

Judah and Tamar

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 October 2017

Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] Now, I don't know if any of you are like me, but when you're working through a passage or a section of Scripture, you always come upon more difficult chapters as well as nicer ones.

I imagine some of you read this this evening and thought, oh dear, it would have to be that chapter tonight, wouldn't it? But I am reminded of what we read in 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, truly furnished unto all good works.

And whilst this chapter may appear like a somewhat unpleasant interlude in what had begun to be the story of Joseph now, what we might think of as an unedifying account of incest and uncleanness, and yet, and yet, still, if all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, there are lessons that we can draw from this, a number of lessons to be drawn from it, from this otherwise uncomfortable narrative.

It is not for nothing, but it is given to us, and there are things we can take from it. The most obvious one, obviously, as we recognise at the end of it, when we have the account of Tamar giving birth to these twins, to Phares and Tamar.

[1 : 2 8] Phares, of course, means, as the name suggests there, a breach. And how hast thou broken forth this breach be upon thee? Phares, or Perares, if you remember, when the Ark of the Covenant was being brought up to Jerusalem, and when it stumbled at one stage, in 2 Samuel 6 we read, and a man called Yutza put forth his hand to steady it, and the Lord smote him, and he died.

The anger of the Lord was kindled against Yutza, and God smote him. Therefore, David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Yutza, and he called the name of the place Phares Yutza unto this day.

Phares, Phares, means a breach. Zarah, his brother, the name comes from a root, which means to rise, or to come forth. Or, as a noun, it can mean the dawning, or the shining, as in the shining of the dawn.

So, these twin boys that are born, albeit, we might say, incestuously to Judah, through Tamar, his daughter-in-law, these are used of the Lord, and Phares in particular, becomes, of course, the ancestor, humanly speaking, of our Lord.

If we turn to Matthew chapter 1, you see there the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ, and there we find Judas chapter 3, a verse 3 begat Phares, and Zarah of Tamar, and Phares begat Ezra, and Ezra begat Adam, and so on.

[2 : 5 9] Now, you may recollect that in that particular genealogy, there are four women, not counting Mary, the mother of our Lord, there are four women who are mentioned. Tamar is the first.

There's also Reha, the heart of Jericho. There's Ruth, the Moabites, and there's Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite. And what is significant about each of these women, okay, there's many things significant about them, but unusual as it is to have the women listed, or the wives listed, in such a genealogy.

They are not exclusively all outlanders. Ruth is a Moabites. Yes, Rahab is of Jericho. Tamar, we don't know whether she was a Cainite, or whether she was of the extended family of Israel, or whatever.

Bathsheba probably was an Israelite from Jerusalem, but each one of them had all been somebody else's wife or woman, first of all. Rahab probably hadn't had another husband, but she had various other men.

So they had all belonged to somebody else first. And yet the Lord brought them in and used them in his great scheme of salvation.

[4 : 10] So the Lord has a plan and a purpose, and he already does. However, unsavory sometimes might be the human outworkings. Of what we find revealed here.

But we see at the outset, then, of this chapter, we read Judah went down from his brother and turned into a certain Adelaide, whose name was Haya. He went down from his brother.

Now the timing of this chapter, placed immediately after the selling of Joseph into slavery, and of course before we take up again the narrative of Joseph in Egypt, this would suggest that it follows hard upon the selling of Joseph, as indeed the chapter is placed.

The placing of chapters isn't always exactly chronological, but I would suggest to you that this is exactly the right place for this chapter here. Because it tells of Judah's dwelling separately for some considerable time from his brethren and from his father's house, falling in with Canaanite company and for a time following their pagan ways.

It is highly unlikely, the narrative would preclude it, indeed, that this could have happened before the selling of Joseph. You know, Judah is not described as, you know, dwelling amongst Canaanites or having a Canaanite wife or children.

