

# Genesis 38 - Judah's Sin with Tamar; Er & Onan Die; Tamar Avenges Judah; Tamar's Pregnancy

II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

(4) Life of Joseph (Gen 37:1—50:26)

(A) Sin of Joseph's family (Gen 37:1—38:30)

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## Introduction

Before we are told what happened to Joseph in Egypt, the Holy Spirit traces for us, in typical outline, the history of the Jews, while the antitypical Joseph is *absent from the land*. It is remarkable that Gen 38 records the history of *Judah*, for long before the Messiah was rejected *by the Jews*, Israel (the 10 tribes) had ceased to have a separate history. Here, then, Judah foreshadows the history of the Jews since their rejection of Christ. "And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in to her" (38:2). How striking this is! "Canaanite" signifies "the merchantman," and "Shuah" means "riches." How plainly the meaning of these names give us the leading characteristics of the Jews during the centuries from the Cross! No longer are they the settled husbandmen and quiet shepherds as of old; but, instead, travelling merchants. And "riches" has been their great pursuit.

Three sons were born to Judah by Shuah, and the "Numerical Bible" suggests as the meaning of their names: Er, *enmity*; Onan, *iniquity*; Shelah, *sprout*. Deeply significant, too, are these names. "Enmity" against Christ is what has marked the Jews all through the centuries of this Christian era. "Iniquity" surely fits this avaricious people, the average merchant of whom is noted for dishonesty, lying and cheating. While "sprout" well describes the feeble life of this nation, so marvellously preserved by God through innumerable trials and persecutions.

The chapter terminates with the sordid story of Tamar, the closing portions of which obviously foreshadowing the end time conditions of the Jews. In the time of her *travail* "twins were in her womb" (38:27). So in the Tribulation there shall be two companies in Israel. The first, appropriately named "Pharez," which means "breach" speaking of the majority of the nation who will break completely with God and worship the Antichrist. The second, "Zerah" that had the "scarlet thread" upon his hand (38:30), pointing to the godly remnant who will be saved, as was Rahab of by the "scarlet cord." But we must turn now to Gen 39.

## Genesis 38

(b) Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)

(i) Sin of Judah (38:1-5)

1 And it came about **at that time**, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

1 And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

1 Right about then, Judah left his brothers and went to live with an Adullamite man named Hirah.

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.

- "...at that time" - at the time Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites; Judah separated from the family at the same time Joseph was sold into slavery

— The account of Judah spans ~23 years

- Judah, the Messianic line, left the Hill Country of Judah and went and lived with Hirah, a Canaanite, in the town of Adullam. He fully integrated himself into the Canaanite culture.

— This would put him at the Shephelah, away from the Hill Country where the rest of the family was located

2 Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her *as a wife* and had relations with her.

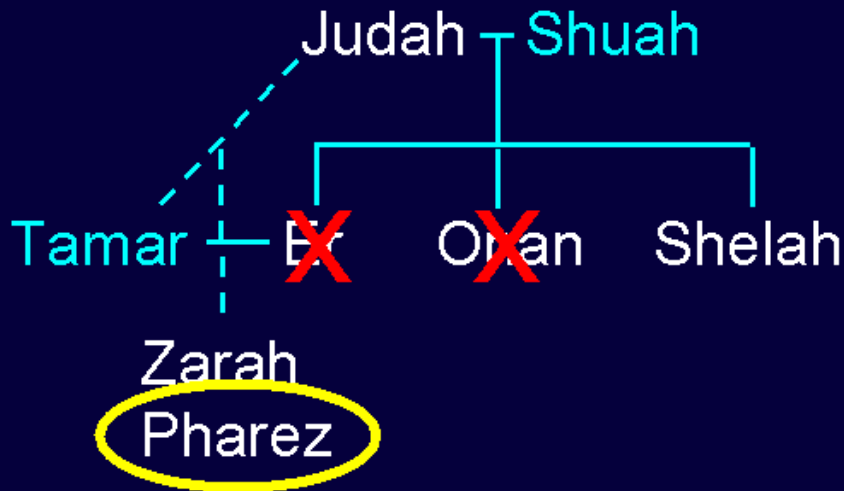
2 Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her and went in to her.

