

## Home Group Notes 4

### Tamar – don't hide the shame

#### Introduction

This chapter is shameful and yet the Bible does not hide it. It is wedged into the story of Joseph and it is almost highlighted in Matthew's version of Jesus' family tree.

1. Have you led a sheltered life? Is this because you haven't read Bible chapters like Genesis 38?
2. Why would the writer of Genesis keep this in?  
[ ] he has a certain tabloid flair?  
[ ] re: God's promises, Judah is the one to follow  
[ ] to show the family line was getting worse  
[ ] to show God cares about mistreated women  
[ ] other \_\_\_\_\_
3. If you were writing the account of Jacob's sons, would you have interrupted the story of Joseph to tell this sordid chapter starring Judah?  
Which is more the main story line of the Old Testament: chapter 38 *or* chapters 37, 39-45?  
Why is that?
4. **Read Genesis 38vv.1-11.** Do you find it surprising that the Lord brings death to those who reject him and his plan of salvation? What had God said from the start of humanity (2vv.16-17)?
5. How did Er reject God and his ways?  
How did Onan reject God and his promises?

6. Do you know the Old Testament provision for a widow to be married by her dead husband's brother? Can you see the good aspects of this?
7. How were widows cared for in New Testament times (Acts 6v.1, 1 Tim 5vv.3-8)? How are widows cared for today? Is there a better way?
8. **Read Genesis 38vv.12-19.**  
Have you any sympathy for Judah, the widower?  
Have you sympathy for Tamar, let down by Judah?  
Do you think either of them had in mind the promises of God? How scandalous is this?
9. **Read Genesis 38vv.20-26.** Can you see the dangers of humans taking responsibility for God's promise of death for the sinner? Should we ever?
10. Is it good that Judah shows his shame in v.23 and v.26? When is it good to acknowledge shame?
11. **Read Matthew 1vv.1-3a.**  
Why does Matthew include Tamar?  
[ ] he is a first century feminist, wanting to give an example of plucky girl power  
[ ] he is a tabloid style writer & likes a tacky story  
[ ] he knows Mary's story might sound a bit scandalous to his Jewish listeners and alludes to previous scandals where God's plan overcame
12. Do you know how God can be at work even in the most sordidly sinful of circumstances?  
Does this help you see things differently?

#### Prayer Points

*Pray for us to see all of the dangers of sinful actions  
Pray that we acknowledge God at work even there  
Pray for those in sad and desperate circumstances*