[5 : 34] During chapter 37, when Joseph is attacked by his brothers and sold into slavery, the implication is, though, that none of them are married at that point, and Judah certainly is just one of the brothers at that point.

There's no mention of any domestic involvements or attachments at that time, so it almost certainly can't have happened before the selling of Joseph into slavery.

Nor can it realistically have happened after the family goes down into Egypt to buy corn. Because other than that, other than maybe one year's elapsed between the first trip and the second trip, after that, they all move lock, stock, and barrel, down into Egypt.

So it cannot be subsequent to that event. And you might think, well, you know, that much is obvious. Of course, it can't be after, and of course, it can't be before. Why are you spelling this out? Because if this is happening between the selling of Joseph and the moving down into Egypt, it's a comparatively short time span that all of this has to be fitted in.

[6 : 39] Remember that Judah has to go down to this, this Canaanite, he's got to see this daughter of Shua that he falls in love with and that he marries and has children with, and then the children grow up and then they marry, and so on.

All of this has to be done within the space of 22 years. 22 years, there's loads of time. It's not that much time for two people to get married, have three separate sons, each of whom would then be married, two of them die, one of them should be married, but the other isn't, and then the father-in-law has an almost accidental, you could say, although not really, incestuous relationship with his daughter-in-law, and twins are born from that.

22 years, it's a lot to pack in. In a comparatively short time between the selling of Joseph and the family going down into Egypt.

Well, how can we say it's only 22 years? Well, although we have no indication as to Judah's age or how many years pass, most of you will perhaps be aware by now that we can compute the time from the age of Joseph.

If you go back to chapter 37, you see at verse 2 that Joseph is 17 when he goes to seek his brother. And the end of that chapter, verse 36, that's when he's sold into Egypt.

[8 : 00] Same incident, same time, here he's still 17. If you look ahead then to when Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream, chapter 41, at verse 46, you see that it says that he was 30 when he stood before Pharaoh, when he successfully interpreted that dream.

13 years then have elapsed. And we know that he revealed himself to his brothers, chapter 45, at verse 6, after two years of the famine.

Five years of famine still to go. Now the two years of famine only have began after you'd had the seven years of plenty. So nine years have now elapsed since Joseph stood before Pharaoh.

So he's 39 when he makes himself known to his brother. And as soon as he makes himself known to his brother, they go back, tell Jacob, they get the wagons, they get all the loxod up in battle and move into Egypt.

39, he's 17 when he's sold into slavery. 22 years. It's not a huge amount of time for all that has to happen in the meantime.

[9 : 08] So everything that happens in this narrative happens within the space of that 22 years, which is a comparatively limited amount of time.

Now just in terms of timescale, if you want to be difficult or arithmetically awkward, then, you know, we can look ahead and say, yes, but now this chapter ends with Phares and Zara being born. And then when it comes to, when it comes to going down into Egypt, then, if at the end of that 22 years, that's then just being born, we see then the sons of Judah, verse 12 of chapter 46, Aaron, Onan, and Sheba, and Phares, and Zara, but Aaron, Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Phares were Hezron, and Hamel says, suddenly Phares has sons of his own. So how in the world do you squeeze all that in as well? Well, I think we have to understand what is probably a Hebraism here.

In other words, a Hebrew method of looking at family and timing. That when Jacob goes down into Egypt, that entire first generation and everything that they do is accounted as being there already, as though they all went down at that time, although almost certainly Phares' children were not born until they were actually in Egypt.

[10:32] But that's part of the first generation that went down. Likewise, Benjamin, who is described as a lad, or a youth, which is a particular Hebrew term, when Joseph asks for him in Egypt, he is coming down to Egypt in chapter 46 of Genesis with ten sons.

That's pretty quick work for one so young. But I think we would need to understand it, as we say, in terms of this Hebraism. So how do we understand this Hebraism?

