not refused they would have denied the historical and saving vocation of Israel and his seed. "The father, Israel, appears, however, to have been of a different opinion. For he doubtless knew the proposal of his sons in reply. He does not condemn their proposition, however, but the fanatical way in which they availed themselves of its consequences. Dinah could not come into her proper relations again but by Shechem's passing over to Judaism. This way of passing over to Israel was always allowable, and those who took the steps were welcomed. We must therefore reject only: (1) The extension of the proposal, according to which the Israelites were to blend themselves with the Shechemites; (2) the motives, which were external advantages. It was, on the contrary, a harsh and unsparing course in reference to Dinah, when Leah's two sons wished her back again; or, indeed, would even gratify their revenge and Israelitish pride. But their resort to subtle and fanatical conduct merits only a hearty condemnation" (Lange, 561). (Note that "Jacob had scarcely become Israel when the arts and cunning of Jacob appear in his sons, and, indeed, in a worse form, since they glory in being Israel" (*ibid.*, 560).

Note that the duplicity of Leah's sons consisted in *their utter hypocrisy and accompanying trifling with a divine institution* (just as people in our day, and thousands

of professings church-members trifle with the institution of Christian baptism. This writer has had parents request of him what they called "infant baptism" solely for the purpose of acquiring a legitimate birth certificate for the child: a modernized hypocritical form of union of church and state.) These brothers answered "deceitfully." "The honor of their family consisted in having the sign of the covenant. Circumcision was the external rite by which persons were admitted members of the ancient Church (rather, *theocracy* or *commonwealth*: the church is first, last, and always the *ecclesia* of Christianity and was never a part of the Jewish system). But although that outward rite could not make the Shechemites true Israelites, yet it does not appear that Jacob's sons required anything more. Nothing is said of their teaching them to worship the true God, but only of their insisting on the Shechemites being circumcised; and it is evident that they did not seek to convert Shechem, but only made a show of religion—a cloak to cover their diabolical design. Hypocrisy and deceit, in all cases vicious, are infinitely more so when accompanied with a show of religion; and here the sons of Jacob, under the pretense of conscientious scruples, conceal a scheme of treachery as cruel and diabolical as was perhaps ever perpetrated" (Jamieson, 221). "The demand was made that they [Shechemite males] should circumcise themselves in the belief that they or their townspeople would not consent (Sforno). Although Shechem and Hamor spoke to Jacob and his sons, only the latter answered, Jacob remaining silent because the incident was so disgraceful that he could not speak about it. Jacob and all his sons assented to this guile, either for the reason given by Sforno, or because they thought to take advantage of the resulting weakness to get Dinah out of Shechem's house. But only Simeon and Levi contemplated the revenge which was subsequently taken (Nachmanides)" (SC, 206). (It seems to me, however,

that any person with moral standards of consequence could not possibly excuse Jacob's silence on so flimsy a ground. The fact appears to be that Israel had drifted back into the role of Jacob, despite what may be suggested as a "reason"—in reality, a pretext—for his failure to act, if for no other purpose than to protect the moral and spiritual image implicit in his theocratic pre-eminence.) "The ground on which they declined a matrimonial alliance with Shechem was good; their sin lay in advancing this simply as a pretext to enable them to wreak their unholy vengeance on Shechem and his innocent people. The treacherous character of their next proposal [vv. 15-16] is difficult to be reconciled with any claim to humanity, far less to religion, on the part of Jacob's sons; so much so, that Jacob on his death-bed can offer no palliation for the atrocious cruelty to which it led (49:6-7). . . . This proposal was sinful, since (1) they had no right to offer the sign of God's covenant to a heathen people; (2) they had less right to employ it in ratification of a merely human agreement; and (3) they had least right of all to employ it in duplicity as a mask for their treachery" (PCG, 406).

Parenthetically, *the question of the extent and design of the practice of circumcision obtrudes itself at this point.* It will be noted that when the proposal made by the sons of Leah was presented to the males of Shechem, the primary argument for its acceptance was the material advantage which such an alliance would inevitably secure for them. The appeal of the rulers was in the strongest manner to the self-interest of the Shechemites: Jacob's house was wealthy, and the Shechemites therefore could only gain by the connection: as stated above, a complete amalgamation of the two groups. "Hamor naturally says nothing of the personal matter, but dwells on the advantages the clan will derive from union with the Israelites. The men are already *on friendly terms* with them; the land is

spacious enough; and by adopting circumcision they will obtain a great accession to their wealth" (Skinner, 420). The ready acquiescence of the Shechemites has with some measure of validity been regarded by some authorities as a proof that they were already acquainted with circumcision as a social, if not religious rite. "Knobel notes it as remarkable that the Hivites were not circumcised, since, according to Herodotus, the rite was observed among the Phoenicians, and probably also the Canaanites, who were of the same extraction, and thinks that either the rite was not universally observed in any of these ancient nations where it was known, or that the Hivites were originally a different race from the Canaanites, and had not conformed to the customs of the land (Lange). Murphy thinks the present instance may point out one way in which the custom spread from tribe to tribe (PCG, 408). As a matter of fact "According to Herodotus, circumcision was practised by the Phoenicians, and probably also among the Canaanites, who were of the same race and are never referred to in the Old Testament as uncircumcised, as, e.g., it speaks of the unCanaanitish Philistines" (Lange, 561); cf. *uncircumcised* Philistines, 1 Sam. 14:6, 17:26, 36; 1 Sam. 31:4; 2 Sam. 1:20; 1 Chron. 10:4, etc. Some authorities think that the spread of circumcision was the consequence of the growing awareness of its value as a sanitary measure. That it did exist among the Egyptians, Canaanites, and Hebrews is well established; but not, so far as the records go, among the Greeks, Romans, and Hindoos. At the present time, we are told, it is to be found among all Moslems and most Jewish communities, throughout Africa, Australia, Polynesia, and Melanesia, and, it is said, in Eastern Mexico. "It is hardly possible to say what its original distribution was, and whether or not there was a single center of distribution. As to its origin many theories have been advanced. Its character as initiatory is not an explanation—all customs of initiation

need to have their origins explained. . . . It may be said at the outset that it must have sprung from simple physical need, not from advanced scientific or religious conceptions" (Toy, IHR, 69). The simple fact is that for the Hebrews it was specifically appointed a Divine institution, a fleshly sign, to separate God's people of olden times from the pagan world and at the same time to serve as a symbol of religious faith and moral purity. Circumcision was a divinely *appointed* sign of the old covenant, much in the same manner, it would seem that the rainbow was appointed a sign of God's promise (covenant) to Noah and all mankind that He would never bring a universal judgment on the human race in the form of a Deluge, and as the bread and fruit of the vine of the Lord's Supper were appointed memorials of the death of Christ for our sins (Gen. 8:20-22; Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; 1 Cor. 15:13, etc.). Surely it is not to be understood that these things came into existence just at the respective times they were appointed signs, memorials, etc. It would be unreasonable to assume that they had not existed from the beginning, that is, "from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 13:15, 25:34; Luke 11:50, John 17:24, Eph. 1:4, 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8, 17:8; Heb. 4:3, etc.). "With respect to the symbolical significance of circumcision it is said to have originated in phallus worship, but if so this would have no bearing on the Israelite view of the rite. It was practised, say some, because of its medical advantages, as the warding off of disease through ease in cleanliness, or that it served to increase the generative powers, but these can hardly be received as proper explanations, for whole nations not practicing circumcision appear as healthy and fruitful. Nor can the rite be brought into connection with the idea of sacrifice, 'the consecration of a part of the body for the whole,' or even 'as an act of emasculation in honor of the Deity, that has gradually dwindled down to the mere cutting away of the foreskin.' We must

rather look for the significance of this rite in the fact that the corruption of sin usually manifests itself with peculiar energy in the sexual life, and that the sanctification of the life was symbolized by the purifying of the organ by which life is reproduced. But, as spiritual purity was demanded of the chosen people of God, circumcision became the external token of the covenant between God and His people. It secured to the one subjected to it all the rights of the covenant, participation in all its material and spiritual benefits; while, on the other hand, he was bound to fulfill all the covenant obligations. It had not, however, a sacramental nature; it was not a vehicle through which to convey the sanctifying influences of God to His people, but was simply a token of the recognition of the covenant relation existing between Israel and God" (UBD, s.v., 206). (We must call attention to the fact, however, that the word "sacrament" derives from the Latin *sacramentum*, which was the name of the oath of obedience taken by the Roman soldier to his centurion. In this sense, circumcision was indeed a "sacrament," the oath of fidelity to the provisions of the Old Covenant by the Covenant-people. We reject the theological corruption of the term in using it to designate some mystical ["esoteric"] impartation [usually explained as a "means of grace"] from God to His New-Covenant people.) Circumcision was formally enacted as a legal institution by Moses (Lev. 12:3, John 7:22-23), and was made to apply, not only to the Jewish father's own children, but to slaves, home-born or purchased; to foreigners before they could partake of the Passover or become Jewish citizens (Cf. Gen. 17:13—*he that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with money of any foreigner not of thy seed*, etc.). In its specific meaning for the Children of Israel circumcision was a *seal*, a seal in the flesh, as the Old Covenant was a fleshly Covenant, and hence indicative of the relationship designed to obtain between God and His Old-

Covenant people, proffered by grace and accepted by the obedience of faith. See my *Genesis*, Vol. III, 250-264, 272-282).

"During the wilderness journey circumcision fell into disuse. This neglect is most satisfactorily explained as follows: The nation, while bearing the punishment of disobedience in its wanderings, was regarded as under temporary rejection by God, and was therefore prohibited from using the sign of the covenant. As the Lord had only promised his assistance on condition that the law given by Moses was faithfully observed, it became the duty of Joshua, upon entering Canaan, to perform the rite of circumcision upon the generation that had been born in the wilderness. This was done, immediately upon crossing the Jordan, at or near Gilgal (Josh. 5:2-9). From this time circumcision became the pride of Israel, they looking with contempt upon all those people not observing it (Judg. 14:3, 15:18; 1 Sam. 14:6, Isa. 52:1, etc.). It became a rite so distinctive of them that their oppressors tried to prevent their observing it, an attempt to which they refused submission (1 Macc. 1:48, 50, 60, 62). "The process of restoring a circumcised person to his natural condition by a surgical operation was sometimes undergone from a desire to assimilate themselves to the heathen around them, or that they might not be known as Jews when they appeared naked in the games. Against having recourse to this practice, from an excessive anti-Judaistic tendency, St. Paul cautions the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7:18, 19). Circumcision was used as a symbol of purity of heart, in certain instances (Deut. 10:16, 30:6; cf. Lev. 26:41; Jer. 4:4, 9:25; Ezek. 44:7). Exod. 6:12—"Who am of uncircumcised lips": By this figure Moses would seem to imply that he was unskilled in public address, as the Jews were wont to consider circumcision a perfecting of one's powers. Circumcision is also figurative of a readiness to hear and obey (Jer. 6:10)" (UBG, 207).

(For Christian [spiritual] circumcision, see my *Genesis*, Vol. III, 282-290).

