

### Judah Admitted That He Was Guilty

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that Judah sinned because of the desires of his heart. That is the reason why every person commits sin. In this topic, we will see that Judah was quick to condemn Tamar but was forced to admit his own sin.

Genesis 38:20-23 says, “And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman’s hand, but he did not find her. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, ‘Where is the harlot who *was* openly by the roadside?’ And they said, ‘There was no harlot in this *place*.’ So he returned to Judah and said, ‘I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this *place*.’ 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.’” We saw in the last topic that Judah thought he had committed adultery with a prostitute. He had agreed to pay her with a young goat. As a result, we see that when Judah arrived at the place where his sheep were being sheared in Timnah, he asked Hirah, his friend the Adullamite, to take a young goat back to the prostitute with whom he had committed adultery.

Hirah took the young goat and went back to the place. However, when Hirah reached the place, Tamar had left. She had taken off the veil that hid her face and had put on the clothes that showed she was a widow. Then, she had returned to the house of her father. When Hirah found nothing where Tamar had been, he asked the men of that place where to find the prostitute who had been by the roadside. The word that is translated “openly” is usually translated by either the eye or by sight so he said that she was in a place where she could easily be seen. Hirah had to return to Judah and tell him that he could not find the prostitute. Then, he added that the men of that place said, “there was no harlot in this *place*.” Judah and Hirah both knew there had been a woman who had her face covered and dressed like a prostitute, but they knew it would be difficult to find her.

At that point, Judah had to make a decision. He still had the young goat, but he did not have his signet, his cord or his staff. These three things could all be recognized and there would be people who knew that they belonged to Judah. Judah immediately said, “Let her take *them* for herself, lest we be shamed.” The word translated “shamed” is the key word here. The word is normally translated “contempt”. One other place where the word is used is in Proverbs 18:3, where we read, “When the wicked comes, contempt comes also; and with dishonor *comes* reproach.” Judah knew that if either he or Hirah continued to ask about a prostitute that none of the men of the area knew, they would be looked at with contempt and it would bring shame upon them. As a result, Judah decided that it was better to let the woman have his signet, his cord and his staff rather than to continue to look for her.

Genesis 38:24-26 says, “And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, ‘Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she *is* with child by harlotry.’ So Judah said, ‘Bring her out and let her be burned!’ When she *was* brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, ‘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.’ 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.” Three months later, we see that Judah heard that Tamar had not remained a widow. In fact, she was pregnant because she did not remain as a widow.

Instead of even thinking about the sin he had committed, Judah condemned Tamar and said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!” We see that same thing happened when Christ was on the earth. John 8:3-5 says, “Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?’” When someone is found in the very act of adultery, there are two guilty people. In order to catch the woman in the very act of adultery, the act had to be planned with agreement by the other guilty person. As a result, it was probably one of the men who condemned the woman that day who had committed adultery with her. The purpose of the scribes and Pharisees was to trap Christ with their question, even if one of their own had to commit adultery. Here, Judah shows that same self-righteous attitude and that was why he said to “bring her out and let her be burned!”

We see that she was brought out of her father’s house. Judah was ready to have her burned to death. Instead, Tamar had a surprise for Judah. The word translated “she sent” means to *send*, to *reach out*, or to *extend a hand*. As Tamar extended her hand toward her father-in-law, she said, “By the man to whom these belong, I *am* with child.” Then, she added, “Please determine whose these *are* — the signet and cord, and staff.” Suddenly, Judah was looking at his signet, cord and staff. He could not say those things belonged to someone else. In Numbers 32:23, Moses warned the men who settled on east side of the Jordan River, ““But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.”” In the same way, Judah had sinned against the Lord in two different ways. First, he had sinned against the Lord by not giving Shelah to Tamar to be her husband. Second, he had sinned against the Lord by committing adultery with Tamar. Now, his sin had found him out and everyone who was there that day could see that Judah was guilty.

Judah had condemned Tamar to death for her sin. Now, he had to face the fact that he was also guilty. Judah then admitted that the things Tamar was holding belonged to him. He was the man who had caused Tamar to become pregnant. Then, Judah said, “She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son.” By these words, Judah made it clear to all those who were there that he had not kept his promise to

Tamar. He knew he had broken his promise to her by not giving Shelah to her as her husband. He had made that promise to her several years earlier and she had waited for Judah to keep that promise. Tamar was a Canaanite. The descendants of Canaan had been cursed in Genesis 9:25, where we read, “Then he said: ‘Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.’” However, God chose to show His great mercy to Tamar, and she is included in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:3. There, we read, “Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.” In these verses, we see that the family line of Christ passes through both Tamar and her son Perez. Meanwhile, Judah realized his sin and never had sexual relations with his daughter-in-law again.

We go on to read that Tamar gave birth to twin sons. Genesis 38:27-30 says, “Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins *were* in her womb. 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.’ 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. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.” In these verses, we see that something unusual happened in the process of giving birth to these twins.

The midwife who helped Tamar with the delivery of the baby realized there were actually twins being born. As a result, she tied a bright red thread around the wrist of the hand that came out first. However, once she tied the bright red thread around the hand of the baby, the baby pulled the hand back into the womb. Then, the other twin came out of the womb unexpectedly. As a result, the twin with the bright red thread on his wrist was actually born after his brother.

The midwife noticed this unusual event and said, “How did you break through? *This* breach *be* upon you!” The word that is translated “break through” was most commonly used either in the time of war or in the time of disaster. In Nehemiah 4:3, we read, “Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* beside him, and he said, ‘Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up *on it*, he will break down their stone wall.’” In this verse, the word is used to speak about breaking down their stone wall. The word is also used in Ecclesiastes 3:3, where we read, “A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up...” In this verse, we see that “break down” is contrasted with “build up”.

The word translated “breach” is another form of the word that is translated “break through”. As a result, the name that was given to Perez is very similar to the spelling of the Spanish and English words “Perez”. This makes it clear that he was given that name because of the fact of what happened at the time the twins were born. In many cultures around the world, a similar thing happens in the naming of children. They are named for something that happened at the time of their birth. Perez was given his name because of the fact he had been born first, even though Zerah had stuck his hand out of the womb

before Perez was born. The name translated “Zerah” means *rising*. When he was born, the midwife, and any others who were there at the time, could see that it was his hand that came out first.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that the Lord shows great mercy and chose this as one of many illustrations of the fact that He is quick to show mercy to all those who come to Him in repentance and faith. The Lord chose to show mercy to Tamar and included her in His family line even though she was a Canaanite. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain the mercy of God to all who come to Him.