If you look in Hebrews chapter 7, you don't have to turn it up just now, but if you think in Hebrews chapter 7, where the apostle is writing of the tithes that Abraham paid to Melchizedek, we see in verses 9 and 10, as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

So in other words, remember the apostles writing to Hebrews, they don't say, oh come on, that's stretching things a bit. This is a method of explaining things that they will clearly be familiar with and understand.

Saying that because Abraham paid the tithes to Melchizedek, Isaac, who wasn't yet born, likewise paid tithes. Levi, who wasn't yet born, being a son of Jacob, then he likewise would pay tithes, being a great grandson or whatever.

[12:00] He's still taking his being in the loins of his grandfather or whatever. And he likewise is paying tithes, being yet in the loins of his father Abraham.

But Hebrews chapter 7, verse 10. This is a Hebrew song. And I would suggest to you that in chapter 46 of Genesis, when all the family is moving down into Egypt of the 70 souls that are recounted there, some of them would have physically gone down at that time.

Some of them would simply have been of that first generation. Some of whom were not yet physically born, but were taken as being in the loins of their fathers at the time when they were born.

So the period that we have between the serving of Joseph and the family going down into Egypt is this 22-year period. A lot happens in it.

So we read of Judah going down from his brethren and turned into a servant of Delamite. We are not told exactly why he parts of his family, but given the context, it seems highly likely that he has fallen out with them over some major thing that has happened.

[13:13] Guess what? The selling of Joseph into Egypt has just occurred. Judah has played a significant role in the actual selling. Chapter 37, verse 26 and 27.

It's actually his idea to sell his wee brother to the Midianites and the Ishmaelites. Perhaps guilt is overcoming him. Perhaps he just needs to get away and be by himself.

Perhaps he's fallen out with them over the deceiving of their father. We don't know the exact reasoning, but for a time he lives separately from his father's house and from his brethren.

He went down from his brethren and turned into a servant of Delamite. And Adalim is to the southern part of the land of Judah. And we see there, we've got maps in the back of your Bible, you can probably find it there, whose name was Hira.

Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. And in a way that's written you would think that that was her name. But as verse 12 tells us that it was the daughter of Shua, it's the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua.

[14:18] And he took her and went in unto her. Now that makes it sound like it was just a sort of casual passing relationship. But we're told, again at verse 12, that she was his wife. He saw her, he fell in love with her, they married, and they had these three sons.

And so it's a lasting committed relationship, albeit, to one who is a Canaanite and therefore a pagan. He does not seek advice from his father Jacob, he does not seek his family's guidance, he is living apart from his family now, he's falling into the way of the Canaanites, he takes a Canaanite wife, and the offspring of that Canaanite marriage is not happy as the events portray.

So this is not a mere casual acquaintance, this is a marriage into which he enters. You can see there a son called his name Er, another son named Onan, yet again another conception called his name Shela.

We don't know exactly how many years between these three sons. It is likely that Shela was a number of years after the other two for obvious reasons as we see later on, waiting for him to be grown up.

And Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. This jumped between five and six, all these silent years. They had just been born, you think, well they're just toddlers at this point, but clearly all these silent years have elapsed.

[15:41] And now he's taking a wife for his eldest when the boy is probably just in his late teens at this stage. His name was Tamar. Tamar means one who is erect or can be a palm, like tall and erect and straight standing like a palm tree.

In Solomon chapter 7, of course, the writer writes to his beloved, this thy stature is like to a palm tree. Behold, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof, and so on.

So this is Tamar that he takes for his eldest. Verse 7, we read that Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord. The doubt that he was wicked in his own sight, none of us tends to be.

We don't look at ourselves and think, oh yes, I'm really terrible, I'm really wicked, unless we are under conviction of sin. And conviction of sin only comes from God's spirit, it doesn't come from us. Nobody thinks that they are unrighteous in their own eyes. And it is part of the mark of the unconverted, as opposed to one upon whom God's spirit is working, in that the worldling thinks himself good.

