



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 61



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE EXPERIENCES OF JUDAH

Gen 38:1 "And it ³⁰ And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. ² And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. ³ And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. ⁴ And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. ⁵ And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him. ⁶ And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar." ⁷ And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. ⁸ And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. 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. ¹⁰ And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also. 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. 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. ¹³ And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. 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. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. 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? 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? 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. ¹⁹ And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. ²⁷ and it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. 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. 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. was called Zarah." Genesis 38:1-30)

Judah takes a Canaanite wife who bears two sons, both of whom were killed by the Lord. After his wife died, he went in to Tamar, thinking she was a harlot. – Given O. Blakely

INTRODUCTION

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A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Because of the tracing of the genealogy leading to Jesus, we are now given a brief account of a phase of Judah's life. These experiences reflect the effect of not having a written moral law, and living in an era when human nature was not being changed. This in no way sanctions the reported activities of Judah, but rather helps us to understand what was involved in preparing for the Savior to come. There is abounding evidence of the need for a Savior. Not only was there a requirement for a righteous means that provided the remission of sins, there must also be a righteous means furnished through which men could be changed, transformed, or regenerated. Before these means were finalized in Christ Jesus, it should not surprise us to find men doing things that would not in any way be allowed under the New Covenant and its administration by Jesus. However, even with these circumstances, as confirmed by our text, God saw to it that men were acquainted with His total intolerance of iniquity.

THEY WERE NOT MADE PERFECT

WITHOUT US

It is written of those living prior to the New Covenant, *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Heb 11:39-40). Other versions read, *"God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect,"* ^{NIV} and *"Because God had us in mind and had something better and greater in view for us, so that they [these heroes and heroines of faith] should not come to perfection apart from us [before we could join them]."*

AMPLIFIED



Being *"made perfect"* is a coin with two sides. These are essential, and can only be accomplished by God Himself. First, there must be the remission of sins. That is, they must be removed – in the eyes of God, and thus in reality, they must be no longer associated with the individual. Second,

Prior to Christ, these provisions were not realized. Before that could take place, there had to be a very real judgment against, and condemnation of, all sin. The *"sin of the world"* had to be taken away (John 1:29), or *"put away"* (Heb 9:26). This was accomplished by God taking the whole of sin – the *"iniquity of us all,"* and laying it upon Christ (Isa 53:6). **Notice that Isaiah uses the word *"iniquity"* – the singular form, and not the plural (*"iniquities"*).** All sin was gathered together into one composite mass, so to speak. This could be done because all sin has the same nature. **Until this was accomplished, sin kept accumulating in the human race.**

Those living before the Law had the least information on this matter. Their knowledge-base was the smallest, for very little truth had really been made known. In fact, at the time of the patriarchs, nothing had been revealed about the remission of sins or a change of nature. **Everything they were told had to do with life in this world.** The only word that extended beyond this was the vague word about the Seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent, and the serpent bruising His heel (Gen 3:15).

FAITH MUST HAVE REVELATION

Let it be clear in your mind that faith cannot appropriate what has not been revealed. **Faith can only operate within the perimeter of what the Lord**

Prior to Christ, these provisions were not realized. Before that could take place, there had to be a very real judgment against, and condemnation of, all sin. The *"sin of the world"* had to be taken away, or *"put away,"*

there must be a change of nature – A more precise conformity to the Divine image – one in which there could be real fellowship between God and man.

has revealed, or made known. In its essence, faith is believing God (Jonah 3:5; Acts 27:25; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6). There is no Scriptural example of

Whenever revelation is given to those upon earth, it is the obligation of those in the earth to avail themselves of that knowledge

someone who believed, or had faith without some word from God.

As of the time of our text, God had not breathed a word about the forgiveness of sin or the conferment of a new nature. No particulars concerning the coming Savior had been revealed, or the means he would use to bruise the head of the serpent. The concept of reconciliation to God had not yet been made known, much less the means through which it would be accomplished. The word “forgive,” in any of its varied forms (“forgive,” “forgiving,” “forgiveness,” “forgiven,” etc) is not found in Scripture until Genesis 50:17). Then it is mention only once in the entirety of Genesis, with the next reference being in Exodus 10:17).

What level of awareness concerning sin could be developed under those circumstances? Sin had not yet been defined, and therefore man’s knowledge of it was extremely limited. The “*knowledge of sin*” came through the Law (Rom 3:20). This does not mean that godly men had no understanding of sin at all, as will be

confirmed in the experience of Joseph (Gen 39:9). In fact, the word “sin” in all of its varied forms (“sin,” “sinned,” “sinner,” “sinners,” “sinful,” etc.) occurs 5 times from Genesis 4:7 thru Genesis 31:36 (Gen 4:7; 13:13; 18:20; 20:9; 31:36). After that, the book of Genesis contains only three more references to “sin” in its varied forms (Gen 39:9; 42:22; 50:17).

These facts must temper our assessment of Judah, and others living during that time of sparse revelation. We must not judge them as though they were privy to all of the revelations concerning sin, its nature, and its pervasiveness. We should not expect their conduct to rise to the heights that are expected in Christ Jesus.

AS WE COMMENCE

As we commence a review of this chapter, you must know that it will contain accounts that are abrasive to your spirit. That is because faith in Christ and walking in the Spirit has sensitized your spirit. **The view you have of sin is much more refined than that of Judah.** This by no means

sanctifies what he did. It does explain it, and confirms that he also “*was not made perfect without us*” (Heb 11:40). Jesus’ death did atone for sins such these, committed during a period of relative ignorance (Heb 9:15).

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

The lack of knowledge during those spiritually primitive times was owing to the lack of revelation. **This cannot be said of our generation.** Sin has been defined by the Law of God, together with vivid descriptions being provided for the consequences of sin. The existence of this further revelation removes all excuse for sin. **Whenever revelation is given to those upon earth, it is the obligation of those in the world to avail themselves of that knowledge.** Thus, after the Law was given, Israel’s ignorance was not excused. When John the Baptist came with a pertinent message, it was the duty of men to avail themselves of it. When Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, it was the duty of the people to go where He was, hear Him, and submit to him. There was no valid excuse for remaining in a state of ignorance.

