

How should we then live? A missiological reading of Genesis 34: A redemptive historical approach



Author:

Barend Wielenga¹

Affiliation:

¹Unit for Reformed Theology, Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Barend Wielenga, bwielenga@outlook.com

Dates:

Received: 09 May 2023

Accepted: 18 July 2023

Published: 15 Sept. 2023

How to cite this article:

Wielenga, B., 2023, 'How should we then live? A missiological reading of Genesis 34: A redemptive historical approach', *In die Skriflig* 57(1), a2983. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v57i1.2983>

Copyright:

© 2023. The Author. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

The narrative of Dinah's rape in Genesis 34 has attracted the attention of Jews and Christians throughout the ages and has been the source of many scholarly papers all around the world. What have the readers in the different communities of faith over the ages heard in this shameful story? This article wanted to convey what this researcher has heard. An attempt has been made to read Genesis 34 in a missiological way in the redemptive historical context of Genesis 12–36. This article wants to demonstrate that the communicative intention of the author of Genesis 34 was to teach his readers how they, as descendants of Abraham, should live in the promised land in order to accomplish the task God had charged them with: To be a blessing to the nations (Gn 12:3). Hence, in Genesis 34, the author reminded his readers how their ancestors failed in this divine mandate and that they should not be followed: Dinah's brothers murdered the rapist of their sister and turned it into a curse to the nation of the Hivites. Their negative behaviour should open the eyes for what God positively wanted from his people throughout the ages. This reading formed the basis for a missiological understanding of the significance of this narrative in the Christian community of faith. The missiological significance of Genesis 34 has been discussed from three angles: The importance of worship for missions; the integrity of the missionary praxis; and the in-between time in which missions take place.

Contribution: This research wants to answer the question why the author of Genesis 34 included in his composition this shameful episode in the patriarchal history narrating the rape of Leah's daughter, Dinah, and the consequent criminal honour killings by her brothers. The purpose of this investigation is to show the missiological significance of this narrative for the present Christian community of faith for whom the Bible is the authoritative Word of God.

Keywords: redemptive history; communicative intention of Genesis 34; peaceful co-existence with the Canaanites; abuse of circumcision; Dinah's rape; the murder of the Shechemites; worship and missions.

Introduction

This article attempts to read Genesis 34 missiological within its own redemptive historical context of Genesis 12–36, covering the foundational narrative of the patriarchal era in the history of Israel. The purpose of this research is to discover the communicative intention of the author with his inclusion of this narrative in his text and its missiological significance for the present Christian community of faith. This research suggests that the author wants to remind the readers of his narrative of how they should live in the promised land as the people of God. He does this by sharply condemning the response of Jacob's sons to the rape of their sister, Dinah and thereby opening the eyes of his readers for how they, positively, should then live in God's land.

Based upon this redemptive historical approach, some suggestions for missiological conclusions from Genesis 34 are added within the context of the grand narrative of the canonical scriptures that function within the Christian community of faith as the authoritative Word of God.¹

This redemptive historical research employs a canonical, literary (synchronic) approach to the text.² The narrative is situated in the patriarchal era of Israel's history, but the author himself and his readers lived in a much later time. He updated the original narrative with so-called frame breaks, drawing his readers into the narrative as participants in the discussion about its message.

1. For the church as the proper locus for Bible reading, see Wielenga (2010:709–714).

2. For the redemptive historical approach, see Greidanus (1988:80–121), Smit (2006:111–181) and Wielenga (2010:49–50). Also see Van Bekkum (2013b:177–196) who reads Joshua using this approach.

Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

The question in the title, *How should we then live?*, is as relevant for them as it was for the patriarchal family in Genesis 34.

Two issues will first be addressed: The purpose of this research in Genesis 34 will be explained; and the dating of Genesis 34 will be discussed.

The need to remember

The purpose of this research is to show the missiological significance of the story of Leah's daughter, Dinah's rape near the Hivite town of Shechem in the land promised by God to the patriarchs (Gn 12:1–3; 15:13–16, 18–20; 26:23; 33:18–20; 35:12). However, Dinah plays just a minor role on the margins of redemptive history.

She suddenly appears on the scene of Israel's history only to disappear just as suddenly into oblivion. Her rape, however, caused the murderous sacking and plundering of Shechem by her brothers that almost derailed the progress of God's redemptive history (Gn 34:30). Jacob's recent settlement in the promised land (Gn 33:18–20) was almost immediately threatened by the criminal behaviour of his sons in response to what happened to their sister (Gn 34:31). The inclusion of this shameful event in the early historiography of Israel was intentional.

The author wanted to remind his readers of what happened in the past to their ancestors, to teach them how they as their descendants should not live in the present as God's people in God's land, with the conclusion that human sin nevertheless cannot block the progress of redemptive history. The other side of this coin is that the author implicitly also taught his and later readers how they should then live in the land as a blessing to the nations (Gn 12:3).

The author's communicative intention is as relevant for modern readers today as it was for his first readers in his own time. Despite the differences in time and context between the different reader communities in the course of redemptive history, they are all traveling the same journey³ that started with God's calling of Abram and will be concluded on the day of the Lord (Mt 3:1) when he comes back to judge the living and the dead (Rv 20–21). The question of how the reader communities of faith should then live during the journey with its different stages and contexts, remains pertinent for each new generation called to live their lives before the eyes of the watching world. The answer to the question of how they should then live, will be shown to be significant for each new generation of the Christian community of faith.

The approach towards Genesis 34 as employed in this article, assumes a missiological perspective. The reading of Genesis 34 as proposed here, differs sometimes quite considerably from the ones developed in the scholarly community from the early church onward.⁴ For example, feminist approaches

3. For the journey metaphor in redemptive history, see McConville and Millar (1994).

4. Schroeder (1997) discusses Martin Luther's 16th century handling of Dinah's case. See Kadari (2014) for the Jewish interpretation of Dinah's rape (Midrash and Aggadah).

have received much attention recently.⁵ Without denying the value of these and other approaches based upon its redemptive historical reading of Genesis 34, this article argues for a missiological perspective on the narrative within the context of the Christian community of faith being the present community of the author's readers of Genesis 34.

Dating Genesis 34

The author must have intentionally inserted this narrative at just this point in the sequence of narratives being written down by him with the patriarchal history in Genesis 12–36 as the link connecting them (Wenham 1994:308–309).⁶ He focuses his readers' attention on what looks like a marginal event: a migrant teenage girl, new in the neighbourhood with her family, visits native girls to make friends with. She is noticed by a well-respected man in town – a member of the local ruling family (Gn 34:2, 19) – who rapes her. The rumour, spread by witnesses, reaches Dinah's father, Jacob (Gn 34:5). This experience must have been shattering for Dinah, but nothing in the story refers to her feelings and emotions. Her voice gets lost in the brutal aftermath of her rape.

