

Joseph—Genesis 38

Judah and Tamar

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. **Chapter 38...** Brother Franklin Camp suggests the following—“The moral danger that surrounded Jacob and his family, living in the atmosphere of the Canaanites, had an influence upon the sons of Jacob. This chapter is intended to show the need of Jacob being taken out of this kind of atmosphere in order to allow his family to grow into a nation. The Egyptians would not associate with them and therefore, when they went down into Egypt they were separated and placed in the land of Goshen and allowed to develop apart from the strong influence of idolatry and the corruption that goes with idolatry as is indicated in this chapter in Canaan” [quoted by Wesley Simons in, Chapter 18, of *The Book of Genesis: Foundational Truth and the Unfolding of God’s Plan of Redemption*, Curtis Cates, Editor, p., 361].
2. **38:8.. Go in unto thy brother’s wife, and marry her**--literally, and perform the part of levir, or husband’s brother, to her. The language seems to imply that what was afterwards in the code Mosaic known as the Lex Leviratus (Deuteronomy 25:5, 6) was at this time a recognized custom [*Pulpit Commentary*].
3. **38:9... ..he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.** “Onan sinned because his motivation was evil. Not only did Onan sin against his father and Tamar, but he sinned primarily against his dead brother. Onan put his own personal interests above his brother’s inability to continue the family line” [Robert Deffinbaugh quoted by Wesley Simons in, Chapter 18, of *The Book of Genesis: Foundational Truth and the Unfolding of God’s Plan of Redemption*, Curtis Cates, Editor, p., 361]. Cf., the point on this verse in the **Lessons and Applications** section below. ||||| “This sin of Onan required the fatal judgment of God because it could have thwarted the proper foundation of the Messianic family, and was therefore a threat to God’s purpose of redeeming mankind. There can be no doubt, that if a similar threat existed today, the judgment of God would be executed in such a manner as to remove it” [Coffman].

II. Chronology.

Bible Period: **Patriarchy.**

III. Summary.

This chapter is likely not placed in chronological order. It would seem not enough time having passed between the time of Joseph being sold (37:28) and the family descending into Egypt for Judah to have grandchildren. Some have suggested that this account of Judah’s marriage to a Canaanite woman and the sad results in his family that are set forth in this chapter are placed at this particular point to demonstrate the *desperate need* for Jacob’s family to move out of the land of Canaan. What actually did happen is that they moved to Egypt and were kept in a separate area (Goshen, 45:10) away from the rest of the Egyptians. Though Judah did not consult, evidently, with his father about his choice of a wife, he did select a wife for his oldest son. That son, Er, must have been extremely wicked because the Lord slew him. Judah insisted that his second son “raise up seed” for his brother. Onan was not cooperative with this instruction and the Lord executed him as He had done his brother. Judah makes a promise to his daughter-in-law, Tamar, that when the youngest son, Shelah, matures she will have a husband. However, Judah does not keep his promise to Tamar. Tamar seeks to avenge herself

of this mistreatment from Judah and has just the plan to do so. Tamar conceives twin boys by deceiving her father-in-law. Tamar thus becomes one of the four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:3); additionally, this places Judah in that same lineage.

IV. Outline.

1. Judah's three sons (Er, Onan, and Shelah) are born of a Canaanite woman (Genesis 38:1-6).
2. The Lord slays Judah's first two sons because of wickedness (38:7-10).
3. In order to raise up seed, Judah promises his third son to Tamar, the wife of Er, when Shelah matures (11).
4. Judah's wife dies and he makes a trip to Timnath (12).
5. Tamar disguises herself, commits adultery with her father-in-law, and conceives twin boys (13-18).
6. In process of time, Judah's sin finds him out as Tamar had planned it (19-25).
7. Judah acknowledges his wrongdoing and repents (26).
8. Pharez and Zarah are born (27-30).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Judah acknowledged that Tamar had been more righteous than he had been.
02. _____ Er, Judah's son-in-law, was slain by Judah.
03. _____ Tamar acted like a prostitute.
04. _____ Judah had the permission of his father to marry the Adullamite, Hirah.
05. _____ Judah's first response to news of Tamar's playing the harlot was to say: "let her be burnt."

MATCHING

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| A. Onan | F. Of prostitution |
| B. Pharez | G. Her face was covered |
| C. Shelah | H. Onan |
| D. He was blind | I. Zarah |
| E. Of widowhood | J. Er |

06. _____ After her encounter with Judah, Tamar put on these garments.
07. _____ Judah's firstborn son.
08. _____ The baby on whose arm was placed a scarlet thread.
09. _____ Judah's son who did not displease God.
10. _____ Judah did not recognize Tamar because...

