




## Genesis 38:1-30

One fourth of the entire book of Genesis is about Joseph. But after Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, it focuses on Moses. Chapter 38 tells us about a man and his low-life standards that he had but yet God used his lineage for greatness later on. If God puts information in the bible, then we need to study it and garnish the lesson from it.

This chapter is important for types and examples. God uses people's shortcomings and makes wonderful things happen when it is His sovereign will. He does what He wants, when He wants, how He wants no matter what we think. God is open and honest about these people and their lives. People don't get away with misbehaving, but God's will is always done no matter what we do.

- 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.** Judah is a son of Jacob. He leaves his father's encampment due to all the bickering and goes back to the gentile areas and hangs out with his pagan buddy Hirah. Remember this man, Hirah.
- 2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her, and went in unto her.** Judah marries this Canaanite lady against his family's orders to stay away from heathens and pagans. It means don't be unequally yoked; marry a Christian. Don't marry a non-Christian.
- 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.** Notice the wife is naming the children. Usually the men named the children.
- 5 And she yet again 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 first-born, and her name was Tamar.** Remember this lady's name, Tamar.
- 7 And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah; and Jehovah slew him.** We don't know what Er did to make God so angry to come down and kill this man, but He did.
- 8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her, and raise up seed to your brother.** In those days, if a brother dies, the other brother is to go take the widowed wife and have more children with her.
- 9 And Onan knew that the seed would 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 he should give seed to his brother.** Onan didn't want to do this so he practiced birth control and "pulled out" before seeding her, going against God's orders.
- 10 And the thing which he did was evil in the sight of Jehovah: and he slew him also.** We don't think God killed Onan over this one thing, but whatever he did, it angered God so much He came and killed Onan.
- 11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son be grown up; for he said, Lest he also die, like his brethren. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.** Jacob does not like Tamar, but his two sons who married her died. He has one son left and if he marries her, Shelah might die too. So Jacob sends Tamar to his house to live as a widow until Shelah is full grown and then she can marry him.
- 12 ¶ And in process of time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.** Hirah comes back in the picture here. Judah hooks up with his buddy Hirah again.
- 13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, your father-in-law goes up to Timnah to shear his sheep.** Tamar's been waiting all this time for Judah's son to grow up, but now she hears Judah himself is coming into the neighborhood.

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- 14 And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gate of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife.** She had already heard that Judah is not fulfilling his promise, so she realizes he is not going to let her marry his youngest son. She dressed up like a temple prostitute and sat out in the open hoping someone would pick her up and perform acts that honored their pagan gods.
- 15 When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face.** Usually the prostitutes would keep their faces covered before, during, and after the acts and then go their separate ways.
- 16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Come, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee: for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, what will you give me, that you may come in unto me?** She wants to know what he will give her to perform these sex acts.
- 17 And he said, I will send you a kid of the goats from the flock. And she said, Will you give me a pledge, till you send it?** He says he'll give her a kid goat, but he doesn't have it on him. So she asks for a pledge, a guarantee that he will pay her.
- 18 And he said, What pledge shall I give you? And she said, your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand. And he gave them to her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.** A signet is a ring whereby correspondence is stamped. It is his person. A cord is a chain around his neck. A staff represents his position in the family and society. He is willing to give up all his stuff for a few moments of lustful pleasure.
- 19 And she arose, and went away, and put off her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.** When Tamar gets back home, she gets rid of the harlot clothes and puts back on her widowhood garments.
- 20 And Judah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.** Judah wants his stuff back. It is important stuff. He went to find her but couldn't find her.
- 21 Then he asked the men of her place, saying, Where is the prostitute, that was at Enaim by the wayside? And they said, there has been no prostitute here.**
- 22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, There has been no prostitute here.** The locals said we don't have any prostitutes here.
- 23 And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be put to shame: behold, I sent this kid, and you have not found her.** He's more concerned about getting his payment made and his stuff back than about what others think about him or his position as a role model. He tried his best to pay her and get his stuff back.
- 24 ¶ And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; and moreover, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, bring her forth, and let her be burnt.** After three months people find out Tamar is pregnant. They complain to Judah about her playing the harlot, getting pregnant while wearing widow garments. Judah makes a snap judgement: burn her to death.
- 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 you, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff.** Tamar hung on to Judah's belongings. She says the father is the one who owns these items: the ring, the necklace, the staff.
- 26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She is more righteous than I, forasmuch as I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.** Judah knew it was his stuff as did everyone else, so he couldn't deny it. He acknowledged he was the father, but he had nothing to do with her anymore. It shows Judah's low-life attitude.
- 27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.**
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- 28 And it came to pass, when she travailed, that one put out a hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.** One baby sticks his hand out of the womb and the midwife ties a red thread around it, declaring it firstborn. But he went back in!
- 29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, Wherefore have you made a breach for yourself? Therefore his name was called Perez.**
- 30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zerah.** The second baby came out first, and the one with the red thread came out second. Judah was a man of low-class attitude, but these two boys, Perez becomes prominent in Israel: King David and Jesus Christ Himself come from Perez's lineage. It shows God uses the worst people to make great things happen eventually.