

Four scholarly takes on Judah's taking a Canaanite woman

The lack of "embarrassment in narrating that the father of the tribe of Judah joins ranks with a Canaanite and marries the daughter of a Canaanite" is "a secure argument" that Gen 38 and Gen 24 "cannot come from the same author" and that "Gen 24, therefore, must have arisen later than Gen 38." (Westermann 51).

Response: Abraham's rejection of a Canaanite woman for Isaac implies neither the author's nor YHWH's agreement.

"knowing his father's antipathy, Judah went ahead [and married a Canaanite woman], showing once again his callous disregard for his father's feelings." (Wenham 365)

Response: where do we hear that Jacob (as opposed to Isaac and Rebekah, 28.1) doesn't want his sons to marry Canaanite women or that he has any preference at all about whom they marry?

"The deaths of Judah's sons...surely imply that Judah's marriage to a Canaanite was cursed by God." (Clifford (2004, 525)

Response: Correlation is not causation! Nothing explicit in the text supports this conclusion.

Within the larger story of Gen 38, it is Tamar who helps propagate the "seed" of Abraham, not Onan: "Not only is Tamar innocent, she is arguably more in tune with the divine promises than any of the males in the story.... The audience of the story in the Persian period may well have detected this irony, since Genesis 38 conflicts so obviously with the doctrine of seminal purity promulgated by the governors of the time." (Brett 2000, 114)

Response: Brett rightly situates the question in the cultural context of the audience, reaching a solid conclusion