Not the girl but her brothers and their reaction to her rape are the centre of the author's attention. Their behaviour⁷ made him to include the narrative in the text he was composing. He updated⁸ the orally transmitted narrative for the sake of his audience to show its relevance for them in their situation. The following frame breaks can be noted:

- The brothers describe Dinah's rape as 'defilement' and a 'folly not done in Israel' (Gn 34:5,13; see also 2 Sm 13:12) – terminology that can be defined as 'combined speech' (Shemesh 2007:19–20). It refers to the opinion of the brothers and of the author. It assumes familiarity with the world of the *Torath Mosheh* (Block & Schultz 2017)⁹ in the Pentateuch. The conquest and occupation era, described in Joshua and Judges, could also be mentioned as an early context for the author's first readers (Jos 3:1–5; Jdg 2:1–5; 19:23–24; 20:6, 10).¹⁰
- In Genesis 33:20, Jacob erects an altar for the God of 'Israel' near Shechem. This composite name is not just a reference to Jacob's new name, Israel (Gn 32:28; 35:10). It also refers to Israel as God's people for whom an altar for God near Shechem certainly called up memories of other altars erected there – the most famous one among them certainly the one at Mount Ebal after having conquered the land (Jos 8:30–35; see also Dt 27), confirming God's claim of ownership of the land (Richter 2007:353–363).

5. See, for instance Caspi (1985); Bechtel (1990); Noble (1996); Scholz (2001); Van Wolde (2002a; 2002b); Klopper (2010); Meng Yanling (2020); Clark (2006). For modern readers the narrator's treatment of Dinah (being silenced) is problematic. Feminist readers correctly draw attention to this.

6. For an analysis of narratives in the Pentateuch, see Vogt (2009:48–60, 146–155).

7. In Genesis 34:13, the disqualification of the brothers' behaviour as deceitful also assumes the author's later revision of the original narrative.

8. Slater (1991:285 note 22) uses the term *frame breaks* for updates of the original narrative.

9. See Wielenga (2021:1, notes 1–2) for the use of the term *Torath Mosheh*.

10. See Nihan (2012:97–113); Edenburg (2012:120–127); Grisanti (2013:223–249) for Joshua as early context.

- The Hivites are mentioned again in Joshua 3:5 and 9:7 in the conquest narrative. They form a part of the well-known group of seven nations that had to be driven out of the land at God's time (Gn 15:18–21; Lv 20:23; Dt 7:1–6; 12:1–4) to protect Israel against idolatry and syncretism that would jeopardise its mandate to be a blessing to the nations (Gn 12:3; Ex 19:5–6; Dt 4:5–8).¹¹ The conflict between the Hivites and the founding fathers of Israel in Genesis 34 must have been of special interest for the conquest generation of Israel who had also to deal with them, be it in a different situation.¹²

For the purpose of this article, it is sufficient to state as possible date for the insertion of Genesis 34 in his composition, the time of the conquest and occupation generations from Joshua's days onwards as described in the books of Joshua and Judges (Brueggemann 1982:274). This fits the historical context of Genesis 34 better than the post-exilic one of Ezra-Nehemiah as assumed by, among many others, Rofé (2005:373) and Brett (2012:55–57), relevant as this narrative may have been also for this post-exilic time (Ezr 9:10–12).¹³

Outline

This article consists of three main sections:

- In the first one, attention will be paid to the redemptive historical context of the narrative as found in Genesis 12–36. The behaviour of the main characters in this narrative, including the brutal misbehaviour of some, will then also be scrutinised.
- In the second section, the communicative intention of the author will be summarised by the leading question: Why did he want to remind later generations of the shameful past of their ancestors? Would it not have been better to suppress their outrageous behaviour?
- In the third section, some missiological conclusions (three) will be suggested from the redemptive historical reading of Genesis 34.

The narrative of Genesis 34

Firstly, the redemptive-historical context of Genesis 34 will be outlined. Next, the behaviour of the different characters in the narrative will be scrutinised. In closing, the brutal aftermath of the patriarchal family's behaviour will be examined.

The redemptive-historical context

After his return home from Paddan-Aram, Jacob made peace with his brother, Esau, who moved back to Seir (Gn 33:16; 36:9) while he settled in the land promised to him by the God

11. See De Jong (2013:55–63) for a redemptive historical treatment of the extermination of the Canaanites. See also Versluis (2013:161–176).

12. See Wielenga (2017:288–294) for the antiquarian nations in the Old Testament. Based upon Joshua 9, Edenburg (2012:126, 130) concludes to Israel's relatively positive attitude towards the Gibeonites or Hivites. The Genesis 34 narrative would then support this, based upon its clear condemnation of the criminal behaviour of Jacob's sons.

13. See Na'aman (2014:95–119) for a discussion of the patriarchal (especially Jacob) narratives' dating. The originally orally transmitted narrative found in Genesis 34 must have had its roots in the patriarchal time.

of his (grand)father (Gn 35:11–13) near the Hivite town of Shechem. It was a location where his grandfather, Abraham, had also lived and had built an altar for God (Gn 12:6–7). He bought a plot of land near the town and made his home there. As he was still being a migrant in the land that would one day be given to his descendants (Gn 23:3–6), he wanted to live in peaceful co-existence with the Hivites, the dominant nation in the region (Gn 34:18). They were not allowed to intermarry with Canaanite people and to assimilate with them (Gn 24:1–4; 26:34–35; 27:46–28:9). They had to maintain their identity as people covenanted to the true and only God, but as in Abraham's time (Gn 14:18–20; 18:16–33), peace and harmony with the Canaanite nations was important to Jacob (33:18–19). As a small migrant minority living among a native-born majority, this made sense from a socio-political perspective.

There was, however, another reason for keeping peace and harmony with the Hivites. When God concluded his covenant with Abraham (Gn 15:13–21), he announced that the time for taking the land had *not yet* arrived. He would fulfil his land-promise to Abraham as soon as the sin of the Canaanite inhabitants of the land had reached its full measure (Gn 15:16). At that moment, this was *not yet* the case. His descendants would even take a 400-year detour living as slaves in a foreign country before the land-promise would be granted to them.

It should be noted that the announcement of judgement over the Canaanite nations is immediately followed by the declaration of its postponement: their sin had *not yet* reached its full measure.¹⁴ This created space between judgement announced and judgement fulfilled that could be used by the Canaanite nations to avert this judgement, by turning away from their sinful existence to the true and only living God. He should have been made known to them and they should have been attracted to him through the agency of God's people descending from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who should live a God-pleasing life among them. They were called to be a blessing to the nations (Gn 12:3) starting with those they were living among in the promised land. The example of Abraham should have been guiding his descendants in their approach to the Canaanites¹⁵ during the interim between the announcement and fulfilment of judgement.

