

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS 35-38

During the Welsh Revival of 1904, the Lord swept across the country saving souls, and changing lives. Bars closed, people confessed their sins, churches were packed. A great spiritual awakening transformed the entire country.

During this time, two children were overheard explaining their notions of what was occurring... One of the kids asked his buddy, “Do you know what happened in our town?” The other child replied, “No, I don’t, except that Sunday comes every day now.” The first kid asked again, “Don’t you know?” He said, “No, I don’t.”

Finally the boy explained, “Hey, Jesus Christ has come to live in our town.”

Guys, that’s a wonderful explanation of a spiritual revival. A personal renewal takes place when God gives us a new awareness of Jesus. Revival in a church occurs when the presence of Jesus is evident in our midst... Revival comes whenever we sense the presence of Jesus in a new and powerful way.

In Genesis 35 Jacob experiences a revival... *and boy did he need one!*

Understand Jacob’s life was far from an exemplary walk of faith. God worked with a vacillating Jacob. He was up and down – hot and cold – on again, off again.

After swindling his brother out of his birthright, Jacob flees to Haran... to find a wife and to escape Esau. On the way, he has a dream of a ladder extending to heaven. Jacob

encounters God, and is receives the promise God made to his dad, Isaac, and grandpa, Abraham. He names the place, “Bethel”, or *house of God*.

Jacob spends the next 20 years building a harem and growing his herds.

He marries two women – Leah and Rachel - and gets the bonus of two concubines. With these four women Jacob sires 12 sons and a daughter.

Finally he returns to the land and encounters God again, near a tributary that feeds the Jordan. He wrestles with God’s messenger thinking he’s Esau. Finally he realizes he’s wrasslin with God - and refuses to let Him go without a blessing.

The next day, Jacob is reunited with Esau - but rather than enter the land God promised him, Jacob squats on the East Bank of the Jordan. It was a lack of faith.

Jacob spends some time at a place he calls Succoth, until finally he enters the Promised Land... *But again* Jacob settles in a questionable location... He pitches his tent near the Canaanite stronghold of Shechem – a pagan, worldly city.

And at Shechem, Jacob’s life and family fall apart...

His daughter, Dinah, begins to hang out with the locals and gets raped. Jacob does nothing, so his sons take matters into their own hands, and avenge their sister by slaughtering the men of Shechem. *Imagine, Jacob’s situation...*

He aches for his daughter. He’s ashamed of his impulsive and violent sons. His reputation has been ruined. He fears the surrounding nations are out to get him.

At the end of chapter 34 Jacob and his family are spiritually adrift. Jacob is in need of a spiritual revival, and that's when God comes to the rescue...

Chapter 35, "Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother." God brings Jacob back to where he first encountered God.

The sinful city of Shechem had gotten Jacob's eyes off the Lord, and the result was confusion and carnage for him and his family. It's time for a new encounter with God - so Jacob is ordered to "make an altar". God wants to *re-alter* Jacob...

Jacob needs to leave the world behind, and seek fellowship with the Lord.

Guys, when will we learn, this also is the cure for our ailments... the answer to our problems? If the world has you confused and beaten down return to the house of God. Rededicate yourself to Him, and at the altar let God re-alter your life.

But notice there's some preparation that needs to occur before you come to God's altar - verse 2, "And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." Before they go to meet the Lord they need to take three steps: *put away your idols, purify yourself, and*

change your garments.

And these are the same three prerequisites we need to meet with God...

First, **put away your idols**. Salvation is free, but you can't come to Jesus toting along a bag of other gods. *Jesus won't save who He can't govern.*

Whatever it is you love more than God, put it away.

Then **purify yourself**. Wash in the blood of Jesus. Ask for a fresh cleansing.

And then **change your garments**... In other words, adopt a new perspective. Learn to see yourself in Christ – a child of God. Shed your worldly attitudes.

And that's what Jacob's family does... verse 4, **"So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem."** And notice what Jake does with their worldliness and sin – *he buries it under the tree...*

This is how you discard the baggage in your life. Take it to the cross. Take it to the tree on Calvary. At the cross of Jesus all our sins are buried and never dug up.

