

Through the Bible - Genesis 37-38

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores Joseph's early life, his dreams, the jealousy of his brothers, and the resulting betrayal that leads to his journey into Egypt.

Scripture: Genesis 37 - 38, Matthew 1:3-16, Romans 8:28, Hebrews 12:15

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Sibling Rivalry"

Description

Chuck Smith explores the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-38, focusing on the dynamics of sibling rivalry and the consequences of favoritism within Jacob's family. Joseph, favored by his father, faces hatred from his brothers, leading to his betrayal and sale into slavery. The narrative highlights God's sovereignty in using human flaws and mistakes to fulfill His divine plan, as seen in the lineage of Christ through Judah and Tamar. Smith emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's purpose in our lives, even amidst our imperfections and struggles.

Transcript

Genesis chapter thirty-seven.

And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. And these are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report (Gen 37:1-2).

So there is now developing a strained relationship between Joseph and his brothers. Because of Jacob and his love for Rachel, when Joseph was born he almost became immediately a favored son kind of a status. And no doubt Jacob indicated his favoritism towards Joseph all the way along.

And now Joseph is seventeen years old and he's out as all of the boys were engaged in the industry of shepherding, but his brothers had been goofing off and Joseph is the tattletale. He comes and he tells his dad what his brothers are doing which, of course, never endears you with your brothers. It's always hard to have a brother who is a nark. And so that's just thrown in there, it just--the scripture, verse two, is just thrown in there. I think to just give us a little bit of the insight why his brothers really began to resent him and hate him. He was Mister Good Guy and they were bad guys and he was telling on them. And he was bringing their evil report to his dad. He was reporting on them to their dad, and so that is surely going to bring resentment against Joseph, which of course it did.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all of his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours (Gen 37:3).

Now in the Hebrew, this particular phrase they didn't know quite how to translate it and this idea of coat of many colors pretty much came from Martin Luther and his endeavor to translate the Hebrew phrase. But since that time of the King James translation and the discovery of more ancient records, it is now believed that this should have been translated "made him a sleeveless coat." And that would seem to be a more accurate translation of this particular difficult Hebrew phrase.

Now the connotation of a sleeveless coat was that of rulership. The rulers wore sleeveless, kind of; or rather a coat with sleeves is what it should be. And I'll get there in a minute. The sleeveless coats were worn by the laborers and the rulers wore the coats with sleeves, because the coat with sleeves you really couldn't do much work in those. And so it indicated more of an aristocracy, a rulership class. Not a workly, working class to have a coat with sleeves. The sleeveless coat was the worker's coat, and so when his dad made him a coat with sleeves it was giving a definite message to his brothers of Jacob's intention of making Joseph the ruler.

And that was the intention of Jacob. It really did not come about by Jacob's devices but later did come about by God's devices. But Jacob in the forty-ninth chapter, which is a classic chapter, gives the reasons why the other brothers of Joseph really did not inherit the place of blessing, as did Joseph.

When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of his other brothers, they hated him, and they could not speak peaceably unto him (Gen 37:4).

Real problems arose there in the family of sibling rivalry, of hatred, and their inability now to even say a kind word to him. So Joseph no doubt was suffering much from the attitude and the actions of his older brothers. Can you imagine having ten older brothers that were sort of jealous of you because of your position?

Our daughter Cheryl had two older brothers and barely survived because they thought that she had a favored position, which she probably has had, I wouldn't doubt or deny that totally. But she suffered much at the hands of her brothers because of their supposed, at least favored position that they thought that she had within the family, just because she rules it.

But at any rate, Joseph had to go through with ten older brothers, all of them feeling resentment towards him. None of them able to really speak a kind word to him. And you can imagine all of the things that they did to antagonize him and to torment him. You know, tripping him and giving him an elbow now and then and all of those things that just really made life quite miserable for Joseph.

But even to compound the problems,

Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told his brothers: and they hated him even more. For he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream that I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and stood up straight; and, behold, all of your sheaves stood round about, and did obeisance [they bowed down] to my sheaf. And his brothers said unto him, Shall thou indeed reign over us? or shall thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet more for his dreams, and for his words (Gen 37:5-8).