Therefore, this postponement of judgement also meant the deferral of the fulfilment of God's land-promise to his people. They too, were going to live in an in-between time between the announcement and fulfilment of the land-promise (Gn 15:7, 13, 16). As migrants in their promised land, they should live in anticipation of the time when they would live there as full citizens (Gn 15:18–20; 17:8). But how should they then live during this interim time? They should live as a blessing to all peoples on earth (Gn 12:3; Ex 19:5–6; Dt 4:5–8) – the Hivites in Genesis 34 included.

14. See Hays (2016:59–108) and Wielenga (2018) for the nature of delay-intended Old Testament judgement prophecies.

15. See Genesis 14:18–20 (Melchizedek); 18:16–33 (intercession for Sodom).

One should notice that the journeys of both peoples, the Canaanites and the Israelites, were intersecting and aiming at the same goal: the moment in time when God would judge the Canaanites and bless the Israelites. The land would be taken away from the first and be given to the last. In the meantime, the charge God had laid upon the Israelites would not be annihilation of the Canaanites but peaceful co-existence with them. In Genesis 34, one receives an example of how they should *not* have lived as God's people awaiting the fulfilment of the land-promise. It was a case of mission failed!

The characters in the narrative

Reading the text describing the encounter between Dinah and Shechem (Gn 34:1–5), it is striking to notice that the feelings and emotions of the rapist receive full attention (Gn 34:3–4, 11), while the voice of his victim is not heard at all!¹⁶ Obviously, the author is not focused on Dinah's drama, but on the behaviour of her family in this terrible situation in comparison with that of Shechem, the perpetrator of the evil deed, in conjunction with his countrymen. How did Jacob's household handle the situation before the eyes of the watching Canaanites (Gn 34:30; 35:5)?

Dinah

Dinah walked alone (Gn 34:1)¹⁷ from her new home near Shechem towards a place where she could meet with the native girls her age (McKay 2012:227–228) – maybe a watering place out of town. Was her behaviour here extraordinary in the ancient Near Eastern context?¹⁸ As a teenage girl, the last-born of her mother, Leah (Gn 30:21), the wife not favoured by her father Jacob (Gn 29:31), she could have felt a need to make friends in the new neighbourhood and possibly, being a teenage girl, misjudging the risk she would run of getting involved with Hivite young men. She is noticed by Shechem, well-known as a member of the local ruling family, who forced sex upon her. This could only have been a shattering experience for her. Shechem removed her from the scene to the privacy of his home. Nothing is said about what Dinah herself would have wanted to happen. Throughout the narrative she is silent.

Shechem

Nevertheless, Shechem presents himself as a sensitive man, soothing the emotionally upset girl with tender words and

taking her home to present her to his father as his wife-to-be, having fallen in love with her (Gn 34:3–4).¹⁹ He wants to start the marriage negotiations immediately. This makes sense, even if it was only for Dinah's sake – to repair her socially damaged condition as a raped virgin. This would have reminded the author's readers of the teaching in the *Torath Moshel* about what to do in case of a virgin raped among her own people (the rapist had to marry the girl – Dt 22:28–29).

His father, Hamor, supports his son without questioning him about what happened. He throws his full weight behind him in the negotiations with Dinah's family (Gn 34:8–10). Together they convinced the male population of Shechem to accept the only condition set for marriage by Dinah's brothers: circumcision of *all* males in order to become one people with them, the migrant family of Jacob. The Hivites' polytheistic worldview left room for a new god and his rituals. The main argument of Shechem and his father was that intermarriage with this migrant household would be economically profitable (Gn 34:23) for them (Caspi 1985:40). Dinah's family would also benefit from this proposal: from being a socio-politically insecure migrant family, they would become part of a settled, powerful nation, getting a firm foothold in the land promised by God to their ancestor, Abraham.

The accusation of Dinah's brothers that Shechem treated their sister as a prostitute (Gn 34:31) sounds unfair against this background.²⁰ The Hivite representatives behaved rather decently towards Dinah's family who were just recently arrived migrants, even though their own economic interest was the deciding factor for them. What about Dinah's family, God's chosen people?

Jacob

When the rumours of what happened to his daughter reached Jacob, the head of the household, he did nothing (Gn 34:5).²¹ Was he emotionally less involved with his daughter because of her mother whom he did not love? Dinah's unusual introduction in the narrative as Leah's daughter (Gn 34:1) could be an indication in that direction (Scholz 2001:3). His adult sons were also not at home, and it could be that he wanted them to participate in the marriage negotiations (Gn 34:5). In what follows, Jacob does not appear at all (see Bechtel 1990:35 for a different approach). It looks as if he, right from the start, has given up control over the negotiations to his sons who are furious about the shame inflicted on their family through what happened to their sister. Only at the end of the narrative is he seen and heard again as the head of his household (Gn 34:30). What is mentioned then is not Dinah's

16. The term *innā* has received much attention (Bechtel 1990; Shemesh 2007:4–9; Van Wolde 2002a; 2002b): Does it refer to rape or to debasement of the victim? For a teenage girl, non-consensual sex with an adult stranger is a traumatic experience whatever the label stuck on it. Fleischman (2004:15–19, 29) explains Dinah's experience as abduction in the context of the ancient Near Eastern marriage culture. See Shemesh (2007:10–17) for a refutation of his arguments. Klopper (2010:655) discusses what happened to Dinah as date rape, and Shemesh describes it as power rape (2007:9). However, indeed rape is rape (Shemesh).

17. See Genesis 24:15–16 for Rebekah, being a virgin, coming out of her house alone to visit a well (Meng Yanling 2020:185–189). However, Van Wolde (2002b:233–235) interprets 'went out' as 'left', indicating a definite movement away from home which makes Dinah responsible for the consequences: her rape and the Hivite genocide which was an out-of-control honour killing by her brothers.

18. Wenham (1994:310) calls her 'going out' imprudent and even improper by meeting Canaanite girls, 'sailing close to the wind', referring to her mother's behaviour in Genesis 30:16. See also Van Wolde (2002b:233–236) who disqualifies approaches, as followed in this article, as typically a modern, Western biased interpretation. Nevertheless, even if this were true, it does justice to the innocence of Dinah as portrayed in Genesis 34.

19. Van Wolde (2002b:232) points out that in Genesis 34:3, Dinah is called 'daughter of Jacob' as indication of the change in her position after Shechem's declaration of his wish to marry her (from a raped virgin girl to a wife-to-be) in whom he 'delighted' (Gn 34:19). These negotiations were all-important for Shechem (Wenham 1994:314).

