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Hermeneutical Analysis of the Sexual Violation of Dinah in Genesis 34 and Implications for Christian Youths

Analyse herméneutique du viol de Dina dans Genèse 34 : Implications pour les jeunes chrétiens

Ochenia Faith OPADE¹ and Akusa Danlami GAJERE²

Abstract

This hermeneutical analysis explores the narrative of the sexual violation of Dinah in Genesis 34, examining its socio-cultural context and implications for contemporary Christian youths. By delving into the complex dynamics of power, gender, and justice portrayed in the text, this study aims to shed light on the multifaceted interpretations of the incident. Drawing upon biblical exegesis, historical context, and contemporary perspectives, this analysis provides insight into the enduring relevance of this ancient narrative and its potential to inform discussions on sexual ethics, consent, and the treatment of women within Christian communities. Through a critical examination of the text and its implications, this paper offers valuable lessons and guidance for Christian youths navigating issues of sexuality, morality, and the promotion of equitable and respectful relationships in the modern era.

Keywords: sexual violation, ethics, youths

Résumé

Cette analyse herméneutique explore le récit du viol de Dina dans Genèse 34, en examinant son contexte socioculturel et ses implications pour les jeunes chrétiens contemporains. En plongeant dans la dynamique complexe du pouvoir, du genre et de la justice décrite dans le texte, cette étude vise à éclairer les multiples interprétations de l'incident. S'appuyant sur l'exégèse biblique, le contexte historique, et les perspectives contemporaines, cette analyse cherche à donner un aperçu de la pertinence durable de ce récit ancien et de son potentiel à informer les discussions sur l'éthique sexuelle, le consentement et le traitement des femmes au sein des communautés chrétiennes. Grâce à un examen critique du texte et de ses implications, cet article offre des leçons et des conseils précieux pour les jeunes chrétiens qui naviguent sur les questions de sexualité, de moralité et de promotion de relations équitables et respectueuses à l'ère moderne.

Mots clés : viol, éthique, jeunes

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Introduction

The print and electronic media are filled daily with news of sexual violations involving both old and young male and female victims and perpetrators. Cases of sexual violation are reported daily at schools, homes, and even in religious places of worship. A Nigerian newspaper, *The Punch*, reported a case of a 20 years old who raped and killed a 17-year-old girl in Oyo State, Nigeria, in September 2022.³ Channels TV also reports that a three-month-old girl child was sexually abused by an adult man in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, causing severe injuries and damage to the baby.⁴ These are just a few instances, but many more heartbreaking stories are reported of sexual violations, and many never get reported.

A *World Health Organization* (WHO) report indicates that “globally, about 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.”⁵ The severe sexual violations reported everywhere involve youths, and one wonders what is becoming of our society.

Reading the Bible, one sees many occurrences of violence against women, especially sexual violations. There are passages in the Bible where such happening is explained while others are subtle. The female victim in such biblical narratives is brutalized, beaten, or even killed. This paper is not an attempt to find a solution to the general problem of sexual violation or suggest laws to guide it. However, it is concerned with the analysis of the sexual violation of Dinah in Genesis 34 and its implication for Christian youths. The paper considers an overview of sexual violation, an analysis of Genesis 34, and the implication of Dinah’s violation for Christian youths. The use of ‘sexual violation’ will be interchanged with ‘rape’ in this paper to refer to the same thing.

An Overview of Sexual Violence

Rape (sexual violation) is “an unlawful sexual activity, most often involving sexual intercourse, against the will of the victim through force or the threat of force or with an individual who is incapable of giving legal consent because of minor status, mental illness, mental deficiency, intoxication, unconsciousness, or deception.”⁶ This definition means sexual violence is the carnal knowledge of a woman or man who did not consent to it, which is considered a crime. It is forcing a woman or man to submit to sexual intercourse against the person’s wish.⁷ The dictionary further states that “in many jurisdictions, the crime of rape has been subsumed under sexual assault. Rape was long considered caused by unbridled sexual desire, but it is now understood as a pathological assertion of power over a victim.”⁸

³Olufemi Olaniyi “How I Raped, killed teenager inside church” in <https://punch.com/how-i-raped-killed-teenager-inside-church-suspect> 20 September, 2022. Retrieved on 2/22/2022.

⁴Ronke Sanya Idowu “Rape of Three-Month-Old-Baby: Court Sets March 18 To Hear Case” in <https://www.channelstv.com/2021/03/11/rape-of-three-month-old-baby-court>. 11 March 2021. Retrieved on 2/11/2022.

