

# Genesis

## Chapter 38



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This chapter gives an account of Judah and his family, and such an account it is, that it seems a wonder that of all Jacob's sons, our Lord should spring out of Judah, Hebrews 7:14. But God will show that his choice is of grace and not of merit, and that Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. Also, that the worthiness of Christ is of himself, and not from his ancestors. How little reason had the Jews, who were so called from this Judah, to boast as they did, John 8:41. What awful examples the Lord proclaims in his punishments, of his utter displeasure at sin! Let us seek grace from God to avoid every appearance of sin. And let that state of humbleness to which Jesus submitted, when he came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, in appointing such characters as those here recorded, to be his ancestors, endear the Redeemer to our hearts.<sup>1</sup>

**Jewish Study Bible:** Judah and Tamar; This chapter, which treats the origins of the Judahite clans (cf. Num. 26:19-22), is, on the one hand, independent of the novella of Joseph in which it now appears. Note that Judah lives apart from his brothers and already has grown children when the tale begins. On the other hand, a number of verbal and thematic connections to the Joseph story bespeak the exquisite fitness of its placement therein.<sup>2</sup>

**Nelson:** Although some consider the story of Judah and Tamar an intrusion into the Joseph story, it does fit into the flow of the narrative. First, the story provides a stunning contrast between the morals of Judah and Joseph. Second, Judah's story illustrates the further disintegration of Jacob's family. Jacob's sons had sold Joseph, and now Judah married a Canaanite woman and solicited a Canaanite prostitute (who happened to be his daughter-in-law, v. 11–16). If this process continued, Jacob's family, the family of promise, would become like the people of Canaan. The fact that the Messiah's lineage would be eventually traced through Judah's line is a clear sign of God's grace and mercy (49:10; Matt. 1:2–3).<sup>3</sup>

**McGee Introduction:** This is another chapter that seems to be about as necessary as a fifth leg on a cow. After you have read the story, you may wish that it had been left out of the Bible. Many people have asked me why this chapter is in the Word of God. I agree that it is one of the worst chapters in the Bible, but it gives us some background on the tribe of Judah, out of which the Lord Jesus Christ came. This fact makes it important that it be included in the biblical record. In this chapter you will read names like Judah and Tamar and Pharez and Zerah. If you think they sound familiar, it is because you have read them in the first chapter of Matthew. They are in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. My friend, that is an amazing thing! Our Lord came into a sinful line. He was made in all points like as we are, yet He Himself was without sin. He came into that human line where all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

This chapter deals with the sin and the shame of Judah. This leads me to say that the sons of Jacob were certainly not very much of a comfort to him. It looks as if all the sons were problem children, with the exception of Joseph and Benjamin. And Joseph was no

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry's Commentary

<sup>2</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

<sup>3</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

comfort because his father was heartbroken about his disappearance. All of this reveals to us that Jacob spent too much time in Padan-aram accumulating a fortune rather than teaching his children. How different he was from Abraham. You remember that God had said of Abraham: “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen. 18:19).

Well, Jacob didn’t do that. He was so busy down there contending with Uncle Laban that he didn’t have much time for his boys. That was tragic, because each one of them seemed to have gotten involved in something that was very sinful.

There is, I believe, a further reason for including this chapter in the Word of God at this juncture. Beginning with the next chapter, we go down to the land of Egypt with Joseph. God is sending Joseph ahead, as he very clearly detected from the fortuitous concurrence of circumstances in his life, to prepare the way for the coming down of the children of Israel into Egypt. It would preserve their lives during the famine in Canaan, but more than that, it would get them out of the land of Canaan from the abominable Canaanites into the seclusion of the land of Goshen in Egypt. Had Jacob and his family continued on in Canaan, they would have dropped down to the level of the Canaanites. The chapter before us reveals the necessity of getting the family of Jacob away from the degrading influence of the Canaanites.

This is the story of Judah, whose line will be the kingly line among the tribes of Israel.<sup>4</sup>

**Torah Class Introduction:** The story suddenly shifts for a while, back to Canaan, and concentrates now on the brother whose suggestion it was to sell Joseph into slavery, Judah. Some of what we read in this chapter about sons marrying brothers’ widows and so on is strange to us. For now, we just need to accept it as we read it, because this was simply normal custom for that time. Some of this chapter’s importance for us is to help understand the mindset and customs of that era. It was vitally important to people then, and even in tribal cultures of today, that family bloodlines are carried on. We’ll come back to that in a few minutes.

First, I’d like to focus on Judah, because it was out of Judah that would come the Jewish people and the eventual Messiah, Jesus. That is, Judah would now carry the torch as the continuing line of covenant promise that began with Judah’s great-grandfather, Abraham. Judah was Jacob’s 4<sup>th</sup> son, and was a son of Leah, one of the two legal wives of Jacob; Jacob’s first 4 sons were all born by Leah. In trying to figure out why Judah was mentioned so prominently in the previous chapter, as the one who perpetrated the selling of Joseph, and now in this chapter as the one who thought he was sleeping with a prostitute, but instead, it was his widowed daughter-in-law, we need to take notice of the state of the family of Israel, the clan of Jacob.

It’s entirely possible, and probable, that Judah had viewed his brother, or better, half-brother, Joseph as a rival (remember, Judah was born to Leah, and Joseph born to Rachel). Why a rival? Because, Judah may have seen himself as the one now due the firstborn blessing and all the wealth and authority that went with it. Why would he think that? As we’ll see later, Jacob had decided that Rueben (even though he was Jacob’s

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<sup>4</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:153). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

firstborn son) would not receive the firstborn blessing, because Rueben had slept with Jacob's concubine, Bilah. And, Simeon and Levi, the next two in line, were also deemed unworthy to inherit the firstborn blessing Rueben forfeited, because they were the two who led the raid on the males of Shechem, killing them in revenge for the rape of their sister, Dinah.

So, it would naturally SEEM to follow that Judah, the 4<sup>th</sup> in line, would become the inheritor of the firstborn blessing. But, Joseph having been given the tunic of royalty and being openly favored by his father, appeared to indicate to Judah's mind that Jacob was leaning towards, or perhaps had already decided to bypass his first 10 sons (which included Judah), and give all rights and authority over the clan to Joseph; this, of course, would not have settled well with Judah.

Now, here's the irony of all of this: this wrestling for power (that the teenaged Joseph was utterly oblivious to) was but the beginning of the rivalry between Judah and Joseph...or, better yet.....their descendants. For these two brothers represent those people who would eventually become the two dominant tribes of Israel: Judah and Ephraim. Some of you are probably saying, wait a minute: I thought we were talking about Judah and Joseph, how did Ephraim jump in here? As we'll see in a few chapters, Ephraim, an Egyptian-born son of Joseph (that is, born to Joseph's Egyptian wife), would effectively replace Joseph as a tribe of Israel. In fact, Jacob would actually adopt Ephraim (and his older brother Manasseh) away from Joseph, for the purpose of replacing Rueben. And, centuries after that, Judah and Ephraim would become the two Israelite Kingdoms that were created after the split of the nation of Israel as it existed under David and Solomon. And, the descendants of Judah and Ephraim would find themselves warring against each other, off and on, until Assyria finally conquered the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim, and scattered the 10 tribes of Israel which constituted Ephraim throughout the far reaches of Asia.

So, beginning from the time Joseph was a young man, right on through to today, the descendants of Judah and the descendants of Joseph, by way of Ephraim, have been at odds with one another. It is interesting that in the prophecy of Ezekiel 37, that a time is foretold, that Israel will cease to exist as a nation, yet become a nation back in the land of its beginnings. Further, that Judah and Ephraim will come back to the land, and be ruled under one king.....a descendant of King David.....for all time. Judah came back to the Middle East in 1948, reconstituted the nation of Israel in the same place it was before it was destroyed, some 2000 years earlier. But, what of Ephraim? Well those "Joseph" tribes have been making news of late. We have traditionally talked of "the 10 lost tribes of Israel" when referencing the tribes of Ephraim. Ephraim had NOT returned to Israel, but Judah had. Well, for several years now, large tribes of people, scattered around Asia and India have been claiming that THEY are some those lost tribes. After nearly 20 years of investigation, the Jewish Religious leadership of Israel has determined that indeed they ARE Ephraim, and they have convinced the Israeli government of that fact. So, as of March 2005, some of these tribes of Ephraim have been invited to immigrate to Israel. The prophecy of Ezekiel 37 is underway.

