

Genesis Ch. 38

- Chapter 38 is a parenthetical break in the storyline.
- Joseph has been sold into slavery in Egypt, meanwhile back on the ranch...
- This chapter represents the black velvet backdrop against which the next chapter will contrast as a diamond being put on display.

V: 1 Judah separates from his brethren.

- Adullam is about 8 miles away from Hebron, certainly within the pasturing circuit of his family.

V: 2 Once away from his family, Judah sees a Canaanite woman, and makes her his wife.

New Testament prohibition:

2 Corinthians 6:14 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?”

- Later in **Exodus 34**, the children of Israel are called to drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites – lest the children of Israel make covenants with them, and take wives of them and they end up “whoring after their gods.”
- At present there doesn’t appear to be very many options in terms of obtaining wives for the sons of Jacob.
- They can’t go back to Abraham’s family, Laban and his family have been corrupted by idolatry and are no different that the Canaanites around them.
- “Shuah” means “sunken” or “wealth”

V: 3-5 Sons are born to Judah:

- Er = “protector” or “watchful”
- Onan = “Power”
- Shelah = “Please” or “Be Still” or “Rest”
- He names the firstborn, then she names the rest, possibly indicating a lack or leadership on his part.

V: 6-7 Judah takes a wife for Er by the name of Tamar. “Palm Tree” (Shady character...)

- Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord killed him.
- Possibly putting him out of his misery, possibly protecting others from him.
- We don't know what Er did, or how God killed him – just that it happened.

Deuteronomy 32:39 “See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand.”

V: 8-10 Onan is instructed to take Tamar as his wife and raise up seed in his brother's place – which seemingly he agrees to do, but does not allow Tamar to become pregnant.

- Motive: 1st born would be heir to older brother, heir to birthright and blessing.
- Custom and culture of the day: brother raising up seed for his dead brother.
- Judah's instruction to his son Onan was obviously of God, because when Onan refuses – God slays him for his disobedience.
- Later in Deuteronomy 25 this is codified into the Law.

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 “⁵If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. ⁶And it shall be that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.”

- Later there was also a provision for the man if he didn't want to take on his brother's wife, which was considered a dishonorable thing.
- Onan doesn't have that option and dies for his rebellion.

Romans 6:23 “The wages of sin is death...”

V: 11 Judah promises his 3rd and last remaining son to Tamar as soon as he is of age.

V: 12 Shuah dies, Judah goes through a period of mourning, then goes to shear his sheep in Timnah.

- “was comforted” could also be translated “looking for comfort” which fits contextually.
- There were sheep shearing festivals, basically it was a time of celebration, party time.

- Again he's with his friend the Abdulamite, who is probably not a good influence.

Psalm 1:1 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

1 Corinthians 15:33 "Be not deceived: evil communications / companionships corrupt good manners."

V: 13-14 Shelah did eventually marry, he became the father of the Shulamites (Numbers 26:20) – but he didn't marry Tamar as Judah had said.

- All of this became apparent to Tamar who then began to take matters into her own hands.
- God was already acting on her behalf when she intervened.
- Usually pagan worship centered on sexual relations of various kinds. Every Canaanite woman had to devote herself, for a period of time, as a prostitute to raise funds for the temple. It was an accepted practice among the Canaanites.

V: 15-18 Judah unwittingly obliges.

- Notice that his friend Hirah the Abdulamite isn't talking him out of this foolishness.
- The vice guys weren't there to pop him for solicitation, but God's got his number.
- A pledge, not only part of the plan – but also because he isn't trustworthy.
- "Thy signet" – a ring engraved with the family name or crest or symbol which when pushed into a wax seal becomes a family seal used in business to identify goods, or sign letters and things like that.
- The signet, along with the bracelets, and staff are all identifiers. Kind of like when the bad guys drops his wallet at the scene of a crime with his CDL and other info in it – makes being a detective very easy.
- Each of the things that Tamar asked for were symbolic in nature:
 1. Signet: speaks of the person, identity.
 2. Bracelets: spoke of possessions, wealth.
 3. Staff: spoke of position.
- She wanted his identify, his possessions, and his position – all of which she got.

- At the end of this sordid tale she ends up back in his household being taken care of as before, identifying with the family, benefitting from their wealth, and her sons took up the position of heirs.
- This is where the tradition of the “engagement” ring started. As a man would make a pledge of his love, and his intent to marry a woman.

V: 19-23 Tamar goes back to being a widow.

- It would appear that her sole motive was to raise up seed for her dead husband, and fulfill her marital vow of producing an heir.
- Judah sends the kid, the down payment on his sin.
- Again the Abdulamite is a facilitator – not a real friend.
- Real friends will keep you from sin – not help you get into it.
- They can’t find the “harlot” – so she keeps the stuff.

“Lest we be ashamed” – who’s the “we”?

Numbers 32:23 “But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.”

V: 24 Webster’s definition of hypocrisy:

- Hypocrisy: the false profession of desirable or publicly approved qualities, beliefs, or feelings, esp. a pretense of having virtues, moral principles, or religious beliefs that one does not really possess.
- Saying one thing and doing another.
- Tamar was sent into her widowhood at her father’s house, yet Judah had the authority to have her brought forth and executed.
- Scripture condemns harlotry and adultery in vigorous terms:
- The penalty for adultery was death by stoning. (**Deuteronomy 22:20-24**)
- If the daughter of a priest became a harlot, she was to be put to the flames. (**Leviticus 21:9**)
- We’ll see that the only one who gets burned in this deal is Judah himself.

