

**Theme: THE DECEPTION AND DUPLICITY OF SINNERS**

**Memory Verse:** *Genesis 34:13 “And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:”*

**Texts:** Genesis 34:6-23; 2 Samuel 13:19-22

True Christian men do not take marriage decisions in a heat of passion. First, there must be sincere prayer to determine the will of God. Second is consultation with appropriate organs set up in the church to ensure orderliness and decency in all things. Third, when cleared to proceed, the brother communicates his marriage conviction to the sister. Fourth, a favourable reply from the latter leads both of them back to the marriage counselling committee on their way to securing the consent of both parents. Thereafter, a period of courtship commences under the supervision and guidance of experienced Spirit-filled church leaders. Next, as a token of respect for the sister’s parents and, in keeping with clear injunctions of Scripture, the intending bridegroom must pay the bride-price as well as fulfil other legitimate requirements of the intending bride’s family. A successful courtship results in a Christ-glorifying wedding and a legitimate consummation of the marriage union. Any attempt to circumvent this scriptural procedure renders a marriage union unchristianly. (2Timothy 3:13)

Negotiations for Dinah’s hand in marriage soon commenced between Hamor and his son on one part and Jacob and his sons on the other. In the negotiation, however, both parties acted with deception and duplicity with the sole aim of outsmarting each other. While talking fair, the real motive of Jacob’s sons was to execute a ruthless vengeance of Dinah’s humiliation. Jacob’s sons came from the field to learn of what happened to their sister. They were not happy about it. They wanted to get their sister out of Shechem’s house. They also wanted to teach Shechem a lesson: “when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth.” They felt disgraced by it. It was scandalous. It is folly and ought not to happen. Immorality by children of God is a grievous sin. It ought not to happen at all. No wonder Jacob’s sons thought of revenge. They allowed the negotiations to take place but they had a different plan. Jacob’s Sons demanded that all males of Shechem be circumcised before Dinah can be given to them in marriage. But this was a lie. They had no plan whatsoever to become one with the people of Shechem.

They only wanted a way to avenge the humiliation of their sister. Hamor and Shechem equally had their private agenda. The son coveted Jacob’s daughter, Dinah, while the father coveted Jacob’s wealth. To achieve his goal, Hamor had to speak from both sides of his mouth. He adduced separate plausible reasons for the proposed marriage contract with Israel. Hamor, speaking to his fellow countrymen, however, revealed his real reason for this marriage contract: “Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us”. (Genesis 34:23). Hamor and Shechem met their match in Simeon and Levi. The Sons of Jacob were so masterful in the wicked art of deception that they betrayed no inkling of their real hearts’ intent to the unfortunate Shechemites. Here, exactly, is a good example of how sinful men and women have often excused their sins, to soothe their consciences - such lame excuses as extreme provocation, an overwhelming irresistible temptation, self-interest or even self-defense. Hypocrisy is a terrible sin that must be repented of. “Whatever the excuses of men, God will by no means clear the guilty”. Confession and forsaking of sin are the path to mercy and forgiveness.

	<b>DAILY BIBLE READING</b>	
	<b>MORNING</b>	<b>EVENING</b>
<b>SUNDAY</b>	Jeremiah 51	Jeremiah 52
<b>MONDAY</b>	Lamentations 1	Lamentation 2
<b>TUESDAY</b>	Lamentations 3	Lamentation 4
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	Lamentations 5	Ezekiel 1
<b>THURSDAY</b>	Ezekiel 2	Ezekiel 3
<b>FRIDAY</b>	Ezekiel 4	Ezekiel 5
<b>SATURDAY</b>	Ezekiel 6	Ezekiel 7