

— Genesis 38 —  
Genesis Series 85  
**Judah and Tamar**

Gn 38.1 It came to pass at that time that Judah [went down] from his brothers, and [turned aside to] a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. 2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her. 3 So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. 4 She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. 5 And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him. 6 Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him. 8 And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." 9 But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. 10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also. 11 Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

12 Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13 And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." 14 So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. 15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. 16 Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" 17 And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock." So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?" 18 Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. 19 So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood. 20 And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. 21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?" And they said, "There was no harlot in this place." 22 So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place." 23 Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

24 And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" 25 When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are—the signet and cord, and staff." 26 So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

27 Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. 28 And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29 Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez. 30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

► This is still the story of Joseph the Christ-type, but if Jo is a picture of Christ, then his older bros are a picture of fallen Man and his \_\_\_\_\_ for salvation. The bros are headed down the wrong path, and \_\_\_\_\_ chief among them. J was the 4<sup>th</sup> born among Jacob's sons, but we see him emerging as the natural \_\_\_\_\_. J was strong, instinctive, decisive, and willing to blaze his own trail. At the same time, he was all about \_\_\_\_\_. He was not walking with \_\_\_\_\_. When the Hb says "J went down ... and turned aside" (1), it is describing J's path physically & \_\_\_\_\_ (cf. Jon1.3).

Jonah 1.3 Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

► Everything we read of J in this chapter has a feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ and unconcern for God and others. J finds a Canaanite wife for his eldest, Er, and her name is \_\_\_\_\_. Er was wicked, and the LORD killed him (6-7). The same happens to Onan (10). It's not often in Scripture that someone is so wicked that the LORD outright kills them, but we're told that of J's 1<sup>st</sup> 2 sons. Unfortunately, those sons are taking their trajectory from their \_\_\_\_\_. With the death of those sons, Scripture sets up the central question for the remainder of the ch: Who cares about the \_\_\_\_\_ of God? The answer is a most unlikely one: Not Judah or his sons, but \_\_\_\_\_.

► Central to God's promises are the themes of a miraculously born Savior, of many children, and of the land of C and its 7 nations. The three are related, for the children are more than children – they are pledges of a renewed humanity born of the Spirit of the Savior; and C is more than C – it is a pledge of a renewed earth filled with disciple nations; all so that God's original glorious intentions for man and the earth are realized. One of the ways God showed the importance of this in the OT was thru the law of the levirate (lit., "the husband's bro"), under which the bro was to take his deceased bro's widow as wife and raise up an \_\_\_\_\_ for him. This preserved the dead bro's \_\_\_\_\_ and his right to share in the inheritance, and it preserved his widow a \_\_\_\_\_ in the family and protected her from destitution, thus showing that not even death could cancel their importance in the eyes of \_\_\_\_\_.

► J, as was his duty as the father, initially follows the levirate law: He gives Tamar to Er's brother, Onan. But O rejects the levirate law out of pure \_\_\_\_\_. He \_\_\_\_\_ T for sex, while making it impossible for her to conceive, for if she does, O will receive a lesser share of the inheritance. O's actions and intentions are the kind of wickedness that God \_\_\_\_\_ in a special way, so God kills O. T must now be given to J's 3<sup>rd</sup> son, Shelah. But instead of looking thru the eyes of \_\_\_\_\_, J looks thru the eyes of unbelief and superstition, and blames T for his sons' deaths. He schemes to move T out of the picture in order to avoid the levirate law. He tells T to return to her F's house until S is old enough to marry. It's an impossible situation for T, for as Er's widow, she is \_\_\_\_\_ to S, and any unfaithfulness to S is adultery. J wants S \_\_\_\_\_ of T, while keeping T tethered to S.

► Over time, T realizes S is \_\_\_\_\_, and J has no intention of fulfilling the levirate law. Meanwhile, J's wife has died, the days of mourning are past, and J is going to Timnah for the sheep-shearing, which is a festival. T disguises herself as a cult \_\_\_\_\_ and sets up on the road J is traveling. T targets J, not S, for J is the one responsible to ensure the levirate law is fulfilled, and he is the one ensuring that it will \_\_\_\_\_ be fulfilled. In God's providence, J turns into T. They negotiate a price, a young goat. T asks for a pledge of J's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, which today would be like his driver's license and passport. J goes into T, and she conceives. But when J's friend returns with the goat, T cannot be found, and the locals say there has been no cult prostitute there. J drops the matter, lest it get around that he has visited a prostitute and he become the butt of \_\_\_\_\_.

► After 3 mos., T's pregnancy is obvious, and word gets to J, who demands that T be \_\_\_\_\_, which under the law would be reserved for only the most severe sexual sin, such as a man marrying a mother and her daughter (Lv 20.14). When T is brought out, she does not name J directly, but says she is pregnant by the man who owns the seal & staff. J confesses they are his, and that T has been \_\_\_\_\_ while he has been unrighteous.

► We see God repeating the gospel lessons he has been teaching from Abraham forward:

(1) It doesn't matter if you have A's blood in your veins, if you don't have his \_\_\_\_\_ in your heart. The only one in this entire episode who was concerned to do the \_\_\_\_\_ of God with his \_\_\_\_\_ in mind was T. As Paul tells us, A is the father of all who \_\_\_\_\_ and only those who \_\_\_\_\_.

Rom 4.11 [Abraham is] the father of all who believe

Gal 3.7 [O]nly those who are of faith are sons of Abraham

(2) God's covenant and promises are not about \_\_\_\_\_ human descent and inheritance, and so the normal rules are inverted once again by God when the \_\_\_\_\_ of T's twins, Perez, will turn out to be the greater, and Christ will come thru his line (Mt 1.3). Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's covenant and promises, for he is the only one who directly inherits what God has promised. The covenant, its signs and promises, are intended to create a household in which \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ is cultivated, and walking in that faith with \_\_\_\_\_ toward God and one another is modeled and taught. Trusting in the covenant itself, instead of in Christ, turns the covenant into an \_\_\_\_\_, making it a curse instead of a blessing.

Gal 3.26 [Y]ou are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus ... 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Eph 2.19 [Y]ou [Gentile believers] are ... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone

(3) Those of great faith are very \_\_\_\_\_ to God. So God double blesses T with twins, and T is one of three Gentile women, the others being Rahab and Ruth, who are named in the genealogy of \_\_\_\_\_. All three were examples of the kind of \_\_\_\_\_ God treasures.

Mat 1.3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, ... 5 ... Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king ... 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

(4) Don't despise the day of \_\_\_\_\_ beginnings. That's what we see with J and his \_\_\_\_\_ that T is righteous, while he is not. God is not \_\_\_\_\_ with J.

Gen 49.10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah ... until Shiloh comes"