

Genesis 37-

INTRO

Ch 37 • Joseph Sold into Slavery

37:1-4 • Joseph, Jacob's favorite

¹ Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. ² This *is* the history of Jacob.

That phrase that opens v2 recurs repeatedly in Gen.

It marks the end of 1 story & begins another.

This seals the story of Jacob & turns to his 11th son Joseph.

Joseph, *being* 17 years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. & the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah & the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; & Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

Joseph was the 1st son of Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel.

He had 4 brothers from his father's 2 concubines, Zilpah & Bilhah.

It's to be expected that as Jacob had multiple wives their sons would tend to hang out with each other & that there was probably a bit of rivalry between them all.

After all, they each wanted to be Jacob's favorite and receive the family blessing.

Levi & Simeon were pretty much out of the running since they'd massacred the Shechemites and Reuben had bedded one of his dad's concubines.

That just opened the field wider to the **other** brothers who all thought they now had a **better** shot at it.

The flocks of Jacob were so vast, they had to be grazed separately.

So as we'd expect, the sons of each mother made a team that headed out with their portion of the herd.

Joe's brother Ben was too young to be a shepherd, so while he stayed home, Joe headed out with the sons of the 2 concubines **Dan, Naphtali, Gad & Asher**.

Boys will be boys, and when they returned home, Joe ratted his brothers out for some shenanigans they pulled.

When Jacob confronted them, they knew Joseph had tattled.

Joseph stands out as one of the Bible's true heroes and a man of amazing moral courage and godliness.

Here, in his teen years, there's a bit of relational immaturity & lack of wisdom.

Finking on his brothers wasn't a good idea.

Especially because

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of *many* colors. ⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him & could not speak peaceably to him.

Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph was obvious to all.

They all realized he intended to pass the family blessing on to him.

We've already seen how the contest in obtaining the birthright can bust up a family in the story of just 2 brothers; Esau & Jacob.

Imagine when **12** brothers are involved!!!

1 of the ways Jake showed his favoritism was by giving Joe, what's called here "a tunic of many colors."

That translation is a hold-over from earlier attempts to translate an archaic Hebrew phrase the translators had no clue about.

We now know the garment referred to was 1 reaching to the wrists & ankles.

It was worn by rulers & those exempt from manual labor.

Regular laborers wore short-sleeved garments with a hem at the knees.

This allowed for greater freedom of movement and didn't get soiled as quickly.

The longer the hem and sleeves, the higher the rank.

Some of the Egyptian art form that time shows such long-sleeved & hemmed garments as having a band colored fabric at the cuff & hem; like they're placed there purposefully to say, "Look at me.

Look how long my sleeves and hem is. I get to wear this because I'm an important person."

It was a status symbol.

Jacob's gift of this special garment to Joseph told the family he was being groomed as the next patriarch & ruler

of the household.

Imagine how the other brother's felt about that!

And Let's remember whose sons these are = Jacob's.

Can you see trouble brewing?

37:5-11 • Joseph's Dreams of Greatness

⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, & he told *it* to his brothers; & they hated him even more. Even before telling us what the dream was, Moses tells us their hatred was enflamed.

⁶ So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: Here again we see Joe's immaturity.

It would have been wiser for him to just sit on this.

It was for him; not for his brothers.

⁷ There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose & also stood upright; & indeed your sheaves stood all around & bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ 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 & for his words.

As the unfolding story makes clear, this dream was *prophetic*.

But that doesn't mean Joseph ought to have told it to his brothers.

Just because God speaks to YOU, doesn't automatically mean it's something you have to share with others – it may be just for you.

As we look at the Bible, we see that consistently when God wants his people to speak His message to others, He tells them to.

Joseph received no such command & ought to have kept this to himself.

It will serve him well later and that's why God gave it to him, so he could look back over the events of his life, including the bad things, and see that God had ALWAYS been with him.

⁹ Then he dreamed still another dream & told it to his brothers, & said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. & this time, the sun, the moon, & the 11 stars bowed down to me." ¹⁰ So he told *it* to his father & his brothers; & his father rebuked him & said to him, "What *is* this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother & I & your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" ¹¹ And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*.

Yet another mark of his ***relational ineptitude***.

Joe hadn't learned from the earlier error of sharing his dream.

So he repeats it with another - to the same effect.

And this time, as the dream's included imagery of his parents, he ropes them into the sphere of who he tells it to.

Jacob rebuked Joe for his breach of domestic etiquette, but filed the dream away as something to keep in mind.