Very sharp contention there.

He dreamed yet another dream, and he told his brothers, and said, Behold, I have dreamed another dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me. And then he told it to his father, and to his brothers: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brothers indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brothers envied him; but his father observed the saying (Gen 37:9-11).

Jacob tucked it away in the back of his mind. Probably wondering just what is going to happen? What significance is there to this?

This particular dream of Joseph helps us in the understanding of the book of Revelation. For in the book of Revelation it goes into an allegorical type of references in the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation. Where John saw a woman clothed with the sun and the moon and the twelve stars who was about ready to bring forth a child. The woman of the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation is identified by this dream to be the nation Israel. To try to give to the woman any other identity is to speculate only and it's unscriptural speculation.

There are many today who, in order to try to prove that the church is going to get through the Great Tribulation, identify the woman as the church. But there is no scriptural kind of foundation to try to make the woman the church, because nowhere is the church described as having the sun and the moon and the twelve stars surrounding it. And they make the man child that comes forth from the woman sort of a supersaint who are caught up during the midst of the Great Tribulation period, but that is surely a straining of the text and not a natural scriptural flowing.

The woman of chapter twelve, because of the identification, must be the nation Israel. And as I have pointed out in the book of Revelation, if the woman is the church, she's in serious trouble because she's pregnant and just about ready to have a child. And Paul speaks of the church as a chaste virgin and he wanted to present the church as a chaste virgin unto Christ, certainly not as a pregnant mother. So it strains the interpretation of the church that much trying to make the woman in Revelation the church; it strains it that much more.

But here gives cause to identify, and surely the Bible is the best commentary on the Bible and the Bible is an amazing commentary on the Bible. It's amazing how many of the things in Genesis are explained further in the Scriptures or how even amplified further in the Scriptures. So the best commentary you can ever buy on the Bible is just the Bible itself, comparing scripture with scripture.

So his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem (Gen 37:12).

They probably figured, "We're getting out of here. He's nuts with his dreams" and all and can't stand him. "We'll head for Shechem", which was about sixty-seven miles away from where they were staying there in the area of Hebron.

And Israel said to Joseph, Do not your brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said unto him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, and see whether it is well with your brothers, and well with their flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, Who are you looking for? And he said, I'm looking for my brothers; tell me, I pray thee, where are they feeding their flocks. And the man said, They are departed from here; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brothers, and found them in Dothan.

And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Hey, here comes the dreamer (Gen 37:13-19).

So surely Joseph nor his father had any idea that the brothers' hatred had grown to this extent; else his father would have never sent him. And Joseph probably would have been reluctant in going. But coming to Dothan, or coming to Shechem and not finding them, he was just sort of roaming in the field.

I would imagine that he was looking for evidences. Probably trying to find a trail, looking for the footprints of the flocks and so forth and just going back and forth through the field trying to find the trail, trying to find out which direction they may have gone. And as he was just sort of wandering in the field, looking for evidences of where they might be, this man said, "Who are you looking for?" He said, "Do you happen to know where my brothers have gone with their flock?" And he said, "Yeah, I heard one of them say they're going to Dothan". So he headed out twenty miles further north to Dothan. And so he's now almost ninety miles away from home.

His brothers seeing him come conspired together to kill him. They said,

Come now therefore, let us kill him, we'll cast him into a pit, and we'll say, Some evil beast must have devoured him: and we will see then what will become of his dreams (Gen 37:20).

Showing the deep resentment they had towards his dream, the very idea that they would bow down to him. "We'll thwart really the plan of God. See what happens to God's plan after we kill him". Of course, there are many who see in Joseph a beautiful type of Jesus Christ and Satan's endeavor to destroy Jesus to see what could become then of God's plan. And of course God's plans were fulfilled in the death of Christ.

Reuben heard it [the oldest brother], and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Hey, let us not kill him. Reuben said unto them, Don't shed blood, let's just throw him in this pit that is here in the wilderness, and don't lay any hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again (Gen 37:21-22).

