

# GENESIS 38

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

**Genesis 38:1–30**

**Judah and Tamar**

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the [word-by-word](#), [verse-by-verse studies](#) of **Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Genesis ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). Every word of that study can be found in the word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even

though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

**Preface:** Judah leaves his family and takes up with a Canaanite woman, having 3 children by her. Judah decides to choose a wife (Tamar) for his first son (aka, a levirate marriage), but he dies. The wife is given to his second son in order to raise up seed for his deceased brother, but then he dies. Then Joseph has to figure out what to do about Tamar.

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Genesis. This will be the most extensive examination of Genesis 38, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

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## Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter

[1Chron. 2](#)

Many who read and study this chapter are 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### Definition of Terms

#### **Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)**

In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the **Doctrine of Rebound** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Some of these definitions are taken from

[http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=1556](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1556)

<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>

<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>

<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/terms-and-definitions/>

<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html>

<http://www.theopedia.com/>

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## An Introduction to Genesis 38

**Introduction:** Some portions of Genesis seem to be quite significant—Abraham's defeat of the kings from the east in Genesis 14 (which changed history); the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which, even today, is contemplated with great interest. Genesis 38 is an unusual chapter. Judah, who is in the line of promise, takes up with a woman and has several children by her. His first child dies the sin unto death; and the second son is called upon to raise up a son in the name of his deceased older brother. He agrees, but then, at the last moment, withdraws himself. He may end up doing this on several occasions, with the appearance that he is doing what is asked of him, but he is simply in it for the enjoyment, and not the responsibility. So he dies the sin unto death.

Judah is concerned that his other sons may die, so he asks her to simply remain unmarried and without children. The third son of Judah grew to manhood, but he was not given over to her. Judah, having lost 2 sons, did not want to lose his third son.

During this same time, Judah's wife dies. When going up with a friend to Timnah, he comes across a woman who he thinks is a prostitute—however she is his daughter-in-law, out of her widow's clothing, and with her face covered. So, she gave the appearance of being a prostitute.

Judah is intrigued and he makes a deal with her: sex for a young goat. Since he does not have the young goat with him, he promises her and she requires him to give him a pledge of personal items that he is carrying. In having sex, she conceives by Judah.

When his daughter-in-law turns out to be pregnant, Judah calls for his daughter-in-law to be burned, as punishment. She reveals that she is pregnant by Judah. Quite obviously, that changes everything. How can he call for her execution if he is the man who made her pregnant and he did not give her his third son, as custom of that day required.

She has two sons, who carry on Judah's name. One of these sons would be in the line leading to Jesus Christ.

I rarely read the work of another person before I begin to work on a chapter, for fear of undo influence. Once I have finished with the general exegesis, then I go to a hundreds of different sources and fill in some details. However, with Chapter 38, after reading a portion of it, I went to J. Vernon McGee for a synopsis and the short, no-nonsense explanation for which he was famous. It seems as though the Bible here goes off on this unusual, inexplicable tangent. It all has a reason and a purpose for being there (even if we are not sharp enough to discern them). So it is with this chapter. There was a pervasive immorality in the land of Canaan, an immorality that the Jews had to be separated from.

I spent a lot more time researching this chapter than most, and found a great many excellent resources (Ron Snider, Jack Ballinger, Robert Dean). Nearly every commentary that I read from had some excellent insights as well as some mistaken notions about this chapter.

The time frame of this chapter has pretty much a built-in minimum based upon the events in this chapter. Judah will get married, he will have 3 sons; all 3 sons will grow to adulthood; two of them will get married; and Judah's wife will die. This suggests a minimum number of years of around 20. Before Joseph is sold into slavery, he is 17 years old (Genesis 37:2), he will enter the palace of Pharaoh at age 30 (Genesis 41:46), and this will be followed by 7 years of prosperity and 1 year of depression which causes his brothers to come to him in Egypt (Genesis 41:53–57 42:1–5). That makes Joseph at least 38 or 39 when his brothers come to him. So, on the high end, this story of Judah must be able to fit within the 21 or 22 years of what is happening with Joseph in Egypt.

We abruptly leave Joseph as a slave in the home of Potiphar in Genesis 37 and return to Canaan to visit the family of Jacob back in the land of Canaan for Genesis 38. Actually, the narrative of Genesis 37 left us the option of two directions to go: (1) we could follow Joseph into slavery in Egypt (Genesis 37:36 [Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.](#)) or (2) we could stay with Jacob's family in the land (Gen. 37:34–35 [Then Jacob \[thinking that his son Joseph was dead\] tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.](#)). The author, whom I believe is Joseph, chooses to follow the life of Jacob and his sons—in particular, one set of incidents in the life of Judah.

To understand what is going on, keep in mind that there are 3 men that we have been concentrating on: Reuben, Judah and Joseph. Reuben is the firstborn and should have received the rights, privileges and responsibilities of the firstborn. However, Reuben never seems to fully embrace his responsibilities. He is always stuck somewhere between doing the right thing and being influenced by his younger brothers to do the wrong thing. A true leader cannot do this. A true leader has to do the right thing, whether those under him like it or not. He cannot choose to do something in between good and evil or between right and wrong. If he recognizes right and wrong, the one with authority must stand with what is right.

The second man we have been watching is Judah. You will recall that when the older brothers talked in the previous chapter, only Reuben and Judah were specifically identified and associated with particular quotes. Judah would become the patriarch of the ruling tribe, but it is clearly not because he is a great man. In fact, in this

chapter, Judah is going to come off looking *anything but*.. Nevertheless, he will redeem himself later in the book of Genesis.

The patriarch we would expect to head the ruling tribe instead of Reuben is Joseph. He faces a variety of injustices and yet, rises to the second highest office in the land of Egypt. He reigns, exercising his authority with great wisdom and restraint. He does not use his authority to harm those who have harmed him. This will not be ignored by God. God will give Joseph the double portion (usually reserved for the firstborn).

The Bible has a great historic arc to it, and most people have no appreciation for this great arc because they see the Bible as a single book (which it is). The Old Testament is made up of books that were composed over a period of over 1000 years (I would contend that the single book of Genesis was composed over a period of 1500 years).

There are two important issues before us: (1) which son will be the head of the ruling tribe; and (2) which son will be the father from whom the Lord Jesus Christ will come? There are 3 possible men: (1) Reuben, the firstborn; (2) Jacob, the 4<sup>th</sup> born; and (3) Joseph, the 11<sup>th</sup> born. Joseph will exhibit the grace of God in his life, despite being persecuted by his brothers. In the narrative, if one of these 3 men has something to say, then we will know it. If Simeon or Levi or Asher has something to say, they will be referred to as *the brothers*.

No one during the lifetimes of these brothers knows which tribe will be the ruling tribe; no one during their lifetimes knows from which tribe will come the Lord Jesus Christ. No one during the life of Moses, some 400 years later, will know these things. Yet, the writer of this portion of Genesis seems to know that it must come down to these three men. Does Joseph (the likely author of Genesis 37–50) know this? Is he thinking in terms of the ruling tribe? Is he thinking in terms of the future Messiah? It is unclear that he has this on his mind. Who would know this? Who would know the end from the beginning? God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit knows that it comes down to these 3 men and the tribes which will come from them. Therefore, what they say and do is carefully recorded. What Dan does or what Zebulun does is just not that important.

(1)(2)

(1)(2)(3)

From the time that Joseph is taken to Egypt to the time that his brothers come to Egypt, a period of at least 20 years transpires. The Bible Hub has Joseph going into slavery 1898 B.C.; and then Jacob and his sons go down to Egypt 1875 B.C.<sup>1</sup> This is consistent with the events of Genesis 38 occurring within the limits of such a timeline.

We will follow a portion of Judah's life, a person that we may mistakenly thought to be a reasonably righteous man. Reuben had suggested the selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites, but only as a cover to rescue Joseph (but Reuben failed to act quickly enough<sup>2</sup>).

We will see in this chapter that Judah was a poor excuse for a believer, self-righteous with a double standard. Part of this is character defect and part of it is the world in which he lived. He was unduly influenced by the immorality of the Canaanites (many of whom were later executed by God's command for their depravity), as were his brothers. God had to remove the Jews so that they did not end up like the other peoples of that land. Furthermore, we find the line of Christ in this chapter, where we would not expect to find it.

As McGee pointed out, everything which is in the Bible is God's Word and is therefore true, but this does not mean that God approves of everything which occurred. It is simply an honest record of what has happened. Our understanding of the rest of Scripture along with the customs and mores of that day, allow us to comment and to exegete.

With regards to authorship, it is difficult to tell. I am leaning more and more toward Joseph or Reuben writing a majority of the previous chapter and Judah writing this one; all later to be combined with the writings of Jacob and Joseph and edited either by Joseph or Moses. The events recounted here would have been known by a variety of people, but Judah would know the majority of them, as he was involved. The time frame is quite easy to pinpoint because of the information given to us about Joseph in other chapters. This chapter has to run parallel

<sup>1</sup> The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

<sup>2</sup> And he should have exercised his own personal authority instead of being devious.



to the life of Joseph, from being taken into slavery to the point where he sees his brothers again. Based on information from other chapters, 22 years is the length of the events found in this chapter.

Although it is possible that the events of this chapter begin prior to Joseph being sold into slavery, that is quite unlikely. Judah will separate from his family, and this will appear to be a fairly strong act of separation. Most of the time, a choice like that would be precipitated by something—and what makes more sense than for Judah to separate from his family rather than to continue lying, along side of his brothers, about what happened to Joseph. You may be able to lie to your father once or twice; but it is very difficult to continue a lie that clearly affects the emotional well-being of your father. I would say that Judah could not longer deal with this, and just went out on his own, which is represented by the events recorded in this chapter of Genesis.

So, the events of this chapter appear to run parallel to the selling of Joseph into slavery and Judah apparently reunites with his family when the famine strike them all (causing the brothers to all travel as a family to Egypt).

This chapter of Genesis is clearly a separate document from the one which later gives us Joseph's history in Egypt. However, that does not mean that Joseph did not *write* the final composition of these events.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, Joseph would be too far removed to know by time and space to know all that transpired in the life of Judah. However, when he reunites with his family, there will likely be times when they share their histories with one another. Although this chapter does not fit in seamlessly with Genesis 37 and 39, there is at least one other chapter which clearly was experienced by the other sons of Jacob and not by Joseph, but was placed into the Word of God, the account of this final quarter of Genesis. Moses would have been too far removed from it by time to know anything of what happened here, apart from learning this information by hearing it and memorizing it. Judah is likely the primary author, making him second most likely author for the previous chapter (but I think Joseph clearly write most or all of the final sections of Genesis).

This is one of the few times that we will examine the life of Judah and it isn't a pretty sight. He even failed when it came to the morality of his day, let alone with true morality. For the past couple chapters, we have seen failure after failure in the lives of the sons of Jacob. One can lay fault with Jacob and his late spiritual growth spurt and with his favoritism; but he is spiritually grown and his sons are men now—responsible for their own behavior.

You may ask, *why is any of this important?* Judah will be the line of Christ. In fact, in this very chapter, we will see exactly how his line is the line of the Messiah—and it will be some unusual twists and turns.

When comparing this to the chapter which follows, you have two people in this chapter who do not appear to be adjusting to the plan of God: Joseph and Tamar; and in the next chapter, we study the man most adjusted to the justice of God—Joseph. In both cases, in this and the next chapters, God's will is clearly the issue, and God's will is done, despite Judah's hard-heartedness in this chapter, and in synch with Joseph's divine viewpoint thinking in the next chapter. God's will is moving forward in both chapters, no matter who is onboard and who is not.

It is important to understand what has gone before.

## The Prequel of Genesis 38

Genesis 38 will begin with

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We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> I think that this information was actually recorded in the minds of Joseph's children, who passed it down to their children. I believe that the book of Genesis, for all intents and purposes, was memorized in its entirety by the Jews while in Egypt.



## The Principals of Genesis 38

Characters

Commentary


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We need to know where this chapter takes place.

## The Places of Genesis 38

Place

Description


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## The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 38

### Legend

Birth or death

God speaks with Abraham

Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)

Parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.

The entire **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The entire **Patriarchal Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2234 B.C.	2097 B.C.			Genesis 11:24	Terah, Abram's father, is born. Gen 11:24–26 Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1978 B.C.			Genesis 11:25	Death of Nahor, Abram's uncle
	1969 B.C.		Noah is 950	Genesis 9:28–29	Death of Noah
2164 B.C.	1967 B.C.			Genesis 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 <sup>rd</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 <b>Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.</b>
2078 B.C.	1881 B.C.	2080 B.C.	Abraham is 86	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 <b>Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.</b>
2064 B.C. (2066 B.C.)		2066 B.C.	Abraham is 100	Genesis 21:1–7 1Chronicles 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 <sup>th</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 <b>Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.</b>
	1841– 1816 B.C.			Genesis 25:12–16 1Chronicles 1:29–31	Ishmael's children.
	1834 B.C. 1829 B.C. (Klassen)	2054 B.C.		Genesis 22:1–19	Abraham is told by God to go to the <b>land of Moriah</b> to offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice. This was a 3-day journey away. They then go to <b>Beer-sheba</b> , which could simply indicate that they are returning home to <b>Beer-sheba</b> .
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge <sup>4</sup> puts this date at 1872 B.C., based upon Antiquities by Josephus.					
(2029 B.C.)	1830 B.C.	2030 B.C.	Abraham is 137	Genesis 23:1–20	The death of Sarah. She dies in <b>Kirjatharba</b> , it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> . Gen 23:1 <b>Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life.</b> She is buried in a cave of the field of Machpelah before <b>Mamre</b> ; it is <b>Hebron</b> , in the <b>land of Canaan</b> , purchased by Abraham from the sons of Heth.
(2026 B.C.)				Genesis 24:1–67 Genesis 25:20	Isaac (Abraham's son) and Rebecca. Genesis 25:20 <b>Isaac was 40 years old when he took as his wife Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-aram, and sister of Laban the Aramæan.</b> At this time, Isaac is living in the <b>Negev</b> . It is likely that Abraham lived there as well; or near to there.
		2026 B.C.	Isaac is 40	Genesis 25:20	Isaac marries Rebecca. Genesis 25:20
	1826 B.C.			Genesis 25:1	Abraham marries Keturah. Smith puts the date at 1860 B.C.; and Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge at 1853 B.C.

<sup>4</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 22:1.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
				Genesis 25:2–4 1Chronicles 1:32–33	Abraham's fathers children by Keturah.
	1817 B.C.		Shem is 600	Genesis 11:11	Death of Shem.
2004 B.C.	1807 B.C.	2006 B.C.	Abraham is 160; Isaac is 60	Genesis 25:19, 21–26	Jacob & Esau born to Isaac. Gen 25:26 <i>After this, his brother came out grasping Esau's heel with his hand. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.</i> Therefore, Abraham would be 160 years old.
(1991 B.C.)				Genesis 25:5–6	Isaac is the heir of all things that Abraham has (but, most importantly, of the covenant of God with Abraham).
1989 B.C.	1792 B.C.	1991 B.C.	Abraham is 175	Genesis 25:7–10	Abraham dies. Gen 25:7 <i>This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years.</i> He is buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Nephron (this would be with Sarah).
				Genesis 25:11	God blesses Isaac.
(1943 B.C.)	1788 B.C.			Genesis 25:17	The death of Ishmael. Gen 25:17 <i>This is the length of Ishmael's life: 137 years. He took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people.</i>
			Eber is 464	Genesis 11:17	Death of Eber.
	1782 B.C.	1978 B.C.		Genesis 25:27–34	Jacob obtains Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage.
	1782 B.C. 1740 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:1–5	A famine in the land; God renews covenant with Isaac at Gerar.
				Genesis 26:6–10	Rebecca and Isaac in Gerar.
				Genesis 26:11–16	Isaac is blessed by God in Gerar.
	1782 B.C. 1735 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:17–22	Strife between Isaac and Philistines in and near Gerar.
	1767 B.C.			Genesis 26:34–35	Esau marries two Canaanite women.
	1757– 1739 B.C. 1733 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:23–25	Isaac makes an altar in Beer-sheba.
(1943 B.C.)	1744 B.C.		Ishmael is 137	Genesis 25:17–18	The death of Ishmael.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1738 B.C. c 1732 B.C. (Klassen)	1977 B.C.		Genesis 26:26–33	Isaac's alliance with Abimelech at Beersheba.
(1929 B.C.)	1737 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1929 B.C.		Genesis 27:1–46	Jacob by deception receives a final blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau.
				Genesis 28:1–5	Jacob goes to his Uncle Laban's home in Padan-aram for a wife.
		1928 B.C.		Genesis 28:10–22	Jacob's dream; God speaks to Jacob.
				Genesis 28:6–9	Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael.
		1906 B.C. (For descendants)		Genesis 36:1–42	Esau's marriages and descendants.
	1736 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1928 B.C.		Genesis 29:1–14	Jacob in Haran (Charan).
	1736– 1729 B.C. 1730– 1723 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 29:15–20	Jacob works 7 years to marry Rachel, but is deceived by Laban, and Jacob marries Leah, her older sister.
	1729 B.C. 1724 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C.		Genesis 29:21–31	Jacob marries Rachel
(1915 B.C.)	1729– 1716 B.C. 1723– 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C. 1916 B.C. (Rachel bears Joseph)		Genesis 29:32–34 Genesis 30:1–6 Genesis 29:35 Genesis 30:9, 7–8, 10–24	Jacob has 12 children by his wives, Rachel and Leah; and by their personal servants as well. Reese breaks the timeline down in smaller increments in his book.
1915 B.C.				Genesis	Joseph is born.
	1711 B.C.			Genesis 36:31–33 1Chronicles 1:43–44 Genesis 26:34–39 1Chronicles 1:45–50 Genesis 36:40–43 1Chronicles 1:51–54	The kings of Edom.
(1909 B.C.)	1716 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 30:25–43 Genesis 31:1–16	Jacob's final years with Laban.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
				Genesis 31:17–55	Jacob's departure from Laban.
		1908 B.C.		Genesis 32:1–23	Jacob returns to Canaan.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 32:24–32 Genesis 35:10	Jacob wrestles with the angel.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:1–16	Jacob meets Esau face to face.
	1715 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:17–20	The resumption of Jacob's journey.
	1711– 1708 B.C. 1706– 1705 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:1–5 1Chronicles 2:3	Judah fathers 3 sons.
	1700 B.C. 1687 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 34:1–31	Dinah, daughter of Judah, is defiled.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 35:1–15	Jacob returns to Bethel.
	1700 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1903 B.C.		Genesis 35:16–19 48:7 35:20–22	Rachel dies when giving birth to Benjamin.
(1898 B.C.)				Genesis 35:27 37:1	The return to Hebron.
	1699 B.C.		Joseph is 17	Genesis 37:2–11	Joseph—his early days and his dreams.
				Genesis 37:12–35	Joseph in Shechem and Dothan.
1897 B.C.		1898 B.C.		Genesis 37:36 39:1	Joseph is sold into slavery, to end up in Egypt.
	c1699– 1690 B.C.	1898 B.C.		Genesis 39:2–6	Joseph enjoys prosperity in Egypt.
	c1695 B.C. 1707 B.C. (Klassen)	1898 B.C.		Genesis 38:6–11	Judah and Tamar.
	1692 B.C.			Genesis 38:12–26	Judah's wife dies.
	1692 B.C. 1691 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:27–30 1Chronicles 2:4	The birth of Pharez, the 41 <sup>st</sup> generation from Adam.
	c1690 B.C. 1689 B.C. (Klassen)	1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:7–19	Joseph flees adultery.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
		1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:20–23	Joseph is put into jail; yet prospers in jail.
(1887 B.C.)	1688 B.C.	1887 B.C.		Genesis 40:1–23	Joseph gives the interpretation of the dreams of the baker and the butler.
1884 B.C.	1687 B.C.		Isaac is 180	Genesis 35:28–29	The death of Isaac. <a href="#">Now the days of Isaac were 180 years.</a> (Genesis 35:28)
(1885 B.C.)	1686 B.C.	1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:1–37	Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dream.
		1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:38–44	Joseph is made governor.
				Genesis 41:45	Joseph marries Asenath.
1884 B.C.	1686– 1679 B.C.	1886 B.C. (Beginning)		Genesis 41:46–49	The 7 years of plenty.
	1685– 1683 B.C.			Genesis 41:50–53	Sons are born to Joseph.
	1685– 1681 B.C.			Exodus 6:16 Num. 3:17 1Chronicles 6:1, 16	The descendants of Levi are born.
	1679– 1672 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 41:54–57	The seven years of famine.
(1876 B.C.)	1678 B.C. 1677 B.C. (Klassen)	1875 B.C.		Genesis 42:1–44:34	Joseph provides his family with food.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 45:1–15	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 45:16–28	Jacob hears that his son, Joseph, is still alive, and he prepares to travel to Egypt himself.
	1677 B.C.			Ruth 4:18 1Chronicles 2:5	Birth of Hezron, the 40 <sup>th</sup> generation.
1873 B.C. <sup>5</sup>	1677 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:1–7, 28	Jacob goes to Egypt after God's assurance in Beersheba.
		1875 B.C.	Jacob is 130	Genesis 46:8–27 Exodus 1:1–5	Summary of the 70 who came to Egypt. Compare Genesis 47:8–9 and 46:27 for Jacob's age.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:29–34 47:1–12	The people of Joseph are established in Egypt.
	1676– 1675 B.C.			Genesis 47:13–21	Joseph continues as prime minister in Egypt, exercising wise leadership during the famine.
				Genesis 47:22–26	The land of the priests in Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> Jacob moves family to the Land of Goshen in Egypt (Genesis 47:28)

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1672– 1593 B.C.			1Chronicles 2:6–8	Zerah, the brother of Pharez, and his descendants.
	1671 B.C. 1660 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 48:1–22	Blessings to Manasseh and Ephraim.
	1660 B.C. 1665 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Berith to Ephraim.
				Genesis 47:28–31	The last days of Jacob; his charge to Joseph.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 49:1–32	Jacob speaks to his sons, giving them their final blessings and encouraging them.
1857 B.C.	1660 B.C.	1859 B.C.	Jacob is 147	Genesis 49:33	The death of Jacob.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 50:1–14	The burial of Jacob.
				Genesis 50:15–21	The fears of Joseph's brothers after the death of Jacob.
	1638 B.C. 1644 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Resheph (who is in the line between Ephraim and Joshua).
	1625 B.C. 1620 B.C. (Klassen)			Num. 26:58	Birth of Aram (Levi's grandson and Moses' father.
	1623 B.C. 1604 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Ram, the 39 <sup>th</sup> generation.
	1615 B.C. 1625 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Telah, in the line between Ephraim and Joshua.
				Genesis 50:22–23	Joseph's last days.
	1606 B.C.			Genesis 50:24–25	Joseph's last words.
1805 B.C. (1805 B.C.)		1806 B.C.	Joseph is 110	Genesis 50:26 Exodus 1:6	The death of Joseph. His brothers also die.
	1606– 1462 B.C.			Genesis 47:27 Exodus 1:7	The population explosion among the Jews living in Egypt.

### Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011 and August 12, 2014. Included in MacDonald's timeline is a timeline for Egypt interspersed.



See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

From: [http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible\\_study\\_guides/abram\\_to\\_the\\_exodus.pdf](http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf) (Christian shepherd). This source believes that the Jews live only a short time in Egypt (210 years).

*The Reese Chronological Bible*; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen’s dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

*The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version)*, Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 10–54.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Genesis 38 (from Dr. Bob Utley)**

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (FOLLOWS MT)
Judah and Tamar	Judah and Tamar	Judah and Tamar	Judah and Tamar	The Story of Judah and Tamar
Gen. 38:1-5 Gen. 38:6-11	Gen. 38:1-11	Gen. 38:1-11	Gen. 38:1-5 Gen. 38:6-11 Gen. 38:12-14 Gen. 38:15-16 a Gen. 38:16 b	Gen. 38:1-5 Gen. 38:6-11 Gen. 38:12-14
Gen. 38:12-19	Gen. 38:12-23	Gen. 38:12-19	Gen. 38:17 a Gen. 38:17 b Gen. 38:18 a Gen. 38:18-19 Gen. 38:20-21 a	Gen. 38:15-19
Gen. 38:20-23		Gen. 38:20-23	Gen. 38:21 b Gen. 38:22 Gen. 38:23 Gen. 38:24 a	Gen. 38:20-23
Gen. 38:24-26	Gen. 38:24-26	Gen. 38:24-26	Gen. 38:24 b Gen. 38:25 Gen. 38:26	Gen. 38:24-26
Gen. 38:27-30	Gen. 38:27-30	Gen. 38:27-30	Gen. 38:27-30	Gen. 38:27-30

If you are glancing at this and wondering, *what’s up with the TEV?* It is simply following English convention, where each new quotation from someone speaking is a separate paragraph.

From Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright ©2014 Bible Lessons International; [www.freebiblecommentary.org](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org); from e-sword; Genesis 38 chapter comments).

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Here is what to expect from Genesis 38:

**A Synopsis of Genesis 38**

## A Synopsis of Genesis 38

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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### Chapter Updates:

I will use this space to indicate any format changes.

Every verse will be hyperlinked from the first page, so that you can easily go to a specific verse in this chapter.

At the end of the exegesis of every verse, I will make certain that there is a Kukis mostly literal translation and a Kukis paraphrase, both of them marked as such.

I have decided to add spacing between the translation and the commentary.

In the future, I would really like to add a few translations, fill in the translation of this chapter (at the end of this document); and provide additional sources at the end of this document.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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## Judah Separates from his Brothers and Starts a Family

Although many commentators covered this chapter, it was missing in the works of Josephus and barely mentioned by Edersheim or Carroll.

Because Genesis 38 is so unusual, this doctrine will help us to have an idea as why Genesis 38 is in the book of Genesis. The bulk of this doctrine comes from Makarios Bible Church.

### Preliminary points for Genesis 38

1. This chapter, like several others in Genesis, has been considered to be useless in terms of teaching material.
2. The chapter serves several purposes which should not be overlooked,
  - 1) It acknowledges the passing of time between the sale of Joseph and the events of chapter 39.
  - 2) It demonstrates how quickly Jacob's family deteriorated and immersed themselves in Canaanite culture, which helps to explain why God separated them from that culture.
  - 3) Therefore, this chapter provides us the background reasons for why the transfer to Egypt was necessary.
  - 4) It serves to contrast the lot of the reversionist with the lot of the adjusted believer; Judah and Joseph.
  - 5) It serves to continue the genealogy of the line of Messiah, which strangely enough passes through Judah and Tamar.
  - 6) This chapter reveals that God the Holy Spirit is not legalistic, ascetic or prudish.
3. These things make this chapter *profitable for doctrine, reproof and instruction in righteousness*.

## Preliminary points for Genesis 38

4. This chapter includes such topics as, the violation of right man/right woman, dishonorable sex, prostitution, incest and the sin unto death.
5. Jacob's family was in danger of being absorbed by the native Canaanites, and this chapter demonstrates how quickly and easily they fell in with them.
6. The Canaanites, although inferior in every way, were quite amiable (some of them) and ready and willing to establish close ties with the seed of Abraham. This should also remind you of Shechem and how quickly they were ready to intermarry with the sons of Jacob.
7. The line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is well-defined as is the line of promise. Therefore, Satan is going to want to muddy this line up. We saw a major attack on their line back with the family of Shechem.
8. This chapter makes it clear why their sojourn in Egypt was necessary. The family of Jacob needed to completely separate from the Canaanites. They had to remain separate from the Egyptians (intermixing had to be kept to a minimum).
9. This is exceptional material to demonstrate to the believer the necessity for applying the doctrine of separation.
10. The cosmos is more than willing to put pressure on you to fit in with them and to integrate you into its culture and thinking.
11. There is a correct balance. As believers, with are in the world and not of the world. We do not become better Christians because we buy a cabin out in the woods and live apart from everyone else. We are not better Christians because we join a convent or a monastery and live only with those who are like us. We are not better Christians because we join a cult, and in that cult, we cut off all ties to former friends and family members. These are perversions of the Christian life.
12. The line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will remain separate; but they will live in Egypt for the next 400 years rather than in Canaan.
13. Genesis 38 will actually keep the future ruling tribe separate from the Canaanite.

From [makarios-bible-church.org](http://makarios-bible-church.org) (this will open up in Word or WP); accessed April 13, 2016 (edited and appended).

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Kukis slavishly literal:

**And so he is in the time the this and so goes down Judah from with his brothers. And so he turns as far as a man, an Adullamite, and his name [is] Hirah.**

Genesis  
38:1

Kukis mostly literal translation:

**It is at this time that Judah goes down away from his brothers. And so he turns even to a [certain] man, an Adullamite, whose name [is] Hirah.**

Kukis paraphrase:

**It is at this time that Judah left his brothers and went to a certain man, an Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation<sup>6</sup>; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

<sup>6</sup> I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use [www.latinvulgate.com](http://www.latinvulgate.com).

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From [http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos\\_genesis.html](http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_genesis.html) and first published in 1862.

The very fact that we have ancient Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic translations of the Bible testifies to its accuracy. There may be a difference word or phrase here or there; the Greek may have a singular where the Hebrew has a plural, but there is no set of doctrines in the Latin Bible which are any different from those found in the Greek Bible or the Syriac Bible. These different cultures when they chose to translate the Bible chose to translate it as accurately as possible. Where human viewpoint would expect to find doctrinal differences between the Bible of the Hebrews, of the Greeks or of the Romans, no such differences exist.

## Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is in the time the this and so goes down Judah from with his brothers. And so he turns as far as a man, an Adullamite, and his name [is] Hirah.
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum (Onkelos)	.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And it was at that time that Jehuda went down from his brethren, and turned aside to an Adulamite man whose name was Hira. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862).
Jerusalem targum Revised Douay-Rheims	It was at that time that Jehuda had gone down from his property, and separated himself from his brethren, and had inclined to a man an Adullemite whose name was Hira,...
Latin Vulgate Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	.
Peshitta (Syriac)	At that time Juda went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Odollamite, named Hiras.
Septuagint (Greek)	It happened at that time, that Yudah went down from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.
NETS (Greek) Brenton's Septuagint	AND it came to pass at that time that Judah went down from his brothers, and turned in to a certain Arlemite, whose name was Hirah. Judah and Tamar. Gn.38.1-30 And it came to pass at that time that Judas went down from his brethren, and came as far as to a certain man of Odollam, whose name was Iras.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:<sup>7</sup>

Bible in Basic English	Now at that time, Judah went away from his brothers and became the friend of a man of Adullam named Hirah.
Easy English	At that time, Judah left his brothers. He went to stay with a man from the town of Adullam. His name was Hirah.
Easy-to-Read Version <i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup>	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	<b>Judah's Sin with Tamar</b> About that time Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man from Adullam whose name was Hirah.
International Children's B.	.
<i>The Message</i>	<b>Judah and Tamar</b> 1About that time, Judah left his brothers. He went to stay with a man named Hirah. Hirah was from the town of Adullam. About that time, Judah separated from his brothers and hooked up with a man in Adullam named Hirah.
Names of God Bible NIRV New Simplified Bible	.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	<b>Tamar's place in Judah's family</b> At that time, Judah moved away from his brothers and settled near an Adullamite named Hirah.
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<sup>7</sup> Many of these Bibles fall into 2 or more categories. The CEV, for instance, is **approved** by the Catholic Church, it is a limited vocabulary Bible, and it is a paraphrase, for the most part.

Contemporary English V.	About that time Judah left his brothers in the hill country and went to live near his friend Hirah in the town of Adullam.
The Living Bible	.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	.
New Life Version	Judah went away from his brothers at that time. He visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.
New Living Translation	<b>Judah and Tamar</b> About this time, Judah left home and moved to Adullam, where he stayed with a man named Hirah.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	After that, Judah left his brothers and traveled on for some distance. Then he [ran into] a man from Odollam named Hiras, [who went to work for him].
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard V	<b>Judah's Life among the Adullamites</b> Right about then, Judah left his brothers and went to live with an Adullamite man named Hirah.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	A time came when Judah left his brethren up in the hill country, and went to lodge with a man called Hiras, at Odollam.
Revised Knox Bible	.
Translation for Translators	<b>Judah's daughter-in-law Tamar tricked Judah into making her pregnant</b> At that time, Judah left his older and younger brothers and went down from the hilly area and stayed with a man who lived in Adullam town, whose name was Hiram.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	It occurred, that Judah was to go down with his brothers, and was to turn aside to a man of Adullam, named Hirah.
Conservapedia	It happened in that season that Judah went down from his brothers, and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, and his name was Hirah.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	About this same time Judah went and separated from his brothers, and joined with an Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And it fortun'd at that time that Judas [Judas (exact spelling)] went from his brethren and got him to a man called Hira of Odollam, and there he saw the daughter of a man called Sua a Cananite. A portion of v. 2 is included for context.
HCSB	<b>Judah and Tamar</b> At that time Judah left his brothers and settled near an Adullamite named Hirah.
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	<b>2. The Danger that threatened Jacob's Sons (Chapter 38)</b> And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down away from his brethren and pitched his tent near a man of Adullam, whose name was Hirah.
Lexham English Bible	<b>Judah and Tamar</b> And it happened [that] at that time Judah went down from his brothers and pitched his tent near a certain Adullamite, whose name [was] Hirah.
NIV, ©2011	<b>Judah and Tamar</b> About that time Judah went down from his brothers and he camped near an Adullamite man, whose name was Hirah.
NIV – UK	.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):



Christian Community (1988)	The story of Judah and Tamar It happened at this time that Judah left his brothers and went to stay with an Adullamite by the name of Hirah.
The Heritage Bible	And it was at that time, that Judah descended from his brothers, and spread out his operation to a man of Adullam, whose name was Hirah.
New American Bible (2002)	About that time Judah parted from his brothers and pitched his tent near a certain Adullamite named Hirah. [1-30] This chapter, from the Yahwist source, <sup>8</sup> has nothing to do with the Joseph story in which Judah is still living with his father and brothers. The sacred author inserted this independent account from the life of Judah at this place to mark the long lapse of time during which Joseph's family knew nothing of his life in Egypt. This is apparently a personalized history of the early days of the tribe of Judah, which interbred with several Canaanite clans, though some of these soon became extinct.
New American Bible (2011) <sup>9</sup>	<i>Judah and Tamar.</i> * About that time Judah went down, away from his brothers, and pitched his tent near a certain Adullamite named Hirah. [38:1–30] This chapter has subtle connections to the main Joseph story. It tells of the eponymous founder of the other great tribe of later times, Judah. Having already been introduced as one of the two good brothers in 37:26–27, he appears here as the father-in-law of the twice-widowed Tamar; he has reneged on his promise to provide his son Shelah to her in a levirate marriage. Unjustly treated, Tamar takes matters into her own hands and tricks Judah into becoming the father of her children, Perez and Zerah. Judah ultimately acknowledges that his daughter-in-law was right (“She is in the right rather than I,” v. 26). In contrast to Judah’s expectations, the family line does not continue through his son Shelah, but through the children of Tamar. Similarities relate this little story to the main narrative: the deception involving an article of clothing (the widow’s garments of Tamar, Judah’s seal, cord, and staff) point back to the bloody tunic that deceives Jacob in 37:31–33; a woman attempts the seduction of a man separated from his family, for righteous purposes in chap. 38, for unrighteous purposes in chap. 39.
New Jerusalem Bible	It happened at about that time that Judah left his brothers, to go down and settle with a certain Adullamite called Hirah.
New RSV Revised English Bible	. ABOUT that time Judah parted from his brothers, and heading south he pitched his tent in company with an Adullamite named Hirah.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	(iv) It was at this time that Y’hudah went off from his brothers and settled near a man named Hirah who was an ‘Adulami.
exeGesés companion Bible	<b><u>YAH HUDAH AND TAMAR</u></b> And so be it, at that time, Yah Hudah descends from his brothers and turns to a man - an Adullamiy whose name is Hirah:...
Hebrew Roots Bible	And it happened at that time that Judah went down, away from his brothers, and turned aside to a man of Adullam named Hirah.
Hebrew Names Version JPS (Tanakh—1985)	. About that time Judah left his brothers and camped near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.

<sup>8</sup> There is no Yahwist source; that is hogwash. Note that this is missing from their 2011 Bible.

<sup>9</sup> Also called the revised edition.



Judaica Press Complete T.  
Kaplan Translation

*Judah and Tamar*

Around this time, Judah left his brothers. He became friends with [See Genesis 38:12,20. Others, 'He camped around until he came to...' (Redak.)] a man of Adullam [This is a city some 41 miles south of Shechem, and 11 miles northwest of Hebron. It is identified with Tel esh-Sheikh Madhkur. See Joshua 12:15, 15:35, 1 Samuel 22:1, 2 Samuel 23:13, Micah 1:15, Nehemiah 11:30.] by the name of Hirah [He was the foreman of Judah's shepherds (Genesis 38:12; Tzava'ath Yehudah 8:1). From the expression, 'his name was Chirah,' we see that he was a righteous person. There is a tradition that whenever the expression, 'his name was,' precedes the actual name, the person in question was righteous (BaMidbar Rabbah 10; Esther Rabbah 6:2)]. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.

Natural Israelite Bible  
Orthodox Jewish Bible

And it came to pass at that time, that Yehudah went down from his achim, and turned in to an ish Adulami shmo Chirah.

Restored Names Version  
*The Scriptures* 1998

And at that time it came to be that Yehudah left his brothers, and turned aside to a man, an Adullamite whose name was Hirah.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*  
The Expanded Bible

Judah and Tamar

About that time, Judah left [went down from] his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah in the town of Adullam [a Canaanite city nine miles northwest of Hebron].

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

**Verses 1-11**

The story of Judah, Shuah, and Tamar

And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. After the episode with Joseph, Judah separated himself from his brothers and moved down from Hebron, which is in a mountainous region, toward the southeastern plains, pitching his tent near the town of Adullam and entering into friendly relations with a man by the name of Hirah.

NET Bible®

*Judah and Tamar*

At that time Judah left [Heb "went down from."] his brothers and stayed [Heb "and he turned aside unto."] with an Adullamite man [Heb "a man, an Adullamite."] named Hirah. When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote. Some of their notes will be reproduced in the exegesis of the chapter.

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

It was about this time that Judah decided to leave home, so he parted company with his brothers and went to see Hirah, a fellow from Adullam.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV  
Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and it came to pass in that appointed time, Yehudah <sup>[Praised]</sup> went down from his brothers and he stretched unto a man, one of Adulam <sup>[Witness of the people]</sup>, and his title was Hhiyrah <sup>[Bleached white]</sup>,...

Concordant Literal Version	And coming is it at that season that down is Judah going from his brothers and is turning aside unto a man, an Adullamite, and his name is Hirah.
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	.
Darby Translation	.
Emphasized Bible	.
English Standard Version	.
English Standard V. – UK	.
Evidence Bible	.
Green’s Literal Translation	And it happened at that time that Judah went down, away from his brothers, and turned aside to a man of Adullam named Hirah.
King James 2000 Version	.
21 <sup>st</sup> Century KJV	.
Modern English Version	<b>Judah and Tamar</b> At that time Judah left his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.
NASB	.
New European Version	<b>Judah and His Sons</b> It happened at that time, that Judah went down from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.
New King James Version	<b>Judah and Tamar</b> It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.
Owen’s Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster’s Bible Translation	At that time, Judah went down from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.
World English Bible	.
Young’s Literal Translation	.
Young’s Updated LT	And it comes to pass, at that time, that Judah goes down from his brothers, and turns aside unto a man, an Adullamite, whose name is Hirah.
<b>The gist of this verse:</b>	Judah departs from his brothers and begins to hand out with a man named Hirah, an Adullamite.

Genesis 38:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָא) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #1961 BDB #224

Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered *subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which*. Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).

## Genesis 38:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
'êth (תֵּת) [pronounced <i>gayth</i> ]	<i>time, the right time, the proper time; opportunity</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6256 BDB #773
With the bêyth preposition, this means <i>at the right time, at the proper time</i> .			
hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced <i>hee</i> ]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is, is</i> implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
These three words together seem to mean <i>at this time, at that time; during this same time, during this same time period</i> .			
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i> ]	<i>to descend, to come down, to go down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (הַיְדוּדָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised; and is transliterated Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
Together, min 'êth mean <i>from proximity with, from with, from close proximity to, to proceed from someone</i> . A good up-to-date rendering might be <i>directly from</i> . The idea is, the person that these prepositions refer to is supposed to directly be involved in the action or in whatever is being requested.			
'achîym (אֶחָיִם) [pronounced <i>awhk-EEM</i> ]	<i>brothers, kinsmen, close relatives; tribesmen; fellow-countrymen</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

**Translation:** It is at this time that Judah goes down away from his brothers.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the sons of Jacob were not very kind men. They overreacted to a rape of their baby sister (by killing men who were not responsible); and he was one of the brothers involved in selling their youngest brother into slavery.

As we see above, there is a phrase to connect the two chapter narratives: *And it happened at that time* (MKJV); *It came to pass at that time that* (VW); *About that time* (God's Word); and, *And at that time it came to be that* (The Scriptures 1998). I was hoping to come across *meanwhile, back at the ranch*; but I could not find that one.

In this chapter we have a repeated figure of speech called a *pleonasm* [pronounced *PLE-o-nasm*] (or redundancy), which is a phrase whose lack would not seem to affect the meaning or the grammatical completeness of the sentence. It is the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which is typically translated *and it came to pass*. This occurs six times in this chapter (vv. 1, 7, 24, 27, 28 and 29) as opposed to but once in the previous chapter (v. 23), whereas there were ample opportunities to use that phrase in the previous sentence and ample reasons to leave it out in this chapter. What is the difference? It is a difference of style. Joseph will have the same style in his writings and it will be a phrase, although used sparingly prior to this chapter, will be found quite often after this. This is a way of saying that *time has passed*, but not a great deal of time (as in Genesis 38:12). This is also a possible indication that authorship changed between chapters 37 and 38 (if Joseph was the ultimate author/editor, which I believe he was, then he may have retained some of the idiosyncracies of his source material).

The Holy Spirit chooses each and every word, but that each and every word expresses the emotions, the thoughts and the vocabulary of the human author. This means that the use of this word is not superfluous, but the way the human and the divine author express emphasis. For almost 2000 years, this particular phrase would endure through many authors.

To sum up, we find this phrased used for:

1. Emphasis
2. An expression which tells us time has passed
3. Possibly an indication of a different author or a different set of circumstances.

They seem unable to measure their reactions to this or that situation. A normal morality appears to elude them. We will find the same thing in this chapter. Judah will become very self righteous about his life and that of his daughter-in-law.

In Genesis 37, we bring Joseph and Judah together; and then they go off in two different directions: Joseph off to Egypt as a slave and Judah back to his father to lie about Joseph's death. Both narratives are important.

In the book of Genesis, there are several unusual narratives, and this chapter is certainly one of the most unusual. Key to this chapter is keeping in mind the preliminary points already presented. However, like the previous chapters which we have studied, this will have great meaning to us, despite the dramatic cultural differences that we will encounter.

Throughout Genesis, there are some narratives that, on your first read, you may wonder, *now why is this here?* All of Genesis is recorded for a reason—this is the Word of God, after all, authored by both man and by God the Holy Spirit. So, there ought to be a very human reason why this or that is recorded in Scripture; and a divine reason as well. Nevertheless, even knowing this, the narrative of Genesis 38 is still going to strike you as being very unusual.

Whenever I re-edit this chapter, I may consider moving this doctrine into the introduction.

While Joseph is in Egypt, this is *meanwhile, back at the ranch*; it is what is happening in Canaan. This is one of the few times in the *Joseph section* of Genesis where there is an abrupt change in narrative (however, there are transitional words used to allow this change of place).

It ought to be noted that Genesis 37 does not flow naturally into Genesis 39:

### Genesis 38 is not an insertion

Because of the difference of place, some commentators allege that Genesis 38 had a difference source than Genesis 37 and 39, and that it was clumsily placed in between these two chapters. However, that is not the case. Genesis 37 does not naturally flow into Genesis 39.

Gen 37:31–32 **Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. And**

## Genesis 38 is not an insertion

they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not."

Gen 37:33–34 And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

Gen 37:35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Gen 37:36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

Gen 39:1–4 Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.

My point here is, someone did not come along 300 years later and suddenly stick Genesis 38 into the middle of a continuing narrative. It is placed there because we are watching carefully the lines of Judah and Joseph. Joseph's line will appear destined for greatness; and, in this chapter, Judah's line, not so much.

On the other hand, if Joseph is the author (which I believe him to be), then his life went from Genesis 37 to Genesis 39; but he himself inserts Genesis 38—a series of incidents which he finds out about long after the fact.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The short summation at the beginning of Genesis 39 indicates clearly that there is something which comes between these two chapters (given the repetition of the information in Genesis 37:36 and 39:1), even though that *something* will turn out to be quite an unusual chapter. We take such transitional words for granted in literature, but Joseph is much better at writing than his father and grandfather were.

Based upon what has happened so far, Reuben seems to have been set aside as the likely ruling tribe. We will not hear him speak again until Genesis 42.

At this time, our sympathies are with Joseph and we will learn a great many spiritual lessons from him. However, the line of humanity of Jesus Christ is going to go through Judah, and not through Joseph. In this chapter, Judah's line becomes rather muddled, and it is explained herein. In fact, apart from this chapter, we would have no idea how the Judaic line continues through Tamar, his daughter-in-law.

Judah's line will be quite remarkable. He will marry a Canaanite women (which is not a good idea) and yet, the line of Christ through Judah will not have any Canaanite in it. Pretty slick, don't you think?

The Bible follows one genealogical line in particular throughout the Old Testament, and that is the line that leads to Jesus Christ. Obviously, the human authors did not fully realize what they were recording, but the Divine Author did. What I mean is, looking at this from the human standpoint, the author (Joseph) would not have known that this is the line of the Messiah. From his point of view, this narrative might help to ultimately explain why his family is better off in Egypt. But there is much more to it than that.

Of the authors who speak of this particular line, each one has his own reason for recording that portion of the line, but there is no satisfactory explanation for the entire line of Christ being recorded in Scripture apart from the will of God.

As I have pointed out on several occasions, genealogies are not just randomly thrown into the middle of this or that chapter. There is but one genealogy that is carefully followed from beginning to end, and that is the line of



Christ, which begins with Adam, goes through Noah and Shem, then through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; then through the tribe of Judah all the way down to David, and eventually leading to Joseph, the legal father of Jesus (this line goes through Solomon); and the other leading to Mary, the mother of the humanity of Jesus (that line going through Nathan, another son of David). This entire line is found in the Bible. There is the possibility that one name has been left out due to a copyist error early on; but, apart from that, we know every single generation that takes us from Adam to Jesus (the name of that missing person is in the Greek manuscripts).

You may recall that, the first genealogy posted also presented the history of man and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Although we study some *cluster genealogies* (like Esau's or Ishmael's), we *never* return to those genealogies. No author of Scripture thinks to himself, "I wonder what is going on with the line of Esau right now." However, we *always* return to the genealogy of Jesus Christ. As readers and students of the Bible, we see the Bible as one book, and so, following the genealogy of our Lord does not seem all that fantastic to us. However, the books of the Bible were composed separately by a great variety of authors of different eras and different stations in life; and yet, none of these authors accidentally decides to follow the wrong genealogy (the exception to this is the first half of 1Chronicles, which is a grouping of many genealogies—primarily those of the 12 tribes). Later on, for a variety of reasons, when the inspiration of Scriptures were recognized, then a selection of books had to be made—which were inspired of the Holy Spirit and which were simply written by men?