Skinner holds that the requirement of circumcision imposed by the sons of Jacob upon the Shechemites "was merely a pretext to render them incapable of self-defense" (ICCG, 419). Certainly the Scripture account of the transaction contains no hint of anything that would refute this view; if it be true, it renders their duplicity even more perfidious. And even though the rulers of Shechem and their people agreed to the proposal—even though for reasons of expediency (for them no question of morality was involved)—Jacob's sons' must have rejoiced within themselves that those against whom they sought revenge were so open-minded as to accept a proposal that would render them so completely helpless against the execution of this vengeance. And so we read, that "*on the third day when they* (the Shechemites) *were sore*" ("when the inflammation is said, in the case of adults, to be at its height"), two of the sons of Jacob, namely, Simeon and Levi took the lead in attacking the unsuspecting city with the sword, killing the males therein, and carrying off the women and children and all material goods as spoils. In this ferocious act of revenge they slew both Hamor and Shechem "with the edge of the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house" (vv. 25-26).

Jacob's displeasure (vv. 30, 31) seems to have been occasioned by the principle of expediency rather than by considerations of morality or righteousness. The massacre "displeased Jacob, the more so since he had few supporters and he was a 'sojourner' who could ill afford enemies" (AtD, 92). "Jacob rebukes Simeon and Levi, not for their treachery and cruelty, but for their recklessness in exposing the whole tribe to the vengeance of the Canaanites" (ICCG, 421). Lange is inclined to be a bit more lenient: "Jacob felt that, as the Israel of God, he was made offensive even to the moral sense of the surrounding

heathen, through the pretended holy deed of his sons; so far so that they had endangered the very foundation of the theocracy, the kingdom of God, the old-covenant church. Fanaticism always produces the same results; either to discredit Christianity in the moral estimate of the world, and imperil its very existence by its unreasonable zeal, or to expose it to the most severe persecutions" (CDHCG, 564). Whitelaw summarizes as follows: "That Jacob should have spoken to his sons only of his own danger, and not of their guilt, has been ascribed to his belief that this was the only motive which their carnal minds could understand (Keil, Gerlach); to a remembrance of his own deceitfulness, which disqualified him in a measure from being the censor of his sons (Kalisch, Wordsworth); to the lowered moral and spiritual tone of his own mind (Candlish); to the circumstance that, having indulged his children in their youth, he was now afraid to reprove them (Inglis). That Jacob afterwards attained to a proper estimate of their bloody deed his last prophetic utterance reveals (49:5-7). By some it is supposed that he even now felt the crime in all its heinousness (Kalisch), though his reproach was somewhat leniently expressed in the word 'trouble' (Lange); while others, believing Jacob's abhorrence of his sons' fanatical cruelty to have been deep and real, account for its omission by the historian on the ground that he aimed merely at showing 'the protection of God (35:5), through which Jacob escaped the evil consequences of their conduct' (Hengstenberg)" (PCG, 408). Note the sons' attempted justification: "*Should he [Shechem] deal with our sister as with a harlot*"? That is, "She is not a harlot and her wrong must be avenged; so we as her brothers had to do it" (SC, 209). *But Shechem offered Dinah honorable marriage!*

Note vv. 27-29—In "the sons of Jacob" here surely *all* the sons of Jacob are included. It is inconceivable that only two of them could have massacred all the males

of the city. They must have had the help of other males (servants, herdsmen) in Jacob's *entourage*. Simeon and Levi, however, were the ringleaders. But the other males were surely involved: the prospect of loot becomes to many the primary, rather than the secondary motivation when a mob forms. "They who seemed to have scruples or fears about taking part in the slaughter have no compunctions of conscience about taking a hand in the plundering of the city. This act of theirs again does them little credit. The thing that rankled in the bosom of all was that this was 'the city that had defiled their sister.' They are, indeed, largely correct in imputing to the city a share in the wrong done; for the city condoned the wrong and had not the slightest intentions of taking steps to right it. But only the most excessive cruelty can demand such a wholesale retribution for a personal wrong. . . . Then to show how thoroughly Jacob's sons were in the heat of their vengeance the author reports that also 'all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives' were captured, the latter, no doubt, being kept as slaves. Then to produce the impression that the sacking of the city was done with utmost thoroughness the writer adds: 'and they plundered even everything that was in the houses.' By translating thus we remove the necessity of textual changes which the critics regard as necessary" (EG, 909). (But can we truly say that the Shechemites did nothing to right the wrong done Dinah? Only if we assume, of course, that their proposal for amalgamation was motivated solely by expediency without any awareness of the moral law which had been violated. But again did they have any notion of moral law whatsoever? Of course, we have no way of obtaining conclusive answers to these questions.) Again: "It is almost unbelievable that Jacob should be reproached by commentators at this point for what he is supposed to have failed to say, namely, for not rebuking Simeon and Levi for 'their treachery and cruelty.'

Yet such a man as Jacob could not have failed to be in perfect accord with us in our estimate of this bloody deed of his sons, for Jacob was truly a spiritual man, especially in these later years. Nor was the moral issue involved in the least difficult to discern. The chief reason for the writer's not mentioning Jacob's judgment on the moral issue is that this issue is too obvious. Furthermore, that judgment is really included in the statement, 'Ye have brought trouble upon me.' Then, lastly, the author is leading up to another matter that specially calls for discussion. Since, namely, the entire Pentateuch aims to set forth how God's gracious care led to the undeserving people of His choice from grace to grace, the author is preparing to show another instance of such doing and prepares for it by mentioning how greatly Jacob was troubled by this deed. For *akbar*, which means 'disturb,' 'destroy,' here means 'bring into trouble.' In what sense he means this in particular is at once explained, 'by causing me to become odious (literally, *to stink*) to the inhabitants of the land.' That surely implies that the deed done was both obnoxious and dangerous. In comparison with the inhabitants of the land Jacob had 'but a small following,' or, says the Hebrew, 'Men of numbers,' *i.e.*, men easily numbered. Had not God intervened, the outcome would inevitably have been as Jacob describes it: they would have gathered together and destroyed him and his family. Though without a doubt the deed of Jacob's sons gave evidence of great courage, it certainly also entailed even greater rashness. The thoughtlessness of young men who rush headlong into ill-considered projects was abundantly displayed by this massacre. . . . We are greatly amazed in reflecting upon the event as a whole that descendants of the worthy patriarch Abraham should almost immediately after his time already have sunk to the level upon which Jacob's sons stand in this chapter. A partial explanation is to be sought in the crafty cunning of their

father which in the sons degenerated to the extremes here witnessed. A further bit of explanation is to be sought in their environment; hardly anywhere except in their own home did they see any manifestation of godly life. Then, in the third place, we must attribute a good measure of the guilt of any improper bringing up of these young men to the irregularities of a home where bigamy ruled. All true spirit of discipline was cancelled by the presence of two wives and two handmaidens in the home—practically four wives. Lastly, the chapter as a whole furnishes a clear example as to how much the critics are divided against themselves in spite of their strong protestations of unanimity” (EG, 909-912).

Some additional pertinent comments concerning the tragedy of Shechem are in order at this point. For instance, the following: “Shechem was inhabited at the time by Hurrian elements; the text (v. 2) calls Hamor a Hivite, but the LXX identifies him as a Horite. The latter identification is supported by two independent details: (1) The Shechemites are as yet uncircumcised, a circumstance that supplies the key feature of the story; the contrary was presumably true of Semitic Canaanites. (2) Cuneiform records from the region of Central Palestine have shown that Hurrians were prominent there during the Amarna age (ca. 1400 B.C.); they must have arrived prior to that date. There is, furthermore, the fact . . . that Simeon and Levi are depicted here as headstrong and vengeful. In later sources, Simeon was a rudimentary tribe settled in the south of Judea, a long way from Shechem; and Levi has no territorial holdings whatsoever. Evidently, therefore, a pair of once vigorous tribes had suffered critical losses in their attempt to settle in Central Palestine, losses which they were never able to recoup. Standard tradition retained no memory of that remote event, except for the faint echo in the Testament of Jacob (ch. 49), where the blame is laid, significantly

enough, on the two brother tribes themselves. The period in question should thus be dated before the Exodus, and very likely prior to Amarna times" (Speiser, ABG, 267). (It should be recalled that there were four other sons of Jacob by Leah, in addition to Simeon and Levi: namely, Reuben, the eldest; then respectively Simeon and Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. There were also two (adopted) sons of Leah, by her handmaid, Zilpah, namely, Gad and Asher. Of all these Simeon and Levi undoubtedly took the lead in pressing and executing vengeance on Shechem). (It is interesting to note that among the Amarna clay tablets in Accadian cuneiform, discovered by a peasant woman in 1886 at Tell el Amarna ("mound of the city of the Horizon") about 200 miles south of present-day Cairo, there is mention of events leading to the surrender of Shechem to the Habiru. Apparently, roving bands of these Habiru ("Hebrews"?) infested the country and menaced the settled communities, adding to the general insecurity during the period when Egyptian hegemony in Palestine was on the wane. These tablets were found to contain correspondence of petty Canaanite princelings with their Egyptian overlords. They date back to about 1400 B.C. (See Chronology, xx., *supra*). The Habiru appear prominently in the letters of Abdi-Hiba, governor of Jerusalem ("Urusalim") to the Pharaoh Akhnaton asking for Egyptian troops to hold off these invaders, who could easily have been the Israelite tribes invading Canaan under Joshua. Among these hundreds of clay tablets there is a letter written by Lab'ayu, ruler of Shechem, to the Egyptian king vehemently protesting his loyalty). "The indications in the Bible may imply that the patriarchs were not ordinary nomads, whom an older school of Orientalists liked to compare with the present-day Arab nomads. Even though the latter live exotically in tents and move about, they are quite unsophisticated and detached from the current history of their time. They stand in sharp con-

trast to the Hebrew patriarchs, who had dealings with Amorites, Canaanites, Philistines (early Caphtorians), Egyptians and, of course, kinglets from all over the Near East. The patriarchs' careers seem to lie on the hub of the highly cosmopolitan Amarna Age, or very close to it. . . . Whatever its background in history may be, it is evident that the proto-Aramean strain, represented in the saga of Jacob, is the nomadic element referred to later in the Deuteronomic phrase 'a wandering Aramean was my father' and from this stock of Hebrew and 'Aramean' origin sprang the clans who formed the beginning of a Hebrew settlement in Canaan, at Shechem and Bethel, long before the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus out of Egypt. G. E. Wright maintains that 'it has long been realized that Gen. 34 has behind it a tradition of a Hebrew relationship with Shechem which relates to early events not necessarily altered by the Sojourn and Exodus. Even during the Sojourn the city must have been under Israelite control; that is, a mixed Canaanite-Hebrew group of clans may have been united by covenant, worshipping a deity called 'Baal-berith (Lord of the Covenant)'' (AtD, 94). (Cf. Deut. 26:5, 1:10, 10:22; Gen. 46:27; Judg. 8:33; 9:4, 27, 46).

It might be well to note, in this connection, the rather important role played by Shechem in the Old Testament story, as follows: "(a) A capital of the Hivites, and as such the scene of the brutal heathenish iniquity, in relation to the religious and moral dignity of Israel; (b) The birthplace of Jewish fanaticism in the sons of Jacob; (c) A chief city of Ephraim, and an Israelitish priestly city; (d) The capital of the kingdom of Israel for some time; (e) The principal seat of the Samaritan nationality and cults. The acquisition of a parcel of land at Shechem by Jacob, forms a counterpart to the purchase of Abraham at Hebron. But there is an evident progress here, since he made the purchase for his own settlement during life,

while Abraham barely gained a burial place. The memory of Canaan by Israel and the later conquest (cf. 48:22) is closely connected with this possession. In Jacob's life, too, the desire to exchange the wandering nomadic life for a more fixed abode, becomes more apparent than in the life of Isaac. [Wordsworth's remarks here, after enumerating the important events clustering around this place from Abraham to Christ, is suggestive. Thus the history of Shechem, combining so many associations, shows the uniformity of the divine plan, extending through many centuries, for the salvation of the world by the promised seed of Abraham, in whom all nations are blessed; and for the outpouring of the Spirit on the Israel of God, who are descended from the true Jacob; and for their union in the sanctuary of the Christian church, and for the union of all nations in one household in Christ, Luke 1:68—Gosman]" (Lange, 563).

