

Judah's Humiliation (Genesis 38)

Thursday, May 1, 2014
6:59 AM

To Read:

Ruth 4
Isaiah 54

Other Passages:

Deuteronomy 25
Matthew 1

I. Introduction

A. This morning we are continuing in the last story of Genesis - the toledot of Jacob

1. As we discussed last week, we are going to look at the toledot of Jacob under three headings:
 - a. Humiliation
 - b. Exaltation
 - c. Blessing (of the Covenant)
2. And we are going to see that each section focuses on two of Jacob's children, Joseph and Judah
 - a. Joseph is going to be humbled and Judah is going to be humbled
 - b. Joseph is going to be exalted and Judah is going to be exalted
 - c. Joseph and Judah are going to receive the blessings of the Covenant
3. This week we are going to continue the section on humiliation and we will cover it in three weeks
 - a. Last week we saw Joseph humbled
 - b. This week we are going to see Judah humbled
 - c. And next week we will see Joseph's continued humiliation

B. This morning, we will see Judah's humiliation and ponder on what it teaches us about Christ's humiliation

1. Remember that both Joseph and Judah are pointing to one man who would fulfill this pattern: Christ
 - a. Joseph and Judah are humbled because Christ was humbled
 - b. Joseph and Judah are exalted because Christ was exalted
 - c. Joseph and Judah receive the blessings of the Covenant because Christ received the blessings
2. So, our overarching theme verse for this section of Genesis is Philippians 2:5-11, showing Christ fulfilling the pattern of Joseph and Judah's lives
 - a. Philippians 2:5-11 - *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
3. Since Christ is the fulfillment of Joseph and Judah's story, I want to make Christ the focus of Judah's story

C. So, this morning I am going to have a simple outline that will help us look at Judah's life and see Christ

1. First, we will consider Judah: a sinful type and make simple observations about Judah's life
2. Then we will consider Christ: the perfect fulfillment and apply our observations of Judah's life to Christ
3. Finally, we will consider Us: redeemed imitators and make some applications of our study

D. Heads up: this morning a large portion of our discussion will hinge on the idea of levirate marriage

1. Levirate marriage was a practice in the ancient world where if a married man died without any heirs his brother would take his wife and bear a son with her that would have the dead man's name and rights
2. This practice is commanded of the Old Covenant people in Deuteronomy 25, but in Scripture it is more than simply the ancient practice, it is closely tied to the concept of a kinsman-redeemer as we see in Ruth
3. Levirate marriage and the kinsman-redeemer were not only methods for sorting out inheritance rights, they were tied to the promise of God, so as we go through our text this morning, keep that in mind
4. Unfortunately, because of time, I won't get to describe or dwell on the idea of kinsman-redeemers at length, but I will bring up important points about kinsman-redeemers as we go through our text this morning

E. Proposition: Judah's failures and humiliation point forward to Christ who undoes the humiliation of Judah and fulfills the promise of God that Judah imperiled

II. Judah: a sinful type

A. A sinful type?

1. When I call Judah a sinful type, I don't mean to indicate that Joseph was sinless or a perfect type of Christ
2. But Christ's fulfillment of Judah's humiliation is going to be different than His fulfillment of Joseph's
3. Christ's fulfillment in Joseph's story came by way of comparisons, in Judah's story it is by way of contrasts
4. And I am confident in saying this because Judah's story in chapter 38 is meant to contrast with Joseph
 - a. Looking back, Joseph starts by seeking out his brothers, Judah starts by leaving his brothers
 - b. Looking forward, Judah's story is full of sexual immorality, Joseph's story exhibits excelling chasteness
5. So, we'll start by making five observations about Judah and then we'll turn to think about Christ's fulfillment

