

GENESIS 37-38

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 37 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Tonight, we begin the final section of the book of Genesis and the focus of the next twelve chapters is the life of Joseph, Genesis chapter 38 focuses on Judah and Tamar. But think about this for a minute. We have two chapters on creation but one quarter of the book of Genesis is devoted to this man, Joseph!

Why is Joseph so important?

Why spend so much time with just this one man?

Because Joseph is a type of Christ, and as we will see as we study through the life of Joseph over the next several weeks, the Holy Spirit is painting for us this beautiful picture of Jesus for us.

Arthur W. Pink, in his commentary on Genesis, lists a hundred and one ways that Joseph is a type of Christ.

We will look at some of them, I am not sure we will cover everyone, but it is amazing.

First of all, and just a side note, there is nothing mentioned of Joseph sinning ever and the only other person where there is no sin mentioned of someone is Daniel, besides Jesus, of course.

Does that mean that they did not sin, Joseph and Daniel?

No, because all of us have sinned, but the Holy Spirit edited that out for us to give us the picture, as Jesus was sinless!

Let me just give you a few of these things that were manifested in Joseph's life that give to us a picture of Jesus.

- Joseph was sent forth by his father.
- Joseph becomes a servant.
- Joseph was sorely tempted, yet sinned not.
- Joseph was falsely accused.
- Joseph was thirty years old when he began his life's work.
- Joseph alone dispensed the Bread of Life.
- Joseph became a Savior to all peoples.
- Joseph was unknown and unrecognized by his brethren.
- Joseph was made known to his brethren at the second time.
- Joseph received a Gentile bride during his rejection by his brethren.

- Taken from – Arthur W. Pink – Gleanings in Genesis

Not only that, but we will also see the hand of God work in spite of what the brothers of Joseph had done to him.

Now if I were God, I would have made it a lot easier for Joseph to provide food during a time of great famine, than what we see happen here in Genesis.

But in the midst of these times, we don't see the full picture. Not only was God working in the life of Joseph, but also in the life of his brother's and his dad. This was the perfect plan, and it was carried out in spite of what they tried to do with Joseph.

You are never going to outsmart God and that is why I laugh when I see man pounding his chest like he is somebody and doing things like they are in charge. But in the end, they are carrying out the plan of God and yes, they are responsible for their actions, but God knew what they were going to do and used it to accomplish His will in this world! Never forget that no matter how difficult things may get for you, God is still working!

And listen to these words from one writer. He said, ***“He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man.”*** (Boice)

With that said, let’s begin reading in Genesis chapter 37, beginning in verse 1, and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we begin to look at the life of Joseph!

GENESIS 37

VERSE 1

I want you to notice the dramatic contrast between Esau and Jacob.

Esau had it all, all the possessions you could ask for, while Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, the Promise Land, the land of Canaan.

How true this is, that secular and worldly greatness comes far more quickly than spiritual greatness.

You see, God is taking these lumps of coal and through pressure and heat – trials and tribulations, He is making us into precious diamonds, and that does take time.

But God will finish the work He started in each of us!

And the wonderful thing is that the work that God is doing will last and yet, what the world puts there hope in will all be taken away one day!

VERSES 2-4

One of the problems for Joseph is that his father Jacob loved him more than his other sons, and they were well aware of this, it was obvious to them.

Also, I believe Jacob trusted Joseph more than he did his other sons and thus, he put Joseph in charge over them.

How do I know that?

Because this “**tunic of many colors**” is really a long-sleeved robe and it extended down to the ankles. Thus, it was not a workingman’s garment even though Joseph did assist them in the work. That was just the type of guy he was.

Joseph was like a foreman, keeping an eye on his brothers making sure that they were doing what they were supposed to be doing. And when they didn’t do the work, Joseph told his dad. Which didn’t help his relationship with his brothers, and it is only going to get worse!

Now some feel that placing Joseph in charge was not the right thing to do. I disagree.

The reason I say that is because look at Genesis 37:3 once again and what is the name that Jacob is called?