What will happen in this chapter will seem pretty messtup; but God is able to take *messtup* and use it for His Own glory.

Genesis 38:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâṭâh (נָטָה) [pronounced <i>naw-TAWH</i> ]	<i>to stretch out, to spread out, to reach out; to pitch [a tent]; to bow, to extend, to incline, to turn</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5186 BDB #639
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i> ]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until; while, so long as; to, even to [some certain limit]; even to [unto], unto</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʿĀdullâmîy (עֲדֻלְלָמִי) [pronounced <i>gúhd-ool-law-MEE</i> ]	<i>refuges, retreat; justice of the people; transliterated Adullamite, Adullami; a native of Adullam</i>	gentilic singular adjective	Strong's #5726 BDB #726

**Translation:** And so he turns even to a [certain] man, an Adullamite,...

The city of Adullam is mentioned several times in the Old Testament (Joshua 12:15 15:35 2Chronicles 11:7 Micah 1:15 Nehemiah 11:30). This is the only chapter where the term Adullamite is used; and this is the first reference to either the city or a person of that city.

It appears that Judah is leaving his family and finding others to associate with. The primary reason is, Joseph. They sold Joseph into slavery and now, forever more, they must lie to their father about what happened. Their

story has been, “Here is Joseph’s long sleeve over-cloak; it is smeared with blood. He is probably dead.” But they know what happened to Joseph—they sold him into slavery. So there is no confusion here. As a result, the sons of Jacob find themselves lying to their father essentially every time that they speak. This is exhausting; and it may be why Judah decided to separate from the family.

### Genesis 38:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #8034 BDB #1027
Chîyrâh (חִירָא) [pronounced <i>khee-RAW</i> ]	<i>a nobler family; transliterated Hirah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong’s #2437 BDB #301

**Translation:** ...whose name [is] Hirah.

Hirah is only mentioned in these first two verses. He is a friends of Judah’s and possibly a shepherd of his at well (as per the Septuagint and the Vulgate).

This was not just some stranger or someone that Judah had met on this trip—a certain man indicates that Judah specifically went for the purpose of seeing this man. This was likely a private business venture wherein they both had a flock of sheep together that one of them funded and the other provided the beginnings for the flock. This is our first encounter with an Adullamite; they have not been mentioned in any previous genealogy. From this family will come a city Adullam mentioned later in Joshua (Josh. 12:15 15:35 and several other places in the Bible). When this city came to be and its relation to Hirah is unknown. It seems to be spoken of here as already being in existence.

We have just begun Genesis 38 and have discussed the reasons for its being here and being recorded. So, it is more than just an interesting narrative, where Judah is talking to Joseph, and he says, “Oh, here’s sort of a funny story...”

The sons of Jacob would eventually move to Egypt with their families; and Judah would have an adult son and a pair of much younger twin sons. He also had, more or less, a young wife. Joseph would have no doubt asked about each man’s family; and Judah gave him the most unusual explanation (it is possible that the explanation was coaxed from Judah’s young wife, Tamar). The background of Judah’s family is Genesis 38.

We have two sets of narratives occurring simultaneously; Joseph in Egypt and Judah in Canaan. There is no exact chronology set up for Judah; but an approximate chronology can be determined. Ron Snider estimates<sup>10</sup> that between Joseph being sold into slavery and his brothers coming down to Egypt, approximately 22 years transpire (this can be calculated). Snider has a time frame for the events of this chapter, which I will share once we complete these events. Bear in mind that Genesis 38 would take place over a period of time less than the parallel events in Egypt. However, because of what happens, it would be very difficult for the time period of Genesis 38 to be under 20 years.

**Genesis 38:1** And it happened at that time Judah went down from his brothers and turned in to a certain Adullamite, named Hirah.

<sup>10</sup> From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed May 17, 2016 (Word document will open in Word or WP on your computer).



Genesis 38:1 It is at this time that Judah goes down away from his brothers. And so he turns even to a [certain] man, an Adullamite, whose name [is] Hirah. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:1 It is at this time that Judah left his brothers and went to a certain man, an Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. (Kukis paraphrase)

Judah apparently had set up some business dealings with Hirah the Adullamite.

An Adullamite would be from the city of Adullam, which is located in the territory later known as Judah. Although this city will not be named until the book of Joshua (as a conquered city in Joshua 12:15), it is apparently an established city during the time of Jacob and Judah. Because of this, Adullam would logically be a Canaanite city during Judah's time.

This city will play an important part in Israel's history throughout many eras (during the time of Joshua, the judges, Saul and David, and Rehoboam).

**Map of the Shephelah** from [Pilgrimage Panorama](#); accessed April 13, 2016.

Genesis 38:1 And it happened at that time Judah went down from his brothers and turned in to a certain Adullamite, named Hirah.

We also have the phrase here *Judah went down from his brothers and turned in...* This really sounds like Judah has separated from his family. This is a temporary separation which has taken place, but in this chapter, we will only hear the name of Judah and those related to him in marriage. We will not hear about Jacob or about Reuben or anyone else from his family.



Given the time frame, this separation appears to be quite lengthy; possibly 20 years. Ron Snider, one of the few commentators to recognize this, suggests a number of reasons—the lies to their father about Joseph and the selling of Joseph into slavery (we are not sure that the sons of Jacob did this; but they intended to). Perhaps Joseph is not disgusted with his brothers, but disgusted with himself for participating. Maybe he feels guilty? Could you face your father every day if you are partially responsible for his great sorrow?

Given the circumstances of the previous chapter, it is not hard to imagine several sons separating from the rest of the family. Jacob would be distressed and mourning; he would focus all of his attention on Benjamin, his youngest son.

Jacob's older sons would be held responsible, to some degree, for the *death* of Joseph. Somehow, they are supposed to watch out for their younger brother. Failing to do so lowered Jacob's estimation of them in his eyes. The sons themselves would have felt guilty about all of this, as they are responsible for Joseph being sold into slavery and being separated from his father Jacob.

Hirah appears to be a long-time friend of Judah's. There will be considerable interaction between these two men; but none between Judah and his brothers or father.

And so sees there Judah a daughter of a man, a Canaanite—and his name [is] Shua. And so he takes her and so he goes in unto her. And so she conceives and so she bears a son and so he calls his name Er. And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she calls his name Onan. And so she adds again and so she bears a son and so she calls his name Shelah. And he was in Chezib in a her bearing him.

Genesis  
38:2–5

Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite (his name [is] Shua). Judah [lit., *he*] took her and he went into her. She conceived and bore a son, and he called him Er. Then she conceived again and she bore [another] son and she called him Onan. Then she adds again and bears a son, and she calls him Shelah. And Jacob [lit., *he*] was in Chezib when she bore him.

While he was there, Judah saw a woman who caught his eye, who was a Canaanite, the daughter of Shua. Jacob took her and he went into her. She conceived and bore a son that Jacob named Er. Then she conceived again, bearing another son, and she named him Onan. Then she bore another son and called him Shelah. Jacob was in Chezib when she bore the last son.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so sees there Judah a daughter of a man, a Canaanite—and his name [is] Shua. And so he takes her and so he goes in unto her. And so she conceives and so she bears a son and so he calls his name Er. And so she conceives again and so she bears a son and so she calls his name Onan. And so she adds again and so she bears a son and so she calls his name Shelah. And he was in Chezib in a her bearing him.

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Targum (Onkelos)

.  
And Jehuda saw there the daughter of a merchant man whose name was Shuva, and he took her and went in with her; and she conceived and bare a son, and he called his name Her; and she conceived again, and bare a son, and called his name Onan. And she added again, and bare a son, and called his name Shelah; and he was in Kezib when she bare him. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862).

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

...that Jelluda saw there the daughter of a merchant man whose name was Shuva, and he proselyted her, and entered with her. And she conceived and bare a son, and called his name Er [Er “naked, destitue.”], because he was to die without a child. And she conceived again, and bare a son, and called his name Onan [Onan, “sorrow,” or “iniquity.”], because his father would have to mourn for him. And she added, and bare a son, and called his name Shela, because her husband had forgotten her [The Chaldee verb shelah is either “cessavit,” “destitue,” or “reject, vel oblitus est.”] and was in cessation when she bare him. [JERUSALEM. And it was that she ceased.].

Jerusalem targum  
Revised Douay-Rheims

.  
And he saw there the daughter of a man of Chanaan, called Sue: and taking her to wife, he went in unto her. And she conceived, and bore a son, and called his name Her. And conceiving again, she bore a son, and called him Onan. She bore also a third: whom she called Sela. after whose birth, she ceased to bear any more.

Latin Vulgate  
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

.  
Yudah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her, and went in to her. She conceived, and bore a son; and he named him Er. She conceived again, and bore a son; and she named him Onan. She yet again bore a son, and named him Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bore him.

Peshitta (Syriac)

And Judah saw there the daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. And she conceived, and bore a son; and he

called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bore a son; and he called his name Onan. And she conceived again, and bore a son; and he called his name Shelah; and after she bore him she stopped bearing.

Septuagint (Greek)

And Judas saw there the daughter of a Chananitish man, whose name was Sava; and he took her, and went in to her. And she conceived and bore a son, and called his name, Er. And she conceived and bore a son again; and called his name, Anan. And she again bore a son; and called his name, Selom: and she was in Chasbi when she bore them.

NETS (Greek)

.

Brenton's Septuagint

.

Significant differences:

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English

And there he saw the daughter of a certain man of Canaan named Shua, and took her as his wife. And she gave birth to a son, and he gave him the name Er. And again she gave birth to a son, and he gave him the name Onan. Then she had another son, to whom she gave the name Shelah; she was at Chezib when the birth took place.

Easy English

.

Easy-to-Read Version

.

God's Word™

.

Good News Bible (TEV)

.

International Children's B.

Judah met a Canaanite girl there and married her. Her father was named Shua. And Judah had intimate relations with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Judah named him Er. Later she gave birth to another son. She named him Onan. Later she had another son. She named him Shelah. She was at Kezib when this third son was born.

*The Message*

While there, Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua. He married her, they went to bed, she became pregnant and had a son named Er. She got pregnant again and had a son named Onan. She had still another son; she named this one Shelah. They were living at Kezib when she had him.

Names of God Bible

.

NIRV

.

New Simplified Bible

.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible

.

Contemporary English V.

While there he met the daughter of Shua, a Canaanite man. Judah married her, and they had three sons. He named the first one Er; she named the next one Onan. The third one was born when Judah was in Chezib, and she named him Shelah.

The Living Bible

There he met and married a Canaanite girl—the daughter of Shua. They lived at Chezib and had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. These names were given to them by their mother, except for Er, who was named by his father.

New Berkeley Version

.

New Century Version

There Judah met a Canaanite girl, the daughter of a man named Shua, and married her. Judah had sexual relations with her, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, whom Judah named Er. Later she gave birth to another son and named him Onan. Still later she had another son and named him Shelah. She was at Kezib when this third son was born.

New Life Version

There Judah saw a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her as his wife and lived with her. And she was going to have a child and gave

birth to a son. He gave him the name Er. Then she was going to have another child and she gave birth to a son. She gave him the name Onan. Then she gave birth to another son at Chezib. And she gave him the name Shelah.

New Living Translation .

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible And while he was there, Judah found the daughter of a Canaanite man named Sava. He took her [as his woman] and [slept] with her, and she got pregnant. Then she gave birth to a son whom she named Er. And after that, she got pregnant again and gave birth to a son whom she named Onan. Then she gave birth to a [third] son whom she named Shelah (she was living in Chezib when she gave birth to them).

Beck's American Translation .  
International Standard Version

There Judah met [Lit. saw] the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. He married [Lit. took] her, had sexual relations with her, and she conceived, bore a son, and named him Er. Later, she conceived again, bore another son, and named him Onan. Then she bore yet another son and named him Shelah. Judah was living in Chezib when she bore him.

New Advent (Knox) Bible

Here he cast his eyes on the daughter of one Suë, a Canaanite, and wedded and bedded her. She conceived, and bore a son, whom she named Er; then conceived again, and called her second son Onan; then bore a third, whom she called Sela, and after that had no more children.

Revised Knox Bible .  
Translation for Translators

There he «met/became acquainted with» a woman who was the daughter of a man from Canaan land named Shua. He married her. He had sex [EUP] with her, and she became pregnant and later gave birth to a son, whom he named Er. Later she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son whom she named Onan. Many years later, when Judah and his family went to live in Chezib town, Judah's wife gave birth to another son, whom she named Shelah.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible Judah was to perceive there a daughter of a Canaanite man, named Shuah, and was to receive her out for himself, and was to go in to her. She was to conceive, and was to bear forth a son, and was to call his name Er. She was to conceive, and was to bear forth a son, and was to call his name Onan. She was to add to, and was to bear forth a son, and she was to call his name Shelah. At Chezib, she is to bear him forth.

Conservapedia Judah saw there a daughter of a Canaanite named Shuah. He married her and was intimate with her. She fell pregnant, and gave birth to a son, and named him Er. She fell pregnant again, and gave birth to a son, and named him Onan. She fell pregnant still another time, and gave birth to a son, and named him Shelah. He was at Chezib when she gave birth to him.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible Whilst there he saw the daughter of a Canaanite, whose name was Beth-Shua and he took her and married her, and she conceived and bore a son, and called his name Er. Then she conceived again and bore a son, and called his name Onan. She afterwards increased and bore a son and called his name Shelah ; then she ceased to be child-bearing.

God's Truth (Tyndale) ...and there he saw the daughter of a man called Sua a Canaanite. And he took her and went in unto her. And she conceived and bare a son and called his name Er. And she conceived again and bare a son and called him Onan. And she conceived the third time and bare a son, whom she called Sela: and he was at Chesib when she bare him.

HCSB Jubilee Bible 2000 H. C. Leupold	. . And there Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite man whose name was Shun, and he married her and went in unto her. And she conceived and bare a son and he called his name Er. Again she conceived and bore a son and she called his name Onan. Even once more she bore a son and she called his name Shelah. It happened at Chezib that she bore him.
Lexham English Bible NIV, ©2011	. There Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. He married her and made love to her; she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, who was named Er. She conceived again and gave birth to a son and named him Onan. She gave birth to still another son and named him Shelah. It was at Kezib that she gave birth to him.
Tree of Life Version	There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite man whose name was Shua, and he took her as wife and slept with her. Then she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and he named him Er. She became pregnant again and gave birth to a son, and she named him Onan. She gave birth to yet another son and she called him Shelah. He was in Chezib when she gave birth to him.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) The Heritage Bible	. .
New American Bible (2002) New American Bible (2011)	. There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua; he married her, and had intercourse with her [1 Chr 2:3]. She conceived and bore a son, whom she named Er. Again she conceived and bore a son, whom she named Onan. Then she bore still another son, whom she named Shelah. She was in Chezib* when she bore him [1 Chr 4:21].
New Jerusalem Bible	There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite called Shua. He made her his wife and slept with her. She conceived and gave birth to a son whom she named Er. She conceived again and gave birth to a son whom she named Onan. Yet again she gave birth to a son whom she named Shelah. She was at Chezib when she gave birth to him.
New RSV Revised English Bible	. There he saw Bathshua the daughter of a Canaanite and married her. He lay with her, and she conceived and bore a son, whom she called Er. She conceived again and bore a son, whom she called Onan. Once more she conceived and bore a son whom she called Shelah, and she was at Kezib when she bore him.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	There Y'udah saw one of the daughters of a certain Kena'ani whose name was Shua, and he took her and slept with her. She conceived and had a son, whom he named 'Er. She conceived again and had a son, and she called him Onan. Then she conceived yet again and had a son whom she called Shelah; he was in K'ziv when she gave birth to him.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and Yah Hudah sees there a daughter of a man - a Kenaaniy whose name is Shuah: and he takes her and goes in to her; and she conceives and births a son; and he calls his name Er. And she conceives again and births a son; and she calls his name Onan.



And she yet again, and births a son;  
and calls his name Shelah:  
and he is at Kezib, when she births him.

Hebrew Names Version  
JPS (Tanakh—1985)

There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and cohabited with her. She conceived and bore a son, and he named him Er. She conceived again and bore a son, and named him Onan. Once again she bore a son, and named him Shelah; he was at Chezib when she bore him.

Judaica Press Complete T.  
Kaplan Translation

There Judah met the daughter [Some say that her name was Alyath (Sefer HaYashar, p.126). Other sources give her name as Bath Shua (Yov'loth 34:20; cf. 38:12; 1 Chronicles 2:3).] of a merchant [(Targum; Pesachim 50a; Rashi). Literally, a 'Canaanite.' The word 'Canaanite,' however, is used to denote a merchant; see Isaiah 23:8, Hosea 12:8, Zechariah 14:21; Proverbs 26:24, Job 40:50. It can come from the word kana, meaning to drive down and hence denote a bargainer or haggler (Ramban; Radak, Sherashim). The Holy Land may have thus been known as the 'Land of Canaan' or 'Trade Land' because it was on the trade route from Mesopotamia to Egypt. Others, however, say that Shua was actually a Canaanite (Saadia; Ibn Ezra; Sefer HaYashar, p. 126; Yov'loth 34:20). See 1 Chronicles 2:3 (Targum; Malbim ad loc.).] named Shua [Shoa is a nation in Babylonia (Isaiah 22:5, Ezekiel 23:23), and if he was not a Canaanite, this may have been his place of origin. The expression, 'his name was Shua' would indicate that he was a righteous man (Sekhel Tov; see note on Genesis 38:1). Some say that he was king of Adullam (Tzava'ath Yehudah 8:2).]. He married her and came to her. She became pregnant and had a son. He named the child Er. She became pregnant again, and had another son. She named him Onan. She gave birth once again to a son, and she named him Shelah. [Judah] was in Keziv when she gave birth to [this child].

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Yehudah saw there a bat ish Kena'ani shmo Shua; and he took her, and went in unto her.  
She conceived, and bore ben; and he called shmo Er.  
And she conceived again, and bore ben; and she called shmo Onan.  
And she yet again conceived, and bore ben; and called shmo Shelah; at Keziv, when she bore him.

Restored Names Version  
*The Scriptures* 1998

And Yehudah saw there a daughter of a certain Kena'anite whose name was Shuwa. And he took her and went in to her. So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Ēr. And she conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shēlah. And he was at Kezib? when she bore him.

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*  
The Expanded Bible

There Judah met a Canaanite girl, the daughter of a man named Shua, and married her. Judah had sexual relations with [went to] her, and she became pregnant [conceived] and gave birth to a son, whom Judah named Er. Later she gave birth to another son and named him Onan. Still later she had another son and named him Shelah. She was at Kezib [“deceiving”; a town near Adullam; probably the same as Aczib; Josh. 15:44] when this third son was born.

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. He married a Canaanite woman and entered into the most intimate relations with the heathen. And she conceived, and bare a

son; and he called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. It was the father, then, who named his first-born son, while the mother selected the name for the second. And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah; and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.

The older sons may thus have been born at Adullam, a city of some importance in later times, Joshua 12:15; Joshua 15:35; 2Chronicles 11:7; Mic. 1:15. Chezib, where Judah was tenting at the time of Shelah's birth, Joshua 15:44; Mic. 1:14, was in the southern part of what was afterward the Plain of Judah. Apparently there was not much difference in the age of the three sons, for the entire story, as here related, took place between the incident at Dothan and the removal of Jacob to Egypt, a period of about twenty-three years.

NET Bible®

There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite man [*Heb* "a man, a Canaanite."] named Shua [*Heb* "and his name was Shua."]. Judah acquired her as a wife [*Heb* "and he took her."] and had marital relations with her [*Heb* "and he went to her." This expression is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.]. She became pregnant [Or "she conceived" (also in the following verse).] and had a son. Judah named [*Heb* "and he called his name." The referent (Judah) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] him Er. She became pregnant again and had another son, whom she named Onan. Then she had [*Heb* "and she added again and she gave birth." The first verb and the adverb emphasize that she gave birth once more.] yet another son, whom she named Shelah. She gave birth to him in Kezib [Or "and he [i.e., Judah] was in Kezib when she gave birth to him."].

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

When he was there, Judah laid eyes on the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. He married her and slept with her. She conceived and gave birth to her first son. Judah named him Er. She conceived again and gave birth to her second son, whom she named Onan. She then gave birth to her third son, and she named him Shelah. (Judah was away in Chezib when she gave birth to him.)

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV

Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and Yehudah [<sup>Praised</sup>] saw there a daughter of a man, one of Kena'an [<sup>Lowered</sup>] and his title was Shu'a [<sup>Wealthy</sup>] and he took her and he came to her, and she conceived and she brought forth a son and he called out his title Eyr [<sup>Awake</sup>], and she conceived again and she brought forth a son and she called out his title Onan [<sup>Strong</sup>], and she continued and she brought forth a son and she called out his title Sheylah [<sup>Petition</sup>] and he existed in Keziv [<sup>False</sup>] with her bringing him forth,...

Concordant Literal Version

And seeing is Judah there the daughter of a man of the Canaanites, and his name is Shua. And taking her is he and is coming to her. And pregnant is she and is bearing a son, and calling is she his name Er. And pregnant is she further and is bearing a son, and is calling his name Onan. And continuing further is she and bearing a son, and calling his name Shelah. And she comes to be in Chezib when bearing them.

A Conservative Version  
Context Group Version

And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. And he took her, and went in to her. And she became pregnant, and gave birth to a son; and he named him Er. And she became pregnant again, and gave birth to a son; and she named him Onan. And she yet again bore a son, and named him Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bore him.

Darby Translation

And Judah saw there the daughter of a Canaanitish man whose name was Shua; and he took her, and went in to her. And she conceived and bore a son; and he called his name Er. And she again conceived and bore a son, and she called his

name Onan. And again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah; and he was at Chezib when she bore him.

- Emphasized Bible .
- English Standard Version .
- English Standard V. – UK .
- Evidence Bible .
- Green’s Literal Translation .
- God’s Truth (Tyndale) .
- King James 2000 Version .
- Modern English Version .

There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shua, and he took her and had relations with her. She conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. She again conceived and bore a son and called his name Shelah. He was at Kezib when she bore him.

- Modern KJV .
- NASB .

Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her and went in to her. So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er. Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan. She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him.

- New European Version .
- New King James Version .
- Owen’s Translation .
- Third Millennium Bible .
- Updated Bible Version 2.11 .
- A Voice in the Wilderness .
- Webster’s Bible Translation .
- World English Bible .
- Young’s Literal Translation .
- Young’s Updated LT .

And Judah sees there the daughter of a man, a Canaanite, whose name is Shuah, and takes her, and goes in unto her. And she conceives and bears a son, and he calls his name Er; and she conceives again, and bears a son, and calls his name Onan; and she adds again, and bears a son, and calls his name Shelah; and he was in Chezib in her bearing him.

**The gist of this passage:** When living with or near his friend Hirah, Judah married a Canaanite woman and had three sons by her: Er, Onan and Shelah.

<b>Genesis 38:2a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
râ’âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #7200 BDB #906
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong’s #8033 BDB #1027



Genesis 38:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> hoo- DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
bath (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i> ]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
K <sup>e</sup> na'ăniy (כְּנַעֲנִי) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -nah- gûh-NEE]	<i>merchant, trader; and is transliterated Canaanite, Canaanites</i>	adjective/nominative gentilic; with the definite article	Strong's #3669 BDB #489

**Translation:** Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite...

Judah, while on this trip, comes across a lovely Canaanite gal who catches his eye. The implication here is, *beauty is skin deep*. God the Holy Spirit never records even her name in this chapter.

You will notice that this chapter is nearly always entitled *Judah and Tamar*; no one ever called this chapter, *Judah and his Canaanite Wife*.

Genesis 38:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
shêm (שָׁמָ) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Showa' (שׁוּא) [pronounced SHOO-ahg']	<i>wealth; transliterated Shua, Shuah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7770 BDB #447

**Translation:**...(his name [is] Shua).

Interestingly enough, her name is not given; but her father's name is given.

There are two men in the Bible with this name; and one place which apparently is given this name as well. This man is named only here.

Genesis 38:2c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 38:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3947 BDB #542

**Translation:** Judah [lit., he] took her...

The verb here is a very common Hebrew verb, and it has a variety of uses. Here, it means *to take in marriage*.

The translations vary here somewhat—some say that Jacob took this woman and some say that he married her. The Hebrew word is lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH] and it is in the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, 3<sup>rd</sup> feminine singular suffix. The simple meaning is *to take* but it is used in a variety of ways. This word is used of Abimelech who had *taken* Abraham's wife due to his lie (Genesis 20:3) and of the servant of Abraham *taking* a woman for Isaac (Genesis 24:4). In conjunction with the word 'ishshâh (אִשְׁשָׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW], it does mean *to take to wife* or *to take a woman to wife* (e.g., Genesis 11:29 25:20 28:1, 6) and it is used perhaps a thousand times throughout the Old Testament. Here, we do not have the Ishshah; and we will have reason to believe later that she is not his right woman (first a foremost is, she is a Canaanite woman who name is never given).

## Genesis 38:2d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

**Translation:** ...and he went into her.

Then Judah has sex with her. It is expressed euphemistically, as it is generally spoken of in the Bible.

The last verb is the Qal imperfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular, 3<sup>rd</sup> feminine singular suffix of bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced boh] and it means *to come, to go, to enter* and is used several thousand times in the OT with a variety of applications. In conjunction with women, it is a Hebrew euphemism for having sex. The scenario appears to be that Judah took her to live with her. It is very possible that Judah's family disapproved of him marrying a Canaanite woman.

**Bible Distortions by Homosexuals:** The vocabulary here is quite important and it is because there are a great many false teachers out there in the world today. One of the latest false teachings which I have become aware of, is the Bible's approval of homosexuality. Now, let me be clear: that is false. The Bible states unequivocally that homosexual acts are sinful. However, for whatever reason, those who commit homosexual acts and are

saved (or just want to pretend that they are spiritual); often come off like they are these great Biblical scholars. They find every place where the plain reading of Scripture that condemns homosexuality, and they come up with some weird interpretation, so that it is not homosexuality, but some other sin, which they know because of a special translation of the key words in the text. This is hogwash. There are maybe a half-dozen or more published Hebrew scholars, and where the Bible speaks of homosexuality, that is what the text means. When you have a half-dozen scholars who have devoted their lives to the ancient Hebrew language, I tend to trust them far more than some gay-boy who read an article and memorized it, because he thinks that it allows him to commit his favorite sin.

So there is no misunderstanding, homosexuals (in behavior) are saved like anyone else—they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and they are saved. Like anyone else, they are saved and they cannot lose their salvation. However, they refuse to admit to God their sins; and therefore, spend their entire spiritual lives out of fellowship, attempting to lead others astray.

You may wonder, *what the heck are you suddenly talking about?* I had an online conversation with an admitted homosexual, and he started talking about how David and Jonathan were lovers and the covenants which they made between each other were covenants of love and marriage. Bullcrap! David and Jonathan made, if memory serves, 3 covenants, and the gist of those covenants is also recorded in context, and none of it deals with love and marriage and sex. You cannot even weirdly interpret those passages as such, and Genesis 38:2 tells us what the proper vocabulary is. Judah takes this woman and he goes into her. The first verb is used for taking this woman in marriage; the second verb is used for have conjugal relations with her. These are the verbs used.

Regarding David and Jonathan—such verbs are never used. They had a great friendship, a category #3 love, in fact, but it was not a physical relationship. How can I state this unequivocally? Because of these two verbs found in this passage but never found in relation to David and Jonathan.

False teachers do this quite often. Especially when it is some sin that they really, really like to do. So they bend and twist Scripture in every way possible, so that they think they have convinced everyone that they are not sinning. However, they don't have to convince you or me; they have to convince God—and they have not done that.

What is odd is, when militant homosexuals interpret the Bible, they take every passage where homosexual behavior is clearly designated, and they claim that it is something else; and then they find passages where no homosexuality of any sort is found, and they attempt to insert it.

Every pastor-teacher who teaches Scripture has a sin nature. No matter what their weakness is, it is still up to them to correctly teach every passage of Scripture. They are not to attempt to justify any particular sin that they like to commit. If this or that passage excoriates them—that is okay—they just learn to play poker like everyone else in the congregation.

**Genesis 38:2** And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite man named Shuah. And he took her and went in to her.

Genesis 38:2 Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite (his name [is] Shua). Judah [lit., *he*] took her and he went into her. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

It appears that Judah found her ravishing and could not live without her because she excited him—and therefore took her (apparently as a wife, but not where his family appears to be involved). Was Judah overcome with lust and desire? Possibly, but we are reading into the text to take that view. In any case, our modern lifestyle is much less modern than its proponents would have you to believe.

Judah used these out-of-town trips to meet women as well. Here he takes a Canaanite woman. This is a problem; and the history of his family should have taught him that this is a problem—but he just went ahead and did it anyway. Judah was sometimes led astray by the ladies.

The problem was not that this was an interracial marriage and God wants to keep the races pure; the problem with this is, she is a Canaanite, and they were a very degenerate people. In fact, they are so degenerate that God will have the children of Israel, 400 years hence, wipe most of them out. You may recall that Esau's Hittite wives were very troubling to his parents.

The Canaanite woman is not named, but her father's name means *wealth*. So, she is the daughter of wealth. It is possible that, Judah, even knowing of his family's history with the Canaanites, figured, *the problem is, they did not marry into class*. So, whereas Judah may have viewed Esau, his uncle, as making the mistake of marrying the wrong kind of heathen woman, Judah marries a rich one, thinking, somehow, that this will be better.

God has sent Abraham and his sons to the land of Canaan; and Israel will be commanded by God to destroy the Canaanites. Therefore, we ought to know something about these people.

### Doctrine of the Canaanites

1. The Canaanites were descended from Ham. Genesis 10:6
2. They were an accursed race. Judah would have known very little about the Canaanites from Scripture, apart from Genesis 9:24–26 *When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."* It is possible that Judah (of the people of Shem) was unaware of the Scriptures. However, he would have known them by reputation and by their actions.
3. The Canaanites were comprised of seven distinct nations. Deut. 7:1
  - 1) This is where it gets to be a little tricky. There is a specific group of people called the Canaanites, descended from Canaan, the son of Ham.
  - 2) However, when they established themselves in Canaan, people who came after them to live in Canaan were sometimes called Canaanites as well, after the land where they lived.
  - 3) How important a distinction this is, is debatable. But that helps to explain why seemingly disparate groups of people are sometimes all called Canaanites. Context would be the guide here; but the distinction is not always important.
4. The Canaanites are described as...
  - 1) Great and mighty. Num. 13:28 Deut. 7:1
  - 2) Idolatrous. Deut. 29:17
  - 3) Superstitious. Deut. 18:9–11
  - 4) Profane and wicked. Leviticus 18:27
  - 5) Extremely numerous. Deut. 7:17
  - 6) They had many strong cities. Num. 13:28 Deut. 1:28
  - 7) They were expelled for wickedness. Deut. 9:4 Deut. 18:12
5. Abraham and the Canaanites:
  - 1) Abraham was called to dwell among them. Genesis 12:1–5
  - 2) He was promised the country of the Canaanites; their land would be his inheritance. Genesis 13:14–17 Genesis 15:18 Genesis 17:8
  - 3) Abraham had his faith tried by living among the Canaanites. Genesis 12:6 Genesis 13:7
  - 4) Some Canaanites were kind to the patriarchs. Genesis 14:13 Genesis 23:6
6. Israel was commanded...
  - 1) To make no league with. Deut. 7:2 Judges 2:2
  - 2) Not to intermarry with. Deut. 7:3 Joshua 23:12
  - 3) Not to follow idols of. Exodus 23:24 Deut. 7:25
  - 4) Not to follow customs of. Leviticus 18:26 Leviticus 18:27
  - 5) To destroy, without mercy. Deut. 7:2 Deut. 7:24

### Doctrine of the Canaanites

- 6) To destroy all vestiges of their idolatry Exodus 23:24 Deut. 7:5 Deut. 7:25
- 7) Not to fear. Deut. 7:17 Deut. 7:18 Deut. 31:7
- 8) Terrified at the approach of Israel. Exodus 15:15 Exodus 15:16 Joshua 2:9–11 Joshua 5:1
- 9) Partially subdued by Israel. Jos. 10:1–11:23 Jdg. 1:1–36;
- 7. Some Canaanites were left in the land, even after Joshua conquered it. They were left for several reasons:
  - 1) To try Israel. Judges 2:21 Judges 2:22 Judges 3:1–4
  - 2) To chastise Israel. Num. 33:55 Judges 2:3 Judges 4:2
  - 3) To ensnare Israel. Judges 2:3 Judges 2:19 Psalm 106:36–38
- 8. Some descendants of Canaan still remained in our Lord's time. Matthew 15:22 Mark 7:26;

Primarily from R. A. Torrey's New Topical Textbook; from e-Sword, topic: Canaanites (heavily edited).

Given the doctrine above, even though God is fully aware of the degeneracy of the Canaanites; it is not clear that Judah appreciates that.

### Genesis 38:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced haw-RAW]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHAD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** She conceived and bore a son,...

Judah is married and his wife conceives and bears him a son.

### Genesis 38:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 38:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
The NET Bible: <i>Some mss read this verb as feminine, "she called," to match the pattern of the next two verses. But the MT, "he called," should probably be retained as the more difficult reading.</i> <sup>11</sup>			
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
'Êr (עֵר) [pronounced gair]	awake; transliterated Er	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6147 BDB #735

**Translation:** ...and he called him Er.

One thing becomes very clear. Neither Judah's wife nor Judah thought about God in relation to the child being born. Judah names the first male child; he simply names him *awake*.

I took some liberties with the translation here. Literally, this reads, *and so he calls his name Er. Er means awake.*

'Êr (עֵר) [pronounced gair] and it is the Qal participle of 'ûwr (עוּר) [pronounced goor] which means *to see*, but it has the connotation of opening one's eyes or just waking up. Judah names him. Having a son was quite an eye-opener for him. How Judah views his wife/woman is not clear; but having this first child opened his eyes.

**Genesis 38:3** And she conceived and bore a son. And he called his name Er.

Genesis 38:3 She conceived and bore a son, and he called him Er. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There is actually very little focus in this narrative on the woman taken by Judah. We do not even know if they are properly married (although they appear to be, given that she has 3 sons by him; and later in this narrative, she will be called *Judah's woman*). We do not know her name, only that she is the daughter of Shuah. We will find out that two of their sons are pretty worthless as human beings.

I am of the opinion that, most (or all) of the people named in Scripture were believers; and most of the people who play a part in a Scriptural narrative, but are not named, are unbelievers. The story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates this.

Now, you might pose the question, *what about 1Chronicles 2:3? Isn't this woman named in 1Chronicles 2:3? 1Chronicles 2:3 The sons of Judah: Er, Onan and Shelah; these three Bath-shua the Canaanite bore to him. Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death.* So there is her name, right? *Bath-shua*. However, *Bath-shua* literally means *the daughter of Shuah*. So, you think that she has been named, but really, it is her father who is named, and she is his daughter.

<sup>11</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 3, 2016.



Sometimes, we find out a great deal about the spiritual life of the parents by the name they give their children. Their first child is named *awake*. Judah names the first son. There is no reference to God in his name and we are not told what is said at his birth.

### Genesis 38:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
ôwd (וַעַד) [pronounced <i>ôhd</i> ]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i> ]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** Then she conceived again and she bore [another] son...

Judah's wife has another son. This certainly indicates that they had an active marriage.

### Genesis 38:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027



### Genesis 38:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
ʾŌwnân (אֹנָן) [pronounced oh-NAWN]	<i>strong</i> ; transliterated <i>Onan</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #209 BDB #20

**Translation:** ...and she called him Onan.

Judah's wife names the second son; and she calls him *strong*. She is not thinking about God either.

*Onan* means *strong*.

Immediately they have another child, and they have a *modern* relationship where she named the next child ʾŌwnân (אֹנָן) [pronounced oh-NAWN] and it means *vigorous, having ability and power, successful*. By the second child in an affair such as this, the man is beginning to become a bit weary of the woman and is ready to go on business trips and come back a little less often. What the woman has to offer is children for him so she emphasizes that this child is strong, healthy and vigorous with great potential—this should capture his attention and imagination. However, this didn't work out because Judah appears to be going away more often. Several years passed before they had a third child. The two Hebrew words which precede this third son have to do with persistence and continuation along with the word *to add*. This indicates that they continued at their living together and persisted at having a family, even though they had sex less and less often and Judah was going on more and more business trips to tend to his investments out of town. Judah wasn't far away; this town was southwest of Adullah in the lowlands of Judah.

**Genesis 38:4** And she conceived again, and bore a son, and she called his name Onan.

Genesis 38:4 Then she conceived again and she bore [another] son and she called him Onan. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

We do not know whether Judah took her as his wife and brought her back, or if he kept her there, as his live-in girlfriend in southern Judah (those who settle this area will be descendants of Judah and the land will be called Judah).

The second child is named *strong*. Notice, it is the mother naming the second child.

### Genesis 38:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâçaph (יָצַח) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again; to continue to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
ʾôwd (וַיְוֹד) [pronounced gohd]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728

## Genesis 38:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i> ]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** Then she adds again and bears a son,...

She continues to bear children; and a third son is born.

## Genesis 38:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Shêlâh (שֵׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shay-LAW</i> ]	<i>a petition; transliterated Shelah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7956 BDB #1017

**Translation:** ...and she calls him Shelah.

The third son is born; and there are words used which suggest that there are only 3 boys born. The third son is *Shelah*, which means a *petition*.

You will note with the names of these 3 sons, Judah is thinking nothing about God.

This Canaanite woman has at least 3 male children by Judah. She names the third child a *petition*. None of these sons has a name related to the God of Jacob.

God has given us the privilege of bringing life into this world; and our thinking when we have our first child may or may not include the recognition of God as the Giver of All Life. In the time of Judah, this recognition would often result in a name which reflects our thinking (and whether or not God is considered when a child is born).

### Genesis 38:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
K <sup>e</sup> zîyb (כְּזִיב) [pronounced <i>kehz-EEB</i> ]	<i>false; transliterated Chezib</i>	proper singular noun/location	Strong's #3580 BDB #469
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i> ]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
When combined with a bêyth preposition, the infinitive construct often takes on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i> . With the bêyth preposition, the Qal infinitive construct serve as a temporal marker which denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb. <sup>12</sup>			
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>him, it; he; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

**Translation:** And Jacob [lit., *he*] was in Chezib when she bore him.

I don't know exactly the import of this, but Judah is elsewhere when the 3<sup>rd</sup> son is born (it appears that is the son).

I may want to go back and redo this and add some additional sources.

### The Meaning of Chezib

Chezib means *disappointment, deception*, which is a pretty odd thing to name your son (who named him?). K<sup>e</sup>zîyb (כְּזִיב) [pronounced *kehz-EEB*] is only found in this passage, although it is possible that it is related to Achezib (or 'Ak<sup>e</sup>zîyb) (אֲכִזִּיב) [pronounced *ak-ZEEB*] (found in Joshua 15:44 and Micah 1:14) if not the same place, but probably not the same place as the Achezib up in Asher (in Joshua 19:29 and Judges 1:31). The verb which this word is related to is kâzab (כָּזַב) [pronounced *kaw-ZAB*], which means *to lie, to deceive*; and the related noun is kâzâb (כְּזָב) [pronounced *kaw-ZAWB*] which means *a lie or a falsehood*.

It is a tough call here. It is very tempting to say that the noun and the verb proceeded from the name of the

<sup>12</sup> Paraphrased from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

## The Meaning of Chezib

town in this case, because the first time that we have any word related to these words is in Job 6:28 24:25 34:6 41:9 other than that, all the related words occur but one time in the Law (Num. 23:19 wherein it reads *God is not a man that he should lie*). This should all be quite fascinating to the etymologist who would have to decide which came first, the chicken or the egg? In this case, which came first, the town or the meaning of the name? This could very well be a possible means of identifying the elusive date of Job (with other pertinent philological evidence). If Judah's reputation and this town were interrelated and he continually told his wife that he had to go to Chezib on business, it couldn't take but a few years for the name to become synonymous with lying and deception. This would place the book of Job perhaps 50–300 years later, but definitely before the Law and the exodus (as neither are mentioned in the book of Job). If Job predates this time period to even soon after the flood, we have the problem where these words are used several times in the book of Job yet are barely found within the realm of Moses' vocabulary (one use).

### Chapter Outline

### Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 38:5 Then she adds again and bears a son, and she calls him Shelah. And Jacob [lit., *he*] was in Chezib when she bore him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:2–5 Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite (his name [is] Shua). Judah [lit., *he*] took her and he went into her. She conceived and bore a son, and he called him Er. Then she conceived again and she bore [another] son and she called him Onan. Then she adds again and bears a son, and she calls him Shelah. And Jacob [lit., *he*] was in Chezib when she bore him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:2–5 While he was there, Judah saw a woman who caught his eye, who was a Canaanite, the daughter of Shua. Jacob took her and he went into her. She conceived and bore a son that Jacob named Er. Then she conceived again, bearing another son, and she named him Onan. Then she bore another son and called him Shelah. Jacob was in Chezib when she bore the last son. (Kukis paraphrase)

Some of the comments I wrote in my original examination of Genesis are preserved below.

## Memories from 1994/2016

From 1994: One of the reasons that we study almost each and every word in the Bible is that they were placed there by God for a variety of reasons. If we just assume it is just the name of some town somewhere with no other relation to the rest of Scripture, then we miss some of the investigative work available to us. I unfortunately did not begin serious personal study until I got my first computer during the summer of 1994. I had just been given the ax by a wonderful woman whom I thought that I was going to marry. This, combined with a terrible summer in real estate, allowed me to begin my personal studies in God's Word. At the age of 44, now a little over a year later where my stamina at the keyboard has improved somewhat, I cannot imagine doing what I would like to do—that is, exegete every book in the Bible as well as I have been able to exegete this particular book of Genesis. There are several revisions which I need to make and material which I have which I have not consulted yet, but in all this study, it has caused me to realize how inexhaustible are the riches of the Word of God. I have been given training in two fields prior to this time which have been incredibly beneficial to me: I spent nearly 25 years under the ministry of R.B. Thieme, whose knowledge of the languages and the Scriptures were almost unparalleled in his day; and I spent almost 20 years teaching Geometry, a marvelous form of logic, something which many Biblical expositors (and their know-it-all critics from the other side of the pulpit) are totally lacking in. Although I taught over 1000 how to think in a logical, deductive manner, this training also rubbed off on me, which I have found immeasurably valuable in my study of God's Word.

I am looking back at this in the year 2016 when I have just turned 66 years old. I had no idea how much I would be able to study and write over these past 22 years. It is amazing how God works in our lives. There are so

## Memories from 1994/2016

many things which happened all at once, all at the right time, and all which moved me into the direction of studying the Old Testament and then writing about it. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

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Judah's wife named the last couple children as she was a liberated woman for the second child and possibly a woman who was alone for the third child. Shelah, or Shêlâh (שֵׁלָה) [pronounced *shay-LAW*] is a very unusual name for a young man. The alleged meanings for him include *to draw out, to extract* (shâlâh—שָׁלַח); to be quiet, *to be at ease* and, quite possibly, *to be prosperous* (shâlâh or shâlêz). His wife quite obviously had a way with words and she named the child drawn out of her quiet and prosperous.

### Reviewing Genesis 38:1–5/Time Constraints on This Chapter

Genesis 38:1–5 It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her and went in to her, and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

There are very heavy time constraints upon this narrative. Judah has returned with his brothers and told his father that his favorite son, Joseph, is probably dead. We will follow Joseph in other chapters, where a very specific number of years are laid out, during which this narrative must occur. Before Joseph is sold into slavery, he is 17 years old (Genesis 37:2). When he ascends to the office of prime minister of Egypt, he is 30 years old (Genesis 41:46). This will be followed by 7 years of prosperity (as predicted by Joseph—Genesis 41:47–48). When the years of famine began, men from all over the world came to buy grain from Joseph (Genesis 41:56–57). When famine came to Canaan (this would be in year 8), the sons of Israel went down to Joseph for grain (Genesis 42:–18). This could take place in no more than 22 years.

Judah's starting point is *going down from his brothers and turning aside to Hirah, an Adullamite*. He will reunite with his brothers and fathers in about 22 years to go down to Egypt for grain.

On the other hand, this narrative has events which require a minimum amount of time to occur (Judah will marry, father 3 children, then marry off the first child, and finally, his 3<sup>rd</sup> son reaches an age where he is old enough to be married). At a bare minimum, that is 20 years, allowing that his sons could be married in their middle teens (given the influence of the Canaanite culture, that is not unlikely).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

## Judah Chooses Tamar as a Wife for his Oldest Son and then Dismisses Her



And so takes Judah a woman for Er, his firstborn—and her name, Tamar. And so is Er, a firstborn of Judah, evil in [two] eyes of Y<sup>e</sup>howah; and so kills him Y<sup>e</sup>howah. And so said Judah to Onan, “Go in unto a woman of your brother and do the duty [of your brother] to her and raise up seed for your brother.”

Genesis  
38:6–8

Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name [was] Tamar. Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, so that Y<sup>e</sup>howah executed him. Judah said to [his son] Onan, “Go in to the wife of your brother and do the duty [on behalf of your brother] to her, and raise up seed for your brother.”

Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name was Tamar. Er, Judah’s firstborn, was evil in the estimation of Jehovah, so Jehovah killed him. Judah told his son, Onan, “Go in to your brother’s wife and perform your levirate duty to her, to raise up descendants for your brother.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so takes Judah a woman for Er, his firstborn—and her name, Tamar. And so is Er, a firstborn of Judah, evil in [two] eyes of Yehowah; and so kills him Yehowah. And so said Judah to Onan, “Go in unto a woman of your brother and do the duty [of your brother] to her and raise up seed for your brother.”
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum (Onkelos)	. And Jehuda took a wife for Her his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. And Her the firstborn of Jehuda was evil before the Lord, and the Lord caused him to die. And Jehuda said to Onan, Go in with the wife of thy brother, and associate with her, and raise up seed to thy brother. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862).
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jehuda took a wife for Er his firstborn, a daughter of Shem the great, whose name was Tamar. But Er the firstborn of Jehuda was evil before the Lord because he had not given his seed unto his wife, and the anger of the Lord prevailed against him, and the Lord slew him. And Jehuda said unto Onan, Enter thou to thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed unto the name of thy brother.
Jerusalem targum Revised Douay-Rheims	. And Juda took a wife for Her his firstborn, whose name was Thamar. And Her, the firstborn of Juda, was wicked in the sight of the Lord: and was slain by him. Juda, therefore add to Onan his son: Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, that you may raise seed to your brother.
Latin Vulgate Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	. Yudah took a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. Er, Yudah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of Mar-Yah. Mar-Yah killed him. Yudah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her, and raise up seed to your brother."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Judah took a wife for Er, his first-born, whose name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. And Judah said to Onan, Go in to your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up an offspring to your brother.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Judas took a wife for Er his first-born, whose name was Thamar. And Er, the first-born of Judas, was wicked before the Lord; and God killed him. And Judas said to Aunan, Go in to your brother's wife, and marry her as her brother-in-law, and raise up seed to your brother.
NETS (Greek) Brenton's Septuagint	. .

