

Genesis: God and the Originals

JUDAH AND TAMAR

Tamar the Canaanite (38:1-11)

Vv. 1-5

1. Who does Judah marry and why is it odd, and how many sons does he have?

Vv. 6-11

2. Who does Judah “get” for a wife for his firstborn? What can we assume about her?
3. Why does God “put to death” Er? What crime has he committed?
4. Why does Judah require Onan to sleep with Tamar? What custom is this and why is it important?
5. What does Onan do that causes God to also put him to death? Why do you think Onan did what he did?
6. What is Judah’s solution in v.11? How is it wrongheaded and rude in multiple ways?

Tamar Acts (38:12-23)

Vv. 12-15

7. What is the initial cause of Judah’s eventual sex with his daughter-in-law? Is it normal for a man finished with grieving to have sex with a “prostitute”?

Enaim is a play on words. It means “_____,” as Tamar “_____” that she was not being treated fairly, and Judah would eventually have his “_____.”

Vv. 16-19

8. Tamar is no dummy. What does she insist on as a guarantee of payment for sex?
9. Judah is a dummy. How dumb is Judah that he didn’t bring payment?

10. Is all of this sexual activity just a random encounter or something premeditated?

Vv. 20-23

11. In previous verses, Judah was dealing with a “prostitute.” Now the language changes. How does it change and why do you think that is?

12. How is Judah kind of a coward in all of this?

Tamar Confronts Judah and Has His Twins (38:24-30)

Vv. 24-26

13. What is Judah’s response to Tamar’s pregnancy (ironically, see Leviticus 20:10ff)? What does he assume?

14. What is Tamar’s response to Judah? What does she prove about herself that comes out of Judah’s own lips?

Vv. 27-30

15. Who is born to Tamar and how? Why is the line of Judah important?

BONUS: Read Matthew 1:1-6. What is ironic about Jesus’ genealogy of forefathers?

BONUS: Ultimately, how does Judah do the right thing for the wrong reason? How does this encourage you; how does it make you uneasy?

“What seems the simple satisfaction of sexual hunger for Judah is, in fact, the redemption of his future.” - R. R. Reno

“Christ, then, participates in the blood of the Canaanites... in order that He may bear witness at the very beginning that He does not reject the Gentiles, whom He has received and has designed to assume into His person.” - Martin Luther