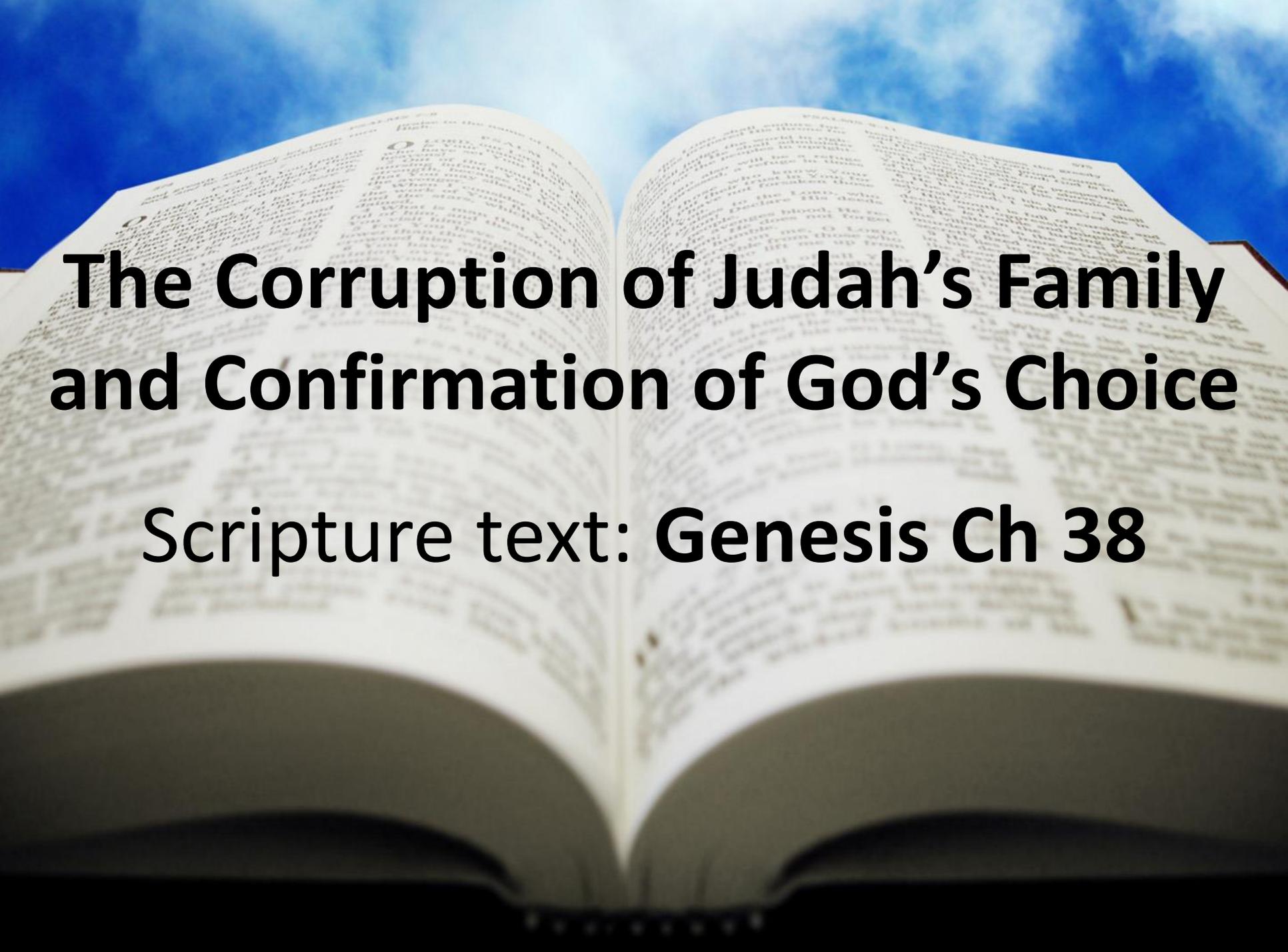


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, and the background is a bright blue sky with some clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