[16:50] The worldling thinks himself righteous. No better, no worse than anybody else. I'm okay, if there is a God, I should jolly well be saved, because I'm not a bad person. That is your standard attitude of the worldly.

One upon whom the spirit of Christ is beginning to work, recognizes his or her own sinfulness in the light of God's grace and of his spirit. So, Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord slew him.

Often the Lord does not slay suddenly, does not punish suddenly, but in this instance he does. And Judah said, Oh, I'm going unto thy brother's wife and marry her and raise up seed to thy brother. Now, this was an ancient practice, which was enshrined also in the law of God. In Deuteronomy, we read verses 5 and 6, in chapter 25, the 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 unto her and take her to him to wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her.

[17:56] And it shall be that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name do not put out of Israel. Losing posterity, losing an inheritance was a major disaster to any of these ancient peoples, including to the Lord's people.

The inheritance, the land, the tribal inheritance that had to be gained, it was imperative that they had heirs. So that if there wasn't one, then that's why this, what to us, would seem incestuous, but God approves in that limited time and place this, what was known as letherate marriage, whereby a brother would go into his brother's wife and take her as his own wife, perhaps in addition to other wives, but where God's law specifies only the firstborn that they have from their union would be counted as his brothers.

Any others would count for himself and it's not even necessary perhaps that after that, after there's been an heir, that there should be any further contact between them. The requirement is for provision for the widow and above all for an heir to take the place of the deceased father.

So Judah said to Onan, going on to thy brother's wife, marry her and raise up seed to thy brother.

And Onan knew that the seed should not be his and it came to pass when he went in unto his brother's wife that he spilled it on the ground lest that he should give seed to his brother.

Now the way we have it in our English translation makes it sound as though it's a one-off incident, just sort of a wedding night failure. But the original Hebrew, the verb, is in the frequentative sense that implies that it's a recurring theme.

[19 : 40] So it's not just when he went in to that night, that one night he spilled it on the ground, but rather whenever he went in unto his brother's wife, every occasion that they came together, he did this.

So that it's a frequentative sense, it's a recurring sin that he's committing. And so it came to pass that he spilled it on the ground and the thing which he did is pleased the Lord before he slew him also.

Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, remain a widow at thy father's house till Shaloh, my son, be grown. We don't know how many years afterwards Shaloh was born. For the argument to count, he must still have been at least, you know, young teens as opposed to late teens.

Otherwise, it wouldn't wash as an argument. Remain a widow at thy father's house till my son, Shaloh be grown, for he said, lest peradventure he die also. So the real concern is not, oh, the boy's too young.

The real concern is a sort of back-of-the-mind anxiety that Tamar is somehow responsible for the death of Judah's two elder sons.

[20 : 52] He's not explicitly saying, look, it's your fault. Maybe he just thinks, to use a pagan phrase, she's unlucky. Maybe he just thinks that there's some, perhaps some, illness or some infection is contracted.

Maybe he thinks for whatever reason, whoever has union with her dies. And he doesn't want his third son to go the same way. But she does as her father in Ockemas.

In the process of time, the daughter assured Judah's wife died and Judah was comforted. It's, again, a Hebrewism that simply doesn't mean he felt better. It usually means that the period of formal mourning, however many months it was, was concluded.

He fulfilled the time of required mourning and after that he was declared to be comforted and, as it were, that the thing is behind him.

He went up onto his sheep shears to Timna, to his friend Hyda, the Abdelamite. Now this isn't just an agricultural labor. It was taken in the ancient world as being an occasion of great joyfulness and gathering together.

[21 : 57] You're shearing your sheep, presumably it's producing all the mass of fleeces. It was an occasion for a party a great gathering. If you think of 1 Samuel 25 when Nabal, whose wife Abigail, David's subsequently married, he's got his sheep shears in Maon and David goes and asks him for food, for his men.

And he had a thousand, three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel. And to us, that just means, okay, he was shearing them. He was taking off the fleeces.

