

There Goes the Neighborhood

Scripture Reading — Genesis 34:24-31

All the men who went out of the city gate agreed ... and every male in the city was circumcised.
Genesis 34:24 —

The Bible doesn't shy away from Jacob's shameful deceit, nor from the deceit of his sons. Their sister Dinah has been raped by Shechem, a local youth, so her brothers were furious. They manipulated the men of Shechem into agreeing that they should all submit to a painful religious rite—circumcision—which was intended to be a special reminder of God's promise to Abraham. But Jacob's sons planned to murder the men while they were recovering. And they did just that.

It was wicked to manipulate justice to avenge their sister. Even worse, though, was that the brothers abused the symbol of their family's relationship with the one true God.

Their shameless manipulation of God's blessing and their murder of the men of Shechem did not go unpunished: "You have brought trouble on me," Jacob told them. Their response was to justify themselves: "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"

If Christians are abused by the burning of churches and other forms of persecution, that gives us no reason to manipulate God's gifts to get personal vengeance. Nor would it be right to tell people you will not love or forgive them if they don't convert to Christ or don't live as faithful believers. Patience in the name of Jesus is best, giving time for God to work his righteous justice.

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for your gift of forgiveness and your compassion in my life. Help me to love you above all, and my neighbor as myself, for Jesus's sake. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Genesis](#)

Written by Arie Leder — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/arie-c-leder>

<https://today.reframemedia.com/devotions/there-goes-the-neighborhood-2009-11-21>

Printed on October 27, 2020

