OVERCOMING THE DYSFUNCTIONS OF ISRAEL'S PATRIARCHS
XX. The Great Cost Of Compromised Associations
(Genesis 34:1-31)

I. Introduction

A. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Israel's patriarchs and their respective wives and families, though blessed of God, were imperfect people who at times made huge mistakes that led to serious marital and family dysfunction.

B. Thankfully, Romans 15:4 states that we can learn from whatsoever things were written in the Old Testament for our edification, and that includes our learning how to overcome the dysfunctions of Israel's patriarchs.

C. We view Genesis 34:1-31 on the great cost of compromised associations for our insight and application:

II. The Great Cost Of Compromised Associations, Genesis 34:1-31.

A. Dinah, a daughter of Jacob's wife Leah, went out unescorted from her family's home into the country to visit the women of the land, Genesis 34:1. This was a very unwise, dangerous deed for a young maiden like her:

1. First, the fact that this deed by Dinah was even mentioned in the context meant it was an unusual one, for had she habitually gone out to see such women there would have been no need to mention the event in this context. (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, 1974, vol. II, p. 897)
2. Second, from the words of the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 12:11-55; 20:9-13 and 26:7,we know that Dinah "should have known that Egyptians and Canaanites . . . regarded unmarried women abroad in the land as legitimate prey and should not have gone about unattended." (Ibid., p. 898)

B. Consequently, when Shechem the son of Hamor the pagan Hivite who was a prince in the area saw Dinah, he with his low Canaanite morals coupled with his high social station as an area prince felt at liberty to take Dinah and "afflict, oppress" (***'anah***) her, what in this context means that he raped her, Genesis 34:2.

C. Though Shechem had ravished the 14 or 15 year old maiden Diana, he was much attached to her and loved her, so he kept her in his house and "spoke upon the heart of the girl," trying to comfort her. (Ibid.; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Gen. 34:3; Gen. 34:26) Shechem and his father Hamor felt no need to excuse what Shechem had done to Dinah due to their low moral standards as Canaanites, but Shechem only tried to comfort Dinah, revealing that she was very upset over what had happened to her. (Op. cit., Leupold, p. 898)

D. Marriages were arranged by the parents, so Shechem asked his father Hamor to acquire Dinah as his wife, and Hamor went to Dinah's father Jacob to try to arrange for the marriage, Genesis 34:4-5a.

E. Meanwhile, Jacob had heard of Shechem's rape of Dinah, but he kept quiet about it until his sons had returned from the field at evening, Genesis 34:5b. The father and brothers of a young maiden jointly arranged for a maiden's marriage, and Jacob wanted to consult his sons on the situation. (Op. cit., Leupold, p. 899)

F. When Hamor and Shechem spoke with Jacob and his sons about acquiring Dinah to be Shechem's wife, these Canaanite men asked that they intermarry with Jacob's family, Genesis 34:6-12.

G. Jacob's sons were furious over what had happened to their sister Dinah (cf. Genesis 34:7), so they deceitfully told Shechem and Hamor that they could not give Dinah in marriage to Shechem unless all of the Canaanite men in their group became circumcised like the men in Jacob's family, Genesis 34:13-17.

H. These words pleased Hamor and Shechem, so they persuaded the men of their town to be circumcised with the intent of coming to possess all that Jacob's family possessed by way of wealth and livestock, Genesis 34:18-23. Thus, all the men of the Canaanite town were circumcised on a certain day, Genesis 34:24.

I. On the third day after the circumcision when the Canaanite men were sore from the surgical procedure of circumcision, Levi and Simeon, Dinah's full brothers (cf. Genesis 29:32-34; 30:20-21), each took a sword and attacked the Canaanites of the city, killing all the men and retrieving Dinah from Shechem's house, Genesis 34:25-26. Jacob's other sons then took the possessions, the wealth, the children and wives of the slain Canaanite men as spoils of war back to their encampment, Genesis 34:27-29.

J. Jacob was troubled over this atrocity, and he criticized Levi and Simeon for making him an enemy to the Canaanites of the land, and he feared that they might gather together to attack his family, Genesis 34:30-31.

K. Thus, Dinah's compromise with the women of the land "loosened a stone that caused a landslide" for Jacob's family, for the local Canaanites and for the whole land. (Op. cit., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 83)

Lesson: Dinah's decision to compromise her associations by going out to visit the women of the land unescorted came at great cost to her, but also at great cost to the local Canaanites and to many Canaanites of the land.

Application: May we not compromise our associations lest it lead to great problems for us and many other people.