

## Structure .. Continued

- \* Gen 37 comprises the first act of the narrative — consisting of five scenes that chart Joseph's progression from "preferred to put-out"
  - ◆ Scene 1 introduces the overall context for the Joseph narrative in vv. 2b-4 — the "meta-context" for Gen 37-47
  - ◆ Scene 2 presents the plot line — Jacob's prophetic dreams in vv. 5-11
  - ◆ Scene 3 sets the stage for revenge in vv. 12-17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Structure .. Continued

- ◆ Scene 4 presents the brothers conspiracy to destroy Joseph & render his dreams mute in vv. 18-28
- ◆ Scene 5 concludes Act 1 with the family's distinctive "birthmark" — deception — in vv. 29-36

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* The scene opens with a summary statement that gives us, the reader, a full preview
- \* The brothers reaction to Joseph proceeds in 2-stages
  - **What are they?**
  - ◆ The first was emotional ... “Let’s kill him!”
  - ◆ The second was pragmatic ... “Let’s sell him”
- \* Verses 19-20 reflect the brothers are “all in” — “**They**” purposed to kill him thinking it will change the outcome of his dreams

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* “They” were of one accord to get rid of “**this dreamer**” — note they won’t even call him by his name ... **What words might you use to describe their reaction?**
- ◆ Disdain — Derision — Scorn — Contempt
- \* And of course we see the family DNA at work — deception ... “we’ll say a wild beast killed him”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* After which they sit down to a “family meal”
- \* What descriptions come to mind from this reaction?
  - ◆ Complete indifference — No conscience — Hard hearted
  - ◆ Of course until later ... Turn to Gen 42:21-22
- \* So while the text of Gen 38 does not record Joseph’s pleas, Gen 42 indicates he appealed to his brothers throughout the meal — to no avail
- 📖 Reminding us that God’s justice might not be immediate ... but it will come!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* “Opportunity knocks” in v. 25 ...
- \* Dothan was situated on one of the two major trade routes to Egypt (remember the other was to the East of the Jordan River)
- \* HW #3: Who takes the lead in part 2 ... and Why?
  - ◆ Who = Judah
  - ◆ Why = He has the most to gain from Joseph’s removal

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* Sequentially, Judah was next in line to receive the birthright inheritance after Reuben, Simeon, and Levi's disqualification
  - ◆ He does not succeed w/r/t the birthright inheritance
  - ◆ But he will head the "Messianic" line ...
- \* Now — how do you feel about Judah's little speech in v. 26-27?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* The word "sanctimonious" comes to mind for me ... perhaps closely followed by "insincere" ... and of course "deceptive"
- \* So his brothers "buy-in" to the plan and they sell him to the passing caravan of Midianite traders for the price of a slave
  - ◆ Don't be troubled by "Ishmaelites" in v. 25 and "Midianites" in v. 28
  - ◆ Ishmaelites was a general name for the non-chosen descendants, while Midianites was a specific branch
  - ◆ Analogous to us labeling the Middle East beyond Israel as "Arabs" ... yet comprised of "Jordanians, Saudi Arabians, etc."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* There is a great irony as we leave this scene — What is it?
  - ◆ Their actions to rid themselves of Joseph serve to actualize the very dreams they sought to subvert ...
  - ◆ Demonstrating once again God's sovereignty in the affairs of men!
  - ◆ God works to bring about His purposes in the midst of our failures ...
  - ◆ Joseph lives to “play another day” — and to advance God's redemptive plan

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- \* The final scene opens with Reuben's discovery that the pit is empty ...
- \* Begging the question — Where's Waldo during all of this ... What do you think?
  - ◆ Most likely it was Reuben's watch ...
  - ◆ So he was in the field watching over the flock
- 🐣 Which reminds us that God's providence extends to things BIG and SMALL

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- \* DON'T ASK ME HOW THIS WORKS —  
The Bible does not tell us!!!!
- \* Anyway — Reuben bemoans his fate in v. 30
  - ◆ Essentially saying, what am I to say to Dad?
- \* To which the ever-ready deceptive brothers have a solution “ready at hand” — **What is it?**
  - ◆ A deceptive lie ...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- \* **What is ironic about the ruse they employ?**
  - ◆ Jacob deceived his father with “goat meat” and “goat hair” ...
  - ◆ And now himself is deceived by “goat blood”
- \* **Now what is extra sneaky and sinister about the brothers implementation of the ruse?**
  - ◆ They cause Jacob to pronounce the outcome ... avoiding having to “voice the lie!”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- \* What is interesting about Jacob's response?
  - ◆ He doesn't seem to be the least suspicious
  - ◆ Nor does he seem to do a close examination ... of the robe or the brothers
- \* As we — and the brothers — would expect, Jacob responded with grief and mourning
- \* What is surprising about Jacob's mourning?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- ◆ Its extent and his inconsolability ...
- ◆ Jacob refused to be comforted by his surviving sons and daughters
- \* Why do you think this is so?
  - ◆ Obviously his "favoritism" and "deep love", but ...
  - ◆ More-so, I think, because God wants to **sear** the brothers consciences ...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# Opening Thoughts