Jacob had had his own prophetic dreams & knew God reveals Himself in special ways to His chosen instruments.

This 2nd dream is prophetic in more than just what it foretells about Jacob's family showing deference to Joseph as the ruler of Egypt.

This dream forms the basis for 1 of the Apostle John's visions in Rev 12.

37: 12-36 • The Brothers Plot Against Joseph

¹² Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. ¹³ 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." ¹⁴ Then he said to him, "Please go & see if it is well with your brothers & well with the flocks, & bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, & he went to Shechem.

Ah – SHECHEM! You remember that place.

That's where Simeon & Levi Jake's boys proved to be Jake's boys.

They decide to head back to the scene of their previous crime.

When Jacob hears where they've gone, he sends Joseph to go check on them.

Remember that he's already tattled on 4 of them for shenanigans they'd pulled while they were on one of these shepherding forays.

Jacob suspects his sons are up to no good slouching around Shechem & he wants to know what they're up to.

Well, they're up to no good alright.

¹⁵ Now a certain man found him, & there he was, wandering in the field. & the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" ¹⁶ So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks*." ¹⁷ 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 & found them in Dothan.

When Joseph arrived in the region of Shechem, his brothers were nowhere to be found.

One of the locals found him searching the area & asked him if he could be of assistance.

He told Joseph that Jacob's flocks had been taken to pasture in Dothan, a few miles N.

¹⁸ Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. It wasn't hard to tell it was him, what with his special garment.

It was like a neon sign over his head with an arrow point at him saying, "I'm Joseph, Dad's Fave."

¹⁹ Then they said to 1 another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! ²⁰ Come therefore, let us now kill him & cast him into some pit; & we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

Some of the brothers suggest they get rid of the troublesome little fink.

Most of them agree to it.

As we read on in Joseph's story, it seems pretty clear it was the treacherous Simeon who came up with the original plan to off Joe.

But Reuben, the eldest, balks

²¹ But Reuben heard *it*, & he delivered him out of their hands, & said, "Let us not kill him." ²² And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, & do not lay a hand on him" — that he might deliver him out of their hands, & bring him back to his father.

Reuben's been looking for a way to get back into his father's favor ever since bedding Bilhah.

He sees this as his opportunity.

He suggests it would be easier on all their consciences to not actually kill Joe, but to just stick him in a deep hole and let him die of the elements.

Reuben's real plan was to sneak back, rescue Joseph, & bring him home to Papa.

Just look at all the conniving going on here folks!

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. ²⁴ Then they took him & cast him into a pit. & the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.

This was a pit, not a well with water in it.

²⁵ And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes & looked, & there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, & myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt.

²⁶ So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit *is there* if we kill our brother & conceal his blood? Judah voice what no doubt they were all thinking What difference was there in killing Joseph outright & leaving him to die of exposure & thirst in a hole in the ground?

Either way it's *murder* & something they'd have to live with for the rest of their lives.

Why not make at least profit of what they were doing by **selling** Joseph to these traders passing by?

²⁷ Come & let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, & let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother & our flesh." & his brothers listened. ²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up & lifted him out of the pit, & sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 *shekels* of silver. & they took Joseph to Egypt.

Think about how brutal all this is.

They first plot to kill him.

Then agree to let him die in a pit.

Once they've tossed him in, they take a seat, pull out their PBJ sandwiches & have lunch.

How do you eat when your brother is pleading with you to not do this?

Then Judah says, "Hey, instead of leaving him her to rot, let's **sell** him!"

If these guys loved their father, wouldn't they stop to think about what losing him would do to him?

It seems Reuben wasn't there for this part of the tale.

After he persuaded them to just drop Joe in the pit, he took off, probably rounding up some straying sheep.

²⁹ Then Reuben returned to the pit, & indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; & he tore his clothes. ³⁰ And he returned to his brothers & said, "The lad *is* no *more*; & I, where shall I go?"

The brothers then told him what they'd done and that Joseph was on his way to the Egyptians salve market.

³¹ So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, & dipped the tunic in the blood. ³² Then they sent the tunic of *many* colors, & they brought *it* to their father & said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it *is*

your son's tunic or not?" ³³ And he recognized it & said, "*It is* my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him.

Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, & mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ And all his sons & all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted,

& he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

From here out, Jacob is a broken man.

This loss & the grief it brought was a crushing weight from which he never recovered.

Jacob's favoritism *of* Joseph ended up costing him his son.

³⁶ Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh & captain of the guard.