Shechem has a long history Biblically. (1) The name appears once as *Sichem* (Gen. 12:6, A.V., marginal rendering, Sychar, cf. John 4:5). The town was in Central Palestine. "The etymology of the Hebrew word *shekem* indicates that the place was situated on some mountain or hillside; and this presumption agrees with Josh. 20:7, which places it on Mount Ephraim (see also 1 Ki. 12:25), and with Judg. 9:6, which represents it as under the summit of Gerizim, which belonged to the Ephraim range" (UBD, *s.v.*). (2) Shechem is the first Palestinian site mentioned in Genesis. Abram, on first entering the land of promise, pitched his tent there and built an altar under the oak (or terebinth) of Moreh (Gen. 12:6). "The Canaanite was then in the land," *i.e.* even at that early time; nevertheless, Yahweh revealed Himself to the patriarch there, and renewed His covenant promise (Gen. 12:7, whereupon the patriarch built an altar unto Him. (3) Abraham's grandson, Jacob, on returning from Paddan-aram, came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, and

pitched his tent (Gen. 33:18, 19; ch. 34) on a parcel of ground which he bought from Hamor, the Hivite prince of the region (Gen. 33:18, 34:2). When Shechem, the son of Hamor, defiled Dinah, Simeon and Levi led in the massacre of the men of the region (Gen. 34:25, 26) and the other sons of Jacob pillaged the town (vv. 27-29), though Jacob—then Israel—condemned the action (Gen. 34:30, 49:5-7). (4) Here Jacob buried all of his household's "strange gods" under the oak (35:1-4) and raised an altar to *El-elohe-Israel* ("God, the God of Israel"), Gen. 32:20. This "parcel of ground" which Jacob purchased he subsequently bequeathed as a special patrimony to his son Joseph (Gen. 33:19, Josh. 24:32, John 4:5); and here the Israelites buried the bones of Joseph which they had brought with them out of Egypt (Josh. 24:32, cf. Gen. 50:25). (5) Joseph as a young man in Canaan sought his brothers who were tending their flocks near the rich pasture lands around Shechem (Gen. 37:12ff.). (6) In the 15th century B.C. the town fell into the hands of the Habiru as we learn from the Tell-el-Amarna letters (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, J. B. Pritchard, 1950: pp. 477, 485-487, 489, 490). The name probably occurs earlier in the Egyptian records dating back to the 19th-18th centuries B.C. (ANET, 230, 239; see Douglas, NBD, 1173). (7) In the course of the Conquest, Joshua as the successor of Moses called for a renewal of the Covenant at Shechem: at this time the Law was again promulgated: its blessings were proclaimed from Gerizim and its curses from Ebal (Deut. 27:11, Josh. 8:33-35). Various features of the typical covenant pattern well known in the East in the centuries 1500-700 B.C., may be identified in these Scriptures. (See especially NBD, under "covenant.") (8) In the distribution of the land, Shechem fell to Ephraim (Josh. 20:7, 1 Chron. 7:28) but was assigned to the Kohathite Levites, and became a city of refuge (Josh. 21:20, 21). (9) At Shechem Joshua

assembled the people shortly before his death and delivered to them his last counsels (Josh. 24:1, 25). (10) After the death of Gideon, Abimelech, his illegitimate son by a Shechemite woman, persuaded the men of the city to make him king (Judg. 9:6; cf. 8:22, 23). In the time of the Judges, Shechem was still a center of Canaanite worship and the temple of Baal-berith ('the lord of the covenant'). Abimelech proceeded to exterminate the royal seed, but Jotham, one son who escaped the bloody purge, standing on Mount Gerizim, by means of a parable about the trees, appealed eloquently to the people of Shechem to repudiate Abimelech (Judg. 9:8-15). This they did after some three years (vv. 22, 23), but Abimelech destroyed Shechem (v. 45) and then attacked the stronghold of the temple of Baal-berith and burned it over the heads of those who sought refuge there (vv. 46-49). In a subsequent engagement at Thebez, however, Abimelech was mortally wounded by a millstone thrown down on his skull by a woman, and to save his "honor" commanded his armor-bearer to end his life (Judg., ch. 9). (11) Evidently the city was soon restored, for we are told that all Israel assembled at Shechem and that Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, went there to be inaugurated king of all Israel (1 Ki., ch. 12): at this same place, however, the ten tribes renounced the House of David and transferred their allegiance to Jeroboam (1 Ki. 12:1-20, 2 Chron. 10:1-19). Jeroboam restored Shechem and made it the capital of his kingdom (the northern kingdom, Israel) for a time (1 Ki. 12:25): later it seems, he moved his capital to Penuel, and his successors still later moved it to Tirzah (1 Ki. 12:25, 15:21, 16:6). (12) From that time on, the town declined in importance, but continued to exist long after the fall of Samaria, 722 B.C., for men from Shechem came with offerings to Jerusalem as late as 586 B.C. (Jer. 41:5). The Assyrian king, Shalmeneser (or Sargon?) on taking over Samaria carried most of the people of Shechem into

captivity and then sent colonies from Babylon to take the place of the exiles (2 Ki. 17:5-6, 17:24, 18:9ff.). Another influx of strangers came under Esarhaddon (Ezra 4:2). In post-exilic times Shechem became the chief city of the Samaritans who built a temple there (Ecclesiasticus 50:26-28; Josephus, *Ant.*, 11, 8, 6). In 128 B.C. John Hyrcanus captured the town (Josephus, *Ant.*, 13, 9, 1). In the time of the first Jewish revolt Vespasian camped near Shechem, and after the war the town was rebuilt and was named Flavia Neapolis in honor of the emperor Flavius Vespasianus: hence the modern Nablus. From the time of the origin of the Samaritans (cf. 1 Ki. 16:23-24) the history of Shechem is interwoven with that of this people (the ten tribes having lost their identity by forced amalgamation with foreign colonials) and their sacred mount, Gerizim. "It was to the Samaritans that Shechem owed the revival of its claims to be considered the religious center of the land; but this was in the interest of a narrow and exclusive sectarianism (John 4:5ff.);" (UBD, 1008). (For information about archaeological discoveries at Shechem, see especially BWDBA, or any reliable Bible Dictionary, e.g., UBD, NBD, HBD, etc.). Shechem is now generally identified with Tell-Balatah."

A final word is in order here concerning the tragedy of Shechem. "Jacob reprov'd the originators of this act most severely for their wickedness. *'Ye have brought me into trouble (conturbare), to make me stink (an abomination) among the inhabitants of the land; . . . and yet I (with my attendants) am a company that can be numbered (lit. people of number, easily numbered, a small band, Deut. 4:27, Isa. 10:19); and if they gather together against me, they will slay me,'* etc. If Jacob laid stress simply upon the consequences which this crime was likely to bring upon himself and his house, the reason was, that this was the view most adapted to make an impression upon his sons. For his last words concerning Simeon and

Levi (49:5-7) are a sufficient proof that the wickedness of their conduct was also an object of deep abhorrence. And his fear was not groundless. Only God in His mercy averted all the evil consequences from Jacob and his house (35:5-6). But his sons answered, '*Are they to treat our sister like a harlot?*' . . . Their indignation was justifiable enough; and their seeking revenge, as Absalom avenged the violation of his sister on Amnon (2 Sam. 13:22ff.), was in accordance with the habits of nomadic tribes. In this way, for example, seduction is still punished by death among the Arabs, and the punishment is generally inflicted by the brothers. . . . In addition to this, Jacob's sons looked upon the matter, not merely as a violation of their sister's chastity, but a crime against the peculiar vocation of their tribe. But for all that, the deception they practised, the abuse of the covenant sign of circumcision as a means of gratifying their revenge, and the extension of that revenge to the whole town, together with the plundering of the slain, were crimes deserving of the strongest reprobation. The crafty character of Jacob degenerated into malicious cunning in Simeon and Levi; and jealousy for the exalted vocation of their family, into actual sin. This event 'shows us in type all the errors into which the belief in the pre-eminence of Israel was sure to lead in the course of history, whenever that belief was rudely held by men of carnal minds' (*O. v Gerlach*)" (K-D, 314-315).

To sum up: The city of Shechem was overpowered, of course, but Jacob thought it prudent to avoid the revenge of the Canaanites by departing from the region of what must have been to him a great disillusionment. It seems most likely that he returned afterward and rescued 'from the Amorite with his sword and his bow' the piece of land he had previously purchased and which he left, as a special inheritance, to Joseph (Gen. 48:22, Josh. 17:14).

2. *Jacob at Bethel*, 35:1-15.

Jacob had allowed some ten years to pass since his return from Mesopotamia, without performing the vow which he had made at Bethel when in flight from Esau (28:20-22). However, he had recalled it in his own mind when he was resolving to return (31:13), and had also erected an altar in Shechem to "God, the God of Israel" (33:20). He is now divinely directed to go to Bethel and there build an altar to the God who had appeared to him on his original flight to Paddan-aram. This divine injunction evidently prompted him to perform a task which he had evidently kept putting off, namely, to put out of his house the strange gods which he apparently had tolerated, weakly enough, out of misplaced consideration for his wives, and to pay to God the vow he had made in the day of his trouble. He therefore ordered his household (vv. 2, 3), *i.e.*, his wives and children, and *all that were with him*, *i.e.*, his men and maid-servants, to put away all the strange gods they were harboring (and, it may be, concealing), then to purify themselves and wash their clothes. He also buried all the strange ("foreign") gods, including no doubt Rachel's teraphim (31:19), and whatever other idols there were (including, in all likelihood some that were carried off in the looting of Shechem), and along with these the earrings which were worn as amulets and charms: all these he buried *under the terebinth at Shechem*, probably the very tree under which his grandfather Abraham had once pitched *his* tent (12:8, 13:3, 28:19). Bethel was about twelve miles north of Jerusalem and thirty miles south of Shechem. From Shechem to Bethel there is a continuous ascent of over 1000 ft.