That's work.

It's slob. Why would anybody think, come on, give us some food and drink? But because in that culture and time, it was a big gathering, a big festive gathering. Because David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep and David sent out ten young men.

And David said to the young men, go ye up to Carmel, go to Nabal and greet him in my name. And thus shall he say unto him that liveth in prosperity, peace be both to thee, peace to thy house and peace unto all that thou hast.

And now I have heard that thou hast shearers. Now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not. Neither was there missing unto them. All the while they were in Carmel. In other words, we looked after your flocks and herds.

[23 : 12] We didn't touch them. We never stole any of your sheep. We were a protection to your shepherds and your people. Ask thy young men and they will show thee. Wherefore, let the young men find favour in thine eyes for we come in a good day, a party day, a festive day.

Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants and to thy son David. In other words, you've got plenty of food and drink ye have gathered. Spare some of it for these young men, for my men, for David's men because you've got plenty, you've got abundance and you're having a party.

Again, 2 Samuel 13, verse 23, absolutely, as his sheep shears, he invites all the king's son. It's a party occasion. It's a festive time. It's not just, as I say, an agricultural labour.

But at this time of festivity, inevitably, perhaps people are relaxing a little more, shall we say.

Perhaps there's more conviviality or a brinking or whatever going on.

And in this time of levity, Judah is more vulnerable, we might say. And Tamar is told that he's going up to his sheep shears.

[24 : 22] And she put her widow's garments off from her and covered her with a veil and wrapped herself and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath. For she saw that Sheol was grown and she was not given unto him to a wife.

When Judah saw her, he thought her to be in horror because she had covered her face. There were different kinds of prostitution in the ancient world. There was ordinary commercial prostitution, which it's probable that Rahab was in Jericho.

But very common also was cultic or temple prostitution, particular ones who were dedicated to the goddess Ashtaroth or Ishtar. And part of their particular attire was that they did veil their faces. They covered over their faces and they wrapped themselves with a certain kind of mantle and a liaison with such an individual was meant to invoke certain kind of pagan magic to bring fertility on the land, on the flocks, on the herds, and so on.

It was all part of this pagan fertility cult, nature worship, so it was not uncommon. And having her face covered in this way might have caused Judah to think she was one of these particular temple prostitutes.

[25 : 37] who happened to be in the wayside seeking business in that sense. Obviously covering her face was guised as well, but for somebody who was raised to fear the God of Israel, this was yet another example of Judah's just falling deeper and deeper into pagan sin.

He is in a vulnerable situation, his wife has died, he's in a situation of yes, festivity, and everybody's sort of enjoying themselves, maybe he lets his guard down, for whatever reason, there is no excusing the sin, whilst there may be some explaining of it, there is no excusing of it.

He turned out, unto him by the way, go to, I pray thee, let me come in, not to thee, and the angry of Christ, a kid of the flock, which would be reasonable, you know, I might give you a lot of meat and a lot of resources, and through for quite a while, but she says, oh wait a minute, until you send it, who's to say you'll ever send it, so give me a pledge just now, give me a down payment, a deposit, she says, okay, well fair enough, what will I give you?

And she doesn't ask for, you know, so much gold, or so much monetary payment, you notice that what she asks for are things which would be identifiable as belonging to the owner, the bracelets, the arm bracelets that Israel might swore in those days that a man of rank would have, the staff wouldn't just be a stick, a walking stick, it would be particularly carved and inherited from his forefathers, it would be distinctive, and the signet, whether that means a ring or a particular kind of attachment of a seal by a ribbon or whatever it might be, the key thing is that these things are distinctive, it's like giving somebody a credit card prior to them actually cashing it in, it's got all your details on it, if she produced these, and of course she did, everyone would know who they were and who they belonged to and that's the thing she's going for.

