

Genesis 38 New American Standard Bible

Judah and Tamar

And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. 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. ³ And she conceived and gave birth to a son, and he named him Er. ⁴ Then she conceived again and gave birth to a son, and she named him Onan. ⁵ She gave birth to yet another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she gave birth to him.

⁶ Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name *was* Tamar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the Lord, so the Lord took his life. 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." 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.

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

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. ¹³ And Tamar was told, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah 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. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he assumed she *was* a prostitute, for she had covered her face. 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?"

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

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. 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." 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.'" 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."

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!" 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?"

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.²⁷ It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins 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."

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

Adullam city in Judah It was originally a Canaanite town, the seat of Hirah the Adullamite (friend and father-in-law of Judah Adullam's king was defeated by Joshua This region contained many caves which could offer refuge to outlaws. In one of these, David hid after fleeing from Saul it served as his headquarters for a time during his war with the Philistines It was there that the three "mighty men" brought David water from the well at Beth-Lehem It remained a Jewish town in Hasmonean Judah the Maccabee withdrew to Adullam after his battle against Gorgias near Marissa

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

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What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Paul's observations and insights

1. Judah chose to leave the camp of Israel. Why did he choose to do this?
2. Why did he go to visit an Addullamite? Who were they?
3. Judah was looking for a wife from the people of Canaan.
4. What does it mean by the statement 'he took her and went into her'?
5. Er – the name of the son born to Judah from this encounter, then after that Onan, and then after that Shelah – three sons.
6. Judah takes a wife for his son from Canaan, her name is Tamar. Again what does it mean 'he took her from Canaan'?
7. Now, Er was evil in God's sight. What did he do that made God put him to death?
8. Onan is given the responsibility, by his father, to produce children for his brother, Er, from his wife Tamar.
9. Why did he not want to do this?
10. To waste his seed is to offend God and abandon his responsibility as a brother.
11. God took his life for this act of unfaithfulness to his brother.
12. Judah is now afraid of losing his last son Shelah to Er's wife Tamar, so he schemes to protect him.
13. Tamar, having been abandoned, schemes and deceives her father-in-law, by taking advantage of him in an isolated place of vulnerability.
14. Tamar presents herself as a prostitute and lures Judah by seducing him in her bed.

15. Tamar is motivated by abandonment, resentment and bitterness.
16. Judah falls into Tamar's trap and is completely unaware that he is having intercourse with Tamar, his daughter-in-law.
17. For Judah it was about the sex and driven desire, for Tamar it was about deliverance from disgrace as a barren women.
18. Tamar protects herself and invests in her future by receiving a pledge from Judah.
19. Tamar needs something that identifies Judah to the pledge.
20. Tamar is exceptionally fertile and conceives a son.
21. Judah attempts to pay what he owes to the prostitute but she can't be found and he is perplexed!
22. Judah's servant attempts to find out about the temple prostitute, it appears that one doesn't exist.
23. There are two problems he recalls to Judah 'I can't find her' and 'she doesn't exist'.
24. Why does Judah say that they will become a joke if he doesn't pay?
25. Tamar begins to show signs of her pregnancy and the tribes are ready to kill her for being with child outside of marriage. What do you think of that?
26. Judah is ready to burn her along with the baby. What do you think of that?
27. The pledge saves Tamar's life.
28. Jesus Christ has pledged to forgive us of our sins at the judgement 'if we confess him on earth before men He will confess us before His Father in heaven'.
29. Tamar asks the question of Judah 'who do these belong to'? As if she didn't know.
30. Why does Judah call Tamar 'righteous'?
31. Judah had no other relationships with Tamar. How did that make her feel?
32. Twins were born from the relationship – double trouble!
33. The firstborns birth right is challenged.
34. What does Perez mean? - Which in Hebrew means "to breach" or "to burst forth".
35. What does Serez mean? - Will be