

Genesis 38

1,2 This was probably the reason he left, to seek a wife.

3-8 Custom at the time and would even be incorporated into the Law, Deut 25:5-10. It was to honor the wife with protection and provision and a child. The firstborn would carry her first husband's name and carry on his line.

9 Use the woman but don't let her have the privilege of bearing your child. This is the first mention of some kind of contraception.

10 Wow! Two brothers, both dead. The wicked thing was that he would not care for and honor her, nor obey his father. Was it greed, knowing that a son would inherit a double portion? If none is born then he gets it. He found a way around the obligation so that he could be take advantage of the situation personally. Ever meet anyone who did their obligation but made it end up costing them nothing and the one they were to help ended up paying the price? That is deceitful wickedness. Fear God! He does judge the wicked!

11 Shelah is young and so Judah has an excuse. At least he does his familial duty and cares for her. If a woman could not bear a male child she felt of little worth in that society. China is the same today.

12-14 He would not have Shelah marry her because he feared he would die too. So she makes a plan to restore her place. Judah is very vulnerable so she disguises herself as a prostitute and waits for him at the crossroad.

15 He couldn't see who she was. Her plan worked.

16 She bargains the price but the price is not what she is after.

17,18 Here is what she is after - evidence that it was him. Sure enough she becomes pregnant.

19-21 He thought she was a prostitute of the Canaanite religion. It was common for shrine prostitutes to be around as they thought this encouraged to Baal to cause rain. They were the only legal ones. Of course no one knows anything about this person he is seeking.

22,23 He honors his deal by leaving the seal and cord, and staff, very important objects in that time.

24 She let it be made known so there would be a big spectacle. Burn her! Interesting how we are so quick to condemn people who are in our way. It is easy to accept criticism and judge someone who is a bother to us. Lookout, it may back fire.

25,26 First she has everyone's attention. He did not give her the privilege of being his wife and we don't know if he ever gave Shelah to her. Interesting - gave to her. Marriage was not so one sided as we would think. God has a heart for the oppressed, the widow and the helpless. Though her methods were less than honorable God in His mercy cared for her situation. The Law?

27-30 This is the promised Seed. And in this name there is huge Messianic implications according to rabbi. They believe this is prophetic of the One who would break through the boundaries of the Law.