He is called Israel or governed by God and thus, I don’t believe he was being carnal here but spiritual. That he was being guided by the Holy Spirit and thus, gave Joseph this “**tunic of many colors.**”

Already the brothers of Joseph don’t like him, and it is only going to get worse as we read on.

VERSES 5-8

Now some, in reading this say that Joseph was wrong in the way he handled this.

They say that he lacked tack or even worse, he was boasting.

I don't believe so. Yes, he may have been little naïve in thinking his brothers would be excited to hear what he had to say, but again, he is sharing with them what God has shown him.

And I think many miss this point. God spoke to Joseph in a dream and the message may have been unpleasant for his brothers to hear, but it was the truth and they needed to hear the truth, even though they couldn't handle the truth!

We hear that same garbage today that we need to be more positive. Well, okay, outside of Jesus Christ I am positive you are going to Hell, thus, ask Him to be your Lord and Savior and I am positive you will be saved!

How's that, it is positive, isn't it?

I am sorry if when I teach, I offend you. And I realize that some of you get mad at me. But do you really think I am going to water down the Word of God so that you are not offended. You see, maybe you are being convicted and you don't like it and thus, you get mad.

Remember what Paul admonished Timothy to do. He told him to, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** II Timothy 4:2-5.

It doesn't matter what they want, you give them what they need, the Word of God! I fear God more than I fear anyone else because I am His representative, and I am teaching His Word and I am responsible for that. Thus, I will not water it down or make it less offensive.

For Joseph, I believe that is all that he was doing, sharing God's Word. And think about it, they did not have the Scriptures; they had God's Word spoken to individuals!

And when Joseph told them what this dream meant, that one day he will reign over them, in hearing this, they hated him even more, but Joseph isn't done yet!

And when you listen to the response of his brothers to what Joseph said, don't you just hear the nation of Israel saying to Jesus this very thing!

In John 19:15-16 we are told, **“But they cried out, ‘Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’ Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away.”**

In other words, they were saying, *“We will not have this man rule over us!”*

And God is not done with Joseph, he is going to have another dream that he will share with his brothers and his father.

VERSES 9-11

Here in Joseph's second dream, he now sees his parents and his brothers all bowing down before him and even though Jacob rebuked Joseph for this, he knew that God was doing something powerful in Joseph's life and he was going to watch and see how this would all play out! But his brothers did not like this at all! They refused to accept these things Joseph told them.

When did this take place where all of Jacob's house or the whole house of Israel would bow down to Joseph?

This happened when Joseph is revealed as the savior of the world to his family, and they travel to Egypt to be taken care of by him at the end of Genesis!

Does that sound familiar?

It should because when the Lord returns the whole house of Israel will receive Him as their Savior, the Savior of the world and they will bow down to Him!

One more point here and that is that this dream that Joseph had here we see it spoken of in Revelation 12:1-2 where we are told, **“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.”**

You see, this illustration was taken out of Genesis chapter 37, and thus, you need to understand the Old Testament if you want to understand the book of Revelation.

It was out of the tribes of Israel, that the Messiah would be born!

VERSES 12-17

Do you think Jacob, or should I say Israel was a little concerned about what his sons were doing in Shechem?

I do, and I believe that is the reason he sends Joseph out to see what is going on, what they are up to!

Also, it seems that Shechem was not necessarily the wrong place to be, but when you realize what took place there back in Genesis chapter 34, they should have stayed clear, but they didn't! (Where Dinah was raped, and Simeon and Levi killed the men of Shechem)

Thus, Hebron to Shechem was about 50 miles to the north and then add another 15 miles north to Dothan. It probably took Joseph some five days or so to travel and find his brothers.

Listen to what Warren Wiersbe said regarding what was going on here with these brothers. He wrote,

First, why were Jacob's sons pasturing their flocks fifty miles from home when there was surely good grassland available closer to Hebron?

Possible answer: They didn't want anybody from the family spying on them.

