

Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of My Inheritance

Lesson #14 Skeletons Escape The Closet

Recall: Since the first 3 brothers [Reuben, Simeon & Levi] were disqualified from their position to receive the Inheritance Of The Firstborn, the mantle falls to the 4th child, Judah, who wasn't exactly a spiritual giant. Will Judah Be Qualified To Be The Ruler Of The Family?

Genesis 38 records a scandalous story that exposes some of the skeletons in Judah's closet.

Note: Just as the story of Joseph gets underway in Gen. 37, it is stopped by a short story of his older brother, Judah. Then the story of Joseph continues in Genesis 39.

Question: Why did God interrupt the account of faithful Joseph with the sordid account of Judah's sin? One reason might be to show us why God led the people of Israel down to live in Egypt -- where they would eventually become slaves!

Why would God allow His chosen people to end up in bondage in a foreign land?

Quote: "The redneck soap opera of Jacob's family takes a Jerry Springer Show twist in Genesis 38 with the sinfulness of Judah following in his father's footsteps. In God's grace He will transform Judah as He did his father Jacob from a godless goober to a godly man fit to be a patriarch [ruler, leader] carrying the covenant promises of God to future generations."

Background: The 10 sons of Jacob have sold the youngest, Joseph, into slavery.

Judah has the "claim to fame" of persuading his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery.

Gen. 37:26-27 So Judah said to his brothers, "What PROFIT is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come and Let Us Sell Him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother *and* our flesh."

Directly on the heels of this sin, Judah chooses to leave his family.

Gen. 38:1-11 Disobedience in Marriage

1. 38:1 Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. [Fellowship and union with Canaanites]

a. This proves to be a grave mistake. Hirah becomes a close friend and poor influence on Judah.

2. 38:2 Judah SAW there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name *was* Shua, and he married her and went in to her.

a. As a member God's Covenant people, he is not to marry outside the family. He KNEW better!

b. It was "lust at first sight." [physical choice] What a mistake! [II Cor. 6:14-15]

c. Some people have to learn the lesson the hard way.

A spiritually mixed marriage will erode one's faith.

d. Scripture tells us the Canaanites [means lowlands; to go down; to go low] were very idolatrous and immoral people.

Consider: One reason God did not want intermarriage with the tribes in Canaan was due to the spirits in the land.

1. Hittites = Spirit of Fear & Discouragement

2. Amorites = Bitter, Fierce-talking and Judging Spirits

3. Canaanites = Spirit of the Lower Instincts = Make us feel low
4. Perrizites = Careless, secure spirits
5. Hivites = Spirit of Vanity = Fantasizing Spirits [empty romance]
6. Jebusites = Spirit of Pride & Elevation = They trample upon and despise.
7. Girgashites = Unclean dirty spirits = spirits of perversion

If God had not brought Jacob and his family down to Egypt, Judah's intermarriage with a pagan woman would have been repeated many times by Abraham's descendants. Thus God's chosen people would no longer have been distinctively Jewish, and the faith of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, would have been contaminated and polluted with the idolatry and the immorality of the Canaanites. The Egyptians detested the Hebrews [Gen. 43:32; 46:34], so in Egypt there was very little intermarriage. Living in Egypt, the nation of Israel was actually sheltered from contamination by the idolatry and immorality of the Canaanites!

3. Judah had 3 sons by the Canaanite woman. Er, Onan and Shelah.

a. Er married Tamar.

b. 38:6 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.

c. 38:8 And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."

Note: This was a common practice and became a part of God's law (Deut 25:5-10). It was called a "levirate [Latin =husband's brother] marriage." A brother would father a child through his brother's widow. The child would take the name of the deceased husband, care for his mother in her old age, carry on the name of the deceased brother, and receive all of his inheritance.

The purpose of this custom was to ensure that no line of the family would become extinct.

d. Onan did not fulfill his duty as a brother and brother-in-law [38:8].

e. He was willing to gratify his desires, but was not willing to do the responsible thing.

He refused to impregnate her (38:9). Why?

f. Onan knew the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother.

g. This Was A Birthright Issue. Er was the firstborn and entitled to the birthright.

