

father process." **Judah** blamed his own decisions for this scene and said **Tamar** was **more righteous** than he was in that he had withheld his youngest son. This was a one-time event.

- **Tamar** is listed among the four women who were forbearers of Jesus. Matthew 1:3:

Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar). Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram.

(27) When the time came for Tamar to give birth, it was discovered that she was carrying twins. (28) While she was in labor, one of the babies reached out his hand. The midwife grabbed it and tied a scarlet string around the child's wrist, announcing, "This one came out first." (29) But then he pulled back his hand, and out came his brother! "What!" the midwife exclaimed. "How did you break out first?" So he was named Perez. (30) Then the baby with the scarlet string on his wrist was born, and he was named Zerah.

- **Perez** means *breach*. Not much is known about him but his family became large. Ruth 4:12.
- **Zerah** means *dawning, rising or shining*.

GENESIS CHAPTERS 37-38

37-38 Gen NLT-C
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Genesis Previously		
Mankind Created	Nations Formed	Abram Covenanted
Abram at War, is Honored, Land Boundaries Specified		
Sarai substituted, then Rejected Hagar; the Lord supported Her Expanded Names given to Sarai and Abram.		
Abraham was Visited and Warned about Sodom Sodom Was Destroyed, but Lot and Daughters Were Saved.		
King Abimelech takes and quickly returns Sarah		
Isaac is born, then Hagar and Ishmael are dismissed		
The near-sacrifice of Isaac and the death of Sarah.		
Isaac Marries Rebecca		
Isaac prays for a son and received two. God blessed Isaac.		
Jacob acquired both the family birthright and family blessing.		
Then Jacob left Canaan to marry. He saw a stairway to heaven.		
Jacob married Leah, then Rachel. He acquired property.		
Jacob returns to Canaan, Laban pursues, but makes agreement		
Jacob reconciles with his brother Esau.		
The Dinah incident, Jacob becomes Israel, Rachel dies.		

The main story of the promise to Abraham continues now.

JOSEPH'S FAMOUS COAT

(37:1) So Jacob settled again in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived as a foreigner. (2) This is the account of Jacob and his family.

- This concludes the previous tablet which is also the last tablet of Genesis. The rest was preserved in some other form.
- **Preview:** The land promised to Abraham was slowly being taken by grandson **Jacob**. It would not be completely fulfilled for many years to come. Even as a large nation

under Joshua's leadership, they failed to drive out many inhabitants. The nation did not reach its maximum until the years of David and Solomon.

- The rest of Genesis revolves around **Joseph** and his place in God's plan to get the descendants of **Jacob** to Egypt. To this point in the story, the Lord has communicated directly with Abraham, Isaac and **Jacob**. But that communication ends here and does not include Joseph. From here on, we see Divine Providence as the Lord's main way of steering the events of history.
- When Joseph was seventeen years old, he was caring for the flock with his brothers. The boy was with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph told his father about how bad they were. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because Joseph was born when he was an old man. And Israel made him a long coat of many colors. His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers. So they hated Joseph and could not speak a kind word to him.

(2b) When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked for his half brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing. (3) Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. (4) But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.

- Jacob did not treat his sons all the same, but favored **Joseph** because he was among the youngest sons and his mother was Jacob's beloved Rachael. He had also been given **an beautiful o robe. Joseph** had brought a bad report to dad about the older brothers. The older **brothers**

money to pay, so she required a pledge. Then she disappeared back into society.

(20.) Later Judah asked his friend Hirah the Adullamite to take the young goat to the woman and to pick up the things he had given her as his guarantee. But Hirah couldn't find her. (21) So he asked the men who lived there, "Where can I find the shrine prostitute who was sitting beside the road at the entrance to Enaim?" "We've never had a shrine prostitute here," they replied. (22) So Hirah returned to Judah and told him, "I couldn't find her anywhere, and the men of the village claim they've never had a shrine prostitute there." (23) "Then let her keep the things I gave her," Judah said. "I sent the young goat as we agreed, but you couldn't find her. We'd be the laughingstock of the village if we went back again to look for her."

- The messenger could not find the prostitute to pay the bill and local men said there was no local prostitute. **Judah** had tried to pay, but his efforts led nowhere. He was concerned about being laughed at.

(24.) About three months later, Judah was told, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she's pregnant." "Bring her out, and let her be burned!" Judah demanded. (25) But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are these?" (26) Judah recognized them immediately and said, "She is more righteous than I am, because I didn't arrange for her to marry my son Shelah." And Judah never slept with Tamar again.

- It appeared to **Judah** that **Tamar** had sinned against the third son of **Judah** by having sex with someone else instead of being available to marry him. This is why **Judah** wanted her killed. She cleverly involved **Judah** in the "discovery of

TAMAR OUTWITS JUDAH

(12.) Some years later Judah's wife died. After the time of mourning was over, Judah and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep. (13) Someone told Tamar, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." (14) Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but no arrangements had been made for her to come and marry him. So she changed out of her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah.

- **Judah's wife** died and he grieved for her. The grieving period was normally 30 days. **Tamar** saw that **Judah** did not intend to give his last son to her. She changed roles, leaving her widow's garments and dressing like a temple prostitute, part of the local pagan worship.