Now Reuben being the oldest brother would be then the one who would be most responsible. He would be the one that would be responsible to his dad for his youngest brother. And so seeing that these guys were really serious in their intention to kill him, he felt that it was his responsibility to save him from their anger. And so he suggests an alternate plan. "Don't kill him, just throw him in the pit. Let him starve to death. And that way you don't get your hands bloody. And you won't have his blood on your hands. You just let him die there in the pit."

And he was intending to come back around later and to let Joseph out of the pit and deliver him back safe to his father. Joseph would have been safe around his father.

It came to pass, when Joseph was come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him (Gen 37:23);

Even as they stripped Jesus of His robe and cast lots.

And they took him, and cast him into a pit: the pit was empty, there was no water in it (Gen 37:24).

So it indicates that it was probably a cistern. Now all over that land they have dug these huge cisterns in the rock, which are water reservoirs. And some of them have, were dug in an area where there was a fracture in the rock and they would not hold water. So here was a cistern, it was empty. They usually all of them have very steep sides and so they decided to dump Joseph in the cistern.

And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said to his brothers, What profit is it if we kill our brother, and conceal his blood? Let's sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brothers were content (Gen 37:25-27).

Now whether or not it was Judah's desire to save his life or to make money is only a matter of speculation. But he is suggesting that they again not actually kill him. They could actually make some money off of him. What profit is it to kill him? Let's just sell him and we'll make money off of him. And how pure were Judah's motives or well intentioned as far as Joseph is concerned, there's only speculation. We really don't know for sure.

Then there passed by the Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt (Gen 37:28).

And so he is rejected by his brethren and sold. Even again in the typology, as Christ was rejected by His brethren, and was sold for thirty pieces of silver by Judas Iscariot.

Now at this point, Jacob was really, I mean Joseph was really crying and pleading with his brothers that they would have mercy on him and all. And his brothers just really turned a deaf ear unto his pleas. And later on in the book of Genesis, it tells how that his brothers when he was playing games with them in Egypt and putting pressure on them said, "You know, this is really our fault. We didn't have mercy on our brother". In the forty-second chapter, verse twenty-one, "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he begged us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Genesis 42:21).

And so going just a little bit ahead in the story, when Joseph became the ruler in Egypt and his brothers came down to buy grain, they did not recognize Joseph. Of course, some twenty years had transpired. Joseph was just seventeen years old when his brothers sold him. He was thirty years old when he came to Pharaoh. And he was seven years of the famine--I mean of the feast or the plentiful years so he was at least twenty years older since his brothers last saw him. And he was now older, matured and had no doubt the style of hair and beard and so forth as the Egyptians. And they didn't recognize that this was their brother, but he recognized them but didn't let them know who he was, spoke to them through an interpreter.

But he started giving them a bad time. He said you guys are spies. You're not brothers; you've come down here to spy out Egypt. I would have to put you all to death you know and just would give them a bad time and so he was giving such a rough time they started talking to each other in Hebrew, not knowing that he could understand. And they said, Hey, hey, you know, and it shows you that you can't get away from your guilt. You may bury it down in the recesses of your mind that you might try to sublimate it, but guilt will out.

Somewhere or other guilt will out. It will out in a neurotic behavior pattern, or it will out in some form or other. Guilt will out. There's only one thing that can remove your guilt. That is confession to Jesus Christ and receiving His forgiveness. That's the only thing that can remove your guilt.

And so the brothers, twenty years later, are still feeling guilty over the acts that they did. This is caused because we saw the anguish of his soul and we didn't give any heed to it. So Joseph was really begging them, pleading with them, no doubt crying. And yet they were heartless. They were hard. And as he was being carried away in this caravan, probably chained to the other slaves, looking back, pleading, crying, don't do this; and they didn't have any compassion upon him whatsoever.

So later, Reuben. Now Reuben evidently had gone off someplace while the brothers conspired to sell him.

Reuben came back to the pit; and saw that it was empty; and he tore his clothes. And he returned to the other brothers, and he said, The child isn't in the pit; and I don't know where I'm going to go. And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat with long sleeves, and brought it to their father; and said, We found this coat: you know whether or not it is your son's coat. And he knew it, and he said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces. And Jacob tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth, and he mourned for his son for many days. And all of the sons and all of the daughters [daughters plural, so he had other daughters. Only one is named] they rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. And thus the father wept for him (Gen 37:29-35).