2 There Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. He married her, had sexual relations with her,

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

- This shows that the chosen family began to intermarry with the Canaanites; intermarriage with the Canaanites had been avoided earlier (Gen 34), but not here

# Judah's Sin with Tamar



3 And she conceived and gave birth to a son, and he named him **Er**.

3 So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er.

3 and she conceived, bore a son, and named him Er.

3 And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er.

- "...Er" - "watcher"

— The first son was named by Judah

4 Then she conceived again and gave birth to a son, and she named him **Onan**.

4 Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan.

4 Later, she conceived again, bore another son, and named him Onan.

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

- "...Onan" - "strength" or "sorrow"

— The second son was named by Shuah

5 She gave birth to yet another son and named him **Shelah**; and it was at **Chezib** that she gave birth to him.

5 She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him.

5 Then she bore yet another son and named him Shelah. Judah was living in Kezib when she bore him.

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

- "...Shelah" - "weak"; later founded the Shelanite Clan (Num 26:20)

— The third son was named by Shuah

- "...Chezib" - the location of the sons' births; they were no longer in Adullam, but still in the Shephelah

#### (ii) Widowhood of Tamar (38:6-11)

6 Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar.

6 Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar.

6 Judah found a wife for his oldest son Er. Her name was Tamar.

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.

7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was **evil** in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life.

7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life.

7 But the LORD considered Er, Judah's oldest son, to be wicked—so he put him to death.

7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.

- "...wicked" - *ra*, in the Book of Genesis, this is the type of wickedness that deserves divine punishment (Cf. 6:5; 8:21; 13:13)

8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Have relations with your brother's wife and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up a child for your brother."

8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother."

8 So Judah instructed Onan, "You are to have sexual relations with your dead brother's wife, performing the duty of a brother-in-law with her, and have offspring for your brother."

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

- By the custom of the Law of Levirate Marriage, the second son, Onan, was to marry Tamar, the widow of his brother, and raise up offspring for his brother

— Levirate Marriage: (from Latin *levir*, "husband's brother") was codified in the Torah (Deut 25:5-10; Ruth 4:5-6; Matt 22:24); see Tag: **Levirite Marriage**

9 Now Onan knew that the child would not be his; so when he had relations with his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground so that he would not give a child to his brother.

9 Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother.

9 But Onan knew that the offspring wouldn't be his own heir, so whenever he had sexual relations with his brother's wife, he would spill his semen on the ground to avoid fathering offspring for his 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.

- Onan knew whatever child he had with Tamar would be the legal child of his dead brother

- Onan repeatedly used the Law of Levirate Marriage for sexual gratification; he was not willing to fulfill the obligation he had to his brother

- He was willing to take Tamar for sexual gratification, but refused to take the responsibility to fulfill his obligation. So God took his life too.

- This was not a one-time act: the wording means he regularly did this

10 But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also.

10 But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also.

10 The LORD considered what Onan was doing to be evil, so he put him to death, too.

10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

- Er and Onan both died in Canaan, thus were not part of the group that went down to Egypt (Num 26:19)

11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "*I am afraid* that he too may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "*I am afraid* that he too may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

11 After this, Judah told his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Go live as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up." But he was really thinking, "...otherwise, Shelah might die like his brothers." So Tamar left and lived in her father's house.

**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.

- Judah instructed Tamar to live as a widow in her father's house until Shelah was old enough to marry her
- However, Judah never had any intent to offer Shelah to Tamar; he now considered Tamar to be "bad luck"
- Tamar, trusting Judah, went to live in her father's house

(iii) Tamar deceives Judah (38:12-23)

**12** Now after a considerable time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at **Timnah**, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

**12** Now after a considerable time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

**12** Some years later, Shua's daughter (that is, Judah's wife) died. As Judah was grieving, he visited the shearers of his flock in Timnah, accompanied by his Adullamite friend Hirah.

**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.

- "...Timnah" - 12 miles northwest of Adullam

- Sheep shearer season, which occurs in Palestine towards the end of March, was spent in more than usual hilarity, and the wealthiest masters invited their friends, as well as treated their servants, to sumptuous entertainments

— Accordingly, Judah was accompanied by his friend, Hirah

**13** And Tamar was told, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

**13** It was told to Tamar, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

**13** "Look!" somebody reported to Tamar, "Your father-in-law is going to Timnah to shear his sheep."

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

**14** So she removed her widow's garments and covered *herself* with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife.

**14** So she removed her widow's garments and covered *herself* with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that

Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife.