Second question: Why did they return to the dangerous area near Shechem when Jacob's family had such a bad reputation among the citizens there? (34:30)

Suggested answer: The brothers were involved with the people of the land in ways they didn't want Jacob to know about.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – OT, p. 118

Very interesting points that Warren Wiersbe is making here. These brothers were not very nice people, and we will see that played out even more as we read on!

Now there are some who feel that Jacob should not have sent Joseph out to check on his brothers, he could have sent a servant to do this.

But if Joseph was in charge, he was responsible for keeping track of what was going on.

And the most important point here is that he is called Israel, governed by God and not Jacob. Thus, I believe this is exactly what God wanted him to do.

One more point here and that is Joseph did what his father asked him to do just as Jesus did all that God the Father asked Him to do!

VERSES 18-22

They are so envious of Joseph and what God was doing in his life they wanted to kill him. They wanted to put an end to this dreamer of dreams and his dreams.

The problem for Joseph's brothers is that this is not something he came up with, God is the one who revealed this to Joseph. And thus, if God has said it, it will come to pass no matter what man may try to do to stop it or kill it!

I have seen that over the last twenty-seven years here at Calvary. People working to bring this work of God to an end. Trying to usurp the leadership position. Trying to bring false doctrine into the church.

Here's the thing. I know what God has told me, how He has called me and the work that He started here in Manitowoc He is more than able to complete! I am not worried about that because these are not my plans or ideas, this is what God has established!

Now we also need to understand that this desire to kill Joseph began in their hearts long before they ever were going to act it out.

And that is true in our own lives. Hatred, evil speaking, lying, and all those evil things begin in our heart.

What man tries to do is to change their behavior but that does not work unless God first changes a person's heart! You see, the Christian life is God working on the inside and that then is manifested outwardly, in our actions, in our talk!

The sin was in their heart before it was ever acted out. Our sin problem begins in our heart and must be dealt with on a heart level. Our goal is not only changing our behavior, but especially to let God change our heart. Christian transformation works from the inside out.

And when I speak of talk, I am speaking of murdering people with our tongue, and that is just as bad as we can also destroy people's lives.

James tells us, **“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”** James 3:14-16.

A life filled with envy is a confused life and is focused on self as the brothers of Joseph were!

Now out of these ten, Benjamin was not with them, Rueben steps forward. And yes, this is the Rueben, the son that slept with his father's concubine. But here he tries to do right but does not want to offend his brothers.

Thus, he tells them not to kill Joseph but to throw him into this dry pit, thinking this will work, things will cool off and Joseph can go home, but in the end, Joseph will not go home to his father. You see, if you want to be a man pleaser you will never succeed. Be a God pleaser and you won't lose!

Things are bad now, as you can see. But they are going to get worse for Joseph!

VERSES 23-28

Talk about your cold, heartless behavior. They must have seen Joseph coming from a distance wearing that multi-colored long-sleeved robe. And as Joseph comes in contact with them, they ripped off this tunic of Joseph's, which I am sure brought them great pleasure!

And as cold as that was, they then threw him into a pit and sat down to eat!

Now here's the thing. They felt the conviction of God upon their lives for what they were doing, but they ignored it. We see that in Genesis 42:21 as these brothers said, "... '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 has come upon us.'"

Man does that today. They harden their hearts to God and when God is bringing conviction upon them, instead of repenting and getting right, they harden their hearts and if you do that enough, you can sear your consciousness so that you don't feel any longer. That is a dangerous place to be!

Let me share this with you. We are told,

Kurt Vonnegut, in an interview on the Daily Show, gave his opinion on human nature.

"We are terrible animals," he said. *"I think that the Earth's immune system is trying to get rid of us, as well it should."* . . .

There can be no more depraved act in the theater of human history than the crime Mallard committed on 26 October 2001, in Fort Worth, Texas. She drank heavily and did drugs at a party, then struck a homeless man, Gregory Biggs, on her drive home.

She was traveling at least 50 miles per hour and ran into him with such force that he flipped over the hood and crashed headfirst halfway through her windshield.

Mallard proceeded to drive home in this state, park in her garage, then go inside and go to sleep. She called no one.