⁵World Health Organization (WHO). “Violence Against Women” in <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women> 9 March 2021. Retrieved on 2/11/2022.

⁶Britannica Dictionary. “Rape” <http://www.britannica.com>. Accessed on 2/11/2022. Rape is still unlawful; Speak Up and Seek Help!. <https://amaghanaonline.com/2021/07/27/rape-is-still-unlawful-speak-up-and-seek-help>.

⁷Gadotti Alhena, “Why It Was Rape: The Conceptualization of Rape in Sumerian Literature.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 129, 72-82. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40593869>. Accessed 3 November, 2022.

⁸Britannica Dictionary, “Rape”. <http://www.britannica.com>. Accessed on 2/11/2022.

From the biblical perspective, Schulte asserts that “there is no biblical Hebrew word for ‘rape.’”⁹ However, the researchers discovered that the Hebrew word *חָזַק*-*chazaq* (prevailed upon), as used in Deuteronomy 22:26, implies rape when it says, “But if a man finds a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man forced her, and lie with her...” (KJV). Although there is a noticeable absence of God in the narrative of rape scenes in Genesis 34, Judges 19, and 2 Samuel 13, rape scenes or imagery are present in other biblical books. Nevertheless, the majority of biblical scholars do not consider them together.¹⁰

Sexual Violation against Females in the Bible

Sexual violence against females is not a contemporary issue but an age-long experience. King Solomon wrote, “There is nothing new under the sun” (Eccl. 1:9). There are numerous cases recorded in the Bible where sexual violence against women or females occurred. The critical passage within the law of God that speaks on sexual violation is Deuteronomy 22:25-27.¹¹ The Hebrew word used in the above passage to indicate violence, assault, beating, or battering is *chazaq*. It indicates force, violence, or an overpowering of someone against his/her will.¹² Going by that definition, it is not consensual since it involves overpowering an individual or the victim.

Sexual purity in every society is considered a sacred societal value. When there is a sexual violation against women, it is often a sign or signal of societal breakdowns.¹³ Notable sexual violence or rape in the Old Testament include Dinah’s rape by Shechem, the Prince of the city of Shechem, in Genesis 34. Judges 19-20 narrates a woman whose name is never mentioned is gang-raped, killed, and mutilated. 2 Samuel 13 narrates David’s son, Amnon raping his half-sister, Tamar.¹⁴ There are many other examples of sexual violence in the Old Testament that time and space will not allow mentioned here. As mentioned above, this set the background for the discussion in Genesis 34 in the case of Dinah. However, looking into the extra-biblical accounts of the Ancient Near East, the world of the biblical time, is pivotal to understanding the practice.

Sexual Violation in the Ancient Near East

It is interesting to note that there existed sexual violence in the ancient Near East of the biblical world. In the ancient Near East law, “sexual intercourse with a woman amounted to an offense when it was an infringement of the rights of the person under whose authority she was, for example, her father or her husband.”¹⁵ However, ownership of a chattel slave eliminated that authority, but not entirely so in the case of a debt slave. In the case of a slave, the law of

⁹Schulte Leah Rediger, “Defining Rape.” *The Absence of God in Biblical Rape Narratives*. 1517 Media, Fortress Press, 2017, 1-32. JSTOR, <http://www.doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1pwt85t.4>. Accessed on 3 November, 2022.

¹⁰Rediger, 1-32

¹¹Aaron Burden, “Are there Examples of Sexual Assault in the Bible?” <http://www.ucg.org>. 28 November, 2018.

¹²Ibid

¹³Tamar Kamionkowski, “Violence Against Women in the Hebrew Bible,” *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*. 23 June 2021. Jewish Women’s Archive (Viewed on 2/11/2022). <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/violence-against-women-in-the-hebrew-bible>

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Raymond Westbrook, ed., *A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law* (2 Vols), (Netherland: Brill Publishers, 2003), 72.

the ANE provides that a female slave was property, and the owner could exploit her sexuality and fertility like any other beneficial aspect of the property. The slave female could be made her owner's concubine. Where it resulted in motherhood, the slave might be accorded some qualified protection from the consequences of her status as property.¹⁶

Scurlock argues that the encounter between *Ninlil* and *Enlil* in the Sumerian composition *Enlil and Ninlil* is not rape but rather the "Ruin of an unmarried woman." She bases her argument on a comparative approach¹⁷ to studying ancient documents: "Information drawn from any source may be profitably prepared with any other, provided that proper care is taken to avoid decontextualization."¹⁸ The finding is supported by Walton and others when he indicates that rape as a means of obtaining a marriage contract was one ploy used in the ancient Near East. Laws regulating this practice are found in Exodus 22:16-17; Deuteronomy 22:28-29, the Middle Assyrian Laws, and the Hittite laws. These often require the rapist to pay an especially high bride price and sometimes forbid any possibility of divorce, Sumerian Law 7.¹⁹ This submission is entirely the opposite of the interpretation of rape in contemporary society. Rape as a means of gaining a marriage contract seems to have the same elements in the traditional African setting where defilement or rape means marriage, but not in the contemporary African setting.