When the Ishmaelites arrived in Egypt, they set up shop & began trading.

One of their prizes was Joseph who was quickly sold to Potiphar, the chief commander of Pharaoh's personal bodyguard.

Later in Joseph's story we'll see the brothers reunited.

It's the highest form of drama & a great tale.

It's clear that the conscience of most, if not all, of them suffered badly after they sold Joseph into slavery.

CH 38 // Sidelight: Peril In Canaan

38:1-11 • Judah's Detour into Canaan

Dropped into the middle of Joe's story is an sordid tale about Judah that *seems* out of place.

Here's why I say that.

Let's just omit the ch and read the last v of ch37 and first of 39.

³⁶ Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh & captain of the guard.

¹ Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.

It's like Moses, the author, KNEW ch38 was an interruption to Joe's tale.

So he repeats the last part of that story and takes it from there.

This is a bit like the story of Adam naming the Animals in Gen. 2

God says it's not good that Adam is alone and that He will make him a companion.

But before He does, we have 2 vs where God has Adam name all the animals.

Only **THEN** does God put Adam to sleep and create Eve.

The seeming 2 v interruption of naming the animals provokes us to ask why it's there.

And that question leads to an important discovery

The long hours of naming the animals impressed on Adam they each had a mate.

He realized he did not. So, now **FEELING** lonely, he longed for a companion.

Which God met by providing one perfectly suited for him.

So Ch 38 **SEEMS** an interruption that provokes us to ask **WHY** it's here.

This story explains *why* Jacob's family needs to be taken **OUT OF** Canaan for a time.

Back in ch 15, God told Abe his descendants would be taken OUT OF Canaan for several generations, then would return after 400 years.

God made a most cryptic remark.

He said Israel would return when the iniquity of the Amorites was complete.

The Amorites were the main people group living in the land of Canaan.

Amorite is their tribal & ethnic identity, while the title Canaanite simply refers to where they lived.

Like today, the title American means people who live in the USA.

But we have lots of different ethnic and racial identities; Caucasian, Hispanic, Scandinavian, African, Asian. Etc.

Please understand that in Israel's conquest of Canaan after the Exodus, God **used** Israel as the instrument of His judgment on Canaanites.

They were a culture that had gone completely over into the most abominable kind of idolatry & debauchery.

They practiced mass human & infant sacrifice & were a culture wholly given over to the worship of sex & power.

They'd sinned themselves past the point of repentance so God used Israel to judge them.

At the time of Jacob & his sons, the Canaanites were on their way to that place; but they weren't there yet.

This story makes clear to us WHY Israel needed to be removed from Canaan as the Canaanites slipped into increasing abomination.

If they **weren't** removed, the danger was that they'd go down with them.

So, ch38 is crucial because it shows why **God** sent Joseph to Egypt.

¹ It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.

Why Judah chose to leave the family at this time isn't stated.

Maybe the affair with Joseph put some caution in him regarding his brothers.

Now that Joe's was out of the way, the question of inheritance is again center stage.

Which of the sons will Jacob favor now?

Reuben's out because of his incest with Jacob's concubine.

The next 2, **Simeon & Levi**, are out because of their treachery at Shechem.

That meant **Judah** was next in line. He may have split to avoid another plot.

Adullam was a Canaanite city-state in the south-central region of what's called the *Shephelah*; the sloping plain that joins the coast to the central mountains.

We'd call it the foothills. Think Santa Paula & you get an idea of the topography.

How Judah knew this guy Hirah who lived in Adullam isn't given.

² And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her.

WHAT?!?! Okay you veteran Wed Night Bible Students Is Judah supposed to be hooking up with a Canaanite wife?

Houston: We have a problem!

It's this Because of Jacob's conniving machinations with his father-in-law Laban, there's no going back to PA for wives for Jacob's sons.

That bridge done-been burned to ash.

So, were are they going to get spouses?

They **DO** take them from the locals because there are no other options.

Judah sees a woman he likes, the daughter of a guy named Shua, & marries her.

³ So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. ⁴ She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. ⁵ And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him.

And where ever that was, we have no idea.

Chezib is one of the many place names in the Bible that's passed out of our knowledge.

Judah's wife bore him 3 sons: Er, Onan, & Shelah.

Er = Watcher / Watchful

Onan = Vigorous

Shelah = Petition / Request; He was likely given this name because his mom had asked God for another son.

⁶ Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord killed him.

As was the custom, Judah arranged a wife for his eldest son.