Biggs survived the impact for about 5 hours, though unconscious, and died in the early morning still stuck in Mallard's windshield.

When Mallard, who had worked as a nurse's assistant, woke and went to the car, she called her friends and bragged about having killed a homeless man, then requested help with the body.

Mallard and two friends drove the car, with Biggs's body hanging out of the windshield, to a wooded park near a landfill and set it on fire to conceal the evidence. The crime scene was discovered, but with insufficient evidence on a culprit, and the case went cold for 4 months – until Mallard began laughing with her friends about having killed a white man.

One of her friends turned her in. Mallard was handed a 50 year sentence, and will be eligible for parole in 2027. During at least two psychiatric interviews in prison, she has indicated a regret at having not tried to save Biggs's life, but has always added "because I went to jail."

On the subject of an apology, she has remained notably evasive.

- <https://bit.ly/3yMk3co>

The hearts of many have grown cold.

The only way you can do something like that, without remorse, is because, as Paul warned us, "**Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.**" I Timothy 4:1-2.

How can we murder children in the womb? Because we have seared our conscious with a hot iron and we don't feel any longer! So sad.

Now who are these traders that are spoken of?

It can be confusing here because two different groups of people are listed, so let me try to clear it up.

The Ishmaelites did speak of the descendants of Abraham by Hagar, (Genesis 16:15).

And the Midianites were the descendants of Abraham by his concubine Keturah,
(Genesis 25:2).

But that term “**Ishmaelite**” can speak of desert tribes, so these Midianite traders were known as Ishmaelites also.

And the brothers of Joseph sell him for 20 shekels of silver; they figured they would make a profit off him even though it was not much!

Joseph is now on his way to Egypt to be sold as a slave.

VERSES 29-35

As you read this it seems like Reuben wasn't there when Judah talked with the others, and he talked them into selling Joseph into slavery to the Ishmaelites or these Midianite traders!

When Reuben sees what has happened he was devastated and wonders how he, as the oldest son, could go and tell his father that Joseph is no more. You see, he was responsible for Joseph as well as his other brothers being the oldest son.

So they come up with an evil plan to deceive their father!

Yes, they didn't murder Joseph, but to his father Jacob, he might as well be dead, sold into slavery, and thus, Reuben tore his clothes over what his brothers did and his ineffectiveness of saving him from this fate.

As they return home to their father Jacob, they deceive him into thinking Joseph is dead and they do this by putting goats' blood on the tunic of Joseph. They could not tell their dad they sold their brother Joseph into slavery, that would not have gone over very well!

How cold, how heartless were they?

So Jacob believes that Joseph has been eaten by a wild animal and is dead. Thus, he is mourning the loss of his favorite son and he refuses to be comforted.

What is interesting to me is that years earlier Jacob deceived his father Isaac by wearing goatskin and now his sons are deceiving him with the blood of a goat!

We do reap what we have sown!

And for Jacob's sons, they pretended to comfort their dad even though they were the ones who did the crime and then covered it up. And, as we have seen, this was no comfort for Jacob.

Can you imagine holding onto this lie for years and years, knowing that you sold your brother into slavery, and you lied to your dad, telling him that Joseph is dead, or making it look like Joseph was dead!

VERSE 36

So we see here that Joseph is sold into slavery and his master is Potiphar, the captain of the guards, he was in charge of Pharaoh's prison! And that will be an important thing to remember as we read on.

Even in the midst of this horror, God did not depart from Joseph. In some ways the story will get worse, and when it does, God will still be with Joseph. God is working not only for Joseph himself, but also for the larger purposes of His redemptive plan.

I think many times we believe that as Christians, things should just go smoothly, no problems, but that is not the case. Yes, there are times of refreshing but most of the time we are in a battle and God will use that to teach us lessons of faith.

And when you look at the life of Joseph, at least so far, you wonder how this is going to work out for good. Joseph had two dreams that put him in charge and yet, he is being sold into slavery and not in charge. That seems to be contrary to what God has spoken to him in those dreams.