14 So she took off her mourning apparel, covered herself with a shawl, and concealed her outward appearance. Then she went out and sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah, because she knew that even though Shelah had grown up, she wasn't being given to him as his wife.

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.

- This passage reveals Tamar's plan to avenge Judah's treachery by not giving her Shelah as a husband

- In both Hittite and Assyrian Law, levirate marriage was performed by the father-in-law. However, she was already promised to Shelah, thus her act caused two sins: adultery, because she was legally Shelah's wife by betrothal, and incest because she had sex with her father-in-law.

- She felt she would have to take matters into her own hands if she were to be granted the rights of the levirate custom

- She removed her widow's clothes and dressed as a prostitute

- Since brides wore veils at their wedding and into the wedding night, prostitutes played the same role

- This shows what she thought of Judah's moral standing...that if she were to play the role of a prostitute, she could entice him to sin

- She placed herself at the gate of Enaim (Enam, Joshua 15:34), on the way where Judah would pass on his route to Timnath

15 When Judah saw her, he assumed she *was* a prostitute, for she had covered her face.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought she *was* a harlot, for she had covered her face.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, since she had concealed her face.

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

- Pretending to be one of the *kedeshot* (religious prostitutes), she tricked Judah into having illicit relations with her

- Judah, who had earlier deceived Jacob, initiating the selling of Joseph, now is himself deceived

16 So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, "Here now, let me have relations with you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me, that you may have relations with me?"

16 So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, "Here now, let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

16 So on the way, he turned aside, approached her, and said, "Come on! Let's have some sex!" But he didn't realize that he was talking to his own daughter-in-law.

"What will you give me," she asked, "in order to have sex with me?"

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 He said, therefore, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." She then said, "Will you give a pledge until you send *it*?"

17 He said, therefore, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." She said, moreover, "Will you give a pledge until you send *it*?"

17 "I'll send you a young goat from the flock," he responded.

But she pressed him, asking, "What security will you put up until you've sent it?"

**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?

- Judah's offer was only a promise, since he didn't have the goat with him

- Since Tamar did not trust Judah, she asked for a "pledge" (security to ensure he would deliver the goat). However, what she was really doing was providing evidence of who the father of the child would be

18 He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" And she said, "Your **seal** and your **cord**, and your **staff** that is in your hand." So he gave *them* to her and had relations with her, and she conceived by him.

18 He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" And she said, "Your seal and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave *them* to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

18 Then he asked, "What pledge do you want me to give you?"

"Your signet ring, cord, and the staff in your hand," she suggested. So he gave them to her, had sex with her, and she became pregnant by him.

**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.

- Tamar asked for three things in pledge for the goat, to have sex:

- (1) "...seal" - a prized possession; used to seal documents

- (2) "...cord" - the necklace upon which the signet ring was worn



(3) "...staff" - the symbol of his occupation

19 Then she got up and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow's garments.

19 Then she arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow's garments.

19 Then she got up and left. Later, she took off her shawl and put on her mourning clothes.

19 And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

- Tamar returned to her "old life," but this time pregnant with Judah's (her father-in-law) child

**20** When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her.

**20** When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her.

**20** Later on, Judah sent his Adullamite friend to take her a young goat, intending to retrieve what he had put up as security from the woman, but he could not find her.

**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 He asked the people of her place, saying, "Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?" But they said, "There has been no temple prostitute here."

21 He asked the men of her place, saying, "Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?" But they said, "There has been no temple prostitute here."

21 He asked the men who lived in that area, "Where's that temple prostitute who was sitting alongside the road at Enaim?"

But they replied, "There's been no temple prostitute here."

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.

- The men were truthful: Tamar only pretended to be a prostitute

22 So he returned to Judah, and said, "I did not find her; and furthermore, the people of the place said, 'There has been no temple prostitute here.'"

22 So he returned to Judah, and said, "I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, 'There has been no temple prostitute here.'"

22 So he returned to Judah and said, "I haven't found her. Also, the men who are from there said, 'There's been no prostitute here.'"

**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 Then Judah said, "Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her."

23 Then Judah said, "Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her."

23 Then Judah said, "Let her have those things. Otherwise, we'll become contemptible. I sent this young goat, but you didn't find her."

