

# JESUS' SORDID FAMILY'S PAST

## INTRODUCTION

This story shows that there is room in God's family for the worst of us.

## DISCUSSION

Do you know anyone who now follows Jesus who you never thought would have?

Tell the story.

## EXPLANATION (MATTHEW 7:3)

Are there any people you secretly hope would not be saved?

What, in your mind, is an unpardonable sin?

Why does Jesus tell us to look to our own life before we can judge anyone else?

## APPLICATION (GENESIS 38:26)

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10-12

What is the difference between confession and repentance?

Which one is easier for you to do?

How are confession and repentance acted out in your life?

## MISSION

How can having better self-examination keep us from acting like hypocrites?

Throughout Genesis we have seen the patriarchs repent when confronted,

how could our open repentance further the gospel of Jesus Christ?

## HOMEWORK FOR NEXT WEEK

Read Genesis 39:1-21

What have been some of your unanswered prayers?

How does prayer help change us to understand God better



# GENESIS

THE FINAL CHAPTERS

## JESUS' SORDID FAMILY'S PAST PART 58

GENESIS 38

Matthew 1:2-3  
Genesis 38:1-30

Acts 5  
1 Corinthians 11  
Hebrews 10:31

Ecclesiastes 9:10  
Matthew 1:1-3

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## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

**ELEMENT MOMS PLANNING LUNCH**  
Wednesday, March 13th, 2pm.  
[weiting@ourelement.org](mailto:weiting@ourelement.org)

**LOMPOC GC STARTS 3/12**  
[email\\_alf@ourelement.org](mailto:email_alf@ourelement.org)

**YOUTH WIDE AWAKE**  
All Nighter  
This Friday, 7:30p

**EKIDS! BAPTISM CLASS**  
March 17th, 1pm



# JESUS' SORDID FAMILY'S PAST

**Matthew 1:2-3 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar**

Chapter 38 of Genesis plays a crucial role. The very fact that the narrative seems to lie outside the course of events of the Joseph story shows that the writer has put it here for a special purpose. It plays an important part in the development of the central themes of the book.

We see Judah as a terrible son, brother, father, and husband, yet Jesus is called throughout much of the New testament the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah.”

As other narratives have in the Book of Genesis (Adam, Noah, and Terah), this story begins with the mention of three sons. Two of the sons died because of the evil they did; these events put the offspring of Judah in jeopardy. Who would prolong his name? The point of this introductory information is to show that the continuation of the house of Judah lay not only in Judah's hands, but in God's hands as well.

The narrative that follows shows that Judah does nothing to further the offspring of his own household, he doesn't care or raise his boys. The only thing he is shown to do is to pick a wife for his son, her name is Tamar. It takes the “righteousness” of the woman Tamar (v.26) to preserve the line of Judah.

A nearly identical theme is found in the Book of Ruth (4:18), which itself alludes to this chapter of Genesis. The story of chapter 38 is much like the other “patriarchal” narratives outside the story of Joseph, it constantly shows the promised offspring in jeopardy and the patriarch showing little concern for its preservation. Just as in chapter 20 where the seed of Abraham was protected by the “righteous” Abimelech, it is Tamar (and God), not Judah the patriarch, who is ultimately responsible for the survival of the descendants of the house of Judah.

The text is not clear from whose house Jacob originally took Tamar for his son's wife, but it is probably not good if the text won't tell you. Some believe she is a Canaanite, but either way she is not a believer. If Tamar was not a Canaanite then telling us about her shows another point at which the promise to Abraham would have stood in jeopardy. By marrying the daughter of a Canaanite, Judah had realized the worst fears of Abraham (24:3) and Isaac (28:1); so, according to the

logic of the narrative, the promise regarding the descendants of Abraham and Isaac was in danger of being unfulfillable.

Tamar's hatches a clever plan and the seed of Abraham was preserved. The line was continued through Judah and Tamar. The genealogy at the close of the narrative serves to underscore this point.

The whole of the Jacob narratives reaches a fitting summary in this brief account of the birth of the two sons, Perez and Zerah. As the Jacob narrative began with an account of the struggle of the twins Jacob and Esau, now the conclusion of the Jacob narrative is marked by a similar struggle of twins. In both cases the struggle resulted in a reversal of the right of the firstborn and the right of the blessing. The result of both struggles was that the younger gained the upper hand over the elder. As Jacob struggled with Esau and overcame him, so Perez overcame Zerah, the elder, and gained the right of the firstborn.

The brevity with which the narrative is recounted leaves the impression that the meaning of the passage is self-evident to the reader. It comes on the heels of a long series of reversals in which the younger gains the upper hand on the elder, its sense is transparent.

In the end Judah recognizes his sin and repents. It seems that “broken” is where God puts us together again.

- **He confesses his sin** – Where we agree with God “that was wrong.”
- **He repents of his sin** – Where we don't do it anymore.

This story shows that there is room in God's family for the worst of us. Jesus' family tree includes Judah and Tamar. Even the worst people can be used by God.

Jesus will do for you what he did for Judah. Your life can have purpose and be lived the way it was meant to be.