If he has no offspring, the birthright will transfer to Onan.

If, however, Tamar bears a son that is considered Er's, the birthright will pass to that son.

h. Onan's selfish heart will not do the lawful thing.

i. Instead, He DESIRED what rightfully belonged to his older brother's heir.

j. 38:10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.

k. Onan was deliberately frustrating the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. [Gen. 11:4] Descendants were important in God's plan for His people.

Consider: Judah has 2 sons who have been involved with Tamar and both are dead.

He sends Tamar back to her parent's home.

Gen. 38:11 "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown."

Consider: Judah should have cared for this defenseless widow.

A considerable period of time passes. Two events occur which set the scene for Judah to depart even further from the faith of his fathers. Thus far, Judah has formed an alliance with Hirah and married a Canaanite. Two of his 3 sons were so wicked God killed them. Judah's Canaanite wife has died. Enough time has elapsed for Shelah to grow up, marry Tamar as a wife to raise up children to Er. However, Judah never gave Shelah to Tamar as promised.

Gen. 38:12-19 - No Word Of Honor & Fornication [Plot Thickens]

1. Judah's wife died when he is about 50. After a period of mourning, he and Hirah went to the sheepshearers at Timnah. Sheepshearing was known to be a time for partying and celebration. [I Sam. 25:11; II Sam. 13:23, 28]

News of this reached Tamar and signaled her to set into action a plan to provide a son to carry on the name of her first husband. In her society not only were the younger brothers able to raise up seed for her husband, but also her father-in-law, Judah. Since Judah was unwilling to risk the loss of his last and only living son, Tamar determined to force the matter, becoming pregnant by Judah. She was only trying to acquire that to which she had a legal right. Judah was wrong in withholding Shelah, but so was Tamar by taking these matters into her own hands.

2. Sexual temptation was everywhere due to the Canaanite's fertility and cultic practice of ritual fornication; temple prostitutes, etc.

3. She removed her widow's garments, put on seductive clothing and covered herself with a veil.

4. Judah came upon a "prostitute" on the road to Timnah.

Consider: Obviously, Tamar knew Judah well enough to know moral purity wasn't one of his virtues. If she could look the part of a prostitute, he would most likely take the bait.

5. 38:16 Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you;" for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. [propositioned her]

6. So she said, "What will you give me that you may come in to me?"

7. Judah replied, "I will send a young goat from the flock." [another garment & goat??]

a. His father, Jacob, deceived his father, Isaac, by wearing a goatskin garment. [Gen. 27:9-10]

b. Judah deceived his father, Jacob, by dipping Joseph's robe [garment] in goat's blood. [37:31]

c. Tamar deceived Judah with a disguise [garment] and a goat.

8. Prostitute countered: Will you give *me* a pledge till you send the goat?"

9. Judah asked, "What pledge shall I give you?"

10. She said, "Your seal and your cord and your staff." The seal was a stamp engraved with his unique design. It was his identification and used for all transactions.

He wore his seal around his neck on a cord.

He gave his identification to a prostitute in exchange for her body. What a travesty!

11. After the encounter with Judah, Tamar arose, departed, removed her veil and put on her widow's garments. [Gen. 38:15-19; Prov. 6:25-29, 32-33, 7:10]

12. Judah never knew the identity of this "prostitute."

Gen.38:20-26 - Judah's Hypocritical Brutality

1. He needed to quickly pay the prostitute and retrieve his seal, cord, and staff.
2. In his embarrassment and shame, he sent Hirah.
He did not want anyone to catch him in the company of a prostitute.
3. Hirah took the goat —the agreed upon price, but he could not find the prostitute (38:20).
4. When he asked the men of the city where the temple prostitute was, they told him that there had been no temple prostitute in the region (38:21-22).
5. The "prostitute" has his seal and staff.
6. 38:23 Then Judah said, "Let her take *them* for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

Question: Who in his right mind is going to call the authorities to report a robbery under these circumstances?