Significant differences:

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	And Judah took a wife for his first son Er, and her name was Tamar. Now Er, Judah's first son, did evil in the eyes of the Lord, so that he put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, Go in to your brother's wife and do what it is right for a husband's brother to do; make her your wife and get offspring for your brother.
Easy English	Judah got a wife for his oldest son, Er. Her name was Tamar. But God saw that Er, the first born son of Judah, was bad. So the Lord made him die. Then Judah said to Onan 'Marry your dead brother's wife. You must do this because you are her dead husband's brother. You must have a son for your dead brother.
Easy-to-Read Version	Judah chose a woman named Tamar to be the wife of his first son Er. But Er did many bad things. The LORD was not happy with him, so the LORD killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and sleep with your dead brother's wife. Become like a husband to her. If children are born, they will belong to your brother Er."
<i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup>	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	For his first son Er, Judah got a wife whose name was Tamar. Er's conduct was evil, and it displeased the Lord, so the Lord killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's widow. Fulfill your obligation to her as her husband's brother, so that your brother may have descendants."
International Children's B.	Judah chose a girl named Tamar to be the wife of his first son Er. Er was Judah's oldest son. But he did what the Lord said was evil. So the Lord killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and have physical relations with your dead brother's wife. It is your duty to provide children for your brother in this way."
<i>The Message</i>	Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name was Tamar. But Judah's firstborn, Er, grievously offended God and GOD took his life. So Judah told Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's widow; it's the duty of a brother-in-law to keep your brother's line alive."
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	Judah got a wife for his oldest son Er. Her name was Tamar. But Judah's oldest son Er was evil in the Lord's eyes. So the Lord put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife. After all, you are her brother-in-law. So carry out your duty to her. Provide children for your brother."
New Simplified Bible	For his first son Er, Judah got a wife whose name was Tamar. Er was an evil man. It displeased Jehovah. So Jehovah killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan: »Go sleep with your brother's widow. Fulfill your obligation to her as her husband's brother. That way your brother may have descendants.«

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible	Judah married his oldest son Er to a woman named Tamar. But the Lord considered Judah's oldest son Er immoral, and the Lord put him to death. Judah said to Onan, "Go to your brother's wife, do your duty as her brother-in-law, and provide children for your brother."
Contemporary English V.	Later, Judah chose Tamar as a wife for Er, his oldest son. But Er was very evil, and the LORD took his life. So Judah told Onan, "It's your duty to marry Tamar and have a child for your brother."
The Living Bible	When his oldest son, Er, grew up, Judah arranged for him to marry a girl named Tamar. But Er was a wicked man, and so the Lord killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother, Onan, "You must marry Tamar, as our law requires of a dead man's brother; so that her sons from you will be your brother's heirs."
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	.



New Life Version	Judah chose a wife for his firstborn son Er. Her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's first-born, was sinful in the eyes of the Lord. So the Lord took his life. Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife. Do your duty as her brother-in-law. Have children for your brother."
New Living Translation	In the course of time, Judah arranged for his firstborn son, Er, to marry a young woman named Tamar. But Er was a wicked man in the LORD'S sight, so the LORD took his life. 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."

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	[Well, years later], Judah took a woman named Tamar to be the woman of his first-born, Er. But Er was wicked before Jehovah, so God killed him. Then Judah told Aunan: 'You must go and [have sex] with your brother's woman... since you're her brother-in-law, you must take her so [she can] raise a seed for your brother.'
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	Judah found a wife for his oldest son Er. Her name was Tamar. But the LORD considered Er, Judah's oldest son, to be wicked—so he put him to death. So Judah instructed Onan, "You are to have sexual relations with your dead brother's wife, performing the duty of a brother-in-law with her, and have offspring for your brother."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Juda found for his eldest son, Her, a wife whose name was Thamar; but this first-born son of his was a sinner, and God saw it and cut him off in his prime. Whereupon Juda bade his son Onan mate with the widow, and do a husband's duty by her, so as to beget children in his brother's name;...
Revised Knox Bible Translation for Translators	When Judah's oldest son Er <i>grew up</i> , Judah got a wife for him, a woman named Tamar. But Er did something that Yahweh considered to be very wicked, so Yahweh caused him to die. Then Judah said to Onan, "Your older brother died without having any sons. So marry his widow and have sex [EUP] with her. That is what our customs require that you should do."

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Judah was to receive out a wife for Er, his first-born, and her name is Tamar. Er, Judah's first-born, was to be evil in the eye of Jehovah, even was Jehovah to kill him. Judah was to say to Onan: Be coming in to your brother's wife, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law, even be raising up seed to your brother.
Conservapedia	Judah procured a wife for his firstborn, Er. Her name was Tamar. Er, firstborn of Judah, became evil in the eyes of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. Judah then said to Onan, "Marry your brother's wife, and do your levirate duty toward her, and raise up an heir for your brother." This is the first instance of the Levirate Law, by which a man would marry his dead brother's wife, and the first son of that union would inherit the dead brother's estate.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	When Judah took a wife for his eldest son Ar, her name was Thamar. But Ar, Judah's eldest son, was wicked in the presence of the EVER-LIVING, so the Lord caused him to die. Judah consequently said to Onan. " Marry the wife of your brother, and raise up an heir for your brother."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Judas gave Er his eldest son, a wife whose name was Thamar. But this Er Judas eldest son was wicked in the sight of the Lord, wherefore the Lord slew him. Then said Judas unto Onan: go in to your brothers wife and marry her, and stir up seed unto your brother.

HCSB	Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the Lord's sight, and the Lord put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife. Perform your duty as her brother-in-law and produce offspring for your brother."
Jubilee Bible 2000 H. C. Leupold	. And Judah procured a wife for Er, his first-born, and her name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the estimation of Yahweh, so Yahweh let him die. Then Judah said to Onan, go in unto thy brother's wife and marry her as brother-in-law, and raise up spring to thy brother.
Lexham English Bible NIV, ©2011 Tree of Life Version	. . .

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	.
New American Bible (2002)	Judah got a wife named Tamar for his first-born, Er. But Er, Judah's first-born, greatly offended the LORD; so the LORD took his life. Then Judah said to Onan, "Unite with your brother's widow, in fulfillment of your duty as brother-in-law, and thus preserve your brother's line." Preserve your brother's line: literally "raise up seed for your brother." The ancient Israelites regarded as very important their law of levirate, or "brother-in-law" marriage; see notes on ⇒ Deut 25:5; ⇒ Ruth 2:20. In the present story, it is primarily Onan's violation of this law, rather than the means he used to circumvent it, that brought on him God's displeasure (⇒ Genesis 38:9-10).
New American Bible (2011)	Judah got a wife named Tamar for his firstborn, Er. But Er, Judah's firstborn, greatly offended the LORD; so the LORD took his life [1 Chr 2:3]. d Then Judah said to Onan, "Have intercourse with your brother's wife, in fulfillment of your duty as brother-in-law [Dt 25:5; Mt 22:24; Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28], and thus preserve your brother's line [lit., "raise up seed for your brother": an allusion to the law of levirate, or "brother-in-law," marriage; see notes on Dt 25:5; Ru 2:20. Onan's violation of this law brought on him God's punishment (vv. 9–10)]."
New Jerusalem Bible	Judah took a wife for his first-born Er, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's first-born, offended Yahweh, and Yahweh killed him. Then Judah said to Onan, 'Take your brother's wife, and do your duty as her brother-in-law, to maintain your brother's line.'
New RSV Revised English Bible	. Judah found a wife for his eldest son Er; her name was Tamar. But Judah's eldest son Er was wicked in the LORD's sight, and the LORD took away his life. Then Judah told Onan to sleep with his brother's wife, to do his duty as the husband's brother and raise up offspring for his brother.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Y'hudah took a wife for 'Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But 'Er, Y'hudah's firstborn, was evil from <i>ADONAI'S</i> perspective, so <i>ADONAI</i> killed him. Y'hudah said to Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's wife — perform the duty of a husband's brother to her, and preserve your brother's line of descent."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Hudah takes a woman for Er his firstbirth, whose name is Tamar. And Er, the firstbirth of Yah Hudah, is evil in the eyes of Yah Veh; and Yah Veh deathifies him.

And Yah Hudah says to Onan,  
Go in to the woman of your brother  
and be her levirate  
and raise up seed to your brother.

Israeli Authorized Version

And Yhudah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. And Er, Yhudah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of YY ; and YY slew him. And Yhudah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

Judah got a wife for Er his first-born; her name was Tamar. 7But Er, Judah's first-born, was displeasing to the Lord, and the Lord took his life. 8Then Judah said to Onan, "Join with your brother's wife and do your duty by her as a brother-in-law, and provide offspring for your brother."

Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation

Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar [Literally a 'palm tree.' This is a name that would recur in David's family (1Samuel 13:1), since he was a descendant of Tamar (see note on Genesis 38:29). Since it says 'her name was Tamar,' we see that she was righteous. Some say that she was from Aram Naharaim (Tzava'ath Yehudah 10:1; Yov'loth 41:1).]. Judah's first-born Er was evil in God's eyes, and God made him die. Judah said to Onan, 'Marry your brother's wife, and thus fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law [*Yibum* in Hebrew; see Deuteronomy 25:5; Ruth 1:15. Some say that this was instituted by Judah (Bereshith Rabbah 85).] to her. You will then raise children to keep your brother's [name] alive [Literally, 'you will then raise up seed for your brother.'].'

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Yehudah took a wife for Er his bechor, whose shem was Tamar.  
And Er, bechor Yehudah, was rah in the eyes of Hashem; and Hashem slaughtered him.  
And Yehudah said unto Onan, Go in unto eshet achicha, and enter into levirate marriage with her, and raise up zera to achicha.

Restored Names Version  
*The Scriptures* 1998

And Yehudah took a wife for Ēr his first-born, and her name was Tamar. But Ēr, Yehudah's first-born, was evil in the eyes of הוהי, and הוהי took his life. And Yehudah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn; her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord killed him [in judgment]. Then Judah told Onan, "Go in to your brother's widow, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law [under the levirate marriage custom]; [be her husband and] raise children for [the name of] your brother."

The Expanded Bible

Judah ·chose [<sup>L</sup>took] a girl named Tamar to be the wife of his ·first son [firstborn] Er. But Er, Judah's ·oldest son [firstborn], did ·what the Lord said was evil [<sup>L</sup>evil in the eyes/sight of the Lord] so the Lord killed him. Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and have sexual relations with your dead brother's wife. It is your duty to ·provide children for your brother in this way [<sup>L</sup>raise up a seed for your brother; Deut. 25:5–10]."

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

And Judah took a wife for Er, his first-born, whose name was Tamar, apparently also a Canaanite. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him. If Judah had intended to curb the wickedness of his oldest son by an early marriage, he was disappointed; Jehovah punished Er with an early death. And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. This custom of marriage between a man and the

widow of his brother, known as the levirate, was afterward definitely fixed by the Lord, Deut. 25:5. It was understood that the family of the older son should thereby be established.

NET Bible®

Judah acquired [*Heb* “and Judah took.”] a wife for Er his firstborn; her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was evil in the Lord’s sight, so the Lord killed him. Then Judah said to Onan, “Have sexual relations with [*Heb* “go to.” The expression is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.] your brother’s wife and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her so that you may raise<sup>14</sup> up a descendant for your brother.”.

Syndein/Thieme

And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn whose {the wife's} name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah/God and Jehovah/God slew him. And Judah kept on saying unto Onan, Go in unto your brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed/progeny to your brother.

{Note: This is the 'law of posterity'. If a man dies leaving a wife and no male children, his name and posterity will be considered gone. But if a brother impregnates the widow, then her child will bear the name of the dead brother and his name will be legally continued. After the Exodus this was very important. The family names were to be continued. And, every 50 years, the land reverted back to that family, unless that family name had died out.}.

The Voice

Now Judah arranged for Er, his firstborn, to marry a woman named Tamar. But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was a *particularly* wretched human being in the eyes of the Eternal One, and so the Eternal ended his life. *Judah summoned his second son, Onan.*

**Judah (to Onan):** *You know our customs and the duty of a brother-in-law in a situation like this. You must go and marry your brother’s wife and make sure your brother has an heir.*

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

American KJV

Benner’s Mechanical Trans.

...and Yehudah [<sup>Praised</sup>] took a woman for Eyr [<sup>Awake</sup>] his firstborn and her title was Tamar [<sup>Palm tree</sup>], and Eyr [<sup>Awake</sup>], the firstborn of Yehudah [<sup>Praised</sup>], existed dysfunctional in the eyes of YHWH [<sup>He Exists</sup>] and YHWH [<sup>He Exists</sup>] killed him, and Yehudah [<sup>Praised</sup>] said to Onan [<sup>Strong</sup>], come to the woman of your brother and do the marriage duty to her and make a seed rise for your brother,...

Concordant Literal Version

And taking is Judah a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name is Thamar. And coming is it that Er, Judah's firstborn, is evil in the eyes of Yahweh, and Yahweh is putting him to death. And saying is Judah to Onan, "Come to your brother's wife and wed her, your brother's widow, and raise seed for your brother."

A Conservative Version

Context Group Version

And Judah took a woman { or wife } for Er his first-born, and her name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of YHWH. And YHWH killed him. And Judah said to Onan, Go in to your brother's woman { or wife }, and perform the duty of a man { or husband } 's brother to her, and raise up seed to your brother.

Darby Translation

*Emphasized Bible*

English Standard Version

English Standard V. – UK

Evidence Bible

Green’s Literal Translation

God’s Truth (Tyndale)

King James 2000 Version

Modern English Version

Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD killed him.

Then Judah said to Onan, "Go have relations with your brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up descendants for your brother."

Modern KJV  
NASB

Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life. Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother."

New European Version  
New King James Version

Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him. And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."

Owen's Translation  
Third Millennium Bible  
Updated Bible Version 2.11  
A Voice in the Wilderness  
Webster's Bible Translation  
World English Bible  
Young's Literal Translation  
Young's Updated LT

And Judah takes a wife for Er, his first-born, and her name is Tamar; and Er, Judah's first-born, is evil in the eyes of Jehovah, and Jehovah does put him to death. And Judah says to Onan, "Go in unto the wife of your brother, and marry her, and raise up seed to your brother."

**The gist of this passage:**

Judah takes a wife for Er, his oldest son; but Er is taken out by the sin unto death soon thereafter. Judah implores Onan, the next in line, to marry Er's wife and raise up seed in her for his brother.

Genesis 38:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Êr (עֵר) [pronounced <i>gair</i> ]	<i>awake; transliterated Er</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6147 BDB #735



## Genesis 38:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
b <sup>e</sup> kôwr (בְּכוֹר) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> KOHR]	<i>firstborn</i> ; metaphorically used for <i>anything which is chief or first of its kind</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1060 BDB #114

**Translation:** Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn.

This is an interesting choice—Jacob, who left home and found a wife for himself, decides to find a wife for Er, his eldest son. If you remember correctly, Abraham, Judah's great grandfather, had his eldest servant find a wife for Isaac. Judah's father, Jacob, went east and found a wife on his own (as Judah did for himself).

This seems to indicate that Judah realizes that choosing his own wife for himself may not have been the way to go.

Several translations begin this verse with words like, *sometime later*. When studying this and the chapters which parallel this chapter in time, it is important to remember that we are under specific time limitations. From the time that Judah leaves his brothers, gets married, has 3 children, to the time that he returns to his family, only a short period of time has gone by—22 years or so. So, when Judah finds a wife for Er, he is perhaps anywhere between 14 and 19 (at the oldest). Interestingly enough, God is going to hold Er accountable for his behavior at a very young age. Given the behavior of his father and wife in this chapter, whatever Er did, at a very young age (14 to 19) must have been highly irregular.

### Arranged Marriages:

Genesis 38:6a And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born,...

Time passes—say 10 or 15 years. When Er is old enough to take a wife, Judah finds one for him. This was a common custom of that era. You will recall that Abraham had his most trusted servant choose a wife for Isaac.

A year or so ago, I talked to an Indian (from India), and we talked about arranged marriages. This was very common in his culture and he was comfortable with it. He was surprised that I, as an American, also believed it to be a reasonable practice as well. Few people know you as well as your parents do. They know who you befriend, who you do not like to spend time with; what you like to spend time doing, how you think, how you reason and how you communicate. Your parents know other families with daughters of a marriageable age. They know these families, what sort of people they are; and they know about the daughter, what she is like. They know the values that she is raised with.

Many times, the son of one family may be promised to the daughter of another, and they might never meet until their wedding day. Other more progressive parents might put them together, with the knowledge that they will marry; just to see what happens.

This is what Judah did—he found a wife for Er, and they married. He did this despite—or, possibly because—he chose his own wife, a Canaanite woman. He seemed to make a better choice for his son than he did for himself. We know nothing about this Canaanite wife—not even her name. She and Judah obviously had relations, but all that is unsaid about her suggests that Judah, in retrospect, probably could have chosen better for himself. This is very likely the reason he found a woman for Er, and while Er was still young.

Given the time frame to which we are confined, Er probably marries at age 14 or 15.

## Genesis 38:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Tâmâr (תָּמָר) [pronounced <i>taw-MAWR</i> ]	<i>palm-tree, date-palm and is transliterated Tamar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #8559 BDB #1071

Interestingly enough, this, when used as a simple noun, is a masculine singular noun; however, as a name, it is considered a feminine singular noun, since it is applied to women.

**Translation:** Her name [was] Tamar.

The woman's name was Tamar. She will be one of the two very famous Tamar's from Scripture. The daughter of King David, named Tamar, is probably named for this Tamar.

I personally believe that almost everyone who has a right man or right woman is introduced to that person at least once in their lives. They may not be able to do anything about it because they are in the midst of an affair with another person; they might be married to this right person and ruin it with an affair with another; they are usually married to the wrong person out of lust and lack of self-control; or they meet both their right person and they meet someone a bit flashier and they gravitate toward the flash. Judah should have waited. He should not have married a Canaanite woman. There was enough history in the family of Abraham to warn him against doing that.

It is likely that the person that he met here was his right woman. Please understand what he did; he went out and saw a woman who was quite attractive and quite appealing and he walked up to her and said, how would you like the marry my son? He did not approach her for himself. She accepted. Whatever it was that he said, it appealed to her and she accepted.

In any case, it seemed a bad idea to Judah to just let his first son marry whatever woman he fancied. My guess is, Judah put a lot of careful thought into this woman, more than he did when he took up with the Canaanite woman. We know Tamar by name; we do not know the Canaanite woman by name.

Genesis 38:6 Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name [was] Tamar. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 38:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224



Genesis 38:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
Ēr (ער) [pronounced <i>gair</i> ]	<i>awake</i> ; transliterated <i>Er</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6147 BDB #735
b <sup>e</sup> kôwr (רִכּוֹב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>e</sup>KOHR</i> ]	<i>firstborn</i> ; metaphorically used for <i>anything which is chief or first of its kind</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1060 BDB #114
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (הַיְדוּדָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
ra <sup>c</sup> (עַר) [pronounced <i>rahg</i> ]	<i>evil, bad, wicked; evil in appearance, deformed; misery, distress, injury; that which is displeasing [disagreeable, unhappy, unfortunate, sad]</i>	masculine singular adjective/noun	Strong's #7451 BDB #948
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ĭynĕy (עֵינַי) [pronounced <i>gee-NAY</i> ]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Together, the bēyth preposition and the construct form ĭynĕy (עֵינַי) [pronounced <i>gee-NAY</i> ], literally mean <i>in the eyes of</i> ; it can be understood to mean <i>in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of; as ____ sees things to be, in the sight of</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** *Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of Y<sup>e</sup>howah,...*

We are told almost nothing about Er, other than he was evil, in God's estimation. What did he do? What did he think? We are not told.

Again, his sinful behavior has to occur while Er is a very young man—still in his teens.

The word for evil is ra<sup>c</sup> (עַר) [pronounced *rahg*] a word causing considerable disagreement. BDB presents it as both a noun and an adjective with entirely different (and a great contrariety of opinions as to its) uses. It is the same as the perfect, 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine singular of the corresponding verb, also causing confusion and disagreement. Here, when used with the Hebrew equivalent of the absolute status quo verb *to be*—hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], it is clearly an adjective used as a predicate nominative. *Wicked* sounds somewhat outdated, but then it is hard to find a suitable synonym which does not sound outdated in an era of positive re-enforcement, relative morality and non-judgmental commentary. *Depraved, morally bankrupt, morally depraved, decadent* are all reasonable synonyms which could be used. This means that very likely Er embraced the lack of morality in his day found in that area in which they lived and God killed him because of it. He was so evil, that God did not want his seed to be perpetuated and took his life.

Genesis 38:7b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced mooth]	to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y <sup>e</sup> howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** ...so that Y<sup>e</sup>howah executed him.

God put him under the sin unto death.

Now, bear in mind, given the names of Judah's 3 boys, none of these names reference God in any way, which suggests that Judah did not think about the God of Abraham very much; nor did his wife (Judah named the first son and she named the second two).

So Er and Tamar were promised to be married—it is not clear if they actually married (I would think that they did); but they had no children. In that era, the woman not only married the husband, but she married into his family. Her new husband—and, if necessary, her new family—took responsibility for her. The responsibility shifted from her father to the new husband and the new family.

During that day when the population was small and there was a great deal of expansion which God wanted to see take place, it was the custom that if a brother died without children, that his brother should either marry and impregnate his brother's wife. Often the case would be, God would provide a person with their right woman that their evil brother snagged yet did not have children by. It was also difficult for a woman during those times who was once married to become remarried. This allowed her to remove the stigma of a previous marriage and allowed her to be married again. Many of the characteristics which attracted her to one man were to be found in that man's brother. Er's brother, did not want to be tied down to this woman, although there was nothing wrong with her. The motive was likely greed (although, Onan would have been quite young—a teenager).

**Genesis 38:7** And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah. And Jehovah killed him.

*Robby Dean: What we are told about Er is that he did evil in the sight of the Lord. The phrase "he did evil in the sight of the Lord" is used some 56 times in the Old Testament. It is only found 6 times in the Torah: once in Genesis, once in Numbers, and four times in Deuteronomy. It describes this unstated evil behavior of Er here, it describes the rebellion of Israel against God at Kadesh-barnea, in Deuteronomy it twice refers to idolatry and twice to transgressing the covenant. In Judges it almost exclusively describes idolatry. In 1 Samuel 15 it describes Saul's rebellion when he fails to completely slaughter all of the Amalekites and Samuel has to come and reprimand him and tell him the sin of rebellion is like the sin of divination. And it is used numerous times in the books of Kings and Chronicles to describe idolatry. So when this term is used it is a serious term. The term "evil" is also used to describe the fact that man did evil continuously before the Lord in Genesis 6. It describes the sexual sins and perversion with the sons of God and the daughters of men in Genesis 6. It also describes the activities of the Sodomites in Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>13</sup> From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen145.htm> accessed April 26, 2016 (edited).

Er, Judah's firstborn, dies the sin unto death, and at a very young age (in order for this to fit within the time frame to which we are constrained). God would have to take Er's life when he is 14 or 15 or 16, not too long after his marriage. Remembering what I was like at age 14 and older gives me great pause to consider this.

Quite obviously, parents often have a blind spot for their own children, and may not realize just what they are like. This is the case with Judah and Er. We do not know what Er's sins were—just that he was wicked, and God killed him. Quite possibly, his wicked behavior could be attributed in part to the training (or lack of same) that he received from his mother, a Canaanitess. Judah appears to be no prize himself in the morality department.

It is reasonable to suppose that Er was a believer. The sin unto death is reserved for believers only. God kills unbelievers; but for the most part, these sorts of deaths recorded in this way are about believers who have gone wrong.

Er has a wife that Judah chose for him; and Onan, his next younger brother, is to play the part of the responsible younger brother.

Genesis 38:7 *Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, so that Y<sup>e</sup>howah executed him.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 38:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יהודה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Ôwnân (אונן) [pronounced <i>oh-NAWN</i> ]	<i>strong</i> ; transliterated <i>Onan</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #209 BDB #20
bôw' (בו) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>come [in], go [in], enter, advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>eh</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'îshshâh (אשה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61

## Genesis 38:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** Judah said to [his son] Onan, “Go in to the wife of your brother...

There was a tradition in the ancient world which attempted to continue the name of sons of have died have a wife without children. We do not do this now—but this is an interesting concept. This is a cultural norm which, in this situation, is not right or wrong in itself; but it is well-accepted among these people. We even find it codified into the Mosaic Law.

Judah tells his son to go in to his late brother's wife. He is being told to have sex with her in order to raise up children by her. The first son would be considered the son of his late brother.

## Genesis 38:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâbam (יָבַם) [pronounced yaw-BAHM]	do the duty of; perform levirate marriage, perform the duty of a brother-in-law; the duty due to a brother who died childless - to marry his widow and have a son for his name	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #2992 BDB #386
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	her, it; untranslated generally; occasionally to her, toward her	sign of the direct object with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

**Translation:** ...and do the duty [on behalf of your brother] to her,...

The word found here is rarely used and appears to be very specific. Onan is to perform the duty of the next brother in order to raise up seed by this woman. The verb means *perform the duties of a levitate marriage*. Although this is the first time that such a custom is presented in Scripture, this certainly cannot be the first time it occurs in history. The way that it is presented here suggests that this is a common social practice of that era. Judah does not say, “Hey, Onan, I have got this great idea...”

## Genesis 38:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## Genesis 38:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qûwm (קום) [pronounced koom]	<i>cause to raise up, cause to stand, establish, fulfill; uphold, perform [a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise]</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
The NET Bible: <i>The imperative with the prefixed conjunction here indicates purpose.</i> <sup>14</sup>			
zera' (זרע) [pronounced ZEH-rahg']	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âch (אח) [pronounced awhk]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

**Translation:** ...and raise up seed for your brother.”

Judah is telling his second son to impregnate this woman and her first son would be considered a continuation of the line of Er.

Genesis 38:8 Judah said to [his son] Onan, “Go in to the wife of your brother and do the duty [on behalf of your brother] to her, and raise up seed for your brother.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Levirate Marriage in the Ancient World:

**Genesis 38:8** And Judah said to Onan, “Go in to your brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to your brother.”

This was a custom of that era. Each son was to maintain an identity and a genealogical line if he married, even if he died before fathering children. A brother (or a near relation = kinsman) would step in and father a son by the man's wife (in marriage), and this firstborn son will be considered to be the son of the deceased. This son would be treated as if he were Er's son; and not as Onan's son, even though he would be raised and cared for by Onan. Notice that Judah tells him to marry the woman. This is known as a levirate marriage and it was a custom of that era (in fact, it is a fairly widespread custom). However, a levirate marriage was a social custom, not a divine commandment.

Onan would also be expected to take care of this woman and her son (notice that he was to marry her). Sometimes, in an arrangement like this, perhaps the remaining brother might marry another woman as well—we don't know, as this sort of union is only mentioned thrice in Scripture. However, although there are no laws about this, marrying more than one woman seems to be less common.

You will note that Judah found the wife for Er and Judah presses his son Onan to fulfill his levirate obligation. This would make great sense, given that his sons are in the middle teens in this narrative. Judah would be the one taking the initiative.

<sup>14</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 4, 2016.

From a spiritual standpoint, this means that each and every individual is important, and their children are important.

This tradition was common to that era; and Onan could have certainly refused. How much social pressure was on him is not known to us. However, when this custom is codified in Deut. 25:5–10, the brother (or the kinsman) is given an out.

The NET Bible: *The purpose of this custom, called the levirate system, was to ensure that no line of the family would become extinct. The name of the deceased was to be maintained through this custom of having a child by the nearest relative. See M. Burrows, "Levirate Marriage in Israel," JBL 59 (1940): 23-33.*<sup>15</sup>

Interestingly enough, God does not stop this and say, "Look, this is just some custom that will eventually die out. You really don't need to do it." This was an accepted custom of that civilization in that day; and it seems to continue for at least two millennia.

Genesis 38:6–8 Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name [was] Tamar. Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, so that Y<sup>e</sup>howah executed him. Judah said to [his son] Onan, "Go in to the wife of your brother and do the duty [on behalf of your brother] to her, and raise up seed for your brother." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:6–8 Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name was Tamar. Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the estimation of Jehovah, so Jehovah killed him. Judah told his son, Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform your levirate duty to her, to raise up descendants for your brother." (Kukis paraphrase)

**And so knows Onan that not to him is the seed; and he was if he went in unto a woman of his brother and he destroyed ground-ward to not give seed to his brother. And so is displeasing in [two] eyes of Y<sup>e</sup>howah what he did and so He kills also him.**

Genesis  
38:9–10

**Onan knew that the descendant [would] not be his; and it was, whenever he went into his brother's wife, he wasted [his seed] on the ground to not give a descendant to his brother. What he did was displeasing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and He killed him also.**

**Onan knew that this descendant would not be his, so, whenever he had relations with his brother's wife, he would spill his seed onto the ground, so that he would not be giving his brother a son. This displeased Jehovah, and God subjected him also to the sin unto death.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so knows Onan that not to him is the seed; and he was if he went in unto a woman of his brother and he destroyed ground-ward to not give seed to his brother. And so is displeasing in [two] eyes of Y<sup>e</sup>howah what he did and so He kills also him.

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Targum (Onkelos)

And Onan knew that after his name the seed would not be called; and it was that when he went in with the wife of his brother, he corrupted his way upon the earth that he might not raise up seed unto his brother; and what he did was evil before the Lord, and he caused him also to die.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And Onan knew that they would not call the children after his name, and it was, when he entered to the wife of his brother, that he corrupted his work upon the

<sup>15</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 4, 2016.



earth, that he might not raise up children to his brother's name. And what he did was evil before the Lord and he cut off his days also.

Jerusalem targum  
Revised Douay-Rheims

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He knowing that the children should not be his, when he went in to his brother's wife, spilled his seed upon the ground, lest children should be born in his brother's name. And therefore the Lord slew him, because he did a detestable thing.

Latin Vulgate  
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

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Onan knew that the seed would not be his; and it happened, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother. The thing which he did was evil in the sight of Mar-Yah, and he killed him also.

Peshitta (Syriac)

And Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; and it came to pass when he went in unto his brother's wife that he spilled the semen on the ground, lest that he should raise an offspring to his brother. And the thing which he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; wherefore he slew him also.

Septuagint (Greek)

And Aunan, knowing that the seed should not be his-- it came to pass when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled it upon the ground, so that he should not give seed to his brother's wife. And his doing this appeared evil before God; and he slew him also.

NETS (Greek)  
Brenton's Septuagint

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Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

But Onan, seeing that the offspring would not be his, went in to his brother's wife, but let his seed go on to the earth, so that he might not get offspring for his brother. And what he did was evil in the eyes of the Lord, so that he put him to death, like his brother.

Easy English

But Onan did not want Tamar to have his child. He knew that a child like that would not belong to him. So when he had sex with his brother's wife Tamar, he made his semen go on to the ground. So Tamar could not become pregnant. He would not give Tamar a child for his dead brother.

Easy-to-Read Version

What Onan did was wrong. So God made him die also.

Onan knew that the children from this union would not belong to him. He had sexual relations with Tamar, but he did not allow himself to stay inside her. This made the Lord angry. So he killed Onan also.

God's Word™

Good News Bible (TEV)  
International Children's B.

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But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him. Onan was supposed to have physical relations with Tamar. But he did not complete the physical act. This made it impossible for Tamar to become pregnant. So Er could not have descendants. The Lord was displeased by this wicked thing Onan had done. So the Lord killed Onan also.

The Message

So Judah told Onan, "Go and sleep with your brother's widow; it's the duty of a brother-in-law to keep your brother's line alive." But Onan knew that the child wouldn't be his, so whenever he slept with his brother's widow he spilled his semen on the ground so he wouldn't produce a child for his brother. GOD was much offended by what he did and also took his life.

Names of God Bible

But Onan knew that the descendant wouldn't belong to him, so whenever he slept with his brother's widow, he wasted his semen on the ground to avoid giving his brother a descendant. What Onan did angered **Yahweh** so much that **Yahweh** took away Onan's life too.

NIRV Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife. After all, you are her brother-in-law. So carry out your duty to her. Provide children for your brother." But Onan knew that the children wouldn't belong to him. So every time he slept with his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground. He did it so he wouldn't provide children for his brother. What he did was evil in the Lord's eyes. So the LORD put him to death also.

New Simplified Bible .

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible .  
 Contemporary English V. Onan knew the child would not be his, and when he had sex with Tamar, he made sure that she would not get pregnant. The LORD wasn't pleased with Onan and took his life too.

The Living Bible .  
 New Berkeley Version .  
 New Century Version But Onan knew that the children would not belong to him, so when he was supposed to have sexual relations with Tamar he did not complete the sex act. This made it impossible for Tamar to become pregnant and for Er to have descendants. The LORD was displeased by this wicked thing Onan had done, so the LORD killed Onan also.

New Life Version But Onan knew that the children would not be his. So when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground to keep his brother from having children. What he did was sinful in the eyes of the Lord. So the Lord took his life also.

New Living Translation 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. But the LORD considered it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the Lord took Onan's life, too.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible However, Anun knew that the seed wouldn't be [counted as] his. So when he [had sex with] his brother's woman, he spilled [his semen] on the ground, so his brother's woman wouldn't [get pregnant]. 10 And his doing this appeared evil to God, so He killed him also.

Beck's American Translation .  
 International Standard V But Onan knew that the offspring wouldn't be his own heir, so whenever he had sexual relations with his brother's wife, he would spill his semen on the ground to avoid fathering offspring for his brother. The LORD considered what Onan was doing to be evil, so he put him to death, too.

New Advent (Knox) Bible ...but Onan, who knew that they would not be reckoned as his, frustrated the act of marriage when he mated with her, sooner than breed sons in his brother's name. Him, too, for this abominable deed of his, the Lord punished with death.

Revised Knox Bible .  
 Translation for Translators But Onan knew if he did that, any children who would be born would not be considered to be his. So every time he had sex [EUP] with his brother's widow, he spilled his semen on the ground, so that she would not get pregnant and produce children for his older brother. Yahweh considered that what he did was wicked, so he caused him to die also.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Onan was to know, that the seed is not to be his. As when he was to come in, to his brother's wife, he is to have wasted them on the solid grounds, so as not to give seed to his brother. That which he is to have done, was to be shocking in the eye of Jehovah, and he was to kill him.
Conservapedia	Onan knew that the son would not be his heir. So what happened was that when he was intimate with his brother's wife, he spilled his gism on the ground, so as not to give his brother an heir. What he did was evil in the eyes of the LORD, and He put him to death as well.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But Onan knew that the heir would not be his own, therefore when he approached his brother's wife, he ejected on the ground, instead of giving seed to his brother. What he did was, however, wicked in the eyes of the Ever-living, and therefore He caused him to die.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And when Onan perceived that the seed should not be his: therefore when he went in to his brothers wife, he spilled it on the ground, because he would not give seed unto his brother. And the thing which he did, displeased the Lord, wherefore he slew him also.
HCSB	But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, so whenever he slept with his brother's wife, he released his semen on the ground so that he would not produce offspring for his brother. What he did was evil in the LORD'S sight, so He put him to death also.
Jubilee Bible 2000 H. C. Leupold	. But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his own, so it happened that each time he went in unto his brother's wife he took preventive measures so as not to give offspring to his brother. And that which he did was evil in the estimation of Yahweh, and He let him die also.
Lexham English Bible	But Onan knew that the offspring would not be for him, so whenever he went in to the wife of his brother he would waste [it] on the ground so as not to give offspring to his brother. And what he did was evil in the sight of Yahweh, so he killed him also.
NIV, ©2011	But Onan knew that the child would not be his; so whenever he slept with his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from providing offspring for his brother. What he did was wicked in the Lord's sight; so the Lord put him to death also.
Tree of Life Version	But Onan knew that the seed would not be his. So every time he went to his brother's wife he would destroy it on the ground so as not to provide a seed for his brother. What he did was evil in <i>ADONAI'S</i> eyes, so He put him to death also.

#### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	But Onan knew the child would not be his, so whenever he slept with his brother's widow, he spilled the semen on the ground lest he give an heir to his brother. What he did was displeasing to Yahweh who took his life as well.
The Heritage Bible	And Onan knew by seeing that the seed would not be his; and it was, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he destroyed it on the ground, not giving seed to his brother. And what he did was evil in the eyes of Jehovah, and he also killed him.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	Onan, however, knew that the offspring would not be his; so whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground, to avoid giving offspring to his brother. What he did greatly offended the LORD, and the LORD took his life too.
New Jerusalem Bible	But Onan, knowing that the line would not count as his, spilt his seed on the ground every time he slept with his brother's wife, to avoid providing offspring for his brother. What he did was offensive to Yahweh, who killed him too.
New RSV	.

Revised English Bible But Onan knew that the offspring would not count as his; so whenever he lay with his brother's wife, he spilled his seed on the ground so as not to raise up offspring for his brother. What he did was wicked in the LORD's sight, and the LORD took away his life also.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible However, Onan knew that the child would not count as his; so whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground, so as not to give his brother offspring. What he did was evil from Adonai's perspective, so he killed him too.

exeGesés companion Bible And Onan knows that the seed is not his; and so be it, when he goes in to the woman of his brother, he ruins it on the earth, lest he give seed to his brother. And what he works is evil in the eyes of Yah Veh: and he deathifies him also.

Israeli Authorized Version  
JPS (Tanakh—1985) .  
But Onan, knowing that the seed would not count as his, let it go to waste whenever he joined with his brother's wife, so as not to provide offspring for his brother. 10What he did was displeasing to the Lord, and He took his life also.

Judaica Press Complete T.  
Kaplan Translation .  
Onan, however, realized [On the basis of what his father had told him (Sekhel Tov Yov'loth 41:5). Other sources indicate that his mother did not want him to have children by Tamar (Tzava'ath Yehudah 10:6).] that the children would not carry his name. Therefore, whenever he came to his brother's wife, he let [the seed] go to waste on the ground [It is from here that all the discussions regarding birth control and masturbation are derived (Yevamoth 34b; Niddah 13a; Bereshith Rabbah 85).], so as not to have children in his brother's name. What he did was evil in God's eyes, and He also made him die.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Onan knew that the zera should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto eshet achiv, that he spilled it on the ground, lest he should give zera to achiv. And the thing which he did was rah in the eyes of Hashem; therefore He slaughtered him also.

Restored Names Version  
*The Scriptures* 1998 .

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible* Onan knew that the child (heir) would not be his [but his dead brother's]; so whenever he lay with his brother's widow, he spilled his seed on the ground [to prevent conception], so that he would not give a child to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord; therefore He killed him also [in judgment].  
The Expanded Bible But Onan knew that the children [seed] would not belong to him, so when he was supposed to have sexual relations with [he went to] Tamar he did not complete the sex act [spilled his seed on the ground], making it impossible for Tamar to become pregnant and for Er to have descendants [so that he did not give a descendant/seed to his brother]. The Lord was displeased by this wicked thing Onan had done [What he did was evil in the eyes/sight of the Lord], so he killed Onan also.

The Geneva Bible .

Kretzmann's Commentary	And Onan knew that the seed should not be his, that a possible first-born son would not perpetuate his name and family, but that of his brother Er; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. Rather than yield to the custom and be obedient to his father, Onan committed this crime against the divine institution of marriage and its purpose according to the will of God. Such works of the flesh, all too prevalent in our day, when children are no longer desired, are an abomination before the Lord. Where the fear of God still rules, such vices will not be tolerated. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord, was evil in His eyes; wherefore He slew him also.
NET Bible®	But Onan knew that the child [ <i>Heb</i> "offspring."] would not be considered his [ <i>Heb</i> "would not be his," that is, legally speaking. Under the levirate system the child would be legally considered the child of his deceased brother.]. So whenever he had sexual relations with [ <i>Heb</i> "he went to." This expression is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.] his brother's wife, he withdrew prematurely [ <i>Heb</i> "he spoiled [his semen] to the ground." Onan withdrew prematurely and ejaculated on the ground to prevent his brother's widow from becoming pregnant.] so as not to give his brother a descendant. What he did was evil in the Lord's sight, so the Lord [ <i>Heb</i> "he"; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] killed him too.
Syndein/Thieme	And Onan knew that the seed/progeny would not be his {under the law} and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he 'ejaculated on the ground', lest that he should give seed/progeny to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased Jehovah/God therefore He slew him also.
The Voice	<i>Resentful that any child born in this kind of marriage would not be his, Onan would interrupt intercourse and spill his semen onto the ground whenever he slept with his brother's wife. That way he would not father a child that would belong to his brother. Onan's selfish behavior was as wretched as his brother's to the eyes of the Eternal One; so the Eternal ended Onan's life like his brother.</i>

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	.
Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Onan <sup>[Strong]</sup> knew that the seed did not exist for him and it came to pass that he came to the woman of his brother and he did damage unto the land to not give seed to his brother, and he was dysfunctional in the eyes of YHWH <sup>[He Exists]</sup> because of what he did and he killed him also,...
Concordant Literal Version	And know does Onan that the seed will not become his. And it comes, when he is coming to his brother's wife, then he ruins it on the earth, to avoid giving seed to his brother. And evil in the eyes of Yahweh is what he does, and, moreover, He is putting him to death also.
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	And Onan knew that the seed would not be his; and when he went in to his brother's woman { or wife }, he spilled on the ground, lest he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did was evil in the sight of YHWH: and he killed him also.
Darby Translation	.
Emphasized Bible	.
English Standard Version	.
English Standard V. – UK	.
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.



Modern English Version	Then Judah said to Onan, “Go have relations with your brother’s wife, and marry her, and raise up descendants for your brother.” But Onan knew that the descendant would not be his, so when he had relations with his brother’s wife, he let his semen go on the ground, so that he would not give a descendant to his brother. What he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.
Modern KJV NASB	. Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother’s wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Owen’s Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother’s wife, that he spoiled it on the ground, so as not to give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did made the eye of Jehovah quiver; therefore He killed him also.
Webster’s Bible Translation	And Onan knew that the seed would not be his: and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother’s wife, that he frustrated the purpose, lest he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.
World English Bible	.
Young’s Literal Translation	.
Young’s Updated LT	And Onan knows that the seed is not reckoned his; and it has come to pass, if he has gone in unto his brother’s wife, that he has destroyed it to the earth, so as not to give seed to his brother; and that which he has done is evil in the eyes of Jehovah, and He puts him also to death.

**The gist of this passage:** Onan realized that the child would not be considered his own, so he used coitus interruptus in order to keep from impregnating his sister-in-law/wife. God kills him by the sin unto death as well.

Genesis 38:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
yâda’ (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHṢ]	to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3045 BDB #393
’Ōwnân (אֹנָן) [pronounced oh-NAWN]	strong; transliterated Onan	masculine singular proper noun	Strong’s #209 BDB #20
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong’s #3588 BDB #471



## Genesis 38:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lō' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
I'm not sure if these mean anything together. However, I thought I would at least list the places where we find them together. <i>After</i> a negative, kīy is often rendered <i>but</i> ; however, here, it proceeds a negative. Owen, ESV, God's Word™ and the KJV render this <i>but [he, they] could not</i> ; LITV: <i>but [he] did not</i> ; Young: <i>but not</i> ; HNV: <i>for he could not</i> in Judges 1:19.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
zera' (זֶרַע) [pronounced <i>ZEH-rahg</i> ]	<i>a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2233 BDB #282

**Translation:** Onan knew that the descendant [would] not be his;...

Onan was one of those who thought only about himself. The resultant child would be considered his brother's and take his brother's name. He would appear to take the responsibility as well for this boy. This did not strike Onan as a very good deal. The problem is, Er was the firstborn; therefore, his son (the son of Onan and Tamar) would be considered the firstborn. If there is no son of Er, then Onan becomes the *firstborn* (he stands in for the firstborn).

## Genesis 38:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
îm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, whenever; since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

## Genesis 38:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
The NET Bible: <i>The construction shows that this was a repeated practice and not merely one action.</i> <sup>16</sup>			
bôw' (בָּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced shaw-KHAHTH]	<i>to destroy, to ruin, to lay waste [to]; to spoil, to corrupt; to deal corruptly [with]; to act wickedly</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth [ground]; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i>	feminine singular noun with the directional hê	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:** ...and it was, whenever he went into his brother's wife, he wasted [his seed] on the ground...

This does not appear to be a one-shot act. The hypothetical particle can also be used to mean *when, whenever*. So, this was not just one decision that he made, but that he did this several times. He took advantage of his brother's wife, enjoyed relations with her, but did not follow through by implanting his seed inside of her.

The word often translated *spill* is shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced shaw-KHAHTH], and it means *to destroy, to ruin, to lay waste [to]; to spoil, to corrupt; to deal corruptly [with]; to act wickedly*. Strong's #7843 BDB #1007. Because we have the noun *ground* following this verb, we may understand that he wasted his seed onto the ground. Understanding this helps to make sense of the many translations which use various forms of the word *spill*.

So, on numerous occasions, Onan would have sex with his late brother's wife. This was as per the instructions of his father Judah. The purpose was for the woman to conceive a son, and this son would bear the name of Er, who had died the sin unto death. However, Onan would simply withdraw and spill his seed on the ground.

The NET Bible: *The text makes it clear that the purpose of the custom was to produce an heir for the deceased brother. Onan had no intention of doing that. But he would have sex with the girl as much*

<sup>16</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 4, 2016.

as he wished. He was willing to use the law to gratify his desires, but was not willing to do the responsible thing.<sup>17</sup>

Genesis 38:9c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bill <sup>e</sup> tîy (יִתְּלֵב) pronounced bill <sup>e</sup> -TEE]	not	adverb/particle of negation	Strong's #1115 BDB #116
This combination means <i>in that not, so that this [will not happen], so as not.</i>			
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
zera <sup>c</sup> (זֶרַח) [pronounced ZEH-rahg <sup>c</sup> ]	a seed, a sowing; an offspring, progeny, descendant; posterity	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2233 BDB #282
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âch (אָח) [pronounced awhk]	brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

**Translation:** ...to not give a descendant to his brother.

His intention was *not* to give a son to his brother.

Tamar was not unattractive; Onan had no trouble having sex with her, but he chose not to father a child on behalf of his brother. For some reason, which I do not entirely fathom, Onan does not want to father children who would be on behalf of his late brother. Victor Matthews sheds some light on this in his *Manners and Customs in the Bible*. The children born to this marriage would be the legal heirs of Er and not of Onan. Er, being the first-born, and Judah being quite the businessman, meant that Er's progeny would receive a lion's share of the inheritance. If a brother did not come along and impregnate Tamar, then the next in line for the lion's share of the inheritance would be Onan. So Onan did not impregnate Tamar out of selfishness. No heirs of Er means more money for him at Judah's death. He has no problems with having sex with Tamar, but he will not take the responsibility which comes with it. It is quite likely that Onana could have refused and been off the hook; but the fact that he slept with his brother's wife, but then intentionally did not impregnate her, was a selfish act of degeneracy. It would be difficult for her to find a husband or to have children (a burning need for many women), she will not have children next in line for Er's inheritance, and Onan only made things worse.

**Genesis 38:9** And Onan knew that the seed would not be his. And it happened when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled on the ground, not giving seed to his brother.

Onan was apparently attracted to Tamar, enough to have sex with her, but he intentionally did not impregnate her, not wanting to father a son who would not be considered his. There are two things at play here: Onan did marry this woman (that would be logical, as it was a levirate marriage); but he intentionally did not have children by her (and he has a very specific reason for doing so).

<sup>17</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 4, 2016.

The technique that he used is not 100% effective; but it was effective in this case. In fact, it appears that this happened on several occasions.

Let's take a look at the Hebrew here. We begin with the wâw conjunction followed by the Qal perfect of the verb *hâyâh*, which means *to be*. Without a specific subject and object, the verb *hâyâh* often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the wâw consecutive).