Her name was **Tamar**, another Canaanitess.

But Er was a wicked man and for reasons simply explained as God's judgment, he died.

Several commentators suggest WHAT Er's wickedness was.

But since the text is silent, it's best for us to be.

The important thing is to realize Judah's son has been corrupted by his surroundings.

That corruption was so great it required swift judgment.

This is a crucial lesson for Christian parents. The world *is* going to influence our children.

The challenge to us is **HOW** it will influence them.

The only way to avoid it would be to move off to some secluded commune in Montana where there's not internet.

And that's simply not practical; nor do I believe it's God's will.

Church History has already tried the "hermits, monks & monasteries" deal. It didn't work well.

Can I share an observation with you?

Parents who try to sequester & hide their kids from the world have good intentions, but often do more harm than good.

I've witnessed several parents who attempt to shield their kids from the world by not having TV's, not letting them listen to the radio, never going to movies, no internet, home-schooling - & not even participating in a home-school support group.

Some even keep their children with them in church because they don't trust a Sunday school teacher.

Won't let their teens join the youth group for fear of influences they don't approve of.

Inevitably, when their children become young adults, they run off & into all the stuff their parents tried to keep them out of.

They resent the **controlling** they endured for 16, 17 yrs.

And because they were never exposed to the world's enticements, they have no capacity for handling it.

A far better strategy is for parents to raise their children to know how to be IN the World without being OF it.

To recognize the lies that shape the world and know the truth that dispels those lies.

We are called to wage spiritual warfare; not to be spiritual hermits.

We are called to be light to the world, not under a box.

Salt that resists decay because it's in contact with the world, not sitting in a pretty salt-shaker.

Parents, the world **IS** going to influence your children.

It's our job to make sure that influence works FOR God's glory, not against it by training how children how to channel that influence into goodness rather than sin.

Judah left the household of faith & journeyed to the moral wasteland of MTV, I mean **Canaan**.

His compromise left little ground for raising godly sons.

It was his family who suffered.

According to custom, if a man died before producing children, it was his next oldest brother's duty to go to his widow & father a child on his behalf and in his name.

This is called "**levirate marriage**" and will later codified into the Law of Moses.

This was done so the dead brother's property would stay in the family under his name & so his widow would have children to support her in her old age.

⁸ And Judah said to Onan, [**Er's next eldest brother**] "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ And the thing which he did displeased the Lord; therefore He killed him also.

The sibling rivalry that marked Jacob's house is duplicated in Judah's.

Onan despised his brother Er.

Besides, he wanted the firstborn rights for himself.

He wasn't about to be part of a scheme where his despised brother took the prize he wanted.

So, how do I say this? How do I put this decorously?

Onan by-passed his duty; he refused to get his sister-in-law pregnant.

He too was then judged by God. Judah's boys are dropping like flies.

With Er & Onan both gone, there's 1 last son to fulfill the duty of levirate marriage = Shelah; Judah's 3rd son.

But he's too young.

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

Judah **SAYS** Shelah's not old enough, but he has NO intention of allowing him to go near Tamar.

Judah thinks she's a black widow.

So he tells her to head home to her father's house till Shelah's grown.

He's probably hoping she'll strike up a romance with one of her fellow Canaanites & that will be the end of her connection to his family.

Well, Judah doesn't know here very well.

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.

The official time for mourning the death of a spouse was 7 days.

When it says Judah was comforted, it doesn't mean he was over his sorrow at the loss of his wife; that could go on for months & years.

It simply means the **official** time for mourning her was complete.

And while his loss was real, the needs of fields & flocks don't stop.

So he and his buddy Hirah went to the city of Timnah where his sheep were being sheared.

Shearing was when his flocks paid off.

He wanted to make sure he was getting a good deal for the wool.

¹³ And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁴ So she took off her widow's garments, covered *herself* with a veil and wrapped herself, and 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. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she *was* a harlot, because she had covered her face.

Time's passed. And Shelah is now old enough to fulfill his duty in levirate marriage.

But Judah's ignored her. She knows what's up. // Judah's written her off.

Note she was still wearing the distinctive garb of a widow.

She hadn't set it aside after the official time of mourning the loss of **her** spouse, creep that he was.

She wasn't trying to win the affection of some other guy.

She trusted her father-in-law to fulfill his promise & duty.

But when she realized he had no intention to, she took matters into her own hands.

She put off her widow's garb, put on more attractive clothes, and parked where she knew Judah would have to pass on his way to Timnah.

