

GENESIS 38 JUDAH AND TAMAR

BACKGROUND:

GEN. 37 In type Christ has been rejected by the Jews, and turned over to the Gentiles (Egypt). Now in Chap. 38 we're going to see the history of the Jewish nation, in type, through Judah.

37:4 (his brothers saw that Jacob loved Joseph more than all his brothers) **"...hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms."**

37:5 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and **they hated him even more.**

37:13,14 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? **Come, I will send you to them.**" So he said to him, **"Here I am."** (Lit. "Behold I" or "I am ready")

The father in heaven sending the Son (Christ) to his brothers (Jews) feeding the flock.

37:18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, **they conspired against him to kill him.**

Matt. 12:14 (after healing a man on the Sabbath) Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

37:20 "Come therefore, **let us now kill him and cast him into some pit;** and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' **We shall see what will become of his dreams!"** (sneered at Him, "He saved others let him save himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One" Luke 23:35)

21 But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, **"Let us not kill him."** (Pilate three times declared Him not guilty, John 18:38, 19:4 and 19:6 and "made efforts to release Him" 19:12)

37:23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that **they stripped Joseph of his tunic,** the tunic of many colors that was on him.

Matt. 27:28 And they **stripped Him** and put a scarlet robe on Him.

37:25a “ **And they sat down to eat a meal.** Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming ...”

Matt.27:36 **Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.**

AND IN GEN 42, SOME 20 YEARS LATER WHEN IN FRONT OF JOSEPH TO GET BREAD, WE READ

Gen. 42:21 ¶ Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for **we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear;** therefore this **distress** (same heb. Word as “anguish” above) has come upon us." (**This is 20 years later, and still “convicted”**)

Zech 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then **they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him** as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

Joseph has been ambushed, stripped of his coat, brothers wanted to kill him, thought better of it, (Reuben --- Pilate --- suggested the pit but not kill him (37:21, 22) threw him in a dry well, sat down to eat lunch, heard Josephs' pleas (Gen 42:21 did nothing) and Judah suggests sell him and make a profit to the Midianite traders coming by, going to Egypt. (37:27)

(Sold for 20 shekels of silver (37:28) Note Christ was sold for 30 shekels of silver as the price of a slave. Turns out 20 shekels of silver is the price of a slave that is between 5 and 20 years old. (Lev. 27:5) and we know that Joseph was 17 at the time he was sold into Egypt. Another type of Christ.)

I think Judah actually thought the Midianites would be so rough on him as a slave that he might die with them and his blood wouldn't be on the brothers. Or at least he's out of their hair and don't have to listen to the pompous 17 year old anymore.

37:27 (Judah speaking) “Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, **and not lay our hands on him;** for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.”

Matt 12:6 "Yet I say to you (to Pharisees) that in this place there is One greater than the temple.

8 "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

9 Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue.

10 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" --that they might accuse Him.

Mt 12:13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.

14 Then **the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.**

Jews (Judah and brothers in chap. 37 have rejected Joseph) reject Christ and plot to kill him. That's where we are at the end of chapter 37, Joseph turned over to Gentiles (Egypt), into slavery.

Now in chapter 38 we'll see the nation of Israel sinking into sin and needing a savior in Joseph (Christ).

GENESIS CHAPTER 38

38:1 "...at that time" I think this is right after they've gone back to Jacob with the bloody coat and Jacob is inconsolable with grief.

Did Judah get ostracized from other brothers, since his idea to sell Joseph, when we know from 38:29, it was Reuben's intention to haul him out of the pit and return him home.

Did Judah feel remorse, who knows, but leaves home and goes to Adullam. Hebrew for "departed" is literally "**went down**" either physically, or more importantly **spiritually**.

Adullam is referenced in I Sam 22:1 as having a cave where David hid from Saul, A CANAANITE TOWN.

Not supposed to marry a Canaanite; (Canaan was a son of Ham — of Noah— from whom we got the Hittites Jebusites Ammorites Hivites, etc.)

Gen. 24:3 (Abraham to his servant who is going out to get a wife for Isaac)... "and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, **that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites**, among whom I dwell."

Gen. 28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "**You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.**"

38:2 Yet Judah married the daughter of Shua, a Canaanite, so lived a lot of years in this area, enough to have three kids. Last one (younger than the first two) was born in Chezib (v. 5) meaning "deceitful" how appropriate.

Notice that Judah's wife **is named** in I Chr. 2:3, but not anywhere in chap. 38; even in I Chr. just called Bath-Shua, or "daughter of Shua".

1Ch 2:3 The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, and Shelah. These three were born to him by **Bath-Shua**, the Canaanitess. (Some translations say "daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess", rather than Bath-shua) Er, the firstborn of Judah, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; so He killed him.

