

# Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

## Genesis 38:1-30

"All Things for Good"— August 20, 2023



### Introduction

The catechism reminds us that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. As Christians, we believe that He WILL be glorified, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of His glory. However when we see our struggle with sin and our struggle to live for God's glory, it may seem that His glory might be threatened.

Do you ever feel like your sin may prevent God from being glorified or that you might be "run over" in order for God to be glorified? Sin always leaves a trail of destruction in the lives of the sinner and in the people, families and communities that it touches. Is there any hope in the aftermath of sin? Is there hope for the sinner? Is there hope for the one sinned against?

Here in Genesis 38, God will carry out His unstoppable plan. God is not limited. He is able to carry out His worldwide plans for His glory while simultaneously caring for those sinned against.

Big Idea: Trust God in the sinful mess because God is faithful to complete His plan and care for His people.

### Sermon Outline

1. Scene One: Sin's devastation Vs. 1-11
2. Scene Two: An unstoppable plan Vs. 12-19
3. Scene Three: The blind shall see. Vs. 20-26
4. Scene Four: God's surprising choice Vs. 27-30

### Read & Discuss

#### 1. Read vs. 1 - 11

Verses 1 - 5 set the scene for the chapter. Judah left his family at the time that he and his brothers sold Joseph into slavery, which, by the way, was Judah's idea. Why did he leave his family? Jacob's favoritism caused him to feel overlooked. He moved to get a fresh start. Judah is not walking by faith and married a Canaanite woman. He put his desire or lust in the driver's seat. Can you relate to Judah? At the end of a long week when nothing seems to go our way, are you tempted to indulge in something that feels good? As Judah drifts from his family, he begins to look more like the world. Although it looked like he got a clean start, we see the results of sin in his family.

Er was wicked, and God put him to death. Onan, out of selfishness, would not fulfill his responsibility to provide offspring for his brother. God put him to death. God is not indifferent to sin. Judah sends Tamar back to her father's home. She went back to her father's house as a widow with no protection or provision as well as public shame.

This is not exactly the fresh start Judah wanted. It's not exactly the life Tamar thought she'd have? Can you identify with Judah? Has your sin caused devastation to those around you? Can you identify with Tamar? Have you been sinned against? Are you suffering the consequences of that?

#### 2. Read vs. 12 - 19

Abraham's family was promised offspring. The problem we see here is that two of Judah's sons were dead. Judah's wife was dead. Tamar was left without a husband to carry on the line. All she could do was wait. It feels like God's plan is in jeopardy, but Tamar has a plan to trap Judah during the sheep shearing festival.

Was Tamar righteous in what she was doing? In one sense, she was not. She deceived Judah, and prostitution is immoral. Moses just stated what happened. The morality was not referenced. Judah was hurt growing up, and now was the one dishing out the hurt. Tamar was left with no options. He sent Tamar away. Then Tamar hurts Judah. Sometimes hurt people will hurt others. Have you been hurt by someone who is hurting? Have you lashed out and hurt someone because you are hurting?

All of this did not derail God's plan. God used this questionable choice. ([Ps. 76:10](#)) God is in control. In the end, Tamar is pregnant. Ultimately she would carry out the family line of Judah to David and to Jesus.

### 3. Read vs. 20-26

Judah sees this prostitute in secret, but now he was eager to get his things back. He got his friend to help. A friend who supports you in your sin is not a friend. ([Proverbs 27:6](#)) Do the people you call friends support you in your sin or do they pull you back? Be wise about choosing your friends. ([Proverbs. 13:20](#))

Judah was blinded by the fear of man. Fear of man blinds us to the seriousness of our sin and to the pain of those around us. It blinds us to the cliff that sin is barreling toward - the cliff of destruction and ruin.

Word got out that Tamar is pregnant. When Judah found out, he was furious and wanted her punished (put to death). Do you see the irony, hypocrisy and self-righteousness in these verses? He was blaming Tamar for all the bad around him. Judah was blind, but God saw what he did. Tamar is brought out with Judah's things. God would use this encounter to open Judah's eye to his own sin. Here, he took responsibility for his sin and repented. ([Vs. 26](#)) Repentance is more than acknowledging your sin; it is turning away from sin and with God's help, changing.

Judah loved the world. He married an unbeliever. He misused Tamar. He slept with a prostitute. However, when we see Judah later in the book of Genesis, we will see a changed man. Do you see God's care for Judah in this confrontation? God mercifully opened his eyes. God stopped him and granted him repentance. Has there been a time when God stopped you in your tracks and opened your eyes to your sinful choices and actions? How did you respond?

Revival begins with true repentance. When God turns the spotlight on our sin, it doesn't feel good. You want to hide. Left to ourselves, we love darkness rather than light. Like Judah, we will sin. How will you respond when your sin is exposed? Do you sense the conviction of God and His word? How do you find the courage to step into the light?

Our hearts are still beating, and we are still breathing today because God is giving us time to repent. We have bigger problems than being embarrassed. So, God sent Jesus to die in our place, to take the penalty of sin, so that we would not have to drink it. It is better to lose the life we are building on earth to gain eternal life.

([Matthew 16:24-25](#))

### 4. Read vs. 27-30

Why does Moses interrupt Joseph's story with this chapter. These events happened over the course of 20 years, and they occurred simultaneously during the events of Joseph's life. What is happening with Joseph at the time? He is fleeing sexual immorality. This example of Judah in chapter 38 is in direct contrast to what we will see in chapter 39.

Here, we are also reminded that people may forget the Tamars of the world, but God does not. God cares for them. God is working His sovereign plan, but while He is doing it, He has time to care for the Tamars of the world. He lifts them out of the pit and gives them a place of honor. ([Matthew 1](#) – notice Tamar's place in the genealogy of Jesus ([vs. 3](#))) It's not deserved; it is given by grace for God's glory.

Our lives must be different from the world. We are called to be holy. One of the encouragements of this text is that Judah changed. It started with repentance. Hope, in the aftermath of sin, starts with repentance. Ask the Lord to search your heart. Is there something from which you need to repent? Ask God to help you turn from it.

### Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at [fbcum.org](http://fbcum.org)

**Next week's sermon text:** we turn to [Genesis 39:1-23](#) "Flee From Temptation"