Neither will there be leniency for those today who have not sought the Lord, feeling after him, if, perhaps, they might find Him, although He is not far from everyone of us (Acts 17:17). As the creation of God, man is obligated to both seek and find Him.

JUDAH WENT DOWN FROM HIS BRETHREN

Gen 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. ² And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.”**

On the surface, this chapter appears to be an interruption of the narrative concerning Joseph. In fact, some commentators affirm it is an

interpolation, injected by some unknown scribe or scribes. Such a view might have merit among the spiritually unlearned, but it is a glaring display of ignorance to those who know that “*ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Tim 3:16). This word was written at least 1,500 years after Moses died. There is no way it can be construed to mean that only portions of the Scriptures used at that time were actually inspired by God. Such theories should simply be

dismissed as nothing more than the prattling of pretended theologians.

In this chapter, we will be introduced to one of the progenitors of the Messianic lineage: Pharez (Gen 38:29). He was a twin and, like Jacob, was a living demonstration of Divine selection and purpose.

Because the overriding theme of Scripture is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:39; Rom 1:1-3; 1 Pet 1:10-11; Rev

19:10), this chapter has been given. It assists us in maintaining a proper perspective, and not being unduly influenced by the narrative of Judah's life. **As a general rule, what events lead to are more important than the events themselves.**

The genealogy of Jesus was traced through Judah, and therefore Moses, moved by the Holy Spirit, gives a brief account that confirms God was working throughout this entire matter. From a human point of view, there is an enormous amount of confusion regarding the offspring of Judah. **It is my own persuasion that in this manner the Lord confused the devil, so he did not know what action to take.** The mighty God, however, had His way in it all of these matters.

Once again, the presence of questionable conduct was strictly owing to the level of spiritual ignorance that existed during that time. Under our circumstances, during *"the day of salvation,"* this ignorance would have blocked the favorable working of the Lord. However, because of the sparseness of Divine revelation, God used seemingly foolish things to bring His will to pass.

JUDAH WENT DOWN FROM HIS BRETHREN

"And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren . . ." Other versions read, *"departed from his brothers,"*^{NKJV} *"went down to stay with,"*^{NIV} *"went away from his brothers,"*^{BBE} *"left his brothers,"*^{CSB} *"left home,"*^{NLT} and *"withdrew from his brothers."*^{AMPLIFIED}

We do not know why Jacob, at this point, separated himself from his brothers. Some have conjectured it was because of the friction caused over the handling of Joseph. **However, because we are dealing with the working of God, it is not necessary to establish why Jacob took this action.** It is enough to know that the Lord was about to build the nation through whom the Messiah would enter into the world.

Coincidentally, the words *"went*

down" are very literal. Shechem was in higher ground, while Adullam was *"in the valley"* (Josh 15:33-35). **It should not surprise us that uncomplimentary things take place when going down,** i.e.–Like when a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, falling

This city was in the land of Canaan, and would be given to the tribe of Judah when they possessed the land.

HE TOOK SHUAH, AND WENT IN UNTO HER

From a human point of view, there is an enormous amount of confusion regarding the offspring of Judah. It is my own persuasion that in this manner the Lord confused the devil, so he did not know what action to take. The mighty God, however, had His way in it all of these matters.

among thieves (Lk 10:30).

A CERTAIN ADULLAMITE

" . . . and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. . ." Other versions read, *"and visited,"*^{NKJV} *"to stay with,"*^{NIV} *"and settled near,"*^{NRSV} *"became the friend of,"*^{BBE} *"turned aside to,"*^{ESV} *"came as far as to,"*^{SEPTUAGINT} *"pitched his tent near,"*^{NAB} *"turneth aside unto,"*^{YLT} *"moved to Adullam and lived there with"*^{LIVING} *"arrived unto,"*^{ABP} *"went to live near his friend,"*^{CEV} *"hooked up with a man,"*^{MESSAGE} and *"went to [lodge with]."*

An "Adullamite" was a citizen of Adullam, was in the territory that would eventually be allocated to the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:21-35). This was one of the royal cities of the Canaanites (Josh 12:15). The Scriptures mention this city eight times (Josh 12:15; 15:35; 1 Sam 22:1; Sam 23:13; 1 Chron 11:15; 2 Chron 11:7; Neh 11:30; Micah 1:15).

Some versions state that Hirah was Judah's friend, while others simply state that he turned aside at that point, and stayed with him. Later in this chapter, he is referred to as Judah's "friend" (Gen 38:12).

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

Here was a Canaanite woman who did become Judah's wife (Gen 38:12). Abraham did not allow Isaac to take a wife from these people (Gen 24:3-9). Neither, indeed, did Isaac allow Jacob to take a wife from these people (Gen 28:1). Now, one of Judah's sons takes a wife from these people.

While I do not desire to take this matter too far, it seems there was some degree of deterioration from Abraham to Judah. If this is the case, I would observe that **where there is no redemption and reconciliation, spiritual deterioration is inevitable.** For men, this would create impossible circumstances. However, with God, all things are possible. **The times, regardless of their inferior nature, will not hinder the Lord from fulfilling His will – doing so without any compromise of His character.**

Judah takes a Canaanite to be his wife (Gen 38:12). Her name was not Shuah, that was her father's name, as stated in verse 12: *"And in process of*

time *the daughter of Shuah* (Gen 38:12). We do not know the name of the woman herself. Through her offspring we will glean some valuable knowledge about God Himself. God often uses unknown people

SHUAH CONCEIVES AND BARES THREE SONS

“³ And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. ⁴ And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. ⁵ And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.”