But, there is still a problem: the Judaism that modern Jews practice is different (to varying degrees) than the way these various Ephraimite tribes practice their beliefs in Torah. Just as it started with the man, Judah, and the man, Joseph..... and as it has

happened since Judah sold Joseph into slavery and he wound up in Egypt.... Judah and the Joseph tribes (Ephraim) are still at odds. Judah, the Jews, have told Ephraim that they MUST adopt the Jewish traditions and basically convert to Judaism in order to return to Israel. Those of Ephraim, who are desperate to come to Israel, have agreed. But, you can bet that this is not the end of the story. I suspect that as the return of Ephraim heats up, so will their resistance to completely adopting the ways of Judah.<sup>5</sup>

**Chumash: Classic Question:** “Why is the story of Judah and Tamar written here?”

Rashi: Why was this section placed here, where it interrupts the section dealing with Joseph? To teach us that Judah’s brothers demoted him from his high position when they saw their father’s distress. They said “You told us to sell him. If you’d have told us to return him to his father, we would have listened to you”<sup>6</sup>

**Chumash: Sparks of Chasidus:** Rashi explains the simple reason why the Torah begins to speak of Judah, in the middle of the story of Joseph “To teach us that Judah’s brothers demoted him from his high position.” However, Rashi does not explain why the entire account of Judah and Tamar was recorded here, leading up to the birth of Peretz and Zarach. However, according to the explanation of the Midrash, we can understand that the account of Judah and Tamar was included here to explain the reason why Joseph was sold: because God was paving the way for Mashiach. Thus, before we read of Joseph’s enslavement, and the ensuing Egyptian exile, the Torah “prefaces the cure before the disease,” informing us of God’s inner intent.<sup>7</sup>

### **Genesis 38:1**

**And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.**

[at that time] Chronologically, Genesis 38 should follow Genesis 33, because thirty-three years after Jacob left Haran he went into Egypt. By that time, Judah's son's widow had given birth to twins and they were old enough that one of them had married and become the father of twins.<sup>8</sup>

**And it came to pass at that time**—The facts mentioned here could not have happened at the times mentioned in the preceding chapter, as those times are all unquestionably too recent, for the very earliest of the transactions here recorded must have occurred long before the selling of Joseph. Mr. Ainsworth remarks “that Judah and his sons must have married when very young, else the chronology will not agree. For Joseph was born six years before Jacob left Laban and came into Canaan; Genesis 30:25, and Genesis 31:41. Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold into Egypt, Genesis 37:2, 25; he was thirty years old when he interpreted Pharaoh’s dream, Genesis 41:46. And nine years after, when there had been seven years of plenty and two years of famine, did Jacob with

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<sup>5</sup> Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>6</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

<sup>7</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

<sup>8</sup> Dake’s Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

his family go down into Egypt, Genesis 41:53, 54, and Genesis 45:6, 11. And at their going down thither, Pharez, the son of Judah, whose birth is set down at the end of this chapter, had two sons, Hezron and Hamul, Genesis 46:8, 12. Seeing then from the selling of Joseph unto Israel's going down into Egypt there cannot be above twenty-three years, how is it possible that Judah should take a wife, and have by her three sons successively, and Shelah the youngest of the three be marriageable when Judah begat Pharez of Tamar, Genesis 38:14, 24, and Pharez be grown up, married, and have two sons, all within so short a space? The time therefore here spoken of seems to have been soon after Jacob's coming to Shechem, Genesis 33:18, before the history of Dinah, Genesis 34, though Moses for special cause relates it in this place." I should rather suppose that this chapter originally stood after Genesis 33, and that it got by accident into this place. Dr. Hales, observing that some of Jacob's son must have married remarkably young, says that "Judah was about forty-seven years old when Jacob's family settled in Egypt. He could not therefore have been above fifteen at the birth of his eldest son Er; nor Er more than fifteen at his marriage with Tamar; nor could it have been more than two years after Er's death till the birth of Judah's twin sons by his daughter-in-law Tamar; nor could Pharez, one of them, be more than fifteen at the birth of his twin sons Herron and Hamul, supposing they were twins, just born before the departure from Canaan. For the aggregate of these numbers, 15, 15, 2, 15, or 47 years, gives the age of Judah; compare Genesis 38 with Genesis 46:12."<sup>9</sup>

**[Judah]** *Y<sup>e</sup>huwdah*, (H3063) *yeh-hoo-daw'*; from Hebrew 3034 (*yadah*); *celebrated*; *Jehudah* (or Judah), the name of five Israelites; also of the tribe descended from the first, and of its territory :- Judah.

**[Judah went down from his brethren]** This story is a necessary link in the genealogy of Christ and is inserted here so that Joseph's history, which immediately follows, won't be interrupted.

**[Adullamite]** Adullam was the ancient capital of the Canaanites or giants who occupied the southern part of Canaan. Located in the Shephelah, Adullam has been identified with Tell esh Sheikh Madhkur northwest of Hebron (see 1 Samuel 22:1; Micah 1:15). It would have been at a lower elevation than Hebron (3,040 feet above sea level), and thus the statement that Judah "went down" is appropriate.

**[Adullamite]** An inhabitant of Adullam, a city of Canaan, afterwards given for a possession to the sons of Judah, Joshua 15:1, 35. It appears as if this Adullamite had kept a kind of lodging house, for Shuah the Canaanite and his family lodged with him; and there Judah lodged also. As the woman was a Canaanitess, Judah had the example of his fathers to prove at least the impropriety of such a connection.<sup>10</sup>

**[Hirah]** A friend of his (Genesis 38:12).

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<sup>9</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

<sup>10</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

**Judah departed from his brothers:** Jacob's family was slowly falling apart. First, Simeon and Levi had taken revenge on Shechem (ch. 34). Second, Reuben, the firstborn, had abused Bilhah (35:22). Third, the brothers had sold Joseph into slavery (ch. 37). Now Judah, the fourth son of Leah, left the family circle and sought Canaanite friends.

**Adullamite:** A person from Adullam. This place was in the hill country northwest of Hebron, later associated with David's flight from Saul (1 Sam. 22:1). During his period of disenchantment with his family, Judah embraced the Canaanite **Hirah** as friend and confidant (vv. 12, 20).<sup>11</sup>

This chapter vividly contrasts the immoral character of Judah with the moral character of Joseph. Judah's lack of integrity resulted in family strife and deception. In Genesis 39, we see how Joseph's integrity and wise choices reflect his godly character. His faithfulness was rewarded with blessings greater than he could imagine, both for himself and for his family.<sup>12</sup>

### **Genesis 38:2**

**And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.**

[**took her, and went in unto her**] Judah may have only been in his teens perhaps 15 years old when he married Shuah's daughter.

**daughter of a certain Canaanite:** Not only did Judah take a Canaanite as his friend, he took a Canaanite woman, the daughter of **Shua**, as his wife.

### **Genesis 38:3**

**And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er.**

**Missler:** This final part of the story provides the significance of the whole account. Judah then left and stayed in Adullam (about 15 miles NW of Hebron) and married a pagan Canaanite woman. This marriage to a Canaanite almost ruined Judah's family. Intermarriage with the Canaanites had been avoided earlier (Ch. 34), but not here.<sup>13</sup>

[**Er**] Er, Judah's firstborn, some say may have been the chosen one in Judah's family through whom the Messiah was to come. Even after his death, Tamar his widow bore a son to Judah whose name (Pharez or Phares) appears with hers (Tamar) in the line of Christ (Matthew 1:3). Er's wickedness may have included despising his privilege to bring forth one in the lineage of Christ.

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<sup>11</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

<sup>12</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>13</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Book of Genesis Commentary, Genesis Study, KHouse.org

### **Genesis 38:4**

**And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.**

### **Genesis 38:5**

**And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.**

#### **Three sons of Judah and Shuah:**

1. Er                    *watchful*
2. Onan                *strong*
3. Shelah             *request*

**Ramban:** Now some scholars say that it was their custom for the father to name the firstborn, and the mother the second one. It is for this reason that Scripture states concerning the first son, *And he called his name*, and concerning the second one, *And she called*. Now concerning the third son, [the naming of whom was the father's prerogative, Scripture nevertheless] says, *And she called*, explaining that this was because Judah was in Chezib when she gave birth to him, and he was not there to name him.<sup>14</sup>

**[Chezib]** Chezib, Timnath, and Adullam were cities southwest of Jerusalem (Genesis 38:1,5,12). Hirah evidently kept a lodging house, for Judah "turned in" to him as did Shuah and his family (Genesis 38:1-2).