B. Judah was humbled because he turned away from the covenant (vs. 1-10)

1. Judah turns away from the covenant
 - a. Judah leave his brothers, that is leave the company of the people of God, and join himself to a Canaanite woman who is not only outside the covenant but under the judgment of the covenant
 - b. This puts Judah in a category with Esau who sought out two non-covenantal wives and was separated from the covenant, and contrasts with Abraham and Isaac who got non-Canaanite wives for their sons
 - c. Judah's actions here are the actions of one who has turned away from the covenant, he isn't pursuing it
2. But not only Judah, the son's Judah bears outside the covenant also turn away from the covenant
 - a. The next five verses turn from Judah to Judah's sons and show that Judah's sons follow in his footsteps
 - i. Er, Judah's firstborn, is simply described as wicked without further explanation
 - ii. Onan's sin is given in more detail so we have to ask, what was Onan's sin and why is it described?
 - b. To understand this, we need to look at context: The promise of a son was a major part of the covenant
 - i. The promise was fulfilled in Isaac but was also passed down, passing down the promise of a son is part of the sonship covenants: the seed of Eve, the offspring of Abraham, David's promised son
 - ii. As this promise of a royal son passes from Eve to Abraham to David it passes through Judah and is specifically associated with Judah by Genesis 49, it is against this backdrop that Onan's sin occurs
 - iii. Onan despises the promise and covenant of God and chooses his own worldly benefit over seeking the promises of God by continuing the promised line (vs. 9)
 - iv. The word seed emphasizes this point, in Genesis nearly every use of the word is related to God's promise and covenant: the promise is to Eve's seed, to Noah's seed and to Abraham's seed
 - v. So Onan's sin is not a standalone issue that we need to determine from these two verses but is tied to the greater story of Genesis and emphasizes despising the covenant
 - vi. This is why it is emphasized twice that Onan didn't want to give offspring to his brother - he wasn't looking to the covenant promise, instead he was looking to his own profit
 - vii. With the death of Er, Onan would assume the position of eldest getting the double inheritance and passing it down to his sons, unless Er had an heir, because Onan wanted the worldly benefit instead of looking for the promised seed, Onan chose not to give his brother an heir
 - viii. Onan, like his father Judah and his brother Er, despised the covenant bringing humiliation to Judah

C. Judah was humbled because he failed to provide a kinsman-redeemer (vs. 6-19)

1. The bulk of the middle of our story is dedicated to the failure of Judah to provide a kinsman-redeemer
 - a. The husband provided was wicked and killed by God
 - b. The first kinsman-redeemer refused to act the part of a redeemer and was killed by God
 - c. The second kinsman-redeemer was held back by Judah
2. So, as the story moves on, Tamar seeks redemption from Judah on her own initiative
 - a. As we come to Tamar's actions, we have to ask what was Tamar's motive? The actions of Tamar aren't specifically condemned in the text and there is a slight undercurrent of approval - was Tamar right?
 - b. Our first reaction is no! And I would affirm that answer, her actions don't give us a norm to live by
 - c. But, as a widow who was cast out of her in-laws family and withheld from a redeemer, she had very few prospects left in life, we know for sure that Tamar was trying to redress this wrong done to her
 - d. But many commentators emphasize that Tamar's actions show that, unlike Judah, she believed in the promise and wanted to be joined to the promised line - I'm not sure whether or not this was the case

- e. Perhaps we could make a comparison to Ruth who ends up in a relatively similar situation, having lost her husband and having no redeemer to redeem her, but she chooses to join herself to the people of God instead of turn and go back to her own people -perhaps Tamar's motives may have been similar
 - f. So, maybe this was Tamar's motive, but I'm still not completely sure, in any case, Tamar attempts to rectify the wrong done to her by tricking Judah into giving her a son, to act, as it were, as her redeemer
3. Judah's failure to provide a kinsman-redeemer imperils his line as it looks as the line of Judah is about to fail, but then when it doesn't it leads directly to Judah's humiliation as he fathers his own grandchild