7. Three months later, Judah learns Tamar is pregnant. (38:23)
8. Judah was incensed and repulsed! My daughter-in-law pregnant; Out-of-wedlock
9. Gen. 38:24 "Bring her out and let her be burned!"
10. As Tamar was on her way out to be burned she sent Judah a message.
11. 38:25 The message was straight to the point: "By the man to whom these belong, I *am* with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these *are*—the signet and cord, and staff." His gaze fell on his personal seal, cord, and staff.
Possession of these gives Tamar proof of the identity of the child's father.

Judah's ability to be a LEADER AND RULER over the family is QUESTIONABLE.

He comes across as a hard and callous man.

- a. He lobbied to sell Joseph for a profit & deceive Jacob. Gen. 37:26
- b. He married a Canaanite woman against God's will.
- c. He showed no grief over the death of his 2 sons.
- d. He separated himself from God's covenant people. Gen. 38:1
- e. He hung around ungodly men. Gen. 38:12
- f. He was sexually immoral. Gen. 38:18
- g. Regarded Temple prostitutes as "no big deal"
- h. He failed to keep his word to his daughter-in-law, Tamar. Gen. 38:26
- i. He kept Tamar from the one who had a lawful right to her.
- j. He was hypocritically brutal - burn her - not stone
- k. He committed adultery - incest.

12. So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And He Never Knew Her Again.

13. Judah had the honor to keep his obligation to a prostitute, but not to his own daughter-in-law.

Note Tamar was loyal to her deceased husband by trying to raise up an heir for him.

She had not married another Canaanite. She risked everything for her right to be the mother in the family of Judah and protect the family.

God's Grace Abounds Genesis 38:27-30 Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins *were* in her womb. ²⁸ And so it was, when she was giving birth, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took a scarlet *thread* and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." ²⁹ Then it happened, as he drew back his hand that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? *This breach be upon you!*" Therefore his name was called Perez. ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

1. Tamar and Judah had two sons: Perez and Zerah (38:27-30)

Consider: a. The twins were God's gift to Tamar to compensate for the lack of children from her two husbands.

b. Since Judah lost two sons to wickedness, the twin boys were also a sign to Judah that his sins were forgiven and a new day was dawning under God's favor.

2. Perez was the first of the twins born. Though born of an adulterous and incestuous relationship, Perez became the ancestor of David [Ruth 4:18-22], who in turn became the ancestor of Jesus Christ [Matt 1:3].

Note: Tamar and Judah were not examples of godliness, but both are in the family line of Jesus Christ the Messiah, through Perez (Ruth 4:12; Matt 1:3). This is nothing short of astonishing! Why in the world would God bless such sinful and unfaithful people with the privilege of being in the line of Christ? It is a glorious example of God's amazing grace! (I Cor. 1:26-31)

The Key To Forgiveness: GOD BROKE JUDAH through this tragic event. He REPENTED and DEMONSTRATED HIS REPENTANCE by not sleeping with Tamar ever again.

Gen. 29:35 Now I [Leah] Will Praise The LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah.

1. Redemption was in his name. Verb le-hodot "to thank" = le-hitvadot "to Admit; confess" YE-HUDAH [Judah] = To Praise; To Confess; To Admit

2. This is the 1st recorded admission of fault and sin in the Bible.

The first son to confess and repent is the first to one to be blessed.

Note: With confession and repentance, Judah's redeemable traits can be brought to light. His leadership, his capacity for personal sacrifice, his capacity for mental honesty and his capacity for love and accommodation.

When Judah Humbled Himself, THEN God Raised Him Up To Be The Chief Ruler Of The House Of Israel.

Have you have made a mess of your life? Bad decisions? You knowingly went down a wrong path. Have you concluded God could never love you or do anything through you?

The God who transformed Judah will transform you and use you. God included these events to show us that by HIS Amazing Grace, He can take anyone with a disgraceful past and make them

into a new chosen vessel. God chose to use a son of incest for the lineage of Jesus Christ. Anyone who trusts Jesus Christ, the lion of Judah, with the shambles of their life will be received and remade. Jesus died for our sin. He paid the price so that we could have a new beginning and a new destiny!