20. Shechem's marriage proposal disqualifies the accusation for what it is: slander to justify their own abhorrent behaviour. See Vogt (2009:177–178) for a different approach.

21. See Josberger (2007:8–212) and Block (2003:33–102) for the position of the *āb* [the head of the household] in Deuteronomy 21–25. Responsibility and justice, in particular, should define his treatment of the women of his family.

fate, but his own safety and that of his family being a migrant minority among the powerful Canaanite nations. Only in Genesis 35, after God's intervention, does he act again as the head of the family, chosen by God, should do.²² But the evil has already been done by then and cannot be undone again.

Dinah's brothers

Her brothers take over the marriage negotiations from their father and right from the beginning, as the author indicates, they are *deceitful* and want to restore the honour of the family damaged by Shechem's rape of their sister (Gn 34:31). They were furious and felt compelled to retaliate for what had happened (an honour killing).

No mention is made of any physical or mental damage Dinah's rape had inflicted upon her.

One could ask which options would have been open to them if their negotiations with the rapist's family had been without deceit and above board?

Firstly, they could not have considered the Hivites' proposal of intermarriage between them and Jacob's household, given the fact that intermarriage with Canaanites was unacceptable in their family's tradition (Gn 24:3–4; 26:34; 27:46; 28:6–9; 36:2–3; 38:1–2). From the perspective of the author and his first readers, any affiliation with Canaanites such as the Hivites, was strictly forbidden to prevent idolatrous influences among God's people (Ex 34:11–16; Dt 7:1–4; 12:1–4; Jos 23:12–14). Intermarriage was not really a viable option for them. Nevertheless, Jacob's sons pretended to take the marriage proposal of Shechem seriously.

Another point should also be made: How should the patriarchal family have lived as migrants in the land promised to them but *not yet* given to them? How should they face their close neighbours, the powerful Hivites, after this despicable deed to one of their teenage girls done by one of the Hivites' leading personalities?

The time for holy war (Lilly 2012:129–137; Wenham 1971:40–48)²³ between the population groups had *not yet* arrived (Geller 1990:5). The family was to be a blessing and not a curse to the nations (Gn 12:3), including the Canaanites, who, in the interim, lived with them in peaceful co-existence. Which response of Dinah's brothers to her rape would have been appropriate in this situation? It was complex and complicated, a real challenge to their position as God's chosen people in the land that was *not yet* theirs. As indicated in Genesis 34:13, their solution was in direct conflict with God's purposes with his chosen people in the holy land at that moment in time. They entered the negotiations with a double agenda, not with blessing but with cursing the Hivites uppermost in their mind.

22. His cursing of Simeon and Levi on his deathbed (Gn 49:5–7) is still not a sign of any deeper understanding of the spiritual crisis the family suffered in Genesis 34.

23. That the sons' behaviour, anticipated the rule of war (*cherem*) (Dt 20:16–18), finds no support in the relevant texts.

So, should one conclude that the sons of Jacob had no real option open to them? They could not in all sincerity accept the marriage proposal of the Hivites. Avenging the rape of their sister with an honour killing was also not done among the people of God, as was later formulated in the *Torath Mosheh* (Ex 22:16; Dt 22:23–29), and certainly not on the scale upon which they executed their shameless revenge. How should they have reacted in this situation? Was Shechem's proposal not the best what could have happened to Dinah? He was even prepared to be circumcised to join Abraham's descendants in order to make this marriage possible.

What, however, happened was that her brothers took Dinah home (Gn 34:26), and she disappeared from the scene. In the cultural context of the ancient Near East, raped virgins remained in their family home without hope of marriage and motherhood. Was this the only option open to them? The brothers deliberately chose another direction.²⁴ Their choice of action betrayed their contempt for the Hivites despite their decent behaviour towards Dinah and her family. They also did not fear the God of their fathers to whom their father, Jacob, had recently consecrated an altar in recognition of God's claim of authority on the land He had promised to give to Abraham and his descendants (Gn 33:20). They abused the ritual of circumcision God had given to them as a means of sealing the covenant relationship between him and his chosen people (Gn 17:9–14). It is not without good reason that the author does not mention God's name at all in this narrative. They did not seem to have considered a possible intervention of God to open this dead-end street for them. Jacob's sons acted as if God was not there.

In fact, foreign gods from Paddan-Aram, whose images had later to be removed were worshiped among them (Gn 35:2–4). They lived in the 'Canaanite way' (Dt 12:4) rather than in God's way – a condition very recognisable for the author's first readers in their time (Jdg 2:1–5).

Action and reaction: The aftermath

In this section, the deceitful intentions of Jacob's sons will first be analysed, and then their actions will be evaluated.

Damaging the covenant

In Genesis 34:13–17, the intentions of Jacob's sons in response to the intermarriage proposal of the Hivites are narrated in great detail. They pretended to accept the proposal on the condition that *all* the males of the town are circumcised.

The reason they gave for this condition (Gn 34:14) was not without merit. Circumcision was instituted by God as a seal of the covenant between him and Abraham and his descendants (Gn 17). It was not so much an ethnic boundary marker (Skafte 2012:3–5) as a religious one (Block 2017:355–359). It referred to a spiritual condition: living as the people of God in the land promised to them. Even children were included, and foreigners were not excluded (Gn 17:12–13). The only

24. Could they have received Shechem as their brother-in-law after he (and he alone) was circumcised?

condition for foreigners to be included in the covenant was that they should join Abraham's descendants²⁵ through circumcision to become part of God's people.

In this in-between time, even Hivites could have joined the covenant community if they had honestly been willing to join the descendants of Abraham – a very unlikely proposition considering the socio-political reality at that time. Circumcision, as such, was not a problem for the Hivites. The ritual of circumcising young males at the threshold of adulthood was not unknown in the ancient Near East (Skafté 2012:3; Vogt 2009:117). In their polytheistic world, the addition of a new god and his rituals was not uncommon. It is, however, doubtful whether the concumcision of baby boys on the 8th day was as well-known (Gn 17:12). This indicates a fundamental difference between Abraham's descendants and the Hivites regarding the meaning of circumcision. Furthermore, exclusively joining God's people, a small migrant minority in their own native land, could not be expected from them. The Hivite males must have thought of integrating both population groups into one in which they would have had the upper hand.

Moreover, even if circumcising the Hivites on an individual basis was still permissible in the in-between time, mass-circumcision of *all* Hivite males in one major operation and their integration into the nascent nation of Abraham's descendants would have been completely different. As the first readers of the author could affirm, the Hivite culture and religion would have become the major force in the new, unified people. This would not have advanced God's intentions with his election of Abraham and the establishment of the covenant with him: to be a blessing to the nations, including the Hivites during this interim. Just the opposite would have happened: the numbers would have been decisively to the advantage of the Hivites (Jdg 2:1–5).

