

## Genesis 38: shape and keywords

**1) It happened at that time** that Judah went down from his brothers and settled near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; he took her and went in to her. She conceived and bore a **son**; and **he named** him Er. Again she conceived and bore a **son** whom **she named** Onan. Yet again she bore a **son**, and **she named** him Shelah. She was in Chezib when she bore him.

Judah took a woman for Er his firstborn; her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of **YHWH**, and **YHWH** put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's woman and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her; raise up **seed** for your brother." But since Onan knew that the **seed** would not be his, he spilled his **seed** on the ground whenever he went in to his brother's woman, so that he would not give **seed** to his brother. What he did was displeasing in the sight of **YHWH**, and he put him to death also. Then Judah said to his **daughter-in-law** Tamar, "Remain a **widow** in your father's house until my **son** Shelah grows up"--for he feared that he too would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went to live in her father's house.

**2) In course of time** the woman of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; when Judah's time of mourning was over, he went up to **Timnah** to his sheepshearers, he and **his friend Hirah the Adullamite**. When Tamar was told, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to **Timnah** to shear his sheep,"

she put off her **widow's garments, put on a veil**, covered herself up, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to **Timnah**. She saw that Shelah was grown up, yet she had not been given to him in marriage.

When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a **whore**, for she had covered her face.

He went over to her at the roadside, and said, "Come, please, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his **daughter-in-law**. She said, "What **will you give me**, that you may come in to me?" He answered, "I will send you a kid from the flock." And she said, "Only if **you give me a pledge**, until you send it." He said, "What **pledge shall I give you?**" She replied, "Your signet and your cord, and the staff that is in your **hand**." [Nb: each speaks three times.]

**So he gave them to her**, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

Then she got up and went away, and **taking off her veil she put on the garments** of her **widowhood**.

When Judah sent the kid by the **hand** of **his friend the Adullamite**, to recover the **pledge** from the **hand** of the woman, **he could not find her**. He asked the men of the place, "Where is the **consecrated woman** who was at Enaim by the wayside?" But they said, "No **consecrated woman** has been here." So he returned to Judah, and said, "**I have not found her**; moreover the townspeople said, 'No **consecrated woman** has been here.'" Judah replied, "Let her keep the things as her own, otherwise we will be laughed at; you behold, I sent this kid, and you **could not find her**."

**3) About three months later** Judah was told, "Your **daughter-in-law** Tamar has played the **whore**; behold, she is pregnant as a result of **whoredom**." And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned." As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "It was the owner of these who made me pregnant." And she said, "Recognize, please, whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." Then Judah recognized them and said, "She is in the right, not I, since **I did not give her** to my **son** Shelah." And he did not know her again.

**4) When the time of her delivery came**, behold, twins in her womb! While she was in labor, one put out a **hand**; and the midwife took and bound on his **hand** a crimson thread, saying, "This one came out first." But just then he drew back his **hand**, and behold, out came his brother; and she said, "What a **burst**, you have **burst!**" Therefore he was named **Perez**. Afterward his brother came out behold, with the crimson thread on his **hand**; and he was named Zerah.