**And he was at Chezib when she bare him**—This town is supposed to be the same with Achzib, which fell to the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:44. "The name," says Ainsworth, "has in Hebrew the signification of lying; and to it the prophet alludes, saying the houses of Achzib shall be (Achzab) a lie to the kings of Israel, Micah 1:14."

**Torah Class:** What we have here is a story of blood lines and genealogy; but it is also a story that relates cultural information from that era, as well as historical data that we'll find linked in later times to cities and places and people. Almost all the names of places that we find here.....Adullam, Chezib, Timnah, and Enam.....will appear later in the Bible as being located within the tribal territory of Judah. So, while this section of Israelite history seems a little disconnected from the direction the Torah is taking (making Joseph's life the central theme for the remainder of Genesis), in fact it is there to show Judah's rise to prominence, and make connections even in the life of the future King David Let me remind you that at the time of this story Israel is still several centuries away from possessing the Land of Canaan, and from dividing Canaan up into 12 districts, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. The time frame of this story is somewhere between the day that Joseph was sold to the slave traders, and Jacob deciding to move his entire family to Egypt to survive the famine.

What we see in this narrative is that Judah had children with a Canaanite woman: a most definite no-no to God. We aren't told the name of these women, only that her

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<sup>14</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

father's name was Shua. Without doubt, we see that Judah had made a conscious decision to part ways with his family for a time, and this is reflected in the first words of this chapter, when it says that '... Judah left his brothers....' He knew full well that marriage to Canaanite women was not to be contemplated among Israelites; and as we all know, when we want to do something that we know is both wrong and unacceptable to our families, we separate ourselves from them so that we don't have to face them; this is what Judah did.

This unnamed woman produced 3 sons for Judah, but none of these *should* have been suitable to carry on the line of the covenant promise, because they all were of Canaanite blood. But, without doubt, this never even occurred to Judah. Nor, apparently, did it matter to him that his uncle Esau had been passed over for the firstborn blessing, partially because HE married Canaanite women. And, here was Judah, doing the same thing. How often we tend to do what Judah did; we claim faith in God, but then separate that faith from the everyday matters of our lives. And, what troubles and sorrows that mindset and behavior inevitably brings to us...just as it was about to for Judah.

Yet, as was going to happen on a regular basis, foreign women were brought in to Israel, assimilated, and they were considered Israelites in time. This principle of being adopted into Israel, or grafted into Israel, or whatever term one might like to use, was one of the earliest principles set down by Yehoveh. At the end of this chapter, we'll talk a little more about his matter of Canaanite women and Israel.<sup>15</sup>

### **Genesis 38:6**

**And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.**

**[took a wife for Er]** Er may have been about fifteen and Judah about thirty or thirty-one years old.

**[Tamar]** (*to be erect; a palm tree*) Who she was is not known. She was evidently a Canaanite. Her history is in Genesis 38:6-30; Ruth 4:12; 1 Chron. 2:4. She was in the line of Christ (Matthew 1:3).

Jasher along with rabbinical sources describes Tamar as Shem's son Elam's daughter.

### **Book of Jasher: Chapter 45**

Jasher 45:23 And in those days Judah went to the house of Shem and took Tamar the daughter of Elam, the son of Shem, for a wife for his first born Er.

24 And Er came to his wife Tamar, and she became his wife, and when he came to her he outwardly destroyed his seed, and his work was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him.

25 And it was after the death of Er, Judah's first born, that Judah said unto Onan, go to thy brother's wife and marry her as the next of kin, and raise up seed to thy brother.

26 And Onan took Tamar for a wife and he came to her, and Onan also did like unto the work of his brother, and his work was evil in the sight of the Lord, and he slew him also.

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<sup>15</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

27 And when Onan died, Judah said unto Tamar, Remain in thy father's house until my son Shiloh shall have grown up, and Judah did no more delight in Tamar, to give her unto Shiloh, for he said, Peradventure he will also die like his brothers.

28 And Tamar rose up and went and remained in her father's house, and Tamar was in her father's house for some time.

29 And at the revolution of the year, Aliyath the wife of Judah died; and Judah was comforted for his wife, and after the death of Aliyath, Judah went up with his friend Hirah to Timnah to shear their sheep.

30 And Tamar heard that Judah had gone up to Timnah to shear the sheep, and that Shiloh was grown up, and Judah did not delight in her.

31 And Tamar rose up and put off the garments of her widowhood, and she put a vail upon her, and she entirely covered herself, and she went and sat in the public thoroughfare, which is upon the road to Timnah.

32 And Judah passed and saw her and took her and he came to her, and she conceived by him, and at the time of being delivered, behold, there were twins in her womb, and he called the name of the first Perez, and the name of the second Zarah.

### **Genesis 38:7**

**And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.**

**Er—was wicked in the sight of the Lord**—What this wickedness consisted in we are not told; but the phrase sight of the Lord being added, proves that it was some very great evil. It is worthy of remark that the Hebrew word used to express Er's wickedness is his own name, the letters reversed. Er ער wicked, רע ra. As if the inspired writer had said, "Er was altogether wicked, a completely abandoned character."<sup>16</sup>

**Ramban:** "and Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Eternal" Scripture does not specify the nature of his wickedness as it did in the case of his brother. Instead, it simply states that he died for his own sin. It informs us that this was not by way of punishment of Judah for his role in the sale of Joseph, since the saving of Joseph's life by Judah compensated for his role in the sale. There was no case of death of a child in the house of the patriarchs except this one who was wicked in the sight of the Eternal, since the race of the righteous is blessed. This is why Jacob mourned many days for his son Joseph, and he refused to comfort himself, for he considered this to be a great punishment to himself, quite apart from his love for him.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

<sup>17</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

## **Genesis 38:8**

**And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.**

**[raise up seed to thy brother]** It became part of the law of Moses (Deut. 25:5-9), and is still practiced in the East.

The duty in question, known in English as “levirate marriage,” is spelled out in Deut. 25:5-10. If a man dies childless, his brother is obligated to marry his widow, and her first son is reckoned as the offspring of the deceased. In Deuteronomy, the surviving brother can decline and undergo a procedure that the Rabbis named “*halitzah*,” but Genesis chapter 38 presupposes a stage in history of the law in which “*halitzah*” is still unknown (cf. Ruth 4:5-6). Today, levirate marriage is discouraged and “*halitzah*” is substituted among traditionally observant Ashkenazic Jews. Some Sephardic groups still practice levirate marriage.<sup>18</sup>

**Torah Class:** As the 3 sons of Judah matured, the firstborn son, ‘Er was given a wife selected by Judah: this wife’s name was Tamar (Tamar means “palm tree”). But, we are told that God killed ‘Er because he was evil. So, Tamar was now a widow. What is key here is that Tamar was a childless widow; or more correctly, a son-less widow (she may well have produced some girl babies before her husband’s death). Onan, the second son of Judah was then instructed to go and take his brother’s widow, Tamar, as his wife. This was simply a custom of that day...and, generally speaking, this was NOT optional....it was the law that the brother do this. The idea was that, just as female could be a substitute “wife”, a concubine, a baby producer, (like we saw with Hagar, and then with Bilah and Zilpah) for a woman who was unable to bear children to her husband, so could a substitute husband impregnate a woman who’s husband had died, and left her without a son. This tradition was based on the substitute husband usually being a family member, normally a brother, of the deceased man. The Traditional name for this law among Hebrews is the Levirate Marriage. Now, it might appear from its name that this is taken from the Hebrew tribal name, Levi.... but it is not. The actual Hebrew word for this ordinance is ***yibbum***. Our modern translation of “Levirate” is taken from the Latin word “levir”, which is the designation for a husband’s brother. So, Levi and Levirate are just similarly spelled and pronounced words that are in no way related.

The Levirate marriage was not at all unique to Israel; it existed in other cultures as well. This is attested to with well-preserved Hittite documents, and even documents from the Middle Assyrian age. This Levirate law can be found in Deuteronomy 25.