- Tamar was betrothed to Shelah and this would make her guilty of adultery. It seemed however that her father in law, Judah was the one preventing her from actually marrying Shelah.
- Women had no rights in those days. It wasn't until the advent of Christianity that women were given any sense of equality.

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

V: 25-26 Tamar is brought forth, at which time she reveals who it was that impregnated her – her judge!

- To his credit, Judah acknowledges his guilt – also acknowledging that he didn't do what he said he would with regard to his 3rd son Shelah.

V: 27-30 Tamar has twins. One of the babies starts to come out, they tie a red thread to his hand, then the other is born – Pharez, (Breaking through) through whom the Messiah will come and his brother with the red thread Zerah (Rising).

- In Matthew's Gospel, he records the genealogy of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus.
- 4 women are listed in this genealogy:
 1. Tamar – who had played the harlot.
 2. Rahab - the harlot in Jericho.
 3. Ruth - the Moabitess.
 4. Bath-sheba – an adulteress and later the wife of David, formerly the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
- 4 women with shady pasts – yet used of God to bring forth the Messiah.
- Some may be sitting here thinking that whatever you've done has disqualified you from being used by God – not so.
- If God would use them, he would use us also.

Genesis Ch. 39

V: 1 Joseph is sold down in Egypt to Potiphar, and officer in Pharaoh's court, a eunuch, and chief of the guard, or executioner.

V: 2 God's anointing was upon Joseph, and God was with Joseph.

Hebrews 13:5 “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have, for He has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”

V: 3 Joseph was a good witness, the non-believers could see the True and Living God through him.

John 3:2 “The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with Him.”

V: 4-6 Joseph finds grace and favor in his master’s sight.

“... and he served him:...”

- Joseph worked hard, he had a good attitude, and God used that.

Colossians 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”

Colossians 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

- He’s given a position of responsibility and trust, he’s being blessed.
- After Abraham obeyed God and took his son, his only son Isaac to sacrifice him on mount Moriah; God told him afterwards:

Genesis 22:17 “That in blessing I will bless thee,...”

- God goes on to explain what means, that it will be through his descendants, through the obtaining of the land – and more to the point that this would extend to his descendants.
- Potiphar didn’t even know what all he had – he trusted it all to Joseph’s stewardship.
- Joseph was well favored, handsome.

-
- Have you ever had that feeling or come to the realization that everything is going too smoothly, things are going to well – and you begin to wonder when the next shoe is going to fall – like it’s going too good?

V: 7 “... *his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph...*”

1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

- The enemy never takes a vacation; we have to always be on our guard against his attacks.

Ephesians 6:10-18 “¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. ¹³Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; ¹⁵And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. ¹⁷and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: ¹⁸Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

- We can’t just put all this stuff on, and then decide to take a nap. We must be watchful with all perseverance – the enemy is coming, and he’s coming after each of us.

V: 8-9 “*But he refused...*”

- Joseph had three good reasons for his refusal:

“... *Behold, my master...*”

1. His master’s trust, he didn’t want to violate that trust.
 - There must have been some instruction or parameters given at some point because Joseph mentions about nothing being withheld from him except Potiphar’s wife.
 - A pastor that I know had a very vivid nightmare in which he knew that he’d committed adultery and his nightmare was that he had to explain it to his wife and kids, and to his fellowship.
2. “... *how then can I...*”
 - As a child of God, born again by the Spirit of God.

- Joined together as one with Jesus Christ in the newness of life in the Spirit.
- How can I get involved? I'm different, I'm special.
- I'm a child of God, I've been washed in the blood of Jesus. I've been cleansed from all of my past sins.
- I'm not even my own to do with as I will – I belong to Jesus!

1 Corinthians 6:15-20 ¹⁵Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. ¹⁶What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh. ¹⁷But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. ¹⁸Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. ¹⁹What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? ²⁰For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

3. Joseph feared God.

"...how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

- Joseph had been separated from his family, but not from his God.
- Joseph understood that when we sin, it is truly against God.

Psalms 51:4 "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

-
- Three very good reasons!
 - Temptation is something that is common to all people, it comes in different forms, but everyone is subject to it to one degree or another.

1 Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

- Joseph's awareness of God working personally in his life and wanting to maintain that relationship kept him from sin.

V: 10-12 She would not take “no” for an answer, she persisted – and he resisted.

- Make sure there’s a witness, take someone with you – don’t be alone!

James 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

2 Timothy 2:22 “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

- Joseph doesn’t hang out to pray with her, he doesn’t witness to her – he runs for his life!

V: 13-18 *“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned...”*

- Potiphar’s wife makes up a vicious lie.

V: 19-20 Potiphar seemingly doesn’t question the facts of the event, and Joseph is sent off to prison.

- Potiphar’s wrath is kindled, but it doesn’t say against who. If it had truly been kindled against Joseph, he’d be a dead man – end of story.
- We don’t read anything about Joseph defending himself, or resisting in any way.
- This is another similarity between Joseph and Jesus:

Isaiah 53:7 “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

V: 21 Again as Joseph seemingly enters this difficult season, the Lord is with him.

Psalms 139:7-10 ⁷“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ⁸If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. ⁹If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; ¹⁰Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

V: 22-23 The Lord was with him, the Lord made everything that he did to prosper.

Psalms 1:1-3 ¹“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ²But his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in his Law doth he meditate day and night. ³And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

Prov. 3:5-6