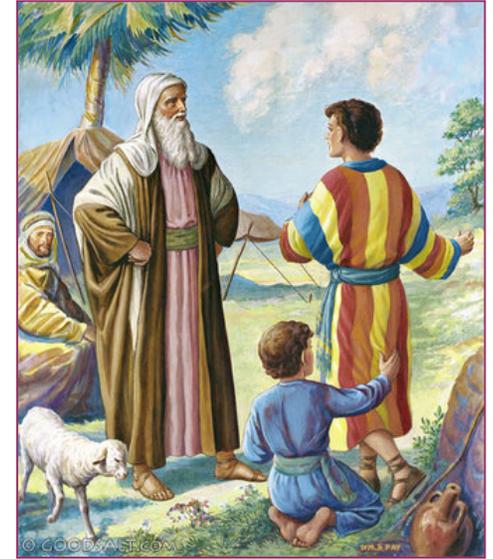
(14.) Judah noticed her and thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. (16) So he stopped and propositioned her. "Let me have sex with you," he said, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law. "How much will you pay to have sex with me?" Tamar asked. (17) "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," Judah promised. "But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?" she asked. (18) "What kind of guarantee do you want?" he replied. She answered, "Leave me your identification seal and its cord and the walking stick you are carrying." So Judah gave them to her. Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. (19) Afterward she went back home, took off her veil, and put on her widow's clothing as usual.

- **James Smith** says the local laws required the father-in-law to take the role to raise up children if his sons were not available. Tamar was getting her legal rights! Because **Judah's** decision was spontaneous, he did not have any

hated Joseph and **could not say a kind word to him.**

Hatred fuels hateful words. Note that these **brothers** were the sons of secondary wives. Both Leah and Rachel may have been deceased by this time.

- **Burton Coffman** comments on the **robe**: "Some of the later versions read "coat of many colors" as "a long sleeved coat," but it is admitted by all that the text here is difficult and that no one really knows what is meant, except, that is, the only important thing, namely, that it was a distinctive, special garment designed to endow the wearer with special attention and favor.



That part is clear enough. The implications of Joseph's receiving it were that he was his father's special favorite, and that, in all likelihood, the birthright, forfeited by Reuben's adultery with one of Jacob's wives, would eventually pass to Joseph, which of course, it did. That such distinguished honor be emphasized in so conspicuous a manner was extremely foolish never seems to have entered Jacob's mind. Such action on his part was certain to foster egotism, arrogance, conceit, and pride on Joseph's part, and bitter envy and hatred on the part of his brothers.

"How strange it is that Jacob, who himself had been brought up in a household of foolish parental preferences between their sons, and who thus had accurate knowledge of the foolishness of such parental preferences, should have, himself, foolishly indulged in the same wickedness."

JOSEPH'S FAMOUS DREAM

(5) One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. (6) "Listen to this dream," he said. (7) "We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!" (8) His brothers responded, "So you think you will be our king, do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them.

- Besides his royal robe, **hatred** increased toward **Joseph** as he told his **dream**. It was easy to understand the **dream**. The **brothers** would bow down to **Joseph**. This was totally unacceptable to them.

(9) Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. "Listen, I have had another dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!" (10) This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers, but his father scolded him. "What kind of dream is that?" he asked. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow to the ground before you?" (11) But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant.



- There was not one **dream**, but two. This time he included his **father** Jacob in telling the story. This **dream** was easily interpreted and may have been rooted in their heritage. It wasn't puzzling to them. **The sun** and **moon** were the ruling powers in the life of Joseph—his parents. The **eleven stars** were his **brothers**. This simple picture of the

TAMAR IS TRAPPED

(6) In the course of time, Judah arranged for his firstborn son, Er, to marry a young woman named Tamar. (7) But Er was a wicked man in the LORD's sight, so the LORD took his life. (8) Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and marry Tamar, as our law requires of the brother of a man who has died. You must produce an heir for your brother." (9) But Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground. This prevented her from having a child who would belong to his brother. (10) But the LORD considered it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the LORD took Onan's life, too.

- More time passed as a wife was selected for the **firstborn** son. Attention is called to the wickedness of **Er** and that the Lord put him to death. His sins are not described but were apt to be moral sins.
- **Judah** ordered his second son **Onan** to have a baby by Er's **wife** to maintain the family name and probably property. He refused to complete the process because the child would not be his. **The Lord** put him to death for this **sinfulness**. The Lord has caused an early death for the first two men in **Tamar's** life.

(11.) Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Go back to your parents' home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old enough to marry you." (But Judah didn't really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers.) So Tamar went back to live in her father's home.

- After the death of two sons, **Judah** did not want to risk his last son. This was totally insulting to **Tamar** because it implies that she had something to do with the death of the two men. At this point **Tamar** devised a plan to ensnare **Judah** himself.

His family all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "I will go to my grave mourning for my son," he would say, and then he would weep. (36) Meanwhile, the Midianite traders arrived in Egypt, where they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

- Notice that **Jacob's family** came to **comfort** him. This is evidence that Jacob's family had unnamed daughters in addition to Dinah. These daughters make getting the exact size of the clan very difficult.
- The writer draws attention to the providence of God in that **Joseph** was sold to a high official in **Egypt**.