Now, we could say that, oh, this is terrible what Tamar is doing and Luke, she's engaging in incest and prostitution and all these things and some people have said that and of course there is no doubt that whilst Judah is sinning in this regard, he at least is sinning innocently in regard to the incest that he's about to engage in, he doesn't realise it's his daughter-in-law, she does know that it's her father-in-law but on the other hand, when she's seeking to be given to Shela his son, which is her right, and to raise up children for her first husband, for her or for Onan or indeed for Shela himself, whose line would she be preserving?

[28 : 19] it would be Judah's, Judah's line, Judah's posterity, Judah's inheritance that would be being protected and by giving herself to Judah in this way, if there is a child from it, it is his line that she is protected and that she is guaranteeing by this subterfuge, this deceit.

And so having engaged then she disappears. Judah then seeks to make his payment, goes back, sends his friend with the king of the flock and they can't find her. And they ask the men of the places, where's the harlot?

They used to say, by the wayside. And they say, well there wasn't any harlot here. And they don't mean in terms of, we're so virtuous, we would never do that. Probably what they mean is there was no temple prostitute here, there's no shrine prostitute in this area, there's nothing here or hereabouts that would suggest that we don't know what we're talking about.

So he says, let her take it to her unless we be shamed. Now we don't quite know what he means by this. He doesn't appear to be anxious about in case people know what I've done. There doesn't seem to be that much shame about the actual activity in which he is engaged.

It is a pagan culture in which he is moving after all. There is no morality as such. Although adultery, as we'll see, was still very much found on.

[29 : 41] It could be that, it could be, we'll be shamed if people realise I've been made a fool of. That somebody's taken my staff and my bracelets and my signet and they've done an honour.

I'm going to end up looking a fool so just don't say anything about it. Or it could be, perhaps, we will be shamed if it is thought that having engaged in this commercial transaction, we didn't pay the bill. That is possibly the most likely. It'll look as if we're not men of honour. It'll look as if we didn't fulfil our obligations. So, let her take the deposit and let her go with it so that we don't get shamed for people thinking we don't fulfil our obligations.

The least of his concern appears to be the actual fornication itself. He's in a pagan culture. These things don't matter much to pagans.

And it came to pass about three months after that it was told, Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath plagued the harlot. And also, behold, she is with child by boredom.

[30 : 45] Judah said, bring her forth and let her be burnt. Here's the self-righteous hypocrisy coming out now. Romans tells us, chapter 2, verse 1, Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things.

If she is guilty, he is guilty. And they would call it adultery because she's meant to be engaged to Shela, his son. And so it would count as adultery, but he hasn't actually given his son to her.

Leviticus does tell us that if the daughter of a priest, chapter 21, verse 9, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father, she shall be burnt with fire.

Some commentators take this to mean not burnt alive like at the stake, but rather branded with fire in the cheek or in the forehead with a mark of adultery.

That's possible. But likewise, when it comes to Samson's wife and father-in-law, when it says the Philistines burned them with fire, it quite clearly means they burned the house over their head.

[31 : 55] They burnt them to death. We've got the instance in Jeremiah, chapter 29, where the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar, he destroys two of the Israelites who are mutinous.

Chapter 29, verse 22, two of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which had in Babylon saying, the Lord may be like Zedekiah and like Ahab who the king of Babylon roasted in the fire because they have committed villainy in Israel and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives and spoken line words in my name.

So adultery was viewed as a capital crime if people were caught for it, of course, for obvious reasons it was often a lot easier to catch the woman after the event than it might be to catch the man and that injustice of course often continued.

But when she is brought forth she sends to her father-in-law saying, by the man whose these are am I with child. And she said, discern I pray thee whose are these to sing it and the bracelets and the staff.

Now she's not saying simply, if I'm guilty you're guilty too because they could have turned around and said, ah yes, but my wife is dead this isn't adultery for me.

[33 : 12] So it's wrong but the incest would still count. The fact of the fornication would still count. Judah could, if he was a man completely devoid of any grace of God at all, say, well, I'm not recognising those I don't know whose those are.