The Corruption of Judah's Family and Confirmation of God's Choice

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 38**

Chapter 38 presents a sordid picture, showing Judah **yielding to the lusts of the flesh**. It is quite a contrast to Joseph's purity (39:7–13). Judah was willing to sell his brother for a slave, **yet he himself was a "slave of sin"** (John 8:34). Even so, "where sin abounds, grace much more abounds" (Rom. 5:20), for we see that Tamar is included in the human lineage of Christ (Matt. 1:3). Note that Judah was harder on others than on himself (v. 24). Like David, he wanted the "sinner" judged—until he discovered that he was the sinner!

Genesis 39:7-10 And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me."
But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. **How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?**" And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, **he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.**

John 8:30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him. So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, **"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Romans 5:18-21 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Now **the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more**, so that, as sin reigned in death, **grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Note: As there cannot be above 23 years from the selling of Joseph, unto Israel's going down into Egypt; and as it is impossible that Judah should take a wife, and by her have three sons successively, and Shelah, the youngest, marriageable when Judah begat Pharez of Tamar, and Pharez be grown up, married, and have two sons, all within so short a period; Mr. Ainsworth conceives that the time here spoken of is soon after Jacob's coming to Shechem, in Genesis 33.

Genesis 38:1-5 It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to 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**, and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name **Er**. She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name **Onan**. Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name **Shelah**. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

Adullamite—an inhabitant of the city of Adullam (Gen. 38:1, 12, 20).

Easton's Bible dictionary

HIRAH (HĪ' rǎ) Personal name of unknown meaning. A friend of Judah, the son of Jacob, whom Judah was visiting when he met Shuah, who bore three of his sons (Gen. 38:1–12). Hiraḥ was from the Canaanite city of Adullam, about nine miles northwest of Hebron.

Shua—wealth. (1.) A Canaanite whose daughter was married to Judah (1 Chr. 2:3).

(2.) A daughter of Heber the Asherite (1 Chr. 7:32).

Er [ûr] (Heb. *ēr* “*watcher*” or “*watchful*”; Gk. *Ēr*).

The firstborn son of Judah and the daughter of the Canaanite Shua (Gen. 38:1–3, 12; 46:12; Num. 26:19) or Bath-shua (cf. 1 Chr. 2:3). Er’s marriage with Tamar, probably a Canaanitess, ended shortly with his death, attributed to “**wickedness in the sight of God**” (Gen. 38:7; 1 Chr. 2:3).

Onan [ō´nən] (Heb. ֹׁנָן “*vigorous, wealthy*”). The second son of Judah and the Canaanite (Bath-) Shua. When his wicked older brother Er died without leaving an heir, Onan was obligated to father a son by his brother’s widow, Tamar (Gen. 38:7–8; cf. Deut. 25:5–10). Onan slept with Tamar, apparently fulfilling his fraternal obligation, but realizing that the child would be heir to his brother’s double portion of the patrimony, whenever Onan and Tamar had intercourse he would spill his sperm on the ground to prevent her from conceiving; for this the Lord slew him (Gen. 38:9–10). [*The Eerdmans Bible dictionary*](#)

Shelah—petition. (1.) Judah's third son (Gen. 38:2, 5, 11, 14). (2.) A son of Arphaxad (1 Chr. 1:18).

Easton's Bible dictionary.

Tamar—palm. (1.) A place mentioned by Ezekiel (47:19; 48:28), on the southeastern border of Palestine. Some suppose this was "Tadmor" (q.v.). (2.) The daughter-in-law of Judah, to whose eldest son, Er, she was married (Gen. 38:6). After her husband's death, she was married to Onan, his brother (v8), and on his death, Judah promised to her that his third son, Shelah, would become her husband. This promise was not fulfilled, and hence Tamar's revenge and Judah's great guilt (38:12–30).