- \* Gen 38 is a most sordid affair in every way — for me, anyway, adding confidence to the Bible's veracity
- \* Like Gen 36 — it is parenthetical, pausing to develop Judah's line ... from whom [Messiah will come](#)
- \* The chapter's purpose is two-fold ...
  - ◆ To demonstrate the dangers of worldly entanglements, and
  - ◆ To reveal God's motivation for sequestering Israel in Egypt

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Opening Thoughts

- \* [Anyone know why Egypt was the perfect place?](#)
  - ◆ Turn to Gen 46:33-34
- \* The chapter is quite straight-forward ...
- \* So we will proceed "somewhat" swiftly through the events, pausing to highlight two topics ...
  - ◆ Levirate marriage, and
  - ◆ The women in Jesus' genealogy

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Judah Strikes Out

- \* On the heels of the events of Gen 37, Judah leaves the safety of the family to pursue a wife ...
- \* **What is wrong with this situation?**
  - ◆ First, Jacob plays no role in procuring a wife
  - ◆ Second, Judah marries a pagan woman
- \* From the text it is hard to determine whether Judah's failure is entirely his own demonstrating **head strong rebellion** or perhaps **impatience**, or...
- \* Jacob's lackadaisical parenting

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Judah Strikes Out

- \* Regardless of which, intermarriage had been aggressively avoided earlier - Gen 34 (Shechem)- but not so here ...
- 📖 Reminding us that when we don't establish safe boundaries from the world, we become entangled with it ...
- 📖 Because the minority always runs the risk of being "overcome" by and "conforming" to the majority

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Judah Strikes Out

### \* What NT principles does Judah violate?

◆ 2 Cor 6:14 — Unequally yoked (a command)

◆ 1 Cor 7:39 — "... only in the Lord"

### \* Like all "unchecked sin," Judah's initial sin will lead to more and progressively worse sin, he will ...

◆ Break a promise — Have "relations" with a prostitute — And play the hypocrite, reminding us that ...

🐛 Sin's tentacles are just as entangling as the world

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Judah Strikes Out

### \* Yet — despite our sin, God works in the midst of human failures

### \* Namely here, God blesses the union with three sons in rapid succession

◆ Er, Onan, Shelah

◆ Though, as the narrative will now reveal ...

◆ At least the first two were quite wicked

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plight

- \* Verses 6-11 record Tamar's "ill-fated" union to two of Judah's sons
- \* Unlike his father, Judah gets half the equation right — which part?
  - ◆ He takes the lead in seeking a wife for Er
- \* What part does he get wrong?
  - ◆ He pursues the wrong "bride pool"
- \* God "takes" husband #1's life — who was "evil" in the sight of the Lord

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plight

- 📖 Reminding us that God is longsuffering, BUT He will intervene and take action for persistent wickedness ...
- \* This is the first recorded instance of God taking an "individual's life" in the Bible — a scary thought!
- \* Based on prevailing ANE custom, the 2<sup>nd</sup> born was then given to the wife so that the deceased son would have an heir — called Levirate marriage
- \* Thus Judah instructed his 2<sup>nd</sup> son Onan to do so

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plight

- \* While we are not told the nature of Er's wickedness ... Onan's is graphically spelled out
- \* Namely, he uses Tamar for his physical pleasure, and deliberately avoids conception
  - ◆ From his name comes the English word "onanism" which in the name of modesty I will leave to you to look up in the dictionary
- \* His act was a sin of commission ... In the OT called "sinning with a high-hand" ... versus one of omission
  - ◆ It was deliberate and premeditated!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plight

- \* Not only "high-handed," Onan's sin was persistent — It was not an isolated instance
  - ◆ The "when" of v. 9 is better translated "whenever"
- \* Based on v. 9, what was Onan's motive?
  - ◆ Greed ... He wanted "all" of the first-born's inheritance
- \* God then intervened and took Onan's life
- \* What should have happened next?
  - ◆ Judah should have pledged Shelah to Tamar, and ...
  - ◆ Kept her in his home