D. Judah was humbled because he was full of self-righteous (hypocritical) wrath (vs. 12-24)

- 1. In the last few verses that we looked at, we saw Judah continue blatantly in sin
 - a. Perhaps Judah didn't know that he was committing incest but he was brazenly looking for a prostitute
 - b. By verse 12, Judah hasn't apparently learned anything, he hasn't understood God's judgment against him and his sons and hasn't purposed to seek after the things of God
 - c. Instead, he tries to nullify God's wrath by withholding a redeemer and continues blatantly in sin
- 2. After Judah continues blatantly in sin, though, Judah tries to conceal his sin
 - a. He tries to make good on his bargain with Tamar, sending a goat with Hirah to get his items back
 - b. But Hirah can't find the prostitute even after asking around for her
 - c. Judah decides that the best thing to do is cover up the incident, because he doesn't want to be humiliated as people laugh at the foolish guy who went to a prostitute and can't complete the bargain
 - d. Judah tries to conceal his sin to spare himself embarrassment
- 3. In contrast, though, Judah exposes and condemns Tamar's sin in the next verse
 - a. Although Judah should have had plenty of time and situation to stop and ponder his sin and his departure from the covenant, Judah instead lashes out in hypocritical rage
 - b. Judah pronounces judgment and condemnation instantly without stopping to figure out the facts
 - c. Judah, though mired in humiliating sin himself, lashes out with self-righteous, hypocritical wrath which leads directly to the climax of his humiliation

E. Judah was ultimately humbled by his own sin (vs. 25-26)

- 1. After Judah lashes out in hypocritical wrath, Tamar reveals her plot against Judah and displays the symbols identifying Judah as the father of the child - revealing him to have committed incest and adultery with her
- 2. Judah, who has gone to lengths to run and hide from his sin to spare himself embarrassment, is now humiliated far beyond what he imagined would be the case - Tamar not only presents the evidence, but presents it publicly, challenging Judah to identify himself as the culprit
- 3. Finally, seeing the full result of his sin, of his turning away from the covenant, of his failure to provide a kinsman-redeemer, of his seeking a prostitute, of his hypocrisy, Judah understands the reality of his sin
- 4. And his humiliation comes with a humble recognition in verse 26, "*She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.*" - not exactly absolving Tamar of guilt, not calling her righteous, but realizing that his sin was the precipitating incident that led to this mess
- 5. Judah finally acknowledges, confesses and even repents of his sin - the end of verse 26 gives us a taste of his repentance, his turning away from sin, as it records that he did not know Tamar again, he wasn't going to continue in the sin that he had been caught in
- 6. Judah, having denied and run away from his sin is finally humbled by his sin

F. Judah was redeemed in the birth of a son (vs. 27-30)

- 1. Our story ends this morning with the birth of Judah's children, Er's heirs - and once again there are twins
- 2. God's sovereignty and His purpose in salvation is emphasized as there are not only another set of twins, but the younger is chosen over the elder, remembering Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau
- 3. Judah has completely humiliated himself in sin, but God redeems Him from that sin, continuing His purpose through Judah - the promise of a son will be continued through Judah, Judah's line will not fail
- 4. God's sovereignty and God's redemptive plan will make sure of that, Judah's sin has not derailed God's plan
- 5. And this birth is important because it ends up in every major genealogy in Scripture going forward, so that, as we read earlier, Perez, the younger of the twins, is the ancestor of David, the ancestor of Christ, which leads us to our next point

III. Christ: the perfect fulfillment

A. Like we did last week, in this second section of the message this morning, I want to take the simple observations we made about Judah and see how they apply to Christ's life

1. In other words, I want to see how this passage points to Christ and what it teaches us about His humiliation
2. So from the five observations we made about Judah I want to make five observations about Christ

B. Christ was humbled to bring us into the covenant

1. As we go through Genesis 38 and see the humiliation and redemption of Judah, the central issue for Judah is that he turned away from the covenant, he chose to walk away from the promises of God and this started a path that led to his children walking away and eventually led to his humiliation in sin with Tamar
2. I said in the introduction that Christ's fulfillment of Judah's story here is going to be opposite of His fulfillment of Joseph's story, he will contrast with Judah instead of compare
3. So, while Judah was humiliated because he walked away from the covenant, Christ was humiliated in order to restore us to the covenant - Christ's humiliation undid what Judah's humiliation brought
4. We see this clearly in Luke 22:20 in Luke's discussion of the last supper - *And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."*
5. Christ, looking forward to His imminent death told His disciples that His coming humiliation would bring them back into covenant with God - Judah walked away from the covenant, Christ brought us back
6. So Christ fulfills Judah's story by undoing what Judah does and, in doing so, He gives hope to all who have rejected the promises of God that He, through His humiliation and death, can bring us back into covenant with God - how can Judah or us return to right relationship with God? Through Christ's humiliation.