Scurlock interprets the episode of *Enlil and Ninlil* within the background of Sumerian and ancient Near Eastern law and concludes that there was indeed no rape in the modern sense of the term in the ANE. Instead, the "Sumerian laws on intercourse with married women were projected to punish adultery, not rape, and the treatment of intercourse between unmarried individuals in Sumerian law has even less to do with the crime of rape as we know it."²⁰ This buttress the point that rape in ANE was a means of obtaining a marriage contract and was not treated as a crime.

In a similar vein, Gwendolyn Leick, as cited by Gadotti, reached a conclusion in 1994 that, in sex texts as "Enlil and Ninlil," the concept of rape is inappropriate since these myths are not concerned with social customs and institutions but portray the activities of deities in a world largely devoid of human regulations.²¹ Going by the above narration, it may be inferred that the ancient Mesopotamians did have a perception of rape as we understand it. However, it was not understood as a crime but a means of obtaining a marriage contract. A better way to interpret the scenario of the rape of Ninlil is by likening it to parallel episodes.²²

It is important to note that Ancient Near Eastern literature contains law collections of the time and earlier, making it clear that prohibitions concerning illicit and violent sexual behaviour were not innovations at Sinai. The codes of conduct by which people lived in this time show remarkable similarity to the laws enshrined at Sinai and demonstrate a universal common sense of morality and justice. Laws and less formal standards often sought to guard the honour and integrity of the family, the dignity of the individual, and security within

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Alhena Gadotti, "Why it was rape: The conceptualization of rape in Sumerian literature" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127 (1): 73-82 (2009).

¹⁸ Scurlock, J. A. "Ninlil Was She Rape? A Verdict through Comparison," *NIN* 4 (2003): 103.

¹⁹ Walton, John H., Matthews, Victor H and Chavalas, Mark W. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. IntersVarsity Press, 2000.

²⁰ Alhena Gadotti "Why it was rape," 74

²¹ Ibid, 77.

²² Ibid, 82.

society.²³ Suffice it to say, therefore, that the Ancient Near East did not see rape as a crime but as a means to obtain a marriage contract or punish adultery and not in other motives as we have in our present society. The ANE protects the reputation and integrity of the family and the individual, which our contemporary society seems to lack.

Recent Issues of Rape

From the ongoing, sexual violence is a sexual assault usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration carried out against a person without the individual's consent. This activity is often carried out by physical force, coercion, abuse of authority, or against a person incapable of giving valid consent.²⁴ Michael and Bamigboje observed that rape is not an immaterial issue as it has unveiled its ugly mask in every society with increased reported cases in recent times. Rape is considered to stand on the same pedestal as the offense of murder.²⁵ The primary concern is that rape cases constantly filter our society, posing a concern to our societal norms and values. Agents of human rights report that:

In Nigeria, incidences of rape are fast assuming a threatening dimension that requires urgent intervention considering the increasing rate. Rape, like other forms of violation against women, infringes on women's rights, privacy, self-preservation, and dignity. Available data in print and electronic media reveal that the issue of rape has become an isolated criminal act affecting just a few women in society. In recent times the occurrences of rape have amplified at an alarming rate in Africa and Nigeria, leading to the death of so several women.²⁶

Findings also reveal that no particular age category engages in such acts because even the elderly adults in society partake in the act. In essence, teenagers, young men, and older adults engage in violent sex with the opposite sex, sometimes resulting in death.

Brief Historical Background of Genesis

The book of Genesis is one of the five books that make the Pentateuch known as the Torah, a Hebrew title meaning "instruction." Dick posits that it is traditionally known as the heart of the Hebrew Bible.²⁷ The word Genesis comes from the Hebrew word *bereshit*, meaning "in the beginning."²⁸ It is structured employing a repeated genealogical formula that ties the book's various parts into unity.²⁹ McCain notes that, as far as its authorship is concerned, it is

²³Neomi Rao, *Three Concept of Dignity in Constitutional Law*. <http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndr> Vol. 81 Issue 2. 2011.