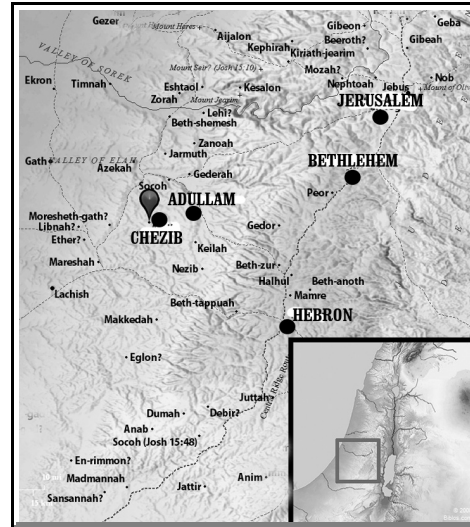
JUDAH NAMES A SON

“And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. . . .” Other versions read, *“he named him Er,”* NASB *“who was named Er,”* NIV *“he gave him the name Er,”* BBE *“whom she named Er,”* NAB *“Judah named him Er”* NET *“Er, who was named by his father.”* LIVING

I see no justifiable reason for not accepting the authorized version that states Judah named the son “Er.” This is Judah’s firstborn son. His name means “WATCHFUL,” STRONG’S OR “WATCHMAN.” HITCHCOCK

HIS WIFE NAMES A SON

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



Onan.”

This time, Judah’s wife names the child. The name *“Onan”* means “STRONG” EASTON AND “FORCE.” HITCHCOCK

A THIRD SON

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

Judah’s wife also named his third son. The name “Shelah” means, “A REPETITION” OR “PEACE,” MCCLINTOK & STRONG’S “THAT BREAKS OR UNTIES.” HITCHCOCK He is the father of the Shelanites” (Num 26:20).

Jacob was dwelling in Chezib at the time. This is located in the heart of what would later be called Judea – not far from Bethlehem and Jerusalem. I emphasize this to confirm that Judah did not leave the land of Canaan, but merely went to another part of the land. He, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, continued to tabernacle in the land of promise as a pilgrim and a stranger these events, he was cleaving to the promise of God, who was fulfilling His purpose.

THE LORD REACTS TO TWO WICKED MEN

“⁶ And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.” ⁷ And Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. ⁸ And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother’s wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. 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. ¹⁰ And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.”

JUDAH’S FIRSTBORN SON, ER

“And Judah took a wife for Er his

firstborn, whose name was Tamar.” And Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him”

There are three women named “Tamar” in Scripture. This is the first one.

- The wife of Er (Gen 38:6).
- The daughter of David and Maachah the Geshurite princess, and thus sister of Absalom (2 Sam 13:1-32).
- The daughter of Absalom, a woman of “fair countenance” (2 Sam 14:27).

Remember, we are here dealing

with the lineage through which the Savior of the world will come. Is it suitable for Er to be in that lineage? Our text answers the question. He was “wicked in the sight of the Lord.” This is not “wicked,” or “evil” NASB during the age of the Gospel, but “wicked” in an especially evil time – before the Law was given. It was similar to the word said about Sodom prior to this time: *“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly”* (Gen 13:13).

It is one thing to be a sinner, it is quite another to be “wicked in the sight of the Lord” during a time when sin is the standard, and God is known, even

in an introductory sense, by very few people. **Among other things, this confirms that there is a sense in which all sinners are not ranked alike.**

At any rate, God judged Er unworthy to live, and so He “slew him.” If we had been there, it probably did not appear as though this is what happened, so the Holy Spirit spells it out for us. In some way his life was terminated by the Lord Himself.

JUDAH’S SECOND SON ONAN

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

standard procedure that would endure throughout all time. **It was necessary prior to the New Covenant because of the nature of God’s dealings with men. Commencing with Abraham, and through the generation before Jesus, the fleshly nation descending from Abraham was a key factor.** God set aside a particular man, and a particular nation. Under ordinary situations, there could be no mingling of the chosen seed with Gentile seed. In order to demonstrate the nature and power of grace, there were exceptions to the rule. Some of them include the following.

- ➔ **Tamar** herself was an exception, apparently being a Gentile.
- ➔ **Rahab** the harlot, a Gentile by blood, who was married to Salmon, the

Therefore, there were exceptions that were managed by God Himself, who alone is the Sovereign One. **God’s workings with men are not automatic, or strictly proceduralized.**

In this particular case, Onan had no interest in the maintenance of his brother’s house and inheritance. Knowing that the seed would not be his, he went in to Tamar, but did not consummate the union. The NIV reads, “so whenever he lay with his brother’s wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from producing offspring for his brother.” The Amplified Bible states it even more modestly: “so when he cohabited with his brother’s widow, he prevented conception, lest he should raise up a child for his brother.”

Thus, Judah’s first two sons are slain by the Lord. **The same thing happened to Aaron** (Ex 6:23; Lev 10:1-2). It also happened to Eli (1 Sam 1:3; 4:11).

A Lesson to Be Learned

The point of condemnation was that no offspring was produced. That circumstance was not owing to barrenness, but to the will of Onan. He went through the procedure of marriage, but according to his own will, did not produce any fruit.

So it is with many professing Christians. They go through the supposed mechanics of discipleship, but never really bring forth fruit to God. That fruit is the purpose for our union with Jesus, just as surely as Onan’s union with Tamar was intended to produce fruit. Therefore it is written, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, **that we should bring forth fruit unto God**” (Rom 7:4).

If God was angry with Onan because he did not produce the intended fruit of a fleshly union, what do you suppose His attitude is toward those who wear His Son’s name, claim identity with Him, yet have no “fruit” to

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brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore He slew him also.”

Later, under the Law, the procedure of a man raising up children through his brother’s widow was codified: “If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband’s brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel” (Deu 25:5-6).

This was not intended to be a

father of Boaz, who was the great-grandfather of David (Matt 1:5-6). She was a woman of faith (Heb 11:31).

- ➔ **Ruth**, the Moabitess, who was married to Boaz, and through whom Obed, David’s grandfather, was born (Matt 1:5). She also was a believer, choosing to forsake her former god, and serve the God of her mother-in-law Naomi (Ruth 1:18).

Other men with Gentile wives include Joseph (Gen 41:45) and Moses (Num 12:1).

From this we learn that, prior to Christ, the bloodline had to be preserved. Yet, men could not base their faith upon that bloodline.

offer Him? Which one do you feel has committed the greater sin? – the non-fruit-bearing “Christian,” or Onan, the second born son of Judah?

JUDAH’S COUNSEL TO TAMAR

“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.”

REMAIN A WIDOW

“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. . . .”