"And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob." God protected them.

"So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel (literally, "God of the house of God"), because there God appeared to

him when he fled from the face of his brother.” I like Jacob’s perception...

Jacob could’ve gotten sentimental about the location of his meeting with God.

This happens to many believers. They grow attached to a specific church, or a building. They act as if God has spiritual hot spots – Wi-Fi zones that are set up to make it easier to go online in prayer. It would’ve been easy for Jacob to have this attitude toward Bethel. It was where he met God - and then met God again.

But after the second encounter Jacob renames the place - not “Bethel”, but “El Bethel”, or “*the God of the house of God.*” Jacob is making a statement. His faith is not dependent on a locale. He trusts in the God who meets, not the meeting place.

Verse 8, “Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.” Or *tree of weeping.*” Remember Jacob was a mama’s boy. He loved his mother. Rebekah was the one who coached him in their conspiracy to steal Esau’s blessing, and I’m sure Rebekah’s maid was a reminder of Jacob’s past.

It’s interesting, that it’s not until this last connection to his mother dies *that God does a new work in Jacob’s life...* which is often what happens with us. God’s has glorious plans for our future, but He waits to reveal it until we bury our former life.

It’s when Jacob buries Rebekah’s maid that God gives him a new name.

“Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.” So He called his name Israel.” God changes him from “**Jacob**” or “*heel-catcher*” – a name that implies someone who’s dirty, sneaky, conniving – to “**Israel**” or “*governed by God*”.

And the *change in his name* pointed to a *change in his nature*.

Between his two trips to Bethel, Jacob had gone from a self-sufficient man who relied on his own schemes, to a man who knew God and trusted in His promises.

Verse 11, “**Also God said to him: “I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.”** God is passing on the covenant He made earlier to Abraham, and then to Isaac. Now He’s reaffirming the covenant with Jacob - or Israel.

Verse 12, “**The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.**” The Palestinians and Arabs need to read this verse. The covenant God gave to Abraham also belongs to Israel and sons.

“Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him.

“So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and

he poured oil on it.” Jacob gathered a pile of rocks that served as a memorial - a spiritual landmark... And I believe we all need these kinds of milestones to remind us of how far God has brought us.

I’ve talked to a lot of believers who struggle with assurance of their salvation because they lack a point in time where they can point to a commitment. This is why landmarks are valuable – they provide a place for our faith to stand.

Important dates, events, experiences, even baptisms all serve this purpose. For years to come, a pile of stones at Bethel would mark Jacob’s transformation. “And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.”

Verse 16, “Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor.

Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, “Do not fear; you will have this son also.” And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni (or *son of my sorrow*); but his father called him Benjamin (or *son of my right hand* – or the position of honor).

So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day” On our last trip to Israel, we went to Bethlehem and stopped to visit Rachel’s tomb.

It’s interesting that 2000 years after Benjamin was born another child was born in Bethlehem. Jesus began as “son of

my sorrow” – he agonized on the cross.

But later His Father changed His name to “son of my right hand” - when Jesus rose from the dead, He returned to heaven, and now sits at God’s right hand.

“Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it.” Bilhah was Rachel’s maid. Reuben was Jacob’s firstborn son. Their sin was incest... And it costs Reuben dearly...

Because of this sin Reuben will later forfeit the rights of the firstborn. Reuben could’ve been father of the Messiah. Instead they just name a sandwich after him.

“Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher.

These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.”

Here’s the family roll call. Jacob’s boys will become the twelve tribes of Israel.

It’s amazing how the future of the nation, Israel, parallels the life of the man with the same name. Notice the similarities... *Both are forced into exile because of their sin... While away, they both yearn to return home... Both develop into crafty*

businessman (the Jews have certainly gained a reputation for shrewdness).

Both are preserved and prospered by the providence of God. Both become wanderers. And finally, in God's time He returns both to the Land of Promise.

Verse 27, “Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.” Evidently they not only buried their dad, but also buried the hatchet. For the family's sake, the two brothers who never got along, worked together to make the arrangements...

Chapter 36, “Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom.” Later in the Old Testament we'll read a lot about the Edomites – they were Esau's descendents.

“Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.” Esau had three wives, and all three were pagan princesses. Sadly, he married idolatrous women.

Verse 4, “Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel. And Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his

daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob.” The Edomites settled east and south of the Dead Sea. In later years the Edomites became Israel’s neighbors. “For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock.

So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.”

In later years the capital of Edom became the rock city of Petra. The façade of Petra was used in the movie *The Last Crusade*. It’s where Indiana found the grail.

Other notes of interest... King Herod was an Edomite... The book of Obadiah was a prophecy written to warn the nation of Edom of coming judgment... And in verse 12 the name “Amalek” appears – perhaps, the father of the Amalekites.

And notice one other point of interest... Verses 4,10, and 12 mention the name “Eliphaz”. In verse 33 you’ll find the name “Jobab”, or perhaps, “Job” for short.

Both these characters appear in the book of Job, which is one reason Bible scholars believe Job was the first book of the Bible to be written. The story of Job may’ve occurred during the times of the patriarchs, before Moses wrote Genesis.

As for the remainder of Esau’s genealogy, I’ll let you read it for yourself...

Chapter 37 begins the fascinating story of Joseph. More than 25% of the book of Genesis is preoccupied with Joseph. More biblical ink goes to the life of Joseph than almost anyone... except of course, the life of our Lord Jesus, and King David.

James Montgomery Boice penned these words about Joseph, "He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the 110 year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust Him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man."

Over the next several weeks there's much we'll learn from the faith of Joseph.

Chapter 37 begins, "Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers.

And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah (Dan and Naphtali) and the sons of Zilpah (Gad and Asher), his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father." He snitched... Joseph was honest with his dad, and told him what he needed to know, even though it incriminated his brothers...

And you can bet this didn't make the brothers' fond of Joseph...

They get infuriated further in verse 3, “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age.” Israel really bears the blame for how the brothers treated Joseph. He helped create the intense sibling rivalry.

Which brings up a point for parents... *don't play favorites.*

And if you've got multiple kids you'll be tempted to... There'll be one kid that you'll have more in common with than the others – or perhaps your personalities match - or the circumstances around their birth make them special. Like Joseph, he could be *the son of your old age*... But let me warn you... favor one child and slight another, and you'll create all kinds of dissension and conflict in your home.

And if ever there was a dad who should've known the dangers, it was Jacob.

Remember, it was his dad, Isaac, who always favored his older brother, Esau, over him. Now Israel is repeating the same mistake he once resented. And the next verse throws gas on the fire - “Also he made him a tunic of many colors.”

Tonight, I thought I would teach chapter 37 in my High School letter jacket. And I want you to check it out... 28 years old and it's still a perfect fit! Imagine that...

I remember, when I was 18, I loved walking around in this jacket!

Of course, you don't really *walk* in a letter jacket – you *strut*. A letter jacket has little icons that show off your talents and triumphs. It can be *a coat of conceit*.

If Israel had bought all his sons a coat of many colors there would've been no problem, but he only bought one, and it belonged to Joseph. He was the only one that had a jacket... and boy, did it make his big brothers even more jealous.

Look at verse 4, **“But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.”**

A father's favoritism, and a silly coat, combined to tear this family apart.

One translation of the phrase, **“tunic of many colors”** reads *“a long sleeve coat”*, which was the landowner's attire. Common workers wore short sleeves - Joseph wore long sleeves. The impression the coat left on his brothers was that Joseph was white-collar - they were all blue-collar. *Joseph is better than the rest of us.*

Every time Adam and Hoss saw Little Joe strutting around the Ponderosa in his letter jacket their hatred grew. Bitterness was brewing - boiling - ready to explode!

And Joseph didn't do a lot to help matters...

In verse 2 he tattles - in verse 5 he tells his brother about a dream he had.

We're told, **“Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.”** Joseph never learned that one of the keys to a happy family life is leaving a few things unsaid... Joseph had to spill the beans...

Verse 6, **“So he said to them, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field.”**

Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." In other words, your wheaties are going to bow to my wheaties.