²⁴Joseph, Michael and Bamigboje, Toluwani, *Rape Under the Nigerian Laws and the Need for Amendment*. <https://www.Legalpadiaonline.com>. Accessed on 3 November, 2022.

²⁵Michael Joseph &Toluwani Bamigboye, *Rape Under the Nigerian Laws and the Need for Amendment*. <https://www.Legalpadiaonline.com>.

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷Michael B. Dick, *Reading the Old Testament: An Inductive Introduction* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2008), 102.

²⁸Steven L. McKenzie and John Kaltner, *The Old Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2007), 57.

²⁹Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 129.

anonymous because the book does not make any statement about its author.³⁰ However, the traditional position is that Moses wrote the book, confirmed by the Talmud, the earliest Jewish record of the Bible apart from the Bible. The book was written as a source of history and encouragement for the Israelites.³¹ It is divided into the pre-patriarchal history, chapters 1-11, and the patriarchal history comprising 12-50. Moses wrote it near the end of his life between 1447 and 1407.³²

Literary Context of Genesis 34

According to how McCain divides the book of Genesis, the pre-patriarchal period from Genesis 1-11 and the patriarchal period from 12-50, this pericope falls in the patriarchal period.³³ This text is a narrative. It is found between the narrative of Jacob meeting his brother Esau and God's instruction to Jacob to go to Bethel and dwell there (Gen. 35).

Analysis of Genesis 34

Genesis 34 is a pericope with about four structures: v. 1; vv. 2-3; vv. 4-24; and vv. 25-31, respectively. In this section, the writer uses descriptive analysis to exegete the text. The first part (v. 1) discusses the biography of Dinah, identifying her as a daughter of Leah and mother of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The Old Testament is always particular about genealogies because they show one's lineage; thus, if one behaves in a particular way, it could be easy to check if it was a trend. Her mother, Leah, was used to deceive Jacob instead of Rachel, whom he loved (Genesis 29:16-30).³⁴ As a young girl, Dinah was adventurous as girls of her age would be and wanted to meet her mates. It should not be strange that she acted the way she did, for she was the lone girl among boys. Naturally, she wanted to be in the company of other girls. Hence, she independently took action by going out to see the young women of the land. It should be understood that Jacob had moved to Shechem, one of the cities in the land of Canaan.³⁵ Dinah was alone in a new environment and among people of strange cultures and disciplines. One would expect she should not have felt too safe as a stranger, especially since she did not know anyone there. It is crucial to test before trusting, but Dinah, unfortunately, failed to do that.

In the second part (vv. 2-3), as Dinah enters the environment, Shechem notices and violates her. There is no record of whether she met with the girls she wanted to but fell into the hands of an abusive man. Spence and Exell affirm that it was carelessness on her part, and she paid dearly for it.³⁶ That is to say, when one is in a strange land and does not take cognizance of that, anything can happen. It is possible that as the Prince of that land, Shechem was entitled to the most beautiful lady he could desire, and they probably found it a privilege. It can be

³⁰Danny McCain, *Notes on Old Testament Introduction* (Bukuru, Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2014), 46.

³¹McCain, *Notes on Old Testament Introduction*, 51.

³²McCain, *Notes on Old Testament Introduction*, 51.

³³McCain, *Notes on Old Testament Introduction*, 51.

³⁴ Uroko, Favour C. and Enobong, Solomon, *Beyond the Rhetoric of Genesis 34:1-28: Understanding the Rape Epidemic During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 42 (1), 2211. 2021. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v42i1.2211>. accessed on 4 November, 2022

³⁵ Solomon, *Beyond the Rhetoric of Genesis 34:1-28*.

³⁶ H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, *The Pulpit Commentary* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011), 404.

inferred that Dinah, being an Israelite, knew what it meant to preserve her virginity and could have possibly resisted him, who overpowered her.

It would seem that in the ancient Near East, the law did forbid rape. There is no record of Shechem being reprimanded or rebuked by his father, and it could be his upbringing and the value system of the people of Shechem. After the act, the young man, Shechem, spoke kindly with her, which he would have done from the beginning. Using force to get into a woman destroys her pride. It is significant to note that when a child is raised with the mindset to always get whatever they want, as Shechem, it is dangerous because they think that all that matters is that they satisfy their urges and caprices at the expense of others.

