

Genesis 38-39

Worldview: Man's Actions Fulfill God's Plan

Introduction: Detecting a pattern

Genesis 31-32: Events are directed by God, not man

Genesis 33-34: Events may appear to be directed by man

Genesis 35-37: Man cannot alter God's plan

Genesis 38-39: Man's actions fulfill God's plan

At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?" (Dan 4:34-35)

Part 1: A Misinterpretation of Events: Genesis 38:1-11

1. Judah leaves home and marries a Canaanite woman.
2. He has 3 sons: Er, Onan, Shelah.
3. Judah finds a wife for Er named Tamar.
4. The Lord puts Er to death for his wickedness.
5. Onan takes Tamar as his wife but refuses to fulfill the requirements of Levirate marriage.
6. The Lord kills him too.
7. Judah sends Tamar to remain in her father's house until Shelah grows up.

Questions:

1. **What is the significance of Judah marrying a Canaanite woman?**
2. **What would Onan not want to provide an offspring for his brother?**
3. **Do you think Judah planned to have Shelah marry Tamar once he grew up? Why or why not?**
4. **What is Levirate marriage? See Deut 25:5-10**

Part 2: Deceit in the Lineage of David: Genesis 38:12-26

1. Judah's wife dies, and after he mourns her, he goes with his friend Hirah to Timnah to shear his sheep.
2. Tamar took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil, and sat at the entrance to Enaim – which is on the road to Timnah.
3. Not recognizing Tamar and thinking her a prostitute, Judah negotiates a price.
4. They agree on a price (a young goat), but until he can deliver the goat, he gives her his signet, cord, and staff as collateral.

5. Tamar becomes pregnant by him and returns home putting on the garments of her widowhood.
6. Judah tries to deliver the goat and get his collateral back but can't find the prostitute – for fear of shame, he doesn't pursue the matter further.
7. Three months later, Judah is told that Tamar is pregnant by immorality. Judah's response? Let her be burned.
8. Tamar presents his signet, cord, and staff to him and says "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant".
9. Judah's response? "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah".

Questions:

1. **Discuss sin, clothing, and subterfuge in the Abrahamic narrative.**
2. **Was Judah's initial response to Tamar's immorality appropriate? See Lev 21:9**
3. **How was Tamar more righteous than Judah?**

Part 3: A Retracted Hand in God's Plan: Genesis 38:27-30

1. Tamar had twins.
2. During labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife flagged it as firstborn with a scarlet thread.
3. He drew back his hand, and the other brother came out first.
4. Tamar named the first one out Perez – meaning "breach"

Questions:

1. **Have we seen unusual things regarding the firstborn before? Discuss.**
2. **What is the significance of the birth of Perez? Discuss the events that lead to his birth as it relates to God's plan. See Ruth 4:18-22**

Part 4: Midas has Nothing on God: Genesis 39:1-5

1. In his slavery, Joseph prospered.
2. His master made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.
3. The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house.

Questions:

1. **Why was Joseph successful?**
2. **Why did Joseph find favor with Potiphar?**
3. **Why did the Lord bless Potiphar's house?**

Part 5: Matthew 5:10 in Action: Genesis 39:6-20

1. Joseph was attractive.
2. Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, but he refused.
3. For days, the back and forth continued, but Joseph refused her advances.
4. Finally, when no one else was around, she caught him by his garment saying "Lie with me".
5. He flees leaving his garment behind.
6. When the men of the household return, she accuses Joseph of trying to rape her.
7. Potiphar throws Joseph in prison.

Questions:

1. **How does Potiphar's wife's account of events remind you of Adam and Eve?**
2. **Was God asleep at the wheel when Joseph was thrown in prison?**

Part 6: Midas has Nothing on God – Part 2: Genesis 39:21-23

1. Joseph is put in with the king's prisoners.
2. The jailer put Joseph in charge of everything.
3. Joseph was successful in all that he did.

Question: Discuss God's direction of events as it relates to this passage.

Next Week: Genesis 40-41