The deaths of Er and Onan, and the significance of them, were apparently known to Judah. I do not doubt that, according to the appearances, the deaths of his first two sons could easily have been judged the result of some disease, accident, etc. **But Judah saw something in those deaths that was outside the realm of nature.** He apparently knew his sons were wicked, for they probably made no attempt to hide their wickedness. He also had some kind of sense of the Lord’s hatred of iniquity. That sense was cultured by the knowledge of Adam’s fall, the curse of Cain, the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the judgment against Laban. These were matters that were passed down through the holy lineage from mouth to ear until the Scriptures were written. In my judgment, Aaron’s advice to Tamar was driven by this awareness.

From what Aaron said, Shelah may have had some signs of stability to that point. Also, Judah might well have taken extra precautions to raise him with care, reminding him of the fate of his older brothers. It also ought to be noted that although Tamar is listed in the Messianic lineage, it is not because of a union with Shelah.

Because Judah was not sure if

Shalah would die like his brothers, he asked Tamar to remain a widow until Shalah was grown.

Commentators offer a number of explanations for this advice.

- ➔ “. . . IT SEEMS, THAT HE WAS IGNORANT OF THE TRUE CAUSE OF THEIR DEATH, BUT THOUGHT IT WAS EITHER OWING TO THEIR MARRYING TOO YOUNG, OR TO SOMETHING IN THE WOMAN UNFORTUNATE AND UNHAPPY; AND HE MIGHT NOT REALLY INTEND HE SHOULD MARRY HER AT ALL.” JOHN GILL
- ➔ “IT IS IMPLIED THAT THIS WAS MERELY A PRETEXT ON THE PART OF JUDAH, AND THAT HE DID NOT REALLY INTEND TO GIVE HIS THIRD SON TO TAMAR, CONSIDERING HER AN UNLUCKY WOMAN.” DELITZSCH, KEIL, KALISCH
- ➔ “. . . AT LEAST, NOT AT PRESENT, UNDER THE

I personally do not care for these explanations, although I am not willing to be contentious about it. **It seems to me that we should to adopt any form of reasoning that omits the working of God, even though that working may be mysterious and very difficult, if not impossible, to trace.**

My own view is that the deaths of his first two sons had brought Judah’s consciousness of God to a higher level. He knew that his own seed must be perpetuated in order to the maintenance of the seed of Abraham. At this time he was not aware that he would have yet more sons, and this sought to have his seed perpetuated through Tamar and the only other son he thought he would

No one of sound mind will excuse these matters, or suggest there was nothing wrong with them. However, they provide us with a solid reason for the need of a new creation.

IMPRESSION THAT THE DEATHS OF ER AND ONAN HAD BEEN OCCASIONED BY THEIR TOO EARLY MARRIAGES.” LANGHE

- ➔ “JUDAH ACTED VERY UNJUSTLY IN KEEPING ONE BOUND, WHOM HE INTENDED TO DEFRAUD. FOR TRULY THERE WAS NO CAUSE WHY HE SHOULD BE UNWILLING TO ALLOW HER TO DEPART FREE FROM HIS HOUSE, UNLESS HE DREADED THE CHARGE OF INCONSTANCY. BUT HE SHOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED THIS AMBITIOUS SENSE OF SHAME TO RENDER HIM PERFDIOUS AND CRUEL TO HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW. BESIDES, THIS INJURY SPRUNG FROM A WRONG JUDGMENT: BECAUSE, WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE CAUSES OF THE DEATH OF HIS SONS, HE FALSELY AND UNJUSTLY TRANSFERS THE BLAME TO AN INNOCENT WOMAN.” JOHN CALVIN
- ➔ “SHELAH, THE THIRD SON, WAS RESERVED FOR THE WIDOW (V. 11), YET WITH A DESIGN THAT HE SHOULD NOT MARRY SO YOUNG AS HIS BROTHERS HAD DONE, LEST HE DIE ALSO.” MATTHEW HENRY

have – Shelah.

The Difficulty of Consistency Prior to the Day of Salvation

At this point we should point out the difficulty men living prior to the day of salvation had in maintaining consistency in their lives. It is not that such a thing was totally beyond possibility, as was demonstrated in Enoch, Joseph, and others. **Yet, from time to time those associated with God did things that would not at all be done in Christ.** Some of the deeds were unintentional – like Noah becoming drunk (Gen 9:21). There were the sins Moses striking the rock instead of speaking to it (Num 20:8-12; Psa 106:32), and David sinning with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:2-5).

No one of sound mind will excuse these matters, or suggest there was nothing wrong with them. **However, they provide us with a solid reason for the need of a new creation.**

Further, faith can extend no further that the revelation that has been given. That revelation forms the perimeter of faith, which cannot extend beyond it. **I therefore reason that the deficiencies, by New Covenant standards, that were found in the ancients were strictly owing to the**

limitation of their faith. It also ought to be noted that their desire for more revelation exceeded their aptitude, and therefore they were able to recover from any setbacks they realized.

AND TAMAR DWELT IN HER FATHER'S HOUSE

" . . . And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house."

Tamar submitted to the direction of Judah, confirming that she was humble, and was not strictly driven by

self interests. As will be substantiated, she considered this to be a temporary circumstance. It is not to be construed as a willingness to remain a widow for the rest of her life.

In our evaluation of this whole incident, we must exercise ourselves to remember the limitations these brethren had. As it is written, *"they without us should not be made perfect"* (Heb 11:40). These were imperfections, to be sure.

TAMAR'S RESPONSE TO THE NEWS OF JUDAH COMING

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

IN THE PROCESS OF TIME

"And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died..."

We do not know the name of Judah's first wife – simply that she was the daughter of Shuah, a *"certain Canaanite."* We know the name of Abraham's wife – Sarah. We know the name of Isaac's wife – Rebekah. We know the names of Jacob's wives – Rachel and Leah, and their handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah. However, the name of Judah's wife, through whom he had his first three sons, is withheld. Two of those sons, Er and Onan, were slain by the Lord. The third son, Shelah. He is named as a son of Judah in the numbering of Israel, being the father of the Shelanites (Num 6:20-22).

As time marched forward, Judah's wife died, yielding to the curse

pronounced in Eden.