Then we have the hypothetical particle *ʾim* (אם) [pronounced *eem*], which can mean *if*; but it can also mean, *when, whenever*. This is followed by the Qal imperfect of *to come in, to come, to go in*. Now, if this occurred on one occasion, then the Qal perfect would have been used. The imperfect can suggest extended action, successive action (when there are several together), or several actions repeated.

The next verb, which follows a wâw conjunction, is the Piel perfect of *shâchath* (שחַת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*], which means (in the Piel), *to destroy, to ruin, to lay waste [to]; to spoil, to corrupt; to deal corruptly [with]; to act wickedly*. Strong's #7843 BDB #1007. This verb is followed by *to the ground*. The word *seed (semen)* is implied (it is found 2 other times in this verse). This is the result of whenever Onan would go into Tamar.

The ESV translates this:

**Genesis 38:9** But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother.

By doing this, he rejected having that first son by Tamar. Without giving a graphic explanation, Onan went out of his way not to impregnate her. The purpose of a levirate marriage is to raise up a son on behalf of the deceased brother, and Onan was not going to do that.

What is going on with Onan here? What is his thinking? I am unaware of any commentaries who understand what is going on. Let me explain. Er was the firstborn son. He was entitled to the double-portion, but he was dead. What happens if Onan raises up a child by Tamar? That child carries on Er's line and he receives the double portion that would have come to Er. If there is no Er and there is no child to carry on in his place, who gets the double portion? Onan. So Onan is motivated both by inheritance and, to a much lesser extent, sexual desire.

If there is no son raised up under the name of Er, then Onan becomes entitled to the double portion. Let's look at this in dollars and cents. Let's say that Judah is worth \$100,000. He has two sons: Onan and Shelah remaining. Onan would get a double-portion as an inheritance, which is \$66,667; and Shelah gets the rest. Now, let's say that Onan fathers a child, who is considered to be Er's child. *That child* would get the double portion, which would be \$50,000; and Onan and Shelah would split the remaining \$50,000 evenly. So, you see, there is a lot of money at stake here.

Bear in mind the short time during which all of this takes place. Onan is not very old at this time. He might be as young as 14 or 16. Old enough to think through this situation, and selfish enough to work it out just for himself.

Because sexual relations were designed for marriage, Onan and Tamar were married and they were probably both living with Judah at this time. There is no indication that there would have been continued sexual union without benefit of marriage. There is no indication that this levirate marriage did not include marriage. The central point of this narrative is not their marriage, but Onan did not follow through completely to raise up a son by Tamar in his brother Er's name, because that would have cut into his own personal inheritance.

Also, as an aside: this passage has nothing to do with a condemnation of birth control. It is all about Onan's selfish plans and his agreeing to do something that he was intentionally not doing.

**Genesis 38:9** Onan knew that the descendant [would] not be his; and it was, whenever he went into his brother's wife, he wasted [his seed] on the ground to not give a descendant to his brother. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Women Want Protection and Security:** For Tamar, she is looking for two things—some security and a family. One of the very interesting political differences between men and women is, many woman—particularly those who see themselves as *liberated from men*—will turn around and vote for whatever politician promises to step into the role of the husband/provider. They think they are liberated because they do not depend upon a husband—but then, vote in such a way for the government to take care of them, just in case things go bad. It is a natural instinct—quite obviously, this is not true of all women—but a preponderance of younger, single women (particularly single mothers) will vote Democrat, because the Democrat party promises that the federal government will take care of them (in fact, during one of President Obama’s elections, his campaign posted *the Life of Julia*, an interactive advertisement which showed how Julia, a woman without a husband, was taken care of by the government at every step of the way in her life. Many conservatives laughed at this and even mocked it (although you can no longer find *the Life of Julia* online, you can find parodies of it), but that is because most conservatives did not understand why this appealed to women. Women, even in today’s modern culture, still have the innate need for someone to protect them, for someone to look out for their needs. If they have rejected the man as the provider/protector, then many (and the numbers prove this) then vote for a government which promises to do the same thing.

Now, what about women who vote Republican and promote conservative values? Any person who adheres to the laws of divine establishment is far more likely to vote conservative, regardless of gender. Furthermore, married women already have a provider/protector, and so, they do not need another one (government). Therefore, married women and women who believe in the laws of divine establishment will more likely vote for conservatives.

**Levirate Marriage in the Old Testament:** One of the things which bothered me in the Old Testament was the divine law that if a Jew dies childless, that his brother should marry his widowed wife (Deut. 24:5–6). However, we have seen that there was a stigma attached to having been married before; particularly to having had relations with another man before. This allowed the woman to have children, to have a husband, and not have this stigma. The brother would have, as mentioned, many of the characteristics that originally drew her to her first husband, since they are siblings. Furthermore, the brothers would likely have similar taste in women, so that this woman would not be displeasing to her second husband.

Part of what bothered me is that free will was removed when choosing a mate; however, I belong to a generation for which free will was foremost in the selection of a marriage partner and we have a 50% batting average when it comes to marriages lasting.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, we are dealing with a particular time period with a particular population. We are no longer under the law and it is best not to over-think these situations (as did the Pharisees in Matthew 22:24). Our application to today? If a man does die childless, then his brother should at least carefully examine this widow and they should determine if they should marry. With the choices made today, many men and women could do a lot worse.

Interestingly enough, Judah, who made a free will choice to marry a Canaanite woman, believed it would be better if he chose Er’s wife for him.

We are studying Genesis 38 and we have come upon the first mention of a levirate marriage in the Bible. A levirate marriage is when the husband of a wife dies, the wife is childless, and so his brother (or another close relative) steps up and marries the woman. In the Bible, this is always done with the expressed desire to raise up a son in the name of the deceased brother; but these kinds of marriages can come about even when a family has already been started.

The people involved in Genesis 38 are these:

<sup>18</sup> Some, like Michael Medved, claim that this percentage is exaggerated.



## The People of the First Recorded Levirate Marriage

Person	Description
Judah	Judah is the 4 <sup>th</sup> son of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. Judah appears to be estranged from his family at this time. Judah will be the line of Messiah, although no one would have known this at this time.
Er	Er is the first son of Judah. Judah arranged a marriage between Tamar and Er; but Er will die the sin unto death before fathering a child by Tamar.
Tamar	Tamar is a woman of unknown origin. Judah finds her and arranges a marriage between her and Er. She and Er marry as a very young couple (Er could be as young as 14).
Onan	Onan is Judah's second son, who had the responsibility to marry Tamar and raise up a child by her. He married her, but went out of his way not to have children by her. The likely reason is, a child raised up as Er's child would have deprived Onan of a sizable inheritance.
Shelah	Shelah is the 3 <sup>rd</sup> son of Judah, who had been promised to Tamar; but Judah had no intention of delivering here, believing Tamar to be bad luck (a <i>black widow</i> , if you will).

This scorecard will make it easier to understand the names and actions of those mentioned below.

The overall time frame appears to be a around 20 years, during which time, Judah returns to his father, and then separates from his family. He marries a Canaanites and has 3 sons by her. These sons grow up old enough to be married (probably mid-teens), and Judah's wife dies. There are constraining factors of other portions of Genesis which confine this time period to 22 years or less.

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Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, married a Canaanite woman and had 3 sons by her. He found a wife (Tamar) for his first son (Er), but that first son died the sin unto death early on in the marriage. Therefore, Judah compelled his next son, Onan, to impregnate her and marry her (the first son would be brought up as a son of Er rather than the son of Onan). Onan appeared to go along with this idea, but *he spilled his seed on the ground* so that he would not impregnate Tamar (this happened on numerous occasions). Onan had probably figured out that, if he fathered a son in Er's name, that son would have reduced Onan's own inheritance considerably (because Er died, Onan would now get the double portion of his father's inheritance; however, if Onan has a son under Er's name, that son would get the double portion). Because he did not father a son as he had agreed to, God took him out by the sin unto death.

Judah promises Tamar his next son, Shelah; but he does not follow through on this promise, apparently blaming Tamar for the deaths of his other two sons.

In any case, had Onan followed through and impregnated and married Tamar, this would have been a levirate marriage with a resultant son raised up as Er's son.

**Surprising things about a levirate marriage:** There are many things which might surprise you about the Levirate marriage: (1) there are only 3 Old Testament passages which speak of it and (2) this is a custom practiced all over the world (see Wikipedia on [Levirate Marriage](#)). (3) There is no indication that God instituted levirate marriage; but He seemingly condones it, as Moses made it a part of the Mosaic Law in Deut. 25. Once this study is complete, you will understand why. God's laws, as given to Moses, seemed to take into account the cultural norms and standards of that era.

The levirate marriage is made fun of by those in the gay marriage movement, who found a number of unusual marriages in the Bible and said, "If you are okay with these kinds of marriages in the Bible, then surely you cannot



object to gay people marrying.” (Or words to that effect.) The logic is, religious Christians were the main people who objected to gay marriage; so unusual marriages were found in the Bible (and gay marriage proponents put the worst possible spin on them). Furthermore, gay marriage proponents presented these marriages as God-approved marriages (some were, some were not; and some were distorted<sup>19</sup>). The reasoning being, “God approves of these marriages, so you cannot object to gay marriage.” We briefly studied these various marriages in **Marriage Alternatives in the Bible** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The problem is, God does not approve of all forms of marriage found in the Bible (God does not condone polygamy, but He tolerates it). Nor do all of these forms of marriage originate with God (the levirate marriage appears to be a very common custom of that era). Also, gay marriage proponents often portray some sets of marriages in the Bible inaccurately (you should not expect expert exegetical information from the gay community when it comes to the Bible—a large majority of them reject the Bible as authoritative and the few who put some stock in Scripture, twist it about in order to justify their own behavior).

The passage we are studying, Genesis 38, appears to be the oldest literature (that I am aware of) which speaks of such a marriage; but it is recorded in Genesis as an existing custom. Judah does not look the situation over and say, “Hey, I’ve got a great idea here!” God does not speak to Judah, saying, “Listen, son, this is what I want you to do...” What takes place in Genesis 38 simply falls within the cultural norms of that day, and given that day and time, this is not a bad cultural norm.

There are some things which are not clear about this custom (known to us today as a *levirate marriage*). Could Judah have divorced Tamar (his daughter-in-law) from the family? Could he have come and said, “Look, we will not be providing for you a kinsman to stand in for Er.” Or was it his responsibility to see that Er’s first child would be raised up through her? The latter seems to be the case. In fact, there appears to be a reasonable amount of social pressure for Judah, the father-in-law, to take care of this. Furthermore, near the end of Genesis 38, Judah will try to have Tamar executed for being pregnant; and that would make sense if she is married or promised in marriage; but it would make less sense if she is simply a widow.

Primarily, a Levirate marriage is described from the man’s point of view in the Bible. The doctrine below considers both the men and the woman in the arrangement.

### Robert Dean and Jack Ballinger on the Levirate Marriage

1. A levirate marriage (or levirate obligation) is the marriage of a childless widow to her husband's brother. This seems very odd to us. If a woman is married and her husband dies before they have children, then his brother has the responsibility to come in and to marry her for the purpose of raising up children in the dead man's name. The first son is considered the son of the deceased husband; not the brother's. The term Levirate derives from the Latin word for brother-in-law.
2. This custom preserved the name and inheritance of any son who died prematurely.
3. The custom, which may seem to be somewhat bizarre to the modern reader, was widely practiced among Israel’s neighbors. The Assyrians and the Hittites and Nuzi and Ugarit held to this custom.
4. The brother-in-law, in this case Onan, is supposed to come in, marry Tamar, and their first child that they have would not be considered his. They are considered hers and Er’s, because he is the oldest. As a result, their first child would be the beneficiary of double the inheritance.
5. The Mosaic law incorporated Levirate marriage into the law in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. It is designed to protect widows in society who have lost their husband, who don't have a source of income. Such women do not have a male to protect them, and, because they are childless, they don't have sons to grow up and take care of them. That is part of the reason for this custom. The book of Ruth is based on this practice, although in Ruth, it is a distant relative who marries Ruth.
6. The Sadducees also used this law in an attempt to trap Jesus (Luke 20:27-44).
7. The passage in Deuteronomy provides a way out for the brother of the deceased to avoid this obligation. There was some humiliation, but if he truly objected to this marriage, he could get out of it.

<sup>19</sup> I should also point out that, some of these passages are mistranslated as well in some Bible translations.

## Robert Dean and Jack Ballinger on the Levirate Marriage

8. The principle provided for the widow who was left without a husband, without protection, and without a source of income. It was designed to take care of her.
9. The law was also designed to protect the family inheritance. There is a significant emphasis in Scripture on protecting inheritance and providing inheritance for the next generation.

From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen145.htm> accessed April 26, 2016;  
and from <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen38.htm> accessed May 18, 2016 (both were edited).

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**The Levirate Marriage from the woman's perspective:** The Bible explains the levirate marriage primarily from a male viewpoint. A man and a woman are married; the husband dies, but before giving his wife a son. A member of the man's family is then brought in to impregnate the woman, to raise up a child in the name of her deceased husband. Logically, this son would continue the line of the deceased husband and this son would be entitled to his inheritance as well.

This custom is confusing and even troubling for many, but perhaps if I put a slightly different spin on the custom, you might better understand and appreciate it. Unlike today, when a woman might have many sexual encounters and several husbands, and yet still manage to get married once again, that was not the way things were done in the era of ancient Canaan (later Israel).

Marrying a virginal bride was so important in the ancient world that the bloodied bed sheets from the first night of their marriage bed were collected and delivered to the father of the bride, and he saved them as proof of his daughter's virginity (Deut. 22:13–17). This indicates that the father delivered a virginal bride to her new husband; and that the new husband is now responsible for this woman—the woman whose virginity he took.

Most of the time in the ancient world, once a woman has had sexual intercourse, even within the confines of marriage, that made her nearly ineligible for a second marriage, regardless of the circumstances of the first marriage. Furthermore, it was much more difficult in that era for a woman to make it on her own (hence the Bible often speaks of caring for the widows and orphans).

Therefore, a woman whose husband has died early, without giving her a son, has several strikes against her: (1) she is not as marriageable as she was as a virgin; (2) it is not very easy for such a woman to take care of herself; and (3) she has no son to care for her in her old age. Since these are not considerations for a woman in 21<sup>st</sup> century America, a levirate marriage would be inappropriate. On the other hand, in its cultural context, you might understand how a levirate marriage provided protection for the widow.

When this woman married into a family, she became a part of that family. If her husband died, then she was still a member of her new family, and it was up to them to look after her. This was accomplished through a levirate marriage.

There are other factors at play as well. There is a natural yearning in most women to have and raise children. Even though there are obvious exceptions to this, it is normal for both men and women to desire children. Furthermore, even in today's deviant society, the family is still the essential building block of society.

A union with another member of the family (her kinsman-redeemer, as it were) offered this woman a family as well as the protection and provision of marriage. So, such a woman is not cast aside in society, but she embraced by the family that she originally married into; and provided for and protected by that family (usually by the brother of her deceased husband).

In summation, the name of the brother who dies prematurely is preserved; and the woman who married into his family continues as a part of that family, and she is protected and provided for.

By understanding all the ramifications of such a marriage, it helps us to better understand why it was important to ancient culture, in that it protected and provided for the weak. This also explains, from a human standpoint, why the Bible would allow and even support such a marriage.

### Genesis 38:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
rā'ac (רעע) [pronounced <i>raw-GAHG</i> ]	<i>to make a loud noise; to be evil [from the idea of raging or being tumultuous]; to be bad, to displease; possibly to be unpleasant and embittering; to break, to shatter; to be worse</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7489 BDB #949
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
îynêy (עיני) [pronounced <i>gee-NAY</i> ]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Together, the bēyth preposition and the construct form îynêy (עיני) [pronounced <i>gee-NAY</i> ], literally mean <i>in the eyes of</i> ; it can be understood to mean <i>in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of; as ____ sees things to be, in the sight of</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'āsher (אשר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'āsâh (עשה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

**Translation:** What he did was displeasing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah,...

*What he did* becomes the subject of the verb. *What he did* displeased God. Literally, *what he did was displeasing in the sight of Y<sup>e</sup>howah; in the estimation of Y<sup>e</sup>howah*.

What we are dealing with here was a long-standing human tradition. There was an importance, particularly with early man, attached to a man's line. This might be seen today as a man's legacy (although today's concept of a legacy is often more ego-oriented). Each person was seen as important and where his line led was also seen as important.

God seemed to agree with this concept, as there would be one line that would lead to the Lord Jesus Christ, the man Who would save us from our sins.

So, the idea that Onan would be dishonest with his father Judah and with Er's wife, and that he would pretend to go along with this, but he was not really onboard. If he did not want to do this, Onan could simply say, "Sorry, I do not want to participate." There are no dire consequences for not participating. However, Onan was dishonest about it in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh.

Genesis 38:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>him, it; he; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84

**Translation:** ...and He killed him also.

God killed Onan; He subjected him to the sin unto death.

Genesis 38:10 [What he did was displeasing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and He killed him also.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This is an interesting case history, to apply the sin unto death to a circumstance like this. However, bear in mind that Onan is not being punished for not participating; he is be punished for his dishonesty and pretending to go along with this custom, but not completely.

One of the themes of the Old Testament was the fear of the Lord. This was fear intermingled with respect. A person who is strong and tough and could pound anyone that he fought (even though he might not fight) is both feared and respected; feared, because you cannot fight him without getting the snot beat out of you, but respected because he did not go out looking for a fight. God the Father and God the Son commanded that same fear/respect from the Old Testament saints (and strictly fear from some). God does not arbitrarily execute a person nor does He arbitrarily wipe out a city, a nation, or a group of people. His wrath is tempered with perfect justice and perfect judgment. We may not fully understand why God acts the way that He does in every case; however, at some point we will; and then we will know even as we are known. Tamar is in the line of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whatever reason, her genes were specifically chosen by God to be in our Lord's line. Onan had the opportunity to forever be remembered as having been in the line of the humanity of the Savior of the Universe and he chose not to be. We do not know how much he specifically understood—I don't believe that any of the principals involved understood that this would be the line of the Messiah. Similarly, we do not know how much unbelievers understand when they reject God's word. However, God in His infinite wisdom and perfection chose to take Onan out of the world, just as He did Er. Onan died the sin unto death.

This is the line of Jesus, and God would see to it that there is a son of Tamar raised up, in the line of Judah. Tamar would bear a son whose line would lead to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, bear in mind, Tamar is *not* related to Judah in any way, but by marriage. So, how does the line of Christ go through her, who is not necessarily from

the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? That is what this chapter is chiefly about. Tamar will be in the line of Christ, as will Judah.

Onan could have refused; and the sin unto death would have been unlikely. He chose to engage in intercourse with his dead brother's wife, but stopped short of impregnating her. It was not God's plan for Tamar to go on without a son. God's plan is for the line of Judah to be continued, as this would become the greatest tribe and from this tribe, Jesus would be born.

Next question—why didn't Onan simply refuse? Although we do not know the amount of social pressure that was placed upon him, financially, this would be an easy call. If he did not marry Tamar, then his younger brother Shelah would have married her, and the son raised up would have been Er's and entitled to the double-portion. By marrying Tamar, but not fathering a son by her, he insures that he would get the double-portion of inheritance.

Do you see how differently degenerate man thinks as opposed to God? Onan is likely thinking all about his inheritance; and God is thinking about the line for the humanity of Jesus Christ. Onan is concerned with the money that he will get, sometime in the future; and God is concerned with the salvation of all mankind. *For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.* (Isaiah 55:8–9; ESV; capitalized) Living the Christian life is learning to think like God thinks.

Genesis 38:9–10 *Onan knew that the descendant [would] not be his; and it was, whenever he went into his brother's wife, he wasted [his seed] on the ground to not give a descendant to his brother. What he did was displeasing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and He killed him also.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:9–10 *Onan knew that this descendant would not be his, so, whenever he had relations with his brother's wife, he would spill his seed onto the ground, so that he would not be giving his brother a son. This displeased Jehovah, and God subjected him also to the sin unto death.* (Kukis paraphrase)

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**A Review of Genesis 38:1–10:** Judah got married and fathered 3 sons. He found a wife (Tamar) for the first son, but God took that son (Er) by the sin unto death. We have theorized that Er did not have the best of parents, as his mother was a Canaanite. As a result, there is this young woman, who has been taken in marriage by Er, but that marriage did not produce any children. This is a problem for two reasons: (1) Er has no genealogical line and (2) Tamar is without a husband and, in that culture, essentially, unmarriageable.

Judah brings his second son, Onan, into the picture. He is married to Tamar by means of a Levirate marriage, and their first son will be in the line of Er. My educated guess is that Onan did the math and realized that, if he fathers a son by Tamar, his own inheritance will be substantially reduced, so he goes out of his way to see that he does not impregnate Tamar, his wife.

**Genesis 38:10** *And what he [Onan] did was evil in the eyes of Jehovah. Therefore He [God] killed him also.*

Judah, at the very least, should have asked God what the problem was (although it is unclear what sort of relationship the sons of Jacob actually had with God and if there was any communication at all). In any case, based upon what we have observed so far, Judah and his brothers do not seem to be all that interested in God's view of things (again, look at the names of Judah's sons).

As an aside, you will recall that both Abraham and his grandson Jacob spoke with God on many occasions, but we do not seem to have that benefit for the sons of Jacob.



God does not need direct interaction between Himself and various men. He is able to execute His plan without direct contact. For whatever reason, God would see to it the Tamar bore a child in the line of Judah that would lead to the humanity of Jesus. And, interestingly enough, the genetic contribution of the Canaanites would be kept out of the picture. So, somehow, Judah would marry a Canaanite, which he should not have done; he will sire 3 sons by her; and yet, somehow, his unnamed Canaanite wife will contribute no genetic material to the line of Judah that leads to Jesus Christ. This is actually a pretty neat trick!

Furthermore, this will all be brought about while nearly no one acts like they have believed in the Lord. Rom. 8:28 **And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.** (ESV) This is the parallel between the narrative of Judah and the narrative of Joseph—this is God working all things out for good; this is showing us that, for both men, Jesus Christ controls history. The difference between these men? Judah did not understand or appreciate what had happened to him—so far, only 10 verses into this chapter, he has lost two sons, yet that is God’s plan. Joseph, on the other hand, was cast into slavery because of his own brothers, focused on the Living God. Therefore, when he faced insurmountable difficulties in life, he knew that God was in charge.

Judah, who had 3 sons by a Canaanite woman, lost two of them to the sin unto death. However, he blames Tamar, the wife of the first son, for their deaths. He promised his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to her, but does not appear to have any intention of fulfilling this promise.

Judah’s 3<sup>rd</sup> son, Shelah, will reach the age where he could marry, but Judah will not honor his commitment to Tamar.

Judah married a Canaanite woman and had 3 sons by her, none of whom reflected God’s grace—not by their names or by their actions. Judah found a wife (Tamar) for his firstborn, Er, but after getting married and before siring a son, Er died the sin unto death. Judah gave his second son to Tamar, but because of his actions, he also died the sin unto death.

So, Judah apparently thinks that Tamar is the problem. He promises his next son to her, but then gets her the heck away from him and his remaining family.

**And so says Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in a house of your father until grows up Shelah my son;” for he said, ‘Lest dies also him as his brothers.’ And so goes Tamar and so she lives a house of her father.**

Genesis  
38:11

**So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in your father’s home until Shelah, my son, grows up.” (For he thought, “Lest he die also as his brothers.”) So Tamar went and lived in the house of her father.**

**So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, “Stay a widow in your father’s home and let my son Shelah grow up.” However, Judah also thought to himself, “I am worried that Shelah might die as his brothers have died.” So Tamar went to live at the house of her father.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow in a house of your father until grows up Shelah my son;” for he said, ‘Lest dies also him as his brothers.’ And so goes Tamar and so she lives a house of her father.

Dead Sea Scrolls



Targum (Onkelos)	And Jehuda said to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow in thy father's house until Shelah my son be grown up. For he said, Lest he also die like his brothers: and Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jehuda said to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow in thy father's house, till Shela my son be grown up. For he said, Lest he also die as his brethren Tamar went and remained in her father's house.
Jerusalem targum	.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Wherefore Juda said to Thamar his daughter in law: Remain a widow in your father's house, till Sela my son grow up: for he was afraid lest he also might die, as his brethren did. She went her way and dwelt in her father's house.
Latin Vulgate	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Then Yudah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, until Shelah, my son, is grown up;" for he said, "Lest he also die, like his brothers." Tamar went and lived in her father's house.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then said Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow in your fathers house, until my son Shelah grows up; for he said. Lest he die also, as his brothers did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her fathers house.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Judas said to Thamar, his daughter-in-law, Sit you a widow in the house of your father-in-law, until Selom my son be grown; for he said, lest he also die as his brethren; and Thamar departed, and sat in the house of her father.
NETS (Greek)	.
Brenton's Septuagint	.

Significant differences:

#### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Go back to your father's house and keep yourself as a widow till my son Shelah becomes a man: for he had in his mind the thought that death might come to him as it had come to his brothers. So Tamar went back to her father's house.
Easy English	So Judah said to Tamar 'Go to your father's house. And live there as a widow. Live there until my son Shelah is older.' Judah thought 'Shelah may also die, because his brothers died.' So Tamar went to live in her father's house.
Easy-to-Read Version	.
God's Word™	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	.
International Children's B.	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Go back to live in your father's house. And don't marry until my young son Shelah grows up." Judah was afraid that Shelah also would die like his brothers. So Tamar returned to her father's home.
<i>The Message</i>	So Judah stepped in and told his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow at home with your father until my son Shelah grows up." He was worried that Shelah would also end up dead, just like his brothers. So Tamar went to live with her father.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	Then Judah spoke to his daughter-in-law Tamar. He said, "Live as a widow in your father's home. Wait there until my son Shelah grows up." Judah was thinking, "Shelah might die too, just like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's home.
New Simplified Bible	Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar: »Return to your father's house and remain a widow until my son Shelah grows up.« He said this because he was afraid that Shelah would be killed, as his brothers had been. So Tamar went back home.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible Contemporary English V.	Judah did not want the same thing to happen to his son Shelah, and he told Tamar, "Go home to your father and live there as a widow until my son Shelah is grown." So Tamar went to live with her father.
The Living Bible	Then Judah told Tamar, his daughter-in-law, not to marry again at that time, but to return to her childhood home and to her parents, and to remain a widow there until his youngest son, Shelah, was old enough to marry her. (But he didn't really intend for Shelah to do this, for fear God would kill him, too, just as he had his two brothers.) So Tamar went home to her parents.
New Berkeley Version New Century Version	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Go back to live in your father's house, and don't marry until my young son Shelah grows up." Judah was afraid that Shelah also would die like his brothers. So Tamar returned to her father's home.
New Life Version	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Stay in your father's house as a woman whose husband has died, until my son Shelah is grown. "For he thought, "I am afraid that he also may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.
New Living Translation	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.

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar: 'Live as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up... for I don't want him to die like his brothers.' So Tamar left and went to stay in her father's home.
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	After this, Judah told his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Go live as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up." But he was really thinking, "...otherwise, Shelah might die like his brothers." So Tamar left and lived in her father's house.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And now Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Go back to thy father's house, and there support thy widowed state until my son Sela has grown up. The truth was, he was afraid the same doom might overtake Sela. Tamar, then, went back to live at her father's house.
Revised Knox Bible Translation for Translators	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Return to your father's house, but do not marry anyone else. When my youngest son Shelah grows up, <i>he can marry you.</i> " But Judah <i>really did not want Shelah to marry her, because</i> he was afraid that then Shelah would die too, just as his older brothers had died. So Tamar obeyed <i>Judah</i> and went back to live in her father's house again.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Then was to say Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law: Be remaining as a widow in your father's house, until Shelah, my son, was to be grown. For he is to have said: Was he to die as his brothers? Tamar was to go, and was to remain in her father's house.
Conservapedia	Now Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow at your father's house, until Shelah has come of age." To himself he said, "I don't want him to die as well, as his brothers have." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then Judah said to Thamar " Return as a widow to your father's house until Shelah my son grows up," for he reflected "Perhaps she may also kill him like his brothers." Therefore Thamar went and returned to her father's house.

God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then said Juda to Tamar his daughter in law: remain a widow at your fathers house, till Sela my son be grown: for he feared lest he should have died also, as his brethren did. Thus went Tamar and dwelt in her fathers house.
HCSB Jubilee Bible 2000	. Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow at thy father's house until Shelah, my son, is grown; for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren <i>did</i> . And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.
H. C. Leupold Lexham English Bible NIV, ©2011	. Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He may die too, just like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's household.
Tree of Life Version	.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law, "Live as a widow in your father's house until Shelah, my son has grown up," for he was afraid that Shelah, like his brothers, might die. So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.
The Heritage Bible	And Judah said to Tamar, his daughter in law, Sit down a widow in your father's house, until Shelah, my son, has become grown (Because, he said, lest he die also, like his brothers). And Tamar walked, and sat down in her
father's house.	
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	.
New Jerusalem Bible	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, 'Go home as a widow to your father, until my son Shelah grows up,' for he was thinking, 'He must not die like his brothers.' So Tamar went home to her father.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible	.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then Y'hudah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Stay a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "I don't want him to die too, like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived at home with her father.
exeGesés companion Bible	Then Yah Hudah says to Tamar his daughter in law, Settle, a widow at the house of your father, until Shelah my son grows: for he says, Lest he die - even he, as his brothers. And Tamar goes and settles in the house of her father.
Israeli Authorized Version JPS (Tanakh—1985)	. Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Stay as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"—for he thought, "He too might die like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's house.
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	. Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, 'Live as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah is grown.' He was putting her off [(Rashi; Sefer HaYashar, p. 128). Literally, 'he said.')] because he was concerned that [Shelah], too, would die like his brothers. Tamar left and lived in her father's house.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Then said Yehudah to Tamar his kallah, Remain an almanah at thy bais avi, till Shelah beni is grown; for he said, Lest he die also, as his achim did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her bais avi.

Restored Names Version .  
The Scriptures 1998 .

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible	Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow at your father's house until Shelah my [youngest] son is grown"; [but he was deceiving her] for he thought that [if Shelah should marry her] he too might die like his brothers did. So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.
The Expanded Bible	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Go back to live in your father's house, and don't marry [ <sup>L</sup> Remain a widow in your father's house] until my young son Shelah grows up." Judah was afraid that Shelah also would die like his brothers. So Tamar returned to her father's home.
The Geneva Bible Kretzmann's Commentary	Then said Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, where widows returned in case there were no adult children to take care of them, till Shelah, my son, be grown. Evidently he did not want the third son to be married so early; for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. Whether this was due to a superstition which regarded Tamar as an unlucky wife or simply to fatherly anxiety in behalf of his only remaining son, cannot be determined. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. She was perfectly willing to do as Judah had suggested; she gave him the deference which the Fourth Commandment requires also from adult children.
NET Bible®	Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's house until Shelah my son grows up." For he thought [ <i>Heb</i> "said."], "I don't want him to die like his brothers [ <i>Heb</i> "Otherwise he will die, also he, like his brothers."]." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.
Syndein/Thieme The Voice	Judah summoned his daughter-in-law Tamar. <b>Judah:</b> <i>Tamar, it is best if you remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up.</i> Now Judah said this because he was afraid that Shelah, too, would die as his brothers had. So Tamar went and remained a widow with her father. After losing two sons, Judah thinks Tamar must be a dangerous woman. What he isn't willing to admit is that his own sons were wicked.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	.
Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Yehudah [ <sup>Praised</sup> ] said to Tamar [ <sup>Palm tree</sup> ] his daughter-in-law, settle, a widow of the house of your father until Sheylah [ <sup>Petition</sup> ], my son, will magnify given that he said otherwise he will also die like his brother and Tamar [ <sup>Palm tree</sup> ] walked and she settled the house of her father,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Judah to Thamar, his daughter-in-law, "Dwell a widow at your father's house till my son Shelah shall be grown. For, says he, "lest he, moreover, will die as his brothers. And going is Thamar and dwelling in her father's house.
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	.
Darby Translation	.
Emphasized Bible	.
English Standard Version	Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up"—for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house.
English Standard V. – UK	.

## Evidence Bible

Green's Literal Translation

And Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, Live as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah is grown. For he said, Lest he also die like his brothers. And Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

God's Truth (Tyndale)

King James 2000 Version

Modern English Version

Modern KJV

NASB

Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "*I am afraid* that he too may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

New European Version

New King James Version

Owen's Translation

Third Millennium Bible

Updated Bible Version 2.11

A Voice in the Wilderness

Webster's Bible Translation

World English Bible

Young's Literal Translation

Young's Updated LT

And Judah says to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Abide a widow at your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up;" for he said, "Lest he die—even he—like his brothers;" and Tamar goes and dwells at her father's house.

**The gist of this passage:**

Judah tells Tamar to return to her father's home to live as a widow until Shelah, his 3<sup>rd</sup> son is old enough to marry her. However, Judah was primarily worried that Shelah would die if he married Tamar.

**Genesis 38:11a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Tâmâr (תָּמָר) [pronounced <i>taw-MAWR</i> ]	<i>palm-tree, date-palm</i> and is transliterated <i>Tamar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #8559 BDB #1071



## Genesis 38:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kallâh (כַּלְיָה) [pronounced kahl-LAW]	<i>daughter-in-law, spouse, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3618 BDB #483
Kallâh is rendered <i>daughter-in-law, spouse, wife</i> . We do not have an exact English equivalent as its translation depends upon who is speaking or who this is in reference to. It is an absolute noun which we only have relative nouns to stand in for it.			
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>remain, stay; dwell, live, reside; sit</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
'al <sup>e</sup> mânâh (אַלְמָנָה) [pronounced al <sup>e</sup> -maw-NAW]	<i>widow; desolate house, desolate place</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #490 BDB #48
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
'âb (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; ancestor, grandfather; founder, civil leader, military leader; master, teacher</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
'ad (דַּע) [pronounced gâhd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until; while, so long as; to, even to [some certain limit]; even to [unto], unto</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
gâdal (גָּדַל) [pronounced gaw-DAHL]	<i>to be [become] great; to grow; to be greatly valued [celebrated, praised]; to twist together, to bind together</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1431 BDB #152
Shêlâh (שֵׁלַח) [pronounced shay-LAW]	<i>a petition; transliterated Shelah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7956 BDB #1017
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's home until Shelah, my son, grows up.

We might wonder about the dishonesty of Onan, but he apparently learned this from his father, Judah.

Judah decides incorrectly that Tamar is the problem. She is bad luck, insofar as Judah is concerned; and his solution is to separate her from his family. However, he is not honest with her. He tells her to simply wait until Shelah grows older, and then he would impregnate her. But that is not Judah's actual plan.

Judah does not know enough about Jesus Christ to exactly comprehend what has happened. His first two sons have died. He knows that it is right for his youngest son to marry this woman and bring up children by her, but



he doesn't want him to die. He's in a quandary here so he sends her away to her father's home and leaves that option open for this son to marry her while he ponders the situation. In the meanwhile, Judah does not want to assume the financial responsibility for this woman that he has brought into his home, so he sends her back to her family. So there is no misunderstanding, Judah, when he chose Tamar to become his daughter-in-law, was pledging the support and protection of his family towards her. You do not do that, and then send the girl back to her father's home.

Genesis 38:11b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
pen (פן) [pronounced pen]	<i>lest, peradventure, or else, in order to prevent, or, so that [plus a negative]</i>	conjunction	Strong's #6435 BDB #814
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
gam (גם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
'achîym (אחֵימ) [pronounced awkh-EEM]	<i>brothers, kinsmen, close relatives; tribesmen; fellow-countrymen</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

**Translation:** (For he thought, “Lest he die also as his brothers.”)

All the time, Judah is thinking, “I don't want my last son to die;” so he is simply putting distance between himself, his family, and Tamar.

Bear in mind, in all of this, Tamar has never done anything wrong. She is not to blame for anything that has gone one.

The NET Bible: *I don't want him to die like his brothers. This clause explains that Judah had no intention of giving Shelah to Tamar for the purpose of the levirate marriage. Judah apparently knew the nature of his sons, and feared that God would be angry with the third son and kill him as well.*<sup>20</sup>

Genesis 38:11c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Tâmâr (תַּמָּר) [pronounced <i>taw-MAWR</i> ]	<i>palm-tree, date-palm and is transliterated Tamar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #8559 BDB #1071
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH<sup>bV</sup></i> ]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit, to reside; to sit</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i> ]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
'âb (אָב) [pronounced <i>aw<sup>bV</sup></i> ]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; ancestor, grandfather; founder, civil leader, military leader; master, teacher</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

**Translation:** So Tamar went and lived in the house of her father.

So, Judah takes no responsibility for Tamar; he sends her back home to her father. Now, bear in mind, Tamar is no longer a virgin. So, her life, in the ancient world, is changed dramatically. She cannot simply marry. Since she has married and has cohabited both with her husband and his brother, marrying is not really an option at this point.

What appears to be the proper approach is, one of her husband's brothers should have taken up with her, and raised up a son with her and possibly even taken her to wife. It appears that it is really the responsibility of Judah and his sons to look out for her. However, Judah sends her back to her father. In this, Judah is abdicating his responsibility, has her father-in-law.

**Genesis 38:11** Then said Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow at your father's house until Shelah my son is grown." For he said [better understood to mean, *but he thought*], "Lest perhaps he die also, as his brothers did." And Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

Notice that I have made a change in the translation. Literally, the text reads *for he said*, but this is better understood to mean, *but he thought* (which is a legitimate way to render that Hebrew word).

<sup>20</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 4, 2016.

What Judah has done here is shirked his responsibility as a father. It was Judah's duty, more or less, to have his sons raise up children by Tamar. Logically, his own sons would be her kinsmen redeemer. Yet, Judah had no intention of fulfilling this responsibility.

Genesis 38:11 So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's home until Shelah, my son, grows up." (For he thought, "Lest he die also as his brothers.") So Tamar went and lived in the house of her father. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:11 So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Stay a widow in your father's home and let my son Shelah grow up." However, Judah also thought to himself, "I am worried that Shelah might die as his brothers have died." So Tamar went to live at the house of her father. (Kukis paraphrase)

Tamar is Judah's daughter-in-law, but she is associated with the deaths of Judah's first two sons. However, there is nothing to indicate that Tamar herself did any particular evil; but that all of this was on Er and Onan, the two sons of Judah who had each died the sin unto death. From what we know about Judah, there is no reason to assume that he was a very good father. Furthermore, their mother was a Canaanite; so there is little reason to think that she had a positive affect on the way that their sons were raised.

Since there does not appear to be any direct contact with God, at this point, it is reasonable to assume that Judah advances in life based upon the spiritual information in his soul, which is not very much.

There is nothing in this narrative (what we have studied or what follows) which suggests that Judah is introspective about Er's death, and considers, *is there something which I have done wrong?* What seems to be clearly the case is, Judah thinks that Tamar is bad luck. He does not allow Shelah to marry her and raise up seed in the name of Er because he is worried that Shelah will die like his older brothers.

Recall that much effort was expended to find wives for Isaac and Jacob outside of Canaan. When Esau married Hittite women, they were difficult for Rebekah, their mother-in-law, to deal with.

Here, Judah marries a Canaanite woman, and their first two sons die the sin unto death. However, at no point does Judah seem to stop and consider, maybe he should not have married a Canaanite woman.

When you marry, you need to think about what you are doing and follow some basic rules: do not date a person who uses drugs (no matter how infrequently) and do not pursue someone whom you have seen drunk on more than one occasion. If someone is unfaithful to you while dating, stop dating, cut them off, and move on to someone else. If you are a believer positive toward Bible doctrine and they are not, you need to move on. These are simple yet effective guidelines for the young believer.

The man, when he considers a woman, must understand and properly evaluate her character, and he must understand that marriage is a relationship where he becomes responsible for this woman for her entire life, from marriage to the point of her death (just as her father was responsible from birth to marriage). The man's consideration all of his life is to see that his wife and children are taken care of, when he is alive and after he has passed.

Now, you may think that this is old fashioned and how does this have any application to the United States of America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Consider: this expectation of protection and provision is an innate need that women have. When men do not fulfill this need (their father first, their husband next), then do they stand on their own, shaking their fist against societal norms? No, they replace their fathers and their husbands with government. Such women do not really stand on their own; such women do not really say, "I am woman; hear me roar." Instead, such women vote for the government to provide for them. The government is to provide for them if they are pregnant and without a husband; and the government is to make provisions for them throughout their lives. All of this, a couple of generations ago, was done by the two main men in their lives. Single women today who reject gender stereotypes tend to be liberal women, and what do they consistently vote for? More government, more safety nets, more assurances that government will take care of them. This was sold to women as *the Life*

**of Julia** (which was an interactive promise from Barack Obama to take care of women for their entire lives by means of the government<sup>21</sup>). For these women who have rejected their dependence upon men, Uncle Sam becomes their father and their husband to them. With one side of their mouth, they cry for independence from old fashioned norms of a past society; and with the other side of their mouth, they call for a compassionate government to be their daddy and their husband.

Marriage for the woman is much different than marriage for the man. The woman enters into an arrangement of obedience. She is under the control of her father in his home; if she leaves, then she exercises her own volition to determine her life. However, when she marries, she is placing her volition in the hands of the man she marries. For that reason, a woman needs to look that man over carefully to determine if she can make that sort of lifetime commitment. He might be rich and handsome, but he might also be a jerk.

Judah's Canaanite wife probably did not even believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She is probably in Hades today.

This chapter suggests that God may have intentionally wanted to keep the Canaanite race out of the line of Jesus Christ, perhaps under the principle, *a little leaven leavens the whole lump*.

Judah tells Tamar to wait it out, but he decides that he should not ask his third son to raise up a son through her because two of his other sons had died while in association with her.

Tamar is not living with Judah (her father-in-law); she is living with her actual father at this time. Generally speaking, if a woman has lost her virginity, then she is no longer considered to be marriage material. This was a very big deal in that era (as it has been in many periods of time, in many cultures). So Tamar would not be considered for marriage by other men. Furthermore, not only is she not a virgin, but she has been with two men now.

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

### Judah Engages with a Prostitute (who is actually Tamar)

And so become many the days and so dies a daughter of Shua, a woman of Judah. And so is comforted Judah. And so he goes up as far as the shearers of his flock, he and Hirah his associate, the Adullamite, Timnah-ward. And so he was made known to Tamar to say, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flock." And so she turns aside garments of her widowhood from upon her. And so she is covering in the veil and so she disguises herself. And so she sits in the entrance of Enaim that [is] beside the way of Timnah-ward, for she saw that had grown Shelah and she was not given to him in marriage.

Genesis  
38:12–14

The days became many and the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; and Judah was comforted [by friends and family]. Sometime later he went up to the shearers of his flock—he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, to Timnah. And it was made known to Tamar, saying, "Listen, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flock." So she puts off her widow's garments from upon her and covers herself with a veil and disguises herself. Then she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is along side the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah had grown [up] and that she had not been given to him in marriage.

<sup>21</sup> I am unable to find this web page; only a **spoof** of it.

Time passes, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died; and Judah was comforted by friends and family. Sometime after that, he went up to meet with the shearers of his flock. He went with his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, up to Timnah. And it was made known to Tamar, saying, "Listen, your father-in-law will be going up to Timnah to shear his flock." Therefore, she put off her widow's garments and she wore a veil, disguising herself. Then she sat down at the entrance of Enaim, which is along the road to Timnah, for she knew that Shelah had grown up, but that she had not been given to him in marriage.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so become many the days and so dies a daughter of Shua, a woman of Judah. And so is comforted Judah. And so he goes up as far as the shearers of his flock, he and Hirah his associate, the Adullamite, Timnah-ward. And so he was made known to Tamar to say, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flock." And so she turns aside garments of her widowhood from upon her. And so she is covering in the veil and so she disguises herself. And so she sits in the entrance of Enaim that [is] beside the way of Timnah-ward, for she saw that had grown Shelah and she was not given to him in marriage.
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum (Onkelos)	. And after many days the daughter of Shuva, Jehuda's wife, died: and Jehuda was comforted; and he went up to the shearers of his sheep, he and Hira the Adulamite his friend unto Timnath. And it was shown to Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father in law cometh to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she laid aside the dress of her widowhood, and covered herself with a mantle (or a large veil), and adorned herself [Sam. Vers. "changed herself."], and sat in the dividing of Ayin [B'pharashoth Aynin, "in a conspicuous (?) branching of the road." The Sam. Vers. has "in the gate of Chasbim."] which is in the way to Timnath. For she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him for a wife.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And days multiplied and the daughter of Shuva, Jehuda's wife, had died, and Jehuda was comforted. And Jehuda went up to the shearing of his flock, he and Hira his friend the Adullemite, to Timnath. And it was told to Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father in law cometh up to Timnath to shear his flock. And she put the dress of her widowhood from her, and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the dividing of the road where all eyes see, upon the way of Timnath. For she knew that Shela was grown up, yet she had not been given to him to be his wife.
Jerusalem targum Revised Douay-Rheims	. And after many days were past, the daughter of Sue the wife of Juda died: and when he had taken comfort after his mourning, he went up to Thamnas, to the shearers of his sheep, he and Hiras the Odollamite the shepherd of his flock. And it was told Thamar that her father in law was come up to Thamnas to shear his sheep. And she put off the garments of her widowhood, and took a veil: and changing her dress, sat in the cross way, that leads to Thamnas: because Sela was grown up, and she had not been married to him.
Latin Vulgate Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	. After many days, Shua's daughter, the wife of Yudah, died. Yudah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite. It was told Tamar, saying, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." She took off of her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gate of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given to him as a wife.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And in the course of time Shuahs daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah



the Arlemite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold your father-in-law is going up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she put off her widows dress, and adorned herself, and covered her face with a veil, and sat down at the parting of the road to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given to him to wife.

Septuagint (Greek)

And the days were fulfilled, and Sava the wife of Judas died; and Judas, being comforted, went to them that sheared his sheep, himself and Iras his Shepherd the Odollamite, to Thamna. And it was told Thamar his daughter-in-law, saying, Behold, your father-in-law goes up to Thamna, to shear his sheep. And having taken off the garments of her widowhood from her, she put on a veil, and ornamented her face, and sat by the gates of Aenan, which is in the way to Thamna, for she saw that Selom was grown; but he gave her not to him for a wife.

NETS (Greek)

Brenton's Septuagint

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English  
Easy English

A long time passed. And Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua died. When Judah had stopped being sad because of her, he went to the place called Timnah. He went to some men who were cutting the wool from his sheep. And Judah's friend, Hirah the Adullamite went with him. Someone told Tamar 'Your husband's father is going to Timnah to get the wool off his sheep.'

So Tamar took off her widow's clothes. And she covered herself with a veil. She did not want anyone to know who she was. That is why she did this. Then she sat at the place called Enaim. This is on the road going to Timnah. Tamar knew that Jacob's son Shelah had grown into a man. And he had not married her. That is why she did this.

Easy-to-Read Version

Later, Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah's time of sadness, he went to Timnah with his friend Hirah from Adullam. Judah went to Timnah to have the wool cut from his sheep. Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. Tamar always wore clothes that showed that she was a widow. So she put on some different clothes and covered her face with a veil. Then she sat down near the road going to Enaim, a town near Timnah. Tamar knew that Judah's younger son Shelah was now grown up, but Judah would not make plans for her to marry him.

God's Word™

Good News Bible (TEV)  
International Children's B.

After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah had gotten over his sorrow, he went to Timnah. He went to his men who were cutting the wool from his sheep. His friend Hirah from Adullam went with him. Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. So she took off the clothes that showed she was a widow. Then she covered her face with a veil to hide who she was. She sat down by the gate of Enaim. It was on the road to Timnah. She did this because Judah's younger son Shelah had grown up. But Judah had not made plans for her to marry him.