JUDAH MARRIES A LOCAL WOMAN

(38:1) About this time, Judah left home and moved to Adullam, where he stayed with a man named Hirah. (2) There he saw a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shua, and he married her. When he slept with her, (3) she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and he named the boy Er. (4) Then she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son, and she named him Onan. (5) And when she gave birth to a third son, she named him Shelah. At the time of Shelah's birth, they were living at Kezib.

- Jacob's family structure was weak. **Judah** moved away from his father and brothers. In his mind, this freed him from following the policies and rules of the clan. This led to **Judah** marrying outside of the covenant people. He married a **Canaanite**. She bore three sons, so some years were involved here.
- We can see that if left unchecked, the special people that God was preparing would soon disperse by intermarriage with the local **Canaanite** women. It is necessary to move the entire group to Egypt to maintain their national identity. This is exactly what the Lord arranged.

sun and **moon** may be used later in Scripture such as Acts 2:20 where it may mean ruling powers rather than being taken literally. This was fulfilled after Joseph was taken to Egypt. His brothers did literally **bow down**. The **brothers** continued to be jealous, but Jacob considered what **Joseph** was saying.

(12) Soon after this, Joseph's brothers went to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem. (13) When they had been gone for some time, Jacob said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing the sheep at Shechem. Get ready, and I will send you to them." "I'm ready to go," Joseph replied. (14) "Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along," Jacob said. "Then come back and bring me a report." So Jacob sent him on his way, and Joseph traveled to Shechem from their home in the valley of Hebron. (15) When he arrived there, a man from the area noticed him wandering around the countryside. "What are you looking for?" he asked. (16) "I'm looking for my brothers," Joseph replied. "Do you know where they are pasturing their sheep?" (17) "Yes," the man told him. "They have moved on from here, but I heard them say, 'Let's go on to Dothan.'" So Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan and found them there.

- **Joseph** was sent to the his **brothers** as a messenger. He learned that the **brothers** had moved the **flock** yet further away to **Dothan**.

THE BROTHERS PLAN JOSEPH'S MURDER

(18) When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance. As he approached, they made plans to kill him. (19) "Here comes the dreamer!" they said. (20) "Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns. We can tell our father, 'A wild animal has eaten him.' Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!"

- The **brothers** quickly drew up a plan to **kill** Joseph. Lying and murder did not bother them. Godliness was at low levels among the covenant people. If they **killed** him, they most certainly would not have to bow down to him. But the Lord had a plan to get his man Joseph away from the heartless brothers.

(21) But when Reuben heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph's rescue. "Let's not kill him," he said. (22) "Why should we shed any blood? Let's just throw him into this empty cistern here in the wilderness. Then he'll die without our laying a hand on him." Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to his father.



- But **Reuben**, the oldest and the leader, did not want to have **Joseph killed**. His goal was to **return Joseph** to his father.

(23.) So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. (24) Then they grabbed him and threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it. (25) Then, just as they were sitting down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of camels in the distance coming toward them. It was a group of Ishmaelite traders taking a load of gum, balm, and aromatic resin from Gilead down to Egypt. (26) Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother? We'd have to cover up the crime. (27) Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traders. After all, he is our brother—our own flesh and blood!" And his brothers agreed. (28) So when the Ishmaelites, who were Midianite traders, came by, Joseph's brothers pulled him

out of the cistern and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt.

- The **robe** was a symbol of the favoritism **Joseph** received so they took it from him. They threw him into a dry **cistern** so he could not escape. **Judah** saw a way to avoid killing **Joseph** and to make money at the same time. The idea was agreed to by the brothers. The **traders** are called **Midianite** merchants and **Ishmaelites** by the same writer so the words were used interchangeably. **Joseph** was sold as a slave for **20 pieces of silver** and taken down to **Egypt**. God was moving a **key** man towards a **key** nation where he would eventually play a **key** role in national life and a **key** role in moving his family to **Egypt**. But no one knew now.

DECEIVING DAD

(29) Some time later, Reuben returned to get Joseph out of the cistern. When he discovered that Joseph was missing, he tore his clothes in grief. (30) Then he went back to his brothers and lamented, "The boy is gone! What will I do now?" (31) Then the brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph's robe in its blood. (32) They sent the beautiful robe to their father with this message: "Look at what we found. Doesn't this robe belong to your son?" (33) Their father recognized it immediately. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's robe. A wild animal must have eaten him. Joseph has clearly been torn to pieces!"

- **Reuben** missed the meal (verse 25) and didn't know about the sale of **Joseph**. He **tore his clothes** because being the oldest, he was responsible for what had happened. An alibi was made up. **Joseph's robe** was dipped in **goat's blood** and taken back to Jacob. While the brothers did not lie, they knowingly misled their father and allowed him to grieve. Jacob overlooked the fact the **coat** was not **torn**.

(34) Then Jacob tore his clothes and dressed himself in burlap. He mourned deeply for his son for a long time. (35)