JUDAH WAS COMFORTED

" . . . and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. . . " Other versions read, *"and when the time of mourning was ended,"* ^{NASB} *"when Judah had recovered from his grief,"* ^{NIV} *"after a period of mourning,"* ^{CEB} and *"had finished mourning."* ^{CSB}

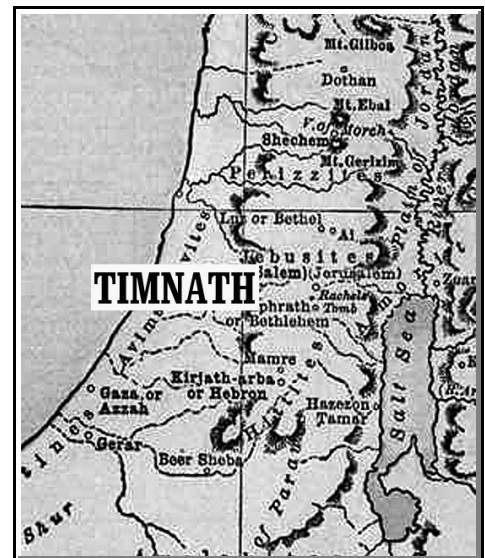
Here being *"comforted"* is not a special ministry administered by one of Judah's peers. Rather, it is the result of mourning being ended. During those early times, a time was assigned to the period of mourning over the dead. When Jacob died, the Israelites mourned for forty days (Gen 50:3). When the clan came to the threshing floor of Atad, they mourned for seven more days (Gen 50:10). The Egyptians mourned for him seventy days (Gen 50:3). When Aaron died, they mourned for him thirty days (Num 20:29). They also mourned for thirty days after Moses had died (Deut 34:8).

During those days of mourning, the grief of the heart was poured out so that it would not be carried about for the rest of their lives. The comfort came when Judah had poured out his grief.

I have known people who have

carried the grief they experienced because of the loss of their loved ones for years – virtually a lifetime. While it may be difficult for some to receive, this is not appropriate. **At some point, it is necessary for grief to yield to comfort. That is what is being depicted in this text.**

Now Judah resumes his own life. He went up with his friend Hirah to manage the shearing of his sheep. This was not Shuah's father, for she was the daughter of a certain Canaanite (Gen 38:2). Hirah was an Adullamite.



Timnath, the place where the sheep were being sheared, was

mentioned in the account of Samson, being a city of the Philistines (Judges 14:1-5). It was about twenty miles Northwest of Hebron, was in the territory occupied by the Philistines, and was not far from Bethlehem, near which Rachel was buried (Gen 35:19).

IT WAS TOLD TAMAR

“And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to

way to Timnath . . .”

We do not know how long Tamar had been wearing her widow’s garments, but it was apparently for some time. Having removed her widow’s garments, she covered herself with a veil so she could not be recognized, and wrapped herself in such a way as to disguise herself.

She then positioned herself *“in an*

describe the time when Judah’s wife had died: *“in the process of time”* (Gen 38:12). Other versions read, *“after a considerable time,”* ^{NASB} *“after a long time,”* ^{NIV} *“some years later.”* ^{NLT}

Judah had given her reason to believe she would be given to Shela when he had grown: *“Remain a widow at thy father’s house, till Shelah my son be grown”* (Gen 38:11). It is true that he did not say specifically that she would be given to Shela, but that is the impression that was left, and is no doubt what he meant.

Now, Tamar had waited patiently, living in her father’s house. She apparently had not sought a husband elsewhere, and had kept herself pure. Now, however, she is going to seize an opportunity to remedy her situation. Admittedly, it is not a comely tactic, but, for her, the seemed to be no other alternative.

This was further complicated by the possibility that she knew very little, if anything at all, about the Divine commitment to the seed of Abraham. Her ignorance now compels her. It seems to me to be a stretch of our imagination to think that Tamar knew about the Abrahamic promise, or the wrongness of proceeding in ones own wisdom. We have the luxury of knowing these things, concerning which little had been made known at that time. Without condoning what Tamar will do, this is another example of the effects of ignorance.

She apparently had not sought a husband elsewhere, and had kept herself pure. Now, however, she is going to seize an opportunity to remedy her situation. Admittedly, it is not a comely tactic, but, for her, the seemed to be no other alternative.

Timnath to shear his sheep. . .”

Apparently, there had not been much communication between Judah and Tamar. However, in the providence of God, someone conveyed to Tamar the fact that Judah was in Timnath *“to shear his sheep.”*

SHE PUT HER WIDOWS GARMENTS FROM HER

“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

open place” which was on the road to Timnath. Other versions read, *“the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnath.”* ^{NASB} The word *“Enaim”* is a translation of the words *“open place.”*

SHELAH WAS GROWN

“ . . .for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.”

The thing that compelled Tamar to do this was that Shelah was now grown, and yet she had not been given to him as Judah promised. Several years had probably passed, as is indicated by the language used to

JUDAH’S RESPONSE TO TAMAR

“¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. 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? 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? 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. ¹⁹ And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from

her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.”

HE THOUGHT HER TO BE AN HARLOT

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

Tamar had positioned herself by the road leading to Timnath, and wrapped a large garment around her. I suppose this is how a harlot presented herself, marketing her wares as Solomon described to his son: "A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, To call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell" (Prov 9:13-86).

As soon as Judah sees the disguised Tamar, lust is awakened in him. He quickly succumbed to it, even though several providential blockades were thrown before him.

JUDAH'S REQUEST

"...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)..."

Judah had to leave his journey to converse with Tamar, whom he thought was a harlot. He had commenced his journey with his friend Hirah the Adullamite (Gen 28:12). We do not know what Hirah did at this time, for nothing more is said of him in the Scriptures.

Notice the modesty of the Spirit's language. Judah says to the woman, "I pray thee, let me come in unto thee." **Other versions read,** "let me sleep with you," NIV/CEB/CJB "suffer me to lie with thee," DOUAY/GENEVA "Come on, let's sleep together," GWN "let me have intercourse with you," NAB/AMPLIFIED "I want to have sex with you," NET "let me have access to thee," WEB "propositioned her to sleep with him," LIVING and "All right, how much do you charge?" Good News Bible "Come on! Let's have some sex!" ISV

According to the Interlinear, the literal rendering of this text is "grant-you! Please! I shall come into you." The

meaning of the word translated "go to" is "TO GRANT, PERMIT." The word translated "come in unto thee" means "TO GO IN, ENTER."