God's grace can cover your sin and change you from the inside out!

Changes In Judah Due To His Repentance:

1. He would not condemn Tamar. He refused to justify himself.

2. Judah found the courage to return to his family. Genesis 43

3. Before, he plotted to sell his brother Joseph who was his father's favorite son.

Now he promises to protect his other brother Benjamin, his father's new favorite.

Gen. 43:9 I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him.

If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever.

4. Judah Intercedes to Joseph for Benjamin

Gen. 44:30-32 Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.'

5. Judah Offers His Own Life As A Pledge To Save Benjamin! God Changed Judah!

Gen. 44:33-34 Now therefore, Please Let Your Servant Remain Instead Of The Lad As A Slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

Note: His appeal is so sincere that Joseph is moved to tears and unable to keep up his charade.

Jacob's Prophecy Over Judah - Gen. 49:8-12

"Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you.

⁹ Judah *is* a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him?

¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; and to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

¹¹ Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.

¹² His eyes *are* darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

Consider: The last days of Jacob: Judah is given the greatest blessings of his father.

He may be number four, but he has displaced his three older brothers and even his father's favorite sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

Jacob's prophecy regarding Judah is amazing! The Messiah will come through him!

Blessings Due To His Repentance:

1. The Praise of His Brothers
2. The Necks Of His Enemies
3. The Bowing Down Of The Other Brothers
4. The Lion Nature
5. The Scepter
6. The Lawgiver
7. Shiloh Coming Through Him
8. Promise of Preeminence: I Chron. 5:2 yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and From Him *Came A Ruler*,

Note: During the time of Moses, tribe of Judah became the strongest and prevailed over his brothers. The census in Numbers 1 > Judah led in population & men who could go to war.

Moses' Blessing-Deut. 33:7 "Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him to his people; Let his hands be sufficient for him, and may You be a help against his enemies."

- a. Hear Judah's Voice = Authority, Favor, Leadership, Intercession
- b. Bring Him To His People = A prayer for ability to lead and handle people well; acceptance by other tribes; bonding and strength with the brethren
- c. Let his hands be sufficient for him = Hebrew word for sufficient = reb = abundant, enough, might, plenteous. Root of words: captain, chief, lord and master. Prays that Judah's hands would be great and mighty; hands that speak of labor, strength and dexterity.

Truth Of Jacob's Prophecy: Judah's history confirmed the prophecies.

1. Tribe Of Judah led the way in conquest. [Num. 10:4]
2. Many kings came from this tribe, beginning with David. } Conquering & Ruling Tribe
- a. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet. [49:10]
- b. The Royal House Of Zerah-Judah [scarlet cord] produced kings of the Cretan, Trojan, Frankish, Scandinavian and Ireland.
- c. The Royal House of Perez-Judah produced the line of King David to Nathan to Jesus Christ.
- d. Both of Judah's twins produced kingly lines.
- e. Judah prevailed even when the kingdom divided. Capital was Jerusalem. Maintained the dynasty and line of David. Judah's southern kingdom lasted ~135 years longer. Southern Kingdom returned to the Land. Northern Kingdom never returned after captivity by Assyria.
3. Judah pitched camp on the east. Judah went FIRST when breaking camp.
4. The tribal emblem of Judah = LION = was displayed first in the marching order.
5. Joshua 15:1 - After the Israelites conquered Canaan and began to possess it, the "lot of the tribe of the children of Judah was received FIRST."
They received the largest and most important sections in the southern part of Canaan.
6. Judah's territory included: Hebron = first capital of Israel
Jerusalem = governmental and spiritual capital of Israel; the Temple; Calvary
7. Tribe of Judah is always first! a. First stone on the breastplate

b. The first judge, Othniel, was of the tribe of Judah.

c. Judah was the first tribe to go to war.

d. Judah was camped by the door of the Tabernacle.

e. Judah was moved from 4th son to First Place.