C. Christ was humbled to act the part of a kinsman-redeemer

1. One of the significant results of Judah's turning away from the covenant was first his need to provide a kinsman-redeemer because of the death of his son and then his failure to provide a kinsman-redeemer
2. Judah's failure to provide a kinsman-redeemer leads to his humiliation as Tamar, by deceit, tricks Judah into being the kinsman-redeemer
3. But where Judah fails to provide and falls in humiliation, Christ, again in contrast, is humiliated in order to be the provided kinsman-redeemer - He is the Son of Judah who willingly acts to redeem the promise of God
4. One of the most beautiful places we see this is actually in prophecy, Isaiah 54:5-6 - *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God.*
5. Notice the parallel between husband in the first half of the verse and Redeemer in the second half, God tells us in Isaiah that He would Himself acts as the kinsman-redeemer for His people
6. Though His people had been barren and rejected as a cast off wife, leading to an apparent failure to obtain the promises, God would send a kinsman-redeemer to redeem His people and fulfill His promise
7. So Christ fulfills Judah's story by undoing what Judah does and, in doing so, He gives hope to all who have been rejected by God and cast away from the promises - how can we who have lost the promises of God ever regain the promises? Through Christ's humiliation.

D. Christ was humbled to turn away righteous wrath

1. One of the last steps to Judah's humiliation was his self-righteous, hypocritical wrath toward Tamar's sin, leading him to attempt to condemn and execute Tamar to relieve himself of a nagging problem
2. But whereas Judah's self-righteous wrath led to his humiliation, Christ's humiliation acts to absorb and turn away righteous wrath
3. Paul says in I Thessalonians 1:10 - *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*
4. Or in Romans 5:9 he says - *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.*
5. Christ went to humiliation and death to absorb, not petty, self-righteous, hypocritical wrath, but holy, righteous wrath exhibited against us by God, wrath that God was right to have against our sin and rebellion
6. So once again Christ fulfills Judah's story by undoing what Judah does, Judah ran full bore into self-righteous wrath and fell into humiliation, Christ ran willingly to humiliation and delivers us from God's righteous wrath - how can God's righteous wrath be turned away from sinners? Only through the humiliation of Christ.

E. Christ was humbled for our righteousness

1. Judah's humiliation reached its zenith as his sinfulness in turning away from the covenant, in refusing to provide a redeemer and in committing incest with Tamar was made public and he is forced to own and repent of his sins
2. But, whereas Judah's sin led to his humiliation, Christ's humiliation led to our righteousness - His humiliation was a result, not of His own sin, but of ours
3. Isaiah 53:10-11 - *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.*
4. II Corinthians 5:21 - *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
5. II Corinthians 5 makes it clear that, once again, Christ fulfills Judah's story by undoing what Judah does, Judah fell into humiliation through his sin, Christ goes to humiliation to remove our sin. How can a sinful people be righteous before God? Only through the humiliation of Christ.

F. Christ was redemption in the birth of a son

1. Chapter 38 doesn't end with Judah's humiliation, it ends with a glimpse of Judah's redemption as the son needed to propagate the promise of God through Judah's line is born and God's sovereignty over His promise is again demonstrated in the birth of twins
2. This is the one place where Christ is going to fulfill a part of this chapter in a more straight-forward way
3. As we look through the genealogies of the Bible, these few verses at the end of Genesis 38 become more important than we might otherwise realize - the younger twin, born of Tamar, Perez, becomes a part of the royal genealogies
4. So we see in Matthew 1:2-6 - *Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.*
5. This birth at the end of Genesis 38 not only symbolizes Judah's redemption, but is a link in the chain that led to Judah's and our true redemption, Perez is an ancestor of David, an ancestor of Christ
6. God's promise was redeemed by God Himself, and Christ has undone what Judah did, Judah refused to provide a redeemer for the promise of God to propagate the line, but God's sovereignty through the actions of Tamar provided a redeemer for all of creation.
7. So Perez, like Seth, and like Isaac, and like Jacob, and like Solomon is an image, a type of the promised Son - his birth was a potent that pointed forward to his descendant who would redeem every promise of God