V. 1—"Because you delayed on the road you were punished by what happened to Dinah (Rashi)." *Dwell there*: "You must dwell there a little time before you set up the altar, so that your mind may be duly attuned to the service of God (Sforno, Nachmanides). The purpose

of the altar was, according to N, to cleanse himself from his contact with idols, or from the slain; according to S, as a thanksgiving for his deliverance" (§C, 209). The command to *dwell there* (at Bethel) surely signified at least one thing, namely, that the massacre of the Shechemites had rendered longer residence in that region unsafe. The divine injunction here "contained an assurance that the same Divine arm which had shielded him against the enmity of Esau and the oppression of Laban would extend to him protection on his future way." V. 2—*Put away the foreign gods*, etc. Note that the same words were spoken by Joshua under the same tree (Josh. 24:23). These facts would "point, it would appear, to the memory of a great national renunciation of idolatry at Shechem in the early history of Israel" (Skinner, ICCG, 423). *The gods of the stranger* included "most likely the teraphim of Laban, which Rachel still retained, and other objects of idolatrous worship, either brought by Jacob's servants from Mesopotamia, or adopted in Canaan, or perhaps possessed by the captives" (PCG, 411). *Cleanse yourselves*. The word is that which is used later to describe purifications under the Law (Num. 19:11-12, Lev. 14:4, 15:3), *Change your garments*: the directions here given were similar to those subsequently given at Sinai (Exo. 19:10-15), and were designed to symbolize a moral and spiritual purification of the mind and heart (the inward man, cf. Rom. 7:22, 2 Cor. 4:16). *Let us arise and go up to Bethel*: evidently Jacob had acquainted his family with the original experience at Bethel. *I will make there an altar unto God*: "El is probably used because of its proximity to and connection with Bethel, or house of El, and the intended contrast between the El of Bethel and the strange Elohim (gods) which Jacob's household were commanded to put away" (PCG, 411). Note that the language here, v. 3, clearly looks back to his Bethel experiences (28:20, 32:9, 31:9). "It ought not to be forgotten that Jacob had now

a large band of followers—wives, children, domestics, slaves, and shepherds. His tribe, as it may be called, could scarcely have numbered fewer than from two hundred to three hundred persons, old and young. These had all come from Mesopotamia, and most of them had been trained in idolatry. So long as Jacob resided in Mesopotamia it is probable he had not the power to prevent idolatrous practices; but now, having come to another country—a country in which the power of Jehovah had been so signally manifested to himself and his fathers—he felt that he might safely and effectually eradicate idolatry from his people” (SIBG, 270). Did he not also have a great number of captives from Shechem? (Cf. 35:29). *Note that the purgation followed Jacob’s commands, evidently without protest.* The foreign gods were handed over and buried, as were also all their earrings, “those employed for purposes of idolatrous worship, which were often covered with allegorical figures and mysterious sentences, and supposed to be endowed with a talismanic virtue” (PCG, 411). Cf. Judg. 8:24, Isa. 3:20, 21; Hos. 2:13). “Tradition has it that these were the teraphim which Rached had stolen and kept until now. The verse may mean that the servants of Jacob had brought their own household gods from their homeland. Jacob compels them to give them up and accept the worship of the God of Israel. Earrings were, and still are, worn in the Orient as amulets or charms against evil. In ancient times they had ritual significance, Judg. 8:24-27” (Morgenstern). *The oak which was by Shechem:* Whether the oak (terebinth) under which Abraham once pitched his tent (12:6), the one beneath which Joshua later erected his memorial pillar (Josh. 24:26), the oak of the sorcerers (Judg. 9:37), and the oak of the pillar at Shechem (Judg. 9:6), were one and the same, we cannot determine with certainty: the probability is, however, that they were. *Change your garments:* “From this we learn that when one goes to pray in

a place dedicated to that purpose, one must be clean bodily and in raiment (Ibn Ezra). Lest you have garments dedicated to idolatry (Rashi)" (SC, 209). *What a lesson here for our generation. A lesson this is, to be commended to our present-day long-haired, female-imitating hippies and to our hip-skirted, fashion-enslaved women (both young and old), indeed to the entire unholy breed of our twentieth-century idolaters! Let them be reminded of one thing: namely, that garishness, rather than modesty, has no place in the conduct or dress of one who presumes to come into the presence of God for divine worship. (Cf. 1 Cor. 10:31, 1 Pet. 3:1-7). Truly he that sitteth in the heavens must laugh at such antics: the Lord will have all such in derision, Psalms 2:4).* "The burial of the idols was followed by purification through the washing of the body, as a sign of the purification of the heart from the defilement of idolatry and by the putting on of clean and festal clothes, as a symbol of the sanctification and elevation of the heart to the Lord (Josh. 24:23)" (K-D, 316).

So Jacob and his household journeyed toward Bethel. *And a terror of God was upon the cities round about them and they did not pursue them.* Was this simply a great terror literally? Or was it a supernatural dread inspired by Elohim, or a fear of Elohim, under whose care Jacob manifestly had been taken? It seems obvious that we have here another instance of what is designated the *numinous* revelation of Elohim: that is, a manifestation, and the accompanying awareness, by human beings, of the *dreadfulness*, the *awesomeness* of God. (It will be recalled that this is the thesis of the book, *The Idea of the Holy*, by Rudolph Otto. See *infra*, pp. 140ff., 171ff., esp. 174). (Cf. Gen. 28:17, 32:30; Exo. 19:16-19, 23:27; 1 Sam. 14:15, 2 Chron. 14:13, Psalms 68:35, Heb. 10:26-31). So *Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan* (a clause obviously designed to draw special attention to the

fact that Jacob had now accomplished his return to Canaan), *the same is Bethel, he and all the people that were with him* (the members of his household and the captive Shechemites). (Luz, as we have noted, was the ancient name of Bethel, and continued to be the name by which it was known to the Canaanites (Gen. 28:19; 35:6, 48:3; cf. Judg. 1:22-26). Luz was given the name of Bethel by Jacob (28:16-19), after spending the night of his sublime dream-vision near to the city. "It was the site of Jacob's sojourn near to the city, rather than the city itself, that received the name Bethel (Josh. 16:2); but this site later became so important that the name was applied to the city as well (Josh. 18:13, Judg. 1:23)" (NBD, s.v.).

Jacob, having arrived safely at Bethel, *built an altar*, but this time he called the place *El Bethel* (the God of Bethel) in remembrance of God's manifestation of Himself to him on his flight from Esau. It will be noted that Bethel marks two significant stages in the course of Jacob's life: the first on his flight from Esau (ch. 28), and now the second on his return trip home, many years later. The name *God of the House of God* definitely connects the present experience with that of his dream-vision on the journey to Paddan-aram (28:16-22). "V. 5—He had formerly called it *Beth-el*, i.e., the house of God. Now, to attest his experience of God's fulfillment of His promises, he calls it, *El Bethel*, i.e., the God of Bethel (SIBG, 270).

The death of Deborah, v. 8. Deborah "was the same nurse who accompanied Rebekah when she left home (24:59). She had been sent by Rebekah to fetch Jacob home in fulfillment of her promise (27:45), but she died on the way (Rashi). It is extremely unlikely that it was the same nurse, because she would have been very old by then and hardly fit for such a mission. She was probably

another nurse who had remained with Laban after Rebekah left, and then became nurse to Jacob's children. Now Jacob was taking her home with him to look after Rebekah in her old age. But why is this fact mentioned? The Rabbis asserted that we have here a veiled hint at the death of Rebekah herself, this being really the reason why the place was named *Allon-bacuth* (Nachmanides). As to why Rebekah's death is not explicitly stated, Rashi cites a Midrash that the reason was that the people might not curse her as the mother who bore Esau. Nachmanides holds that it was because very little honor could have been paid to her at the funeral, in view of Isaac's blindness which confined him to the house so that he could not attend it, and Jacob's absence" (SC, 210). A *Midrash* is an exposition of Hebrew Scripture esp. one that was made between 4th Century B.C. and the 11th century A.D.) Morgenstern suggests the following: "There could be some confusion here between this tradition of the great tree near Bethel, sacred because of its association with a certain Deborah, and the tradition recorded in Judges 4:5 of the sacred 'palm-tree of Deborah' also located near Bethel, because Deborah the prophetess was supposed to have sat beneath it while revealing the oracle to Israel" (JIBG). Lange comments: "The nurse of Rebekah had gone with her to Hebron; but how came she here? Delitzsch conjectures that Rebekah had sent her, according to the promise (27:45), or to her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, for their care; but we have ventured the suggestion that Jacob took her with him upon his return from a visit to Hebron. She found her peculiar home in Jacob's house, and with his children after the death of Rebekah. Knobel naturally prefers to find a difficulty even here. It is a well-known method of exaggerating all the blanks in the Bible into diversities and contradictions" (p. 563). Leupold writes: "Deborah must have

been very old at this time. Since Jacob may have been nearly 110 years old at this time and was born rather late in his mother's life, an age of 170 years for Deborah is not unlikely. But Isaac lived to be 180 years old (v. 28). But these unexplained and unusual features constitute no reason for questioning the historicity of the event. The confusion of our event and the person of Deborah (Judg. 4:5) does not lie in these passages but in the minds of the critics. The Deborah of a later date 'judged' and dwelt 'under a palmtree between Ramah and Bethel.' Our Deborah 'died' and was buried 'under an oak below Bethel.' More important to observe is the fact that the Scripture regards the death and burial of this menial worthy of notice; and that fact would lead us to infer, as Luther does, that 'she was a wise and godly matron, who had served and advised Jacob, had supervised the domestics of the household and had often counseled and comforted Jacob in dangers and difficulties.' So the 'Oak of Weeping' became a monument to a godly servant whose loss was deeply mourned by all" (EG, 919). This final word, in the present connection: "V. 8—There *Deborah*, Rebekah's nurse, died, and was buried below Bethel under an oak, which was henceforth called the 'oak of weeping' [Allon-bacuth], a mourning oak, from the grief of Jacob's house on account of her death. Deborah had either been sent by Rebekah to take care of her daughters-in-law and grandsons, or had gone of her own accord into Jacob's household after the death of her mistress. The mourning at her death, and the perpetuation of her memory, are proofs that she must have been a faithful and highly esteemed servant in Jacob's house" (K-D, 316). Skinner is right (ICCG, 425), it seems to us at this point, in saying that the chief mystery here is not concerning Deborah, but the mystery as to how the name of Rebekah got introduced in this connection at all. He adds that it

is "an unsafe argument" to say that a "nurse" could not have been conspicuous in legend, e.g., cf. the grave of the nurse of Dionysus at Scythopolis, in Pliny, *Natural History*, 5, 74).

The Renewal of the Covenant Promises at Bethel, vv. 9-15. V. 9—"The distinction between *God spake* and *God appeared* is analogous to the distinction in the mode of revelation: cf. ch. 12, 1 and 7" (Lange, 563). Whitelaw comments: "This was a visible manifestation, in contrast to the audible one in Shechem (ver. 1), and in a state of wakefulness (ver. 13), as distinguished from the dream-vision formerly beheld at Bethel (28:12). God appeared to Jacob, *and blessed him*, that is, renewed the covenant-promise of which Jacob was the heir. Note again the mention of the *change of name* (cf. 32:28). At Peniel the name of Israel was given to Jacob; here it is sealed to him; hence, here it is definitely connected with the Messianic Promise. (Murphy suggests also that the repetition of the new name here implies a decline in Jacob's spiritual life between Peniel and Bethel). Not also that God appeared unto Jacob *again*: Now, at his return when the vow has been paid, as before in his migration, when the vow was occasioned and made (28:20-22). "After Jacob had performed his vow by erecting the altar at Bethel, God appeared to him again there ('again,' referring to ch. 28), 'on his coming out of Paddan-aram.' as He had appeared to him 30 years before on his journey thither—though it was then in a dream, now by daylight in a visible form (cf. v. 13, 'God went up from him'). The gloom of that day of fear had now brightened into the clear daylight of salvation. This appearance was the answer, which God gave to Jacob on his acknowledgment of Him; and its reality is thereby established, in opposition to the conjecture that it is merely a legendary repetition of the previous vision. The former theophany had promised to Jacob divine protection in a foreign land and restoration

to his home, on the ground of his call to be the bearer of the blessings of salvation. This promise God had fulfilled, and Jacob therefore performed his vow. On the strength of this, God now confirmed to him the name of Israel, which He had already given him in chap. 32:28, and with it the promise of a numerous seed and the possession of Canaan, which, so far as the form and substance are concerned, points back rather to chap. 17:6 and 8 than to chap. 28:13, 14, and for the fulfilment of which, commencing with the birth of his sons and his return to Canaan, and stretching forward to the most remote future, the name of *Israel* was to furnish him with a pledge. Jacob alluded to this second manifestation of God at Bethel towards the close of his life (chap. 48:3, 4); and Hosea (12:4) represents it as the result of his wrestling with God. The remembrance of this appearance Jacob transmitted to his descendants by erecting a memorial stone, which he not only anointed with oil like the former one in chap. 28:18, but consecrated by a drink-offering and by the renewal of the name Bethel" (K-D, 317). *Note again the name-change.* "The reason of the second investiture with the name of *Israel* seems probably to be that either Jacob himself, or his family, had refrained from using it. *Note:* Believers, like Jacob and his family, are oftentimes negligent of the use and unmindful of the privilege of the *new name*. Believers 'were by nature *children of wrath*, even as others,' Eph. 2:3. But, Behold what manner of love God has bestowed, that they should be called, through faith (Gal. 3:26) *the children of God*, 1 John 3:2" (SIBG, 270).