And he probably could have gone away with it amongst judges who were basically his friends. but at the end of the day she's saying, look, this is why I've done what I've done. I know what should have been promised to me.

I know who should be my husband by now. I know who I should be raising up children and posterity for and it hasn't been done. Who hasn't done it?

Judah hasn't done it. Whose are these bracelets? Whose is this signet? Whose is this stuff? And we have finally then, after his hypocrisy and attempt at not just covering his own tracks but also the likelihood of verse 24 is that Judah is thinking, oh, a chance to get her out of the way.

A chance to be done with her once and for all because now I won't have to marry her to Sheilam, my son, and he won't die under tragic circumstances. It's a chance that presents itself to let Tamar be put to death and then I'm done with this and I don't have to worry about it anymore but instead, thanks be to God, there is conviction and there is repentance.

[34 : 44] Judah acknowledged him and said, she hath been more righteous than I because that I gave her not to Sheilam, my son, and he knew her again no more.

there is this sense of conviction, there is this sense of repentance and yes, he knew that again no more, there's more to it than this.

Somebody once said many years ago, the silences of scripture are also inspired. Now, I know that that could be a dangerous foundation in which to build too much but I would suggest to you there are occasions when it fits the requirement exactly.

It is not simply the case that Judah does no longer have any marital contact with his daughter-in-law Tamar. It says he knew her again no more.

Fine, she has the twins, that's the end of the matter. They are counted as his sons, his posterity, his line. We read of them later on when the family goes down into Egypt.

[35 : 52] But also, out of this unpleasant episode, two things. First of all, Tamar emerges as a woman of virtue instead of as a woman of arletary.

If you think, you go on for example to the book of Ruth and you see at the end of the book of Ruth when people say to Boaz, the Lord make the woman that is coming to thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which to did build the house of Israel, and do thou worthily in Ephrata, and be thou famous in Bethlehem, and let thy house be like the house of Pharaoh, whom Tamar bear unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

So, Pharaoh's being born to Judah by Tamar is taken as being a thing of virtue. It's taken as something to which the Israelites look back with a sense of honour, with a sense of pride.

Now, whilst you think, well, the circumstances don't exactly lend themselves to pride, but in a sense she takes her life in her hand to do the thing which is right, albeit deceptively, albeit incestuously, albeit perhaps without doing that which is entirely pure, but her motives at least are purer whereas Judah's are not.

She is quoted as a woman of virtue and of course she is included without any blush or shame, she is included in our Lord's genealogy in Matthew chapter 1.

[37 : 28] She's the first woman named in it because this is a unique circumstance here. It is something from which the Lord is able to bring good out, not only to demonstrate that in the genealogy of our Lord and that which makes up his salvation history, there is that which involves those who are far less than pure and pristine and spotless.

They are all sinners, those saved by the Lord, all those used of the Lord in working out his salvation history are sinners just as we are sinners.

We may not all be guilty of the same sins, but we are all sinners in need of redemption. But the thing that gives me most encouragement in this chapter is not only this, that he knew her not again, but the implication for the silences of Scripture which are also inspired is that there is no mention of any further children for Judah at all.

when you turn to chapter 46 and the family goes down into Egypt, you read to the sons of Judah, Aaron and Onan and Sheilah and Pharaoh and Zeb.

Aaron and Onan died in the land of Canaan. The sons of Pharaoh were Hezoron and Hamel. You go into 1 Chronicles in chapter 2 where again you've got the listings of all the people of Israel.

[39 : 05] And we read there, the sons of Judah, Aaron and Onan and Sheilah, which three were born unto him the daughter of Sheol of Canaanites. The first born of Judah was evil in the sight of the Lord. He slew him. Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Beahem, Pharah, and Zerah, and the sons of Judah were five.