IV. Us: redeemed imitators

A. Our final point this morning is going to be some application of our story

1. I want to take the story of Judah's humiliation as we have seen it point to Christ and apply it to our lives
2. So we'll draw out of both Judah's story and Christ's story as we make our applications this morning
3. As always when I make applications there are numerable applications that could be made out of our text this morning and there is no way I could make them all
4. So, I've just pulled a few clear applications out of our text this morning, applications that spring from the central issues of the story and apply to our lives today

B. We must humble ourselves in confession and repentance

1. As we listen to Genesis 38, we are struck by all of the sinfulness exhibited by Judah and his sons - for the most part, Judah is not an example to follow, but a warning to be rejected
2. But Judah does have one worthy act here, at the end of the story Judah humbles himself in acknowledging and repenting of his sin
3. Judah finally saw his sin for what it was, he owned it as his own and he turned away from it
4. We should see ourselves as the ones in Judah's position, we were the ones who turned away from the covenant of God, we were the ones mired in and humiliated by our own sin, we were the ones who were unable to provide a redeemer to undo our foolish actions
5. Ephesians 3:1-3 - *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*
6. But this morning we have also seen that Christ was humiliated to undo what Judah had done, He was humiliated to bring us back into the covenant and to redeem us from God's righteous wrath
7. So our response this morning must be to recognize Christ's work and imitate Judah's humility - we need to see our sin for what it is, own it as our own and turn away from it because Christ has redeemed us from it
8. John calls us to this in I John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
9. As those redeemed by Christ's blood we should not deny, hide and dissemble our sin, instead we should confess our sin and turn away from it because, unlike Judah who could only see the types pointing forward, we have seen our Redeemer and He has washed away our sin

C. We must have mercy towards others' sins

1. Having made one positive application out of Judah's story, now I want to give two warnings
2. Judah, in this story, displays great wrath, great condemnation of Tamar's sin, even calling for her to be executed, without pondering his own sin or showing any mercy
3. But Christ has left us a better example, instead of exhibiting even righteous wrath against our sin, Christ humbled Himself in order to turn away God's wrath
4. So we should not be like Judah and instead we should show the mercy of Christ to those in sin
5. Listen to the exhortation of Jude 22-23 - *And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.*
6. *Jude understands that there will be sin within the church - in fact most of his letter is a strong warning against pursuing sinfulness within the church*
7. But, Jude's final conclusion is that instead of showing wrath against sin, we can show mercy to sinners
8. Now, the mercy Jude calls for isn't ignoring sin, he doesn't call us to turn a blind eye, he calls us to snatch sinners out of the fire
9. But he says, "have mercy" even if we have to "show mercy with fear"

10. We don't need to be like Judah who ran to wrath, God will punish all sin according to His perfect holiness, instead we can imitate Christ and have mercy
11. Think about how you react when you see a fellow believer in the church sin, even sin against you perhaps - do you look more like Judah, whether publicly or privately in your own mind, or do you look more like Christ?
12. Let's not run to judgment against each other, instead let's do what John calls us to in I John 5:16-17 - *If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life---to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.*

D. We must not try to circumvent the fruitfulness of the covenant

1. Onan's sin receives a significant mention in our story this morning, so in application it would behoove us to think through his sin and receive a warning to not walk in Onan's ways
 - a. To understand this warning correctly, though, we need to remind ourselves what Onan's sin was
 - b. Onan's sin was rejecting the covenant promises in favor of his own worldly wealth
 - c. So he attempted to circumvent the fruitfulness of the covenant to satisfy his own greed
2. Fruitfulness was a significant part of the covenant promise
 - a. I was going to read a selection of passages demonstrating God's promise to each of the patriarchs that they would be fruitful and multiply, but I think in the interest of time we can just remind ourselves that God promised each of the patriarch's multiple times that they would be fruitful and multiply
 - b. There were two ends to this covenant promise to be fruitful and multiply
 - i. The first reason is because it was through fruitfulness, through the propagation of the seed of Eve, the seed of Noah, and the seed of Abraham that God's redemptive work would happen
 - ii. The people of Israel were to be fruitful because they believed that one of their seed would fulfill the promise - multiplying was a statement of belief in the promise of a son - and this is what Onan rejected, he wasn't looking to the redemptive promise he was looking to his father's wealth
 - iii. The second reason to be fruitful and multiply was the promise of a nation, a new people of God, multiplication would provide the people of this nation
 - iv. The people of Israel were to be fruitful and multiply because they were the people of God that were to be blessed in God's place under God's rule
3. But fruitfulness was not only part of the Old Covenant, having passed away after Christ, fruitfulness is a significant promise of the covenant made with us in Christ as well
 - a. Now, one purpose of multiplication has been fulfilled because the promised seed has already appeared
 - i. Christ, as Paul emphatically points out, is the fulfillment of the promise of an offspring, the promise that fruitfulness was looking for
 - ii. But, that fulfillment has not caused the purpose of the promise of multiplication to end, there is still a continuing purpose for us
 - b. Christ, the antitype of Adam and Abraham, is the one who is to be fruitful and multiply
 - i. We can return to a verse we read a few minutes ago, Isaiah 53:10 - *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*
 - c. But not only will Christ fulfill this, we are commanded to participate in Christ's multiplication
 - i. But like all things that have been made new in the New Covenant, there is a type/antitype relationship in being fruitful and multiplying, so the command sounds like this:
 - ii. Matthew 28:18-20 - *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