Note especially V. 11: "I am God Almighty," etc. "This self-applied title of God has the same significance here as it had in the revelation of God for Abraham (17:1); there he revealed himself as the miracle-working God, because he had promised God a son; here, however, because he promises to make from Jacob's family a com-

munity [assembly] of nations" (Lange). "The *kabal* here is significant as it refers to the ultimate complete fulfilment of the promise in true spiritual Israel" (Gosman, in Lange, p. 563). Murphy calls attention to the fact that from this time the multiplication of Israel is rapid. In twenty-five years after this time he goes down into Egypt with seventy souls, besides the wives of his married descendants, and two hundred and ten years after that Israel goes out of Egypt with numbering about one million eight hundred thousand. *A nation and a congregation of nations*, such as were then known known in the world, had at the last date come of him, and 'kings' were to follow in due time" (MG, 427). It should be noted that the *land*, as well as the *seed*, is again promised.

Note here also *the repeated items of the Promise*. (1) *Be fruitful and multiply*: "Abraham and Isaac had each only one son of promise; but now the time of increase has come" (MG, 427). (Cf. Gen. 1:28). (2) *A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee*: cf. 17:5, 28:3. (3) *And kings shall come out of thy loins*: cf. 17:6, 16. (4) *And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac* (cf. 12:7, 13:15, 26:3, 4), *to thee I will give it* (28:13), *and to thy seed after thee will I give the land* (the time of their actual taking possession of the land was specified to Abraham, 15:12-16).

Note also that this is *the first mention of the drink-offering in the Old Testament* (v. 14).

V. 14—"And Jacob set up a pillar," etc. It would seem that the former pillar (28:18) had fallen down and disappeared. This pillar of stone was to commemorate the interview, *God having gone up from him in the place where He talked with him*. This setting up of memorial pillars seems to have been a favorite practice of Jacob's. Cf. the first pillar at Bethel (28:18), the pillar on Galeed (31:45), the second pillar at Bethel (35:14), the pillar over Rachel's grave (35:20). Note that *Jacob poured a*

drink-offering on this pillar of stone, and oil also. This is the first mention of a drink-offering (sacrificial libation) in the Old Testament. "Mosaic sacrifices were often accompanied by drink offerings (cf. Exo. 29:40, Lev. 23:13. In Num. 15:3-10 the quantity is prescribed according to the types of blood sacrifice to be presented. Its use was perverted by the Jews who offered it along with their sacrificial cakes to Ashtoreth, the *queen of heaven* (Jer. 44:17). God reproved Israel for offering it to idols (Isa. 57:5, 6, and 65:11; Jer. 19:13; Ezek. 20:28). The drink offering is symbolic of the outpoured blood of Christ on Calvary (Isa. 53:12, Matt. 26:28, Heb. 9:11-14) and of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon His Church (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17, 18; 10:45)" (HBD, 57). The drink offering consisted of a fourth part of a hin of wine, which was equal to about a third of a gallon (Exo. 29:40). Jacob poured oil on the memorial stone as he had done previously (28:18). The holy anointing oil of the Old Testament was always a type of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit (Lev. 8:12, Psa. 45:7, Heb. 1:9, Acts 10:38, etc.).

V. 15—God called the place *Bethel* (cf. 28:19). Do we not have a prolepsis here, that is, a referring back, by way of explanation for the sake of emphasis, to what had previously been said and done at this place on the occasion of Jacob's dream-vision (28:18-22).

Bethel (known originally as Luz, Gen. 28:19) has a long and notable history in the Biblical record. (It is usually identified as the modern Tell Beitin on the watershed route 12 miles north of Jerusalem.) Abram camped to the east of Bethel and there built an altar to Yahweh (Gen. 12:8), at the time of his entrance into Canaan. After his sojourn in Egypt, he returned to this site (Gen. 13:3). For Jacob, Bethel was the starting-point of his understanding of God, who was for him in a special sense "God of Bethel" (Gen. 31:13, 35:7). On being divinely

ordered to Bethel, on his return from Mesopotamia, he built an altar and set up a memorial pillar, renewing the name he had given the place originally (35:1-15). After the Conquest it was assigned to the Joseph tribes who captured it, especially to Ephraim (1 Chron. 7:28), and bordered the territory of Benjamin (Josh. 18:13). According to excavated potsherds Bethel began to be occupied as a city in the 21st century B.C. It suffered a severe destruction in the early 14th century B.C.: this is usually referred to as a burning by the tribes of Israel at the time of the Conquest. Later excavations seem to support the view that this destruction was wrought by the Josephites, some time after Joshua's death (Judg. 1:22-26), and had nothing to do with the actual Conquest. When the Israelites took over after Joshua's death, they called it by the name Jacob had given to the place of his vision instead of calling it Luz (Judg. 1:23). When it became necessary for Israel to punish Benjamin, the people sought advice as to the conduct of the battle and worshiped at Bethel "for the ark . . . was there" (Judg. 20:18-28, 21:1-4). It was a sanctuary in the time of Samuel who visited it annually to hold court (1 Sam. 7:16, 10:3); hence it obviously was a site of one of the "schools" of the prophets which were originated under Samuel (2 Ki. 2:1-3; 1 Sam. 10:10, 19:20; 1 Ki. 20:35, etc.). The archaeological remains of this period indicate that it was a time of great insecurity: the settlement was burned twice by the Philistines. Under the early monarchy, the city seems to have begun to prosper again, becoming the center of Jeroboam's rival cultus, condemned by a man of God from Judah (2 Ki. 12:28—13:32). Abijah of Judah captured the site (2 Chron. 13:19); and Asa, his son, may have destroyed it (2 Chron., ch. 14). Elisha met a group of "sons of the prophets" from Bethel, and along with them the "mocking boys" (2 Ki. 2:3, 23). Amos condemned the pagan rites of the Israelite royal sanctuary (Am. 4:4, 5:5-6, 7:13; cf.

Hos. 10:15) and Jeremiah bespoke their futility (48:13). (*Ashtoreth* was the Canaanite mother-goddess of the Canaanites, the goddess of fertility, love and war (1 Ki. 11:5, 44:17): her counterparts were the Syrian Atargatis, the Phoenician Astarta, the Babylonian Ishtar, the Phrygian Cybele, the Egyptian Isis, etc.). The priest sent to instruct the Assyrian settlers in Samaria settled at Bethel (2 Ki. 17:28). Josiah invaded all the pagan sanctuaries of both Judah and Israel and restored the true worship of Jehovah in a mighty national reformation (2 Ki. 23:15ff.). Bethel was later occupied by the returning exiles from Babylon (Ezra 2:28, Neh. 11:31); their worship, however, was again centered in Jerusalem (Zech. 12:2, Isa. 51:22, 23). The city grew again during the Hellenistic period until it was fortified by Bacchides about 160 B.C. (1 Macc. 9, 50). Vespasian captured it in A.D. 69, and a little later it was rebuilt as a Roman "township" (a small political unit). (In this connection, cf. Beth-aven ("house of iniquity"), which was near Ai and to the east of Bethel (Josh. 7:2 and served as boundary mark for Benjamin's allotment (Josh. 18:12). In Hosea (4:15, 5:8, 10:5), "the name may be a derogatory synonym for Bethel, 'House of the (false) god'" (NBD, s.v.). Bethel continued to flourish until the time of the Arab conquest. "Bethel, specified by Eusebius and Jerome, twelve miles from Jerusalem and on the right hand of the road to Shechem, corresponds precisely to the ruins which bear the name Beitin" (UBD, 139). "The site is perhaps Burg Beitin to the southeast of Tell Beitin, the 'shoulder of Luz' (Josh. 18:13)" (NBD, 143).

3. *The Birth of Benjamin and the Death of Rachel*, vv. 16-20.

Jacob now left Bethel, evidently not in opposition to the divine command which simply directed him to go there, build an altar, and dwell there long enough at least to perform his vow. In accordance probably with his own

desire, if not also Heaven's counsel, we find him leaving Bethel and proceeding toward Mamre, no doubt to visit Isaac. (What has happened to Rebekah, in the meantime? When did she die? The Scriptures do not give us the answers. It has been conjectured that her death occurred while Jacob was absent in Paddan-aram. The place of her burial, incidentally mentioned by Jacob on his death-bed (49:31), was in the field of Machpelah. The Apostle Paul refers to Rebekah as having been acquainted with God's purposes regarding her sons even before they were born (Rom. 9:10-12, cf. Gen. 25:23). It seems obvious that Jacob never saw her after his hurried departure for Paddan-aram (27:46, 28:5). Was not this very fact a form of retribution for her deceptive manipulation of events in favor of Jacob, her favorite?)

As they proceeded on their journey southward in the direction of Hebron, Rachel was taken in labor as they entered the vicinity of Ephrath. The text tells us literally that she was suffering *hard labor* in her parturition, all the more severe no doubt because it had been some sixteen years since her first son, Joseph, was born. In the course of the labor, the midwife told her that this baby was also to be a son, fulfilling a wish expressed by her when Joseph was born (30:24). And Rachel dies during the final fulfilment of the strongest wish of her life. Note "*as her soul was departing (for she died)*," the term *nephesb* meaning "soul" or "life." That is, "departing" not to annihilation, but to another state of being (cf. Luke 16:22, John 1:18). "For she died" (Whitelaw calls this "a rather pathetic commentary on ch. 30:1"). As Rachel was dying she named the baby *Ben-oni*, "son of my pain." Jacob, however, called him *Ben-jamin*, "probably son of good fortune, according to the meaning of the word *jamin* sustained by the Arabic, to indicate that his pain at the loss of his favorite wife was compensated by the birth of this son, who now completed the number twelve" (K-D,