The Message

Time passed. Judah's wife, Shua's daughter, died. When the time of mourning was over, Judah with his friend Hirah of Adullam went to Timnah for the sheep shearing. Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law has gone to Timnah to shear his sheep." She took off her widow's clothes, put on a veil to disguise herself, and sat at the entrance to Enaim which is on the road to Timnah. She realized by now that even though Shelah was grown up, she wasn't going to be married to him.



Names of God Bible  
NIRV

After a long time Judah's wife died. She was the daughter of Shua. When Judah got over his sadness, he went up to Timnah. His friend Hirah from Adullam went with him. Men were clipping the wool from Judah's sheep at Timnah.

Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah to clip the wool from his sheep." So she took off her widow's clothes. She covered her face with a veil so people wouldn't know who she was. Then she sat down at the entrance to Enaim. Enaim is on the road to Timnah. Tamar knew that Shelah had grown up. But she hadn't been given to him as his wife.

New Simplified Bible

After some time Judah's wife died. When he finished mourning, he and his friend Hirah of Adullam went to Timnah, where his sheep were being sheared. Tamar found out that her father-in-law Judah was going to Timnah to shear his sheep. She realized that Shelah was now a grown man. She had not been allowed to marry him. So she decided to dress in something other than her widow's clothes and to cover her face with a veil. Then she sat outside the town of Enaim on the road to Timnah.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible

After a long time, Judah's wife the daughter of Shua died. Then, after a period of mourning, he and his neighbor Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnah, to those who were shearing his sheep. Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is now on his way up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So Tamar took off the clothing she wore as a widow, covered herself with a veil, put on makeup, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim on the road to Timnah, since she realized that although Shelah had already grown up, she hadn't been given to him as a wife.

Contemporary English V.

Some years later Judah's wife died, and he mourned for her. He then went with his friend Hirah to the town of Timnah, where his sheep were being sheared. Tamar found out that her father-in-law Judah was going to Timnah to shear his sheep. She also realized that Shelah was now a grown man, but she had not been allowed to marry him. So she decided to dress in something other than her widow's clothes and to cover her face with a veil. After this, she sat outside the town of Enaim on the road to Timnah.

The Living Bible

In the process of time Judah's wife died. After the time of mourning was over, Judah and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, went to Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep. When someone told Tamar that her father-in-law had left for the sheepshearing at Timnah, and realizing by now that she was not going to be permitted to marry Shelah, though he was fully grown, she laid aside her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself, and sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah.

New Berkeley Version  
New Century Version

After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah had gotten over his sorrow, he went to Timnah to his men who were cutting the wool from his sheep. His friend Hirah from Adullam went with him. Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. So she took off the clothes that showed she was a widow and covered her face with a veil to hide who she was. Then she sat down by the gate of Enaim on the road to Timnah. She did this because Judah's younger son Shelah had grown up, but Judah had not made plans for her to marry him.

New Life Version

Now after a long time, Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died. And after the time of sorrow, Judah and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went to the men who cut the wool from his sheep at Timnah. It was told to Tamar, "Your father-in-law is going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep." So she took off the clothes of a woman whose husband has died and put on other clothes and covered her face with cloth.

Then she sat in the gate of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown, and she had not been given to him for a wife.

New Living Translation 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. Someone told Tamar, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

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.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Well after several years, Judah's woman Sava died. So while Judah was looking for comfort, he went to see his sheep shearers at ThamNa, along with his Shepherd, Iras the Odollamite. And when his daughter-in-law Tamar was told, '{Look!} Your father-in-law is going up to ThamNa to shear his sheep,' she took off her widow's clothes, put on a veil and made up her face, and she went to sit by the gate of [the town of] AiNan, along the road that leads to ThamNa. She did this because [Judah's son] Selom had already grown up and [Judah] hadn't given [Tamar] to be his son's woman.

Beck's American Translation .  
International Standard V Some years later, Shua's daughter (that is, Judah's wife) died. As Judah was grieving, he visited the shearers of his flock in Timnah, accompanied by his Adullamite friend Hirah.

#### ***Tamar Avenges Judah's Treachery***

"Look!" somebody reported to Tamar, "Your father-in-law is going to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her mourning apparel, covered herself with a shawl, and concealed her outward appearance. Then she went out and sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah, because she knew that even though Shelah had grown up, she wasn't being given to him as his wife.

New Advent (Knox) Bible Time passed, and Suë's daughter, the wife of Juda, died. And when his grief for her was assuaged, he went with his friend Hiras of Odollam, who was a shepherd, to see the men who were shearing his flock at Thamnas [Here, and in verse 20, the Latin version represents Hiras as Juda's shepherd, the Hebrew text, as his friend. The two words are much alike in the Hebrew language.]. When she heard that her father-in-law was going up to Thamnas for the sheep-shearing, Thamar laid aside her widow's weeds, put a veil on, and disguised herself; then she went and sat at the cross roads on the way to Thamnas. She knew well that Sela had grown up, and still no husband was given her.

Revised Knox Bible .  
Translation for Translators Several years later, Judah's wife, who was the daughter of Shua, died. When the time of mourning for her was finished, Judah decided to go up to Timnah, to the place where his ◀men were shearing his sheep/sheep were being sheared▶ His friend Hiram, from Adullam, went with him. Someone said to Tamar, "Your father-in-law is going to *the fields near the city of* Timnah to help the men who are shearing his sheep." *She realized that now Shelah was grown up, but Judah had not given her to him to be his wife.* So she took off her widow's clothes, and covered her head with a veil, so that people would not ◀recognize her/know who she was▶.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible After many days, the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, was to die, and Judah was sorry; and he was to go up to they shearing his small cattle, to Timnah, with his

friend Hirah, an Adullamite. It was told Tamar, to the intent: Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah, to shear his small cattle. She was to turn aside, a turning aside of her garment of widowhood, and was to cover herself with a veil, even was to enwrap herself. She was to sit at the eye of the entrance, that is on the way to Timnah. For she is to have seen that Shelah is to have grown up - is she to have been given to him for a wife?.

Conservapedia

Eventually the daughter of Shuah, the wife of Judah, died. Judah was consoled, and went up to his sheep-shearers, both he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite, toward Timnath [Timnath would be the place where Judge Samson would try to find a wife.]. Someone told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnath to shear his sheep." She doffed her widow's weeds, and covered herself with a veil, and bedecked herself [The "bedecking" implies putting on too much make-up and too many jewels.], and sat in the opening of Enaim on the Timnath road. She knew already that Shelah had come of age, and she had not been given to him as his wife.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

But time went on, and Beth-Shua the wife of Judah died and Judah grieved for her, and went up with Hirah the Adulamite, his partner, to shear the sheep at Timnath; and it was reported to Thamar, that her father-in-law was going up to Timnath to shear his sheep, so she put off her widow's weeds and concealed herself in her veil, and went down and sat at the opening by the wells which are on the road to Timnath, for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and he was not given to her as a husband :...

God's Truth (Tyndale)

And in process of time, the daughter of Sua Judas wife died. Then Judas when he had left mourning, went unto his sheep shearers to Thimnath with his friend Hira of Odollam. And one told Thamar saying: behold, your father in law goes up to Thimnath, to shear his sheep. And she put her widows garments off from her and covered her with a cloak, and disguised herself: And sat her down at the entering of Enaim which is by the high ways side to Thimnath, for because she saw that Sela was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

HCSB

Jubilee Bible 2000

H. C. Leupold

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And quite a number of days passed, and the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died. Then when Judah had recovered from his grief, he went up to his sheepshearers, he and Hirah his friend, the Adullamite, to Timnah. And it was reported to Tamar: Look, thy father-in-law hath gone up to Timnah to shear sheep. So she laid aside the garments of a widow, and covered herself with a veil, and completely disguised herself and sat down at the entrance to Enayim, which is on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she was not being given to him as wife.

Lexham English Bible

{And in the course of time} the daughter of Shua, the wife of Judah, died. When Judah was consoled he went up to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite, to Timnah. And it was told to Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she removed the clothes of her widowhood and covered [herself] with the veil and disguised herself. And she sat at the entrance to Eynayim, which [is] on the way to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was grown but she had not been given to him as a wife.

NIV, ©2011

Tree of Life Version

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Now the days became many, and Shua's daughter, Judah's wife, died. After Judah consoled himself, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. Then Tamar was told, "Look! Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flocks." And she removed her widow's clothes from herself, covered herself with a veil, wrapped herself, and sat by the entrance to the springs on the way to Timnah (for she saw that Shelah had grown up and she had not been given to him as a wife).

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988) The Heritage Bible	.	And after many days the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died, and Judah was comforted; and ascended to his shearers of the flock, he and his friend, Hirah of Adullam, to Timnath. And it was caused to stand out boldly to Tamar, saying, Lo, your father in law ascends to Timnath to shear his flock. And she took off her widow's clothing from her, and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the entrance of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnath, because she saw that Shelah had become grown, and she was not given to him for a wife.
New American Bible (2002) New American Bible (2011)	.	Time passed, and the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died. After Judah completed the period of mourning, he went up to Timnah, to those who were shearing his sheep, in company with his friend Hirah the Adullamite. Then Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is on his way up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a shawl, and having wrapped herself sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah; for she was aware that, although Shelah was now grown up, she had not been given to him in marriage. Prv 7:10.
New Jerusalem Bible New RSV Revised English Bible	.	Time passed, and Judah's wife Bathshua died. When he had finished mourning, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnath at sheep-shearing. When Tamar was told that her father-in-law was on his way to shear his sheep at Timnath, she took off her widow's clothes, covered her face with a veil, and then sat where the road forks on the way to Timnath. She did this because she saw that although Shelah was now grown up she had not been given to him as a wife.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	In due time, Shua's daughter, the wife of Y'hudah, died. After Y'hudah had been comforted, he went up to be with his sheep-shearers in Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the 'Adulami. Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law has gone up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's clothes, completely covered her face with her veil, and sat at the entrance to 'Einayim, which is on the way to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah had grown up, but she still was not being given to him as his wife.
exeGeses companion Bible	And as the days abound, the daughter of Shuah, the woman of Yah Hudah dies: and Yah Hudah sighs and ascends to his flockshearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamiy. <b><u>THE WHOREDOM OF YAH HUDAH</u></b> And they tell Tamar, saying, Behold, your father in law ascends to Timnah to shear his flock. And she turns aside the clothing of her widowhood and covers her with a veil and wraps herself and sits in the portal of the fountain by the way to Timnah; for she sees that Shelah is grown and she was not given to him to woman.
Israeli Authorized Version	.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)  
 Judaica Press Complete T.  
 Kaplan Translation

A long time passed, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. Judah sought consolation, and he went to supervise his sheep shearers in Timna [A city 4 miles northeast of Adullam, now known as Tibna. See Joshua 15:57, 2 Chronicles 28:18.], together with his friend, Chirah the Adullamite. Tamar was told that her father-in-law was going to Timna to shear his sheep. She took off her widow's garb, and covered herself with a veil. Thus disguised, she sat at the entrance of Twin Wells (Eynayim) [Twin Wells or Twin Springs or Eyes. Some identify Eynayim with Enam in Joshua 15:34. See Genesis 38:21, where it is also referred to as Eynayim. Others say that it denotes two wells with a gate between them (Ibn Ezra), or a fork in the road by a well (Rashi). Others interpret it as 'open eyes,' and state that it denotes an open, visible place (Rashbam; Radak; cf. Targum; Lekach Tov; Sekhel Tov).] on the road to Timna. She had seen that Shelah had grown, and she had not been given to him as a wife.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And in process of time the bat Shua, eshet Yehudah, died; and Yehudah was consoled, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnah, he and his re'a Chirah the Adulami.

And it was told Tamar, saying, Hinei, thy kham (father-in-law) goeth up to Timnah to shear his tzon.

And she put off her widow's garments from her, and covered her with a tze'if (veil), and disguised herself, and sat at the crossroads which is on the derech to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him as isha.

Restored Names Version  
*The Scriptures* 1998

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

But quite a while later, Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, he went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah with his friend Hirah the Adullamite. Tamar was told, "Listen, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she removed her widow's clothes and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself up [in disguise], and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife [as Judah had promised].

The Expanded Bible

After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah had gotten over his sorrow [he was comforted], he went to Timnah [a town south of Hebron] to his men who were cutting the wool from his sheep [sheepshearers]. His friend Hirah from Adullam went with him. Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. So she took off the clothes that showed she was a widow and covered her face with a veil to hide who she was [and wrapped herself up; perhaps indicating a woman was a prostitute; see v. 15]. Then she sat down by the gate of Enaim on the road to Timnah. She did this because Judah's younger son Shelah had grown up, but Judah had not made plans for her to marry him [given her to him as a wife].

The Geneva Bible  
 Kretzmann's Commentary

### Verses 12-23

Judah Becomes Guilty of Incest

And in process of time, after many days had elapsed, after some years, the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, after the usual period of mourning, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnath, not the town in the Philistine plain, but that in the mountains of Judah, he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite. The occasion of the shearing of the sheep was always a great festival for the shepherds, and Judah, after the days of mourning for his wife, was



able to attend. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. She received the information simply in the manner in which a piece of news is passed on. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, completely muffled and disguised both her face and her form, after the manner of the public harlots, or prostitutes, and sat in an open place, in the gate of Enajim or Enam, a town in the plain of Judah, Joshua 15:34, which is by the way of Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. Although her plan and object seems revolting, it was not mere lust which drove her to this step, but a feeling of unjust treatment and the fear of lasting barrenness and mourning widowhood.

NET Bible®

After some time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah was consoled, he left for Timnah to visit his sheepshearers, along with [*Heb* "and he went up to the shearers of his sheep, he and."] his friend Hirah the Adullamite. Tamar was told [*Heb* "And it was told to Tamar, saying."], "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she removed her widow's clothes and covered herself with a veil. She wrapped herself and sat at the entrance to Enaim which is on the way to Timnah. (She did this because [The Hebrew text simply has "because," connecting this sentence to what precedes. For stylistic reasons the words "she did this" are supplied in the translation and a new sentence begun.] she saw that she had not been given to Shelah as a wife, even though he had now grown up [*Heb* "she saw that Shelah had grown up, but she was not given to him as a wife."].)

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

After a while, Judah's wife (Shua's daughter) also died. When Judah's time of mourning was over, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went to Timnah to *work with* his sheepshearers *and enjoy the festivities*. When Tamar learned that her father-in-law would be coming to Timnah to shear his sheep, she took off her widow's clothes, put on a veil to conceal her *true identity*, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim along the road to Timnah. You see, *Tamar harbored deep resentment toward her father-in-law* because she knew by this time that Shelah had grown up, but she had not been given to him in marriage *as Judah had promised*.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**American KJV  
Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and the days increased and the daughter of Shua<sup>[Wealthy]</sup>, the woman of Yehudah<sup>[Praised]</sup>, died and Yehudah<sup>[Praised]</sup> was comforted and he went up upon the shearing of his flocks, he and Hhiyrah<sup>[Bleached white]</sup> his companion, the one of Adulam<sup>[Witness of the people]</sup>, unto Timnat<sup>[Portion]</sup>, and he was told to Tamar<sup>[Palm tree]</sup> saying, look, your father-in-law is going up unto Timnat<sup>[Portion]</sup> to shear his flocks, and she removed the garments of her widowhood, from upon her and she concealed with the veil and wrapped herself and she settled in the opening of Eynayim<sup>[Double spring]</sup> which is upon the road unto Timnat<sup>[Portion]</sup>, given that she saw that Sheylah<sup>[Petition]</sup> magnified and she was not given to him for a woman,...

Concordant Literal Version

And increasing are the days, and the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died. And consoled is Judah, and going up is he to the shearers of his flock, he and his shepherd, Hirah, the Adullamite, to Timnah. And told is it to Thamar, saying, "Behold! Your husband's father is going up to Timnah to the shearing of his flock. And away is she taking the garments of her widowhood off her, and is covering herself with a veil and she is bedecking herself. And sitting is she at the opening to the springs, which are on the way to Timnah, for she sees that Shelah is grown, and she is not given to him for a wife.

A Conservative Version



Context Group Version	And after awhile Shua's daughter, the woman { or wife } of Judah, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheep-shearers to Timnah, he and his confidant Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Look, your father-in-law goes up to Timnah to shear his sheep. And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gate of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she wasn't given to him as woman { or wife }.
Darby Translation	.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	.
English Standard Version	In the course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died. When Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheep shearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage.
English Standard V. – UK	.
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	As time went on, the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died. After Judah was consoled, he went up to his sheepshearers in Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. It was told to Tamar, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." She took off her widow's clothing, covered herself with a veil, wrapped herself up, and sat in an open place, which is by the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as his wife.
Modern KJV	.
NASB	Now after a considerable time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. It was told to Tamar, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she removed her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped <i>herself</i> , and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.
Owen's Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	.
Young's Updated LT	And the days are multiplied, and the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, dies; and Judah is comforted, and goes up unto his sheep-shearers, he and Hirah his friend the Adullamite, to Timnath. And it is declared to Tamar, saying, "Lo, your husband's

father is going up to Timnath to shear his flock;” and she turns aside the garments of her widowhood from off her, and covers herself with a veil, and wraps herself up, and sits in the opening of Enayim, which is by the way to Timnath, for she has seen that Shelah has grown up, and she has not been given to him for a wife.

**The gist of this passage:** Judah’s wife dies and, after the time of mourning, Judah goes up for the sheering of his sheep along with his friend Hirah, in Timnath. When Tamar hears and realizes that she has not been given in marriage to Shelah (even though he is now old enough), she changes her garments and goes up to Enayim, which is on the way to Timnath.

Genesis 38:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
râbâh (רָבַח) [pronounced raw <sup>b</sup> -VAWH]	<i>to become much, to become many, to multiply, to increase in population and in whatever else; to become [or grow] great</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #7235 BDB #915
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong’s #3117 BDB #398
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #4191 BDB #559
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bath]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong’s #1323 BDB #123
Showa’ (שׁוּא) [pronounced SHOO-ahg’]	<i>wealth; transliterated Shua, Shuah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong’s #7770 BDB #447
’îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong’s #802 BDB #61
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> hoo-DAW]	<i>possibly means to praise, to be praised; and is transliterated Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong’s #3063 BDB #397

**Translation:** The days became many and the wife of Judah, Shua’s daughter, died;...

Time passes, and the wife of Judah dies. Interestingly enough, we never know her name. The line of promise does not go through her.

The NET Bible: *There is not enough information in the narrative to know how long this was. The text says “the days increased.” It was long enough for Shelah to mature and for Tamar to realize she would not have him.*<sup>22</sup>

Point in fact, there is a great deal of information about the time here.

**Genesis 38:12a** And the days were many, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shuah, died.

Time passes, and Judah’s Canaanite wife does as well. We know that she dies within 20 years of marrying Judah. Also, during this time frame, the man promised to Tamar, Shelah, had grown into an adult (say, age 14 or so).

Throughout these many years, Judah retains a business partnership with Hirah, his friend from Adullam.

Jack Ballinger observed a number of parallels here. These seem to be designed by God with the intention of Judah recognizing what he and his brothers put their father through. Because of Judah and his brothers, Joseph is in slavery in Egypt; and his father, Jacob, believes that he is dead.

**Ballinger: Judah Suffers as His Father Jacob Suffered**

1. Judah’s experience parallels those of his father.
2. Both lose a son or sons, and both lose their wives.
3. Judah felt that he had to separate from his father; Jacob had to separate from his father. Judah appears to have separated from his father and brothers; Jacob separated from his father and brother.
4. Jacob is deceived by his sons—they lie and tell him that Joseph is dead. Onan deceives his father, pretending to fulfill his levirate obligations, but he did not.
5. Judah did not fully appreciate the pain that he and his brothers caused his father (but he will come around to this eventually); Jacob, by deceiving his father, probably did not realize just how much he pained his own father.
6. When Jacob deceived his father, it was all about his inheritance; when Onan deceived his father, it was all about his inheritance. In both cases, money was more important to them than their relationship to God and family.
7. Jacob had been deceived by others more than once.
8. First Laban, and now his sons in regard to Joseph.
9. One interesting parallel, but not one that Judah would have known about: Tamar disguised herself so that Judah would have sex with her; just as Leah (Judah’s mother) disguised herself (not revealing who she was on their wedding night) so that Jacob would have sex with her.

Just as Judah tried to ignore Tamar, but that did not work; similarly he has tried to ignore his part in the disappearance of Joseph; and that is not working either.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen38.htm>; accessed May 18, 2016 (edited and appended).

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**Genesis 38:12b**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

<sup>22</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 5, 2016.

## Genesis 38:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nācham (נָחַם) [pronounced naw-KHAHM]	<i>to be sorry, to be moved to pity, to lament, to grieve, to have compassion, to pity, to suffer grief, to rue; to repent, to regret; to comfort [console] oneself, be comforted, to comfort oneself, ease oneself</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5162 BDB #636
Y <sup>e</sup> hūwdāh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> hoo-DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

**Translation:** ...and Judah was comforted [by friends and family].

Because of the death of his wife, there was a period of mourning and his friends and family mourned with him.

## Genesis 38:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿālāh (עָלָה) [pronounced ʿaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced ʿahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until; while, so long as; to, even to [some certain limit]; even to [unto], unto</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
gāzaz (גָּזְזוּ) [pronounced gaw-ZAHZ]	<i>shearers, sheep-shearers, men who shear sheep</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #1494 BDB #159
tsōʿn (צֹאן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

**Translation:** Sometime later he went up to the shearers of his flock...

Time passes, and it is time for the shearing of Judah's sheep (we are assuming that is the time frame here). *Going up* is likely Judah's sheep are being kept in the mountains or hill country.

## Genesis 38:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: <i>that, this (one); same</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Chîyrâh (חִירָה) [pronounced khee-RAW]	a nobler family; transliterated <i>Hirah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #2437 BDB #301
rêa' (עַר) [pronounced RAY-ahj]	associate, neighbor, colleague; companion, friend; beloved; fellow, acquaintance; fellow citizen; another person; one, another [in a reciprocal phrase]	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7453 BDB #945
ʿĀdullâmîy (אֲדֻלְמִי) [pronounced gúhd-ool-law-MEE]	refuges, retreat; justice of the people; transliterated <i>Adullamite, Adullami</i> ; a native of Adullam	gentilic singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #5726 BDB #726
Tim <sup>e</sup> nâh (תִּמְנָה) [pronounced tim-NAW]	portion, territory; transliterated <i>Timnah</i>	proper singular noun; location; with the directional hê	Strong's #8553 BDB #584

The directional hê (properly, the directive hê) is the *âh* (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *hê locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

**Translation:** ...—he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, to Timnah.

Hirah appears to have been a friend for a long time. It is with Hirah that Judah originally met his wife.

Judah retained this business relationship and this partnership with Hirah throughout these years. They have continued their business not just in the shepherding business, but they have branched out into sheepshearing and who knows what else. We do not know exactly how much time has passed, but it has been at least a year or so at least since Judah sent Tamar packing back to her father's. Judah's youngest sons is now old enough to be married (he would be a young teenager at this time). He was not old enough before when Tamar's husband died).

Note that Judah's brothers are not in the picture here, indicating that this is Judah's private life, apart from his family, making him the most like candidate to author this portion of Scripture. I think what happened was, Judah told this story to Joseph, and Joseph included it in his own narrative, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly enough, we follow the *line* of Judah much more carefully than we follow the line of Joseph, despite the fact that Joseph is, by almost any standard, a better person than Judah.

Judah (the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob and the half-brother of Joseph) seems to have separated from his family, married a Canaanite, and fathered 3 sons. He found a wife (Tamar) for the first son, who died the sin unto death. He gave his second son to her, but he died because he intentionally did not give her a son. Judah then sent Tamar packing to her father's home, promising her the 3<sup>rd</sup> son (but he had no intention of delivering on that promise).

On the one hand, Judah had assumed responsibility for Tamar by taking her to marry his first son; but, on the other hand, he seems to have concluded that she is bad luck, so he sent her back to her father.

When Tamar realized that Judah was not going to give his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to her, she decided to take matters into her own hand.

**Genesis 38:12** And the days were many, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shuah, died. And Judah was comforted, and went up to shearers of his sheep, he and his friend Hirah of Adullam, to Timnah.

Judah's wife dies and he is going to go up and handle his business. Now, there is this odd juxtaposition. We do not know how long Judah mourns before going back to work, but Tamar is still wearing mourning clothes for the loss of her husbands. We also know that this entire narrative only covers a time period of maybe 20 years (which includes Judah's marriage to the Canaanite woman, the birth of their 3 sons, and the marriage of two of them to Tamar).

Did you notice how her death is different from the death of her sons?

Gen. 38:7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. (ESV)

Gen. 38:10 And what he [Onan] did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also.

God puts Er and Onan to death; the Canaanite wife of Judah dies. Her sons die the sin unto death; she simply dies—probably an unbeliever. As noted before, her name is not even given.

Judah, apparently, decides to have some fun on this business trip.

Genesis 38:12 The days became many and the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; and Judah was comforted [by friends and family]. Sometime later he went up to the shearers of his flock—he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, to Timnah. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	to be made conspicuous, to be made known, to be expounded, to be explained, to be declared, to be informed	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Tâmâr (תַּמָּר) [pronounced taw-MAWR]	palm-tree, date-palm and is transliterated Tamar	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #8559 BDB #1071



## Genesis 38:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55

**Translation:** And it was made known to Tamar, saying,...

We don't know who spoke to Tamar, or why this information would have been made known to her. Perhaps she simply asked friends to inform her of what went on in Judah's household.

## Genesis 38:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, *he observed [that]; he saw*. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.

châm (חָם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>a husband's father, a wife's father, a father-in-law</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #2524 BDB #327
'âlâh (אָלַח) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i> ]	<i>going up, ascending, coming up, climbing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5927 BDB #748

The NET Bible: *The active participle indicates the action was in progress or about to begin.*<sup>23</sup>

Tim <sup>o</sup> nâh (תִּמְנָה) [pronounced <i>tim-NAW</i> ]	<i>portion, territory; transliterated Timnah</i>	proper singular noun; location; with the directional hê	Strong's #8553 BDB #584
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The directional hê (properly, the directive hê) is the *âh* (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *hê locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
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<sup>23</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 5, 2016.

Genesis 38:13b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
gâzaz (גָּזַז) [pronounced gaw-ZAHZ]	<i>to cut [hay]; to shear [a flock]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1494 BDB #159
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

**Translation:** ...“Listen, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flock.”

Perhaps friends simply kept her abreast of what went on in Judah's household. The promise was that when the youngest son was old enough, that he would do the duty of the close relative (which was, in most cases, the next brother).

**Genesis 38:13** And it was told to Tamar, saying, “Behold, your father-in-law goes up to Timnah to shear his sheep.”

Tamar, when she realized that she would not marry Shelah and become a part of Judah's family (as she had been promised), needed to figure out her life. Her options were to remain with her father, mourning her two husbands, and never to marry; or to somehow make herself a part of Judah's family. Bear in mind that, in the ancient world, this was her only option for marriage and children, having lost her virginity. Men married virgins, for the most part (this custom has only recently changed in American society, and elsewhere). In that era, marrying a woman who is not a virgin would have been grounds for divorce.

Tamar developed a plan. She probably knew about Judah's business dealings and knew of his travels. Her plan seems to indicate that she knew of Judah's proclivities (or weaknesses) as well. Her plan makes more sense if she understands Judah somewhat.

The narrative sounds as if this is a hail Mary approach, but there is no reason to assume that Tamar is not both intelligent and calculating.

Someone did not come by to Tamar and visit and say, “Oh, by the way, your father-in-law is going up the sheer some sheep.” Tamar has no doubt put together a plan, has a friend on the *inside*, so to speak (perhaps a servant of Judah's), and has already said, “The next time Judah goes on a business trip, please let me know and give me the details.” No doubt, there is someone on the Judah ranch who is sympathetic to Tamar. Tamar should be under the care of Judah's family and she is not. There are many who would understand this and how she has been wronged.

Apparently, Jacob's sons were reasonably successful. You may recall that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had all been blessed with great herds. It logically follows that his sons were also successful in farming and/or ranching as well.

**Genesis 38:13** And it was made known to Tamar, saying, “Listen, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flock.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 38:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
çûwr (וּר) [pronounced <i>soor</i> ]	<i>to turn aside, to depart, to go away</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693
This verb can be used of things which are removed or taken away. <sup>24</sup>			
b <sup>e</sup> gâdîym (בגדים) [pronounced <i>b<sup>e</sup>-gaw-DEEM</i> ]	<i>garments, clothes, clothing, apparel; possibly blankets</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #899 BDB #93
'al <sup>m</sup> ânûwth (אלמנות) [pronounced <i>ahl-maw-NOOTH</i> ]	<i>widow, widowhood</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #491 BDB #48
min (מ) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of, from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'al (על) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from*. Some translators rendered this *away from*.

**Translation:** [So she puts off her widow's garments from upon her...](#)

It appears that Tamar had developed a plan while waiting for the family of Judah to fulfill their promise to her. Here, we have the idea that she had clothing that appears to identify her as a widow. This would have been a cultural standard of that day.

We had the cultural standard of many years of a married woman being called *Mrs.* and an unmarried woman being called *Miss*.

Tamar had been wearing these widow's clothes for some time, perhaps months or even a year or two, remaining unmarried according to Judah's word. However, as time passed, she realized that she was not going to marry his third son. She has remained in mourning for years according to Judah's word, and he has not contacted her, nor has his son. It was not right to make her wait like that. What she plans to do is not right either. There are great sections of Scripture during which no one does anything right. This should not be a concern to the reader. In historical documents, it is much more often the case when the writer embellishes the honor and integrity of the protagonist of any given section, particularly if that portion is autobiographical. Here is where the Bible is different from all other documents. The writers of Scripture maintain their literary skills (or lack thereof), their vocabulary, their thoughts, but, most importantly, what they write and record is objective, recording everything that they have done which is important to us in all of its negative detail. I personally would not want to have family members and friends read a totally objective and accurate biography about me—I would be too embarrassed to face anyone

<sup>24</sup> H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 582.

afterwards. Had many of these things been about me, I don't know that I would have written them down. Most of what we know about Judah so far is negative. The rest of this chapter will not change that.

Genesis 38:14b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâçâh (כָּסָה) [pronounced <i>kaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over, to engulf; to overwhelm</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3680 BDB #491
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
tsâ'iyph (צִיפָה) [pronounced <i>tsaw-ÇEEF</i> ]	<i>[a woman's] veil; a wrapper, a shawl</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6809 BDB #858

**Translation:** ...and covers herself with a veil...

She is going to disguise herself with a veil.

This verse also gives us a little peek at the practices of the day. During that time in that area, most women went about their daily business unveiled. However, those who hailed from the Mesopotamian area (including those influenced by their culture) wore veils occasionally as an act of modesty (Genesis 38:14). Fashion and those things which mark a person vary from area to area, from time to time, then as they do now.

Genesis 38:14c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âlah (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAHF</i> ]	<i>to cover up oneself; to disguise oneself; to faint</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #5968 BDB #763

**Translation:** ...and disguises herself.

She is going to make herself unrecognizable to Judah. And she apparently has a plan in mind.

## Genesis 38:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (יָשָׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH<sup>AV</sup></i> ]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit, to reside; to sit</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
pethach (פֶּתַח) [pronounced <i>PEH-thakh</i> ]	<i>opening, doorway, entrance, gate [for a tent, house, or city]; metaphorically, gate [of hope, of the mouth]</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6607 BDB #835
Ēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>ġay-NAH-yihm</i> ]	<i>a double spring, a double fountain; two eyes; and is transliterated <i>Enam, Enajim, Enaim</i></i>	proper singular noun location	Strong's #5879 BDB #745
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>ġah</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
derek <sup>e</sup> (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
Tim <sup>e</sup> nâh (תִּמְנַח) [pronounced <i>tim-NAW</i> ]	<i>portion, territory; transliterated <i>Timnah</i></i>	proper singular noun; location; with the directional hê	Strong's #8553 BDB #584

The directional hê (properly, the directive hê) is the âh (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *hê locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

**Translation:** Then she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is along side the road to Timnah,...

She knew where Judah was going, and she was going to position herself along the way.

A lot of things occurred at the entrance of a city; and, apparently, there are prostitutes who sometimes presented themselves at the gates of some cities.

Genesis 38:14e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
gâdal (גָּדַל) [pronounced gaw-DAHL]	<i>to be [become] great; to grow; to be greatly valued [celebrated, praised]; to twist together, to bind together</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1431 BDB #152
Shêlâh (שֶׁלַח) [pronounced shay-LAW]	<i>a petition; transliterated Shelah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7956 BDB #1017
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hîy' (אִיָּהּ) [pronounced hee]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , <i>is</i> implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to be give, to be delivered, to be given forth [as law]; to be made</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

**Translation:** ...for she saw that Shelah had grown [up] and that she had not been given to him in marriage.

The word *to see* can be understood to mean *she knew*. We don't know if she actually observed this with her own eyes or if she simply understood the time frame involved.



**Genesis 38:14** And she put off her widow's clothes, and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself. And she sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown and she was not given to him as wife.

Genesis 38:14 So she puts off her widow's garments from upon her and covers herself with a veil and disguises herself. Then she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is along side the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah had grown [up] and that she had not been given to him in marriage. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Tamar knows how many years have gone by, and she knows that Shelah, Judah's third son, is old enough to father a child by her. That should be his duty, as prompted by Judah. However, Judah was not doing any prompting because he worried that he would lose his third son.

This might be 2–3 years later. Because of the time constraints, not much time can have passed. Besides, Tamar was still wearing mourning clothes.

At this point in her life, she has no child, no proper relationship to the family of Judah through marriage—and she should. Yet, it is through her that the line of Jesus would go (obviously she does not know this nor does Judah).

This is another place where the MKJV goes astray in its translation. The ESV provides a better translation:

Gen. 38:13–14 And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to **Enaim**, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage.

The name of the place where she sat is 'Ēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced *gay-NAH-yihm*], which means, *a double spring, a double fountain; two eyes*. Strong's #5879 BDB #745.

Genesis 38:12–14 The days became many and the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; and Judah was comforted [by friends and family]. Sometime later he went up to the shearers of his flock—he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, to Timnah. And it was made known to Tamar, saying, "Listen, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flock." So she puts off her widow's garments from upon her and covers herself with a veil and disguises herself. Then she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is along side the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah had grown [up] and that she had not been given to him in marriage. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:12–14 Time passes, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died; and Judah was comforted by friends and family. Sometime after that, he went up to meet with the shearers of his flock. He went with his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, up to Timnah. And it was made known to Tamar, saying, "Listen, your father-in-law will be going up to Timnah to shear his flock." Therefore, she put off her widow's garments and she wore a veil, disguising herself. Then she sat down at the entrance of Enaim, which is along the road to Timnah, for she knew that Shelah had grown up, but that she had not been given to him in marriage. (Kukis paraphrase)

It is unclear what Judah saw when he saw Tamar; it is unclear what caught his eye through the veil. Could he see her two eyes? Was he mesmerized by her eyes? Women are often very smart about their appearance, and there are times when they learn to emphasize one attribute over others, so that all attention is drawn to that attribute—and few things are as beautiful as the eyes of a woman. Perhaps she arranged her veil so that her striking eyes caught Judah's imagination?

Furthermore, a smart woman can do a lot, particularly with her eyes. She can say a great deal with her eyes, without you even realizing that she is not speaking aloud.

Perhaps it was her form. In any case...

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And so sees her Judah and so he regards her for a prostitute, for she had concealed her faces. And so he turned unto her unto the road and so he says, "Come, please; I will come in unto you;" (for he did not know that his daughter-in-law she [was]). And so she says, "What will you give to me that you will come in unto me?"

Genesis  
38:15–16

Judah saw her and he took her for a prostitute, for she had hidden her face. So he veered toward her on the road and said, "Come [to me], now, [and] I will come in to you." (for he did not know that she [was] his daughter-in-law) So she said, "What will you give me that you will come in to me?"

Judah saw her and took her for a prostitute, for she had her face covered. So he veered off the road toward her and said, "I would like to come in to you;" (as he did not realize that she was his daughter-in-law). So she said, "What will you give me in order to have pleasure with me?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sees her Judah and so he regards her for a prostitute, for she had concealed her faces. And so he turned unto her unto the road and so he says, "Come, please; I will come in unto you;" (for he did not know that his daughter-in-law she [was]). And so she says, "What will you give to me that you will come in unto me?"
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jehuda saw her, and thought that she was an outcast, because she had covered her face. And he declined to her by the way, and said, Give me now to go in unto thee; for he did not know that she was his daughter in law. And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come to me?
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jehuda saw her; but she seemed in his face as an harlot [Ke-naphkath bara, "as an outcast."], because she had provoked him to anger in his house, and Jehuda did not love her.[JERUSALEM. For she had enwrapped her face.] And he inclined to her in the way and said, Let me now go in with thee: for he knew not that she was his daughter in law. And she said What wilt thou give me to go in with me?
Jerusalem targum	.
Revised Douay-Rheims	When Juda saw her, he thought she was a harlot: for she had covered her face, lest she should be known. And going to her, he said: Suffer me to lie with you: for he knew her not to be his daughter in law. And she answered: What will you give me to enjoy my company?
Latin Vulgate	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	When Yudah saw her, he thought that she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. He turned to her by the way, and said, "Please come, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"
Peshitta (Syriac)	When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned to her by the way and said to her, Come, let me come in unto you (for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law). And she said, What will you give me that you may come in unto me?
Septuagint (Greek)	And when Judas saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; for she covered her face, and he knew her not. And he went out of his way to her, and said to her, Let me come in to you; for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law; and she said, What will you give me if you should come in to me?
NETS (Greek)	.
Brenton's Septuagint	.

Significant differences:

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	When Judah saw her he took her to be a loose woman of the town, because her face was covered. And turning to her by the roadside, he said to her, Let me come in to you; for he had no idea that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What will you give me as my price?
Easy English	Judah saw her. And he thought that she was a prostitute. He thought that because she had covered her face. He did not know that she was his son's widow. And he went over to her while she was at the side of the road. He said 'Let me sleep with you.' Tamar asked, 'If I sleep with you, what will you give me?'
Easy-to-Read Version <i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup>	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When Judah saw her, he thought that she was a prostitute, because she had her face covered. He went over to her at the side of the road and said, "All right, how much do you charge?" (He did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.) She said, "What will you give me?"
International Children's B.	When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute. This was because she had covered her face with a veil. So Judah went to her and said, "Let me have physical relations with you." He did not know that she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law. She asked, "What will you give me if I let you have physical relations with me?"
<i>The Message</i>	Judah saw her and assumed she was a prostitute since she had veiled her face. He left the road and went over to her. He said, "Let me sleep with you." He had no idea that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you pay me?"
Names of God Bible NIRV	. Judah saw her. He thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face with a veil. He didn't realize that she was his daughter-in-law. He went over to her by the side of the road. He said, "Come. Let me sleep with you." "What will you give me to sleep with you?" she asked.
New Simplified Bible	Judah came along. He did not recognize her because of the veil. He thought she was a prostitute, and asked her to sleep with him. She asked: »What will you give me if I do?«

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible	Judah saw her and thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face. He turned to her beside the road and said, "Let me sleep with you," because he didn't know she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me for sleeping with you?"
Contemporary English V. The Living Bible	. Judah noticed her as he went by and thought she was a prostitute, since her face was veiled. So he stopped and propositioned her to sleep with him, not realizing of course that she was his own daughter-in-law. "How much will you pay me?" she asked.
New Berkeley Version New Century Version New Life Version	. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a woman who sold the use of her body. For she had covered her face. He went to her at the side of the road, and said, "Here now, let me come in to you." He did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me to come in to me?"

New Living Translation Judah noticed her and thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. 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.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Well, when Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, because she had her face covered and he didn't recognize her. So he stopped and said to her (not knowing that she was his daughter-in-law), 'Let me [have sex with] you.'  
And she asked, 'What will you give me to [have sex] with me?'

Beck's American Translation .

International Standard V When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, since she had concealed her face. So on the way, he turned aside, approached her, and said, "Come on! Let's have some sex!" But he didn't realize that he was talking to his own daughter-in-law. "What will you give me," she asked, "in order to have sex with me?"

Revised Knox Bible Juda saw her without recognizing her as his daughter-in-law (for she kept her face veiled), and took her for a harlot; so he accosted her, and asked for her favours. What will you give me, she asked, as the price of enjoying them?

Translation for Translators When Judah came along and saw her, he thought that she was a prostitute, because she had covered her head like prostitutes often did (OR, and sat where prostitutes often sat). Judah did not realize that she was his daughter-in-law. So he said to her, "Hey, let me have sex [EUP] with you!" She replied, "What will you give me for allowing you to have sex [EUP] with me?"

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible Judah was to perceive her, and was to think her as being a harlot, for she is to have covered her face. He was to turn aside to her, by the roadway, and was to say: Be permitting me, I was to come in to you. Is he to have known she is his daughter-in-law? She was to say: You was to give to me, that you was to come in to me?

Conservapedia Judah saw her, and reckoned that she was a cult prostitute, because he had covered her face. He turned aside to her by the roadside, and said, "Please grant that I may be intimate with you." (He did not know that this woman was his daughter-in-law.) She said, "What will you pay me for the privilege of being intimate with me?"

Ferrar-Fenton Bible Judah saw her, and he thought she was a harlot, for she had hidden her face, so he turned from the road to her, and said, " Come on, go with me; " — for he knew not she was his daughter-in-law.  
Then she asked, " What will you give to me, if I go with you ? "

God's Truth (Tyndale) When Juda saw her he thought it had been an whore, because she had covered her face. And turned to her unto the way and said, come I pray you, let me lie with you, for he knew not that it was his daughter in law. And she said what will you give me, for to lie with me?

HCSB .

Jubilee Bible 2000 .

H. C. Leupold .

Lexham English Bible And Judah saw her and reckoned her to [be] a prostitute, for she had covered her face. And he turned aside to her at the roadside and said, "Please come, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she [was] his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give to me that you may come in to me?"

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Tree of Life Version .

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988) The Heritage Bible	.	And Judah saw her, and he calculated her to be a harlot, because she had covered her face. And he stretched out to her by the way, and said, Come now, let me come in to you, because he did not know by seeing that she was his daughter in law. And she said, What will you give me, that you may come in to me?
New American Bible (2002)	.	When Judah saw her, he mistook her for a harlot, since she had covered her face. So he went over to her at the roadside, and not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he said, "Come, let me have intercourse with you." She replied, "What will you pay me for letting you have intercourse with me?"
New American Bible (2011)	.	When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, since she had covered her face. So he went over to her at the roadside and said, "Come, let me have intercourse with you," for he did not realize that she was his daughter-in-law. She replied, "What will you pay me for letting you have intercourse with me?"
New Jerusalem Bible	.	Judah, seeing her, took her for a prostitute, since her face was veiled. Going up to her on the road, he said, 'Here, let me sleep with you.' He did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. 'What will you give me for sleeping with you?' she asked.
New RSV Revised English Bible	.	.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	.	When Y'hudah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face. So he went over to her where she was sitting and said, not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, "Come, let me sleep with you." She answered, "What will you pay to sleep with me?"
exeGesés companion Bible	.	When Yah Hudah sees her, he fabricates her to be one who whores; because she covers her face: and he turns to her by the way and says, Give, I beseech you, that I come in to you; - for he knows not she is his daughter in law. And she says, What give you me, to come in to me?
Israeli Authorized Version JPS (Tanakh—1985) Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	.	Judah saw her, and because she had covered her face [It was the custom for sacred prostitutes to cover their faces (Ramban; Bachya). Ancient sources describe this as being like a wreath of string covering the head and face (Herodotus 1:199).], he assumed that she was a prostitute. Kedeshah in Hebrew. See Deuteronomy 23:18 which seems to indicate that the pagan custom was to use the hire of such prostitutes for sacrifice. The kedeshah is also associated with sacrifice in Hosea 4:14. See Numbers 25:1,2. Ancient sources state that among the Amorites it was a custom that girls would have to sit seven days as prostitutes before being married (Tzava'ath Yehudah 12:2; cf. Herodotus 1:199; also see Kethuboth 3b). Judah had no interest in her as a sacred prostitute, and, therefore, above (Genesis 38:15), the word zonah denoting a simple prostitute, is used. He turned aside to her on the road, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law. 'Hello there,' he said. 'Let me come to you.' 'What will you give me if you come to me?'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	.	When Yehudah saw her, he thought her to be a zonah; because she had covered her face.



And he turned unto her by the derech, and said, Come now, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his kallah [daughter-in-law]). And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

Restored Names Version  
The Scriptures 1998

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

When Judah saw her, he thought she was a [temple] prostitute, for she had covered her face [as such women did]. He turned to her by the road, and said, "Please come, let me lie with you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me, that you may lie with me?"

The Expanded Bible

When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face with a veil. So Judah went to her [<sup>L</sup>on the road side/way] and said, "Let me ·have sexual relations with [<sup>L</sup>come to] you." He did not know that she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law.

She asked, "What will you ·give [pay] me if I let you ·have sexual relations with [<sup>L</sup>come to] me?"

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

When Judah saw her, upon his return from the festivities at Timnath, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face, after the custom of such women. And he turned unto her by the way, turned aside from the road, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law). And she said, What wilt thou give me that thou mayest come in unto me?

NET Bible®

When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute [*Heb* "he reckoned her for a prostitute," which was what Tamar had intended for him to do. She obviously had some idea of his inclinations, or she would not have tried this risky plan.] because she had covered her face. He turned aside to her along the road and said, "Come on! I want to have sex with you [*Heb* "I will go to you." The imperfect verbal form probably indicates his desire here. The expression "go to" is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.]." (He did not realize [*Heb* "for he did not know that."]) it was his daughter-in-law.) She asked, "What will you give me in exchange for having sex with you [*Heb* "when you come to me." This expression is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.]"?

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

When Judah *passed by and* saw her, he thought she was a prostitute because she had her face covered. *He decided to proposition her*, so he walked over to her by the roadside.

**Judah:** Come on, I want to have sex with you.

He had no idea she was his daughter-in-law, *but she had a proposition of her own.*

**Tamar:** What will you give me in return if I do?.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV  
Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and Yehudah [<sup>Praised</sup>] saw her and he thought her to be a whore given that she concealed her face, and he stretched to her by the road and he said, please provide, given that he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law, and she said, what will you give to me given that you will come to me,...

Concordant Literal Version

And seeing her is Judah, and is accounting her to be a prostitute, for she covers her face, and he did not recognize her. And aside is he turning to her by the way, and is saying to her, "Prithee, pray, coming am I to you, for not know does he that she



is his daughter-in-law. And saying is she, "What will you give to me that you shall come to me?"

A Conservative Version  
Context Group Version

.  
When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face. And he turned to her by the way, and said, Come, I beg of you, let me come in to you: for he didn't know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What will you give me, that you may come in to me?

Darby Translation  
Emphasized Bible

.  
And Judah, seeing her, reckoned her to be an unchaste woman,—for she had covered her face. So he turned aside unto her. by the way, and said Grant it! I pray thee, let me come in unto thee! For he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, What wilt thou give me, if thou shouldst come in unto me?

English Standard Version  
English Standard V. – UK  
Evidence Bible  
Green's Literal Translation  
God's Truth (Tyndale)  
King James 2000 Version  
Modern English Version

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.  
When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face. He turned to her by the road and said, "Come now, let me have relations with you" (for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law). And she said, "What will you give me, so that you may have relations with me?"