There is no way that the translation of the text can be properly stated as it is in the New International Version, Common English Bible, Complete Jewish Bible, Douay Rheims, Geneva, God's Word Translation, New American Bible, Amplified Bible, Living Bible, The Net Bible, New Living Translation, Tanakh Bible, Contemporary English Revised Version, International Standard Version, and The Message. **All of these versions interpret the verse, ascribing a meaning to it rather than move the text from one language to another.**

I do not doubt that the intentions of Jacob were such as these versions represent. However, they have still violated the rules of faithful translation. **The role of the translator is to faithfully make clear what is said, not what is meant.** Where does such an approach end? Are men to deliver to the masses a Bible that reflects their own understanding? If that is what they are marketing, then it should be called their

Here is the first obstacle thrown up before Judah. **It has to think about what this is worth to him.** He will be able to compare his desires with the reservoir of his knowledge. **However, that is precisely the weakness of this whole scenario. The amount of available knowledge to him – knowledge that comes from Divine revelation – is sparse.**

- ➡ The Law has not yet been given.
- ➡ The only clear word spoken on this subject was said to Abimelech when he took Sarah into his house. God said to him, "Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife" (Gen 20:3).
- ➡ There had been no extended commentary on subduing the lust of the flesh.

It appears as though there was some intuitive knowledge concerning morality, as indicated by Paul in Romans: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of

Behold the wisdom of Tamar. She asks for things she knows Judah will return to obtain.

commentary, because that is really what it is!

The Holy Spirit uses modest language to hold the flesh in check. No further comments on this matter are required.

TAMAR'S SHREWDNESS

"And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? 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? 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. . . "

the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)" (Rom 2:14-15). **However, even there, that law, written upon the heart, was not enough to keep sin from breaking forth.** True intuitive knowledge is only valuable if it is perceived and obeyed.

Judah says he will give the woman "a kid from the flock." Of course, that will have to be delivered later, so Tamar asks for a "pledge," which she will keep unto the kid is delivered. Judah asks her to specify the pledge, and she replies, "Thy signet, and thy bracelets, [your "seal and its

chord," ^{NIV} and thy staff that is in thine hand. . . " The "signet" was a ring that had Judah's validating seal upon it. I agree with Albert Barnes definition of the "bracelets," or "cord" ^{NKJV} – "THIS IS THE CORD BY WHICH THE SIGNET WAS SUSPENDED ROUND HIS NECK."

Behold the wisdom of Tamar. She asks for things she knows Judah will return to obtain.

THE DEED IS COMMITTED

" . . . And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him. . . "

The point here was not the satisfaction of Judah, but the outcome of his deed. It is written, "she conceived by him." This is heaven's announcement. I do not know how a conception could have been confirmed at that time. Further, it is not revealed if this was made known to Tamar.

As difficult as it may be to believe that God would work under such conditions, that is precisely what took place – God worked, as the text will confirm!

THE OUTCOME

" And she arose, and went away,

It is no wonder, therefore, that her judgment was inferior to those who lived under the First Covenant, and particularly of those living during the time of the New Covenant, appropriately described as "the ministration of righteousness"

and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood."

Having laid aside the veil and the garments she had been wearing, and again assumed the appearance of a widow. She apparently moved as fast as she could, lest she be discovered when Judah sent the promised kid, and retrieved his pledge. The thing that she had done was uncomely, and she knew it. Yet, for that moment she could think of no other way to draw the proper attention to her situation.

Once again, we behold the infirmity of ignorance. Unlike us, she had no Bible to consult. There was no prophet close at hand, and prophets were very sparse to begin with. Neither, indeed, was there a

wise man available with whom she could consult. She apparently did not have an understanding of prayer, as Rebekah did (Gen 25:21-22), or even of the God of Jacob, Judah's father.

It is no wonder, therefore, that her judgment was inferior to those who lived under the First Covenant, and particularly of those living during the time of the New Covenant, appropriately described as "the ministration of righteousness" (2 Cor 3:9). Even if a person has an "honest and good heart" (Lk 8:15), they have to be informed by God to some degree before they can make consistently sound conclusions. While I do not applaud Tamar's way of thinking, I do understand it was the result of legitimate limitations.

JUDAH TRIES TO OBTAIN HIS PLEDGE

" 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. 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. 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. 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."

JUDAH SENDS THE KID

"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. 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. . . "

Judah sends the promised kid by the hand of his friend, "Hirah the Adullamite." It is understood that he was to pick up the pledges Judah had left with the woman (Gen 38:18).

JUDAH'S RESPONSE

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

Not being able to find the woman, even after asking about her, Hirah returns to Judah and reports his findings. Judah replies, "Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed." Other versions read, "lest we become a laughingstock," ^{NASB} "otherwise we will be laughed at," ^{NRSV} "let us not be ridiculed" ^{SEPTUAGINT} "Otherwise we will appear to be dishonest" ^{NET} "We'd be the laughingstock of the town to go back again," ^{LIVING} "If we keep looking, everyone will be poking fun at us. I kept

my part of the bargain.” MESSAGE

The idea is that the woman to whom Judah had sent the kid could keep the pledges (“take it to her,” or “keep what she has”).^{AMPLIFIED} An effort was made to deliver the kid, and she could not be found, but she would not lose the kid. It still belonged to her. The text also suggests that the kid was left there with some responsible party, so that, should she return to the place, she would find it.

Notice that Judah had not been concerned about his reputation when he sought the services of someone whom he thought was an harlot. Now, however, he is concerned about

his reputation.

Shortly after this, Joseph will be faced with the opportunity to sin with Potiphar’s wife. He will reply, “how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Gen 39:9). Some have wondered why Judah did not have a similar view of laying with Tamar. The incidents, however, are not identical.

- ➔ Tamar was not some else’s wife.
- ➔ Tamar did not seek to have relations with Judah.
- ➔ Although whoredom was not right,

the sensitivity of men to that circumstance was not as keen as it was after the Law was given.

- ➔ Jacob had been married, but Joseph was young and single.