p. 318). "The father changes the name of ill omen to Benjamin: 'son of the right hand,' *i.e.*, 'son of happy omen'" (JB, 57). "With her last breath Rachel names her son *Ben-oni*; but the father, to avert the omen, calls him *Bin-yamin*. The pathos of the narrative flows in sympathy with the feelings of the mother: a notice of Jacob's life-long grief for the loss of Rachel is reserved for 48:7" (ICCG, 426). "Joseph buried Rachel on the road to Ephratah, or Ephrath . . . *i.e.*, *Bethlehem* (bread-house), by which name it is better known, though the origin of it is obscure" (K-D, 318). Jacob erected a monument (pillar) upon Rachel's grave; "*the same is the Pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day*" (v. 20). That is, unto the time of Moses; yet the site of Rachel's sepulchre was known as late as the time of Samuel (1 Sam. 10:2). "There seems no reason to question the tradition which in the fourth century has placed it within the Turkish chapel Kubbet Rachil, about half-an-hour's journey north of Bethlehem" (Whitelaw, PCG, 417; cf. Robinson, I, 322; Thompson, LB, 644; Tristram, *Land of Israel*, 404; Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, 149). Bethlehem, or House of Bread, became the birthplace of David, 1 Sam. 16:18), and of Christ (Mic. 5:2, Matt. 2:1). "This narrative is more than mere history, for the event occurred, and the record was made, to symbolize a greater sorrow that was to occur at Ephrath nearly two thousand years after, in connection with the birth at Bethlehem of that Man of Sorrows in whom every important event in Hebrew history received its final and complete significance" (Thomson, LB, 644-645). "The grave of Rachel was long marked by the pillar which Jacob erected over it; and her memory was associated with the town Bethlehem (Jer. 31:15, Matt. 2:18)" (OTH, 105). "Nachmanides remarks that the Tomb is about four parasangs from the Ramah of Benjamin, but more than two days' journey from the Ramah

of Ephraim. Hence, when Jeremiah said, *A voice is heard in Ramah . . . Rachel weeping for her children* (Jer. 31:15), it must be hyperbole: so loud is her weeping that it can be heard as far as Ramah. Jacob buried Rachel on the way and did not take her body into the nearby city of Bethlehem because he foresaw that it would belong to the tribe of Judah, and he wished her body to lie in the portion of Benjamin" (SC, 212). "Rachel's sepulchre is still a noted spot. Jews and Mohammedans unite in honoring it. It is marked by a small building surmounted by a white dome. It is on the leading road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, three miles from the former and one from the latter. The original name of Bethlehem appears to have been *Ephrath*, 'fruitful.' This gave place to *Bethlehem*, 'house of bread'; which in modern times has given place to the Arabic *Beit-labm*, 'house of flesh'" (SIBG, 270). "Benjamin was the twelfth and last son of Jacob. He was a full brother to Joseph, being born of Rachel, the favorite wife of Jacob. Benjamin alone was born in Canaan rather than Paddan-aram, and his mother was buried on the way to Bethlehem in the region later assigned to Benjamin. He and Joseph were special objects of the affection of Jacob, because their mother was Rachel. In her dying agonies Rachel gave him the name of *Benoni*, 'son of my sorrow,' but Jacob named him Benjamin, 'son of the right hand.' The peculiar concern of Joseph for Benjamin during the Egyptian episode may be understood by the fact that they were full brothers, whose half brothers looked upon them with envy because of Jacob's special love for them" (HBD, 58). "In Jeremiah 31:15-16, the prophet refers to the exile of the ten tribes under Salmaneser, king of Assyria, and the sorrow caused by their dispersion (2 Ki. 17:20), under the symbol of Rachel, the maternal ancestor of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, bewailing the fate of her children, which lamentation

was a type or symbol of that which was fulfilled in Bethlehem when the infants were slaughtered by order of Herod (Matt. 2:16-18)" (UBD, 907).

"Rachel is a figure of great importance in the saga, as Jacob's beloved wife and as the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, who were to constitute the very core of the Israelite state. And so the narrative in Chapter 35 continues with the death of Rachel and the birth of Benjamin, for she died in childbirth. Tradition hails a cupola-topped structure on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem as the 'tomb of Rachel.' It was actually erected in the 15th century A.D. over a monolith which marks an ancient grave. It is mentioned by the 7th century pilgrim Arculf. This shrine was frequented by Jewish pilgrims in Palestine until 1948 when the Arab-Israel War of Liberation broke out" (AtD, 95). "In the time of the sixth-century[?] pilgrim Arculf, the grave was already marked by a monument of some sort, which he calls a 'pyramid.' That probably means a pyramid-topped mausoleum, for these were frequently constructed in Roman times" (Kraeling, BA, 88).

4. *Reuben's Incest*. vv. 21-22.

Israel went on his way toward Hebron from Ephrath, after the funeral of Rachel, and spread (*i.e.*, unfolded, cf. 12:8, 26:25) his tent beyond the tower of Eder. "He that departs from the scene of his sorrow is designated as 'Israel,' as it would seem to indicate that he bore his grief as his better, newer nature helped him to do, and so 'moved on' a chastened but a more seasoned saint of God. But for the present he did not move far. For 'Migdal-Eder,' meaning 'the tower of the flocks,' *i.e.*, a lookout tower for shepherds, was, according to Micah 4:8, (rightly interpreted), on the southeast hill of Jerusalem on old territory of the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. 18:28, Judg. 1:21) (EG, 926). "Probably a turret, or watch-tower, erected for the convenience of shepherds in guarding their

flocks (2 Ki. 18:8, 2 Chron. 26:10, 27:4), the site of which is uncertain, but which is commonly supposed to have been a mile (Jerome) or more south of Bethlehem" (PCG, 416). "Such towers would be numerous in any pastoral country; and the place referred to here is unknown" (Skinner, 426). Here it was that Reuben, Jacob's eldest, committed incest (Lev. 18:8) with Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid and Jacob's concubine. For this crime he received the dying curse of Jacob and his birthright was taken from him (Gen. 49:4, 1 Chron. 5:1). "Need we be told the self-evident thing; that Jacob disapproved and was deeply grieved and shamed? We are merely informed that he became aware of what had happened: he 'heard of it.' This prepares us for 49:4 where his disapproval finds lasting expression for all future time" (EG, 927). "Another local story," writes Cornfeld, "attached to a place called Migdal Eder, is connected with the oldest roots of the Jacob traditions. It concerns Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, and an affair with his father's concubine, Bilhah. It is of such a scandalous nature that it is reported with characteristic Hebrew conciseness. The biblical storyteller, while not suppressing scandal and 'frauengeschichten' does not lavish time and words on sex and gossip, in line with the Bible's rigid and ascetic social code. This incident, a mere fragment of the vast Jacob saga, is necessary to the Biblical storyteller for an understanding of Jacob's last blessing to his sons, and his paternal curse on Reuben, in Gen. 49:4. But according to the oldest Jewish commentators, Reuben was not motivated by lust, but acted to protect his mother Leah [as in 30:14?] and defend her interests. Commentators assume that Jacob made Bilhah his favorite after Rachel's death, whereupon Reuben seduced her and alienated the patriarch's affection from her. There is more to this than appears in a few short sentences. This motif is part of the epic repertoire of the East Mediterranean and comes up in the Iliad (9:444-

57), where Phoenix, like Reuben, received a paternal curse and no blessing for seducing his father's concubine. He also, like Reuben, was not motivated by lust. This goes to prove that the more we study the Bible, the more we have to respect the importance of the mere details which help to piece together and interpret Biblical stories" (AtD, 95-96). But why was it necessary to try to "explain away" the content of Gen. 49:4, or also of 1 Chron. 5:1? The connection between these passages and Gen. 35:22 is very clear and meaningful. Moreover, there is no real reason for trying to prove that Reuben was too much different from young men of his time, especially in his attitude toward one who was only a 'concubine? Imaginative reconstructions are entirely unnecessary: the Scriptures in this case, when allowed to do so, speak for themselves. This is equally true of other Jewish "interpretations." E.g., "Reuben did not actually do this, but removed her couch from his father's tent, and Scripture stigmatized his action as heinous as though he had lain with her. For during Rachel's lifetime Jacob's couch was always in her tent; on her death he removed it to Bilhah's, Rachel's handmaid. Reuben resented this, saying, 'If my mother, Leah, was subordinate to Rachel, must she also be subordinate to Rachel's handmaid!' Thereupon he removed her couch and substituted Leah's (Rashi, quoting the Talmud). Nachmanides suggests that he did this from the fear that Jacob might have another son by her, as she was still young, and so diminish his heritage" (SC, 213). We call attention to the fact that these passages (Gen. 35:22, 49:4, and 1 Chron. 5:1) all *make sense* when taken together. Why then should anyone resort to utterly uncalled-for and unnecessary flights of the imagination which serve only to create confusion and offer little or nothing that can be substantiated by external evidence. The Scriptures present the story of Reuben's incest *as fact*: the whole story forms a pattern

which authenticates itself. Why should any writer have indulged a *midrash* trying to ameliorate Reuben's sin, when as a matter of fact it could hardly be comparable in its heinousness to the massacre of the Shechemites perpetrated by Simeon's and Levi's thirst for vengeance?

5. *The Twelve Sons of Jacob*, vv. 22-26.

(1) By *Leah*: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, (Cf. 29:32-35, 30:18-20, 46:8-15; Exo. 1:2, 3). (2) By Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. (Cf. 30:22-24, 35:18, 46:19). (3) By Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid: Dan, and Naphtali. (Cf. 30:4-8). (4) By Zilpah (Leah's handmaid): Gad, and Asher. (Cf. 30:9-15). Of all these, Benjamin was the only one born in Canaan; the others were born to Jacob in Paddan-aram. We now have the genealogy of the origin of the twelve tribes who later became a *people* (a *nation*, the Children of Israel). These verses are anticipatory of the Testament of Israel (ch. 49) and of the establishment of the Theocracy, under the mediatorship of Moses, at Sinai.

6. *The Death of Isaac*, vv. 26-28.

Jacob came finally to *Mamre*, unto *Kiriath-arba*, which is *Hebron*, where *Abraham* and *Isaac* sojourned, Cf. 13:18, 23:2, 19; John. 14:15, 15:13, etc. Here Isaac died, being "old and full of days," literally *satisfied with days*. (Cf. the statement about Abraham's death, 25:8). "This chapter closes the ninth of the pieces or documents marked off by the phrase 'these are the generations.' Its opening event was the birth of Isaac (25:19), which took place in the hundredth year of Abraham, and therefore seventy-five years before his death recorded in the seventh document. As the seventh purports to be the generations of Terah (11:27), and relates to Abraham who was his offspring, so the present document, containing the generations of Isaac, refers chiefly to the sons of Isaac, and especially to Jacob, as the heir of the promise. Isaac as a son learned obedience to his father in that great typical

event of his life, in which he was laid on the altar, and figuratively sacrificed in the ram which was his substitute. This was the great significant passage in his life, after which he retired into comparative tranquility" (MG, 429). (Murphy, by the term "document" here has reference to the sections which are introduced by the word *toledoth*, of which there are nine, not including the use of the word with reference strictly, in Gen. 2:4, to the physical or non-human phases of the Creation. Note the use of *toledoth* ("generations") to mark off the nine sections of the book as follows: "the generations of" Adam, beginning at 5:1; of Noah, beginning at 6:9; of the sons of Noah, at 10:1; of Shem, at 11:10; of Terah, at 11:27; of Ishmael, at 25:12; of Isaac, at 25:19; of Esau, at 36:1; and of Jacob at 37:2. See my *Genesis*, I, 46-47.)

Isaac did indeed live in relative tranquility throughout most of his life; as a matter of fact, his personality seems not to have been motivated at any time to works of greatness: he was more or less under the domination of his wife throughout his entire married life. Commentators write eloquently of the Saga of Abraham, the Saga of Jacob, and the Saga of Joseph, but never of the Saga of Isaac: Isaac's career never attained such note, such *epic* proportions, one might well say. The careers of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, on the other hand, *did attain epic proportions*.