Modern KJV  
NASB  
New European Version  
New King James Version

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.  
.  
When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. 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. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

Owen's Translation  
Third Millennium Bible  
Updated Bible Version 2.11  
A Voice in the Wilderness  
Webster's Bible Translation

.  
.  
.  
When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned to her by the way, and said, Come, I pray thee, let me have access to thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law:) and she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayst have access to me?

World English Bible  
Young's Literal Translation  
Young's Updated LT

.  
.  
And Judah sees her, and reckons her for a harlot, for she has covered her face, and he turns aside unto her by the way, and says, "Come, I pray you, let me come in unto you," (for he has not known that she is his daughter-in-law); and she says, "What will you give to me, that you might come in unto me?"

**The gist of this passage:**

When Judah saw Tamar's veiled face, he took her to be a prostitute and began to barter with her to have relations with her.

Genesis 38:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (l) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 38:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> hoo-DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated Judah	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
châshab (בָּשַׁח) [pronounced khaw-SHAHB <sup>v</sup> ]	<i>to think, to mediate, regard, to account, to count, to determine, to calculate, to impute, to reckon</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #2803 BDB #362
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
zânâh (זָנָה) [pronounced zaw-NAW]	<i>adulteress, fornicator, sexually promiscuous person; harlot, whore, prostitute; a madam</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #2181 BDB #275

**Translation:** Judah saw her and he took her for a prostitute,...

In translating châshab (בָּשַׁח) [pronounced khaw-SHAHB<sup>v</sup>] as *took*, I am using it in the sense of, *to think, to mediate, regard*.

In case you are concerned about the recognition factor, Tamar is (1) wearing a veil and (2) a lot of time has passed since Judah and she have seen one another (see v. 12). My guess is that anywhere from 3 to 15 years have transpired since they have seen one another. Since they were not intimate before, it is not difficult to imagine that Judah did not recognize her under these circumstances.

There are several words which are used in this a later verses which are translated *harlot, harlotry, temple prostitute,*, etc. I'll provide you with a glossary below:

Hebrew Glossary for <i>Prostitute</i> and other Nasty Words			
zânâh (זָנָה) [pronounced zaw-NAW]	Strong's #2181 BDB #275	Verb: from a root word meaning to be highly fed; it actually means: to be a whore, to commit adultery, usually used of the woman, less often used for committing fornication, rarely of rape, often used of Israel for spiritual adultery	Genesis 38: 15 (prtc), 24
			Genesis 34:31 Exodus 34:15 Judges 8:33 19:2 Josh. 6:17 Jer. 3:1
z <sup>e</sup> nûwthîym (זְנוּתִיּוֹת) [pronounced zehn-oo-THEEM]	Strong's #2183 BDB #276	Plural abstract intensive substantive: <i>fornications, acts of adultery, acts of prostitution; spiritual adulteries</i>	Genesis 38:24
			2Kings 9:22 Ezekiel 23:11 Hos. 1:2

z <sup>e</sup> nûwth (זָנוּת) [pronounced zahn-OOTH]	Strong's #2184 BDB #276	Substantive: also means adultery, but primarily figuratively for <i>idolatry</i> . Its meanings are given as, <i>adultery, infidelity; idolatry; fornication, harlotry</i> .	not in this passage
			Num. 14:33 Jer. 3:2, 9 Hos. 4:11 6:10
qâdêsh (קֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced kaw-DAYSH]	Strong's #6945 BDB #873	Substantive: this is the word which means temple prostitute and this is the female form	Genesis 38:21, 22
			Deut. 23:17 Hos. 4:14

There are many more such words in the Hebrew.

[Chapter Outline](#)

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When Judah saw her, he thought that she was a prostitute. This suggests an interesting backstory.

There is a great deal that we may surmise from what we have read so far.

### The Implied Backstory to Judah and Tamar

- Someone is reporting information to Tamar, and it appears that information has been brought to her on more than one occasions. She knows that the man promised to her is grown, but he has not been given to her. She knows what Judah is up to.
- She also knows a route that Judah will take. That is, when Judah gets up to go from point A to point B, how did she know where he was going to? Either he had made this trip before or she got very good information.
- Tamar has to overtake Judah, pass him up, and get to this town on the way to his sheep; or she has to leave before he goes. Therefore, her information has to be very current and very specific.
- In other words, Tamar hears this not simply as the word on the street.
- Judah is going to think that she is a prostitute and this will pique his interest. Now, this may surprise some women but, not every man is going to look at a prostitute in the same way; not every man is going to turn aside to chat up a prostitute. Just because a man is going about his business, and sees a woman who is attractive and he identifies her as a prostitute, that does not mean that man will take the bait, so to speak. I could not give you percentages here, but, in a similar circumstance, if a man happened upon a prostitute, certainly fewer than half of all men would pursue this situation further. Many might say *hi* or whatever, but to make an offer is not how most men would react. Now, perhaps more than 5% of men would consider the prostitute; and certainly less than 50% would.
- My reason for suggesting these statistics is, *how does Tamar know how Judah will react to her?* This is a lot of trouble to go to, if Judah would not consider doing something like this.
- Therefore, let me further suggest that this is not the first time Judah has done this; and that Tamar's source has to be a fairly intimate source. Perhaps a slave of Judah's or perhaps even his best friend? All of this would be quite an elaborate scheme to put together for the average male, because the average male would not take the bait. The average male, when realizing that Tamar is a prostitute (that is how she is presenting herself), would beg off, and go on his journey. In fact, easily half would just ride on past her (and probably a larger percentage than that).
- Therefore, we may surmise the following:
  - There is someone close to Judah who is quite sympathetic to Tamar and her situation, feeding this information to Tamar.
  - Judah has established a pattern of life which Tamar will exploit.
  - She probably knows about Judah's trip *before* he leaves on this trip.
-

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Some translations and commentaries say that Tamar is taken to be a temple prostitute; but I do not find any reason to make that assumption.

Genesis 38:15b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
kâçâh (כִּפְּהָ) [pronounced kaw-SAWH]	<i>to cover, to clothe, to conceal; to spread over, to engulf; to overwhelm</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #3680 BDB #491
pânîym (פְּנֵי) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

**Translation:** ...for she had hidden her face.

Apparently what Tamar is doing here is customary. A prostitute probably did not want to be recognized, so that it was common for a prostitute to partially cover her face when striking up a bargain with a customer. It is very likely that she lived around there, so she did not want everyone to know who she was. Apparently, prostitution was far more out in the open at this time.

**Genesis 38:15** When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face.

Tamar covers her face so that Judah does not recognize her, but, apparently, it was also the custom of that time for prostitutes to cover their faces when soliciting business. Perhaps the idea was, this kept them from being recognized. The fact that she is out alone is also an indication of her profession.

We do not know how much of her face was covered; I prefer to think that her eyes were visible and that she was using them to manipulate Judah.

**Genesis 38:15** Judah saw her and he took her for a prostitute, for she had hidden her face. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâţâh (נָטָה) [pronounced naw-TAWH]	<i>to stretch out, to spread out, to reach out; to pitch [a tent]; to bow, to extend, to incline, to turn; to veer off</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5186 BDB #639

## Genesis 38:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
derek <sup>e</sup> (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1870 BDB #202

**Translation:** So he veered toward her on the road...

Tamar, in disguise, catches Judah's eye, and he veers off the road toward her. Certainly, it is normal, if a beautiful woman waves at you, a normal guy is going to wave back and say, *hi*. However, if a woman is clearly a prostitute and motioning for you to come over, quite a number of males would just continue on their way.

## Genesis 38:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
yâhab (בָּהִי) [pronounced yaw-HAWB <sup>v</sup> ]	<i>come! come on! come now, go to</i>	Adverbial use of verb <i>to give</i> ; an adverb of exhortation; with a cohortative hê	Strong's #3051 BDB #396
I don't know that this form is any different from...			
yâhab (בָּהִי) [pronounced yaw-HAWB <sup>v</sup> ]	<i>give, give here; grant, permit; provide [with reflexive]; place, put, set; ascribe</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative; with a cohortative hê	Strong's #3051 BDB #396
nâ' (אָנֹ) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

## Genesis 38:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

**Translation:** ...and said, "Come [to me], now, [and] I will come in to you."...

This is Judah speaking to her. He appears to speak first, and has ascertained what kind of a woman she is, and he is suggesting that they have sexual relations. Now, in that era (as in most eras), much tamer language is used.

One of the areas where we have not become quite as modern as these heathen is that sex was a part of their religious ceremonies. Some women who gave themselves to the *church* were not celibate nuns, but women who fornicated to fill the church's coffers; women who fornicated as part of the worship service; women who gave themselves to the heathen priests as a kind of dedication to God. This was probably not Judah's first time with a whore; he knew what they were and he had no problem with unconditional sex.

When Judah saw her, he thought her to be soliciting [as a prostitute]<sup>25</sup>, for she had covered her face. So he went over to her at the road side and he said, "Please come now; let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. Then she said, "What will you give me that you may come in to me?" (Genesis 38:15–16) By the use of the word for *soliciting*, we do not know whether Judah perceived her as a temple prostitute or not; we do not have a verb to go with qadeshah as we do with zanuwn. However, by the word qadreshah used in vv. 21 & 22. It is unclear whether Judah saw her as a temple prostitute or just as a prostitute. I would guess the latter, based upon the words which he uses himself.

## Genesis 38:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
lô' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâda' (יָדַעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHÇ]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

<sup>25</sup> Since this is in the Qal participle, a good *one-word* translation would be *street-walker*



## Genesis 38:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kallâh (כַּלְהָ) [pronounced kahl-LAW]	<i>daughter-in-law, spouse, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3618 BDB #483
Kallâh is rendered <i>daughter-in-law, spouse, wife</i> . We do not have an exact English equivalent as its translation depends upon who is speaking or who this is in reference to. It is an absolute noun which we only have relative nouns to stand in for it.			
hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced hee]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , <i>is</i> implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:...**(for he did not know that she [was] his daughter-in-law)

Judah clearly does not recognize that this woman is his daughter-in-law.

## Genesis 38:16d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

**Translation:** So she said, “What will you give me that you will come in to me?”

In order to make this clearly a transaction between a prostitute and a customer, there needs to be an exchange of goods for services. In that era, there appears to be more input from the customer as to the price.

There does not appear to be an easy, agreed-upon medium of exchange. That is, Judah cannot simply hand Tamar a hundred dollar bill (or whatever).

**Genesis 38:16** And he turned aside to her by the wayside, and said, “Come now, let me come in to you.” For he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, “What will you give me, so that you may come in to me?”

Judah is attracted to her and desires her for sex, not knowing that this is his daughter-in-law. After all, he is a single man again, his wife having just died.

There are some indications that this was not abnormal behavior for Judah, as Tamar deceived him in this way. It ought to be understood that, not every man will proposition a woman that he recognizes as a prostitute. Tamar, by doing this, seems to know Judah fairly well.

What Judah does not see is, the identity of this woman—a woman he personally picked out for his eldest son.

**Genesis 38:16** So he veered toward her on the road and said, “Come [to me], now, [and] I will come in to you.” (for he did not know that she [was] his daughter-in-law) So she said, “What will you give me that you will come in to me?” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Judah and Tamar, By Horace Vernet** (an oil painting)-

The Yorck Project: 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei.

DVD-ROM, 2002. ISBN 3936122202. Distributed by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=160018> accessed April 26, 2016. This incident inspired many paintings.

**Genesis 38:15–16** Judah saw her and he took her for a prostitute, for she had hidden her face. So he veered toward her on the road and said, “Come [to me], now, [and] I will come in to you.” (for he did not know that she [was] his daughter-in-law) So she said, “What will you give me that you will come in to me?” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Genesis 38:15–16** Judah saw her and took her for a prostitute, for she had her face covered. So he veered off the road toward her and said, “I would like to come in to you;” (as he did not realize that she was his daughter-in-law). So she said, “What will you give me in order to have pleasure with me?” (Kukis paraphrase)



And so he says, "I [even] I will send a kid of the she-goats from the flock." And so she says, "If you will give a pledge until your sending [the gift]." And so he says, "What pledge which I will give to you?" And so she says, "Your signet ring and your cord and your staff that is in your hand." And so he gives [those things] to her. And so he goes in to her and so she conceives to him.

Genesis  
38:17–18

He said, "I [even] I will send a kid of the she-goats from the flock." And she said, "[That is fine], if you give me a pledge until you send [that gift]." He asked, "What pledge should I give you?" And she answered, "[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., *that [is] in your hand*]." Therefore, he gave [those things] to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him.

He said, "I guarantee you that I will send you a young goat from my flock." So she said, "I agree to this, if you give me some sort of pledge for me to hold until you send me the goat." He asked her, "What should I give to you as a pledge?" She answered, "Give me your signet ring, your cord and the staff that you carry." Therefore, he gave these things to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says, "I [even] I will send a kid of the she-goats from the flock." And so she says, "If you will give a pledge until your sending [the gift]." And so he says, "What pledge which I will give to you?" And so she says, "Your signet ring and your cord and your staff that is in your hand." And so he gives [those things] to her. And so he goes in to her and so she conceives to him.
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum (Onkelos)	. And he said, I will send thee a kid of the goats from the flock. And she said, If thou wilt give me a pledge until thou send. And he said, What is the pledge that I shall give thee? And she said, Thy seal ring, and thy scarf [Shosheph, "a handkerchief," sudarium.], and thy staff that is in thy hand. And he gave to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he said, I will send thee a kid of the goats from the flock. And she said, If thou wilt give me a pledge until thou shalt have sent. And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she answered, Thy seal, and thy mantle, and thy staff which is in thy hand. And he gave (them) to her, and went in with her; and she conceived by him.
Jerusalem targum Revised Douay-Rheims	. He said: I will send you a kid out of the flock. And when she said again: I will suffer what you will, if you give a pledge, till you send what you promise, Juda said: What will you have for a pledge ? She answered: your ring and bracelet, and the staff which you hold in your hand. The woman therefore at one copulation conceived.
Latin Vulgate Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	. He said, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." She said, "Will you give me a pledge, until you send it?" He said, "What pledge will I give you?" She said, "Your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand." He gave them to her, and came in to her, and she conceived by him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he said, I will send you a kid from the flock. And she said, Will you give me a pledge until you send it? And he said, What kind of a pledge shall I give you? And she said, Your ring and your robe and the staff that is in your hand. So he gave them to her, and then went in unto her, and she conceived by him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he said, I will send you a kid of the goats from my flock; and she said, Well, if you will give me an earnest, until you send it. And he said, What is the earnest that I shall give you? and she said, Your ring, and your bracelet, and the staff in your hand; and he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.
NETS (Greek) Brenton's Septuagint	. .

Significant differences:

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	And he said, I will give you a young goat from the flock. And she said, What will you give me as a sign till you send it? And he said, What would you have? And she said, Your ring and its cord and the stick in your hand. So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she became with child by him.
Easy English	Judah replied 'I will send a young goat from my animals.' Tamar said, 'You will have to give me something to show that you will do as you say.' Judah asked 'What should I give you?' Tamar replied 'Give me your seal and the cord that holds it. And give me the staff in your hand.' So Judah gave them to her. And he slept with her. And she became pregnant.
Easy-to-Read Version	She said, "How much will you give me?" Judah answered, "I will send you a young goat from my flock." She answered, "I agree to that. But first you must give me something to keep until you send me the goat." Judah asked, "What do you want me to give you as proof that I will send you the goat?" Tamar answered, "Give me your seal and its string and your walking stick." Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and she became pregnant. A portion of v. 16 is included for context.
<i>God's Word™</i>	"I'll send you a young goat from the flock," he answered. She said, "First give me something as a deposit until you send it." "What should I give you as a deposit?" he asked. "Your signet ring, its cord, and the shepherd's staff that's in your hand," she answered. So he gave them to her. Then he slept with her, and she became pregnant.
Good News Bible (TEV)	He answered, "I will send you a young goat from my flock." She said, "All right, if you will give me something to keep as a pledge until you send the goat." "What shall I give you as a pledge?" he asked. She answered, "Your seal with its cord and the walking stick you are carrying." He gave them to her. Then they had intercourse, and she became pregnant.
International Children's B.	Judah answered, "I will send you a young goat from my flock." She answered, "First give me something to keep as a deposit until you send the goat." Judah asked, "What do you want me to give you as a deposit?" Tamar answered, "Give me your seal and its cord, and give me your walking stick." So Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had physical relations, and Tamar became pregnant.
<i>The Message</i>	She said, "What will you pay me?" "I'll send you," he said, "a kid goat from the flock." She said, "Not unless you give me a pledge until you send it." "So what would you want in the way of a pledge?" She said, "Your personal seal-and-cord and the staff you carry." He handed them over to her and slept with her. And she got pregnant. A portion of v. 16 is included for context.
Names of God Bible NIRV	. "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," he said. "Will you give me something that belongs to you?" she asked. "I'll keep it until you send the goat." He said, "What should I give you?"



“Give me your official seal and the string that it hangs from,” she answered. “And give me your walking stick.” So he gave them to her. Then he slept with her. And she became pregnant by him.

New Simplified Bible

He answered: »One of my young goats.« Then she asked: »What will you give me to keep until you send the goat?«

»What do you want?« he asked. »The ring on that cord around your neck,« she replied. »I also want the special walking stick you have with you.« So he gave them to her. They slept together and she became pregnant.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible

He said, “I will give you a kid goat from my flock.”

She said, “Only if you give me some deposit, as security to guarantee that you will send it.”

He said, “What kind of deposit should I give you?”

And she said, “Your seal, its cord, and the staff in your hand.” He gave these to her, slept with her, and she became pregnant by him.

Contemporary English V.

"One of my young goats," he answered. "What will you give me to keep until you send the goat?" she asked. "What do you want?" he asked in return. "The ring on that cord around your neck," was her reply. "I also want the special walking stick you have with you." He gave them to her, they slept together, and she became pregnant.

The Living Bible

“How much will you pay me?” she asked.

“I’ll send you a young goat from my flock,” he promised.

“What pledge will you give me, so that I can be sure you will send it?” she asked.

“Well, what do you want?” he inquired.

“Your identification seal and your walking stick,” she replied. So he gave them to her and she let him come and sleep with her; and she became pregnant as a result. A portion of v. 16 is included for context.

New Berkeley Version

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New Century Version

Judah answered, “I will send you a young goat from my flock.”

She answered, “First give me something to keep as a deposit until you send the goat.”

Judah asked, “What do you want me to give you as a deposit?”

Tamar answered, “Give me your seal and its cord, and give me your walking stick.”

So Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and Tamar became pregnant.

New Life Version

He answered, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." She asked, "Will you give something as a promise until you send it?" He said, "What should I give you as a promise?" And she said, "The ring you use to mark your name, and its string, and the stick that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her. And she was going to have a baby by him.

New Living Translation

“How much will you pay to have sex with me?” Tamar asked.

“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.

“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. A portion of v. 16 is included for context.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

And he said, 'I'll send you a young goat from my flock.'

And she told him: 'You must provide me some assurance that you'll send it.'

So he asked, 'What kind of assurance can I give you?'  
 And she said: 'Give me your ring, your bracelet, and the walking stick you're holding.'  
 So he gave them to her, [had sex with] her, and she got pregnant by him.

Beck's American Translation  
 International Standard V

"I'll send you a young goat from the flock," he responded.  
 But she pressed him, asking, "What security will you put up until you've sent it?"  
 Then he asked, "What pledge do you want me to give you?"  
 "Your signet ring, cord, and the staff in your hand," she suggested. So he gave them to her, had sex with her, and she became pregnant by him.

New Advent (Knox) Bible  
 Revised Knox Bible

I will send you a goat, he answered, from my herd. And when she told him he might have his will, on condition that he gave her a pledge, to hold until he kept his promise, What will you have, asked Juda, for a pledge? your ring, she answered, and your bracelet, and the staff you carry. At this single mating she conceived; and now she rose up and was gone, took off her disguise, and was back in her widow's weeds again. V. 19 is included for context.

Translation for Translators

He replied, "I will send you a young goat from my flock of goats." She asked, "Will you give me something now for me to keep until you send the goat?" He replied, "What do you want me to give to you?" She replied, "Give me the ring that has your name on it that is tied by a cord around your neck and give me the walking stick that you are holding in your hand." So he gave them to her. Then he had sex [EUP] with her, and she became pregnant.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

He was to say: I was to send a kid of the goats of the small cattle. She was to say: You was to give me a pledge, till you is to send it off! He was to say: The pledge I was to give you? She was to say: Your signet ring, bracelet, and staff in your hand. He was to give them to her, and he came in to her, and she was to conceive by him. He said, "I will send you a goat kid from my flock." She said, "Are you going to give me some security until you send it?" He said, "What kind of security should I give you?" She said, "Your signet ring, your bracelets, and that rod in your hand." He gave her these things, and was intimate with her, and she fell pregnant by him. Both parties to this sordid transaction are equally guilty.

Conservapedia

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

Then he replied — " I will send you a kid of the goats or sheep." And she replied — " If you will give me a pledge that you will send them ? " He replied, "What is the pledge that I shall give you ? " And she answered "Your ring and the stick you have in your hand." So he gave her them, and he went with her, and she conceived to him.

God's Truth (Tyndale)

Then said he, I will send you a kid from the flock. She answered, Then give me a pledge till you send it. Then said he, what pledge shall I give you? And she said: your signet, your bracelet, and your staff that is in your hand. And he gave it her and lay by her, and she was with child by him.

HCSB

Jubilee Bible 2000

H. C. Leupold

And he said: I on my part will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said: If thou wilt give a pledge until thou send it. And he said: What is the pledge that I should give to thee? And she said: Thy seal, thy cord, and thy staff which is in thy hand. So he gave these to her and went in unto her; and she conceived of him.

Lexham English Bible

And he said, "I will send a kid from the goats of the flock." And she said, "[Only] if you give a pledge until you send [it]." And he said, "What [is] the pledge that I must give to you?" And she said, "your seal, your cord, and your staff that [is] in your hand." And he gave [them] to her and went in to her. And she conceived by him.



NIV, ©2011  
Tree of Life Version

“What,” she asked, “will you give me to sleep with me?”  
“I will send you a young goat from the flock,” he said,  
“Provided you give a pledge until you send it,” she said.  
“What kind of pledge shall I give you?” he asked.  
“Your seal, and your cord, and your staff in your hand,” she said. So he gave them to her and he slept with her, and she got pregnant by him. A portion of v. 16 is included for context.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) .  
The Heritage Bible .  
New American Bible (2002) .  
New American Bible (2011) He answered, “I will send you a young goat from the flock.” “Very well,” she said, “provided you leave me a pledge until you send it.” Judah asked, “What pledge should I leave you?” She answered, “Your seal and cord [the cylinder seal, through which a hole was bored lengthwise so that it could be worn from the neck by a cord, was a distinctive means of identification. Apparently one’s staff could also be marked with some sign of identification (cf. Nm 17:17–18).], and the staff in your hand.” So he gave them to her and had intercourse with her, and she conceived by him.

New Jerusalem Bible 'I will send you a kid from the flock,' he said. 'Agreed, if you give me a pledge until you send it,' she replied. 'What pledge shall I give you?' he asked. 'Your seal and cord and the staff you are holding,' she replied. He gave them to her and slept with her, and she conceived by him.

New RSV .  
Revised English Bible He answered, “I shall send you a young goat from my flock.” She said, “I agree, if you will give me a pledge until you send it.” He asked what pledge he should give her, and she replied, “Your seal and its cord, and the staff which you are holding.” He handed them over to her and lay with her, and she became pregnant.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible He said, “I will send you a kid from the flock of goats.” She said, “Will you also give me something as a guarantee until you send it” He answered, “What should I give you as a guarantee?” She said, “Your seal, with its cord, and the staff you’re carrying in your hand.” So he gave them to her, then went and slept with her; and she conceived by him.

exeGesés companion Bible And he says,  
I send you a kid of the goats from the flock.  
And she says,  
What pledge give you me, until you send it?  
And he says, What pledge give I you?  
And she says,  
Your seal and your braids and the rod in your hand.  
And he gives her and comes in to her  
- and she conceives by him.

Israeli Authorized Version .  
JPS (Tanakh—1985) .  
Judaica Press Complete T. .  
Kaplan Translation 'I will send you a kid from the flock.'  
'But you must give me something for security until you send it.'  
'What do you want for security?'

'Your seal, your wrap [Pethilah in Hebrew. This is alternatively translated as a cloak (Targum; Rashi), a belt (Saadia; Rashbam), a hood (Radak), or the special shawl worn by aristocrats (Ramban; cf. Tzava'ath Yehudah 12:4). Ancient sources note that in the Middle East, people usually wore a long tunic reaching to the feet, with a short white cloak thrown around them, and besides this, people would always carry a seal and a walking stick with an elaborately carved top (Herodotus 1:195). The pethilah would then be the white cloak. Other sources indicate that the seal and string (pethilah) were to bind the sheep, and the staff was the shepherd's crook (Sekhel Tov).], and the staff in your hand,' she replied.

He gave them to her and came to her, making her pregnant.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And he said, I will send thee a gedi izzim (kid of the goats). And she said, Wilt thou give me an ervon (pledge), till thou send it?

And he said, What ervon shall I give thee? And she said, Thy chotam (signet), and thy [signet neck] cord, and thy staff that is in thine yad. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

Restored Names Version  
The Scriptures 1998

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### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

He answered, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." And she said, "Will you give me a pledge [as a deposit] until you send it?" He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She said, "Your seal and your cord, and the staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and was intimate with her, and she conceived by him.

The Expanded Bible

Judah answered, "I will send you a young goat from my flock."

She answered, "First give me something to keep as a deposit [a pledge] until you send the goat."

Judah asked, "What do you want me to give you as a deposit [pledge]?"

Tamar answered, "Give me your seal [signet] and its cord, and give me your walking stick [staff; <sup>c</sup>all items that could identify a person]." So Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and Tamar became pregnant [he went to her and she conceived].

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. Tamar had thus made her plans with full attention to detail; she had a special reason for demanding Judah's seal-ring with its cord and the staff which he carried with him wherever he went, as badges of his dignity, by which he could definitely be identified. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him, through the sin of incest.

NET Bible®

He replied, "I'll send you a young goat from the flock." She asked, "Will you give me a pledge until you send it [*Heb* "until you send."]?" He said, "What pledge should I give you?" She replied, "Your seal, your cord, and the staff that's in your hand." So he gave them to her and had sex with her [*Heb* "and he went to her." This expression is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.]. She became pregnant by him.

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

**Judah:** I'll send you a young goat from my flock. *How about that?*

**Tamar:** Only if you give me something to hold until you send it.

**Judah:** What should I give you as my personal guarantee?

**Tamar:** Your *personal* seal on the cord you wear *around your neck*, plus the staff you carry.

**Tamar knows Judah cannot be trusted, so she asks for two items so personal and unique they can easily be linked to him.**

Judah *did as she asked and* gave her his seal and walking stick. He then *went and* slept with her, and she conceived his child.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

American KJV	.
Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he said, I will send a male-kid from the she-goats from the flocks, and she said, if you will give a token until you send, and he said, what is the token which I will give to you, and she said, your signet and your cord and your stave which is in your hand, and he gave to her and he came to her and she conceived to him,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is he, "I will send to you a kid of the goats from the flock. And saying is she, "If you will give a surety till you send. And saying is he, "What is the surety which I shall give to you? And saying is she, "Your seal and your twist and your staff which is in your hand. And giving them is he to her, and is coming to her, and pregnant is she by him.
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	And he said, I will send you a young goat from the flock. And she said, Will you give me a pledge, until you send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give you? And she said, Your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand. And he gave them to her, and he went in to her, and she became pregnant by him.
Darby Translation	And he said, I will send [thee] a kid of the goats from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give [me] a pledge, until thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy lace, and thy staff which is in thy hand. And he gave [it] her, and went in to her; and she conceived by him.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	.
English Standard Version	.
English Standard V. – UK	.
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	And he said, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." And she said, "Will you give me a pledge, until you send it?" And he said, "What pledge should I give you?" And she said, "Your signet, your bracelets, and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and had relations with her, and she conceived by him.
Modern KJV	.
NASB	.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock." So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?" Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.
Owen's Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	.
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "I—I send a kid of the goats from the flock." And she says, "Will you give a pledge till you send it?" And he says, "What is the pledge that I give to you?"

And she says, “Your seal, and your ribbon, and your staff which is in your hand.”  
And he gives to her, and goes in unto her, and she conceives to him.

**The gist of this passage:** Judah and Tamar negotiate a deal in order for Judah to have Tamar sexually (Judah does not realize that she is his daughter-in-law).

Genesis 38:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'ânôkîy (אני) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i> ]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect; what is sent ( <i>messengers, a message</i> ) is implied	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
g <sup>e</sup> dîy (גדי) [pronounced <i>g<sup>eh</sup>-DEE</i> ]	<i>kid (as in a young goat)</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1423 BDB #152
'êz (עז) [pronounced <i>gayz</i> ]	<i>she-goat; in the plural, it can mean goats' hair</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5795 BDB #777
min (מן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
tsô'n (צאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i> ]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

**Translation:** He said, “I [even] I will send a kid of the she-goats from the flock.”

Judah promises that, in exchange for sex, that he would send her a young goat from his flock. Obviously, he does not have this animal with him.

Genesis 38:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 38:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'im (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
nāthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'ārâbôwn (אוֹרְבוֹן) [pronounced ŷuh-raw-BONE]	<i>pledge, something given as security, something given in exchange</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6162 BDB #786
'ad (עַד) [pronounced ŷahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until; while, so long as; to, even to [some certain limit]; even to [unto], unto</i>	preposition of duration or of limits	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
shālach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix; what is sent (messengers, a message) is implied	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

**Translation:** And she said, “[That is fine], if you give me a pledge until you send [that gift].”

She agrees to the exchange of sex for one of Judah’s young kids; but she requires here some pledge to hold until that time. Her interest is not in what he pledges, but what she can get from him to accept his pledge.

Tamar was a bright young lady; she was every bit as clever and devious as her father-in-law. She would take the things which would identify Judah as the father of her child-to-be. As far as he is concerned, he is giving these things to her temporarily until he delivers the kid from the flock; besides, he is not thinking with his head right now.

Apparently, Tamar has chosen to bear a son by Judah, which would continue the line of the firstborn.

They determine a price, but it is something that Judah does not have with him at the time. So he will need to give her something of value so that he will be certain to pay her the fee she has requested.

Do you see how convenient cash is?

She reasonably requires of him some collateral; something that he will want back, but not necessarily negotiable. Essentially, he gives her his Israeli driver’s license.



Genesis 38:17 He said, "I [even] I will send a kid of the she-goats from the flock." And she said, "[That is fine], if you give me a pledge until you send [that gift]." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:18a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
'ârâbôwn (אוֹרְבוֹן) [pronounced ōuh-raw-BONE]	<i>pledge, something given as security, something given in exchange</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6162 BDB #786
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** He asked, "What pledge should I give you?"

This is quite interesting for a Bible study, to view the bargaining which appears to be between a prostitute and a customer. Judah has already agreed as to what the price of their relations is agreeable to both of them, but since he does not have that with him, she needs some things from him to guarantee that he will fulfill his part of the bargain.

Now, quite obviously, since we are seeing this and we know both sides of this situation, we know that she does not want the kid-goat; she wants the personal items and to have a child from this line.

Genesis 38:18b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 38:18b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
chôthâm (חֹתָם) [pronounced khoh-THAWM]	<i>a seal, a signet ring</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2368 BDB #368
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
pâthîyl (פִּתְיָל) [pronounced paw-THEEL]	<i>cord, thread; lace; line, ribbon, wire</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6616 BDB #836
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
maṭṭeh (מַטֵּה) [pronounced maht-TEH]	<i>staff, branch, scepter, rod; branch; tribe</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4294 BDB #641
'āsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** *And she answered, “[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., that [is] in your hand].”*

Tamar looks at what Judah has in hand, the things which are personal items, and she asks for those things. This suggests that the things which she is asking for is valued less than the kid-goat (but, Judah will want them returned).

Prostitutes apparently had some sort of an honor system. These things were worthless to the prostitute, but invaluable to Judah. The cylinder seal which she kept was used to inscribe his name on clay tablets and personal property and various legal documents. This seal is what would bind him legally in a business deal. We have a similar situation today where certain legal documents must be notarized to show that the person signing the documents was really the person who he claimed to be.

Judah was not worried that he would lose these items of value. They were of value to him; and they were not of value to the prostitute.

These items will make it clear that this woman, who Judah does not recognize, will have had relations with Judah; and that he has given these things to her in lieu of a payment (which would be sent to her shortly).

**Genesis 38:18a-b** And he said, “What pledge will I give you?” And she said, “Your signet, and your bracelet, and your staff that is in your hand.”

There are two common conjunctions in this verse, and it helps us to understand the difference between them. When she says, “Your signet, and your bracelet, and your staff...”; these are wâw conjunctions. They simply combine things together. However, the final sentence is, **And so he gave [this stuff] to her, and so came in to her, and so she conceived by him.** The words *and so* represent Hebrew wâw consecutives. Many times, these are used to set up a series of events which are in a chronological or logical order; and, at times, are related events. A good translation for the wâw consecutive is *and then*; however, that can get monotonous because there are so many wâw consecutives in Hebrew narratives.

What she asks for are not necessarily valuable items, but they are important to him, so that he will want them back. They are personal items. Furthermore, these things are also very identifiable as Judah’s. Tamar had determined that she will make Judah to act as her kinsman-redeemer.

Unfortunately, the MKJV is not always accurate (the NKJV is much better). A more accurate translation is:

**Genesis 38:18a-c** He asked, “What pledge should I give you?” And she answered, “[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., *that [is] in your hand*].” Therefore, he gave [those things] to her.

The problem with the MKJV translation are the 3 items, which are correctly identified above. One of them in the MKJV is way off (it is a *cord*, not a *bracelet*). The word in question is pâthîyl (פַּתְיִל) [pronounced *paw-THEEL*], and it means, *cord, thread; lace; line, ribbon, wire*. Strong’s #6616 BDB #836.

**Genesis 38:18a** He asked, “What pledge should I give you?” And she answered, “[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., *that [is] in your hand*].” Therefore, he gave [those things] to her.

### The Three Items (Genesis 38:18)

The Item	Its Function/Identification
His signet	His personal seal for signing transactions. Today, this would be his credit/debit card for business transactions. This guaranteed any financial obligation with his name.
His cord	The cord by which the signet was held. Judah’s signet would have probably been in view—or, at least the cord which attached his signet to him. If you have been in a public school recently, often the staff wears ID badges secured by a cord around the neck.
Ballinger: <i>The "seal" was made of stone or metal and was attached to a "cord" affixed around the neck.</i> <sup>26</sup>	
His staff	The staff is a symbol of his leadership in the family and later in the tribe which would bear his name.

From **Makarios Bible Church**; accessed May 18, 2016 (Word document will open in Word or WP on your computer). Edited and appended.

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<sup>26</sup> From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen38.htm> accessed May 18, 2016.

## Genesis 38:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** Therefore, he gave [those things] to her.

Judah agreed to her proposal, and gave Tamar these personal items.

Tamar does not want these items as a pledge; she wants them in order to show the identify of the father later on when she is discovered to be pregnant. So, she is not going to stick around here to get her actual payoff. She has her payoff.

When this is all over, Judah will tell his friend, Hirah, all about it.

## Genesis 38:18d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בוא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

**Translation:** He went in to her...

Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah. As was the custom of that day, another of his sons or a close relative was to give her a child. It is not completely clear what would happen next. It appears to me that this would result in a marriage of sorts; where the husband could continue relations with the woman or add a wife to the mix. The man would also, insofar as I can discern, become responsible for this woman and the child.

In the book of Ruth, we will have another levirate marriage which is completely taken to its logical result.

Genesis 38:18e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced haw-RAW]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...and she conceived by him.

Tamara wanted both a child by this family and the proof that this child was Judah's.

Bear in mind, this union of Tamar and Judah would be the line of the Messiah.

Genesis 38:18 He asked, "What pledge should I give you?" And she answered, "[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., *that [is] in your hand*]." Therefore, he gave [those things] to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:17–18 He said, "I [even] I will send a kid of the she-goats from the flock." And she said, "[That is fine], if you give me a pledge until you send [that gift]." He asked, "What pledge should I give you?" And she answered, "[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., *that [is] in your hand*]." Therefore, he gave [those things] to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:17–18 He said, "I guarantee you that I will send you a young goat from my flock." So she said, "I agree to this, if you give me some sort of pledge for me to hold until you send me the goat." He asked her, "What should I give to you as a pledge?" She answered, "Give me your signet ring, your cord and the staff that you carry." Therefore, he gave these things to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him. (Kukis paraphrase)

What we have is a series of wâw consecutives followed by verbs in the imperfect tense. This continues through v. 19 when she gets up, leaves, takes off her veil, and then puts on widow's garments again. What this means is, when it says that she conceived—she conceived before she got up and left.

Vv. 16–19 read like this: And so he turns to her by the way, and so he says,...and so she says,...And so he says,...and so she says,...And so he says,...and so she says,...and so he gives them to her, and so he comes in to her, and so she conceives by him. And so she arises and so she goes her way and so she lays by her vail from her, and so she puts on the garments of her widowhood. This is a series of consecutive<sup>27</sup> events, which is what occurs when we have a series of wâw consecutives followed by a series of imperfect verbs in a narrative. So, when she gets up to go, she has already conceived.

<sup>27</sup> Or, coterminous.



**And so she rises up and so she departs and so she turns aside her veil from upon her; and so she puts on garments of her widowhood.**

Genesis  
38:19

**She arose and departed. She removed her veil and put [back] on the clothing of her widowhood.**

**Tamar then arose and departed. She removed her veil and put back on the clothing indicating that she had been widowed.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she rises up and so she departs and so she turns aside her veil from upon her; and so she puts on garments of her widowhood.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And she arose, and went, and put off the veil from her, and dressed herself in the dress of her widowhood.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And she arose and went, and put her veil from her, and put on the dress of her widowhood.
Jerusalem targum	.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And she arose and went her way: and putting off the apparel which she had taken, put on the garments of her widowhood.
Latin Vulgate	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	She arose, and went away, and put off her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And she arose and went away and took off her veil from her and put on the garments of her widowhood.
Septuagint (Greek)	And she arose and departed, and took her veil from off her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.
NETS (Greek)	.
Brenton's Septuagint	.

Significant differences:

#### **Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	.
Easy English	.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then Tamar went home, took off her veil that covered her face, and again put on the special clothes that showed she was a widow.
God's Word™	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	.
International Children's B.	Tamar went home. She took off the veil that covered her face. And she put on the clothes that showed she was a widow.
The Message	.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	.
New Simplified Bible	.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible	Then she got up, left, and took off her veil, dressing once again in the clothing she wore as a widow.
Contemporary English V.	.

The Living Bible	Afterwards she resumed wearing her widow's clothing as usual.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	When Tamar went home, she took off the veil that covered her face and put on the clothes that showed she was a widow.
New Life Version	Then she got up and left. She took off the cloth that covered her, and put on the clothes worn by a woman whose husband has died.
New Living Translation	Afterward she went back home, took off her veil, and put on her widow's clothing as usual.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then she got up and took off her veil, put her widow's clothes back on, and left that place.
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard V	Then she got up and left. Later, she took off her shawl and put on her mourning clothes.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	At this single mating she conceived; and now she rose up and was gone, took off her disguise, and was back in her widow's weeds again. A portion of v. 18 is included for context.
Revised Knox Bible	.
Translation for Translators	.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	She was to rise up and depart, and was to turn aside her wrappings, and was to put on her garments of widowhood.
Conservapedia	.
Ferrari-Fenton Bible	Then she arose, and went and put the veil from off her, and dressed herself in her widow's weeds.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And she got her up and went and put her mantle from her, and put on her widows raiment again.
HCSB	.
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	And she arose and went away and put aside her veil, and clothed herself with her widow's garments.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	.
Tree of Life Version	After she got up and left, she removed her veil from herself and put on her widow's clothes.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	So he gave them to her and slept with her; then she rose and left him and, taking off her veil, she put on her widow's clothes. And she became pregnant. A portion of v. 18 is included for context.
The Heritage Bible	And she rose up, and walked, and took off her veil from her, and put on her widow's clothing.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	After she got up and went away, she took off her shawl and put on her widow's garments again.
New Jerusalem Bible	Then she got up and left him and, taking off her veil, resumed her widow's weeds.
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible	.

**Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	.
exeGesés companion Bible	And she rises and goes and turns aside her veil and enrobes the clothes of her widowhood...
Israeli Authorized Version	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Judaica Press Complete T.	.
Kaplan Translation	She got up and left, taking off her veil and putting her widow's garb back on.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And she arose, and went away, and took off her tze'if from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.
Restored Names Version	.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	.

**Expanded/Embellished Bibles:**

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	.
The Expanded Bible	When Tamar went home [she got up and went], she took off the veil that covered her face and put on the clothes that showed she was a widow.
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. Her object being accomplished, she immediately returned to her father's house.
NET Bible®	She left immediately [ <i>Heb</i> "and she arose and left," the first verb in the pair emphasizing that she wasted no time.], removed her veil, and put on her widow's clothes.
Syndein/Thieme	.
The Voice	Then she got up, took off the veil, and went <i>back home</i> , putting on her widow's clothes <i>once again</i> .

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

American KJV	.
Benner's Mechanical Trans.	.....
Concordant Literal Version	And rising is she and going, and is taking away her veil off her and is putting on the garments of her widowhood.
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	.
Darby Translation	.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	.
English Standard Version	.
English Standard V. – UK	.
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	And she rose up and left, and took off her veil from her face. And she put on her widow's robes.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern KJV	.
NASB	Then she arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow's garments.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Owen's Translation	.

Third Millennium Bible .  
 Updated Bible Version 2.11 .  
 A Voice in the Wilderness .  
 Webster's Bible Translation *And she arose and went her way and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.*  
 World English Bible .  
 Young's Literal Translation .  
 Young's Updated LT *And she rises, and goes, and turns aside her veil from off her, and puts on the garments of her widowhood.*

**The gist of this passage:** Tamar arises, leaves, and, upon returning home, removes her veil and puts on her widow's clothing.

Genesis 38:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (קום) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

**Translation:** *She arose and departed.*

The verb *to arise* indicates that she is a woman having a purpose, and she begins putting her plan into action. She departs from this place where she did not live and had pretended to be a prostitute.

The plan was to become impregnated by someone in Judah's family; that it was Judah is not necessarily a bad thing, by that culture at that time.

This woman is bright. She tires Judah out, he falls asleep, and when she leaves, she does not put back on her prostitute disguise (which only Judah saw), but put on her clothing which indicated that she was in mourning for her late husband. No one would ever make a connection to the woman in mourning and to the prostitute (had they seen her). This is almost like a chess game of relative righteousness.

Genesis 38:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 38:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
çûwr (וּרָ) [pronounced soor]	<i>to turn aside, to depart, to go away</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693
This verb can be used of things which are removed or taken away. <sup>28</sup>			
tsâ'iyph (צִיפָה) [pronounced tsaw-GEFF]	<i>[a woman's] veil; a wrapper, a shawl</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6809 BDB #858
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'al (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from*. Some translators rendered this *away from*.

**Translation:** *She removed her veil...*

I took some liberties with this portion of v. 19. The verb, under some circumstances, appears to mean *to remove*; and I left off the final words, which read, *from upon her*.

## Genesis 38:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâbash (לָבַשׁ) [pronounced law <sup>b</sup> -VAHSH]	<i>to put on, to clothe, to be clothed, to wear</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3847 BDB #527
b <sup>e</sup> gâdîym (בְּגָדִים) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> -gaw-DEEM]	<i>garments, clothes, clothing, apparel; possibly blankets</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #899 BDB #93
'al'mânûwth (אַלְמָנוּת) [pronounced ahl-maw-NOOTH]	<i>widow, widowhood</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #491 BDB #48

**Translation:** *...and put [back] on the clothing of her widowhood.*

Tamar returns to how she was previously, wearing clothing which identified her as a widow.

<sup>28</sup> H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 582.



Apparently, during all of this time, she was to continue wearing clothes appropriate for a widow, which would have made it impossible for her to remarry. The time period here was probably a couple months or even a couple of years.

A kinsman-redeemer is to take her mourning clothes from her.

Based upon all that has happened, it is apparent that Tamar expected to become pregnant by Judah, her father-in-law, and would then become a part of Judah's line. There is little to suggest that Tamar believed this to be a special lineage; but that she decided to solve her problem of living at home by getting pregnant (not the last time this was done).

Genesis 38:19 **She arose and departed. She removed her veil and put [back] on the clothing of her widowhood.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:19 **Tamar then arose and departed. She removed her veil and put back on the clothing indicating that she had been widowed.** (Kukis paraphrase)

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Back to Judah and his affair with the supposed prostitute.

**A Review of Genesis 38:1–19:** Judah had married a Canaanite woman and had 3 sons. The first married Tamar (an arranged marriage), but he died the sin unto death. The second was supposed to marry Tamar as her husband's brother and give her a son, but he intentionally did not impregnate her and he also died the sin unto death. Judah sent Tamar packing back to her father's house and promised her the 3<sup>rd</sup> son, but did not follow through on that. He was worried that his 3<sup>rd</sup> son would die if he married her.

A few years pass. The 3<sup>rd</sup> son grows up to become an adult (probably middle teens), but Judah does not give him to marry Tamar. Judah's wife, the Canaanitess dies, and so, Judah goes on a business trip. You may recall that, Tamar, right at this moment, is still wearing mourning clothes for the loss of her husbands. However, Judah's wife dies and he goes back to work soon thereafter.

Tamar finds out about this business trip—probably from a sympathetic servant—and apparently has a plan already in mind. Anticipating his route, Tamar goes to a city through which Judah would pass, and poses as a prostitute. Judah takes her, promises her a young goat in payment; and leaves some very identifiable personal items with her to hold until he pays her.