**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 tried to keep his commitment and agreement, and the fact that she was nowhere to be found was no fault of his; thus, he let the matter drop

(iv) Tamar's disclosure (38:24-26)

**24** Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has prostituted herself, and behold, she is also pregnant by prostitution." Then Judah said, "Bring her out and have her **burned!**"

**24** Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry." Then Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

**24** Three months later, it was reported to Judah, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has turned to prostitution! And look! She's pregnant because of it!"

"Bring her out," Judah responded. "Let's burn her to death!"

**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.

- Again Jacob's family experienced deception—this time by his Canaanite daughter-in-law!

- "...burned" - the crime of adultery was anciently punished in many places by burning (Lev 21:9; Judges 15:6; Jer 29:22)

— Since Judah was the patriarch of the clan, it was his authority to be able to do this

25 It was while she was being brought out that she sent *word* to her father-in-law, saying, "I am pregnant by the man to whom these things belong." She also said, "Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?"

25 It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "I am with child by the man to whom these things belong." And she said, "Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?"

25 While they were bringing her out, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man to whom these things belong. Furthermore," she added, "tell me to

whom this signet ring, cord, and staff belongs."

**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.

- As she was brought to trial, to which Judah did not attend, she implicated Judah by bringing forth the security he left with her

26 And Judah recognized *them*, and said, "She is **more righteous than I**, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not have relations with her again.

26 Judah recognized *them*, and said, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not have relations with her again.

26 When Judah recognized them, he admitted, "She is more upright than I, because I never did give her my son Shelah." And he never had sex with her again.

**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.

- Judah is caught, and confessed

- "...more righteous than I" - this was not an accolade for her moral character, but a commendation by Judah for her attention to inheritance rights of her family line, and his shameful neglect of it

- When she proved by the seal, cord, and staff that he was the guilty partner, Tamar had won the right to be the mother of Judah's children, though in a deceitful way

— Her action was desperate and risky; she thus appears in the Messianic family line (Matt 1:3)

- Tamar could not be Judah's wife, and she could now not be given to Shelah because the levirate requirement had been fulfilled: her sex with Judah had produced seed

— Her actions, although dangerous as she risked severe punishment, were within the laws of that day. She had the right to have a child by the nearest kin of her dead husband.

#### (v) Tamar's children (38:27-30)

**27** It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb.

**27** It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb.

**27** Later, when it was time for Tamar to give birth, she was carrying twins in her womb!

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

28 Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, that one *baby* put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet *thread* on his hand, saying, "This one came out first."

28 Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet *thread* on his hand, saying, "This one came out first."

28 While she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand, so the midwife grabbed it and tied something scarlet around his hand, observing, "This one came out first."

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.

- The scarlet thread would identify the firstborn

29 But it came about as he drew back his hand that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named **Perez**.

29 But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez.

29 As it was, he withdrew his hand, and then his brother was born. Amazed, the midwife cried out loud, "What's this? A breach birth?" So that boy was named Perez.

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.

- However, the child with the scarlet thread retreated his hand, and the brother was born first

- "...Perez" - "breach," "a forging through" or "he who breaks through"

— He later was the founder of the Perezites (Num 26:20); the son of the Messianic line (Ruth 4:12,18-22; Matt 1:3; Luke 3:33)

30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand; and he was named **Zerah**.

30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand; and he was named Zerah.

30 Afterwards, his brother came out, and around his hand was the scarlet. So they named him Zerah.

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

- "...Zerah" - "the shining one"

— He founded the Zerahites (Num 26:20); was an ancestor of Achan, who committed the sin in Israel that caused the first defeat at Ai (Joshua 7:1)

- It is as if the oracle concerning Jacob's ruling over his older brother (27:29) was being relived in the line of Judah

- What was so significant was the connection with Judah's dealing with Joseph (37:26-28)

— He and his brothers sold their younger brother into Egypt, thinking they could thwart God's design that the elder brothers would serve the younger Joseph  
— Yet in Judah's own family, despite his attempts to hinder Tamar's marriage, God's will worked out in a poignant confirmation of the principle that the elder would serve the younger

## **Observations**

This chapter interrupts the story of Joseph. Immediately before, in 37:36, Moses states: "And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard." At this point, the story of Joseph is dropped, but 39:1 repeats in different words the same thing: "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, that had brought him down thither." The account of Joseph picks back up where it left off.