It is interesting to note also the prominent role played by the women of the patriarchal narratives. For example, Abraham accepted, apparently without any protest whatsoever, the barren Sarah's proffer of a concubine as a substitute bearer of children, and thus acquiesced in her lack of faith and unwillingness to abide God's own time for the fulfilment of His promise (16:1, 2). Isaac allowed himself to be victimized by the schemes of the strong-willed Rebekah (27:5ff.). Jacob labored under the spell which his deep love for Rachel seems to have cast over him throughout her life and even after her death (as

evinced by the fact that he worked fourteen years to secure her as a wife: cf. 29:10, 11, 30; 35:16-20; 37:3; 44:20-22); it was Jacob's great love for Rachel that sparked his deep affection for Joseph and Benjamin, no doubt to the disgust of his other sons. It has always been true, and we suppose always will be that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Men are frequently made or marred, or even destroyed, by the passionate devotion they give to the women whom they truly love.

Jacob finally arrived at Hebron with his whole entourage of relatives and servants. Hebron was the third notable station occupied by his grandfather Abraham in the Land of Promise (13:18). Here also Jacob's father Isaac now sojourned. At the time of Jacob's flight Isaac, we will recall, was resident in Beer-sheba; however, as he advanced in age he seems to have moved to Mamre, probably to be near the family sepulchre. Hebron was a town in the Judean mountains, some 2800 feet above sea level, midway between Jerusalem and Beersheba, and about twenty miles from each. It was named *Kiriath-arba* (Gen. 23:2; Josh. 14:15, 15:13), also *Mamre*, after Mamre the Amorite (Gen. 13:18; 14:13, 24; 35:27; 23:17, 19). Here Abraham entertained three heavenly Visitants on occasion and was promised a son (Gen. 18:1, 10, 14). The cave of Machpelah lay "before Mamre," probably to the east of the grove of Mamre (Gen. 23:17, 19; 25:9; 49:30-32; 50:13, 26).

Isaac died at the age of 180 years (cf. Psa. 91:16). "The death of this venerable patriarch is here recorded by anticipation, for it did not take place till fifteen years after Joseph's disappearance. Feeble and blind though he was, he lived to a very advanced age; and it is a pleasing evidence of the permanent reconciliation between Esau and Jacob, that they met at Mamre, to perform the funeral rites of their common father" (Jamieson, CECG, 225). This author would have us think kindly of Isaac, even

reverently. He writes: "In the delicate simplicity and unobtrusive humility of Isaac, in the quiet, gentle, amiable purity of his life, we have an early type of Christ's perfect example. Indeed, his whole character, and the leading events of his history were a foreshadowing of those of the Savior" (*ibid.*, 225). It can be said of Isaac truthfully, whatever else might be said in criticism, that he was a *man of peace*, a man who always sought peace in preference to violence.

The last sentence in this chapter 35 reads like a benediction in itself: "Esau and Jacob his sons buried him." Esau evidently arrived from Mount Seir to pay the final service due his deceased parent, "Jacob according to him that precedence which had once belonged to him as Isaac's firstborn." "The Solemnity of Death: in vs. 29 there comes a haunting echo of an earlier passage: 25:8-9. Except for the names, the two are identical. Isaac dies, and his sons Esau and Jacob come to bury him. Abraham died, and his sons Isaac and Ishmael came and buried him. In each case there had been bitterness between the two sons. Isaac was the cherished one: Ishmael had been driven out because of Sarah's jealousy for Isaac. So in the next generation also the two sons had been divided by Jacob's crafty trick that stole the birthright and Esau's resulting furious anger. But both times the two sons meet at a father's funeral—the one thing that after a long separation could unite them. The verses are more than bare records of events. They suggest a deep instinct that runs throughout all the history of Israel—the instinct of family loyalty. Whatever might drive individuals apart, something stronger held them, and would keep them from complete estrangement. Not in word only, but in fact the people of Israel accepted the commandment, 'Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Obedience to that commandment is one reason why the Jewish race has had such

tenacity and toughness of survival. It has honored and protected the family. It has chastened and corrected selfish irresponsibility by putting into the hearts of each generation a sense of duty to the group" (IB, 743). History proves beyond all possibility of doubt that *when family life goes to pieces the nation falls.*

This is the last mention of the living Esau in Scripture. The sentence seems to indicate that Jacob and Esau continued to be on brotherly terms¹ from the day of their meeting at the ford of Jabbok. Still—no mention whatever of Rebekah in her last days! Nothing—but a passing mention, by Israel himself, of her place of burial, the Cave of Machpelah (50:31).

It is interesting to note the chronology involved in the intertwined lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Jacob was born in the sixtieth year of Isaac's life (25:26), and was thus 120 years old when Isaac died (at the age of 180). But later when he (as Israel) was presented before Pharaoh in Egypt he was 130 years old (47:9). Of this stretch of time there were seven fruitful and two unfruitful years since Joseph's exaltation to power in Egypt (41:53, 54; 45:6), and thirteen years between the selling of Joseph and his elevation, for he was sold at the age of seventeen and made prime minister at thirty (37:2, 47:9). "Hence we must take twenty-three years from the 130 years of Jacob, to determine his age at the time Joseph was sold: which is thus 107. 'Isaac therefore shared the grief of Jacob over the loss of his son for thirteen years.' In a similar way, Abraham had witnessed and sympathized with the long unfruitful marriage of Isaac. But Isaac could see in these sorrows of Jacob the hand of God, who will not allow that anyone should anticipate him in the self-willed preference of a favorite son" (Lange, 571). Leupold presents this problem in a somewhat clearer light as follows: "From this time [of Isaac's death] onward Jacob enters into the full patriarchal heritage, having at

last attained unto a spiritual maturity which is analogous to that of the patriarch. Coincident with this is Isaac's receding into the background. Consequently Isaac's death is now reported, though it did not take place for another twelve or thirteen years. For shortly after this, when Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was seventeen years old. When he stood before Pharaoh he was thirty (41:46). Seven years later when Joseph was thirty-seven, Jacob came to Egypt at the age of 130 (47:9). Consequently Jacob must have been ninety-three at Joseph's birth and at the time of our chapter, 93, plus 15, *i.e.*, about 108 years. But Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born: 108 plus 60 equals 168, Isaac's age when Jacob returned home. But in closing the life of Isaac it is proper to mention his death, though in reality this did not occur for another twelve years. Strange to say, Isaac lived to witness Jacob's grief over Joseph" (EG, 929). Whitlaw writes as follows: "At this time [of Isaac's death] Jacob was 120; but at 130 he stood before Pharaoh in Egypt, at which date Joseph had been ten years governor. He was therefore 120 when Joseph was promoted at the age of thirty, and 107 when Joseph was sold. Consequently Isaac was 167 years of age when Joseph was sold, so that he must have survived that event and sympathised with Jacob his son for a period of 13 years" (PCG, 417). "Isaac died at the age of 180, and was buried by his two sons in the Cave of Machpelah (ch. 49:31), Abraham's family grave, Esau having come from Seir to Hebron to attend the funeral of his father. But Isaac's death did not actually take place for 12 years after Jacob's return to Hebron. For as Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold by his brethren (37:2), and Jacob was then living at Hebron (37:14), it cannot have been more than 31 years after his flight from Esau when Jacob returned home (cf. ch. 34:1). Now, since according to our calculation at ch. 27:1, he was 77 years old when he fled, he must have been

108 when he returned home; and Isaac would only have reached his 168th year, as he was 60 years old when Jacob was born (25:26). Consequently, Isaac lived to witness the grief of Jacob at the loss of Joseph, and died but a short time before his promotion in Egypt, which occurred 13 years after he was sold (41:46), and only 10 years before Jacob's removal with his family to Egypt, as Jacob was 130 years old when he was presented to Pharaoh (47:9). But the historical significance of his life was at an end, when Joseph returned home with his twelve sons" (K-D, 320). *This means simply that Jacob and his household must have dwelt with, or in close proximity to that of Isaac for some twelve or thirteen years, that is, until Isaac "was gathered to his people" at the age of 180.*

We learn later, from Jacob's last words, that Isaac and Rebekah were both buried in the Cave at Machpelah (49:31). However, the Scriptures are completely silent about her life and death, following the departure of Jacob for Paddan-aram at her instigation. It seems only reasonable to conclude that after that departure she never saw her favorite son again.

FOR MEDITATION AND SERMONIZING

*John Peter Lange: On the Fanaticism of Leah's Sons
(CDHCG, 564)*

"The collision between the sons of Jacob and Shechem the son of Hamor, is a vivid picture of the collisions between the youthful forms of political despotism and hierarchal pride. Shechem acts as an insolent worldly prince, Jacob's sons as young fanatical priests, luring him to destruction.

"After Jacob became Israel, the just consciousness of his theocratic dignity appears manifestly in his sons, under the deformity of fanatical zeal. We may view this narrative as the history of the origin, and first original form

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of Jewish and Christian fanaticism. We notice first that fanaticism does not originate in and for itself, but clings to religious and moral ideas as a monstrous and misshapen outgrowth, since it changes the spiritual into a carnal motive. The sons of Jacob were right in feeling that they were deeply injured in the religious and moral idea and dignity of Israel, by Shechem's deed. But still they are already wrong in their judgment of Shechem's act, since there is surely a difference between the brutal lust of Amnon, who after his sin pours his hatred upon her whom he had dishonored, and Shechem who passionately loves and would marry the dishonored maiden, and is ready to pay any sum as an atonement; a distinction which the sons of Jacob mistook, just as those of the clergy do at this day who throw all breaches of the seventh commandment into one common category and as of the same heinous dye. Then we observe that Jacob's sons justly shun a mixture with the Shechemites, although in this case they were willing to be circumcised for worldly and selfish ends. But there is a clear distinction between such a wholesale, mass conversion, from improper motives, which would have corrupted and oppressed the house of Israel, and the transition of Shechem to the sons of Israel, or the establishment of some neutral position for Dinah. But leaving this out of view, if we should prefer to maintain (what Jacob certainly did not maintain) that an example of revenge must be made, to intimidate the heathen, and to warn the future Israel against the Canaanites, still the fanatical zeal in the conduct of Jacob's sons passed over into fanaticism strictly so called, which developed itself from the root of spiritual pride, according to three world-historical characteristics. The first was cunning, the lie, and enticing deception. Thus the Huguenots were enticed into Paris on the night of St. Bartholomew. The second was the murderous attack and carnage. How often has this form shown itself in the history of fanaticism! This

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pretended sacred murder and carnage draws the third characteristic sign in its train: rapine and pillage. The possessions of the heretics, according to the laws of the Middle Ages, fell to the executioner of the pretended justice; and history of the Crusades against the heretics testifies to similar horrors and devastation. Jacob, therefore, justly declared his condemnation of the iniquity of the brothers, Simeon and Levi, not only at once, but upon his death-bed (ch. 49) and it marks the assurance of the apocryphal standpoint, when the book Judith, for the purpose of palliating the crime of Judith, glorifies in a poetical strain the like fanatical act of Simeon (ch. 9). Judith, indeed, in the trait of cunning, appears as the daughter in spirit of her ancestor Simeon. We must not fail to distinguish here in our history, in this first vivid picture of fanaticism, the nobler point of departure, the theocratic motive, from the terrible counterfeit and deformity. In this relation there seems to have been a difference between the brothers, Simeon and Levi. While the former appears to have played a chief part in the history of Joseph also (42:24), and in the division of Canaan was dispersed among his brethren, the purified Levi came afterwards to be the representative of pure zeal in Israel (Exod. 32:28, Deut. 33:8) and the administrator of the priesthood, *i.e.*, the theocratic priestly first-born, by the side of Judah the theocratic political first-born. A living faith and a faithful zeal rarely develop themselves as a matter of fact without a mixture of fanaticism; 'the flame gradually purifies itself from the smoke.' In all actual individual cases, it is a question whether the flame overcomes the smoke, or the smoke the flame. In the life of Christ, the Old-Testament covenant faithfulness and truth burns pure and bright, entirely free from smoke; in the history of the old Judaism, on the contrary, a dangerous mixture of fire and smoke steams over the land. And so in the development of individual believers we see how

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some purify themselves to the purest Christian humanity, while others, even sinking more and more into the pride, cunning, uncharitableness and injustice of fanaticism, are completely ruined. *Delitzsch*: 'The greatest aggravation of their sin was that they degraded the sacred sign of the covenant into the common means of their malice. And yet it was a noble germ which exploded so wickedly.'