It is not! Think of it like this because God has a plan, and His ways are far above our ways. We will play this out through the life of Joseph and onward to Jesus. It goes like this,

- If Joseph's brothers never sell him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt.
- If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar.
- If he is never sold to Potiphar, Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape.
- If Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape, then he is never put in prison.
- If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh.
- If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams.
- If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.
- If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he never is made prime minister.
- If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region.
- If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine.
- If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, the Messiah can't come forth from a dead family.
- If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came.
- If Jesus never came, you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world.

You see, God's perfect plan.

It is as we are told in Isaiah 55:8-11, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.’”**

We may not always understand what God is doing but may we learn to trust in Him as Joseph will do!

We can read the whole story and we can rejoice in what God is doing. But understand that Joseph had to live this story out day by day and so must we! All we can do is rest in the promise of God that no matter how bad it may get, God has a plan, He has a purpose for these things, and it will work out for good! (Romans 8:28)

As we move into Genesis chapter 38 this evening, we are going to take a short departure from the life of Joseph.

And as we do you may find that this is a strange departure, it just does not seem to fit into the picture.

But, as you will see it does fit in because the Holy Spirit is going to give to us the lineage of the Messiah, not through Joseph but through Judah. And let me also say this. It is not always pretty.

We will see this disgusting, immoral story of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar, from whom the Messiah will come! But let me not get ahead of myself, let’s pick up in Genesis chapter 38, beginning in verse 1.

GENESIS 38**VERSES 1-5**

Here we read of Judah, Jacob's fourth son through Leah. (Reuben, Simeon and Levi were born before him)

The tribe from which the Messiah would come, marries a Canaanite woman, living in Adullam, which is about 15 miles northwest of Hebron.

They were not to marry Canaanite women because they would lead them away from the Lord, and yet, Judah does what he wants.

And from this marriage he has three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah.

Also, Judah was the one who suggested they sell Joseph into slavery back in Genesis 37:26. Maybe his conscience was bothering him, maybe it was too hard to see his father so depressed day in and day out, but again, he left where he was supposed to be and did what God did not want him to do.

Not a very spiritual man to say the least and this story will support that.

VERSES 6-7

It is not surprising that Judah chose a Canaanite wife for his son Er, since he himself was married to a Canaanite.

Now let's think about what God did here with Er, Judah's firstborn and compare it to what Judah and his brothers did, you would think God would have killed them, but He didn't!

But for Judah's son, Er, his firstborn and who marries Tamar, he must have been very wicked for the Lord to take his life. And now Tamar is a widow.

VERSES 8-10

Since Er is dead, Judah has his next son Onan, marry Tamar to raise a son for his dead brother.

This custom was known as the Levirate marriage, and in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 we see God establish this, but it was already being practiced.

The reason this was done was so that the name of the dead brother would be carried on and to receive the inheritance.

Also, so the widow would have a child who would care for her.

But here was the problem for Onan.

Onan understood that he would lose out on this so he engages in sex with Tamar, but he allows his seed to go out on the ground, and thus, she could not get pregnant.

Again, let's look at what is taking place here. If Onan did not want to lose out on the inheritance, and that was the main reason, why then did he even have sexual relations with Tamar? If he did not want to father a child with Tamar, why did he engage in this activity?

Because he was satisfying his flesh and that is the only reason he engaged in this activity. That is why he let his seed fall to the ground, he did not want a child with Tamar just the sexual experience!

How evil that is!

And please understand that this was not a one-night stand. Onan had sex with Tamar frequently!

Again, Onan used this law for sexual gratification but refused the responsibility! In other words, he only cared for himself and nothing else, and God held him accountable for his actions and Onan died in God's judgment against him.

He was to raise up an offspring for his dead brother, but he refused to do it.

Now please don't get the idea that sex between a husband and wife is only for propagation, not at all. God has also given us sex for enjoyment; so don't read into the text something that is not there.

Paul said in Hebrews 13:4 “**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**”

As we have seen in this chapter, two of the three sons of Judah have been killed by the Lord for their wicked actions. Two down and one to go.