But right from the beginning, Jacob's sons were not interested in attracting the Hivites to the God of their fathers. The procedure of circumcision made it impossible for the Shechemites to defend themselves against the onslaught Dinah's brothers had in mind (Gn 34:24–29). Hence the emphasis in Genesis 34:15, 25 that *all* the male inhabitants of Shechem must be circumcised (Caspi 1985:39). The small number of 'Israelites' could otherwise not have overcome the Hivites, and their vengeance would have backfired.

Deceit in action

Two of Jacob's sons, full brothers of Dinah, Simeon and Levi, executed the plan hatched by the brothers (Gn 34:25–26). They killed the circumcised Hivites when they were most vulnerable through pain and fever, on the 3rd day (Gn 34:24–25). Their real intention came to light when they, together with their brothers, also captured women and

²⁵The 'descendants of Abraham' refer to those who have Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their ancestors. Descendants of Abraham through the line of Ishmael or Esau are excluded, even though they, too, were blessed by God (Vogt 2009:87; Wielenga 2022:4–5). See De Jong (2021:40–48) for a redemptive historical evaluation of the line of Abraham – Ishmael – Esau.

children, and ransacking the city inside out (Gn 34:27–29). The name of Dinah and her defilement is now mentioned again, a full three times (Gn 34:25–27), as it were to justify their murderous action.

The author's first readers may have had some understanding of the brothers' attitude and conduct in the context of the holy war they had to wage against the Canaanites, including the Hivites (Dt 7:1–6; Jos 9). But a holy war could *not yet* have been waged in the interim by Jacob's sons. At least, then they should have dedicated their loot to God. It was, however, an honour killing gone wrong in retaliation for the rape of their sister. Yet, the murder and sacking of a whole town were completely disproportionate to the offence committed by just one man (Brueggemann 1982:278). Their behaviour could not be justified in any way. God's people should not have lived this way, and certainly not in his land.

Their behaviour was outrageous, especially compared with the rather decent behaviour of the Hivites in response to Dinah's rape by one of their own. Wounded family pride was the original driving force behind the brothers' actions. But merciless greed overtook it and motivated them to plunder the city after having committed mass murder. They were rebuked afterwards by Jacob not so much for their criminal behaviour, but rather for endangering their minority position as migrants among a Canaanite majority (Gn 34:30–31). Jacob, as head of his household, did not give his sons the good example of strong spiritual leadership that was expected from him in this serious crisis.

We should not live like this

In this section, attention will be paid to the communicative intention of this narrative, keeping a memory alive that, from an ethnic perspective, could have been better suppressed.

The author inserted this narrative at just this narrative at specific this place in his composition, with the clear intention to teach his readers about how and why *not* to live as God's people in his land among the Canaanite nations. This would implicitly also reveal the other side of the coin: how and why they should then live as God's chosen people in his land. Keeping the shameful past of the people alive, served a positive purpose: to motivate and activate them in the present time to live as God's chosen people in the land granted by him to them for the sake of the nations (Gn 12:3). Hence, they should distance themselves from the sins of their ancestors as outlined in Genesis 34. How relevant this was for the author's first readers, is shown by the conquest and occupation narratives in Joshua and Judges. Each new generation of Abraham's descendants could have confirmed this message of Genesis 34.

In the next passage, the reprehensible behaviour of Jacob's sons will be looked at from two crucial perspectives: firstly, the absence of altar worship in their lives; and secondly, their failure to fulfil their divine mandate among the Hivites in Shechem.

The forgotten altar

In Genesis 33:20, Jacob erected an altar for God on the piece of land near the town of Shechem that he had bought from the Hivites. He evidently believed that only this God, who had recently personally met him in Peniel (Gn 32:22–30), should be worshiped in this land. Remarkably enough, Jacob did not remove the idols his family had taken with them from Paddan-Aram from his household. That happened only after the disastrous events that occurred in Shechem (Gn 35:2–3). Near Shechem, both God and the idols received a place in Jacob's household. This sort of syncretism must have reminded the author's first readers of the religious practice in their own times from the conquest era onwards (Jdg 2:10–23). Erecting an altar for God should have had consequences for their way of life in the land granted to them by God. The author's first readers must have known of the relevant instructions that were later formulated in the *Torath Mosheh*, as found in Deuteronomy 12–26 – the so-called Deuteronomic Code.²⁶

The significance of erecting an altar for God and of worshipping him there, is confirmed in Deuteronomy 12:1–7. It is the decisive turning point between the Canaanite way of life and the way of life God wanted his people to live in order to fulfil their mandate to be a blessing to the nations. In fact, in Genesis 34, it was the Canaanite way of life that had led Abraham's descendants astray (Dt 12:1–4; Lv 18:24–25). They should not have lived like this. Altar worship should have motivated and activated the people to live in compliance with the divine instructions, as they later would be formulated in the *Torath Mosheh*. The absence of any reference to the altar and to God in Genesis 34, suggests that the forgotten altar was the source of the 'Canaanism' of God's chosen people, that expressed itself in the mass-murder of the male Hivites and the capture of their women and children. It should not be surprising that Abraham's descendants abused the ritual of circumcision for their own purposes, and so endangered the continuity of the covenant and therefore threatening the progress of redemptive history.

The forgotten mandate

No mention is made in Genesis 34 of the divine mandate of Abraham's descendants to be a blessing to the nations. But that was God's exact purpose when he called Abraham (Gn 12:3): 'all peoples on earth will be blessed through you' – the words which were later repeated in the *Torath Mosheh* (Ex 19:5–6; Dt 4:5–8). In Genesis 34, no reason at all can be found why nations should look to Abraham's descendants for a divine blessing. Just the opposite happened. Without God's intervention (Gn 35:5), they would have been removed from the face of the earth by the Canaanite nations. Their relationship with them should have been peaceful as it was in Abraham's time. However, the uncontrollably criminal behaviour of Jacob's sons ended the peaceful condition needed for becoming a blessing to the Canaanite nations.

26. For the Deuteronomic Code, only the following literature is mentioned here: McConville (2002); Arnold (2010); Block and Schulz (2017); Vogt (2013); Cook (2015).

This was even more a pressing problem, because of the decent behaviour of the Hivites in Shechem despite the sex that one of them, even if it was the son of the ruler of the town, had forced upon Jacob's daughter Dinah.