The third part (vv. 4-23) discusses Hamor and Dinah's parents and family members and shows a different response to the rape that Shechem orchestrated. The focus is no longer on the wrong done to Dinah but on the injustice carried out to her family and, by extension, the embryonic Israel nation and the family's dishonour.³⁷ In the first instance, the family is grieved about what happened to the family's only daughter. According to Deuteronomy 22:28, anyone who raped a maiden was supposed to marry her and never divorce her. He was to pay fifty shekels to the father. The man and his father were ready to marry the lady, but her brothers felt Hamor did what was not supposed to be done (verse 6). It is difficult to win a woman's heart who has already been sexually violated. Hamor is seen in these verses to be, in these writers' opinion, irresponsible and not disciplining the son. There is no record of him reprimanding him, yet he is still bent on giving his son whatever he wants, but Shechem and others will pay dearly for his sin. It can be inferred that this may have been Hamor's character in the land since he knew his father could give him all he wanted. There are consequences for every misdeed done.

The last part (vv. 25-31) shows the devastating effect of rape on both the survivor and society as a whole. In the entire episode, Dinah remains silent, and Blyth laments that "Dinah remains a marginal character throughout the story, and her experience is contextualized by the author in a sternly patriarchal ideological background, thereby denying her a voice with which to articulate and focalize her thoughts, feelings, and pains."³⁸ While expressing the pain caused by the defilement, Simeon and Levi took the sword and killed all the male children of Hamor's lineage. They killed Shechem, the rapist, killed the father of the rapist, looted and destroyed all their properties, kidnapping women and children in the process. This happened after subjecting all males, young and old, in Shechem to circumcision as a bet to have Shechem marry Dinah and qualify the Shechemites to dwell with Israelites as one people. However, it was a deception to get an act of revenge for their sister Dinah. After this happened, Jacob knew he was in danger and cried against his sons for causing trouble. However, the sons told their father that their action was to avenge the rape of their sister Dinah.³⁹

³⁷ Shemesh, Y., *Rape is Rape: The Story of Dinah and Shechem in Genesis 34*. *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119(1), 2-21. <https://doi.org/10.1515.ZAW.2007.002>.

³⁸ Blyth, C., 2009. *Terrible Silence, Eternal Silence: A Feminist Re-Reading of Dinah's Voicelessness in Genesis 34*. *Biblical Interpretation* 17(5), 483. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851508X401150>. Accessed on 4 November, 2022.

³⁹ Blyth, C., 2009. *Terrible Silence, Eternal Silence: A Feminist Re-Reading of Dinah's Voicelessness in Genesis 34*. *Biblical Interpretation* 17(5), 483. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851508X401150>. Accessed on 4 November, 2022.

Exegetical Inferences of Genesis 34

From the preceding, the following are the exegetical inferences:

- Sexual violence brings humiliation (v. 2).
- Sexual violence brings embarrassment to the family (vv. 5-7).
- Sexual violence defiles and leads to a loss of pride (v. 13).
- Sexual violence leads to destruction and loss of lives (vv. 25-31)

Implications of Sexual violation for Contemporary Female Christian Youths

Having considered the background and the analysis of Genesis 34, we shall carefully enumerate the implications of Dinah's sexual violation for the Christian youths.

Sexual Violation Brings Humiliation

When sexual violence takes place, it brings with it a deep humiliation to the survivor. Dinah might have experienced terrible social stigma, shame, and humiliation for being treated as a piece of damaged property that had been misused and devalued by the rapist.⁴⁰ Once rape occurs, the victim is humiliated and loses her community value. Because of humiliation, the survivor becomes withdrawn from society and eventually goes silent, leading to depression and suicide. A humiliated person loses self-esteem or self-confidence, which widens the wounds inflicted by the act. Sexual violence removes the victim from the social community with shame and becomes isolated.⁴¹ So many Christian youths who have been sexually assaulted go into hiding, creating a gap in the Church's use of their potential.

Sexual Violence Brings Embarrassment or Bewilderment to the Family

Effects of rape is a crisis shared by the victim and her family. One of the implications of sexual violence is that the effect will not only be on the victim but also affect the survivor's immediate and extended family. The wave brings embarrassment to the family. Baldwin asserts that family pride was wounded and, in this situation, forgiveness would have seemed a weakness.⁴² These writers do not see forgiveness as demonstrating weakness but as the most excellent demonstration of courage because forgiveness is for the strong and not for the weak. When one puts all at stake and lets go, they are stronger than those seeking vengeance. Christian youths are challenged to learn to forgive.