Fill in the Blanks

11. Judah sent the payment for his shameful deed by his friend, the _____ to receive back his _____.
12. "By the _____ whose these are," was the statement from Tamar which caused Judah to recognize his own sinfulness in not keeping his earlier promise to her.
13. That which motivated Tamar to do what she did was that: "She saw that _____ was _____, and she was not given to him to _____."
14. "And _____ took a wife for _____ his firstborn, whose name was Tamar."
15. Judah told Tamar to remain a _____ till his son _____ grew up.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Genesis 37:12-36 Questions: [(1) False, Gen 37:36; (2) False, Gen 37:17; (3) False, Gen 37:34; (4) True, Gen 37:22; (5) True, Gen 37:25; (6) b, Gen 37:14; (7) c, Gen 37:31; (8) a, Gen 37:15; (9) b, Gen 37:26-27; (10) c, Ps 5:6; (11) deliver, thirty, silver, Mt 26:15; (12) Romans, deceit; (13) 19, dreamer; Gen 37; (14) 25, eat bread, Ishmeelites, balm; (15) 29, Reuben, rent].

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother** (Genesis 38:9). *This verse and the next is not proof that birth control is sinful.* “Some try to use this chapter as proof that birth control is sinful. The Bible does not teach that all birth control is sinful. Some birth control is sinful. Any birth control that involves an abortive method is sinful. Onan wanted all the pleasure that came **with** the sexual act, but he did not want to give seed to his brother. The very reason for him knowing Tamar sexually was to raise up seed to his brother. This was the sin in the eyes of God that cost Onan his life. This is the law of the near kinsman. It is also known as the Levirate Law or Marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Consider Ruth and Boaz” [Wesley Simons in, Chapter 18, of *The Book of Genesis: Foundational Truth and the Unfolding of God's Plan of Redemption*, Curtis Cates, Editor, p., 362].
2. **And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee...** (Genesis 38:16). *Satan places a dangerous temptation in front of those who lose their spouses.* “We need to realize that after one has spoken the beautiful language of sex with his mate and his mate dies that there might be added temptation to get involved in activities like these, but they are sinful. Sex can be enjoyed only in the realm of a scriptural marriage (Hebrews 13:4)” [Ibid, p., 363].
3. **And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite,...** (Genesis 38:20). *Some friends are not real friends.* “Hiram was a friend that would go along with sin. He was taking the payment for the harlot from Judah. Friends of this persuasion only help to bring more temptations our way. When we aid and abet others in ungodly deeds, we are as guilty as they are (2 John 1:9-11)” [Ibid, p. 363].
4. **lest we be shamed** (Genesis 38:23). *Sometimes our thinking takes place AFTER the foolishness has already been done as here with Judah!*
5. **Bring her forth, and let her be burnt** (Genesis 38:24). *Could we say that Judah is operating by a DOUBLE-STANDARD?* [Ibid, p. 364]. If he thinks it so bad what Tamar did, then what about the one who participated with her? I think of the scribes and Pharisees who brought forth the woman ONLY in John 8:3.
6. **And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more** (Genesis 38:26). *The character of Judah is demonstrated here, similar to David's after Nathan confronted him, and is admirable!* There is confession of sin and repentance visible here.

VIII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

L K J J H G F D Z S P O I U Y T R E W S
 X C D U E R F V B A G T Y H N M S J U I
 L P O D K I U J M N R H Y T G B T B V F
 R E T A M A R D C X S A W Q A Z A W S X
 C E D H C R F V T G B Y H H N U F J M I
 K A O L A D U L L A M I T E H P F Q A Z
 W M N S X E D C V F R T G B I N H Y U J
 J O M A K I O L P W S P H A R E Z C X D
 Q R A Z A X S W E D C V F R A T G H A B
 N E H Y U N J M M H K I O L H P O E R I
 U R Y T R E I W A A Z X S W E D R Z C V
 F I R T G B N T L L K J H G F H D I S D
 S G M N B V C X E E Z L K J T H G B T F
 D H S A P O I U S H U A H T Y T R E E W
 Z T I M N A T E E S D C E V W B G T L Y
 M E J U S I G N E T Y L H N B I G T E R
 R O F V C D D E W S R X Q A Z X N S C W
 E U D C E V F O N A N R F V B G T S A Y
 H S N L M J U I C L N H Y T G B V F R R
 E D P C X S W S Q A Z X S W E D C D B L

[The words listed below are from Genesis 38 and can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

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|----------------|--------------------|
| 01. JUDAH | 11. TIMNATH |
| 02. ADULLAMITE | 12. PHAREZ |
| 03. HIRAH | 13. ZARAH |
| 04. CANAANITE | 14. SCARLET THREAD |
| 05. SHUAH | 15. TWINS |
| 06. ER | 16. MORE RIGHTEOUS |
| 07. ONAN | 17. PLEDGE |
| 08. SHELAH | 18. SIGNET |
| 09. CHEZIB | 19. BRACELETS |
| 10. TAMAR | 20. STAFF |