Next, the author's first readers should have understood the difference in time between the patriarchal and the conquest and occupation generations. As argued in this article, the patriarchs were still living in the in-between time in which the Canaanite nations were *not yet* to be exterminated but were to be approached with neighbourliness and without deceit. Jacob's household should have been a blessing to the Hivites, even if Dinah's rape confronted them with an almost unsolvable conflict of interests. How should they have lived in this situation in such a way that the divine mandate would not have been trampled upon? The lesson to be learned was that, without altar worship, maintaining the divine mandate became impossible.

The conflict of interests was not solved by Jacob and his sons who completely lost their way. Without God's intervention, the redemptive history would have ended. He kept the journey going forward, giving them a new chance in Bethel to fulfil their divine calling (Gn 35:1–5). However, the memory of what happened in Shechem was to be kept alive for the coming generations. The writing down of Genesis 34 and its canonisation²⁷ by later scribes have also kept the memory alive until the present time, and confront the present readers with the same sort of questions as the author's first readers were confronted with. This will be discussed in the last section of this article.

How should we then live?

Based upon the redemptive historical analysis of Genesis 34, some missiological conclusions will be formulated that could be relevant for the present Christian community of faith. This presumes that the Old Testament is not less important for a missional theology and praxis than the New Testament.²⁸ Using the Bible in missiology, requires a missional hermeneutics. Due to space constraints, a reference to some relevant literature must suffice.²⁹ The two previous sections about the forgotten altar and the forgotten mandate provide the basis for the following missiological conclusions. This section will be concluded with some remarks about the missional significance of the expression *not yet* (Gn 15:16).

Missiological conclusion 1: Worship for missions

The references to the altar in Genesis 33:20 and to the removal of the foreign gods in Genesis 35:2 enclose the narrative in Genesis 34 and together refer to the cause of the threatening

27. For writing down orally transmitted biblical texts, see Van der Toorn (2007:109–142); Wielenga (2010:704–706); Van Bekkum (2013a:111–128).

28. The difference between Old Testament and New Testament is, missiological, the direction of the missional movement, expressed with the terms centripetal (Old Testament) and centrifugal (New Testament). Mission as *missio Dei* did not start in the New Testament (Wright 2006:75–104). For *missio Dei* in systematic theology, see Wielenga (1998:241–251).

29. For missional hermeneutics, see Wielenga (1994:224–235; 2018:6–8); Wright (2006:29–69); Goheen (2016).

collapse of the redemptive history at the hands of God's chosen people. This leads to the missiological relevant conclusion that, without worshipping the one true God whom Jacob had met at Peniel, life in the promised land would come to an end for God's chosen people; they would not be a blessing to the nations, as they would become assimilated with the Canaanites. Genuine worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob alone would provide them with the inspiration and sustaining power to fulfil their divine mandate to be a blessing to the nations.

This accords with the well-known missional text in the New Testament: Matthew 28:16–20. Jesus met with the disciples at the place chosen by him.³⁰ When they saw him there, they worshiped him (Mt 28:17), followed by Jesus sending them out into the world. Mission is born out of worship that inspires, shapes and sustains it (Wielenga 2020), requiring a countercultural ('anti-Canaanite') way of life that attracts the Gentiles. Without (the right way of) worship, missions are doomed to fail, as already implicated in Genesis 34.

Missiological conclusion 2: The missionary praxis

The behaviour of the patriarchal family in Shechem with regard to the Hivites has been imitated time and again in mission history (Bosch 1991:225–238); at least from the Middle Ages onwards (the Crusades). For example, one could point to the conflict of interests between Western colonialism and missions. Mainly from the 19th century onwards, the Western church began to discover that there was indeed a conflict of interests here. Up to then, people of colour in the colonised territories worldwide were forced into slavery with all its dehumanising suffering at the hand of the same people who preached to them the gospel of salvation with the purpose to make them into disciples of Jesus Christ (Mt 28:19), but without setting them free from slavery.³¹ Contrary to the positive approach of Paul to the Gentiles in Romans 2:14–15, Western Christians in the colonial era, just like Jacob's sons in Genesis 34, dehumanised the people they should have been a blessing to. Taught by Genesis 34, we, as a missionising community, should not live like this.³² That, nevertheless, Western missions quite often were richly blessed, was fruit of divine intervention by grace and grace alone (Gn 35:5).

Missiological conclusion 3: Not yet

Attention should be paid to the expression *not yet* in Genesis 15:16 in the context of Genesis 34. It is known to a modern readership from the prophetic eschatological discourse

30. In Deuteronomy 12:5, God chooses the place of worship; in Matthew 28:16, Jesus chooses the meeting place. See also Kemp (2003) for the relationship between worship and missions.

31. The reason that slaves in the Dutch Cape Colony were not allowed to be baptised, was that then they should have to be set free in compliance with a decision of the Synod of Dordt 1618–1619 made in Holland long before Jan van Riebeeck arrived in the Cape in 1652. Hence, mission among slaves was forbidden until the 18th century. Only in 1864, slavery and slave trade were forbidden in the UK. Between 20 and 40 million slaves were sold to European colonies during the colonial era (Bosch 1991:227) with Christian support.

32. See the bundle of articles edited by De Leede and Stoutjesdijk (2023) about the intertwining of church, colonialism and slavery in, especially, Surinam and the Caribbean Islands.

(Wielenga 2016; 2018). It looks, however, as if it was already a concept with a sort of 'proto-eschatological' type of content much earlier in redemptive history (Arnold 2008:25). In Genesis 15, an eschatological argument has not been developed. However, a comparison of the redemptive historical discourse in Genesis with the prophetic eschatological one, prompted by the expression *not yet*, makes one aware of the future orientation of redemptive history right from the beginning. In the present, the past and the future of redemptive history are interlinked, giving the Christian community of faith hope and courage to persist with her God-given missional mandate (1 Pt 2:4–9).

The main missiological relevant point to be made here is that God's judgement of the Canaanites is announced and at the same time delayed. Their judgement would not be executed before their sin had reached its full measure. The *not yet* terminology is a reminder of the later judgement prophecies which always were intentionally delayed (Hays 2016:59–108). The *not yet* of divine judgement always created space for the sinners to return to him so that judgement could be averted. Judgement averted meant prophecy fulfilled! This article contends that this also is the case in Genesis 15. Until God executed his judgement, the Canaanites received room to worship the only true living God through the agency of God's chosen people.³³

This is the perspective on redemptive history that is also found in Matthew 24:14. The redemptive history will be completed at the end of time when the Lord comes to judge the living and the dead. But until then, the world of nations lives in a time of grace with judgement postponed, creating space and time for the missionising community of faith to reach out to them, making them disciples of Jesus to follow him as Lord (2 Pt 3:8–13). A new perspective will be opened for them beyond judgement as heirs of the new creation (Mt 3:19–21; 4:1–3; Rv 21). It is the time for missions in which the nations and their religions should be approached with respect, even when conflicts of interests complicate the relationship and may even impede the advancement of mission.