***NAS Deuteronomy 25:5 "When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 "And it shall be that the first-born whom she***

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<sup>18</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

*bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out from Israel. 7 "But if the man does not desire to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' 8 "Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And if he persists and says, 'I do not desire to take her,' 9 then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face; and she shall declare, 'Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' 10 "And in Israel his name shall be called, 'The house of him whose sandal is removed.'*

This sandal flinging is a rebuff, and it indicates the poor character of someone who refuses to do his family duty. It is a public humiliation.<sup>19</sup>

**Ramban:** “and marry her as brother-in-law, and raise seed to thy brother.”

Now it was considered a matter of great cruelty when a brother did not want to marry his dead brother’s wife, and they would call it *the house of him that had his shoe loosed*, for [after his dead brother’s wife had performed *Chalitzah* (the loosening of the shoe) of the brother-in-law], he was now removed from them, and it is fitting that this commandment be fulfilled through the loosening of the shoe. Now the ancient wise men of Israel, having knowledge of this important matter established it as a custom to be practiced among all those inheriting the legacy, providing there is no prohibition against the marriage, and they called it *Ge’ulah* (Redemption). This was the matter concerning Boaz, and the meaning of the words of Naomi and the women neighbors. The man of insight will understand.<sup>20</sup>

**(Ruth 4:6-12)** <sup>6</sup>And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it. <sup>7</sup>Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel. <sup>8</sup>Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

<sup>9</sup>And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi. <sup>10</sup>Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. <sup>11</sup>And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house

<sup>19</sup> Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>20</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

*of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:  
12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto  
Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.*

### **Genesis 38:9**

**And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.**

**[Onan knew that the seed should not be his]** Onan resented a child of his being born to carry on Er's name. Both were wicked men and may have been bitter enemies; hence, Onan wanted his brother's name blotted out. The firstborn in such cases carried on the dead man's name (Deut. 25:6-10). Furthermore, the devil may have stirred up hatred in Onan for the Seed of the woman who seems to have been intended to come through Er's offspring.

**Onan knew that the seed should not be his**—That is, that the child begotten of his brother's widow should be reckoned as the child of his deceased brother, and his name, though the real father of it, should not appear in the genealogical tables.

Onan would have to expend his own resources to support a child that is legally someone else's, and the child, as the heir to a first-born son, would displace Onan in the line of inheritance to boot.<sup>21</sup>

Because Onan knew that he would not perpetuate his own name, but rather the family of the deceased, he selfishly avoided conception by spilling the semen. Not only did he fail to honor his dead brother, but also in taking his brother's wife without producing offspring for his brother, he was stealing his inheritance. Although he refused the responsibilities of the relationship, however, he was willing to take advantage of its pleasures—a problem that manifests itself in a number of ways in today's society—and he received God's judgment in return.<sup>22</sup>

**Family, Disobedience**—By Hebrew law, if a man died and left no children, his brother was required to marry the widow and father children who would bear the name of the deceased brother (Dt 25:5-6). Under the patriarchal family structure of that time, neither the widow nor the brother could refuse the demand of the head of the family to fulfill this obligation. So Onan took Tamar as a second wife and had intercourse with her but withdrew before ejaculation in order that she not become pregnant. He did not want to father a child that would not bear his own name. This disobedience resulted in his death. Compare Dt 25:7-10; Ru 4:1-12. Unfortunately, the experience of Onan has been identified with masturbation. (Masturbation in the past was called Onanism.) The punishment on him has been interpreted to show God's displeasure with self-stimulation.

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<sup>21</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

<sup>22</sup> Believer's Study Bible

This interpretation misrepresents the passage under consideration. The Bible does not speak specifically about the issue of masturbation in this passage or in any other. Attitudes toward masturbation must be informed by general principles of biblical teachings about sexuality rather than from the experience of Onan.<sup>23</sup>

### **Genesis 38:10**

**And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.**

By the custom of the levirate law of marriage, the second son, Onan, was to marry Tamar, the widow of his brother, and raise up offspring for his brother. However, Onan repeatedly used that law for sexual gratification. He took advantage of the situation, but refused the responsibility that went with it. So God took his life too.

The first instance of a custom, which was afterwards incorporated among the laws of Moses, that when a husband died leaving a widow, his brother next of age was to marry her, and the issue, if any, was to be served heir to the deceased (compare Deut. 25:5).<sup>24</sup>

**Levirate Marriage:** (from Latin *levir*, “husband’s brother”) was codified in the *Torah* (Deut 25:5-10). The role of the *Goel* (as Kinsman-Redeemer, cf. Ruth 1-4; and the Ultimate Redemption (Rev 5).<sup>25</sup>

**levirate marriage.** One remedy for the disruption of inheritance caused by the premature death of a man before he had produced an heir was the custom of levirate marriage. As outlined in Genesis 38, the dead man’s brother was required to impregnate the widow so that his brother’s name (his inheritance share) would be passed on to the child born of this obligatory act. A similar statute is found in Hittite Law 193 and some form of it may be represented in Ruth 4. The law is detailed in Deut. 25:5-10, where the levir is allowed to refuse his obligation by participating in a public ceremony in which the widow shames him. This was probably made necessary by situations like the one Judah faces here, in which a greedy brother (Onan) refuses to impregnate Tamar because it would decrease his eventual inheritance share.<sup>26</sup>

**Wherefore he slew him also**—The sin of Onan has generally been supposed to be self-pollution; but this is certainly a mistake; his crime was his refusal to raise up seed to his brother, and rather than do it, by the act mentioned above, he rendered himself incapable of it. We find from this history that long before the Mosaic law it was an established custom, probably founded on a Divine precept, that if a man died childless his brother was to take his wife, and the children produced by this second marriage were considered as the children of the first husband, and in consequence inherited his possessions.

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<sup>23</sup> Disciple’s Study Bible

<sup>24</sup> JFB Commentary

<sup>25</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Book of Genesis Commentary, Genesis Study, KHouse.org

<sup>26</sup> Bible Background Commentary

**Torah Class:** But, in verse 9, we're told that Onan, the brother of the deceased Er, refused to impregnate Tamar, and then God killed him, because he, too, was evil in God's eyes. Why did Onan refuse to do this? Well, it says that it was because the son produced would not have been his. Let me dissect that a bit: the brother who died (Er) was the firstborn. Onan was the 2<sup>nd</sup> born; but as the eldest surviving brother, he was now the firstborn. But...if he produced a child in the name of his deceased brother, that child would have been entitled to part of Judah's estate. In other words, Onan would have received less if his deceased elder brother's family line had continued. Now, it's not that it was uncommon for family maneuvering to gain the most power and wealth when the father died; but to intentionally deny this widow a son did two things: it meant that her deceased husband's family line would end (a disaster to the ancient mind), and she would have no son to care for her as she grew older. This was tantamount to living in extreme poverty.

So, for Onan to knowingly do all this made him selfish and callous in a very high degree. And, Yehoveh took his life as a consequence.<sup>27</sup>

### **Genesis 38:11**

**Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren *did*. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.**

When Judah saw that his two sons were dead and the law had not been fulfilled by his second son, he promised Tamar his third son when he was old enough. This wouldn't have been long, possibly one or two years, as the three had been born in quick succession (Genesis 38:3-5). He may have been old enough at the time, but Judah hesitated to give her to him lest he die too. Judah's wrong caused Tamar to carry out the plan of having a child by Judah himself, whose own wife was now dead (Genesis 38:12).<sup>28</sup>

**[widows]** In a society that is subject to disease and warfare, it is not uncommon to find widows. Ancient Israel dealt with this problem through levirate marriage (to insure an heir for the deceased husband) and remarriage of young widows as soon as possible after the mourning period. They wore special garments which designated them as widows. Since a widow had no inheritance rights, special provisions were made for widows under the law allowing them to glean in harvested fields (Ruth 2) and protecting them from being oppressed (Deut. 14:29; Psalm 94:1-7). Only the widowed daughter of a priest could honorably return to her father's house (Leviticus 22:13).<sup>29</sup>

Judah's loss of two sons and reluctance to surrender the third foreshadows the tragic situation of Jacob, who will soon lose Joseph and Simeon (or so it will appear to him) and refuse to surrender Benjamin, as he must if the family is to survive (42:36-38).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>28</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>29</sup> Bible Background Commentary

<sup>30</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

**Remain a widow:** Instead of blaming his first two sons' deaths on their own wickedness, Judah blamed the innocent Tamar. He feared that he would lose his last son to her as well. So Judah stalled her by insincerely promising to marry her to his last son when he was of age. Presumably, Judah hoped she would eventually remarry outside the family.