Note also that Judah "**saw**" and "**took**" her, the same Hebrew words that are used when David "saw" and "took" Bathsheba the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

38:3-5 3 kids ER ONAN and SHELAH (quite a bit younger)

v.6 Judah takes a wife for ER, Tamar, undoubtedly a Canaanite woman.

"Tamar" means palm-tree. (Ps. 92:12 "**The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree.**") Interesting that David has a daughter named Tamar, who is raped by Amnon (David's 1st son), Amnon is killed by Absalom (David's 3rd son) and Absalom has a daughter that he also names Tamar. Coincidence ????

ER means either "enmity" or "watchful" I think God watching over the Jews and the verdict on ER is (vs.7) "was **evil in the sight of the Lord**, so the **Lord took his life.**" No accident, but the sovereignty of God.

NOTE prophetically all the kings of Israel in the divided kingdom were "evil in the sight of the Lord."

38:8, 9 When ER died childless, it was the second son's duty to marry

Tamar and any child born would technically be Er's son and therefore heir to Judah's estate. (See Deut. 25:5) Called a "levirate marriage"

De 25:5 ¶ "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

6 "And it shall be that the **firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother**, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

He would also get the "double portion" from Judah. If ER remains childless, then the inheritance devolves down to the second son, Onan, which is what Onan wanted to happen.

ONAN means "iniquity". He dies too by God's hand. He interfered with God's plan, despised his brother ER, and was greedy in wanting the inheritance for himself.

"when" in v.9 is "whenever" meaning more than once. So he had the "fun" but deviously wouldn't allow her to get pregnant. So to Judah it looks like something wrong with Tamar.

38: 10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.

SHELAH means "sprout" born in Chezib, maybe other two in Adullam?? must be considerably younger, since too young to marry Tamar when Onan dies. (v. 11)

38:11 "Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up...."

Tamar had no choice to marry anyone else as long as Judah retained her, so she had no choice but to remain a widow in her father's house and WAIT.

BUT I don't think Judah ever intended to give Shelah to Tamar, "for fear that he too may die like his brothers" I.E. something wrong with Tamar in his mind, so Judah sends her home to her father as a widow, **to wait until Shelah gets old enough to marry her. So she is technically still married**

to ER, which means she just sits and waits.

38:12 “Now after a considerable time....” (PROBABLY YEARS because by v. 14 it’s obvious to Tamar that Judah isn’t going to honor his promise of giving Shelah to Tamar as husband)

Judah's wife, daughter of Shua, dies, Judah mourns, and then heads to see friend Hira for "sheep shearing" This is an annual event that is quite festive, with lots of food and drink and although sheep shearing does get done, it’s really more of a party, and probably got real drunk. Otherwise wouldn't approach a harlot he can't even see (v.15). Just pure lust on his part.

The sheep shearing is at “Timnah” which is where Samson went to get his first wife (not Delilah, she was later), a Philistine woman who obviously caught his eye in that he told his parents to “get her for me as a wife” (Judges 14:2). The point is lots of apparently pretty Philistines.

38:14 Jacob deceived Isaac his father in getting the birthright, **Judah** deceived his father, Jacob, in leading him to think Joseph was dead, and now **Tamar** will deceive Judah because he’s gone back on his promise to her to give her Shelah as husband instead of ER. **She’s taking matters into her own hands.**

(Compare this to Ruth, a Moabite and therefore hated of Israel, who also lost her husband and no children and how she “waited on the Lord” in Ruth 3:18)

38:15 Judah thought she was a **harlot**. Covered her face so he wouldn’t recognize her, but said “harlot” by way dressed, and where she waited for him. Yet when sending Hira to get his credit card back, made up a story about her being a **"temple prostitute" (vs 21)** — a different Hebrew word than “harlot” in v. 15 ---- because “temple prostitutes” were okay, particularly with the Canaanites. SAD SAD state of affairs.

vs. 16-19 Let’s make a deal. Terms are sex for a Kid (as in goat) with a down payment of Judah’s seal, cord and staff. May all be together as seal tied to his staff with a cord. But in any event it is easily recognizable as particular to Judah alone. No question whose property it is.

38:17 “I will send you a kid from the flock.” She said, moreover, “Will you

give a **pledge** until you send it?” “ What **pledge** shall I give you?”

FIRST AND ONLY TIME THIS WORD USED IS HERE IN GEN. 38

“**Pledge**” is ‘arabown’ (6162) in Hebrew and in Greek is the same word carried over from the Hebrew ‘arabon’ (728) “earnest”

Only used 3 times in OT, all here in Gen. 38 and “earnest” in NT also only used three times, **always referring to the Holy Spirit.**

Used in **Eph. 1:13,14**

“...in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is the **earnest** (guarantee or down payment, our word “arabon”) of our inheritance **until the redemption** of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

See also 2 Cor. 1:22 and 5:5

2Co 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,

22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a **pledge**.