Jacob the deceiver, deceiving his brother or actually deceiving his father to get his brother's blessing, ends up being deceived. Deceived by his father-in-law Laban, and now deceived by his own sons. Notice the sons didn't say anything about it. They let the old man come to his own conclusions. They just brought him a bloody coat and said, "You recognize this? It happens to belong to your son". And they let their dad just jump to the conclusion that an animal must have killed his son. Joseph was no doubt torn in pieces and they let him jump to that conclusion and then let him believe it. But they were deceiving him. And so again, he who deceived ends up being deceived.

Now the last verse seems to belong more, well it just closes off this chapter, and then chapter thirty-eight is just sort of a separate little story all on its own.

The Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer (Gen 37:36)

The word officer here in Hebrew literally is "eunuch", a eunuch, of Pharaoh's, and the captain of the guard (Gen 37:36).

Now chapter thirty-eight is just thrown in to give us a little bit of historic background concerning the ancestry of Jesus Christ. For even as marvelous a person as Joseph was, his was not to be the blessing of having the Messiah come through him. The Messiah was to come through the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Joseph.

And so God by His own election and choice choosing the tribe of Judah that it might be by grace and not by works, shows us a little insight into Judah and the fact that the ancestry of Christ isn't really a pure kind of an ancestry. There are several insertions into the ancestry of Jesus that if we were choosing a family background for our own son, we probably wouldn't have chosen. But in order that He might be fully identified with each of us, God did not choose a perfect lineage to bring Him from, but imperfect in order

that we might feel an identity.

Chapter 38

Now it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brothers, and he turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her (Gen 38:1-2).

Now customarily, if you wanted to get a wife, you'd have your father go ahead and arrange a dowry. You have a big ceremony and everything else. Judah didn't bother to go through all of this. He just went down, saw this gal Shuah. She was probably a nice-looking girl and he just decided that let's just go ahead and you be my wife, we'll just live together. And so he took her and went in unto her.

And she conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him (Gen 38:5).

Now that's only about eight miles from Hebron. Judah took a wife. She conceived actually bare three sons; Er, Onan and finally, Shelah. Now the interesting thing is that Judah was to be the father or in the ancestry of Jesus Christ. But Shuah wasn't evidently God's choice for his wife, but was Judah's own willful choice. He just saw the gal, was attracted to her, they started living together and they had three sons. But it wasn't in the plan of God that Shuah should be the mother of those descendants that would bring forth the Christ child. And thus, Judah's action was no doubt out of the plan and the will of God.

I would imagine that she was a Canaanite, she was attached to her Canaanite gods; Judah maybe thought that he could convert her to Jehovah. She evidently wasn't converted because the last two sons are named with Canaanite names. Judah no doubt named the first son Hebrew name, but the last two are Canaanite names which means that she began to have a stronger and stronger influence.

Now Judah knew that from his seed there was to come one day the Messiah and thus he went out and he made arrangements for his son to marry this girl whose name was Tamar.

So he took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. And Er [verse seven], Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him (Gen 38:6-7).

Now it is interesting, it doesn't tell us what his wickedness is nor does it tell us how God killed him. But God did not want this son born of Shuah to be in the line of the Messiah. So before this son of Shuah could have a child, because of his own wickedness, God killed him.

Now a part of the code in those days was that if your brother died before he had a son, then it was the obligation of the next oldest son to take that same woman as a wife and the first son would be named after the dead brother. And this later became incorporated as a part of the Jewish law but it was already the code in the earlier laws of Hammurabi and others. It is there as a part of the codes of the earlier laws that was already an accepted practice and was later incorporated into the Mosaic Law.

And so Onan (Gen 38:8)

The next brother in line was to take Tamar as a wife and bear a son. And he went in unto Tamar.

And he went in unto Tamar; but instead he spilled his seed on the ground, and so God killed him (Gen 38:9-10).