Easton's Bible dictionary

Perez—=Pharez, (q.v.), *breach*, the son of Judah (Neh. 11:4). “The chief of all the captains of the host for the first month” in the reign of David was taken from his family (1 Chr. 27:3). Four hundred and sixty-eight of his “sons” came back from captivity with Zerubbabel, who himself was one of them (1 Chr. 9:4; Neh. 11:6).

Zerah—sunrise. A son of Tamar (Gen. 38:30); called also Zara (Matt. 1:3).

[Easton's Bible dictionary.](#)

Judah, who had suggested that the brothers sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites (37:26–27), married a Canaanite woman. They had three sons, Er ... Onan, and Shelah. This marriage to a Canaanite almost ruined Judah's family. Intermarriage with the Canaanites had been avoided earlier (chap. 34), but not here.

Genesis 37:26-27 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him.

This account of assimilation with the people of the land helps one understand why God settled His young nation in the safety of Egypt for its growth.

Judah's first son Er died because he was wicked. By the custom of the levirate (from Latin levir, "husband's brother") law of marriage, the second son, Onan, was to marry Tamar, the widow of his brother, and raise up offspring for his brother.

However, Onan repeatedly used that law for sexual gratification. He took advantage of the situation, but refused the responsibility that went with it. So God took his life too.

In view of the situation, Judah refused to give his third son Shelah to Tamar, Er's widow. Shelah was not yet grown up (and even later when he was, **Judah still refused**; v. 14).

Genesis 38:14 she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For **she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage.**

Verses 12–23. Thus the family’s future was placed in jeopardy. Tamar felt she would have to take matters into her own hands if she were to be granted the rights of the **levirate custom**. This system was later codified by Moses for the sake of preserving the name of the deceased (Deut. 25:5–10).

When the time seemed right, Tamar deceptively lured her father-in-law Judah into an immoral union with a temple prostitute, or so he thought (Gen. 38:15, 21).

Deuteronomy 25:5-7 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the **wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger**. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and **take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her**. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, **that his name may not be blotted out of Israel**. And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; **he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.**'

Deuteronomy 25:8-10 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' **then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face.** And she shall answer and say, '**So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.**' And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.'

In pledge that he would send a goat for payment, he left his seal (which hung suspended from a cord around his neck) and his staff with her. When he tried to retrieve them through his friend Hirah (cf. v. 1), the girl was nowhere to be found.

Again Jacob's family experienced deception—
this time by his Canaanite daughter-in-law!

Verses 24–26. **Judah lacked integrity** (v. 16), and now he was **seen to be a hypocrite**. When Tamar was reported to be three months pregnant, **he condemned her to death as a prostitute**.

Then she proved by the seal ... cord, and staff that he was the guilty partner. Tamar **had won the right to be the mother of Judah's children**, though in a deceitful way. Her action was desperate and risky.

Verses 27–30. This final part of the story provides the significance of the whole account. God gave **Tamar twins**, and the line of Judah continued because of her. But in the birth of the boys an unusual situation occurred, **paralleling the births of Jacob and Esau**. After one twin's hand came out the other made a breach and was born first, so he was rightly named **Perez** ("breach"). Then the second twin was named **Zerah** ("scarlet") because of the scarlet thread the midwife tied on his wrist. It is as if the oracle concerning Jacob's ruling over his older brother (Gen. 27:29) **was being relived in the line of Judah**.

What was so significant was the connection with Judah's dealing with Joseph (37:26–28). He and his brothers sold their younger brother into Egypt, **thinking they could thwart God's design that the elder brothers would serve the younger Joseph.** Yet in Judah's own family, despite his attempts to hinder Tamar's marriage, God's will worked out in a moving confirmation of the principle that the elder would serve the younger. The **line of promise would carry on through Perez** (cf. Matt. 1:3), for God's program cannot so easily be set aside.