8. Joseph, Judah & The Temple

a. Tabernacle of God had been in Shiloh in the territory of Joseph.

b. David set the stage for the Temple to be built on Mt. Zion [which God loved - Ps. 78] in the territory of Judah.

c. God chose David to be His shepherd and Jerusalem [Mt. Zion] His place to dwell.

d. God chose David to hold the scepter [symbol of kingship] to always remain in the tribe of Judah. [Gen. 49:10; Ps. 89-34-37]

9. 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh [Messiah] Comes

a. Scepter = Tribal Rod [ensign of authority] should not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes.

Judah was to retain both its tribal distinctness and separate authority Until Shiloh Came.

b. They were the only tribe to remain a distinct tribe and be in the land when the Messiah came.

c. After Shiloh came, the legal authority vested in this tribe disappeared.

John 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye Him and judge Him according to your law.

The Jews said..."It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This is a remarkable confession! It is an admission they were no longer their own governors but under the dominion of a foreign power. By the Jews own admission, Gen. 49:10 was fulfilled. The scepter had departed and the lawgiver had disappeared. Therefore, Shiloh must have come!

Question: Why Judah and not Joseph? Interesting Information

Judah's Perfect Repentance: Judah is the first person in the Torah to achieve perfect repentance [teshuvah gemurah], defined by the sages as one who finds himself in a situation to repeat an earlier sin but who does not do so because he is now a changed person.

Recall: Years earlier, Judah was responsible for selling Joseph as a SLAVE.

Later, Judah is face with the prospect of leaving Benjamin as a SLAVE.

Judah says: "Let Me Stay As A SLAVE and Let My Brother Go Free."

This is perfect repentance according to the sages.

The Sages' Principle: Where Penitents Stand Even The Perfectly Righteous Cannot Stand.

The Talmud brings a proof-text from Isaiah 57:19: Peace, peace, to those FAR and NEAR.

Placing the far [the penitent sinner] before the near [perfectly righteous].

Joseph is known to tradition as ha-tzaddik, the righteous. Judah is a penitent.

Joseph became second to the king. Judah became the ancestor of kings.

Hence, where penitents stand even the perfectly righteous cannot stand.

10. Judah = Great Conqueror

a. Judges 1:2 Judah shall go up. Indeed I Have Delivered The Land Into His Hand.

b. II Sam. 22:41; Ps. 18:40 - You have also given me the necks of my enemies,

that I might destroy them that hate me.

c. Jacob used 5 different animals to describe 5 of his sons. Judah is the LION.

Judah Will Produce The Messiah = Our Prophet, Priest and King

Jacob's Prophecy Over Judah Will Be Ultimately Filled In Jesus Christ.

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| 1. You are he whom your brothers shall praise. | National Adulation |
| 2. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. | Military Victory |
| 3. Your father's children shall bow down to you. | Leadership & Royalty Forever |
| 4. You are a lion's whelp. | Kingly Leadership |
| 5. The scepter shall not depart from Judah. | Royal Dynasty |
| 6. The lawgiver shall come from your loins. | Jesus as King - Millennial Reign |
| 7. Donkey to the vine | Messiahship |
| 8. Washed in garments in wine & clothes in blood of grapes | Coming as JUDGE - not Savior |
| 9. His eyes more red than wine - teeth white | Judgment nature of 2 nd Coming |

Tribulation And Restoration

Jesus said in Matt. 24:21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."

The tribe of Judah and the State of Israel will not be spared from this traumatic time.

Jesus said, in Luke 21:20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near."

Zechariah 14:2 "For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city."

Invasion and war will come to Jerusalem and to the tribe of Judah.

Isa. 63:1-3 Who *is* this who comes from Edom, With dyed garments from Bozrah, This *One who is* glorious in His apparel, Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—
"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

² Why *is* Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

³ "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one *was* with Me.

For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury;

Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes.

Following the prophecy of the invasion of Israel and Jerusalem, Zechariah announces:

Zech. 14:4, 9 "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. ...

And the LORD shall be King over all the earth."

Jeremiah spoke of this time: Jer. 23:6 "In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Rev. 5:5 The good news for the tribe of Judah and this world is that the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," Jesus Christ, will return to establish His Kingdom, and the tribe of Judah will finally accept its Redeemer. [Romans 11:26]