Now there are those that would seek to use this particular text as a text against masturbation but it is not at all for that reason that God slew Onan. It is interesting that the Bible really says nothing about that particular practice. Some use this for an argument against coitus interruptus but again, it isn't that at all for which God slew him.

The reason that God slew him was his failure to be obedient to the law that God established of raising a seed for the dead brother. It was a rebellion against that established law of God for which God slew him.

Now as far as these other two things, the Bible is completely silent. And where the Bible is silent on a subject, we must remain silent, and just take certain scriptures such as Romans the fourteenth chapter and let that be the criteria of judgment. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:5).

As far as birth control and the family's exercise of birth control, methods of birth control or something, that is something that each family must work out. The Bible doesn't actually cover or deal with these issues. Where the Bible doesn't deal specifically with the issues, then we just have to take where the Bible deals with the non-specified issues. And that is that each person has to be convinced in their own mind of what is right and what is wrong.

And thus each couple must determine within themselves the method of birth control practices that they want to follow. I do think that God expects us to use wisdom, as far as the size of our family, and I do not believe that God has intended that intercourse be strictly for the perpetuation of the human race between husband and wife, but to be a very pleasurable experience between husband and wife, an experience that draws them together. In Hebrews we read that "marriage is honorable among all men, and the bed undefiled" (Hebrews 13:4).

And so Paul teaches in Corinthians that there should be a mutual understanding and arrangement between husband and wife as far as the frequency of their intimate relationships. But yet there should not be a prolonged withholding of one from the other lest Satan will move in and use that prolonged time as an opportunity to tempt.

And so this scripture here where Onan spilled his seed upon the ground and God slew him must be taken in its context. It is not an argument against these practices, that men have used it as an argument against them, but it is actually because he failed and rebelled against the law of God in raising up a seed for his dead brother.

That is why the Lord slew him. And that's why we don't have children in the Sunday evening services, because it's good to talk to you on an adult level. And these things are there, there are issues in the Bible and we shouldn't really skirt them and I don't know what they did on the radio but,

And the thing which he did [verse ten] displeased the Lord: wherefore the Lord slew him also. Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at your father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brothers did. And Tamar went and dwelt at her father's house (Gen 38:10-11).

Now Shelah was still a little young to get married. He was the youngest of the three brothers but Judah, more than that, was fearful. Man, if two sons have died in an abortive marriage with this gal, he didn't want to lose all three sons. And so he says, "You go home to your father's home and you dwell there" and he

just sort of forgot her. Just sort of tried to put her out of sight, out of mind kind of thing and just let her go.

And now in the process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died (Gen 38:12);

So this gal that he married that really wasn't God's choice at all died and she must have been fairly young because Judah was only about forty years old at this time. And so she must have been fairly young when she died.

and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers (Gen 38:12)

Now it doesn't seem like he spent too much time mourning over her. I would imagine that the marriage turned into a pretty sad affair. It was not really God's purpose that Shuah be in line with the Messiah. She was a Canaanite and no doubt never did convert and began to exercise more and more influence upon the family. And the Lord has now removed her at an early age, and Jacob was comforted--or Judah was comforted and then he headed out for the party, sheep shearing, because sheep shearing was always accompanied by big celebration parties. It was just a fun time of the year and they would gather together and shear the sheep and then they'd have a big party.

And so he went

to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold your father in law is going up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And so [she put on her] she put off her widow's garments, and she covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife (Gen 38:12-14).

Now her father-in-law has not been treating her right. Shelah's now a man and he's supposed to be her husband but they haven't been back to claim her. And so she's going to start to take things in her own hands. In putting on the veil and sitting in this place, actually she is taking on the guise of a temple prostitute.

Among the Canaanite women, it was very common to be a temple prostitute. And even married women were required to give a certain amount of time during their life to serve their god in this way because the fertility processes were worshipped in their primitive worships of god, their worship ceremonies of god. And so the women were required during times of their life to become temple prostitutes. They were giving their life in a sense to their god and the goddesses of fertility. And so she put on the garbs, the veil of a prostitute and sat in the path on the way to Timnath.