None this is presented as sanctioning what Judah had done. **However, in the whole affair we again see what disadvantage that he lack of understanding brings.** It makes the person more vulnerable to temptation.

One can scarcely imagine how all of this have played out in times such as those within which we love – with an abundance of revelation.

ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER

“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.* 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.* 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.”* God once told Israel, “be sure, your sins will find you out” (Num 32:22). The Psalmist wrote, “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance” (Psa 90:8). Again the Psalmist wrote, “evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.” (Psa 140:11). Jesus said, “Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops” (Luke 12:3).

Sin will not remain in the darkness. God will see to it that it is eventually exposed. For some, the exposure is in this life. For others it will not be until

the day of judgment – but the time of exposure will come. As it is written, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after” (1 Tim 5:24). For Judah, it will come “beforehand.”

This a slice of wisdom and understanding that must be included in raising our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Today, there is an inordinate quest to acquaint growing children with “the facts of life.” Public schools are now aggressive to pass along this kind of knowledge. However, this is not wise and tends to set the children up for a fall. **Better to warn them of the moral requirements God has bound upon men, and of the necessity of remaining pure.** The disastrous effects of moral failure are also to be passed along to the children. Solomon did this when he instructed his son about such matters (Prov 7:4-27). In that particular text, the warning was against a zealous harlot. However, such knowledge trains the human mind to detest immorality. When this is accomplished, temptation is greatly reduced.

ABOUT THREE MONTHS AFTER

“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 . . .”

Behold how Tamar’s condition was quickly spotted, and certain conclusions were draw. It was concluded that she had “played the harlot,” and sold herself to some man. They did not assume that she had been molested, or that she had been propositioned by an older man. They assumed the worst.

BRING HER FORTH

“ . . . And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. . . .” Other versions read, “have her burned to death,”^{NIV} “burned alive,”^{CJB} “Bring her out -- and she is burnt”^{YLT} and “Bring her out and burn her.”^{LIVING}

The Law specified that an adulteress was to be put to death (Lev 20:10). The Law commanded that “If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city;

and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you" (Deut 22:23-24). **But none of this had been clearly revealed at this point.**

How different Judah now thinks of harlotry, even though it involves his daughter-in-law. He now has a penchant for moral purity, whereas he was not so concerned about that before. He demands, therefore, that she be brought forth and burned.

Judah's response was much like that David when he was told of a man who had taken a neighbors only ewe lamb to feed a visitor – a report that concerned his sin with Bathsheba. When given the account, "David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, **As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity**" (2 Sam 12:5-6). Nathan pointed the accusing finger at David and replied, "Thou art the man" (2 Sam 12:5-7).

BY THE MAN

" . . . 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 . . ."

Tamar does not make a public spectacle of Judah, but rather sent the pledged items to him, declaring that whoever owned those articles was the one through whom she had conceived.

JUDAH ACKNOWLEDGED THEM

" . . . 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."

It must have been humbling for Judah to have to admit to what he had done. He is faced with his own "signet, bracelet, and staff," confirming that he is the one through whom Tamar had conceived. **His sin had found him out, and that by Divine appointment!**

Judah said, "She hath been more righteous than I." Other versions read, "She is more in the right than I," ^{NRSV} "She is more upright than I am" ^{BBE} "She's not guilty. I am!" ^{GWN} "Tamar is cleared rather than I" ^{SEPTUAGINT} "Tamar has done justice rather than I," ^{ABP} and "She's a better person than I am." ^{CEV}

By this Judah means that Tamar was driven by a more noble purpose. She sought by her own understanding the fulfillment of what was right. Judah had been compelled by lower motives.

Judah traces the whole thing back to a cause for which he himself was

By this Judah means that Tamar was driven by a more noble purpose. She sought by her own understanding the fulfillment of what was right. Judah had been compelled by lower motives.

responsible: "because that I gave her not to Shelah my son." Other versions read, "I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah," ^{NIV} "I didn't allow her to marry my son Shelah," ^{CEB} "I didn't let her become the wife of my son Shelah" ^{CJB} "I didn't arrange for her to marry my son Shelah," ^{NLT} Some have conjectured that Judah never really intended to give Tamar to his son Shela. I choose to believe that his original intentions were good, but in the process of time, he had either forgotten what he had said, or changed his mind about it – even though he knew he should not have done so.

VERIFICATION OF GOD'S ASSESSMENT OF THE HUMAN RACE

All of this confirms the Divine assessment of the human race.

➔ God revealed this to Noah AFTER the flood: "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done" (Gen 8:21).

➔ Solomon declared, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccl 7:20).

➔ Jeremiah wrote, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9).

➔ David twice stated, "The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psa 14:2-3; 53:1-3).

➔ Paul said of all natural men: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom 3:10-18)

➔ David confessed, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Psa 51:6).

We must bring these factual view of man into our consideration of this whole incident. Again, we are not

seeking to justify what Judah and Tamar did. **Rather, we are setting this forth as an example of what sin had done to the human race.** These are the records of the best of the race. Further, they were living without any extensive revelation concerning morality, and no continual access to God. They had no Bible, and had limited exposure to God, and extremely limited information from God.

As confirmed by the inspired records of these people, fallen man, though made in the image of God, did not have the ability to make proper and

consistent assessments. It was extremely difficult for them to reason to valid conclusions, and sometimes even impossible for them to do so. That is a consistent trait of the unregenerate, or natural, mind.

The Spirit sums it all up for us, accenting the effectiveness of salvation in Christ Jesus and the New Covenant: *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect"* (Heb

11:39-40). **Therefore, we should not assess them as though they were perfect, or even could be perfect, as those who have the "better thing" of redemption.**

Further, for those living during the administration of the "better thing" to live no better than those who lacked that "better thing" is an insult to Jesus, and comes close to blaspheming the God of heaven. **There is no valid excuse for inappropriate behavior in Christ Jesus.**

THE BIRTH OF TWINS

"²⁷ And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. 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. 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. ³⁰ And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah."