"And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words." The dream was true, but the brothers didn't want to admit that they would one day have to submit to their bratty little brother – to daddy's little pet.

When you read how the brother's reacted, either Joseph was guilty of a little spiritual pride - or he was just totally oblivious to the obvious... *It may be that Joseph didn't sin - but at best, he needed a lesson on tact and diplomacy.*

Joseph's second dream has the same impact. In fact, it even enrages Jacob.

Verse 9, "Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." In other words, his dad, and mom, and each of his eleven brothers - the whole family - will one day bow down to Joseph.

"So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"

And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind."

And it's this jealousy that sets up the first movement in Joseph's story...

For 14 chapters we're going to embark on a journey with Joseph... We'll follow him from the *pit* - to *Potiphar's* - to *prison* - and finally to the *palace*.

And Joseph's life is a showcase for another "P", and that's *providence*. God is sovereign over situations. He moves behind the scenes to accomplish His plans. Joseph's life illustrates a truth... "*Our disappointments are God's appointments.*"

Verse 12, "Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem."

And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."

Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem." Which brings up two more "Ps" in the story of Joseph... *picture* and *prophecy*. Joseph is a picture and prophecy of Jesus.

In the Old Testament, God often speaks of New Testament realities through types, or analogies. It's been said, "*Typology is a species of prophecy.*"

You may've heard the old saying, "*What's concealed in the Old is revealed in the New, and what's revealed in the New is concealed in the Old.*" It's true.

And Joseph is an excellent example... Joseph is an amazing type of Jesus.

“Hebron” means “communion”, which is exactly what Joseph was enjoying... communion with His father, Jacob - until he’s sent to Shechem. Throughout the Bible, Shechem is associated with sin and sorrow... And this applies to Jesus.

The Gospel story begins with the Father and Son in heaven communing with each other in unbroken fellowship, until the Son is sent into a world of sin and sorrow. Like Joseph, Jesus came to earth to check on his brothers, the Jewish people. And the Jews conspire to kill Him... exactly what happens to Joseph when he arrives in Shechem. The parallels throughout this story are uncanny.

It’s as if God planned this all out years in advance...

Verse 15, *“Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, “What are you seeking?” So he said, “I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks.”*

And the man said, “They have departed from here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.” Joseph is about to step into a pile of trouble.

Verse 19, *“Then they said to one another, ‘Look, this dreamer is coming!*

Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, ‘Some wild beast has devoured him.’

We shall see what will become of his dreams!" But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, 'Let us not kill him.' And Reuben said to them, 'Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him' - that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father." That was Reuben's intention – He wanted to bring Little Joe back to his father...

But that's not how the story plays out, verse 23, "So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it." And they sat down to eat a meal.

Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt." They happen on a caravan headed to Egypt.

"So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?" Notice Judah is the one who brings up money. He wants to betray Joseph for money. It reminds us of another, later Judah, *or Judas...*

Apparently Reuben was away, so Judah takes charge, "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt."

Jesus was sold for thirty shekels of silver by a man named Judas.

In verse 29 Reuben shows back up, “Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?” How could they ever return and face their father with the news they’d ditched his favored son.

And that’s when they concoct a plan, “So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.” They should’ve been thankful this was before the era of DNA testing. “Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?” And he recognized it and said, “It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.”

Note the irony here – call it *poetic justice* – Jacob gets tricked by the same means he used to trick his father, Isaac. Remember, Jacob killed a goat, and attached the wool to his arms to mimic Esau. Now, his sons kill a goat and dip Joseph’s coat in its blood. *Jacob deceived, and is deceived, by a goat.*

You could say, Jacob’s sons *got his goat* the same way he treated his own father. The chickens come home to roost. A man’s sin comes back to bite him.

Verse 35, “And all his sons and all his daughters arose to

comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him." And for the next 20 years the old man Jacob will grieve over the lost of his favorite son, Joseph.

Verse 36 shifts location to the slave markets in Egypt. "Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard."

Here is second movement in the story of Joseph - he goes from the *pit* to the *house of Potiphar*... But in between a bizarre story is inserted in Genesis 38...

