

# A Beautiful Breakthrough

Genesis 38-39

March 19, 2023 | Matt Denton, Lay Elder

Genesis 38	Genesis 39
God's conspicuous ABSENCE	God's conspicuous PRESENCE
Judah	Joseph
Free, but enslaved	Enslaved, but free
Moral blindness	Moral sight
Wicked	Righteous
Sinful	Sinned against
Tamar	Potipher's wife
Widow in desperation	Adulterous woman
Judah	Tamar (ch. 38)
Blatant in sin	Ambiguously illicit

**Big Idea: God breaks through man's sin to preserve His promise**

**I. God breaks through man's sin against His people to preserve His people (39)**

## A. Joseph's circumstances

### a. Familial treason

**Exodus 21:16** | Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.

### b. False witness

**Exodus 20:16** | You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

### c. Failure to seek the truth

**Exodus 23:7** | Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked.

## B. God's presence and Joseph's faithfulness

### a. Despite his circumstances, the Lord was present with Joseph

### b. Despite his circumstances, Joseph pursued faithfulness to the first and second commandment

*“The lesson enforced by the picture of Joseph in his dungeon, and which young beginners in life have special need to learn, is that, come what will of it, right is right, and sin is sin, that consequences are never to deter from duty, and that it is better to have a clean conscience and be in prison than do wickedness and sit at a king’s table. A very threadbare lesson, but needing often to be repeated.” – Alexander Maclaren*

**Ephesians 5:3** | But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

c. **God’s plan and Joseph’s faithful endurance**

## **II. God breaks through man’s personal sinfulness to preserve His promise (38)**

### **A. Levirate Marriage [Latin – “brother in law” – *levir*]**

a. Marriage of a widow to her husband’s brother

b. Three purposes:

i. Justice

ii. Preservation of inheritance

iii. Provision to perpetuate the name of the deceased brother

**Deuteronomy 25:7-10** | 7 And if the man does not wish to take his brother’s wife, then his brother’s wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to perpetuate his brother’s name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband’s brother to me.’ 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, ‘I do not wish to take her,’ 9 then his brother’s wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’ 10 And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal pulled off’.

### **B. Judah’s downward descent into greater personal sin**

a. Judah’s hatred toward his brother Joseph (Gen. 37)

- b. Judah's self-inflicted alienation from his family and the presence of God. (1-2)
- c. Judah's pursuit and marriage to a Canaanite woman (3-5)
- d. Judah's sin has the consequence of promoting generational sin (6-10)
  - i. *Er* (Heb. - "watchful", evil in reverse)
  - ii. *Onan* (Heb. - "Strength", vigorous)
- e. Judah's cowardly indifference to Tamar's circumstances (11-12)
- f. Tamar's plan to trap Judah, perceiving his lustful character (12-19)
- g. Judah's pursuit of a "cult prostitute" and his subsequent moral blindness (20-23)
- h. Judah's unmerciful conception of justice and honor (24)

### C. The end of Judah's story: His life changing repentance

### D. *Perez* [Heb. "To breach, break through"]

**Ruth 4:18-21** | Now these are the generations of Perez...Perez fathered Hebron, Hebron fathered Ram, ram fathered Amminadab, Amminidab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

**Matthew 1:3** | ...and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar...

### E. Application

- a. Moral Blindness
- b. Wayward Children
- c. Sexual Sins
- d. The Church