- d. And the New Testament authors understood this command typologically as bearing spiritual children
 - i. John 1:12-13 - *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*
 - ii. I John 3:1 - *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.*
 - iii. I Corinthians 4:17 - *That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.*
 - iv. Titus 1:4 - *To Titus, my true child in a common faith:*
 - v. Philemon 10 - *I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.*
 - vi. Galatians 4:19 - *my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!*
 - e. And the purpose of our multiplication is the same, we are to be looking for a new nation to spring out of the covenant people - our spiritual fruitfulness will lead to God's people in God's place under God's rule
 - i. I Peter 2:9-10 - *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*
4. If fruitfulness is also a significant promise of our covenant, we must learn from this story not seek to circumvent or excuse ourselves from fruitfulness in the covenant
- a. Onan's disregard for the covenant, refusing to participate in it's fruitfulness looking for the promise of God, was evil in the sight of God
 - b. In the antitypological fulfillment of these things, are we to believe that God's judgment is any less?
 - c. I really hadn't foreseen evangelism, seeking out our brothers and being fruitful, as an application that would come up several times in this last part of Genesis, but every time we turn around there is a pointer calling us to this fruitfulness
 - d. So we should be seeking to be spiritually fruitful, under the sovereignty of God, seeking children of the covenant to build up a new nation in Christ
 - e. Those who refuse to participate in this fruitfulness, who would deny any purpose to evangelism and seeking converts, are despising the covenant just like Onan did
5. So, learning from Onan's disregard of the covenant, we should seek to, under God's sovereignty, produce spiritual offspring - we should seek to spread the gospel and make disciples of all nations, whether it is across the world in Nepal or in our own homes with our children - our actions should seek out spiritual children
- a. But, is there a way that we can apply this to our physical lives as well?
 - b. Using this passage is a little dangerous for that because there is so much going on, if we affirm something too strongly we may affirm more than we mean to - so we need to be careful here
 - c. But, acknowledging the danger, we probably can make some application, maybe not with a 'thus saith the Lord' but we can at least ponder this and ask some pointed questions for personal meditation
 - d. Acknowledging the danger, perhaps we can safely say that turning away from even physical fruitfulness in order to merely pursue worldly goods is, at least in precedent, a dangerous thing
 - e. Onan didn't want a child (with Tamar specifically) because he wanted the worldly goods that would come to him if he didn't have a child - his selfishness ruled him
 - f. Could we not use that description to describe large parts of our current culture? Perhaps we should ponder on that fact and consider how we can apply this in our physical lives as well - is desiring material wealth a reason to turn away from the blessings of children?

E. So, I'll leave you with this question to ponder, but in any case, we are sure that:

- 1. We must humble ourselves and confess our sins, understanding ourselves in the position of Judah
- 2. We must have mercy on other's sins, not acting like Judah in self-righteous wrath
- 3. And we must not try to circumvent the fruitfulness of the covenant, like Onan rejected the covenant
- 4. We do all of these things because Christ has willingly humbled Himself in order to redeem His people to Himself, Christ has undone what Judah had done