**Ramban:** “for he said lest he also die, like his brethren.”

That is to say, he dismissed her with a paltry reply because he never intended to give her to him in marriage. *For he said, Lest he also die, like his brethren,* for she has established herself as one whose husbands die young. This is Rashi's Language.

Now I do not know why Judah, a ruler of his generation, should be shy towards this woman and not tell her, “Go in peace from my house,” and why should he mislead her when she is even forbidden to Shelah, just as the Rabbis have said concerning a married woman: “Twice establishes a presumption [that the woman is a *katlanith* – a woman whose husbands die].” However since Judah was angered by her harlotry to the extent of condemning her to be burned, it would appear that he originally did wish her to remain in his family. It is also unreasonable to say that Judah did not hear about how his children sinned against God, thus causing Him to deliver them into the hands of their fate, while Tamar was guiltless in their death.<sup>31</sup>

### **Genesis 38:12**

**And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.**

Shelah was not yet grown up (and even later when he was, Judah still refused). Sheep shearer season, which occurs in Palestine towards the end of March, was spent in more than usual hilarity, and the wealthiest masters invited their friends, as well as treated their servants, to sumptuous entertainments. Accordingly, it is said, Judah was accompanied by his friend, Hirah.<sup>32</sup>

**In process of time**—This phrase, which is in general use in the Bible, needs explanation; the original is **וַיִּרְבוּ הַיָּמִים** *vaiyirbu haiyamim*, and the days were multiplied. Though it implies an indefinite time, yet it generally embraces a pretty long period, and in this place may mean several years.<sup>33</sup>

The death of **Judah's wife** means that Judah had only one surviving son. Unless Judah remarried, his posterity was dependant on Shelah.

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<sup>31</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

<sup>32</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Book of Genesis Commentary, Genesis Study, KHouse.org

<sup>33</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

### **Genesis 38:13**

**And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.**

**Timnah.** The exact location of the town in this narrative is uncertain. It is a fairly common place name in the allotment list and in the Samson epic (see Joshua 15:10, 56; Judges 14:1-2; 2 Chron. 28:18), with connections to the tribal territory of Judah in the southern hill country (possibly Tell el-Batashi, three and a half miles east of Tel Mique-Ekron).

Apparently this deal that Judah had, which concerned seeing this Adullamite by the name of Hirah, was in connection with sheep. They were raising sheep and must have had a tremendous flock together. Judah goes up there to shear them. In the meantime, Tamar has been waiting all this while at home. She comes to the conclusion that Judah is not going to give Shelah to her as her husband.<sup>34</sup>

### **Genesis 38:14**

**And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.**

Tamar was imitating the harlots who were consecrated to the worship of Astarte.

**widow's clothes** A widow, like a married woman, did not wear a veil. She did wear a special garment which set her apart as a widow. These clothes entitled her to the privileges provided for widows in the law, such as gleaning and a portion of the tithe.

**[open place]** Einayim = eyes that look

**Chrysostom:** "What Happened was by divine design."

So, buoyed up with these promises Tamar sat in her father's house, the text says, waiting for her father-in-law's promise to take effect. When she saw that Judah was not prepared to honor his promise, for a while she accepted it mildly, forbearing to have relations with another man, being content with her widowhood and waiting for a suitable opportunity. She was anxious, you see, to have children by her father-in-law and desired to have children by him, not out of incontinence – perish the thought – but to avoid appearing to be some nameless person. As a matter of fact, what happened was by divine design, and the result was that her scheme took effect. (*Homilies on Genesis 62:3*).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:154). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>35</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 38:15**

**When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; because she had covered her face.**

Tamar felt she would have to take matters into her own hands if she were to be granted the rights of the levirate custom. Pretending to be one of the *kedeshot* (religious prostitutes), she tricked Judah into having illicit relations with her.

**[harlot] prostitution** The Canaanite culture utilized cult prostitution as a way of promoting fertility. Devotees of the mother goddess Ishtar or Anat would reside at or near shrines and would dress in a veil, as the symbolic bride of the god Baal or El. Men would visit the shrine and use the services of the cult prostitutes prior to planting their fields or during other important seasons such as shearing or the period of lambing. In this way they gave honor to the gods and reenacted the divine marriage in an attempt to insure fertility and prosperity for their fields and herds.

The use of a disguise in pursuit of a purpose that conforms to the will of God (and, in this case, religious law) recalls Jacob's deceit in Chapter 27.<sup>36</sup>

**Cyril of Alexandria:** "The incarnation is described"

The purpose and intention of the divinely inspired Scripture is to describe to us the mystery of Christ through countless facts. And with good reason some have compared it with a magnificent and illustrious city that does not have a single statue of its king or emperor but many statues placed in a most frequented spot, where everybody can admire them. See how Scripture does not omit any fact that refers to such mystery but rather describes at length any and all of them. Even though sometimes the text of the story does not seem to be very suitable, this does not prevent Scripture at all from rightly constructing and accomplishing its proposed demonstration. Its purpose is not to relate the lives of saints (this is not the case at all) but rather to instruct us in the knowledge of the mystery of Christ through facts, which can make our speech about him true and manifest. Therefore it cannot be criticized as if it were wandering from the truth. And in Judah and Tamar the mystery of the incarnation of our Savior is again described to us. (*Glaphyra on Genesis 6:1*)<sup>37</sup>.

### **Genesis 38:16**

**And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she *was* his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?**

Judah lived with the Canaanites, and now he is acting like the Canaanites, which is the reason He is going to get the people out of this land and take them down into the land of Egypt.

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<sup>36</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

<sup>37</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 38:17**

**And he said, I will send *thee* a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it*?**

**Wilt thou give me a pledge till thou send it?**—The word עֶרְבוֹן *erabon* signifies an earnest of something promised, a part of the price agreed for between a buyer and seller, by giving and receiving of which the bargain was ratified; or a deposit, which was to be restored when the thing promised should be given. St. Paul uses the same word in Greek letters, ἀρραβων, 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14. From the use of the term in this history we may at once see what the apostle means by the Holy Spirit being the EARNEST, ἀρραβων, of the promised inheritance; viz., a security given in hand for the fulfillment of all God's promises relative to grace and eternal life. We may learn from this that eternal life will be given in the great day to all who can produce this *erabon* or pledge. He who has the earnest of the Spirit then in his heart shall not only be saved from death, but have that eternal life of which it is the pledge and the evidence.<sup>38</sup>

Note the echo of the preceding chapter, where a kid also played a key role in deceiving a parent.

### **Genesis 38:18**

**And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand. And he gave *it* her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.**

**[signet]** A signet was a seal with one's name or emblem worn around the neck. It was indispensable for men of wealth or position, for by it all legal documents were certified. The loss was serious because documents might be forged and the character and credit of the owner abused. Hence, the anxiety of Judah to regain it (Genesis 38:20-23). As the case often is, passion had overcome reason and prudence, causing Judah to part with something very valuable and important to him.

**[bracelets]** Bracelets were worn by men of wealth and position. Sometimes signets were a part of the bracelets.

**[staff]** Important men of the East carried a staff with their name on it. Thus, Judah foolishly pledged all his marks of identification, playing into the hands of his daughter-in-law whom he had deceived (Genesis 38:11-14).

**seal, cord and staff** One distinctive means of signing a document in the ancient Near East was to use a cylinder seal, which contained a mirror-image incision that could be rolled onto a clay tablet or pressed into sealing wax or clay bullae. Cylinder seals, many carved from precious and semiprecious stones, have been discovered from nearly every period post-Early Bronze by archaeologists. The seal was often threaded onto a leather

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<sup>38</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

cord and worn around the neck of the owner. In Palestine it is more common to find stamp seals engraved on the flat side. Another form of identification mentioned here is the staff, an aid to walking as well as an animal goad and weapon. Since this was a personal item, it may well have been carved and polished, and thus known to belong to a particular person.<sup>39</sup>

In pledge that he would send a goat for payment, he left his seal (which hung suspended from a cord around his neck) and his staff with her. Bracelets, including armlets, were worn by men as well as women among the Hebrews. But the *Hebrew* word here rendered “bracelets,” is everywhere else translated “lace” or “ribbon.”