Chapter 38 recounts a sordid story that highlights Jacob's son, Judah, and his disregard for a custom that's no longer applicable to us - *the law of the Levirate*.

Let me first explain the custom - then we'll read the chapter...

The Hebrew word "*Levir*" was a term for "*brother-in-law*" - and in ancient times when a man died without an heir it was the responsibility of the man's brother to marry his widow, and raise up an heir to take over his brother's household...

The Law of the Levirate was later codified by Moses in Deuteronomy 25.

With that background, let's plunge in... "It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her." Here's the beginning of Judah's troubles – he marries a Canaanite – an

unbeliever. And when will we learn this is always a mistake. **“Marry an unbeliever and you get the devil as a father-in-law.”**

Judah sinned. He set himself up for a host of problems by marrying an unbeliever. And if you're a single Christian, don't you repeat his mistake.

Verse 3, **“So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er.”** Hey, Judah erred when he married an unbeliever. **“She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him.”**

Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.”

We don't know how *Er erred*, but apparently it was a serious *err-or*.

Verse 8, **“And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother.”** This was a cruel and selfish deed. Onan uses Tamar sexually, then dumps his seed on the ground to keep from siring a son who will not be considered his son - just his nephew.

Verse 10, **“And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.”** One reason this story appears in the Bible is because of the importance of the lineage of

Judah. We'll see later that Jacob's third born becomes the heir to the family birthright. In fact, Messiah will be born through the lineage of Judah.

Failing to cooperate with Judah's ancestral responsibilities was a serious crime.

Verse 11, "Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die as his brothers did." Notice, Judah implies that Tamar may have been a reason his sons have kicked the bucket. It was an insult that made Tamar very angry.

Judah should've never married a Canaanite, and I'm sure in later years the rabbis used this story to hammer home that point to future Hebrews.

"And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house."

Verse 12, "Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite." Notice again he's hanging out with the wrong person. Hey Hirah is another idolatrous Canaanite. Hey, I pray every teenager here tonight catches this... "Bad company never produces good morals" ...

"And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, & sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife."

Tamar feels double-crossed, and she believes it's time to get what's coming to her. She wants an heir, and she concocts a scheme to get what she wants...

Verse 15, "When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot (that was the plan), because she had covered her face. Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law." This shows the moral condition of Judah. His wife dies, and before her body gets cold, he's soliciting a prostitute for a few cheap thrills.

"So she said (from behind her veil), "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" In other words she wants collateral... *How bout a Visa card number?*

"And he said, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?" She knows firsthand Judah doesn't always keep his promises. "Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." These were important items. It would be like giving over your credit card number. A signet ring was the equivalent of a signature. It was the means to sign contracts and do business.

Guys, make note of what's happened. When a man is controlled by lust it causes him to make some foolish mistakes. He makes unwise choices.

"Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood."

Verse 20, "And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her." He wanted to retrieve his signet and staff, but the woman had disappeared.

Verse 21, "Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?" And they said, "There was no harlot in this place." And he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place." Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her." And he assumed, that just like that, he could dismiss responsibility for the whole affair... Guys trust me, when you fall into sexual sin it's never so easy.

"And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" Judah was outraged. He was livid... *The wicked girl has shamed the family name....*

"When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." *And guess what she handed over?*

"And she said, "Please determine whose these are - the signet and cord, and staff." It would've been something to have seen the look on Judah's face when he saw his signet and cord and staff! "So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son."

And he never knew her again.” But as the old adage declares, **“Your sins will find you out.”** It may take a few months, or even a few years, but they’ll get you.

Verse 27, **“Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, “How did you break through? This breach be upon you!” Therefore his name was called Perez.”** Or **“breakthrough”**.

“Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.” Which means **“a rising light”**.

Fast forward 1800 years to the birth of Jesus, and study his genealogy. And in Matthew 1 you’ll find an amazing entry... Verse 3 records, **“Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar.”** The prostitution of Judah, the vindictiveness of Tamar, the illegitimate twins, Perez and Zerah – the whole sordid story ends up becoming a branch in the family tree of the Savior of the world... *a testimony of God’s grace.*

God can take even our blunders and failures and turn them into good.