BEHOLD, TWINS WERE IN HER WOMB

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

When Rebekah conceived twins, and because she felt unusual activity, she received a revelation from God that twins were in her womb. She came to know this some time before they were born, because two different kind of people were in her womb, and they were fighting within her (Gen 25:23). But this was not the case with Tamar. According to the record, it appears she did not know she was bearing twins until the time of her travail.

Now, because this has to do with the lineage of the Messiah, a choice will

have to be made – and God will make it, even as He did with Jacob and Esau. Here, however, a distinction of people is not the point. Even so, the child who is not chosen will be insignificant in Scripture.

ONE PUT OUT HIS HAND

" . . . 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. 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 . . ."

In order that there be a demonstration of Divine intervention, and to substantiate certain circumstances must be overcome, something takes place that suggests the wicked one was somehow involved in this matter. As Tamar travailed one of the twins put forth his hand. Being alert, the midwife tied a scarlet thread upon the hand to confirm which twin was born first. Remember, in the Abrahamic covenant, and up until Jesus, fleshly births were most important. **I take it that God moved the midwife to act quickly, so men would not be confused about who was firstborn.**

You see how this birth differs from that of Jacob and Esau. Esau was a legitimate firstborn, but his firstborn status was overturned by the Almighty as He worked through series of events that has perplexed many until this very day. The events here are quite different, yet did involve something that had to be managed.

The firstborn pulled his hand back, disappearing from view. **Had not the midwife seen the putting forth of the hand, she could not have known who the firstborn really was.** Tamar may not have been aware of the circumstance, and after the births had completed there was really no way for a mortal to know the real identity of the firstborn. **I conclude, therefore, that this was God, governing the circumstance, and working all things together for good.**

In both cases, the obvious was overridden by Divine choice. In the first, God used circumstances that appeared foolish. In the second, He used circumstances that had not been generally known, were it not for a midwife whose attention was made alert by God.

THE LAST WAS FIRST, AND THE FIRST WAS LAST

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

Zarah.”

After the first full birth was completed, the second one born was discovered to actually have been the first. The proof – a scarlet thread was on his hand. Who could have predicted such a thing?

SIGNS OF GRACE IN CHRIST'S GENEALOGY

The genealogy leading to Jesus, as recorded by Luke, is laced with evidences of grace.

➔ There were a number of relatively unknown people: **Heli**, (father of **Joseph #1** (who was married to Mary, the mother of Jesus) **Matthat** (father of Heli), **Levi** (father of Matthat), **Melchi** (father of Levi), **Janna** (father of Melchi), **Joseph #2** **Mattathias** (father of Joseph #2), **Amos** (father of Mattathias), **Naum** (father of Amos), **Esli** (father of Naum), **Nagge** (father of Esli), **Maath** (father of Nagge), **Mattathias #2** (father of Maath), **Semei** (father of Mattathias #2), **Joseph #3** (father of Semei), **Judah** (father of Joseph #3),

Joanna (father of Judah), **Rhesa** (father of Joanna), **Zorobabel** The Zerubbabel who built the Temple (Ezra 3:2), **Salathiel** (father of Zerubbabel), **Neri** (father of Salatheil), **Melchi** (father of Neri), **Addi** (father of Melchi), **Cosam** (father of Addi), **Elmodam** (father of Addi), **Er** (not Judah's son, father of Elmodam), **Jose** (father of Er), **Eliezer** (father of Jose), **Jorim** (father of Eliezer), **Matthat** (father of Jorim), **Levi** (father of Matthat), **Simeon** (father of Levi), **Judah** (father of Simeon), **Joseph #4** (father of Simeon), **Eliakim** (father of Joseph #3), **Melea** (farther of Eliakim), **Menan** (father of Melea), **Mattatha** (father of Menan), **Nathan** (King David's son, and father of Mattatha), **King David** (father of Nathan), **Jesse** (father of David), **Obed** (father of Jesse), **Boaz** (married to Ruth the Moabitess, and father of Obed), **Salmon** (father of Boas), **Naason** (father of Salmon), **Aminadab** (father of Naason), **Aram** (father of Aminadab), **Esrom** (father of Aram), **Phares** ("Which was the

son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor" (Luke 3:34), Judah (son of Jacob, and father of Pharez).

Who but God could have orchestrated that lineage – and I have only traced from Judah to Jesus. Time fails to list from Adam to Judah – a period covering over two thousand years.

Additionally, this genealogy was carried forward during the inter-testamental period from Malachi until John the Baptist – about 400 years. During that time there was to known prophet or new prophet writing. Yet, the purpose of God continued.

In Genesis, and now particularly in the events related to Judah, we are beholding ways in which the Lord is governing the world and fulfilling His purpose. All manner of things occur that could never have been handled by men, but Lord managed them all!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 7/12/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The sixty-second lesson will cover verses 1 through 23 of chapter thirty-nine: "JOSEPH AND POTIPHAR." The account of Joseph now resumes. Having entered Potiphar's house, the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man. When Potiphar saw this he made Joseph overseer in his house, and over all that he had. The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field. Potiphar so trusted Joseph that he had no idea of his possessions – only of the bread that he ate. Because Joseph was well built and handsome, Potiphar's wife asked him to lie with her. Joseph refused, saying it was not right to do so. Notwithstanding she kept after him day after day until, when she made an aggressive effort to bring him to her chamber, he left his coat in her hand and fled. She trumped up a charge against Joseph, and he was put in the king's prison. The Lord gave him favor there also, and he was made the head over all of the prisoners. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Additional Website for Word of Truth Fellowship: <http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hosea: <http://wotruth.com/hoseaindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>

COMMENTARY on Philippians: <http://wotruth.com/philippiansindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>

COMMENTARY on First Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/1sthessindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/2ndthessindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hebrews: <http://wotruth.com/hebindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on First Peter: <http://wotruth.com/1stpetindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on First John: <http://wotruth.com/1stjohnindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Revelation: <http://wotruth.com/revelationindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Mark: <http://wotruth.com/Mark.htm>

COMMENTARY on Titus: <http://wotruth.com/Titus.htm>

COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>

COMMENTARY on Malachi: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>

COMMENTARY on Galatians: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>

COMMENTARY on Genesis: <http://wotruth.com/Genesis.htm>

COMMENTARY on Ephesians: <http://wotruth.com/Ephesians.htm>