### **Genesis 38:19**

**And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.**

#### **Widows by Dake:**

Mentioned 84 times in Scripture; 15 times with the fatherless. Both were especially cared for under the law (Exodus 22:22-24; Deut. 10:18; Deut. 14:28-29; Deut. 16:11-14; Deut. 24:17-21; Deut. 27:19). God's providence is special over them (Psalm 68:5; Psalm 94:6; Psalm 146:9; Proverbs 15:25). Prophets rebuked Israel for oppressing them (Isaiah 1:17,23; Isaiah 10:1-2; Jeremiah 7:6-7; Jeremiah 22:3; Zech. 7:10; Malachi 3:5). Christ denounced Pharisees for oppressing them (Matthew 23:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47). Instructions to churches about them (1 Cor. 7:8-9; 1 Tim. 5:3-16; James 1:27). Vows of binding (Numbers 30:9). Daughters of priests, to be supported by father (Leviticus 22:13). Priests forbidden to marry widows (Leviticus 21:14). A brother to marry brother's widow to continue inheritances (Deut. 25:5-10; Matthew 22:23-33). Cause of the first trouble in the early church (Acts 6:1-7).

#### Widows Mentioned In Scripture:

1. Tamar (Genesis 38:1-39)
2. Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth (Ruth 1)
3. Tekoah (2 Samuel 14:5)
4. Hiram's mother (1 Kings 7:14)
5. Zeruah (1 Kings 11:26)
6. Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17)
7. Wife of a prophet (2 Kings 4)
8. Anna (Luke 2:36-37)
9. Poor widow (Mark 12:41; Luke 21:2)
10. Widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-15)
11. Importunate widow (Luke 18:1-8)
12. Tabitha or Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42)<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Bible Background Commentary

<sup>40</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

**Torah Class:** Well, now, by tradition, it would have been the Levirate duty of Judah's 3<sup>rd</sup> son, Shelah, to marry the twice-widowed Tamar; but it was judged that he was too young to marry, so Judah sent Tamar to go home and live with her own father until Shelah was old enough to marry her. But, as the words "for he thought" (referring to Judah) indicate, Judah had absolutely no intention of allowing his last son to Tamar.

Time passed. Judah's wife (the mother of his 3 sons) died, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> son Shelah matured and apparently was old enough to be married, but Judah did not allow it. He had seen the result of his other 2 sons marrying Tamar: they died. I think its safe to say that Judah didn't know why they died. We are told it was because they were evil; but I see no indication that Judah knew this. We have to understand that Judah was currently living a life utterly oblivious to God and His laws and commands. To Judah, Tamar was really bad luck. And, he wasn't going to chance losing his last son, his last heir, by letting him marry this woman who seemed to bring God's wrath upon her husbands.

After the formal period of mourning of his wife (probably 30 days), Judah goes to a place called Timnah to supervise and participate in the sheep-shearing season. Tamar found out about this and "took off her widow's garb". We know from other Biblical accounts that women were required to wear special clothing when their husbands died. Typically, it was only during the 30-day mourning period that they wore the widow's garb. But, possibly because Tamar had been denied her right to have a child from her deceased husband's brother, she continued to live in a state of mourning.

Judah was doing a terrible and shameful thing by not allowing Shelah to marry Tamar; Tamar was greatly disgraced by this. So, she developed a plan: she would find a way to sleep with her father-in-law, Judah, and directly from his seed perform the all-important task of carrying on the blood lines of her dead husband's family. Understanding that Judah would never do this knowingly, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute, and sets herself at a place called 'Einayim. This must have been a well-known spot for prostitutes to find clients, for 'Einayim means, "eyes that look". In other words, it was a place where men looked for this kind of women. But, even more, notice that she was thought to be a "temple prostitute". That is, the Canaanites had adopted prostitution as a "worship" practice (symbolizing fertility), and it was connected with the pagan temple to Baal. This was a duty, and in many ways an honor, for these woman to be prostitutes for Baal; and it was considered a legitimate practice by both customer and client, so Judah... so far off the reservation in his current state of mind..... thought nothing of it. Most of the mystery Babylon based religions adopted "sacred sex" as part of their religious practices, and there is a movement within the fringes of the new Spiritualist and New Age movements around the world, and in this nation, to bring the practice back. Their stated goal is to combine the erotic with the sacred...another fundamental of the Mystery Babylon religions. This is just a case in point of how easily we can adopt traditions within the Church that are not really in line with God's word or will, usually taken from something out of the pagan world's customs, and make them as though they're a "good thing". And, while we can attach sincerity to some of these long-held and comfortable traditions, often, as with Judah here, these things are an abomination to God.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

### **Genesis 38:20**

**And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.**

### **Genesis 38:21**

**Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot, that *was* openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this *place*.**

**Where is the harlot that was openly by the wayside?**—Our translators often render different Hebrew words by the same term in English, and thus many important shades of meaning, which involve traits of character, are lost. In Genesis 38:15, Tamar is called a harlot, זונה *zonah*, which, as we have already seen, signifies a person who prostitutes herself for money. In this verse she is called a harlot in our version; but the original is not זונה but קדשה *kedeshah*, a holy or consecrated person, from קדש *kadash*, to make holy, or to consecrate to religious purposes. And the word here must necessarily signify a person consecrated by prostitution to the worship of some impure goddess.

The public prostitutes in the temple of Venus are called ιεροδουλοι γυναικες, holy or consecrated female servants, by Strabo; and it appears from the words *zonah* and *kedeshah* above, that impure rites and public prostitution prevailed in the worship of the Canaanites in the time of Judah. And among these people we have much reason to believe that Astarte and Asteroth occupied the same place in their theology as Venus did among the Greeks and Romans, and were worshipped with the same impure rites.<sup>42</sup>

Cult prostitute and prostitute are the same word in Hebrew; many scholars doubt that cultic prostitution as it is usually understood existed in ancient Israel. A different term underlies “harlot” in vv. 15, 24.<sup>43</sup>

### **Genesis 38:22**

**And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*.**

### **Genesis 38:23**

**And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.**

**Lest we be shamed**—Not of the act, for this he does not appear to have thought criminal; but he didn't want his companions and neighbors making fun of him, for having been tricked out of his signet, bracelets, and staff, by a prostitute.

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<sup>42</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

<sup>43</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

## **Genesis 38:24**

**And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.**

Again Jacob's family experienced deception—this time by his daughter-in-law! Burnt? The crime of adultery was anciently punished in some cases by burning (Lev 21:9; Judg 15:6; Jer 29:22).

Why was Judah so open about his relations with a prostitute, yet ready to execute his daughter-in-law for being one? To understand this apparent contradiction, we must understand the place of women in Canaan. A woman's most important function was bearing children who would perpetuate the family line. To ensure that children belonged to the husband, the bride was expected to be a virgin and the wife was expected to have relations only with him. If a wife committed adultery, she could be executed. Some women, however, did not belong to families. They might be shrine prostitutes supported by offerings or common prostitutes supported by the men who used their services. Their children were nobody's heirs, and men who hired them adulterated nobody's bloodlines.

Judah saw no harm in hiring a prostitute for a night; after all, he was more than willing to pay. He was ready to execute Tamar, however, because if she was pregnant as a result of prostitution, his grandchild would not be part of his family line. Apparently the question of sexual morality never entered Judah's mind; his concern was for keeping his inheritance in the family. Ironically, it was Tamar, not Judah, who acted to provide him with legal heirs. By seducing him, she acted more in the spirit of the law than he did when he refused to send his third son to her.

This story in no way implies that God winks at prostitution. Throughout Scripture, prostitution is condemned as a serious sin. If the story has a moral, it is that faithfulness to family obligations is important. Incidentally, Judah and Tamar are direct ancestors of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 1:1-6).<sup>44</sup>

**Bring her forth, and let her be burnt**—As he had ordered Tamar to live as a widow in her own father's house till his son Shelah should be marriageable, he considers her therefore as the wife of his son; and as Shelah was not yet given to her, and she is found with child, she is reputed by him as an adulteress, and burning, it seems, was anciently the punishment of this crime. Judah, being a patriarch or head of a family, had, according to the custom of those times, the supreme magisterial authority over all the branches of his own family; therefore he only acts here in his juridical capacity. How strange that in the very place where adultery was punished by the most violent death, prostitution for money and for religious purposes should be considered as no crime!