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plight

- \* What does he do instead?
  - ◆ Gives the appearance of conformance, but instead is equivocal — Family DNA on display ... "deception"
- \* How do we know?
  - ◆ Because of v. 11b ... he was afraid Shelah would die
- \* What does this fear expose?
  - ◆ A wrong attribution of blame ...
  - ◆ Judah supposes Tamar is the problem whereas God points to the evil sons of Judah

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plight

- \* How else "will" we know that Tamar is not to blame?
  - ◆ Because she is in the Messianic line!
- \* What other women does the Bible name in Jesus' genealogy?
  - ◆ Rahab — Ruth — Bathsheba — Mary ... cf. Matt 1
- \* The practice on display in this chapter is later codified in the Mosaic Law — called Levirate marriage ... turn to Deut 25:5-10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Tamar's Plight

- \* What OT book fully illustrates the levirate concept?
  - ◆ Ruth
- \* The OT custom and law, however, is broader than just marriage ...
- \* It embraces the idea of a "Kinsman-Redeemer" marked by the Hebrew word גֹּאֵל (goel), and includes ...
  - ◆ Redeeming property (Lev 25:25-28) - Noun and verb forms of גָּאֵל
  - ◆ Redeeming a person (Lev 25:47-55)
  - ◆ Redeeming "blood" — actually an "avenger" (Num 35:16-21)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plan

- \* Verses 12-19 give us both the plan and its execution
- \* This scene presents us with an interesting moral question ...
- \* Namely — Do "rightful or righteous" ends justify sinful means ... *What do you think?*
- \* Follow-up — *What lies (no pun intended) at the core of sinful means?*
  - ◆ Lack of trust in God's sovereignty

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plan

- \* In all of vv. 12-19, Tamar is pursuing her “customary” right to produce an heir
- \* Her chosen means are unsavory, but ...
  - ◆ She is Pagan operating under “pagan principles”
  - ◆ There is no “Law” at this time (cf. Rom 5:12-14)
  - ◆ AND — God blesses her (and Rahab) as women in Jesus’ genealogical line!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plan

- \* So — God can work in and through our sinful choices, but ...
  - ◆ As the knowledge of sin increases so will our accountability (the purpose of the law), and ...
  - ◆ Even if God’s grace blesses a sinful choice, we will ultimately be held accountable for those choices
- 📖 Reminding us, by way of implication, of Rom 6:1-2 [Turn]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plan

- \* The plan is straightforward ... with a wise twist
- \* Judah's wife had died and the mourning period has passed, so he sets out to participate in the "shearing" festivities with his pagan friend Hirah
  - ◆ So we see both good and bad in his actions ...
    - He did honor his departed wife
    - But he demonstrates his entanglement with the world
- \* Tamar sets the trap in v. 14, recognizing that Shelah had "come of age" but was withheld from her

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Plan

- \* Tamar's plan raises a question in my mind — *Any thoughts?*
  - ◆ What made her think that Judah would "bite"
- \* Well ... bite he does in vv. 15-16a
- \* The base terms of the "transaction" are established in vv. 16b-17 — with a wise twist ... *What is it?*
  - ◆ Tamar has thought things through and has exacted a pledge that will soon serve as her "defense"
- \* The plan "works" and the two parties go their separate ways

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Judah's Predicament

- \* Judah dispatches Hirah to settle his debt
- \* Only to discover he has been duped!
- \* What is Judah's response?
  - ◆ He only wants to save face!
- \* What else is interesting about his response?
  - ◆ It doesn't seem to generate any thoughtful reflection

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Judah's Pronouncements

- \* Sin doesn't stay hidden for LONG!!
- \* It is soon revealed that Tamar is pregnant ... out of wedlock!
- \* How do you feel about Judah's response?
  - ◆ Hypocritical at best ...
  - ◆ Perhaps also with a mixture of relief that Shelah will "live"
- \* Tamar springs her "defense" in v. 25-26a to which Judah "fesses-up"

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Judah's Pronouncements

- \* What does Judah exhibit in v. 26?
  - ◆ Genuine repentance
- \* He acknowledges that Tamar is "more in the right or just" than he ... Why?
  - ◆ Because he did not honor his promise to give her his son Selah, while she waited as instructed
- \* So she is spared and Judah has no further "relations" with her

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Tamar's Parturition

- \* The episode ends with attention turning to the birth of Judah's progeny
- \* As with his grandfather Isaac — Judah became the father of twins ...
- \* Who also struggled in the womb — and at birth — like Isaac and Esau
- \* Why does Moses record the births of Perez and Zerah?
  - ◆ Because the line of Christ proceeds through Perez

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