The reason for this "interruption" of the story of Joseph:

- (1) It traces the messianic line and shows how the seed-son, Judah, produced the seed-son, Perez.
- (2) It shows the reason why Judah's Egyptian sojourn was necessary. The chosen family was intermarrying with the Canaanites. What was avoided for Isaac and Jacob is not avoided for the sons of Jacob. Jacob's sons began to intermarry with the Canaanites, and they began adopting the immoral standards of the Canaanites, as seen in the sexual irregularities of Gen 38 and other ways. As a result, the chosen family will be brought into Egypt, and there they will be preserved physically as a nation. Separated from everybody else, including the Egyptians, in the land of Goshen, the chosen family will also be preserved morally.
- (3) Judah and Joseph are contrasted, showing that Judah, who was of the messianic line, does not resist temptation and was willing to have sexual intercourse with the one he thought was a prostitute, while Joseph does resist temptation as is soon to be revealed.

A possible chronology of Judah and Joseph while separated:

- (1) Judah separated from the rest of the family and married "immediately after the selling of Joseph, when Joseph was 17.
- (2) The three sons were born to Judah and his Canaanite wife Shuah about a year apart, and the third was born when Joseph was 20.
- (3) If the firstborn son Er was married at 18, Joseph would have been 36, and this would be the sixth year of plenty.
- (4) If Er died the same year of marriage, then Onan would have married Tamar at 17.
- (5) Onan died the same year, and so Shelah was 16 and, hence, still too young for marriage.

- (6) After 1-2 years passed, Shelah had grown up but was not given to Tamar.
- (7) Tamar was impregnated by Judah when Joseph was 38 years old, when the first year of famine took place.
- (8) Tamar gave birth to the twins in the second year of famine, the very year the brothers went down to Egypt.

This shows that there is no problem with the chronology of Gen 38 regarding the story of Joseph. In spite of critics who have tried to make an issue by saying the events could not have transpired so, the problem of timing is not as great as they make it appear.

### **Prophetic Undercurrents**

Codes in Gen 38—at 49 letter intervals, the names of Boaz, Ruth, Obed, Jesse and David appear in the Hebrew, in chronological order...centuries before the writings of Samuel. David's lineage prophesied (in the time of the Judges) in the Book of Ruth. The 10th generation after Pharez (Ruth 4:12,18-22); bastards excluded until 10th generation (Deut 23:2).

## Genesis 38

- 1 וַיְהִי כַעַת הַהִוא וַיָּבֶר יְהוָה מֵאֵת אֶחָיו וַיֵּם עַד־אִישׁ עַדְלָמָי וַשְּׁמוֹ חִירָה׃
- 2 וַיֵּרֶא־שָׁם יְהוָה בְּתֹאשֵׁם כְּנַעֲנִי וַשְּׁמוֹ שֹׁרֵעַ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיְבֵא אֵלָיָהּ׃
- 3 וַתֵּהָרֶם וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ עֹר׃
- 4 וַתֵּהָרֶם עוֹר וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ אוֹנָן׃
- 5 וַתִּסָּף עוֹר וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שֵׁלָה וַהֲיָה כַכֹּזֵב בְּלִדְתָּהּ אָחִיו׃
- 6 וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אִשָּׁה לְעֹר בְּכוֹרָו וַשְּׁמָהּ תָמָר׃
- 7 וַיְהִי עֹר בְּכוֹר יְהוָה רָע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה וַיִּמָּתְהוּ יְהוָה׃
- 8 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לְאוֹנָן כֹּה אֶל־אִשְׁתְּ אָחִיךָ וַיִּכַּם אֹתָהּ וַהֲקִים זָרַע לְאָחִיךָ׃
- 9 וַיִּבְרַע אוֹנָן כִּי לֹא לוֹ יְהוָה עֵינַי וַהֲיָה אִם־יָבֵא אֶל־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶחָיו וַשְּׁמָהּ אֶרְצָה לְבִלְתִּי נַחֲזֶרְעֵי לְאָחָיו׃
- 10 וַיִּבְרַע יְהוָה עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיָּמָת נִס־אָחִיו׃
- 11 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לְתָמָר כִּלְיוֹ שֶׁבֶר אֶלְמָנָה כִּי־אָכִיךָ עָרִיבְנָדָל שֵׁלָה בְנוֹ כִּי אִם־
- 12 וַיִּרְכַּב הַיָּמִים וַתָּמָת בְּתִישָׁרַע אִשְׁת־יְהוָה וַיִּנָּחַם יְהוָה וַיַּעַל עַל־גִּזְזוֹן צֹאנוֹ הוּא וְחִירָה כַעֲהוֹ הַעַדְלָמָי תַּמְנָתָהּ׃
- 13 וַיָּבֶר לְתָמָר לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה חֲמוּדָךְ עִלָּה תַּמְנָתָהּ לָנוּ צֹאנֵנוּ׃
- 14 וַתִּסֵּר בְּנָדִי אֶלְמָנוּתָהּ מִעָלֶיהָ וַתִּכַּסּ בְּצִעִיף וַתַּחַעֲלָךְ וַתִּשָּׁב בַּפֶּתַח עֵינִים אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַרְרָךְ תַּמְנָתָהּ כִּי רָאִתָּהּ כִּי־נָבֵל שֵׁלָה וְהוּא לֹא־נִחְמָה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה׃