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<sup>44</sup> Life Application Notes

**prostitution as capital crime.** Prostitution or harlotry was generally punished by stoning to death (Deut. 22:23-24). Tamar's sentence of death by fire is exceptional. This sentence is prescribed elsewhere only in cases where a daughter of a priest engages in harlotry and in cases of incest (Leviticus 20:14).<sup>45</sup>

Tamar's ostensible capital offense is not prostitution, but adultery (see Deut. 22:23-24), since she is still in a state akin to betrothal to Judah's family. Adultery is the false charge in the next chapter as well (39:7-18).<sup>46</sup>

**Ramban:** "and Judah said: bring her forth, and let her be burnt!"

Ephraim Makshoah, a disciple of Rabbi Meir, said in the name of Rabbi Meir: "Tamar was the daughter of Shem who was a priest. They therefore sentenced her to be burnt." Rashi quoted this Midrash but did not explain it. And I do not know this law, for a priest's daughter is not liable to be burned except for harlotry in conjunction with a binding relation to a husband, either espoused or married, as is explained in the Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin.

It appears to me that since Judah was a chief, an officer, and a ruler of the land, his daughter-in-law who committed harlotry against his was not judged by the same law as other people, but as one who degraded royalty. It is for this reason that it is written, And Judah said: Bring her forth, and let her be burnt, for the people came before him to do unto her in accordance with his command, and he declared her guilty of a capital crime because of the superior rank of royalty. Thus he judged her as if she had profaned her father in respect of his priesthood, but this was not the judgment meted out to commoners.<sup>47</sup>

### **Genesis 38:25**

**When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these *are*, *am* I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.**

[**Discern**] *nakar*, (H5234) *naw-kar'*; a primitive root; properly to *scrutinize*, i.e. look intently at; hence (with *recognition* implied), to *acknowledge*, *be acquainted with*, *care for*, *respect*, *revere*, or (with *suspicion* implied).

*Examine these* is identical in the Heb to "please examine it" in the previous chapter (37:32). These are, in fact, the only two instances of this expression in the Tanakh. Recognition (the same word in Heb) is a major theme in the Joseph story (see also 42:7-8).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Bible Background Commentary

<sup>46</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

<sup>47</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

<sup>48</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

## **Genesis 38:26**

**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.**

When she proved by the seal, cord, and staff that he was the guilty partner, Tamar had won the right to be the mother of Judah's children, though in a deceitful way. Her action was desperate and risky. And she thus appears in the Messianic family tree: Mt 1:3.

**[She hath been more righteous than I]** He was the cause of her sin and a partner in it, so was prompt to cancel the punishment he would have shared.

**She hath been more righteous than I**—It is probable that Tamar was influenced by no other motive than that which was common to all the Israelitish women, the desire to have children who might be heirs of the promise made to Abraham, etc. And as Judah had obliged her to continue in her widowhood under the promise of giving her his son Shelah when he should be of age, consequently his refusing or delaying to accomplish this promise was a breach of truth, and an injury done to Tamar.<sup>49</sup>

When Tamar revealed she was pregnant, Judah, who unknowingly had gotten her pregnant, moved to have her killed. Judah had concealed his own sin, yet he came down harshly on Tamar. Often the sins we try to cover up are the ones that anger us most when we see them in others. If you become indignant at the sins of others, you may have a similar tendency to sin that you don't wish to face. When we admit our sins and ask God to forgive us, forgiving others becomes easier.<sup>50</sup>

Tamar's actions are justified in Judah's eyes, and in the eyes of the author. She ensured that the family line of Judah was preserved. A Midrash in the Talmud sees Judah's Hebrew name (which includes every letter of the four-letter name of the LORD) as a reward for his public confession of wrongdoing in this episode (b. Sot. 10b). According to 1 Chron. 4:21, Shelah named his first son Er, suggesting that Judah did finally release him to the first Er's widow, Tamar.<sup>51</sup>

Tamar found herself with child by Judah because of her trickery. After pretending righteous indignation, Judah honestly confessed his guilt. This story furnished a contrast to Joseph's morality and integrity, explains the dangers of living among the Canaanites, creates suspense in the Joseph story, and shows the propagation of the messianic line by God's providence (v. 29; Ruth 4:12).

**McGee:** May I pause for a moment to make an application? Remember, all these things are written for our learning. They are examples unto us. Today we hear that if we are going to witness to this generation and if we are going to communicate to them, we've got to get down to their level. I disagree with that. God has never used that method to

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<sup>49</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament

<sup>50</sup> Life Application Notes

<sup>51</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

witness. God has always, under all circumstances, asked His people to live on a high and lofty plane.

I am firmly convinced that if God's people would give out His Word and live lives that would commend the gospel, He would make their witness effective. There are many pastors in our day who are so afraid they will lose the crowd that they do anything to attract people to their church—and some of them are having their problems. But God has never asked us to compromise. God does ask us to give out the Word of God—regardless of the size of our congregation.<sup>52</sup>

**Cyril of Alexandria:** “types of Spiritual Union”

In the first place it must be said that, even though there are some famous characters who are discovered to be guilty of acting in a not entirely honest way, however, since God in the holy Scriptures produces through them something useful for our salvation, let us drive away from us what may offend. If we take good care of our wisdom and intelligence, we are not unaware of what regards our profit. Let us consider how the blessed prophet Hosea took a prostitute as his wife, nor [did he refuse] a notorious marriage and was called the father of hateful sons, whose names were “Not my people” and “Unpitied.” I will not hesitate to declare what this means. In fact, after those who were the nobles and the princes in Israel opposed the preaching of the prophets and the divine word was displeasing to them, in the meantime God acted through his saints so that they might see the future from what was happening as if it was magnificently and expressly depicted in a picture. God did this so they might rededicate their minds to understanding their hope and might look with the strongest application for what would have been salutary to them and might also persuade others to do the same. And they learned that they would not have been the elected people anymore but would have been received among those who show no mercy, if they behaved with hardness and immoderation. Were not they afflicted by evils and overwhelmed by them everywhere?... Since we now understand the criterion and direction of the divine plan in those times, we will not condemn anymore the adultery of Tamar and Judah, but rather we will say that their union occurred in the divine plan. In fact, the former was in need of the seed of procreation as her legitimate husband was lacking it. The latter was guilty of a slight fault since he was free after his first wife had already died. So this union and generation teach us about our spiritual union and the rebirth of our mind. The human mind cannot be drawn to truth in a more appropriate way. (*Glaphyra on Genesis 6:2*).<sup>53</sup>

**Genesis 38:27**

**And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins *were* in her womb.**

**[twins were in her womb]** Second of two sets of twins (Genesis 25:24). In both instances one tried to get ahead of the other.

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<sup>52</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:155). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>53</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 38:28**

**And it came to pass, when she travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.**

**The midwife—bound upon his hand a scarlet thread**—The binding of the scarlet thread about the wrist of the child whose arm appeared first in the birth, serves to show us how solicitously the privileges of the birthright were preserved. Had not this caution been taken by the midwife, Pharez would have had the right of primogeniture to the prejudice of his elder brother Zarah. And yet Pharez is usually reckoned in the genealogical tables before Zarah; and from him, not Zarah, does the line of our Lord proceed. See Matthew 1:3. Probably the two brothers, as being twins, were conjoined in the privileges belonging to the birthright.<sup>54</sup>

### **Genesis 38:29**

**And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez.**

[Pharez] *perets*, (H6556) *peh'-rets*; from Hebrew 6555 (*parats*); a *break* (literal or figurative) :- breach, breaking forth (in), × forth, gap.

[breach] *perets*, (H6556) *peh'-rets*; from Hebrew 6555 (*parats*); a *break* (literal or figurative) :- breach, breaking forth (in), × forth, gap.

[breach] Breach, because he broke forth and was born before his brother. He was in the direct line from Adam to Christ (Matthew 1:3). This parenthetical chapter is inserted here to show that the Messiah came of Judah and Pharez.

### **Genesis 38:30**

**And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah.**

[Zerach] (H2225) *zeh'-rakh*; from Hebrew 2224 (*zarach*); a *rising* of light :- rising. Also some translate it as “*scarlet*” because of the scarlet thread the midwife tied on his wrist.