Conclusion

The question this research wanted to answer is formulated in the heading of this article: How should we then live? The answer given is: We should live in the interim as a missionizing community of faith before the eyes of the watching world. This requires that this community is a worshipping one for which the integrity of the missionary praxis is sacred, and that does not waste the time of grace in the interim as a time for missions.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

33. In the Old Testament, God's chosen people failed in their centripetally missional calling. Hence the Servant King (Is 52:12–14) is announced who will accomplish the calling of Israel vicariously (Wielenga 1996:28–29).

Author's contributions

B.W. is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

References

- Arnold, B.T., 2008, 'Old Testament Eschatology and the rise of apocalypticism', in J. Walls (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, pp. 23–39, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Arnold, B.T., 2010, 'Deuteronomy as the ipsissima vox of Moses', *Journal Theological Interpretation* 4(1), 53–74. <https://doi.org/10.2307/26421328>
- Bechtel, L.M., 1990, 'What if Dinah is not raped? (Genesis 34)', *Journal Studies Old Testament* 19(62), 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030908929401906202>
- Block, D.I., 2003, 'Marriage and family in ancient Israel', in K.M. Campbell (ed.), *Marriage and family in the Biblical world*, pp. 33–102, Intervarsity Press, Downer Groves, IL.
- Block, D.I., 2017, 'Hearing Galatians with Moses: An examination of Paul as a second and seconding Moses', in D.I. Block & L. Schulz (eds.), *Sepher Torah Mosheh. Studies in the composition and interpretation of Deuteronomy*, pp. 338–374, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody Mass, MA.
- Block, D.I. & Schulz, L. eds., 2017, *Sepher Torah Mosheh. Studies in the composition and interpretation of Deuteronomy*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody Mass, MA.
- Bosch, D.J., 1991, *Transforming mission. Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll New York, NY.
- Brett, M.G., 2012, 'The politics of marriage in Genesis', in D.J.A. Clines, K.H. Richards & J.L. Wright (eds.), *Making a difference. Essays in the Bible and Judaism in honor of Tamara Cohn Eskenazi*, pp. 49–59, Sheffield Phoenix Press, Sheffield (Hebrew Bible Monographs 49).
- Bruiggemann, W., 1982, *Genesis, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching*, John Know Press, Atlanta.
- Caspi, M.M., 1985, 'The story of the rape of Dinah: The narrator and the reader', *Hebrew Studies* 26(1), 25–45.
- Clark, R., 2006, 'The silence of Dinah's cry', in *Lectio Difficilior*, p. 1, viewed 10 November 2022, from <https://www.lectio.unibe.ch./012/s>.
- Cook, S.L., 2015, *Reading Deuteronomy. A literary and theological commentary*, Smyth and Helwys Publishing, Macon, GA.
- De Jong, H., 2013, 'De uitroeiing van de Kanaänieten', in H. de Jong, *Eén Bijbel – twee testamenten, of het ongelijk van Marcion*, pp. 55–63, Van Wijnen, Franeker.
- De Jong, H., 2021, 'Menselijke keuzes tegenover Gods verkiezing (Genesis 17:8)', in H. De Jong (ed.), *God is anders*, pp. 40–48, Van Wijnen, Franeker.
- De Leede, B. & Stoutjesdijk, M. (eds.), 2023, *Kerk, kolonialisme en slavernij. Verhalen van een verloten geschiedenis*, Kokboekencentrum Uitgevers, Utrecht, (Jaarboek voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme na 1800, Jaargang 31).
- Edenburg, C., 2012, 'Joshua 9 and Deuteronomy: An intertextual conundrum', in K. Schmid & R.F. Person Jr (eds.), *Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch, Hexateuch, and the Deuteronomistic History*, pp. 115–132, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2, 56).
- Fleischman, J., 2004, 'Shechem and Dinah: In the light of non-biblical and biblical sources', *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116, 12–32. <https://doi.org/10.1515/zatw.2004.001>
- Geller, S.A., 1990, 'The use of typology in biblical covenant religion', *Prooftexts* 10(1), 1–15.
- Goheen, M.W. (ed), 2016, *Reading the Bible missionally*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Greidanus, S., 1988, *The modern preacher and the ancient text: Interpreting and preaching ancient biblical literature*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Grisanti, M.A., 2013, 'The impact of Deuteronomy on the books of the Deuteronomistic History', in J.S. DeRouchie, J. Gile & K.J. Turner (eds.), *For our good always. Studies on the message and influence of Deuteronomy in honor of Daniel I. Block*, pp. 223–249, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN.
- Hays, C.M., 2016, 'The delay of the Parousia: A traditional and a historical-critical reading of Scripture', in C.M. Hays (ed.), *When the son of man didn't come. A constructive proposal on the delay of the Parousia*, pp. 59–108, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Josberger, R.L., 2007, *Between rule and responsibility: The role of the 'ĀB as an agent of righteous ideology in Deuteronomy's domestic ideology*, ProQuest LLM, Ann Arbor MI, PhD thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- Kadari, T., 2014, 'Dinah: Midrash and Aggadah', in *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish women*, Jewish Women Archive, viewed 10 November 2022, from <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia>.
- Kemp, W.K., 2003, *The worship of God as the goal, the motivation and the means of missions*, PhD thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL.
- Klopper, F., 2010, 'Rape and the case of Dinah: Ethical responsibilities for reading Genesis 34', *Old Testament Essays* 23(3), 652–665.
- Lilly, I.E., 2012, 'What about war and violence in the Old Testament?', in T. York & J.B. Barringer (eds.), *A faith not worth fighting for: Addressing commonly asked questions about Christian nonviolence*, pp. 125–139, Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR.
- McConville, J.G., 2002, *Deuteronomy*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL, (Apollos Old Testament Commentary).
- McConville, J.G. & Millar, J.G., 1994, *Time and place in Deuteronomy*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, (Journal Study Old Testament 179).
- McKay, H.A., 2012, "'Making a difference, then and now": The very different lives and afterlives of Dinah and Rizzpah', in D.J.A. Clines, K.H. Richards & J.L. Wright (eds.), *Making a difference. Essays in the Bible and Judaism in honor of Tamara Cohn Eskenazi*, pp. 224–241, Sheffield Phoenix Press, Sheffield (Hebrew Bible Monographs 49).
- Meng Yanling, 2020, 'An approach to biblical exegesis for evangelical women: The story of Dinah in Genesis 34', *Chinese Theological Review* 30, 171–195.
- Na'aman, N., 2014, 'The Jacob story and the formation of Biblical Israel', *Tel Aviv* 41, 95–125. <https://doi.org/10.1179/0334435514Z.00000000032>
- Nihan, C., 2012, 'The literary relationship between Deuteronomy and Joshua. A reassessment', in K. Schmid & R.F. Person Jr (eds.), *Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch, Hexateuch, and the Deuteronomistic History*, pp. 79–113, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen (Forschungen zum alten Testament 2, 56).
- Noble, P., 1996, 'A "balanced" reading of the rape of Dinah: Some exegetical and methodological observations', *Biblical Interpretation* 4(2), 173–204. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851596X00185>
- Richter, S., 2007, 'The place of the name in Deuteronomy', *Vetus Testamentum* 57(3), 342–366. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853307X215518>
- Rofé, A., 2005, 'Defilements of virgins in Biblical law and the case of Dinah (Genesis 34)', *Biblica* 86(3), 369–375.
- Scholz, S., 2001, 'What "really" happened to Dinah: A feminist analysis of Genesis 34', *Lectio Difficilior* 2, viewed 10 November 2022, from <https://www.lectio.unibe.ch/012/s.pdf>.
- Schroeder, J.A., 1997, 'The rape of Dinah: Luther's interpretation of a biblical narrative', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28(3), 775–791. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2542991>
- Shemesh, Y., 2007, 'Rape is rape is rape: The story of Dinah and Shechem (Genesis 34)', *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 119, 2–21. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ZAW.2007.002>
- Skaife, N., 2012, 'Circumcision as identity marker – Creating social and religious boundaries', in *Cultic purity and dietary laws*, pp. 1–8, viewed 10 November, from [academia.edu/8567719/Circumcision_asidentity_Marker_Creating_Social_and_Religious_Boundaries_Introduction](https://www.academia.edu/8567719/Circumcision_asidentity_Marker_Creating_Social_and_Religious_Boundaries_Introduction).
- Slater, S., 1991, "'I have set before you the land': A study of the rhetoric of Deuteronomy 1–3", PhD thesis, Department of Religious Studies, McGill University, Montreal.
- Smit, D., 2006, *Neem, lees. Hoe ons die Bybel hoor en verstaan*, Lux Verbi, Wellington.
- Van Bekkum, K., 2013a, 'Schrijven, schrijvers en auteurs in de oudheid', in K. Van Bekkum, P.H.R. Van Houwelingen & H.G.L. Peels (eds.), *Nieuwe en oude dingen. Schatgraven in de Schrift*, pp. 111–128, De Vuurbaak, Barneveld.
- Van Bekkum, K., 2013b, 'Dit is het land'. De boodschap van bijbelse aardrijkskunde', in K. Van Bekkum, P.H.R. Van Houwelingen & H.G.L. Peels (eds.), *Nieuwe en oude dingen. Schatgraven in de Schrift*, pp. 177–196, De Vuurbaak, Barneveld.
- Van der Toorn, K., 2007, *Scribal culture and the making of the Hebrew Bible*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Van Wolde, E.J., 2002a, 'Does 'INNĀ denote rape? A semantic analysis of a controversial word', *Vetus Testamentum* 52(4), 528–544. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233576659_Does_%27inna_denote_rape_a_semantic_analysis_of_a_controversial_word.
- Van Wolde, E.J., 2002b, 'The Dinah story: Rape or worse?', *Old Testament Essays* 15(1), 225–239.
- Verluis, A., 2013, 'Volkenmoord in naam van God? Een theologische lezing van het gebod de Kanaänieten uit te roeien', in K. Van Bekkum, P.H.R. Van Houwelingen & H.G.L. Peels (eds.), *Nieuwe en oude dingen. Schatgraven in de Schrift*, pp. 161–176, De Vuurbaak, Barneveld.