Boaz  
רוּת Ruth

15 ויראה יהודה ויחשבה לזונה כי כסתה פניה:  
 16 ויש אליה אליההרף ויאמר הכהנא אבוא אליך כי לא ידע כי כלתו  
 הוא ויאמר מהתחילי כי תבוא אלי:  
 17 ויאמר אנכי אשלח גדיענים מןהצאן ויאמר אסיתמן ערבון עד שלחך:  
 18 ויאמר הנה הערבון אשר אסיתלך ויאמר החמיר דכחילך יצוניה אשר פ:  
 ויתןלה ויבא אליה וסתר לו:  
 19 ותקם וילך ותסר עשיבה אשליה ותלבש **הו** אלמנותה:  
 20 וישלח יהודה אחיהו קונים בנל בעהו הערבלי לבשה **הו** בן מנר  
 האשה ולא מצאה:  
 21 וישאל אתאנשי מקמה לאמר איה תקרשה הוא בעינים עלההרף ויאמרו  
 לאדיתה בזה קרשה:  
 22 וישב אליהודה ויאמר לא מצאתיה וגם אנשי המקום אמרו לאדיתה  
 בזה קרשה:  
 23 ויאמר יהודה תקחלה פן נהיה לבנו הנה שלחתי הנרי הנה ואמה לא  
 מצאתה:  
 24 ויהי כמשלש חדשים ויגר ליהודה לאמר ונחל תמור כלחך וגם הנה  
 הרה לזונתים ויאמר יהודה הוציאה וחשך:

Obed עִבְדִּי



25 הָיָא מוֹצֵאֵת וְהָיָא שְׁלֵחָה אֶל־חֲמוּיָהּ לֵאמֹר לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־אֵלֶּה לוֹ אֶנְכִּי הִנֵּה

וְהָאִמְרָל תִּכְרֹץ־לִּי מִחֲמֻמָּה וְהַכְּנִים וְהַמְּטֵה הָאֵלֶּה:

26 וַיָּבֶר יֵשׁוּעָה וַיֹּאמֶר עֲרִידָה מִנֵּי בְנֵי־עֲלִיזָבֶת לְאִי־סִסְיָה וְשֵׁמֶה בְנִי וְלֹא־יִסָּר

עוֹד לְרַעְתָּהּ:

27 וַיֵּלֶךְ בָּעֵת לְרַחֵם וְהָיָה הָאִמּוֹן בְּכַטְנָה:

28 וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּלִדְסָה וַיִּסְוֶה וַיִּתְּנָה בְּיָמֶיהָ וַיִּתְּנָה עַל־יָדָיו שְׁנֵי לֵאמֹר זֶה יֵשָׁא

רֹאשְׁנָה:

29 וַיְהִי כַּמֹּשִׁיב יָדָיו וְהָיָה יֵשָׁא אָחִיו וַיֹּאמֶר מִה־פִּרְעָתָה עָלֶיךָ פֶּרֶץ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ

פֶּרֶץ:

30 וַאֲחֵר יֵשָׁא אָחִיו אֲשֶׁר עָלִיזָרוּ הַשְּׁנֵי וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ זִכְרָה: ס

יֵשָׁא Yishay  
(Jesse)  
דָּוִד David

בֹּעַז Boaz

רוּת Ruth

עֹבֵד Obed

יֵשָׁע Jesse

דָּוִד David

**All in 49-letter intervals; &  
All in chronological order!**