

Women in the
Bible:
Dinah
and me

“Your word is lamp
for my feet and a
light for my path.”

Psalms 119:105

Vulnerability, Victimization
and Violation



Introduction

Isn't it ironic that someone whose name means justice, could experience such injustice and trauma? This account of Dinah's rape by a local ruler, (Genesis 34), highlights the vulnerability and victimization of women who fall prey to the evil intentions of men.



Dinah

Her Name Means "Justice"

Dinah's rape reinforces the fact that the world is an unsafe place. Just imagine how special Dinah was as the only daughter of Jacob amongst his 12 sons. Sadly, we see the escalation of one evil action igniting other acts of violence with terrible repercussions.

Dinah presents a lesson for us to consider how to respond appropriately to unjust acts in society.



Dinah

Her Name Means "Justice"

Discover

- * Her significance in scripture
- * Her representation in society
- * Her life lesson



Going Deeper

1. A curious walk turns to tragedy in Genesis 34:1,2. Discuss similarities for today?
2. Having committed the heinous crime of rape, Schechem, decides that he wants to marry Dinah (verses 3 & 4). Do you think he was trying to make amends?
3. Verses 6-12 outlines the discussion between the 2 families; featuring anger and negotiations.

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4. Discuss Jacob's son's actions in verses 13-18.

Note: these negotiations about marrying Dinah appears to be taking place without her involvement. Think about how she may have felt as the victim of rape, held at the rapist's home and then having a potential marriage discussed. Today in some cultures women still have no voice.

5. Verse 19-29 sees the deceitful plot of Jacob's sons and their retributive actions. Do you think Dinah's brothers were defending her honour by seeking justice for her, but went too far when they committed murder? If you could have advised Dinah's brothers, what would you say?

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6. Discuss the possible outcomes had Jacobs son's agreed to the marriage.
7. Verses 30&31 indicates the resulting unresolved tensions.

Words for Today

8. How do I respond to unjust acts in society?
9. Think of a time when you had to challenge a difficult situation. Did your actions inflame or help the situation?



Questions for Discussion

- * If a perpetrator escapes punishment for their crime, and authorities fail to act justly, is there ever a place for vigilantly action, however harmless?
- * Our church has an official statement on saying 'no' to abuse of any kind and raises awareness about abuse and violence against women. How can we get involved in ensuring the dignity and protection of women?



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Words of Wisdom

- We are not told whether Dinah ever recovered from her trauma.
- The trauma of rape has severe repercussions emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually. Rape victims are often judged more than helped. Our global annual Abuse Prevention Day and its resources exist to safeguard individuals against this evil and support those who are victims.
- **Psalm 9:9** brings assuring words for abuse survivors: "The Lord is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble"





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My Prayer for Today

Father God, You know my vulnerabilities. Please protect me from myself and from predators that may lurk around me. Give me the wisdom to listen for your voice, even in the smallest decisions that I make. Guide my step each day I pray. Amen.

SHARING

A sensitive approach to women who experience rape is crucial. Encouraging them to get professional help is important. Always maintain confidentiality and reassure them of your prayers and support.

- What are you doing in your local church to ensure it is a safe place and one in which women are valued and respected?
- Pray that God will help you to reach out to women who suffer abuse, to ensure their recovery, healing and restoration.

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Be alert to the signs of abuse. Never believe it can't happen in Christian homes and institutions. Listen when a woman shares her concerns. Be willing to stand up for abused women and children and to wrap them in your arms of love. Help them to find the appropriate resources or agencies. Don't allow information about such situations to be withheld from the proper authorities when necessary.