The two that died, Sheilah who lived, and then the children of his own, and the two born from Tamar. Now Judah, we must assume, was of an age where he could still have taken another wife, have had other children, he could have pursued other attachments, but we do not read that he did. We read of no further children at all for Judah. We read of no other wife at all for Judah. We read of no other woman in his life whatsoever.

I don't know, you might think, oh yeah, but they don't list every wife and every person and every concubine. when the concubines produce children, they do list them.

When the wives produce children, they sometimes don't list the wife, but if a marriage is childless, they usually list the wife. Who doesn't have the children, there is no mention of any other whatsoever.

[40 : 21] And I would suggest to you, I would hope with justice to the word God, that having been thus convicted, having been thus convicted of his own sin, and of how close he has come to shedding innocent blood, and destroying not only his daughter-in-law, but his own posterity in her womb, Judah is so smitten with the sense of his own shame, and with the sense of his own conviction of sin, that not only does he never fall into that particular sin again, but that his repentance from it is complete.

And with that repentance, we see a greater nobility coming in with Judah in the future. If we turn a few chapters again, we see that when it comes to Jacob and his sons and the anxiety about the corn, that whilst Reuben extravagantly says, oh, kill my own two sons if I don't bring back Benjamin faithfully and so on, it is Judah who in chapter 43 from verse 8 onwards to verse 10, he is the one that says, I will stand surety for him.

He doesn't say, slay my own son, he doesn't make extravagant claims, but he promises himself to stand in place for Benjamin. And likewise in chapter 44, when he is pleading with Joseph, it is he who says from verse 18 onwards, he says, take me instead of Benjamin.

He doesn't say, take my sons, he doesn't make any mention of wives or children. The implication is that Judah is done with all these things. He's done with wives and children and these domestic relationships for just him, just him and his father, just him and the Lord.

And he's prepared to become a slave in Egypt so that he can fulfill his word and that Benjamin can go free. There is a nobility that emerges now with Judah, which is not there before.

[42 : 25] the one who was ready to sell his little brother into slavery in Egypt, who suggested it to the others, is now ready to become the slave himself. And we find, finally, when Jacob is coming down into Egypt himself, we read in verse 28 that he sent Judah before him unto Joseph to direct his face unto Goshen.

we know that it is of Judah that the tribe comes from which the Messiah emerges. We know it is of Judah that King David and all his descendants come. We see that the Lord has a plan for Judah. We see here what is true not only in the gospel but also in the Old Testament where we read in Ezekiel 18 verse 21, if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed and keep all my statutes and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

All his transgressions that he hath committed they shall not be mentioned unto him. In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live, not because of his righteousness but in his righteousness.

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die saith the Lord God and not that he should return from his ways and live. Of course you remember that verse in Romans where the Lord says that Jesus is the one whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.

[44 : 02] To declare I say at this time his righteousness that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. When a soul turns from their sin it does not matter what they have done when they turn to the Lord in faith when they put their trust in him then whatever may be the blot or the track record of their checkered past it is washed clean by the blood of Christ.

This is the hope of the gospel. This is the good news. It does not negate the reality of the sinners that we are. Genesis 38 is there for a reason.

It is there not only to tell the posterity of Jesus and his genealogy and Pharaoh and Sarah and Tamar and how they came to be but it is also to declare that from that time forth not only does he not touch Tamar not only are there no further children but the most likely reason why there are no further children for Judah is there are no further women in his life no more wives no more concubines no more falling into that particular snare I would suggest to you from what scripture says and from what it does not say that Judah emerges from this chapter a changed man a chastened soul a convicted sinner but a redeemed saint and the fact of his sin and the fact of this account which is there for all posterity is not able to undo the grace and the glory and the mercy that the Lord has laid up for men that love him when they turn from the sins of the past of which Christ is the propitiation that his blood alone redeems it is good enough for Judah and it is good enough for us let us pray dear to not good to have you stuck around as farmer has har done