Judah, a man of his word, made a promise to pay her, and attempts to do that:

**And so sent Judah a kid of the she-goats in a hand of his associate the Adullamite to receive the pledge from a hand of the woman; and he could not find her. And so he asks men of the place, to say, "Where [is] the prostitute? She [was] in the Enaim along the road." And so they say, "She has not been in here, the prostitute."**

Genesis  
38:20–21

**Judah sent a kid of the she-goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take [back] the pledge from the hand of the woman; but he could not find her. Jacob's friend [lit., *he*] asked the men of [that] place, saying, "Where [is] the prostitute [who was here]? She [was] near to Enaim, [right] along the road." And they replied, "The prostitute has not been here."**

**Judah sent the kid from the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman; but his friend could not find her. Jacob's friend asked the men who lived around there, "Where is the prostitute who was here? She was near to Enaim, standing along the road side." But they replied, "No prostitute has been here."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sent Judah a kid of the she-goats in a hand of his associate the Adullamite to receive the pledge from a hand of the woman; and he could not find her. And so he asks men of the place, to say, "Where [is] the prostitute? She [was] in the Enaim along the road." And so they say, "She has not been in here, the prostitute."
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jehuda sent the kid of the goats, by the hand of his friend the Adulamite, to receive the pledge from the hand of the woman; but he could not find her. And he inquired of the men of the place, saying, Where is the harlot who was in Aynin upon the way? And they said to him, There is no harlot here.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Hehuda sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullemite, to bring back the pledge from the hand of the woman; but he found her not. And he asked the men of the place, saying, Where is the harlot who was in the sight of the eyes by the way ? And they said, There is no harlot here.
Jerusalem targum	.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Juda sent a kid by his shepherd, the Odollamite, that he might receive the pledge again, which he had given to the woman: but he, not finding her, asked the men of that place: Where is the woman that sat in the cross way? And when they all made answer: There was no harlot in this place.
Latin Vulgate	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Yudah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend, the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. Then he asked the men of her place, saying, "Where is the prostitute, that was at Enaim by the road?" They said, "There has been no prostitute here."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Arlemite, to receive the pledge from the womans hand; but he could not find her. Then he asked the men of the place, saying, Where is the harlot who sat at the parting of the road? And they said, There is no harlot here.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Judas sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his shepherd the Odollamite, to receive the pledge from the woman; and he found her not. And he asked the men of the place, Where is the harlot who was in Aenan by the way-side? and they said, There was no harlot here.
NETS (Greek)	.
Brenton's Septuagint	.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Judah sent his friend Hirah with the young goat, to get back the things which he had given as a sign to the woman: but she was not there. And he put questions to the men of the place, saying, Where is the loose woman who was in Enaim by the wayside? And they said, There was no such woman there.
Easy English	Judah sent his friend, the Adullamite with a young goat back to where the woman had been. Judah wanted to get his seal, cord and staff back from the woman that he had slept with. But the Adullamite could not find the woman. The Adullamite asked some men who live there 'Where is the shrine-prostitute? Where is the woman who was by the road at Enaim?' But the men said, 'There has not been any shrine-prostitute here.'
Easy-to-Read Version	Later, Judah sent his friend Hirah to Enaim to give the prostitute the goat he promised. Judah also told Hirah to get the special seal and the walking stick from

	her, but Hirah could not find her. He asked some of the men at the town of Enaim, "Where is the prostitute who was here by the road?"
	The men answered, "There has never been a prostitute here."
God's Word™	Judah sent his friend Hirah to deliver the young goat so that he could get back his deposit from the woman, but his friend couldn't find her. He asked the men of that area, "Where's that prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?"
	"There's no prostitute here," they answered.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Judah sent his friend Hirah to take the goat and get back from the woman the articles he had pledged, but Hirah could not find her. He asked some men at Enaim, "Where is the prostitute who was here by the road?"
	"There has never been a prostitute here," they answered.
International Children's B. <i>The Message</i>	.
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	Judah sent his friend Hirah with the young goat he had promised. He wanted to get back what he had given to the woman. But his friend Hirah couldn't find her. He asked the men who lived at Enaim, "Where's the temple prostitute? She used to sit beside the road here."
	"There hasn't been any temple prostitute here," they said.
New Simplified Bible	.
<b>Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:</b>	
Common English Bible	Judah sent the kid goat with his neighbor the Adullamite so he could take back the deposits from the woman, but he couldn't find her. He asked the locals of that place, "Where's the consecrated worker who was at Enaim on the road?"
	But they said, "There's no consecrated worker here."
Contemporary English V.	Judah had his friend Hirah take a goat to the woman, so he could get back the ring and walking stick, but she wasn't there. Hirah asked the people of Enaim, "Where is the prostitute who sat along the road outside your town?" "There's never been one here," they answered.
The Living Bible	Judah asked his friend Hirah the Adullamite to take the young goat back to her, and to pick up the pledges he had given her, but Hirah couldn't find her!
	So he asked around of the men of the city, "Where does the prostitute live who was soliciting out beside the road at the entrance of the village?"
	"But we've never had a public prostitute here," they replied.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	Judah sent his friend Hirah with the young goat to find the woman and get back his seal and the walking stick he had given her, but Hirah could not find her. He asked some of the people at the town of Enaim, "Where is the prostitute who was here by the road?"
	They answered, "There has never been a prostitute here."
New Life Version	Judah sent his friend the Adullamite to bring the young goat to the woman and take from her the things he had given as a promise. But he did not find her. He asked the men of the place, "Where is the woman who was selling the use of her body beside the road at Enaim?" They said, "There has been no woman selling the use of her body here."
New Living Translation	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. 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.

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	Well later, Judah sent the young goat with his shepherd (the Odollamite), to get back the things that he had left with the woman... but he couldn't find her. So he asked the local men: 'Where's that prostitute who used to sit by the road [here at] Jinan?' And they replied: 'There was no prostitute here.'
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	. Later on, Judah sent his Adullamite friend to take her a young goat, intending to retrieve what he had put up as security from the woman, but he could not find her. He asked the men who lived in that area, "Where's that temple prostitute who was sitting alongside the road at Enaim?" But they replied, "There's been no temple prostitute here."
New Advent (Knox) Bible Revised Knox Bible	. Then Juda bade his shepherd at Odollam take the woman a goat, so as to recover the pledge he had given her. But the shepherd could not find her; and when he asked the townsfolk, What has become of the harlot that used to sit at the cross-roads? they said, There was never a harlot there.
Translation for Translators	Judah gave a young goat to his friend from Adullam, for him to take back to the woman, as he had promised. But his friend could not find the woman. So he asked the men who lived there, "Where is the prostitute who was sitting by the road at Enaim?" They replied, "There has never been a prostitute here!"

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Awful Scroll Bible	Judah was to send out the kid of the goats, by the hand of his friend, the Adullamite, to take back the pledge from the woman's hand - is he to have come upon her? - He was to ask the men of that place, to the intent, of the harlot at the eye of the entrance on the road. They were to say: Is there a harlot here?
Conservapedia Ferrar-Fenton Bible God's Truth (Tyndale)	. . And Judas sent the kid by his neighbor of Odollam, for to fetch out his pledge again from the wifes hand. But he found her not. Then asked he the men of the same place saying: where is the whore that sat at Enaim in the way? And they said: there was no whore here.
HCSB Jubilee Bible 2000 H. C. Leupold	. . And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend, the Adullamite, in order to recover the pledge from the woman's hand; and he could not find her. So he asked the men of her place, saying: Where is the sacred prostitute, the one that sat in Enayim by the wayside? And they said: There was no sacred prostitute here.
Lexham English Bible NIV, ©2011	. Meanwhile Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to get his pledge back from the woman, but he did not find her. He asked the men who lived there, "Where is the shrine prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?" "There hasn't been any shrine prostitute here," they said.
Tree of Life Version	When Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he could not find her. He asked the men of her area saying, "Where is the cult prostitute? She was at the springs along the way." But they said, "There hasn't been a cult prostitute here."

#### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	.

- New American Bible (2002) Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite to recover the pledge from the woman; but he could not find her. So he asked the men of the place, "Where is the temple prostitute, the one by the roadside in Enaim?" But they answered, "There has never been a temple prostitute here." Temple prostitute: the Hebrew term *qedesha*, literally "consecrated woman," designates a woman who had ritual intercourse with men in pagan fertility rites; cf ⇒ Deut 23:18; ⇒ Hosea 4:14, where the same Hebrew word is used. Hirah the Adullamite uses a word that refers to a higher social class than that designated by the term *zona*, common "harlot," used in ⇒ Genesis 38:15-24.
- New American Bible (2011) Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to recover the pledge from the woman; but he did not find her. So he asked the men of that place, "Where is the prostitute,\* the one by the roadside in Enaim?" But they answered, "No prostitute has been here." Prostitute: the Hebrew term *qedesha*, lit., "consecrated woman," designates a woman associated with a sanctuary whose activities could include prostitution; cf. Dt 23:18; Hos 4:14, where the same Hebrew word is used. In 38:15 and 24 the common word for prostitute, *zona*, is used.
- New Jerusalem Bible  
New RSV .  
When Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite, to recover the pledge from the woman, he could not find her. He asked the townspeople, 'Where is the temple prostitute who was at Enaim by the wayside?' But they said, 'No prostitute has been here.'
- Revised English Bible Judah sent the goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to recover the pledge from the woman, but he could not find her. When he enquired of the people of that place, "Where is that temple-prostitute, the one who was sitting where the road forks?" they answered, "There has been no temple-prostitute here."

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

- Complete Jewish Bible Y'hudah sent the kid with his friend the 'Adulami to receive the guarantee items back from the woman, but he couldn't find her. He asked the people near where she had been, "Where is the prostitute who was on the road at 'Einayim?" But they answered, "There hasn't been any prostitute here."
- exeGeses companion Bible ...and Yah Hudah sends the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamiy, to take his pledge from the hand of the woman; and he finds her not.  
Then he asks the men of that place, saying,  
Where is the hallowed whore,  
who was at the opening of the fountain  
by the way side?  
And they say, There was no hallowed whore here.
- Israeli Authorized Version  
JPS (Tanakh—1985)  
Judaica Press Complete T.  
Kaplan Translation .  
. .  
Judah sent the young kid with his friend the Adullamite in order to get the security back from the woman, but [his friend] could not find her.  
[The friend] asked the local people, 'where is the religious prostitute? She was near Twin Wells (Eynayim), alongside the road.'  
'There was no religious prostitute here,' they replied.  
Kedeshah in Hebrew. See Deuteronomy 23:18 which seems to indicate that the pagan custom was to use the hire of such prostitutes for sacrifice. The *kedeshah* is also associated with sacrifice in Hosea 4:14. See Numbers 25:1,2. Ancient sources state that among the Amorites it was a custom that girls would have to sit seven days as prostitutes before being married (Tzava'ath Yehudah 12:2; cf.



Herodotus 1:199; also see Kethuboth 3b). Judah had no interest in her as a sacred prostitute, and, therefore, above (Genesis 38:15), the word zonah denoting a simple prostitute, is used.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Yehudah sent the gedi izzim by the yad of his friend the Adulami, to get back his ervon from the yad haisha; but he found her not.

Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the kedasha (cult prostitute) that was on the crossroads by the derech? And they said, There was no kedasha in this place.

Restored Names Version  
The Scriptures 1998

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### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible  
The Expanded Bible

Judah sent his friend ·Hirah [the Adullamite; 38:1] with the young goat to find the woman and get back his ·seal [signet] and the ·walking stick [staff] he had given her, but Hirah could not find her. He asked some of the people at the town of Enaim, "Where is the prostitute [perhaps indicating a temple prostitute connected to a fertility religion] who was here by the road?" They answered, "There has never been a prostitute here."

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

And Judah sent the kid which he had promised to the supposed harlot by the hand of his friend, the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand; but he found her not. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot that was openly by the wayside? Judah had told him that the harlot had sat in the gate of Enayim, and Hirah, accommodating himself to the custom of the country, asked for the devotee of the goddess Astarte, the goddess of love, for to her certain Canaanite women sacrificed their bodies by a life of shame. And they said, There was no harlot in this place. Tamar had arranged it so that her presence in the gate of the town had not been noticed by the inhabitants.

NET Bible®

Then Judah had his friend Hirah [*Heb* "sent by the hand of his friend." Here the name of the friend ("Hirah") has been included in the translation for clarity.] the Adullamite take a young goat to get back from the woman the items he had given in pledge [*Heb* "to receive the pledge from the woman's hand."], but Hirah [*Heb* "he"; the referent (Judah's friend Hirah the Adullamite) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] could not find her. He asked the men who were there [*Heb* "the men of her place," that is, who lived at the place where she had been.], "Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim by the road?" But they replied, "There has been no cult prostitute here."

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

Judah kept his word and sent his friend Hirah the Adullamite with the young goat so he could retrieve his seal and walking stick from the woman. But Judah's friend couldn't find her anywhere.

**Hirah the Adullamite** (to Timnah's elders): What happened to the temple prostitute who was at Enaim by the side of the road?

**Elders:** We have not seen any temple prostitute here.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV  
Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and Yehudah [<sup>Praised</sup>] sent the male-kid of the she-goats in the hand of his companion, the one of Adulam [<sup>Witness of the people</sup>], to take the token from the hand of the woman and he did not find her, and he inquired the men of her place saying, where

	is the prostitute, she was in Eynayim <sup>[Double spring]</sup> , upon the road, and they said, a prostitute does not exist here,...
Concordant Literal Version	And sending is Judah the kid of the goats by the hand of his shepherd, the Adullamite, to take the surety from the hand of the woman. Yet he did not find her. And asking is he the mortals of her place, saying, "Where is the hallowed harlot, she at the springs, on the way? And saying are they, "No hallowed harlot came to be in this place.
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his confidant the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand: but he didn't find her. Then he asked the men of her place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was at Enaim by the wayside? And they said, There has been no harlot here.
Darby Translation	.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And Judah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge at the hand of the woman,—but he found her not. So he asked the men of her place saying. Where is the devotee, she that was in Enaim, by the way? And they said,—Then hath been here no devotee.
English Standard Version	.
English Standard V. – UK	When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. And he asked the men of the place, "Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim at the roadside?" And they said, "No cult prostitute has been here."
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he could not find her. Then he asked the men of the place, "Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim by the road?" And they said, "There was no prostitute in this place."
Modern KJV	.
NASB	When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. He asked the men of her place, saying, "Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?" But they said, "There has been no temple prostitute here."
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Owen's Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he found her not. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the wayside?" And they said, "There was no harlot in this place." And he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her, and also the men of the place said that there was no harlot in this place."
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his companion the Adullamite, to receive the security deposit from the woman's hand: but he didn't find her. Then he asked the men of her place, saying, Where is the prostitute, that was at Enaim by the wayside? And they said, There has been no prostitute here.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	.
Young's Updated LT	And Judah sends the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the hand of the woman, and he has not found her. And he

asks the men of her place, saying, “Where is the separated one—she in Enayim, by the way?” And they say, “There has not been in this place a separated one.”

**The gist of this passage:** Judah sends his friend with a kid from the goats, which would be his payment to this prostitute. When Hirah arrives at the place that Judah met the prostitute, she cannot be found and the people of that area do not know about any such prostitute.

Genesis 38:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; what is sent (messengers, a message) is implied	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יהודה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
g <sup>e</sup> dîy (גדי) [pronounced <i>g<sup>eh</sup>-DEE</i> ]	<i>kid</i> (as in a young goat)	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1423 BDB #152
'êz (עז) [pronounced <i>gayz</i> ]	<i>she-goat</i> ; in the plural, it can mean <i>goats' hair</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5795 BDB #777
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This combination of the bêyth preposition and <i>hand</i> literally means <i>in a hand of, in [the] hand of</i> ; and can be rendered <i>into the hand [s] of; by the hand of; in [under] the power [control] of, in the possession of; by the power of; with; through, by, by means of; before, in the sight of</i> .			
rêa' (ער) [pronounced <i>RAY-ahj</i> ]	<i>associate, neighbor, colleague; companion, friend; beloved; fellow, acquaintance; fellow citizen; another person; one, another</i> [in a reciprocal phrase]	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7453 BDB #945
'Ādullâmîy (אדלמי) [pronounced <i>guh-d-ool-law-MEE</i> ]	<i>refuges, retreat; justice of the people; transliterated Adullamite, Adullami; a native of Adullam</i>	gentilic singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #5726 BDB #726

**Translation:** Judah sent a kid of the she-goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite...

Judah made an agreement with the prostitute (his daughter-in-law) to send her a kid from the goats; so he sent this kid with his friend, Hirah the Adullamite, who went back over their route to the city where Judah met and had relations with his daughter-in-law (not knowing who she was, thinking that she was a prostitute).

A day or so has passed. Judah has returned home, picked out a kid, and sends it back with Hirah on his trip back home.

### Genesis 38:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
ʿarâbôwn (עֹרְבָן) [pronounced <i>g'uh-raw-BONE</i> ]	<i>pledge, something given as security, something given in exchange</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6162 BDB #786
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of</i> ; <i>out of the power of</i> ; <i>from the power of</i> .			
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #802 BDB #61

**Translation:** ...to take [back] the pledge from the hand of the woman;...

Of course, Judah wanted his personal things back. He did not worry about identity theft or anything like that; but these things were like his driver's license and credit card, so he naturally wanted them back. Both men expected this to be a simple exchange. Take the kid up to the prostitute; she returns the personal items and she takes the kid.

### Genesis 38:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

## Genesis 38:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4672 BDB #592

**Translation:** ...but he could not find her.

His friend, easily able to go back to where they had been, was unable to find the woman there. This is because Judah's daughter-in-law put off the prostitute outfit, put on her widow outfit, and returned to her home, which was not too far from Judah's (apparently).

At this time, Tamar knew who everyone was and what they had done; Judah and his friend had no clue.

**Genesis 38:20** And Judah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand. But he did not find her.

Judah viewed this as a simple financial transaction. All he did was have sex with a prostitute; he promised to pay her, and so, he arranges payment for her. Judah did not return to this area himself, but he sent his friend, Hirah, with a young goat to pay her and to collect his stuff. Judah anticipates that his friend will deliver payment, pick up Judah's stuff, and he will be done with the matter. **But he [the Adullamite] did not find her.** She's not there.

So now, at least one man, Hirah, knows what Judah did and that a prostitute is in the possession of things which are specifically Judah's.

**Genesis 38:20** Judah sent a kid of the she-goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take [back] the pledge from the hand of the woman; but he could not find her. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 38:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâ'al (שָׁאַל) [pronounced shaw-AHL]	<i>to ask [petition, request, inquire]; to demand [require]; to question, to interrogate; to ask [for a loan]; to consult; to salute</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ânâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-sheem]; also spelled 'îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35



## Genesis 38:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i> ]	<i>place, situated</i> ; for a soldier, it may mean where he is <i>stationed</i> ; for people in general, it would be their <i>place of abode</i> (which could be their house or their town)	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

**Translation:** Jacob's friend [lit., *he*] asked the men of [that] place,...

Jacob's friend has this young goat, and he is wandering all over this area trying to find the woman that Judah had slept with. He of course did not see her and anyone else like here there, so he saw some men and asked them. Apparently, Jacob's friend did a lot of asking around.

## Genesis 38:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'ayyêh (אֵיךְ) [pronounced <i>ahy-YAY</i> ]	<i>where</i>	interrogative adverb (the verb <i>to be</i> is sometimes implied)	Strong's #346 BDB #32
q <sup>e</sup> dêshâh (קַדְשָׁה) [pronounced <i>keh-d-ay-SHAW</i> ]	<i>prostitute, harlot; female temple prostitute, cult prostitute</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6948 BDB #873

The NET Bible: *The Hebrew noun translated "cult prostitute" is derived from a verb meaning "to be set apart; to be distinct." Thus the term refers to a woman who did not marry, but was dedicated to temple service as a cult prostitute. The masculine form of this noun is used for male cult prostitutes. Judah thought he had gone to an ordinary prostitute (v. 15); but Hirah went looking for a cult prostitute, perhaps because it had been a sheep-shearing festival. For further discussion see E. M. Yamauchi, "Cultic Prostitution," Orient and Occident (AOAT), 213-23.<sup>29</sup>*

**Translation:** ...saying, "Where [is] the prostitute [who was here]?"

He kept asking, "Where is the prostitute?" This pursuit would prove to be unfruitful.

<sup>29</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

Genesis 38:21c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hîy' (היא) [pronounced <i>hee</i> ]	<i>she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Ēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-NAH-yihm</i> ]	<i>a double spring, a double fountain; and is transliterated Enam, Enajim, Enaim</i>	proper singular noun location; with the definite article	Strong's #5879 BDB #745
ʿal (על) [pronounced <i>gah</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
derek <sup>e</sup> (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #1870 BDB #202

**Translation:** *She [was] near to Enaim, [right] along the road."*

When he got these quizzical looks, he would then describe exactly where she would stand. "We walked by this town, and there she was, standing right over there," he would say.

When a prostitute has a particular place, and she stands there all of the time over a significant period, then the men would recognize her. However, it is reasonable that, if a woman stands out there one time only, that she might not be noticed. Tamar's intention was to influence only one man, Judah. Therefore, she likely did not have her veil on except for when Judah came by.

Genesis 38:21d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Genesis 38:21d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
Together, b <sup>e</sup> zeh mean <i>in this [place], here, with this, on these conditions, herewith, thus provided, by this, through this, for this cause, in this manner, on this one.</i>			
q <sup>e</sup> dêshâh (קַדְשָׁה) [pronounced keh-d-ay-SHAW]	<i>prostitute, harlot; female temple prostitute</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6948 BDB #873

**Translation:** And they replied, “The prostitute has not been here.”

Judah's friend says, “She was right here;” and the people answered, “Sorry, we did not see her.” The masculine plural noun indicates not that he spoke to a crowd of people, but that he spoke to many individuals and they all kept telling him, “We don't have prostitutes here.”

With most prostitutes, religious or otherwise, they worked in specific areas and most of the town knows who they are. It should not be difficult to locate this particular one. However, nobody remembers seeing her; no one knows of a regular prostitute who fits her description, and that leaves Hirah wandering about with this kid to give away. Had he asked the right people the right questions, they might have remembered seeing a mourning widow leave town.

**Genesis 38:21a-c** Then he [Hirah, Judah's friend] asked the men of that place, saying, “Where is the harlot who was by the wayside?” And they said, “There was no harlot here.”

Tamar was careful to interact only with Judah, her father-in-law, so that she would not be known as the prostitute of that area. When Judah's friend asks around, no one knows anything about the prostitute that he is inquiring about.

“Where is the prostitute that usually frequents this place?” “We have no idea; we don't have a prostitute who works here.”

It is interesting that Judah sends his friend Hirah instead of going himself. Several possible explanations come to mind: (1) Judah might be a bit ashamed and did not want to face the prostitute again (otherwise, why didn't he return to that city with two young goats?). Or (2) he is giving his friend the opportunity to sample this prostitute for himself. (3) There is certainly the 3<sup>rd</sup> possibility that Judah is tied up at home and Hirah is going back that way, and so, this is simply an errand, with nothing more to be read into the situation than that.

It is also interesting that Hirah uses a different word for prostitute. When Judah described her, he used the feminine singular, Qal active participle of the word zânâh (זָנָה) [pronounced zaw-NAW], which means, *adulteress, fornicator, sexually promiscuous person; harlot, whore, prostitute; a madam*. The emphasis is upon her immorality. Strong's #2181 BDB #275. However, Hirah uses the word q<sup>e</sup>dêshâh (קַדְשָׁה) [pronounced keh-d-ay-SHAW], which means, *prostitute, harlot; female temple prostitute, cult prostitute*. Strong's #6948 BDB #873. She is not a common prostitute, but one who is set apart as a religious prostitute. It is not entirely clear to me why Hirah uses this different designation.

Genesis 38:21 Jacob's friend [lit., *he*] asked the men of [that] place, saying, "Where [is] the prostitute [who was here]? She [was] near to Enaim, [right] along the road." And they replied, "The prostitute has not been here." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

When Judah takes Tamar before the local court, to have her executed for being pregnant, he will use the Qal perfect of the verb *zânâh* (זָנָה) [pronounced *zaw-NAW*], which describes her as being exceedingly immoral. Judah uses one word; but Hirah uses a different word entirely when looking for the young woman. I am not sure of the significance here. It suggests to me that the cult prostitute is seen as a higher calling, and perhaps Hirah simply used that word so as not to be so insulting to this little place where Judah met Tamar. It could simply be their different vocabularies.

All languages have synonyms and that could be all that we are seeing here.

Genesis 38:20–21 Judah sent a kid of the she-goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take [back] the pledge from the hand of the woman; but he could not find her. Jacob's friend [lit., *he*] asked the men of [that] place, saying, "Where [is] the prostitute [who was here]? She [was] near to Enaim, [right] along the road." And they replied, "The prostitute has not been here." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:20–21 Judah sent the kid from the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman; but his friend could not find her. Jacob's friend asked the men who lived around there, "Where is the prostitute who was here? She was near to Enaim, standing along the road side." But they replied, "No prostitute has been here." (Kukis paraphrase)

And so he returns unto Judah and so he says, "I did not find her and also men of the place said, 'There was not in here a prostitute.' " And so says Judah, "She will take to herself lest we are to be shamed. Behold, I have sent the kid and you, [even] you could not find her."

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38:22–23

He returned to Judah and said, "I could not find her; furthermore, the men of that place said, 'There was no prostitute here.' " Judah said, "She will keep [those things] as her own [lit., *to her*], so that we are not shamed. Listen, I sent the kid and you, [even] you could not find her."

He returned to Judah and told him, "I could not find that woman; furthermore, the men of that place said that there had not been a prostitute there." Judah said, "Let her keep those other things, so that we are not shamed. Listen, we attempted to find her and to bring her the kid, but we could not find her."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he returns unto Judah and so he says, "I did not find her and also men of the place said, 'There was not in here a prostitute.' " And so says Judah, "She will take to herself lest we are to be shamed. Behold, I have sent the kid and you, [even] you could not find her."

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Targum (Onkelos)

And he returned to Jehuda, and said, I could not find her; the men of the place also said there is no harlot there. And Jehuda said, Let her take it to her, lest we be in contempt: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And he returned to Jehuda and said, I could not find her: and the men of the place also said that no harlot was there. And Jehuda said, Lest she should have taken the pledge, lest we become a laughing stock, behold, I have sent this goat, and thou canst not find her.

Jerusalem targum	.
Revised Douay-Rheims	He returned to Juda, and said to him: I have not found her; moreover the men of that place said to me, that there never sat a harlot there. Juda said: Let her take it to herself ; surely she cannot charge us with a,lie: I sent the kid which I promised: and you did not find her.
Latin Vulgate	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	He returned to Yudah, and said, "I have not found her; and also the men of the place said, 'There has been no prostitute here.'" Yudah said, "Let her keep it, lest we be shamed. Behold, I sent this young goat, and you have not found her."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, No harlot has been here. And Judah said, Let her keep the pledge, lest I be laughed at; behold, I sent this kid, but you could not find her.
Septuagint (Greek)	And he returned to Judas, and said, I have not found her; and the men of the place say, There is no harlot here. And Judas said, Let her have them, but let us not be ridiculed; I sent this kid, but you have not found her.
NETS (Greek)	.
Brenton's Septuagint	.

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	So he went back to Judah, and said, I have not seen her, and the men of the place say that there is no such woman there. And Judah said, Let her keep the things, so that we may not be shamed; I sent the young goat, but you did not see the woman.
Easy English	.
Easy-to-Read Version	So Judah's friend went back to Judah and said, "I could not find the woman. The men who live in that place said that there was never a prostitute there." So Judah said, "Let her keep the things. I don't want people to laugh at us. I tried to give her the goat, but we could not find her. That is enough."
God's Word™	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	.
International Children's B.	So he went back to Judah and said, "I could not find the woman. The men who lived there said, 'There has never been a prostitute here.'" Judah said, "Let her keep the things. I don't want people to laugh at us. I sent her the goat as I promised. But you could not find her."
<i>The Message</i>	He went back to Judah and said, "I couldn't find her. The men there said there never has been a prostitute there." Judah said, "Let her have it then. If we keep looking, everyone will be poking fun at us. I kept my part of the bargain—I sent the kid goat but you couldn't find her."
Names of God Bible	.
NIRV	So Hirah went back to Judah. He said, "I couldn't find her. Besides, the men who lived there didn't know anything about her. They said, 'There hasn't been any temple prostitute here.'" Then Judah said, "Let her keep what she has. I don't want people making fun of us. After all, I did send her this young goat. We can't help it if you couldn't find her."
New Simplified Bible	.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	So he went back to Judah and said, "I couldn't find her. The locals even said, 'There's no holy woman here.'"
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Contemporary English V.	Judah said, "Let her keep everything so we aren't laughed at. I did send this kid goat, but you couldn't find her."
The Living Bible	Hirah went back and told Judah, "I couldn't find the woman, and the people of Enaim said no prostitute had ever been there." "If you couldn't find her, we'll just let her keep the things I gave her," Judah answered. "And we'd better forget about the goat, or else we'll look like fools." "But we've never had a public prostitute here," they replied. So he returned to Judah and told him he couldn't find her anywhere, and what the men of the place had told him. "Then let her keep them!" Judah exclaimed. "We tried our best. We'd be the laughingstock of the town to go back again."
New Berkeley Version New Century Version	. So he went back to Judah and said, "I could not find the woman, and the people who lived there said, 'There has never been a prostitute here.'" Judah said, "Let her keep the things. I don't want people to laugh at us. I sent her the goat as I promised, but you could not find her."
New Life Version	So he returned to Judah, and said, "I did not find her. The men of the place said, 'There has been no woman selling the use of her body here.' " Then Judah said, "Let her keep the things, or else we will be laughed at. I sent the young goat, and you did not find her."
New Living Translation	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." "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."

#### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So he returned to Judah and said: 'I couldn't find her, and the local men say there wasn't any prostitute there.' Then Judah told him: 'Let her have [those things]. Although I sent the young goat, you couldn't find her; so let's not leave ourselves open to ridicule.'
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	. So he returned to Judah and said, "I haven't found her. Also, the men who are from there said, 'There's been no prostitute here.'" Then Judah said, "Let her have those things. Otherwise, we'll become contemptible. I sent this young goat, but you didn't find her."
New Advent (Knox) Bible Revised Knox Bible	. So he went back to Juda, and told him, I could not find her; and what is more, the townsfolk would have it there was never harlot sitting there at all. Let her keep what she has, said Juda; she cannot call us dishonest, now that I have sent the kid as I promised, and she was not to be found.
Translation for Translators	So he went back to Judah and said, "I did not find her. <i>Furthermore</i> , the men who live in that town said, 'There has never been a prostitute here.' " Judah said, "She can keep the things that I gave to her. If we continued to search for her, people would ridicule us. I tried to send this young goat to her, but you could not find her to give it to her."

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to turn back to Judah, and was to say: I have not come upon her, even the men of the place are to have said: Is there to be a harlot here? Judah was to say: She was to take them, else we be despised. I am to have sent off the kid - even is you to have come upon her? -
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Conservapedia	He came back to Judah, saying, "I can't find her, and in fact the men of the place told me that there never was a cult prostitute there." Judah said, "Let her have the security, then, or else we'll look ridiculous. It's bad enough as it is! I sent this goat kid, and you couldn't find her."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	So he returned to Judah and reported, "I cannot find her; — and the men of the place said ' there was not a whore there.' " Judah, therefore, said ; " You have 23 taken it to her, therefore I cannot be abused by her; for I sent the kid, but you could not find her."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And he came to Juda again saying: I cannot find her, and also the men of the place said: that there was no whore there. And Juda said: let her take it to her, least we be shamed: for I sent the kid and you could not find her.
HCSB	.
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	So he returned to Judah and said to him: I could not find her. Furthermore, the men of the place said there was no sacred prostitute there. Then Judah said: Let her keep them for herself, lest we bring disgrace on ourselves. In any case, I sent this kid, and thou wast not able to find her.
Lexham English Bible NIV, ©2011	. So he went back to Judah and said, "I didn't find her. Besides, the men who lived there said, 'There hasn't been any shrine prostitute here.'" Then Judah said, "Let her keep what she has, or we will become a laughingstock. After all, I did send her this young goat, but you didn't find her."
Tree of Life Version	So he returned to Judah and said, "I couldn't find her, and the people of that place also said, 'There hasn't been a cult prostitute here.'" Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, or we'll be held in contempt. Behold, I did send this young goat, but you couldn't find her."

#### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	He returned to Judah and said, "I didn't find her and even the local people said that there was no prostitute there." Judah then said, "Let her keep it all for herself lest the people finally laugh at us. At least I sent her the kid even if you didn't find her."
The Heritage Bible	And he returned to Judah, and said, I have not found her, and also the men of the place said, There was no harlot in this place. And Judah said, Let her take it to herself lest we be held in disrespect; lo, I sent this kid, and you have not found her.
New American Bible (2002)	He went back to Judah and told him, "I could not find her; and besides, the men of the place said there was no temple prostitute there." "Let her keep the things," Judah replied; "otherwise we shall become a laughingstock. After all, I did send her the kid, even though you were unable to find her."
New American Bible (2011)	.
New Jerusalem Bible	So returning to Judah he said, 'I did not find her. What is more, the men of the place told me there had been no prostitute there.' 'Let her keep the things,' Judah said, 'or we shall become a laughing-stock. At least I sent her this kid, even though you did not find her.'
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible	So he went back to Judah and reported that he had failed to find her and that the men of the place had said there was no such prostitute there. Judah said, "Let her keep the pledge, or we shall be a laughing-stock. After all, I did send the kid, even though you could not find her."

#### **Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	So he returned to Y’hudah and said, “I couldn’t find her; also the people there said, ‘There hasn’t been any prostitute here.’” Y’hudah said, “All right, let her keep the things, so that we won’t be publicly shamed. I sent the kid, but you didn’t find her.”
exeGeses companion Bible	And he returns to Yah Hudah and says, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place say, that there was no hallowed whore here. And Yah Hudah says, Let her take them to herself, lest we become disrespected: behold, I send this kid and you find her not.
Israeli Authorized Version JPS (Tanakh—1985)	. So he returned to Judah and said, “I could not find her; moreover, the townspeople said: There has been no prostitute here.” Judah said, “Let her keep them, lest we become a laughingstock. I did send her this kid, but you did not find her.”
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	. He returned to Judah and said, 'I could not find [the woman]. The local men said that there was no sacred prostitute there.' 'Let her keep [the security],' replied Judah. 'We don't want to become a laughingstock. I tried to send her the kid, but you couldn't find her.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he returned to Yehudah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said that there was no kedeshah in this place. And Yehudah said, Let her take for herself, lest we become buz (laughingstock); hinei, I sent this gedi, and thou hast not found her.
Restored Names Version <i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	. And he returned to Yehudah and said, “I have not found her. And the men of the place also said there was no cult prostitute in this place.” And Yehudah said, “Let her take them for herself, lest we become despised, for I sent this young goat and you have not found her.”

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So he returned to Judah, and said, “I cannot find her; also the local men said, ‘There was no prostitute around here.’” Then Judah said, “Let her keep the things (pledge articles) for herself, otherwise we will be a laughingstock [searching everywhere for her]. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her.”
The Expanded Bible	.
The Geneva Bible	.
Kretzmann’s Commentary	And he returned to Judah and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said that there was no harlot in this place. This report caused Judah some chagrin. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed; behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her. Judah feared that any further search for the woman would bring him, not moral condemnation, but mocking ridicule. It was characteristic of the times that he did not feel guilty, but expressed his satisfaction over the fact that she had his pledges, which were worth more than the kid. It is only by keeping the revolting aspect of sins and vices before the eyes all the time that we escape becoming callous with regard to them.
NET Bible®	So he returned to Judah and said, “I couldn’t find her. Moreover, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no cult prostitute here.’” Judah said, “Let her keep the things [The words “the things” have been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.] for herself. Otherwise we will appear to be dishonest [ <i>Heb</i> “we will become contemptible.”]. I did indeed send this young goat, but you couldn’t find her.”
Syndein/Thieme	.
The Voice	<i>Bewildered</i> , the Adullamite returned to Judah.

**Hirah the Adullamite:** I couldn't find her, and *what's odd is* that the elders claimed they haven't seen any temple prostitutes around there.

**Judah:** Well let her keep my things then. If you go back, we'll be laughed at. *I did what I promised.* I sent the young goat, *and you tried* but could not find her.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	.
Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he turned back to Yehudah <sup>[Praised]</sup> and he said, I did not find her and also the men of the place had said, a prostitute does not exist here, and Yehudah <sup>[Praised]</sup> said, she will take for her otherwise, we will exist to be despised, look, I sent this male-kid and you did not find her,...
Concordant Literal Version	And returning is he to Judah and saying, "I did not find her. And, moreover, the mortals of the place say, `No hallowed harlot came to be in this place.. And saying is Judah, "Take it to her shall she, lest we come into contempt! Behold! I send this kid and you did not find her!"
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	And he returned to Judah, and said, I haven't found her; and also the men of the place said, There has been no harlot here. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, or else we will be put to shame: look, I sent this young goat, and you haven't found her.
Darby Translation	.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Then returned he unto Judah, and said—I found her not,—moreover also, the men of the place said, There hath been here no devotee.. And Judah said: Thou must take it to her, lest we become a contempt,—lo! I sent this kid, and, thou, hast not found her.
English Standard Version	.
English Standard V. – UK	.
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no cult prostitute in this place." Judah replied, "Let her keep them for herself, or we shall be laughed at. I sent this young goat, and you did not find her."
Modern KJV	.
NASB	So he returned to Judah, and said, "I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, 'There has been no temple prostitute here.'" Then Judah said, "Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her."
New European Version	He returned to Judah, and said, I haven't found her; and also the men of the place said, 'There has been no prostitute here'. Judah said, Let her keep it, lest we be shamed. Behold, I sent this young goat, and you haven't found her.
New King James Version	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."
Owen's Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.

Young's Literal Translation  
Young's Updated LT

And he turns back unto Judah, and says, "I have not found her; and the men of the place also have said, There has not been in this place a separated one." And Judah says, "Let her take to herself, lest we become despised; lo, I sent this kid, and you have not found her."

**The gist of this passage:** Hirah returns, being unable to find the woman. Judah tells him to let the matter lie, as returning to that place would end up being futile.

Genesis 38:22a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i> ]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

**Translation:** He returned to Judah...

Judah's close friend returned to where they had been; where Judah had propositioned his daughter-in-law, thinking that she was a prostitute, and had conjugal relations with her.

Judah was simply paying the woman off, and he sent his friend to handle it. However, he returned to Judah with the kid.

Genesis 38:22b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55



## Genesis 38:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4672 BDB #592

**Translation:** ...and said, "I could not find her;...

He first tells Judah that he could not find her.

## Genesis 38:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>and also, together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
'ânâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-sheem]; also spelled 'îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
mâqôwm (מִקוֹם) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

## Genesis 38:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
Together, b <sup>e</sup> zeh mean <i>in this [place], here, with this, on these conditions, herewith, thus provided, by this, through this, for this cause, in this manner, on this one.</i>			
q <sup>e</sup> dêshâh (קְדִישָׁה) [pronounced keh-d-ay-SHAW]	<i>prostitute, harlot; female temple prostitute</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6948 BDB #873

**Translation:** ...furthermore, the men of that place said, 'There was no prostitute here.' ”

Then his friend added, “The men there also told me there was no prostitute there.” The way that this is stated appears to be a direct quote. So, the friend looked for her; and he also asked around; and it was as if this woman had never been there. He had no explanation for it at all for the situation here.

Judah never expected anything like this to happen. What they did was routine six. He was bored, he found a woman who excited him, his wife had passed away, and he thought he would have a little fun. It has never occurred to him throughout this entire chapter than any of what he did was wrong. His friend did not seem to think so. In fact, he was going to deliver the calf for Judah.

Can you imagine, this, his best friend of his entire life, may spend eternity in the lake of fire while Judah spends eternity in heaven because Judah had a weak testimony for his best friend—in fact, he had no testimony for his best friend. Judah just went along with the crowd, with the mores of his day and never gave much thought to the God of his father.

**Genesis 38:22** And he returned to Judah, and said, “I cannot find her. And also the men of the place said, ‘There was no harlot here.’ ”

Judah’s friend has no luck, and he returns to Judah, telling him that he was unable to find the prostitute in question. The men there were unaware of a prostitute working in that area. Hirah made a reasonable effort to find the prostitute but he did not.

**Genesis 38:22** He returned to Judah and said, “I could not find her; furthermore, the men of that place said, ‘There was no prostitute here.’ ” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 38:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## Genesis 38:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> hoo-DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
The BDB gives the following meanings: <i>to take, take in the hand; to take and carry along; to take from, take out of, take, carry away, take away; to take to or for a person, procure, get, take possession of, select, choose, take in marriage, receive, accept; to take up or upon, put upon; to fetch; to take, lead, conduct; to take, capture, seize; to take, carry off; to take (vengeance).</i>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
pen (פֶּן) [pronounced pen]	<i>lest, peradventure, or else, in order to prevent, or, so that [plus a negative]</i>	conjunction	Strong's #6435 BDB #814
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bûz (בוֹז) [pronounced booz]	<i>contempt, shamed</i>	masculine singular substantive	Strong's #937 BDB #100

The NET Bible: *The Hebrew word בוז (buz) describes the contempt that a respectable person would have for someone who is worthless, foolish, or disreputable.*<sup>30</sup>

**Translation:** Judah said, “She will keep [those things] as her own [lit., to her], so that we are not shamed.

I have taken some liberties with the text. We can understand this to mean *she will take possession* and what she takes possession of are the things which Judah left with her as a pledge.

The first half of v. 23 is difficult to translate. Literally, it reads: *And so says Judah, “She will take to herself lest we are to be shamed.”* We could get away with translating it: *Judah said, “She will keep [those things] as her own [lit., to her], so that we are not shamed.”* The idea is, *she’s got my stuff, we tried to pay her but could not find her; we have done nothing wrong.*

<sup>30</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

Judah tried to take care of this debt immediately, but the prostitute he knew was not there and no one knows anything about her. Nothing more could be done. Quite obviously, Judah had no idea what was actually going on.

Judah is expressing some self-justification here. He does not consider being with a prostitute the problem. What he sees as the problem is, he has not paid her the agreed upon amount. But, we tried, Judah says.

What Judah is not going to do is to continue to send Hirah with the kid, nor is he going to go there himself. Judah would be embarrassed to continually ask around about a prostitute. Even though these are the mores of that time, he still is embarrassed about it. He still realizes that going from house to house in that area searching for a prostitute will make him contemptible to the populace there.

In our day and age, we have things on TV which 20 years ago would have constituted an R-rated film.<sup>31</sup> The first X-rated film, *The Midnight Cowboy*, can now be played on television uncut and no one thinks anything of it. We have a pornography industry unparalleled in past times and topless bars for men and for women. However, if you let a politician or a preacher have an affair, some people act as if the world is going to end and are amazed that he could do such a thing. It is a double-standard that has been with us since time immemorial. Judah justifies his position. He made an effort to have this woman found and to take her the kid; if she does not want it, then so be it. He is not going to comb the countryside for this woman.

### Genesis 38:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]; he saw</i> . This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.			
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i> ]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect; what is sent ( <i>messengers, a message</i> ) is implied	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
g <sup>e</sup> dîy (גִּדִּי) [pronounced <i>g<sup>eh</sup>-DEE</i> ]	<i>kid (as in a young goat)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1423 BDB #152
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

**Translation:** Listen, I sent the kid...

"Listen to me," Judah says, with the intention of justifying himself. "You know," he tells his friend, "I sent her the kid that we agree on." Of course, the friend knows this.

<sup>31</sup> I wrote this in 1994; in looking it over, an early "X" rated film can be played on television today unedited.

Genesis 38:23c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i> ]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i> ]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4672 BDB #592

**Translation:** ...and you, [even] you could not find her.”

Judah continues to say, “Listen, you tried to find her, but you could not.” Judah places a great deal of trust in his friend. Whereas, some people might have thought, “If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself,” that is not Judah’s attitude. He assumes that his friend did everything possible to find this woman.

Judah’s cold cruelty will be made manifest in the next verse.

Genesis 38:23 Judah said, “She will keep [those things] as her own [lit., *to her*], so that we are not shamed. Listen, I sent the kid and you, [even] you could not find her.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:22–23 He returned to Judah and said, “I could not find her; furthermore, the men of that place said, ‘There was no prostitute here.’” Judah said, “She will keep [those things] as her own [lit., *to her*], so that we are not shamed. Listen, I sent the kid and you, [even] you could not find her.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:22–23 He returned to Judah and told him, “I could not find that woman; furthermore, the men of that place said that there had not been a prostitute there.” Judah said, “Let her keep those other things, so that we are not shamed. Listen, we attempted to find her and to bring her the kid, but we could not find her.” (Kukis paraphrase)

[Chapter Outline](#)

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## Judah and the Pregnant Tamar

And so he is as from three months, and so he is made known to Judah, to say, “Has fornicated Tamar, your daughter-in-law, and also behold, [she is] pregnant with regards to acts of fornication.” And so says Judah, “Bring her and she is burned.”

Genesis  
38:24

And it was after about three months, it is made known to Judah, saying, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has been fornicating, and now [she is] pregnant by [these] acts of fornication.” Judah then said, “Bring her [here] and she will be burned [in judgment].”



**Three months later, Judah is told about Tamar: “Listen, your daughter-in-law Tamar has been sleeping around and, as a result, she is pregnant.” Judah then ordered, “Bring her here and she will be burned with fire for her fornications.”**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is as from three months, and so he is made known to Judah, to say, “Has fornicated Tamar, your daughter-in-law, and also behold, [she is] pregnant with regards to acts of fornication.” And so says Judah, “Bring her and she is burned.”
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And it was three months, and it was showed to Jehuda, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath committed fornication, and, behold, she is with child by fornication. And Jehuda said, Bring her out, and let her be burned.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And it was at the time of three months, that she was known to be with child: and it was told to Jehuda, saying Tamar thy daughter in law hath committed fornication and, behold, she is with child by fornication. And Jehuda said, Is she not the daughter of a priest. Let her be brought forth and burned.
Jerusalem targum	.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And behold after three months they told a lie, saying: Thamar, your daughter in law has played the harlot, and she appears to have a big belly. And Juda said: Bring her out that she may be burnt.
Latin Vulgate	.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	It happened about three months later, that it was told Yudah, saying, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has played the prostitute; and moreover, behold, she is with child by prostitution." Yudah said, "Bring her forth, and let her be burnt."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass, about three months later, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has played the harlot; and moreover, she is with child because of her harlotry. And Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be burned.
Septuagint (Greek)	And it came to pass after three months, that it was told Judas, saying, Thamar your daughter-in-law has grievously played the harlot, and behold she is with child by whoredom; and Judas said, Bring her out, and let her be burnt.
NETS (Greek)	.
Brenton’s Septuagint	.

Significant differences:

#### **Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	Now about three months after this, word came to Judah that Tamar, his daughter-in-law, had been acting like a loose woman and was with child. And Judah said, Take her out and let her be burned.
Easy English	Then, 3 months later, someone told Judah ‘Your dead son’s wife, Tamar, is pregnant. She has been a prostitute.’ Judah said ‘Bring her out. And burn her to death!’
Easy-to-Read Version	<b>Tamar Is Pregnant</b> About three months later, someone told Judah, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar sinned like a prostitute, and now she is pregnant.” Then Judah said, “Take her out and burn her.”
God’s Word™	.
Good News Bible (TEV)	.
International Children’s B.	.

*The Message* Three months or so later, Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law has been playing the whore—and now she’s a pregnant whore.”  
Judah yelled, “Get her out here. Burn her up!”

Names of God Bible .  
NIRV About three months later people brought word to Judah. They said, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of being a prostitute. Now she’s pregnant.”  
Judah said, “Bring her out! Have her burned to death!”

New Simplified Bible .

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible .  
Contemporary English V. About three months later someone told Judah, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has behaved like a prostitute, and now she's pregnant!" "Drag her out of town and burn her to death!" Judah shouted.

The Living Bible About three months later word reached Judah that Tamar, his daughter-in-law, was pregnant, obviously as a result of prostitution.  
“Bring her out and burn her,” Judah shouted.

New Berkeley Version .  
New Century Version About three months later someone told Judah, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, is guilty of acting like a prostitute, and now she is pregnant.”  
Then Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned to death.”

New Life Version About three months later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has sold the use of her body. She is going to have a baby by doing this sinful thing." Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

New Living Translation 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.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Well after three months, Judah was told: 'Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the whore... and now look; she's pregnant by her whoring!'  
So Judah said: 'Then drag her out and have her burned!'

Beck’s American Translation .  
International Standard V ***Tamar’s Pregnancy Rebukes Judah***  
Three months later, it was reported to Judah, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has turned to prostitution!e And look! She’s pregnant because of it!”  
“Bring her out,” Judah responded. “Let’s burn her to death!”