- Vogt, P., 2009, *Interpreting the Pentateuch. An exegetical handbook*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Vogt, P., 2013, 'Laws and ethical ideals in Deuteronomy', in J.S. DeRouchie, J. Gile & K.J. Turner (eds.), *For our good always. Studies on the message and influence of Deuteronomy in honor of Daniel I. Block*, pp. 81–92, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN.
- Wenham, C.J., 1971, 'The Deuteronomic theology of Joshua', *Journal Biblical Literature* 90, 140–148. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3263755>
- Wenham, G.J., 1994, *Genesis 16–50*, World Books, Dallas, TX, (World Bible Commentary vol 2).
- Wielenga, B., 1994, 'Zendingshermeneutiek: een inleiding', in J. Bouma, J. Dekker, A.M. Van Leeuwen, & K. Muller (eds.), *Begeleidend schrijven. 25 Jaar Theologische Studiebegeleiding*, pp. 224–235, Buijten en Schipperheijn, Amsterdam.
- Wielenga, B., 1996, 'Israel en de zending in het Oude Testament', in W. Van Heest (eds.), *Beminden om der vaderen wil. Over Israel en de zending*, pp. 11–31, Oosterbaan en Le Cointre, Goes (Zending dichterbij 4).
- Wielenga, B., 1998, *Verbond en zending. Een verbondsmatige benadering van zending*, Mondiss, Kampen, Dth thesis, University of South Africa.
- Wielenga, B., 2010, 'Bible reading in Africa: The shaping of a reformed perspective', *In die Skriflig* 44(3+4), 699–722. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v44i3/4.168>
- Wielenga, B., 2016, 'Eschatology in Malachi: The emergence of a doctrine', *In die Skriflig//In Luce Verbi* 50(1), a2091. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v50i1.2091>
- Wielenga, B., 2017, 'On the margins of redemptive history: The antiquarian nations in Deuteronomy 2. A theological assessment', *Theologia Reformata* 60(3), 280–297.
- Wielenga, B., 2018, 'The delay of the Day of the Lord in Malachi: A missional reading', *In die Skriflig//In Luce Verbi* 52(1), a2362. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v52i1.2362>
- Wielenga, B., 2020, *Worship for missions*, KMBC Graduation address d.d. 07.12.2019, Pietermaritzburg RSA, Academia.edu.
- Wielenga, B., 2021, 'The Deuteronomic roots of postexilic prophetic eschatology in Malachi', *In die Skriflig//In Luce Verbi* 55(1), a2759. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v55i1.2759>
- Wielenga, B., 2022, 'The God who hates: The significance of Esau/Edom in the postexilic prophetic eschatology according to Malachi 1:2–5 with a systematic theological postscript', *In die Skriflig // In Luce Verbi* 56(1), a 2822, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v56i1.2822>.
- Wright, C.H.J., 2006, *The Mission of God. Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL.