

Bad News and Good News

Genesis 34-36 | September 6, 2020

Context: After Jacob reconciled with Esau in Genesis 33, he remained in Shechem rather than going to Bethel as God wanted him to do, and the next few chapters reveal some of the consequences.

Observations:

Lessons:

1. Never underestimate the depth of _____.
2. Never underestimate the _____ of God.

Note: All of these come together most prominently at _____.

The bad news: It seems that humans are in control.

The good news:

Implications:

- Our reactions
- The Gospel
- Worship

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of other biblical examples where humanity's sinfulness and God's sovereignty, power and grace intersect?
2. How does this emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity help you in your own life? In discipling others?
3. How does this emphasis on God's sovereignty, power or grace help you in your own life? In discipling others?



Questions for Parents to use with their children:

1. **Take a moment and find the shiniest piece of jewelry you own. You may have to clean it a little! First place it on a clear or white color backdrop for everyone to see. Afterwards, place it on a black piece of paper or cloth.**

The point of this exercise is to demonstrate how a black backdrop makes a piece of jewelry shine more brightly. In our chapters and discussion today, we will see this in principle in how the depravity of man and his sin sets the table for beauty of the Gospel of Jesus.

2. **Next read chapters 34-35 out loud together. If you're up for trying something new, listen to these chapters from a device or computer while you follow along.**

3. **In chapters 34-35, what names or characteristics of God do you see?**

Answer: God is not mentioned at all in chapter 34. This chapter reveals a low point for Jacob and his family. In chapter 35 God reveals himself as "El-Shaddai" which means "God Almighty."

4. **In chapters 34-36, what sins do you see committed by the various characters? What do these sins tell us about humanity...even Jacob and his family?**

Answer: Rape (34:2). Deceit (34:13). Murder (34:25-26). Anger filled family fighting (34:30-31). Revenge. Death (35:19, 29) Fornication and the dishonoring of parents (35:22).

These sins tell us that something is not right with the world. We see pain. Suffering. Family fights. The dishonoring of parents. These sins tell us that humanity is broken and is need of someone to rescue us from God's wrath and ourselves. We need to be rescued from God's wrath because of the wages or penalty of our sin is spiritual death and condemnation from God. We face the judgement of God for the wrong we have committed. We also need to be rescued from ourselves because as fallen humanity we live selfishly and with our lives centered around our needs, wants, and desires. We were never designed to live this way.

5. **How do these chapters point us toward our need for Jesus?**

Answer: With brokenness and horrific sin as the backdrop, these chapters reveal God's people's needing rescue from themselves and ultimately one day from His wrath to come. God's rescue comes in form of a person. His name is Jesus.

If you read the headlines you quickly can see that humanity and the human experience is broken. Unfortunately, in the end, we all die. But only God promises to one day make all things new. In the meantime we look to Jesus for help and healing spiritually. Only he can restore us relationally with our heavenly Father. Only he can help mend broken families.

6. **How can we apply this story to our lives?**

Answer: We can confess our sins to God and seek His forgiveness through Jesus. We can also trust that no matter how bad things get, God is Sovereign and will fulfill his purposes in our lives.