



Read

Your homework is to read chapter 34 at least twice, but for extra credit, read it 5 times. We will work through the text together next Tuesday during Bible study. It is helpful to read backwards to remember the **context** in which you are studying, and can be helpful to read forward, at least a chapter, to understand the text you are studying. This practice is helpful to **avoid misinterpretation**, which is key.

As you read this chapter consider the family dynamics, we read earlier in chapters 29 and 30. Consider also what we have read so far in Genesis. You can use Pericopes to remind you of the details of the previous chapters. Keep in mind what you have read in these chapters 1-34, that established God's intentions for our lives and relations, His heart, and His plan.

Did Jacob Return to the Land God Expected?

Consider what we have read, re-read these scriptures to refresh your memory: Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran (Genesis 28:10). Beersheba was where his father Isaac lived. Jacob vows to return to Bethel (Genesis 28:19-22). God said, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives and I will be with you." (Genesis 31:3). God said, I am the God of Bethel, where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land." (Genesis 31:11-13). Jacob sets off to return to his father, Isaac (Genesis 31:18). And reading forward just a bit, God tells Jacob to settle in Bethel (Genesis 35:1).

Remember the Hivites, who are they: The first time we encountered the Hivites were in [Genesis 10:17](#). They are the descendants of Canaan from the line of Ham, the youngest of Noah's sons. Ham, the father of Canaan was cursed because of his father's (Ham's) indiscretion ([Genesis 9](#)). The curse reads: "Cursed be Canaan! the lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." and goes on to say. "...May Canaan be the slave of Shem..."

The Hivites are the 6th generation of the descendants of Canaan among other "ites". The Canaanite clans scattered to Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah ([Genesis 10](#)).

Cultural Context

"Unattached young women were considered fair game in cities of the time, in which promiscuity was not only common but, in fact, a part of the very religious system itself." (Morris) Therefore, it would have been unusual in the ancient Near East for young girls (or women) to leave the camp without a chaperone, especially when going to a city in a new land.



Societies in this era were often patriarchal, and women were at risk of being treated as property or instruments of forging alliances. These practices do not follow God's design of marriage, but rather, show the condition of human fallenness.

The Hittite culture was in stark contrast to the moral standards of God's covenant people. This contrast is seen throughout the book of Genesis. God's people often clashed with the surrounding cultures, and is true even to this day.

Scripture often presents historical facts without endorsing the actions, the absence of God's judgement within the story does not mean He condones it as we discovered through the stories of Abraham and Sarai who gave her servant to produce the child God had promised or the competition between sisters Leah and Rachel. Their behavior to fulfill what only God can fulfill demonstrates a lack of understanding, trust and patience with how God works.

When we meddle in His methods we incur the consequences of our actions. And sin is an ever-present reality in our world since the Fall, even among God's chosen people. These stories force the reader to wrestle with the severity of sin and the need for divine redemption.

May God give you insight, and wisdom as you read chapter 34.