Let's read on and see how this plays out.

VERSE 11

Judah had only one more son and he didn't want to lose him. So he told Tamar to wait until he was older but he never intended to give Shelah to her.

Think about this for a minute. In Judah's mind it couldn't be his sons that were bad, that were evil, thus, it must be Tamar and his rationale keeps Shelah away from her.

And so Tamar goes to live with her father believing what Judah has told her, that once Shelah is old enough to marry her, he will give him to her as her husband to raise up a son for her first husband, Er.

And as you are reading these verses you may be thinking, “*It can't get any worse, it can't get any more evil, can it?*” The heart of man is wicked and thus, yes it can!

VERSES 12-14

Notice how Genesis 38:12 starts out, “**Now in the process of time . . .**” What that tells me is that several years have passed by and Judah’s wife, Shua, a Canaanite died.

That means that Shelah is older now, maybe sixteen or seventeen years old and he could marry Tamar. But Judah was not going to allow that, it was not an option.

And Tamar figures this out and she is going to come up with a plan to rectify this problem!

Let’s think about this for a minute. Think of what is transpiring here. Judah’s wife dies and all he can think about is being comforted by having sex, not seeking the Lord. He wanted to go out on the town you might say!

And a normal mourning period to grieve the loss of your wife was maybe a week, sometimes up to a month before you sought female companionship.

Let me say this. It is never a good idea to go out on the town and do your own thing apart from the Lord guiding you all the way, you don’t do the wrong thing. And if you are going somewhere you should not go, look out!

Do you remember who else went down to Timnah?

It was Samson and we are told in Judges 14:1-3, “**Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, ‘I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.’ Then his father and mother said to him, ‘Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?’ And Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me, for she pleases me well.’”**

The flesh was in control of his life and Samson as well as Judah see nothing wrong with this.

Folks, it truly is opening a door that leads to destruction and before that door can be closed, sin consumes you. Be careful, don't open the door, don't go down that road!

Like I have said, Tamar saw the handwriting on the wall, that Judah was not going to give his only living son to her and thus, she takes matters into her own hands and dresses up as a temple prostitute.

Isn't it interesting, she knew the only reason Judah was going to Timnah was to engage in sex with one of these temple prostitutes, and thus, she places herself in position to intersect Judah before he gets to the location so she can lay with him!

As sand through the hourglass, so go the days of our lives!!!!!!

VERSES 15-18

So Judah travels where the prostitutes hang out and finds this woman and asks to have sex with her. Wow!

And she wants some payment for her services and Judah negotiates a price with this woman.

Keep in mind that he does not know that this is Tamar his daughter-in-law, for she is covered.

And for sex, she will get a goat; I guess it was a good deal back then.

The problem is that Judah was not traveling with a goat so he leaves with her his signet ring, staff and cord or piece of clothing until the goat can be brought to her and they engage in sex.

And guess what, she becomes pregnant!

Then, before long they are on the Jerry Springer Show doing DNA testing to see who the father really is!

No, but God has an interesting way of exposing Judah's sin!

VERSES 19-23

After her meeting with Judah, Tamar immediately put away her disguise and resumed her normal life.

Then we see that Judah sends his friend, the Adullamite with this goat to pay this woman. And as he looked, she is nowhere to be found.

So he asks the men of this area, who probably did business with these prostitutes that were there, and they tell him that there were no prostitutes in this area.

How can that be?

I thought there were prostitutes in that area!

Again, I think that Judah must have been passing through this area to get to the area where these women worked and ran into Tamar!

She set herself up to be found by Judah in an area where these prostitutes did not gather.

So as this Adullamite tries to track her down, she can't be found. Because of that we see that Judah lets it go, she could have his staff, signet ring and cord, he did his best but now there is nothing more that he can do.

We are not done yet, not even close. You think this is bad, just wait.

VERSES 24-26

I'm telling you, this could be on the Jerry Springer Show!

Look at what has transpired here. We now see that three months pass by and obviously Tamar is showing, everyone knows she is pregnant.