2Co 5:5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a **pledge** (literally down payment).

38:18 The pledge was:

“Your **seal**”

First time used in Bible

“Your **cord**”

First time used in Bible

“Your **staff** that is in your hand”

First time used in Bible

SEAL is 2368 (Heb. chotham) means signet ring, indicates Royalty, and unique

Hag 2:23 'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, 'and **will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,**' says the LORD of hosts.”

CORD is 6616 (Heb. Pathiy) means twine, bound, lace, thread, bracelet Used in Ex 38:28,27 and 39:3,21 referring to “lace” used in making the breastplate & ephod for the **priests**.

STAFF is 4294 (Heb. Matteh) used over 200 times meaning “rod” as in rod of Moses, Aaron’s rod that budded, and also translated “tribe”. Essence is “support” as in a walking staff, or “mutual aid” hence a tribe upon which everyone depends.

STARKEY SO WATCH OUT:

Could we be seeing a type of the “**pledge** of our inheritance in Christ and seeing his “**seal**” as King, his “**cord**” as Priest, and his “**staff**” as Prophet, given by Judah to his lineage, Israel (and us as grafted in)????

vs. 20-23 Tries to send the Kid and get his seal, cord and staff back. Can’t find any “**temple prostitute**” here. (Different Heb word here than “harlot” in vs. 15 used by Judah. Has made up a story for Hira).

So rather than face the ridicule and laughter of his peers, he sweeps it all under the rug. Oh well, “let her keep them, lest we become a laughing stock.”

38:24 “**Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot**” (zanah) Indicates she is still betrothed to Shelah in Judah’s eyes and therefore a widow and yet never been given to him.

"let her be burned"

No law given yet (Moses) but usually death by stoning Deut.22:21, so could be burning to brand her for life, rather than burning to death. However in Lev.21:9 if a Priest’s daughter was found engaged in harlotry, she would be burned to death.

Interesting that he quickly jumps to a conclusion and pronounces judgement since “obviously” she’s betrothed to Shelah, but had sex with someone else, not considering that he’s the one who committed adultery with her; just no one knows that YET. Once found out, he’d be the one to “be burned”.
Deut. 22:23,24 (both man and woman stoned to death)

v 25-26

No doubt on some level, he is relieved to find a legal way out of his dilemma over having her marry his third and last son. Technically, she is betrothed to that son, and getting pregnant by someone else is tantamount to committing adultery. But in reality, it is Judah who has prevented her from becoming

Shelah's wife. He has also prevented her from marrying into any other family by obligating her to wait for Shelah to grow up. By keeping her in abeyance, Judah has in essence promised her that she will bear a Judahite heir. She is committed to doing that, and all her actions lead to that result. She is claiming her right to become a mother in the family that has chosen her. Thus Judah says **"She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah"**

NOT saying that what Tamar did was "righteous" but that she is "in the right, not I" in that I deceived her in not giving my son to her to raise up an heir through eldest son ER.

NOTE also in v.25 Tamar doesn't make a spectacle of Judah (as you would think she might want to, for deceiving her out of Shelah) and wave the seal, cord and staff in public and say "Ah Ha, Gotcha". No she "sent to father-in-law" and said to him "please examine and see whose these are". Seems like she did this respectfully and to Judah alone. He quickly recognizes his wrong and her exercising her family rights and knows the offspring are his.

God's plan all along and providence in what is clearly sin. Like Samson getting a wife from the Philistines, and parents "not knowing it was of the Lord." (Judges 14:4)

v.26 Judah has unwittingly performed Shelah's duty to preserve the line through Tamar, but once that is done, **he has no further relations with her**, as that would be incest. Lev.18:15.

We find in 1Chr.4:21 "The **sons of Shelah the son of Judah were Er** the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers of the house of Ashbea;"

The bible doesn't say, but at least possible that Tamar is eventually married to Shelah and interesting that Shelah's firstborn is named "Er" after his older brother.

38:27-30

Tamar gives birth to twins, like Jacob and Esau, Perez born first although Zerah had stuck out a hand and tied a scarlet thread around it to claim birthright. **SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AGAIN**
Perez is in line of Christ in Matt. 1:3 **even though an illegitimate son.**

Matt. 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

3 **Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar**, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

(Both Perez and Zerah are named ---- unlike Esau as the twin of Jacob)

Deut. says an illegitimate son is **cursed to the 10th generation.**

De 23:2 "One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

Ruth 4 tells us that David is the 10th generation after Perez, **so no one from tribe of Judah could be king in the land UNTIL David.** WOW !!!