"This Shechemite carnage of blind and Jewish fanaticism is reflected in a most remarkable way, as to all its several parts, in the most infamous crime of Christian fanaticism, the Parisian St. Bartholomew. [The narrative of these events at Shechem shows how impartial the sacred writer is, bringing out into prominence whatever traits of excellence there were in the characters of Shechem and Hamor, while he does not conceal the cunning, falsehood, and cruelty of the sons of Jacob. Nor should we fail to observe the connection of this narrative with the later exclusion of Simeon and Levi from the rights of the first-born, to which they would naturally have acceded after the exclusion of Reuben; and with their future location in the land of Canaan. The history furnishes one of the clearest proofs of the genuineness and unity of Genesis—Gosman"] (Lange, 564). (Cf. Gen. 29:32-35; 35:22, 49:3, 49:5-7, etc.).

Analogies: Jacob and Christ

Genesis 32:24-32; John 14:1-14

A study of the lives of the patriarchs reveals the fact that human nature has been the same in all ages. The Bible is unique and superior in that it reveals men just as they are and have always been. It does not turn aside from its faithful record to cover up a single fault, nor hide an unpleasant incident. It is essentially the Book of Life.

In the biography of Jacob, we will find some very marked weaknesses of character. On the other hand, the remarkable virtues that manifest themselves demonstrate the superiority of his character over that of Esau, his brother, who was willing to sell his birthright for a mere "mess of pottage", Gen. 25:29-34, Heb. 12:16. Hence the promise to Abraham, which looked forward to the Gospel, Gen. 12:1-3, Gal. 3:8, was repeated to Isaac, Gen. 26:4, and to Jacob, Gen. 28:14. The names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are inseparably linked together as the

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fathers of the Jewish people, Exodus 3:6, Matt. 8:11, Acts 3:13, Heb. 11:18-20.

While Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are spoken of as types of Christ, it is not to be understood that they are types in character. That would be impossible, for in this He stood alone—"great in His solitude, and solitary in His greatness in holiness and perfection". We do not desire to become too fanciful in this study, yet there are many circumstances in the lives of these men that are strongly typical. We take up now the analogies between Jacob and Christ.

1. Jacob's vision at Bethel, Gen. 28:10-22.

1. Christ's place in the world vision he announced, John 1:51. As Jacob saw in his dream the vision of angels ascending and descending the ladder, so the disciples would see in Christ the connecting link between heaven and earth. Through Christ the heavens would again be opened, and communion between heaven and earth restored, John 14:6, Heb. 8:1-2.

2. Jacob went into a far country to secure his bride, laboring as a servant to secure her, Gen. 29-30.

2. Christ came to the world as a servant, laboring to secure His Bride, the Church, John 1:1-5, Col. 1:16-17, Heb. 1:2-3, Phil. 2:5-8, John 8:58.

3. In the far country eleven sons were born, Gen. 29-30.

3. While on earth, Christ called twelve apostles, but one of them fell, Matt. 10:2-4, John 6:70-71, Matt. 27:3-5, Acts 1:25.

4. Jacob was servant of Laban. At the end of his service, they "set a three days' journey" between them, Gen. 30:36.

4. At the end of Christ's personal ministry, a three days' journey was set between Himself and the world, John 2:18-21, Matt. 16:21, 1 Cor. 15:1-4.

5. Following the return to Canaan, Benjamin was born, making the twelfth son. These twelve sons were the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, Gen. 35:22, 49:28-29, Ex. 24:4, Lev. 24:5.

5. After Christ's return to Heaven, Paul was called to be an apostle, born "out of due season," of the tribe of Benjamin, Acts 9, 26:1-7, 26:16-17, Phil. 3:4-6, 1 Cor. 15:8. The apostles will occupy thrones of judgment and positions of power in the Kingdom, 1 Cor. 6:2, Luke 22:29-30, Rev. 3:21, 21:14. These twelve are now the pillars, or the foundation of the Church, Gal. 2:9, Eph. 2:20.

6. Benjamin was born amidst sorrow and grief, yet was named "The Son of the Right Hand." Gen. 35:16-20.

6. Paul was born to the Church in the period of intense sorrow and persecution, yet came to be the greatest of the apostles, Acts 8:13, 26:9-10, 2 Cor. 11:22-28. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles distinctly, Acts 26:16-18. To him was committed the task of writing a large part of the New Testament.

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7. "Thy name shall be called Israel," (that is, a prince of God); "As a prince thou hast power with God and with men," Gen. 32:24-30.

7. Christ has power with God and with men, John 12:32, 11:41-42, Heb. 7:25.

It is said that Frederick the Great of Prussia once asked a minister, of whom he was an intimate friend, "What do you consider the best evidence of the claims that Jesus is the Son of God, and that the Bible is divinely inspired?" The man of God very quickly replied, "The history of the Jews." And the supposed unbeliever was silenced.

In studying God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their posterity, we are plainly shown that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." God is in history, and especially in the history of the Jews. Today they are scattered among all nations, for their rejection of Christ, "until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." What a warning to Gentiles who refuse to acknowledge Jesus as their Christ, Rom. 11:11-12. When the world is again bathed in sorrows, we may see the light!

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART FORTY-THREE

1. Name the places that figured in the journey of Jacob and state what important event (or events) took place at each.
2. What place was the immediate objective of Jacob on his return from Paddan-aram?
3. What dramatic episode took place at Shechem?
4. Who was Dinah and what apparently were her relations with the women of Shechem?
5. What indignity was perpetrated on Dinah by Shechem the prince of the place?
6. Who was the king of Shechem at this time?
7. What was the reaction of Jacob's sons to this indignity? Who were the ringleaders in the terrible revenge visited on the Shechemites?
8. What is the significance of the statement regarding Shechem's folly, "which thing ought not to be done"?
9. What restitution did the king and prince of Shechem propose for the latter's crime? To what extent did this restitution include Jacob's entire tribe or ethnic group?
10. What was the feature of Shechem's act that was to Jacob's sons a special kind of iniquity? Do we see

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here a taint of national (or ethnic) pride and self-righteousness?

11. What can we ascertain about Dinah's life following the incident at Shechem?
12. What fanatical revenge did the sons of Jacob perpetrate on the Shechemites?
13. In what way did they profane the institution of circumcision in actualizing this vengeance? Did they have any right to propose circumcision to non-Hebrews? Explain your answer.
14. Of what special kind of hypocrisy were the sons of Jacob guilty?
15. What was the total vengeance which they imposed on the Shechemites?
16. What was Jacob's attitude toward this tragedy?
17. What special character did circumcision have in relation to the progeny of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? How was it related to the Abrahamic Covenant?
18. Is there any evidence that circumcision had any other meaning to the children of Abraham than that assigned to it as a feature of the Covenant? Explain your answer.
19. What other suggestions have been offered by anthropologists as to the design of circumcision? Do these suggestions apply to the design of circumcision in the Abrahamic covenant? Explain.
20. What validity is there in the view that the imposition of Circumcision on the Shechemites was merely a pretext to render them incapable of self-defense? Explain your answer.
21. What do we mean by the statement that Jacob's displeasure over the tragedy perpetrated by his sons seems to have been occasioned by expediency? Do you consider this charge valid?
22. Do you consider that parental weakness comes to light in the duplicity of Jacob's sons?

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23. Trace the significant role played by Shechem in the Old Testament story. Where was the place located? How is it related to events in the New Testament?
24. May the tragedy of Shechem be rightly called an example of the dangers of religious fanaticism?
25. Explain, in this connection, the origin of the Samaritans. Why were they so cordially disliked by the Jews in New Testament times? Where in the New Testament do we find this prejudice clearly revealed?
26. Why, in all likelihood, did Jacob set out immediately for Bethel after the tragedy of Shechem? What did he do with the people of Shechem?
27. What did God command Jacob to do, after the incident at Shechem?
28. What steps did Jacob take to "purify" his household? What did he do with their foreign gods? Whom may we suppose to have had these "gods"?
29. What final purification ceremonies did Jacob enforce? What lessons do we learn from this incident about the importance of cleanliness and modesty of dress when we come into the presence of Jehovah to worship Him?
30. What was the first thing Jacob did on arriving at Bethel? On this second visit, what name did he give to the place and what was the significance of it?
31. Who was Deborah? On what grounds can we account for her appearance in the narrative at this point? How had she probably figured in the life of Joseph's household? What significance is there in the name *Allon-bacuth*?
32. What happened at Bethel with reference to the change of Jacob's name?
33. In what sense did Jacob perform the vow he had uttered at Bethel on his way to Paddan-aram?
34. What is the import of the name El Shaddai ("God Almighty") as it occurs in this theophany?

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35. What were the items of the Abrahamic Promise which were repeated and renewed to Jacob at this time?
36. What memorial did Jacob set up at this time? What was the drink-offering and what was its symbolic meaning?
37. Who was the goddess known as "the queen of heaven"? Of what cult was the worship of this goddess an essential feature?
38. What names were given this goddess among various other peoples?
39. Where did the Israelites bury the bones of Joseph when they came out of Egypt?
40. What was the usual punishment for seduction among nomadic tribes?
41. On what ground was the indignation of Simeon and Levi against the rulers of Shechem justifiable?
42. What great evils were involved in the vengeance which they executed?
43. Sketch the notable history of Bethel as it is given us in the Old Testament.
44. Where was Rachel's second son born? How did Rachel's life come to an end?
45. What did she name this son? What name did Jacob bestow on him? What did each of these names mean?
46. Where was Rachel buried? What was her special importance in the patriarchal history?
47. What crime did Reuben commit? What penalty did he suffer for this crime?
48. What probably was the original name of Bethlehem and what did it mean? What does the name Bethlehem mean?
49. What "explanations" of Reuben's act do we find in Jewish "interpretations"? Is there any legitimate ground for rejecting the truthfulness of the Biblical record as indicated in Gen. 35:22, 49:4, and I Chron. 5:1?

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50. Name the twelve sons of Jacob and their respective mothers.
51. Where did Jacob's journeying finally come to an end?
52. How old was Isaac when he died? What general characteristic can we apply to Isaac's life?
53. Where were Isaac and Rebekah buried? How account for the lacuna in the Biblical record with reference to the later period of Rebekah's life?
54. Why do we say that the last statement in the 29th chapter of Genesis reads like a benediction? With what event does the story of Esau's life come to an end?
55. Why do we say that Jacob and his household spent some twelve or thirteen years with Isaac at Hebron prior to Isaac's death? Explain the chronology of this interesting fact.
56. Summarize Lange's essay on fanaticism.
57. List the analogies between the life of Joseph and that of Christ.