Now when Judah saw her (Gen 38:15),

Maybe she was hoping Shelah would see her and would then he was the one supposed to marry her anyhow and she maybe was figuring to catch him, but instead the dad saw her and of course, his wife is now dead and so,

he thought her to be a prostitute; because she had veiled her face. And he turned in unto her by the way, and said, I pray thee, let me come in to thee; (for he did not know that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, How much you give me? And he said, I'll send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Will you give me a pledge, till you send it? He said, What pledge do you want? She said, I'll take your signet, and your bracelets, and the staff that is in your hand. And so he gave it to her, and he came in unto her, and she conceived by him (Gen 38:15-18).

Now this business, "What pledge shall I give thee?" Interesting the giving of a ring in a marriage actually comes back to this; the pledge to show sincerity. The pledge was always the purpose to show "I've made a promise to you and now to show you that my promise is sincere, I give you a pledge". And so the ring is a pledge to show the sincerity of the agreement or of the promise. It's a guarantee of the promise. And so that's the purpose of a ring in a wedding. It's a pledge by which you're guaranteeing the fact that you're going to keep that agreement, that covenant that has been verbally made. And so he went in to her. She conceived.

And she arose, and went away, and she put the veil from her, and put back on her garments of widowhood. And so Judah embarrassed to come back himself sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to get his pledge back from the woman, but he could not find her. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the prostitute that was sitting here by the side?" And they said, "There was no prostitute around this place".

And so he returned to Judah, and he said, "I can't find her; and also the men of the place said that there wasn't any prostitute around there". And Judah said, "Well, let her keep it then", you know, let's not press it any further, I'm embarrassed about the whole scene and so I at least sent the kid, and you haven't found her. So we did what we could.

Now it came to pass about three months after that, that someone told Judah, Tamar your daughter in law has played the harlot; and she's with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her out, and we'll burn her (Gen 38:24).

The whole thing with Tamar have been sort of an uncomfortable thing and he probably thought, "Oh, I'll finally get rid of her and that that's it now". But he had a surprise coming.

When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, who owns these, I am with child: and she said, Take a careful look, I pray thee, do you recognize this signet, and these bracelets, and this staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She has been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. But he knew her not again. But it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that one of them put his hand out: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew his hand back in, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called the Breach or Breaking Forth. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and they called his name Zarah (Gen 38:25-30).

So twins were born, and again it's interesting the one seem to be coming out of the womb and suddenly retracted his hand and the other was born first, because the other was to be the one through which the line of Christ was to come. So Shuah and her sons are out of the way, as far as the line and genealogy to lead to Jesus Christ. And now the genealogy of Christ is going to come through Pharez, the son of Tamar.

So God finally has things worked around now the way He had wanted them. It was a long, roundabout process and yet God has very interesting ways of working out His plans and His purposes in our lives.

So chapter thirty-eight of Genesis, why was it put in the record? I don't know. But I'm sure that God had a purpose for putting it in the record. And perhaps one of the purposes is to show that Christ came from just common, ordinary human passionate people who are not at all perfect, in order that we might be able to

better identify with Jesus Christ ourselves because we are plain, ordinary, passionate people far from perfect. And perhaps God is wanting to show how that His purposes can overrule man's mistakes.

Judah in his own flesh, going out and choosing Shuah as a wife, but God not wanting Shuah to have anything to do with the genealogy that will lead to His Son, Tamar being God's choice. And so by this roundabout process, brings Tamar into the picture so that her son will be the one that will come in the lineage of Christ.

Now it is interesting in Matthew's gospel when Matthew traces the genealogy of Christ, there are four women that are mentioned, one of them being Tamar. Of all of the women that were in the ancestry because there was a woman for every man, naturally in the genealogy of Christ, four women were named; Tamar, Rahab.

Now Tamar was there, she played the prostitute. Rahab was there; she was a professional prostitute. Ruth, who was a Moabitess and Bathsheba, who became David's wife through very seamy circumstances. And so the four women that are named by Matthew in the genealogy of Christ are four of what we would choose to be most unlikely candidates to be in that line that would bring forth the Savior to the world. And they are the four that are mentioned by Matthew.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-genesis-37-38/>

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