

# Genesis 38

## Genesis 38.1-5

**V1-5** – The *Genesis* accounts briefly goes back to Judah (4<sup>th</sup> son of Leah) – why he was qualified to lead the “clan”

-**Reuben?** Committed adultery with Bilhah

-**Simeon and Levi?** Killed the men of Shechem (in retaliation for the rape of Dinah)

-Thus, the first three sons of Jacob had made some major mistakes – now for Judah

**V1** – Short introduction to show how easy it was to get involved with the immorality of the other people in the area (Canaanites)

-**What did Judah do?** Visited a friend (Canaanite)

**V2** – **What else?** Married (v 12) Canaanite woman, daughter of Shua (her name is not given)

**V 3-5** – **Result?** Three sons of Judah and Shua – Er, Onan, Skelah

-**What kind of boys would they be?** Not morally good (Canaanite mother, weak Jewish father)

## Genesis 38.6-11

**V 6** – **What did Judah do for Er?** Got him a wife named Tamar

**V 7** – **However, what happened to Er?** God killed him because he was such an evil person (must have been very evil)

-Apparently, there were no children to this marriage

**V 8** – Many societies in Near East practiced “levirate marriage” = if oldest son died without a son, the next brother had to take his widow as his own wife and try to produce a son

-However, the children born to the second brother and first brother’s widow would legally belong to the first (dead) brother

-**Judah’s instructions?** Told his second son Onan to take Tamar as his wife

**V 9** – Onan let his seed fall on the ground (so that Tamar would not get pregnant)

-**Why would he not want Tamar to get pregnant?** Would have to support a child legally belonging to his brother

**V 10** – **God’s reaction?** Killed Onan because of this

**V 11** – **What did Judah tell Tamar?** Stay with your father until the youngest brother grows up (Judah was afraid that God might kill him too)

## Genesis 38.12-19

**V 12** – **What happened after a while?** Judah’s wife died – Judah mourned her

**-Where did Judah go?** Back to see his friend Hirah (see v 1)

**V 13 – What message did somebody give to Tamar?** That Judah (her father-in-law) was going back to Timnah to stay for a while

**V 14 – What had happened to the third son Shelah?** Had grown up – still had not been given to Tamar (in other words, Judah was ignoring her need for children)

**-What did she do?** Took off garments of a widow and dressed up like a prostitute

**V 15 – What did Judah think when he passed by her?** He thought that she was a prostitute

**V 16 –** Judah decided to go in to this “prostitute” and give her some business (he did not know that she was Tamar)

**-Question of Tamar?** What will you pay me?

**V 17 – Answer?** A kid (lamb) in payment

**-Tamar?** Your pledge that you will send it?

- In other words, a “down payment,” like giving your driver’s license at YMCA

**V 18 – What did Judah give her?** Seal, staff, and cord

**-Result?** They had sexual relations, and Tamar got pregnant

**V 19 – What did Tamar do next?** Put on her widow's garment and left

## **Genesis 38.20-23**

**V 20 – What did Judah do at first?** Sent a lamb to the prostitute in payment

**-What happened?** His friend could not find the woman

**V 21 –** They asked questions, but the local people said there was not temple prostitute there

**V 22 –** The report was taken back to Judah

**V 23 – Judah’s reaction?** Let’s just keep all of this quiet – I will be the laughing stock of the area

## **Genesis 38.24-26**

**V 24 – What rumor did Judah hear?** That Tamar (his daughter-in-law) had worked as a prostitute and was pregnant

**-Judah’s reaction?** She should be burned (a little hypocritical, don’t you think?)

-Some people still have a “double-standard”

-It's OK for boys to commit fornication, but not girls

**V 25 –** What a stroke of genius

**-Tamar’s reaction?** The father of this child is the man who owns these: ring, cord, staff (Judah's)

**V 26** –Judah saw the hypocrisy he had practiced – Tamar was a better person than she was  
-No more sexual relations with her  
**Note:** Similar with woman caught in adultery – *John 8*

## **Genesis 38.27-30**

**V 27**– **What happened when she started giving birth?** Twins (remember Jacob and Esau)

**V 28**– **What happened?** Hand came out – midwife tied string to it

**V 29** – But other one was born first

-Breach = wide place

-**His name?** Perez (a breach), in the lineage for Jesus

**V 30**– **Name given to second born?** Serah

### **Great lessons from Chapter 38**

-The problems from intermarriage with non-Christians

-The dangers of hypocrisy

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