As we look at Tamar's story we discover while Judah's side-journey in Canaan **leads to corruption** in his family, it also **leads to salvation** for the lost!

Tamar learned the story of Jacob's family.

She heard of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

Faith was kindled in her and she determined she'd be a part of the promise.

If Judah wouldn't give her Shelah, she'd set her eyes a little higher and go after Judah himself.

She knew his wife was dead & that he'd likely be looking for some female companionship soon.

She adopted the style & set up at the kind of place a prostitute would.

When Judah passed by, sure enough he assumed she was for hire.

¹⁶ 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. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

Judah obviously doesn't know it's Tamar because she's covered by a veil.

He asks for service & she plays along by negotiating a price.

¹⁷ And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

In other words, "Let's get busy **now**, then I'll send along payment **later**."

So she said, "Will you give *me* a pledge till you send *it*?"

"Give me some collateral till the payment arrives."

¹⁸ Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that *is* in your hand." Then he gave *them* to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

Tamar is clever. She knew this was a prime time for her to get pregnant.

She agreed to take Judah's distinctive signet, which he carried on a cord around his neck.

This was a seal that was pressed into wax as a way to mark **ownership**.

And a shepherd's staff was a symbol of their **authority**.

Every staff had a distinctive shape to it.

Judah was a fool to part with these things since they were the chief symbols of his identity and authority.

But, they weren't really of any good to some random woman he had sex with.

Their only value was in what they meant to JUDAH.

Like if someone stole my wallet, the pictures in it mean nothing to the thief, but they mean a LOT to me.

Judah assumed they served as great collateral for that reason.

The woman would have not need or desire fr them'

But they would ensure he sent the payment for her services to get them back.

Problem is, Tamar DID want them precisely because they DID identify him.

¹⁹ So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

Tamar went back to her father's house and pretended nothing had happened.

She was just waiting for the bun to rise, if you will.

Judah had promised to give her a kid from the flock.

He got it partly right. He gave her a kid alright. It just wasn't from the flock.

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. 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*."

"What you sayin' Willis? We got no hoor's round here!"

²² So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this *place*." ²³ 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."

Judah let the matter die because any further inquiry would just draw attention to the shameful fact he'd paid for sex.

²⁴ And it came to pass, about 3 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!"

So – it's okay to USE a harlot, but not to be one, huh Judah?

A shocking but not uncommon double-standard there.

And let's be honest, this is **really** what Judah was hoping for all along.

He wanted some way to get rid of Tamar & this seemed the perfect excuse.

She was pregnant, but not by Shelah. So she must have been with someone else.

Judah's self-righteousness anger is about to blow up in his face.

²⁵ 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 she said, "Please determine whose these *are*—the signet and cord, and staff." ²⁶ 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.

Judah was busted!

He was **more in err** than she because he'd not fulfilled his promise or duty to give her Shelah.

And if it was wrong for her to play the harlot, it was no less wrong for him to use one.

Moses tells us after the birth of this child, Judah had no more relations with Tamar.

²⁷ Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins *were* in her womb. ²⁸ And so it was, when she was giving birth, that *the I* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took a scarlet *thread* and bound it on his hand, saying, "This 1 came out first." ²⁹ 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. [**Breach / Breakthrough**] ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand. And his name was called Zerah. [**Rise Up / Rising**]

This midwife was skilled enough to realize Tamar had twins.

Since twins are often mixed up after birth, midwives wisely tied a cord around the firstborn's wrist or ankle as a way to identify who was first.

In this case, one stuck a hand out, got the cord, but then his brother ended up emerging first.

Conclusion

Ch38 doesn't present us with the moral superiority of Jacob's family.

It shows the danger Canaanite culture presented them.

And helps explain why they had to be carted off to Egypt for a few hundred years.

In v26, Judah says of Tamar, "She has been **more** righteous than I."

If Tamar's actions can in any way be called "righteous," and he deems her as **MORE** righteous than he, then things are indeed headed S for the family of faith & promise.

This ch also stands as a proof of the *inspiration* of Scripture.

It doesn't cast Judah in a positive light.

In fact, Genesis' portrait of its heroes is **appallingly** honest & frank.

It paints them **warts & all**.

If Scripture was penned by mere mortals apart from divine inspiration, it's writers would have sanitized and edited the story to make them look better.

If Genesis was simply a story about people, instead of about God, we'd see those people in a much kindlier light.

But there's only 1 Hero in the Bible = Jesus. // Everyone else are just sinners saved by grace.