And when Judah, this righteous man finds out, he goes ballistic and calls for her to be burned to death!

What a hypocrite! It is amazing how our sin looks so evil when someone else does it!

What does Tamar do when Judah calls for her to be put to death?

Tamar tells Judah that whoever this signet ring, staff and cord belong to, that is the father!

I'm sure there was silence when Judah saw that it was his signet ring, his staff and his cord! It was his child!

Again, think about how hypocritical he is. He has sex outside of marriage and sees nothing wrong with it but now, when he calls for Tamar to be put to death for her actions; he finds out that he is the guilty party.

Like I have said, our sin looks so bad when others are doing it and yet we ignore it when we do it! Be careful, God will expose it!

Now this could have been prevented if his sons walked with the Lord, if they were not so wicked and if Judah would have given Shelah to Tamar, but he didn't.

Also, this does not justify Tamar's actions, but Judah was also wrong in a big way!

It is as Proverbs 6:27-35 tells us, **“Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor’s wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house. Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away. For jealousy is a husband’s fury; Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.”**

If you play with fire, you will get burned! Judah found that out!

VERSES 27-30

Here we see that Tamar has twins and according to Matthew 1:3 and Luke 3:33, Perez is listed in the lineage of the Messiah, of Jesus.

Now you may be thinking, ***“How can this be? Neither Judah nor Tamar were examples of godliness, not even close!”***

So how did this happen?

It is God’s grace and folks none of us deserve the blessings that God gives us, but that is ***GRACE*** – unmerited favor!

Think about the genealogy of Jesus Christ. There are four women that are mentioned, not including Mary. Out of those four women, three of them were guilty of immorality.

Remember who they were?

There was Tamar and we saw her actions here.

There was Rahab the harlot.

And there was Bathsheba who had an adulterous relationship with King David.

The other woman was Ruth, and she was a Moabite!

Not the ones you would pick, but God did.

Why?

Again, it speaks of the grace of God, that He uses unworthy people to do great things and the reality is, there is none who are good, not even one!

Paul put it like this in I Corinthians 1:25-31, **“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption - that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’”**

May we not forget that!

You see, it is not about us or what we can do but it is about God and what He can and has done in our lives. Thus, He gets the glory.

We are like a lump of clay that is molded into a masterpiece.

We are like a lump of coal, that under pressure turns into a diamond!

I know, coal and clay, not the best things to be like and yet in God's hands they are.

And think about this. You would never hear anyone say, "*What a great lump of clay!*"

Nor would a lump of clay appear on the Tonight Show to be interviewed.

Why is that?

Because it is clay and the value only comes because of the work of the master's hand upon it and thus, he gets the glory.

Let us not forget that fact and let us not forget to praise the Lord for His grace and mercy that He extends to us through Jesus Christ!

Let me close with this. It is *The Touch of the Master's Hand*. It goes like this,

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer

Thought it scarcely worth his while

To waste much time on the old violin,

But held it up with a smile.

"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried,

"Who'll start the bidding for me?"

"A dollar, a dollar. Then two! Only two?"

Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;

Going for three . . ." But no,

From the room, far back, a grey-haired man

Came forward and picked up the bow;

Then wiping the dust from the old violin,

And tightening the loosened strings,

He played a melody pure and sweet,

As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,

With a voice that was quiet and low,

Said: "What am I bid for the old violin?"

And he held it up with the bow.

"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it two?

Two thousand! And who'll make it three?

Three thousand, once; three thousand, twice,

And going and gone," said he.

The people cheered, but some of them cried,

"We do not quite understand.

What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:

"The touch of the Master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,

And battered and scarred with sin,

Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd

Much like the old violin.

A “mess of pottage,” a glass of wine,

A game - and he travels on.

He is “going” once, and “going” twice,

He’s “going” and almost “gone.”

But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd

Never can quite understand

The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought

By the touch of the Master’s hand.

- <https://bit.ly/3eKq7eC>

May we never forget the fact that our lives in our Master’s hands can be used for great things!