God gave Tamar twins, and the line of Judah continued because of her. It is as if the oracle concerning Jacob’s ruling over his older brother (27:29) was being relived in the line of Judah. What was so significant was the connection with Judah’s dealing with Joseph (37:26-28). He and his brothers sold their younger brother into Egypt, thinking they *could thwart God’s design* that the elder brothers would serve the younger Joseph. Yet in Judah’s own family, despite his attempts to hinder Tamar’s marriage, God’s will

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<sup>54</sup> Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Old Testament

worked out in a poignant confirmation of the principle that the elder would serve the younger.

**[Zarah]** Hebrew: a rising of light or dawn.

This chapter contains details, which probably would never have obtained a place in the inspired record, had it not been to exhibit the full links of the chain that connects the genealogy of the Saviour with Abraham; and in the disreputable character of the ancestry who figure in this passage, we have a remarkable proof that "He made himself of no reputation" [Phil. 2:7].<sup>55</sup>

The birth story of Perez and Zerah is highly reminiscent of that of Jacob and Esau in 25:21-26. It is from Perez that King David was descended, as reported, for example, in Ruth (Ruth 4:18-22), a book with striking similarities to Genesis Chapter 38 (see also Ruth 4:11-12).<sup>56</sup>

**Torah Class:** Tamar's plan works; she tricks Judah into thinking she's just a temple prostitute, he purchases her favors, and she becomes pregnant. Three months later, when it is clear to all that Tamar is with child, someone tells Judah about it, and in order to save the family honor, Judah orders her burned to death for adultery; after all, she was unmarried and pregnant and that was proof enough of her offense. The notion in that era was that Tamar was bringing dishonor to Judah and his household.

However, Judah finds out that he is the father, and realizes that by withholding his last son, Shelah, from Tamar; he has caused her to take this drastic action. He now declares that it is he that has done wrong, not Tamar, and so he repents and she is spared. Even more, Judah says that Tamar was righteous in what she did. This is another of those statements in the Bible that while factually true and accurate, the person making the statement is just plain wrong. Tamar was NOT righteous in what she did, anymore than Judah was righteous in what he eventually did. God simply used them despite their sin and rebellion, to achieve His divine purposes.

Tamar goes on to have twin boys: Perez and Zerach. To Judah, his "wrong" had been to cause shame upon Tamar by not giving his son Shelah as a husband to her; that is, the breaking of a tradition. But, the wrong that was actually being righted was of a spiritual nature; because Judah intended to carry on his family line via his Canaanite wife, which produced Canaanite children, and God would have none of it. Judah was utterly oblivious to his sin before God, because, to him, everything turned out OK in the end...so he thought.

Now, the ancient Rabbis give us a helpful piece of information that is not contained in this story: Tamar is a Semite, a descendant of Shem, the sanctified line of good. That is, she is not a Canaanite, a descendant of Ham, the accursed line of evil. Up to now, Judah had produced his 3 sons by a Canaanite woman. And, what happened to these 3 sons of a Canaanite mother? Well, 2 of them died. The 3<sup>rd</sup> one that should have impregnated

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<sup>55</sup> JFB Commentary

<sup>56</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, Tanakh Translation, Berlin & Brettler, Jewish Publication Society, Oxford Press

Tamar, and would have produced the line that carried on the line of Judah, never got the opportunity to do that, because Judah refused to let it happen for all the wrong reasons. The result is that Judah himself, unwittingly made Tamar pregnant. The result is that despite Judah's intention that the line of covenant promise (which he apparently cared little about) would have been polluted by Canaanite blood, it wound up that Judah impregnated a Semite woman, Tamar, and from that came the Semite sons that would carry on the line of promise.

We have seen in previous chapters to what length God went so as not to allow Canaanite blood to be mixed with Israelite blood...particularly when it would affect the line of covenant promise. Yehoveh even did it when the covenant line was *not* directly affected.... as when the planned marriage between Jacob's daughter Dinah and the King of Shechem's son was averted when all the males of Shechem were killed by Simeon and Levi.

But, since Judah is the father of Tamar's children, and since Tamar is a Semite, the children from their union would be acceptable to God; so we see that the particular line of covenant promise, that began with Abraham, which went on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and now to Judah...the purity of the line that would eventually produce the Messiah is preserved by Tamar's rather bold and unsavory act. And, as we look in other chapters of the Bible where we see the lengthy genealogy of Jesus, we get confirmation of this; because we see that Perez, the firstborn of Tamar's twin sons, is a direct ancestor of Yeshua; Perez, son of Judah by Tamar, his widowed daughter-in-law, is the one who carries forth the line of promise for the tribe of Judah...with NO Canaanite blood in him. Further, we see God's Governing Dynamic of Sanctification at work: Perez is divided, separated, and elected away from all the other children of Judah, to be the conduit to continue on with the all-important line of the covenant promise first given to Abraham.

But, we also see the Governing Dynamic of Divine Providence playing out as Judah and Tamar each attempt to satisfy some cultural traditions, and their own selfish lusts and ambitions. Neither had the intent to obey God, nor did either realize they would produce the next generation of the line of covenant promise: Perez. There could not be a better example and demonstration of Divine Providence that this story.<sup>57</sup>

### **Adam Clarke's Summary:**

THERE are several subjects in this chapter on which it may not be unprofitable to spend a few additional moments.

1. The insertion of this chapter is a farther proof of the impartiality of the sacred writer. The facts detailed, considered in themselves, can reflect no credit on the patriarchal history; but Judah, Tamar, Zarah, and Pharez, were progenitors of the Messiah, and therefore their birth must be recorded; and as the birth, so also the circumstances of that birth, which, even had they not a higher end in view, would be valuable as casting light upon some very ancient customs, which it is interesting to understand. These are not forgotten in the preceding notes.

2. On what is generally reputed to be the sin of Onan, something very pointed should be spoken. But who dares and will do it, and in such language that it may neither pollute the

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<sup>57</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

ear by describing the evil as it is, nor fail of its effect by a language so refined and so laboriously delicate as to cover the sin which it professes to disclose? Elaborate treatises on the subject will never be read by those who need them most, and anonymous pamphlets are not likely to be regarded. The sin of self-pollution, which is generally considered to be that of Onan, is one of the most destructive evils ever practiced by fallen man. In many respects it is several degrees worse than common whoredom, and has in its train more awful consequences, though practiced by numbers who would shudder at the thought of criminal connections with a prostitute. It excites the powers of nature to undue action, and produces violent secretions, which necessarily and speedily exhaust the vital principle and energy; hence the muscles become flaccid and feeble, the tone and natural action of the nerves relaxed and impeded, the understanding confused, the memory oblivious, the judgment perverted, the will indeterminate and wholly without energy to resist; the eyes appear languishing and without expression, and the countenance vacant; the appetite ceases, for the stomach is incapable of performing its proper office; nutrition fails, tremors, fears, and terrors are generated; and thus the wretched victim drags out a most miserable existence, till, superannuated even before he had time to arrive at man's estate, with a mind often debilitated even to a state of idiotism, his worthless body tumbles into the grave, and his guilty soul (guilty of self-murder) is hurried into the awful presence of its Judge! Reader, this is no caricature, nor are the colourings overcharged in this shocking picture. Worse woes than my pen can relate I have witnessed in those addicted to this fascinating, unnatural, and most destructive of crimes. If thou hast entered into this snare, flee from the destruction both of body and soul that awaits thee! God alone can save thee. Advice, warnings, threatenings, increasing debility of body, mental decay, checks of conscience, expostulations of judgment and medical assistance, will all be lost on thee: God, and God alone, can save them from an evil which has in its issue the destruction of thy body, and the final perdition of thy soul! Whether this may have been the sin of Onan or not, is a matter at present of small moment; it may be thy sin; therefore take heed lest God slay thee for it. The intelligent reader will see that prudence forbids me to enter any farther into this business.<sup>58</sup>

**CHART: WOMEN IN JESUS' FAMILY TREE**

Tamar	Canaanite	Genesis 38:1-30
Rahab	Canaanite	Joshua 6:22-25
Ruth	Moabite	Ruth 4:13-22
Bathsheba	Israelite	2 Samuel 12:24-25

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<sup>58</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament