

**First Southern Baptist Church - Wednesday Bible Study - 2-24-21**  
**Judah and Tamar - Genesis 38**

**Introduction:**

1. God overcomes obstacles to the blessing
2. Joseph vs Judah - behavior
3. This is what is happening while Joseph is in the dungeon

**I. Judah and His Sons**

1. Wife died
2. Sons:
  - Er
  - Onan
  - Shelah

**II. Judah's Sons and Levirate Marriage**

1. Levirate marriage - Dt. 25:5-10
  - A. Brother marries brother's wife if he dies without an heir
  - B. Ruth refers to this idea
  - C. The "next of kin" - "redemption"
2. The purpose or the "why" of Levirate marriage
  - A. Economic life was threatened - no male provider
  - B. The husband's household was obligated to provide... take care of her
  - C. Protected the woman's sexuality
  - D. To produce an offspring in the name of the deceased
  - E. Produced an heir - so money is involved here
3. In-law marriage
  - A. Found in Hittite and Assyrian cultures
  - B. These provided for father-in-law marriage when brothers are not available

**III. Judah's Dilemma**

1. Er died
2. Onan refused to impregnate this wife -9
  - he will not honor his brother (the implied reason God killed him)
3. Lost two sons
  - God killed Er - 7
  - God killed Onan - 8-10
  - in danger of losing the last son
4. Sends Tamar back to her father's house
  - and wait for the third son, Shelah to grow up
  - promised by Judah... and patiently waited on by Tamar - ?

**IV. Tamar's Plan**

1. She becomes impatient
2. Played the part of a harlot - became pregnant by Judah
  - wears different clothes... assuming harlot's clothes
  - sits by the road

-wears a veil

(Strange irony, since one betrothed (to Shelah) was supposed to wear a veil)

3. Takes pledges
  - Seal - an engraved stone that was rolled across wet clay
  - Cord - probably used to suspend the "seal"
  - Staff - possibly had Judah's name on the head of it/ or the name of the tribe
4. Sends Hiram to pay the lady... found that the prostitute has disappeared
5. Presents them to the "father"

#### **V. Judah's Sense of Fairness/ Morals**

1. Took the prostitute
2. Seems to think this is wrong:
  - did not "sleep with her again"
  - if this gets out "I will be a laughingstock" (23) - lets don't pursue the matter
  - she was "more righteous than he"
  - \*God's view is not considered in the story
3. Proclaimed that Tamar should be "burned"
  - execution was allowed
  - called for death in the law (Lev. 18:15, 29; 20:12) - but not by burning
4. More "tolerable"
  - sense of priorities
  - he "owed" her a son to produce an heir

#### **VI. What's Up Here?**

1. Sexual sins
  - \*incest? Abuse of wives/ women? Sex with a prostitute?
  - A) Taking of wives from foreign nations - influenced by the surrounding nations
    - Esau, Joseph, Judah, Simeon and Levi
  - B) Abraham and Isaac claiming that wives were sisters
  - C) Multiple wives... exemplified by Jacob... Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah
  - D) Deception of Jacob by Laban his father-in-law in Rachel and Leah instance
  - E) Dinah is raped by the Shechemites - this is an unbeliever... not to be held as accountable
  - F) Reuben takes his dad's handmaid/ wife
  - G) Tamar defies Judah - prostitution - just sorry
  - H) Joseph is "attacked" by Potiphar's wife (chapter 39, by the way)
    - \*the Christian is not to be "unequally" yoked with an unbeliever
2. The strange absence of any reference to God and His will
3. The foreign environment
4. Before the law,... but they knew right from wrong
5. Our hero is Joseph... he is in the dungeon doing the right thing... his brothers are with the "people of God" doing the wrong thing