Ru 4:18 Now this is the genealogy of Perez: **Perez** begot **Hezron**;

19 Hezron begot **Ram**, and Ram begot **Amminadab**;

20 Amminadab begot **Nahshon**, and Nahshon begot **Salmon**;

21 Salmon begot **Boaz**, and Boaz begot **Obed**;

22 Obed begot **Jesse**, and Jesse begot **David**.

Judah had 5 kids (I Chr. 2:4, ER (died childless), Onan (died childless) Shelah (I Chr 4:21 had several kids, and Perez and Zerah, both illegitimate.)

Zerah with the scarlet thread, and born second, but with the birthright, means "sunrise" or "dawning"

i.e. the first one up, the sunrise, had 5 children 1 Chr. 2:6

Zimri "praise worthy" aka Zabdi (in Josh 7:1) "gift of Jehovah"

Ethan "firm"

Heman "faithful"

Calcol "sustenance"

Dara aka Darda "pearl of wisdom"

1 Kings 4:31 Solomon's wisdom is compared to Ethan Heman Calcol and Darda and is said to be even greater than these. Good company.

STARKEY SO WATCH OUT: Could be a couple of ideas.

(1) So could it be that Perez (whose name means “breach” or “break out”) as the line of Christ is the Jewish nation that rejects Christ as Messiah, and Zerah, born at the same time, is typical of the faithful remnant of Jews that rule and reign with Christ. (Scarlet thread could be the blood of Christ, like Rahab and “scarlet thread in the window” that redeems the remnant). Both are mentioned in the Matt. 1 genealogy. Food for thought.

OR

(2) Consider that Zerah, with scarlet thread, is the **first man Adam** (at the “dawning” of creation) who though is first, as soon as born (created by God) sins (and so a scarlet thread attached “Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be white as snow” — Is. 1:18).

Perez then would be “**the last Adam**” — **Christ** as in **1 Cor. 15:45** “And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being’. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; **the second Man is the Lord from heaven.**

And of course it is Perez that is in the line of Christ in Matt. 1

We see this principle of the second born being the blessed one a lot in Scripture, with Abel over Cain, Shem over Japheth, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Rachel over Leah, David over all his older brothers, etc.

STARKEY CONCLUSIONS ---- DANGEROUS

- 1) Judah marries a Canaanite Woman Bath-Shua --- Idolatry, has 3 children whose names mean Enmity, Iniquity, and Sprout, the first two of whom die. Has an incestuous relationship with Tamar, his daughter-in-law resulting in twins, Perez (through whom Christ comes) and Zerah (the faithful remnant in Revelation)
- 2) Christ's human lineage is NOT honorable. Consider Perez, Rahab (Canaanite harlot), Ruth (Moabite) etc. in Matt. 1 consider Phil 2:7 “emptied himself”

Phil. 2:6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but **emptied himself**, taking the form of a bondservant, **and coming in the likeness of men.**

- 3) There is **none righteous, no not one.** Judah's conduct is purely flesh and disgusting, the depravity of man. God does not choose anyone based on their merit. God chose a greedy, brother-selling, prostitute-monger as tribe through which Messiah would come.
- 4) Perez is in the line of Christ (Matt 1:3) but an illegitimate son, so cursed for 10 generations (Deut. 23:2) and guess what per Ruth 4: 18-22 **DAVID IS THE 10TH GENERATION.**
- 5) Shows the **inspiration of the Scriptures.** You'd never put this sordid account in the line of the King, unless God wrote it for His purposes.
- 6) The **unfaithfulness of Judah**, both personally and as a kingdom vs. the **Faithfulness of Joseph** as a type of Christ in chapter 39ff.
- 7) God is sovereign in providing His seed through Judah in a way **NO ONE** would expect to get to David "his beloved" as typical Lord and King **Mt 3:17** And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

THEN GO INTO CHAP. 39, AGAIN ABOUT JOSEPH, BUT NOW AS A SERVANT IN EGYPT (THE INCARNATION) ABOUT TO REDEEM HIS BACK SLIDDEN PEOPLE.

IT ALL FITS BEAUTIFULLY AND SOVEREIGNLY INTO GOD'S PLAN

- Presentation of Joseph (Christ) to 11 brothers (Jews) --- Chap. 37
- Rejection of Christ by the Jews (Chap. 37 and Matt. 12)
- History of idolatry and sin of Judah, but through it the line of Christ is preserved and maintained. --- Chap. 38
- Christ redeeming His people as the incarnation and as a servant (Joseph in Egypt) — Chap. 39ff