A survivor's family members will feel shame and embarrassment within and outside their community. Rape is undoubtedly shameful; no family wants to be associated with such an ugly event. In verse 7b, the Bible reads: "They were filled with anguish and fury because Shechem had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's Daughter – a thing that ought not to be done" (NIV). Rape is a thing that should not be done. When it is done, it is considered a disgrace to the family. The family suffers stigmatization by her community as the incident becomes the centre of every discussion. In the case under consideration, it is obvious that the family of Jacob eventually left Shechem not just because of fear of retaliation but because Jacob would not withstand the embarrassment and bewilderment caused by the sexual

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch. *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and Its Aftermath*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996. 25.

⁴¹ Blyth. 2009.

⁴² Joyce G. Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50: From Abraham to Joseph* (Leicester, England: Downers Grove, 1986), 146.

violation of his only daughter. Christian youths must avoid the appearance of anything that suggests rape, considering its adverse effects on the family.

Sexual Violation Defiles and Leads to Loss of Pride in Christian Youths

Sexual violation leads to several destructive effects in different ways. One of the most damaging and destructive effects of rape experienced by its victim is that this crime may often leave her with an overwhelming sense of having been defiled or dirtied.⁴³ Blyth quoted Lebowitz and Susan Roth saying, “rape is an assertive interpersonal communication which speaks volubly to the victim about her significance. She is treated by the rapist, not as an equal moral agent worthy of respect, but merely as an object of contempt, to be damaged, mistreated, and discarded as worthless.”⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, every rape victim experiences the destruction of her confidence, eventually making her feel powerless, worthless, ashamed, and guilty. It makes the survivor feel dirty both spiritually and physically.

The situation worsens when the family and community stigmatize the rape victim. The defilement in the passage suggests that she lost her virginity, and that has caused her to suffer severe and permanent degradation of her social worth and sexual purity. This implies that Dinah, who lived in an environment where virginity was highly priced, would not find a suitor for marriage. This is what defilement can do to rape victims. Christian youths must take note of this and change the narratives.

Sexual Violation Leads to Destruction and Loss of Lives

Another effect of sexual violation that Christian youths must be aware of is its destructive nature. Rape has several dimensions of destruction, and recovery could be almost impossible. As we study Genesis 34, we see the response of Dinah's siblings to the news of their sister's violation, which is destruction. Simeon and Levi led others to inflict injuries of circumcision on all the males in Shechem, and amid their pains, a sword followed where all males in the entire city were gruesomely murdered in one day. Women and children were taken as slaves, and the entire city was burnt to ashes. It was no doubt a heavy destruction, all on account of rape.

Rape destroys the destiny of the men and women involved. Rape victims, like rapists, find it difficult to reach their potential after the experience. In some countries such as Egypt, UAE, China, Afghanistan, Iran, and North Korea, the penalty for rape is outright capital punishment (death). The death of the rapist, however, is a loss to society or the community as such person or persons possess some potentials that would greatly benefit the society and nation at large. In some cases, the victim never survives the experience.

There is also the tendency of retaliation by the victim's loved ones or family. In such a situation, a mini-civil war is initiated, destroying properties in the long run. Simeon and Levi felt the pain of their sister being defiled, and they responded by destroying the entire city of Shechem. The victim's relations attacked homes and properties belonging to the rapist's family, and where litigation ensued, both families experienced financial loss, eventually creating hardship.

⁴³ Blyth Caroline. *Terrible Silence, Eternal Silence: A Feminist Re-Reading of Dinah's Voicelessness in Genesis 34 in Biblical interpretation: A journal of Contemporary Approaches*. Vol. XVII NO. 5 2009.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Christian youths must be deliberate and intentional in living a life of self-control, as taught by the Bible in Galatians 5:23 (NIV). The incident of Dinah's defilement is a clarion call for youths who follow Christ to live a careful life and be God-fearing.

Conclusion

This paper presented an analysis of the sexual violation of Dinah in Genesis 34, discussing an overview of sexual violation as contained in ancient Near Eastern laws, the Old Testament, and the recent issue of sexual violation. The paper also presented the passage analysis, giving the historical background study of Genesis and Genesis 34. It has discussed the implications of Dinah's rape for Christian youths and concluded that there is no justifiable reason for anyone to violate another person sexually. There is no justifiable motive for anyone to be involved in the sexual violation of another person. Every person has the right to 'no' when it comes to demand for sex, and such should be respected. Worthy of note is that sexual violation is a sin against God and lawbreaking against humankind, and the Church condemns it by teaching against it.

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