New Advent (Knox) Bible .  
Revised Knox Bible So three months passed; and then word came to Juda, Thamar, your daughter-in-law, has proved a light woman; she is big with child for all to see. Whereupon Juda said, Bring her here, then; she must be burned alive.

Translation for Translators About three months later, someone told Judah, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has become a prostitute and now she is pregnant!” Judah said, “Drag her outside of the city and kill her by burning her!”

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible After three months, It was reported to Judah, to the intent: Tamar, your daughter-in-law, is to have played the harlot, even is she pregnant by prostitution. Judah was to say: Be bringing her out, she was to be burned.

Conservapedia	Three months later, this news was told to Judah: "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has committed prostitution, and worse yet, she has fallen pregnant through that prostitution." Judah said, "Bring her out here; she is to be burned alive."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But three months after it was reported to Judah " Your daughter-in-law Thamar has prostituted herself, and she is also with child from her fornication;" and Judah replied, " Bring her here and burn her."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And it came to pass that after three months, one told Juda saying: Thamar your daughter in law has played the whore, and with playing the whore is become great with child. And Juda said: bring her forth and let her be burnt.
HCSB	.
Jubilee Bible 2000	.
H. C. Leupold	It came to pass after about three months that is was reported to Judah: Tamar, thy daughter-in-law, has played the harlot; and, mark, she is also pregnant as a result of her harlotry. And Judah said: Bring her forth that she may be burned.
Lexham English Bible	.
NIV, ©2011	.
Tree of Life Version	.

### **Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	.
The Heritage Bible	And it was three new moons, and it was caused to stand out boldly to Judah, saying, Tamar, your daughter in law, has committed adultery, and also, behold, she is with child by adultery. And Judah said, Bring her out, and let her be burned.
New American Bible (2002)	.
New American Bible (2011)	About three months later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has acted like a harlot and now she is pregnant from her harlotry." Judah said, "Bring her out; let her be burned."
New Jerusalem Bible	About three months later, Judah was told, 'Your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore, she is pregnant, as a result of her misconduct.' 'Bring her out,' Judah ordered, 'and let her be burnt alive!'
New RSV	.
Revised English Bible	About three months later Judah was told that his daughter-in-law Tamar had played the prostitute and got herself pregnant. "Bring her out," ordered Judah, "so that she may be burnt."

### **Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:**

Complete Jewish Bible	About three months later Y'hudah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has been acting like a whore; moreover, she is pregnant as a result of her prostitution." Y'hudah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned alive!"
exeGesés companion Bible	And so be it, about three months after, they tell Yah Hudah, saying, Tamar your daughter in law has whored; and also, behold, she conceived by whoredoms. And Yah Hudah says, Bring her, and burn her.
Israeli Authorized Version	.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	Some three months passed, and Judah was told, 'Your daughter-in-law has been behaving loosely. She has become pregnant from her looseness.' 'Take her out and have her burned [It seems that there was no legal justification to burn her, but Judah was using the discretionary power given to the courts to prevent immorality by imposing particularly harsh punishments (Mizrachi; Or HaChaim; cf.

Ramban; Sanhedrin 46a). Moreover, if it were the prescribed penalty, how could Judah later refrain from imposing it? Some say that Judah was punishing her for undermining the morality of the Israelites (Yov'loth 41:17), or as revenge (Tzava'ath Yehudah 12:5). According to other sources, 'burning' here denotes branding and not a death penalty (Tur).], ' said Judah.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And it came to pass about shlosh chadashim (three months) later, that it was told Yehudah saying, Tamar thy kallah hath played the zonah; and also, hinei, she is with child by zenunim (whoredom). And Yehudah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burned.

Restored Names Version  
The Scriptures 1998

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### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the [role of a] prostitute, and she is with child because of her immorality." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned [to death as punishment]!"

The Expanded Bible

About three months later someone told Judah, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, is guilty of acting like a prostitute, and now she is pregnant [has conceived]." Then Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned to death."

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

.  
**Verses 24-30**

The children of Tamar

And it came to pass about three months after that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar, thy daughter-in-law, hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. Tamar was not only the widow of two of Judah's sons, but the promised wife of the third. "In his patriarchal authority he commanded her to be brought forth to be burned. Tamar was regarded as betrothed, and was, therefore, to be punished as a bride convicted of unchastity. But in this case the Mosaic Law imposes only the penalty of being stoned to death, Deut. 22:20, whilst burning to death was inflicted only upon the daughter of a priest, and upon carnal intercourse both with mother and daughter, Leviticus 21:19; Leviticus 20:14. Judah's sentence, therefore, is more severe than that of the future Law. " (Keil. )

NET Bible®

After three months Judah was told [*Heb* "it was told to Judah, saying."], "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has turned to prostitution, and as a result she has become pregnant [*Heb* "and also look, she is with child by prostitution."]. Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

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Approximately three months later, someone told Judah, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has been promiscuous. It's obvious her business has even made her pregnant."

**Judah:** Bring her out *and expose her for what she is*, and then let her be burned.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV  
Benner's Mechanical Trans.  
Concordant Literal Version

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.....  
And coming is it, about three months from this, that it is being told Judah, saying, "Your daughter-in-law Thamar commits prostitution, and moreover, behold! Pregnant is she by prostitution. And saying is Judah, "Bring her forth, and burned shall she be."

A Conservative Version  
Context Group Version

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Darby Translation	.
Emphasized Bible	.
English Standard Version	About three months later Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality." And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned."
English Standard V. – UK	.
Evidence Bible	.
Green’s Literal Translation	And after three months, it happened. It was told to Judah, saying, Your daughter-in-law Tamar has committed adultery, and also, behold, she is pregnant by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her out and let her be burned.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	After about three months, it was told Judah, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has turned to prostitution, and what is more, as a result of prostitution she is pregnant.” Then Judah said, “Bring her forth, and let her be burned!”
Modern KJV	.
NASB	Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry.” Then Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!”
New European Version	.
New King James Version	.
Owen’s Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster’s Bible Translation	And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told to Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot; and also, behold she is with child by lewdness: and Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.
World English Bible	.
Young’s Literal Translation	.
Young’s Updated LT	And it comes to pass about three months after, that it is declared to Judah, saying, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has committed fornication; and also, lo, she has conceived by fornication:” and Judah says, “Bring her out—and she is burnt.”

**The gist of this passage:** Three months pass, and Tamar’s pregnancy is brought to Judah’s attention. He calls for her to be burned.

Genesis 38:24a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָא) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			



## Genesis 38:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
The kaph preposition can be used of time, and translated <i>about, at; as, when, at the time of</i> . <sup>32</sup>			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâlôsh (שָׁלוֹשׁ) [pronounced <i>shaw-LOHSH</i> ]	<i>a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome</i>	numeral; masculine singular noun	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
chôdesh (חֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>KHOH-desh</i> ]	<i>new moons, months</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2320 BDB #294
I need to fix the plural spelling here.			
List the various translations under <i>months</i> .			

**Translation:** *And it was after about three months,...*

This is 3 months or so after Judah's friend tried to locate the prostitute that Judah had sex with in order to pay her. Neither man knows that this is Tamar.

## Genesis 38:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נִגַּד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to be made conspicuous, to be made known, to be expounded, to be explained, to be declared, to be informed</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo-DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

**Translation:** *...it is made known to Judah,...*

<sup>32</sup> As per *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 454.

Just as Tamar had those keeping her informed of what went on in the Judah household, Judah also had informants to let him know what was up with Tamar.

This does not mean that there are spies employed by both people. This is what is normal, small-town living. A friend of mine was in a small town visiting for a week or so, and he was walking, and a cop pulled over and told my friend who he was, who he was visiting and how long he had been there. For those who have never lived in a small town, this is how they work. Everyone knows what everyone else is doing. Whatever is going on with Tamar down the street is big news.

The fact that she pulled off this prostitute ruse without being known is a very big deal and suggests that this woman was very smart.

Genesis 38:24c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
zânâh (זָנָה) [pronounced zaw-NAW]	<i>to commit adultery, to fornicate, to [sexually] pursue; to be a cult prostitute; to be unfaithful (to God) (figuratively)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2181 BDB #275
Tâmâr (תָּמָר) [pronounced taw-MAWR]	<i>palm-tree, date-palm and is transliterated Tamar</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #8559 BDB #1071
kallâh (כַּלְיָה) [pronounced kahl-LAW]	<i>daughter-in-law, spouse, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3618 BDB #483

Kallâh is rendered *daughter-in-law, spouse, wife*. We do not have an exact English equivalent as its translation depends upon who is speaking or who this is in reference to. It is an absolute noun which we only have relative nouns to stand in for it.

**Translation:** ...saying, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has been fornicating,..."

The first thing said to Judah is, "Your daughter-in-law has been out there fornicating around." This gives you some idea as to the morality codes of that day—keeping everyone informed of everyone else's business was okay; but it was not okay for this woman to sleep around.

Now, bear in mind, Tamar has not been sleeping around. She is not going out with a number of men or even one man. She has had relations with only one man—Judah. However, what she is thought to be guilty of is what is told to Judah first.

## Genesis 38:24d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>and also, together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
Do these 3 words mean anything together? Nothing in my own lexicon.			
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i> ]	<i>pregnant, with child, having conceived</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #2030 BDB #248
The adjective and the verb are spelled alike, although both Owen and Zodhiates identify this as the adjective.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
z <sup>e</sup> nûwthîym (זְנוּתֵימ) [pronounced <i>zahn-oo-THEEM</i> ]	<i>fornications, acts of adultery, acts of prostitution; spiritual adulteries</i>	masculine plural noun; abstract intensive	Strong's #2183 BDB #276
The NET Bible: Or "has been sexually promiscuous." The verb may refer here to loose or promiscuous activity, not necessarily prostitution. <sup>33</sup>			

**Translation:** ...and now [she is] pregnant by [these] acts of fornication."

Now the proof is given, and the connection. We do not have the words *she is*. I have added those to smooth out the translation. When necessary text is left out of a sentence, that is calling great attention to the words which remain. This literally reads, "And now pregnant by fornications." The ellipsis gives great emphasis to this statement. She is guilty of immorality and here is the undeniable proof.

Now, think about this for a moment—at three months, who is the only person to know that a woman is pregnant? The woman who is pregnant. Most of the time, if she wants to hide signs of her pregnancy, a woman can do this for many months.

My point is, Tamar has let her pregnancy be known. Now, given how discreetly she had relations with Judah, where both Judah and his friend are without a clue, and given the fact that she now owns personal things belonging to Judah, but nobody knows about them, it ought to be clear who let the cat out of the bag. If Tamar wanted to hide her pregnancy, she could. If she wanted to slip out of town giving whatever kind of excuse, she could have. My point is, after 3 months, it is Tamar who sees to it that Judah knows that she is pregnant.

<sup>33</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

Genesis 38:24e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יהודה) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> hoo-DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated Judah	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
yâtsâ' (יצא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>bring out [forth, here]; cause to go out, lead out, carry out, draw out, take out; [of money:] put forth, lay out, exact; promulgate; produce</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative; with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sâraph (שרף) [pronounced saw-RAHF]	<i>to be burned [with fire]; to be consumed [by fire]; to be baked</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #8313 BDB #976

**Translation:** Judah then said, "Bring her [here] and she will be burned [in judgment]."

Judah, who has not seen Tamar probably since having relations with her, calls for her to be brought to him and she was to be burned. This is a judgment which Judah was able to make and he was able to put her to death by fire.

Notice this bit of self-righteousness. Judah is about to solve his small problem of having a daughter-in-law who expects to marry his last son. We do not know how his son feels about this but likely Judah is holding back, thinking that perhaps, somehow, this woman is cursed, and is causing her husbands—his sons—to die because of this curse. He is in the clear; he told this woman to wait. Now, no matter what, it is expected that she should wait.

In that era, a woman with a child without a husband, without any word to Judah or to his son, is punishable by death and Judah expects to exact this punishment, even though Judah had no intention of allowing her to marry his son. Judah calls for the execution of this woman who is possibly his right woman, designed by God for him in eternity past; a woman God chose to be in the line of our Lord. This is how mixed up we can become under sin and scar tissue of the soul.

As far as we know, we have no testimony apart from this person who told Judah; and Judah has made his decision. Although some commentary with one translation suggests that Judah is simply ordering an execution arbitrarily; I would suspect that this is within the law that he lived under, and that he, as the father, as discretion to make the call. His remaining son is betrothed to this woman and, if the Mosaic Law is related at all to the customs of that era, a woman who is engaged can be executed for adultery (having sex outside of marriage before the marriage).



As an aside, I don't mean to suggest that the Mosaic Law is culture-driven; but that it is appropriate to that culture and to nation Israel in that era.

To try to put this into a cultural context: homosexuals were executed in the Old Testament. Now, even though homosexuality is condemned in the New Testament, their punishment is further addiction to that sin (this does not rule out execution but it certainly does not require it).

There is a woman taken in adultery who the Lord pardons. Similarly, even though execution for an adulterous woman was appropriate for Israel in that day and age, and clearly, adultery remains a sin even to today, there is no requirement in the New Testament to execute a person who has committed adultery.

It is not clear as to where Tamar would be taken to be burned and how long the legal process would take. What some scholars believe is that there was no formal legal process and that the patriarch of the family lays down the law and executes justice (along with his other duties of arranging marriages and handling all business and financial transactions). We have another example of this authority in Genesis 16 when Sarai is throwing a fit about Hagar, (Little Egypt, as R. B. Thieme, Jr. called her) whom Abram impregnated upon her suggestion. It was Abraham's choice to turn the judgement of Hagar over to Sarai. He had the legal ability to do this; and it got Sarai and her bitching out of his hair concerning that matter.

**Genesis 38:24** And it happened, about three months afterward, that it was told Judah, saying, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom." And Judah said, "Bring her forth, and let her be burned."

Tamar has been a burden to Judah. He chose her originally for his son Er. In fact, interestingly enough, Judah married the woman he himself chose, but, for his first son, decided that he ought to choose on behalf of his son (suggesting that, in retrospect, Judah may not have been overjoyed over the woman that he chose and married).

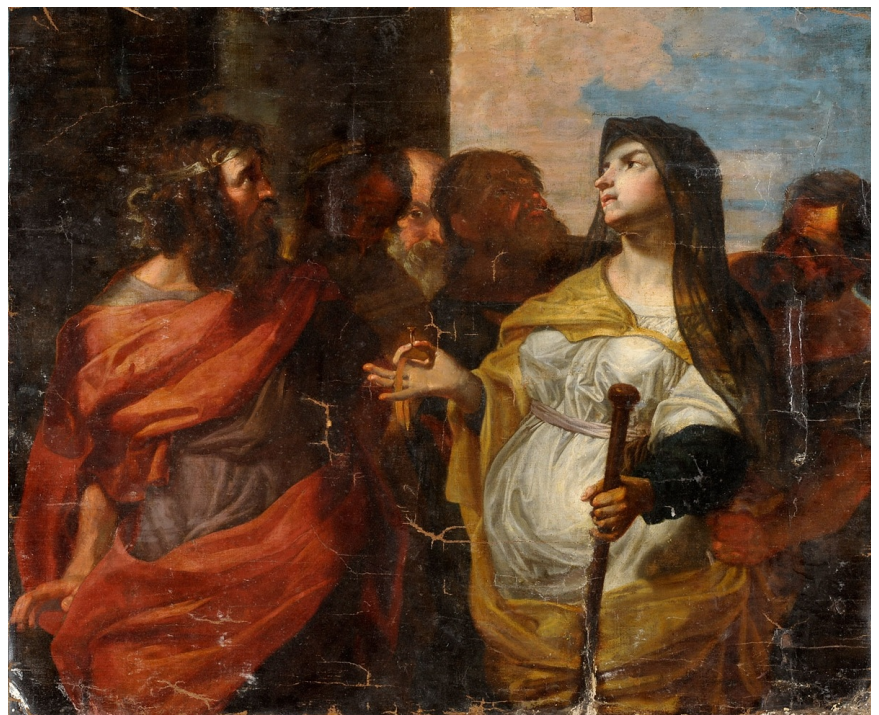
Apparently, there were people who kept Tamar informed of Judah's activities, and others who kept Judah informed of Tamar's activities. Tamar being pregnant is a very big deal in that day and time. This would have certainly gotten back to Judah, as this is quite scandalous (in our culture today, we have no idea, but in my youth, no teen would show up to high school pregnant—it just would not happen).

This is 3 months after Hirah is sent up to find the prostitute, so we are probably 3 or 4 months or so into her pregnancy.

**Juda and Thamar** (a painting), but the artist is unknown. From [Wikimedia](#); accessed May 31, 2016. Painting is from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

**Genesis 38:24** And it was after about three months, it is made known to Judah, saying, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has been fornicating, and now [she is] pregnant by [these] acts of fornication." Judah then said, "Bring her [here] and she will be burned [in judgment]." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

**Genesis 38:24** Three months later, Judah is told about Tamar: "Listen, your daughter-in-law Tamar has been sleeping around





and, as a result, she is pregnant.” Judah then ordered, “Bring her here and she will be burned with fire for her fornications.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Judah finds out that his daughter-in-law is pregnant (not realizing that she is pregnant with his son), and this gives him an excuse to remove her from their lives. She has committed adultery (by the standards of that era), and therefore, should be executed. How fortunate indeed, Judah might be thinking. He no longer has any responsibility towards her. She screwed up big time, and she is deserving of death, in his opinion. Maybe he thought that her chickens have come home to roost (having thought that the death of his two sons were somehow related to her).

Remember that Judah was cold enough to want to sell his own half-brother into slavery. Here, there is this girl that he himself arranged to marry his son; and Judah is ready and willing to have her executed—in fact, to be burned to death, a horrible death.

What could he have done? He could have told her, “You are out of bounds here. Please do not trouble my family any further.” (Remember, when Mary was found with child, Joseph was going to put her away *privately*; that is, with no legal action) But Judah was willing to take his daughter-in-law to court (or, to the authorities), to embarrass her and her father publically and to have her executed—and he has committed the exact same moral transgression that he has attributed to her.

**Reviewing Genesis 38:1–24:** Judah, in a very short period of time, married, had three children, lost two of those children, and then lost his wife. He had a responsibility toward Tamar, who had married his first two sons, who both had subsequently died. Judah had promised her his youngest son in marriage, but did not deliver on that promise. Rather than assume the responsibility, Judah shuffled her off to her father’s house, made promises about the third son, but had no intention of following through.

When Tamar realized that Judah had abandoned her to her father, she took steps to disguise herself and pose as a prostitute to tempt Judah when he traveled through a particular village. Judah was intrigued and propositioned her, and they had intimate relations—but Judah had no idea who she was. He did not have their agreed upon price (a young goat) with him, so he gave her some personal items to hold as collateral.

This Tamar is apparently a very smart young lady (remember that she would have been roughly the age of Judah’s sons—so she is probably 16 or 17 at this time). She wants these personal items in order to identify Judah as the father, but she cannot ask for them right off the bat. She, in their brief conversation, she examines Judah, what he is carrying, and what he lacks, and she asks for a common, reasonable item (a young goat) that he does not have with him. Based upon that, she can then ask for some personal items as collateral. Judah would not think that she has any interest in his personal items, because she wants a young goat for payment. Therefore, he gives them up readily, expecting to get them back in a very short time.

However, when Judah sends his friend, Hirah, to find this young lady, he cannot find her; so they apparently decide, *que sera sera* (whatever will be, will be); or *c’est la vie* (*that’s life*). That appears to have been their agreed upon observation when the woman could not be found.

Judah excuses his own behavior, but he will not excuse Tamar’s similar behavior.

**Genesis 38:24** And it happened, about three months afterward, that it was told Judah, saying, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom.” And Judah said, “Bring her forth, and let her be burned.”

3–4 months later, it is clear that Tamar is pregnant. She is promised to Judah’s 3<sup>rd</sup> son, and, even though that marriage is not going to happen, her pregnancy indicates that she has fooled around on the side with another man. In today’s culture, the man might write a country and western song about it; in that culture, the woman was executed.

She is being brought out and she sent [a message] unto her father-in-law, to say, "To a man who these to him I [am] pregnant." And so she says, "Acknowledge now to whom the signet and the cords and the staff the these." And so acknowledges [ownership] Judah and so he says, "She is righteous more than me; for upon so I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he did not again to know her.

Genesis  
38:25–26

[While] being brought out, she sent [a message] to her father-in-law, saying, "I [am] pregnant by the man that these belong to." And she said, "Therefore acknowledge whose [are] the signet, the cords and the staff?" Judah acknowledges [ownership of these personal items], and so he said, "She is more righteous than me, inasmuch as I did not give Shelah my son to her." But he did not know her again.

When being brought out to later be executed, Tamar sent a message to Judah, saying, "I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong." Then she said, "Therefore, acknowledge ownership of this signet, the cords and the staff." Judah acknowledge that these personal items were his, and he said, "Tamar is more righteous than I am, because I did not give my son Shelah to her." However, Judah discontinued relations with her.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

She is being brought out and she sent [a message] unto her father-in-law, to say, "To a man who these to him I [am] pregnant." And so she says, "Acknowledge now to whom the signet and the cords and the staff the these." And so acknowledges [ownership] Judah and so he says, "She is righteous more than me; for upon so I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he did not again to know her.

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Targum (Onkelos)

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And she was brought out. And she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man to whom these belong I am with child. And she said, Acknowledge now, whose are these, the seal, the scarf, and the staff? And Jehuda acknowledged and said, She is justified in having conceived from me, because I have not given her Shelah my son.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

Tamar was brought forth to be burned, and she searched for the three pledges, but found them not. Uplifting her eyes to the heavens above, she thus said, Mercy I implore from Thee, O Lord: answer Thou me in this hour of need, and enlighten mine eyes to find

the three witnesses; and I will dedicate unto Thee from my loins three saints who shall sanctify Thy name, and descend to the furnace of fire in the plain of Dura.

In that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, signed to Michael, who enlightened her eyes, that she found (the witnesses) and took and cast them before the, feet of the judges, and said, The man to whom these pledges belong is he by whom I am with child. Yet though I may be burned I do not make him manifest: nevertheless the Lord of the world will cause him in his heart to acknowledged them, and will deliver me from this great judgment.

Now when Jehuda saw them, he recognised them, and said in his heart, It is better for me to be ashamed in this world that passeth away, than be ashamed in the faces of my righteous fathers in the world to come. It is better that I burn in this world by a fire that is extinguished, than burn in the world to come with fire devouring fire. For measure is set against measure.[7] This is according to that which I said to Jakob my father, Know now the robe of thy son; so am I now

constrained to hear at the place of judgment, Whose are this seal and mantle and staff ?

And Jehuda, acknowledged and said, Tamar is innocent; she is with child by me. And the Bath kol fell from heaven, and said, From before Me was this thing done, and let both be delivered from judgment. And Jehuda said, Because I gave her not to Shela my son, hath this happened to me. But he added not to know her again. [JERUSALEM. 19. Her veil. 25. Tamar was brought forth to be burned with fire; and she sought the three witnesses but found them not. She lifted up her eyes on high and said For mercy I pray before the Lord. Thou art He, O Lord God, who answerest the afflicted in the hour of their affliction ; answer me in this the hour of my affliction, and I will dedicate to thee three saints in the valley of Dura, Hananva, Mishael, and Azarya.

[In that hour the Word of the Lord heard the voice of her supplication and said to Mikael Descend, and let her eyes have light....When she saw them, she took them, and cast them before the feet of the judges, saying By the man to whom these belong I am with child. But though I may be burned I declare him not, but confide in the Ruler of all the world the Lord who is witness between me and him, that He will give to the heart of the man to whom these belong, to ac-knowledge whose are these his ring, and mantle, and staff.

[And Jehuda recognised the three witnesses, and arose upon his feet and said, I pray you, my brethren, and ye men of the house of my fathers, to hear me. With the measure that a man measureth shall it be measured to him; whether good measure or evil; and blessed is every man who confesseth his works. Because I took the coat of Joseph my brother and dipped it into the blood of a goat, and brought it before the feet of my father and said to him, Know now whether this be thy son's coat or not, the measure is according to the measure, and the rule to the rule. Better is it for me blush in this world than to blush in the world to come; better to burn with a fire that goes out, than to burn in the fire devouring fire. Let Tamar my daughter in law be spared. She hath not conceived a child by fornication, but because I did not give to her Shela my son.

[The Bath kol came forth from heaven, and said, Both of you are acquitted in the judgment. The thing was from the Lord. And he added not to know her.]

Jerusalem targum

Revised Douay-Rheims

.  
But when she was led to execution, she sent to her father in law, saying: By the man, to whom these things belong, I am with child. See whose ring, and bracelet, and staff this is. But he acknowledging the gifts, said: She is juster than I: because I did not give her to Sela, my son. However, he knew her no more.

Latin Vulgate

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

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When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man, whose these are, I am with child." She also said, "Please discern whose are these the signet, and the cords, and the staff." Yudah acknowledged them, and said, "She is more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah, my son." He knew her again no more.

Peshitta (Syriac)

When they brought her out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man to whom these articles belong, I am with child; and she said, Determine whose they are, the ring, the robe, and the staff. And Judah recognized them, and said, She is more righteous than I; because I did not give her in marriage to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

Septuagint (Greek)

And as they were bringing her, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, I am with child by the man whose these things are; and she said, See whose is this ring and bracelet and staff. And Judas knew *them*, and said, Tamar is cleared rather than I, forasmuch as I gave her not to Selom my son: and he knew her not again.

NETS (Greek)

Brenton's Septuagint

.

Significant differences:

**Limited Vocabulary Translations:**

Bible in Basic English	And while she was being taken out, she sent word to her father-in-law, saying, The man whose property these things are, is the father of my child: say then, whose are this ring and this cord and this stick? Then Judah said openly that they were his, and said, She is more upright than I am, for I did not give her to Shelah my son. And he had no more connection with her.
Easy English	So they brought Tamar out. They were going to kill her. But she sent a message to her dead husband's father. She said 'The man who owns these things has made me pregnant. Look at them. See if you know who the seal and cord and staff belong to.' Judah saw that the things belonged to him. He said 'She is more righteous than I am. That is because I would not give her to Shelah my son. Judah did not sleep with Tamar again. And he did not marry her.
Easy-to-Read Version	The men went to Tamar to kill her, but she sent a message to her father-in-law that said, "The man who made me pregnant is the man who owns these things. Look at them. Whose are they? Whose special seal and string is this? Whose walking stick is this?" Judah recognized these things and said, "She is right. I was wrong. I did not give her my son Shelah like I promised." And Judah did not sleep with her again.
<i>God's Word™</i>	As she was brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law, "I'm pregnant by the man who owns these things. See if you recognize whose signet ring, cord, and shepherd's staff these are." Judah recognized them and said, "She's not guilty. I am! She did this because I haven't given her my son Shelah." Judah never made love to her again.
Good News Bible (TEV)	As she was being taken out, she sent word to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man who owns these things. Look at them and see whose they are—this seal with its cord and this walking stick." Judah recognized them and said, "She is in the right. I have failed in my obligation to her—I should have given her to my son Shelah in marriage." And Judah never had intercourse with her again.
International Children's B.	When the men went to bring Tamar out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. She said, "The man who owns these things has made me pregnant. Look at this seal and its cord and this walking stick. Tell me whose they are." Judah recognized them. He said, "She is more in the right than I. She did this because I did not give her to my son Shelah as I promised." And Judah did not have physical relations with her again.
<i>The Message</i>	As they brought her out, she sent a message to her father-in-law, "I'm pregnant by the man who owns these things. Identify them, please. Who's the owner of the seal-and-cord and the staff?" Judah saw they were his. He said, "She's in the right; I'm in the wrong—I wouldn't let her marry my son Shelah." He never slept with her again.
Names of God Bible NIRV	. As Tamar was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. She said, "I am pregnant by the man who owns these." She continued, "Do you recognize this seal and string and walking stick? Do you know who they belong to?" Judah recognized them. He said, "She's a better person than I am. I should have given her to my son Shelah, but I didn't." Judah never slept with Tamar again.
New Simplified Bible	.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

Common English Bible .

Contemporary English V.	As Tamar was being dragged off, she sent someone to tell her father-in-law, "The man who gave me this ring, this cord, and this walking stick is the one who got me pregnant." "Those are mine!" Judah admitted. "She's a better person than I am, because I broke my promise to let her marry my son Shelah." After this, Judah never slept with her again.
The Living Bible	But as they were taking her out to kill her she sent this message to her father-in-law: "The man who owns this identification seal and walking stick is the father of my child. Do you recognize them?" Judah admitted that they were his and said, "She is more in the right than I am, because I refused to keep my promise to give her to my son Shelah." But he did not marry her.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	.
New Life Version	When she was brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "I am going to have a baby by the man who owns these things." She said, "Look and see, who owns this ring for marking a name, and this string and stick?" Judah saw that they belonged to him. He said, "She is more right than I, because I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not lie with her again.
New Living Translation	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?" 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.

**Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:**

American English Bible	But as they were dragging her out, she called out to her father-in-law, and said: 'I'm pregnant by the man who owns these things... just whose ring, bracelet, and walking stick are these?' Well, Judah recognized them and said: 'Tamar is innocent... but not me, because I didn't give her to my son Selom.' And that was the last time [Judah had sex] with her.
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard V	While they were bringing her out, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man to whom these things belong. Furthermore," she added, "tell me to whom this signet ring, cord, and staff belongs." When Judah recognized them, he admitted, "She is more upright than I, because I never did give her my son Shelah." And he never had sex with her again.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	.
Revised Knox Bible	But she, on the way to her place of punishment, sent a message to her father-in-law to say, These belong to the man who got me with child; satisfy yourself, whose are this ring, this bracelet, and this staff. And Juda, recognizing his own gifts, said, She is in the right, not I; why did I not give her my son Sela in marriage? Yet would he never mate with her again.
Translation for Translators	But as they were taking her outside of the city, she gave the ring and walking stick to someone, and told him to take them to Judah, and say to him, "The man who owns these things is the one who caused me to become pregnant." She also said to tell him, "Look at this ring, and the cord that is attached to it, and this walking stick. Whose are they?" When the man did that, Judah recognized the ring and the stick. He said, "She is more righteous than I am. I did not tell my son Shelah to marry her, as I promised that I would." And Judah did not have sex [EUP] with her again.



**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

Awful Scroll Bible	She is being brought out, and she is to have sent to her father-in-law, to the intent: By this man I am to be pregnant! -- even was she to say: Be discerning the signet ring, the bracelet, and the staff. Judah was to discern them, and was to say: She is to have been righteous, in that - am I to have given her to Shelah, my son? - is he to have known her again?
Conservapedia	As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man who owns these things. Please identify the owner of this signet ring, bracelets, and rod." Judah recognized them, and said, "She has acted with greater honor than I, because I failed to give her my son Shelah for a husband." And he was never intimate with her again.
Ferrari-Fenton Bible	They brought her when she produced the ring and walking stick; — and said, " By the man that these belong to I am with child ; " and she continued, " To whom belongs this ring and its motto, and this walking stick? " Then Judah replied and said, " You are more virtuous than I ; for I did not give you Shelah my son." He therefore proceeded no further to examine her.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And when they brought her forth, she sent to her father in law saying: by the man unto whom these things pertain, am I with child. And said also: look whose are this seal, bracelet, and staff. And Juda knew them saying: she is more righteous than I, because I gave her not to Sela my son. But he lay with her no more.
HCSB	As she was being brought out, she sent her father-in-law this message: "I am pregnant by the man to whom these items belong." And she added, "Examine them. Whose signet ring, cord, and staff are these?" Judah recognized them and said, "She is more in the right than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not know her intimately again.
Jubilee Bible 2000 H. C. Leupold	. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law and said: By the man to whom these things belong have I become pregnant. She further said: Look closely now, to whom do these things belong—this seal, these cords, this staff? And Judah looked closely and said: She is more in the right than I, for I did not give her to Shelah, my son. And he never again had intercourse with her.
Lexham English Bible	She was brought out, but she sent to her father-in-law saying, "By the man to whom these [belong] I have conceived." And she said, "Now discern to whom these [belong]: the seal and cord and the staff." Then Judah recognized [them] and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not know her again.
NIV, ©2011	As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. "I am pregnant by the man who owns these," she said. And she added, "See if you recognize whose seal and cord and staff these are." Judah recognized them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah." And he did not sleep with her again.
Tree of Life Version	.

**Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):**

Christian Community (1988)	As they were bringing her out she sent word to her father-in-law, "I have become pregnant by the man who owns these things. Find out to whom this seal, cord and staff belong!" Judah acknowledged them and said, "She is more righteous than I am since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah." And he had no further intercourse with her.
The Heritage Bible	And she came out, and she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man to whom are these, by him I am with child; and she said, Recognize them! To whom is the signet, and its string, and rod? And Judah recognized them, and said, She is more

righteous than I, in that I did not give her to Shelah, my son. And never again did he know her.

New American Bible (2002)

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New American Bible (2011)

But as she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "It is by the man to whom these things belong that I am pregnant." Then she said, "See whose seal and cord and staff these are." Judah recognized them and said, "She is in the right rather than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." He had no further sexual relations with her.

New Jerusalem Bible

But as she was being led off, she sent word to her father-in-law, 'It was the owner of these who made me pregnant. Please verify', she said, 'whose seal and cord and staff these are.' Judah recognised them and said, 'She was right and I was wrong, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.' He had no further intercourse with her.

New RSV

As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, 'It was the owner of these who made me pregnant.' And she said, 'Take note, please, whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff.' Then Judah acknowledged them and said, 'She is more in the right than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.' And he did not lie with her again.

Revised English Bible

But as she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law. "The father of my child is the man to whom these things belong," she said. "See if you recognize whose they are, this seal, the pattern of the cord, and the staff." Judah identified them and said, "She is more in the right than I am, because I did not give her to my son Shelah." He did not have intercourse with her again.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

When she was brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man to whom these things belong. Determine, I beg you, whose these are — the signet, the cords and the staff." Then Y'hudah acknowledged owning them. He said, "She is more righteous than I, because I didn't let her become the wife of my son Shelah." And he never slept with her again.

exeGesés companion Bible

They bring her,  
and she sends to her father in law, saying,  
By the man, whose these are, I conceived!  
And she says, Recognize, I beseech you,  
whose these are - the seal and braids and rod.  
And Yah Hudah recognizes them, and says,  
She is more justified than I;  
because I gave her not to Shelah my son.  
- and he knew her again no more.

Israeli Authorized Version

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JPS (Tanakh—1985)

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Judaica Press Complete T.

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Kaplan Translation

When she was being taken out, she sent [the security] to her father-in-law with the message, 'I am pregnant by the man who is the owner of these articles.' [When Judah came to her,] she said, 'If you would, identify [these objects] [(cf. Yov'loth 41:18; Rashbam). Alternatively, 'She sent word to her father-in-law, 'I am pregnant by the man who is the owner of certain articles.' She said, 'Please identify them...']]. Who is the owner of this seal, this wrap, and this staff?' Judah immediately recognized them. 'She is more innocent than I am!' he said. 'She did it because I did not give her to my son Shelah.' He was not intimate with her anymore.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

When she was brought forth, she sent to her kham (father-in-law), saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child; and she said, Discern, now, whose are these, the chotam (signet), and the [signet neck] cord, and the staff.

And Yehudah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more tzadekah than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah beni. And he knew her again no more.

Restored Names Version  
The Scriptures 1998

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

While she was being brought out, she [took the things Judah had given her and] sent [them along with a message] to her father-in-law, saying, "I am with child by the man to whom these articles belong." And she added, "Please examine [them carefully] and see [clearly] to whom these things belong, the seal and the cord and staff." Judah recognized the articles, and said, "She has been more righteous [in this matter] than I, because I did not give her to my son Shelah [as I had promised]." And Judah did not have [intimate] relations with her again.

The Expanded Bible

When the people went to bring Tamar out [she was brought out], she sent a message to her father-in-law that said, "The man who owns these things has made me pregnant. Look at this seal [signet] and its cord and this walking stick [staff], and tell me whose they are."

Judah recognized them and said, "She is more in the right [righteous] than I. She did this because I did not give her to my son Shelah as I promised." And Judah did not have sexual relations with [know; 4:1] her again.

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

When she was brought forth for execution, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man whose these are am I with child; and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff, the signet-ring with its cord and the staff with its peculiar carved work. And Judah acknowledged them, he could not help but recognize them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I, because that I gave her not to Shelah, my son. That was the result of his not having kept his word to Tamar: deceit, harlotry, incest. By managing to obtain children from Judah himself, Tamar had become guilty of a great sin, but her guilt was smaller than that of Judah. And he knew her again no more; it was a lesson for him to conquer the desires of his flesh and to struggle against sin in every form with greater earnestness.

NET Bible®

While they were bringing her out, she sent word to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong [*Heb* "who these to him."]." Then she said, "Identify the one to whom the seal, cord, and staff belong." Judah recognized them and said, "She is more upright [Traditionally "more righteous"; cf. NCV, NRSV, NLT "more in the right."] than I am, because I wouldn't give her to Shelah my son." He did not have sexual relations with her [*Heb* "and he did not add again to know her." Here "know" is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.] again.

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law.

**Tamar:** It was the owner of these items who made me pregnant. Please, take a close look and tell me whose personal seal, cord, and walking stick these are. When Judah saw them, he realized they were his.

**Judah:** She is more in the right than I am. I did not *keep my word and give her in marriage* to my son, Shelah. Judah didn't sleep with her again.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...she was being brought out and she sent to her father-in-law saying, to the man who these belong, to him I am pregnant, and she said, please recognize to who this

	signet and this cord and this stave, and Yehudah <sup>[Praised]</sup> recognized and he said, she is more correct than I since I did not give her to Sheylah <sup>[Petition]</sup> my son and he did not continue to know her,...
Concordant Literal Version	Forth is she brought. Yet she sends to her husband's father, saying, "By the man whose these are am I pregnant. And saying is she, "Identify, pray, whose these are: the seal and the twist and the staff. And identifying them is Judah, and is saying, "More just is Tamar than I, therefore, for I did not give her to Shelah, my son. Yet not continue does he to know her further.
A Conservative Version Context Group Version	. When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man, whose these are, I am pregnant: and she said, Discern, I beg of you, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She's more vindicated than I; since I didn't give her to Shelah my son. And he didn't have sex with her again.
Darby Translation <i>Emphasized Bible</i>	. When, she, was about to be brought forth, then, she herself, sent unto her father-in-law saying, By the man to whom these belong, have I, conceived! And she said—Examine, I pray thee, to whom belong the signet-ring, and the guard, and the staff—these! So Judah examined them and said—More righteous than I! forasmuch, as I had not given her to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.
English Standard Version English Standard V. – UK	. As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant." And she said, "Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." Then Judah identified them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not know her again.
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	.
Modern KJV	.
NASB	It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "I am with child by the man to whom these things belong." And she said, "Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?" Judah recognized them, and said, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not have relations with her again.
New European Version	When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man, whose these are, I am with child. She also said, Examine, please, whose these are—the signet, and the cords, and the staff. Judah recognized them and said, She is more righteous than I, because I didn't give her to Shelah, my son. He knew her again no more.
New King James Version	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.
Owen's Translation	.
Third Millennium Bible	.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	.
A Voice in the Wilderness	.
Webster's Bible Translation	.
World English Bible	.

Young's Literal Translation  
Young's Updated LT

She is brought out, and she has sent unto her husband's father, saying, "To a man whose these are, I am pregnant." And she says, "Discern, I pray you, whose these are—the seal, and the ribbons, and the staff." And Judah discerns and says, "She has been more righteous than I, because that I did not give her to Shelah my son;" and he has not added to know her again.

**The gist of this passage:** Tamar is brought out, presumably to be burned alive; but she reveals the identity of the person with whom she had sex by handing over his personal items. Judah knows they belong to him and he admits that she is more righteous than he is.

Genesis 38:25a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
hîy' (איה) [pronounced hee]	she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , <i>is</i> implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
yâtsâ' (יצא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	is brought forth, being taken out	Hophal participle	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hîy' (איה) [pronounced hee]	she, it; also used as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one)	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>is</i> , <i>is</i> implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect; what is sent (messengers, a message) is implied	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
châm (חם) [pronounced shawm]	a husband's father, a wife's father, a father-in-law	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #2524 BDB #327

The NET Bible: *Heb* "she was being brought out and she sent." The juxtaposition of two clauses, both of which place the subject before the predicate, indicates synchronic action.<sup>34</sup>

**Translation:** [While] being brought out, she sent [a message] to her father-in-law,...

You will note that Judah does not do any of this. He sends men, probably his servants, to do what he wants done. While being taken, she sends a message to Judah—and apparently this is all quite public.

<sup>34</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.



It is very likely that she sends these things which belong to Judah. We do not know how many people have come for Tamar, but apparently, some of them peel off to take these things to Judah to discover the man involved.

**Genesis 38:25a** As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law... (ESV)

I first pictured this as a court case, in an open air court; and the people of the town are there and Judah and Tamar are there, and this takes place in the midst of the trial. Several paintings of this narrative seem to have the same understanding. However, that does not appear to be exactly what is happening.

We have the Hophal participle of *yâtsâ'* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means, *is brought forth, being taken out*. The Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil (causative stem) and the rarest of the seven stems. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. So, she is probably at home, and men come for her, to take her out. It is likely that she is not being taken from her home to go to trial, but to be executed.

**Genesis 38:25a** As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law... (ESV)

It is unclear as to how the law operated in that day and time. However, someone representing some authority showed up on her doorstep (probably a group of men) for the expressed purpose of burning her alive. This was to be her punishment for being promised to a son of Judah's and getting pregnant during the time that she is waiting.

Who is not there? Her chief accuser, Judah. And it appears that she is not being hauled into court to give a defense, but she is going to be taken forthwith and executed—burned alive.

In the Mosaic Law, many centuries in the future, if a woman is promised to be married, and she is raped, the rapist will be killed. If she engages in a consensual union, despite being promised, she and the man will be executed (Deut. 22:23–26). It reads like this:

Deut 22:23–24 "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

The Mosaic Law did not exist at this time, but it gives us insight into the culture of that era. A *betrothed virgin* is a woman promised to be married. Although Tamar is not a virgin, she is betrothed to be married to Judah's 3<sup>rd</sup> son. And even though Judah is not arranging for their marriage though the son is old enough, that is still her status.

In the Deuteronomic law (this is the part of the Law written by Moses), when a woman promised to another young man, engages in consensual relations with a different man, the man and woman are to be executed.

Deut. 22:25–27 "But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her." (ESV)

Here, if this occurs out in the country, where no amount of screaming will save the woman, the man is assumed to be guilty and woman is assumed to be innocent. The man is executed.

So, if Tamar is about to be hauled away to be executed, the one thing she will be asked about is, *who is the father?*

**Genesis 38:25a** As she was being brought out [to be executed], she sent [messengers] to her father-in-law... The words in the brackets are supplied.

Genesis 38:25b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'êlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh]	<i>these, these things; they</i>	demonstrative plural adjective (often the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	Strong's #428 BDB #41
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>o</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced haw-RAW]	<i>pregnant, with child, having conceived</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #2030 BDB #248

**Translation:** ...saying, "I [am] pregnant by the man that these belong to."

*These* refers to Judah's personal items, which he had given to Tamar. "To whomever these things belong, I am pregnant by that man." These people who have grabbed Tamar up, are well-known by Judah, and when she hands them Judah's personal items and she says this, this quite catches their attention.

This small town will tweet and retweet information about Tamar, Judah and Tamar having Judah's personal things; so everyone is going to know about.

The man has also committed adultery; and he is subject to the same penalties—the same sentence of death.

Tamar got a stay of execution until these items were identified. She sent these things into his tent for his inspection. Signet, cord and staff all have definite articles in the Hebrew, indicating a reference to specific items belonging to a specific person; however, use of the definite article here would sound stilted in the English unless the Hebrew word ordered was changed.

Genesis 38:25c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâkar (נָכַר) [pronounced naw-KAHR]	<i>regard, observe, pay attention to, pay regard to, notice, recognise (as formerly known), perceive, be willing to recognize or acknowledge, acknowledge with honour, be acquainted with, contemplate, behold, recognize, know, know how, care for; point out</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #5234 BDB #647
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
The two particles above may be rendered <i>whose</i> .			
chôthâm (חֹתָם) [pronounced khoh-THAWM]	<i>a seal, a signet ring</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2368 BDB #368
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
pâthîyl (פִּתְיָל) [pronounced paw-THEEL]	<i>cord, thread; lace; line, ribbon, wire</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #6616 BDB #836
This is in the singular back in v. 18, but in the plural here. Not sure why.			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## Genesis 38:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
maṭṭeh (מַטֵּה) [pronounced <i>maht-TEH</i> ]	<i>staff, branch, scepter, rod; branch; tribe</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4294 BDB #641
ʿelleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced <i>ALE-leh</i> ]	<i>these, these things; they</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article (often the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	Strong's #428 BDB #41

**Translation:** And she said, “Therefore acknowledge whose [are] the signet, the cords and the staff?”

Tamar gives these personal items to the messengers, and they are to take these things to Judah and ask him who they belong to. They are his.

Tamar calls for Judah to acknowledge ownership of these personal items. So quite a number of people know that this child is Judah's when she sends these things to him to recognize. Because this is a small town, such things become known quickly.

While she is being taken out (presumably from her home), she sends a message to Judah, to his home, because he is not there with the men who have taken a hold of her. The verb is *shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAKH*], and it means, *to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out*. It is one of the most common verbs in the Old Testament, being found nearly 900 times. Very often, it indicates that a message is being sent or messengers are being dispatched, but this is almost never specifically named. In the ESV above, the translation is *she sent word to her father-in-law*. But the word, *word* does not actually occur in the Hebrew. So, this is more accurately rendered *When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law,...* (VW). So, Judah is nowhere around. The CEV, not a very accurate translation for the most part, gives us a very good feel for what is being said here: *As Tamar was being dragged off, she sent someone to tell her father-in-law,...* It is very likely, Judah does not have to stomach to watch Tamar being executed, even though he has initiated her punishment. “Bring her out to be burned,” he said.

**Genesis 38:25** As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant." And she said, "Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." (ESV)

What appears to be the case is, she sends a messenger (or two) with Judah's personal items to show him. The interaction between Tamar and the men dragging her out of her home is downplayed.

The men who came to her home would have asked her very pointed questions. “Are you pregnant? Who is the father?” Tamar says, “Yes, I am pregnant; and the father of my child is the owner of these items. Judah can identify who the man is.” Her exact words are recorded in this passage. What I have written above is a reasonable guess at the conversation between Tamar and her executioners.

This puts a halt to everything. Judah is her accuser and he also holds one of the important pieces of the puzzle—just who the father of this child is. Logically, if Tamar is guilty of adultery (as she is promised to Shelah), then her partner is as well (which standard appears to have been preserved in Deut. 22:23–24).

Judah, who is likely the author of this chapter of Genesis (or, he told these events to Joseph, and Joseph included them in his own narrative) was not be there to observe the interaction between Tamar and the men. All he would know is, a messenger (or, messengers) show up at his house, and they are carrying his personal items.

No doubt, messengers from Tamar coming to Judah with his personal items knocked him for a loop (figuratively speaking).

We do not know Judah's immediate response. Did the messengers show up, and Judah, seeing the item, just say, "These are mine; where did you get them?"?

Or did the messengers say something like, "These things belong to the father of Tamar's child—she says that you can identify them;" while holding Judah's staff, signet ring and cord for him to identify. Judah is a smart man, and he puts it all together in a matter of a few seconds.

Whatever happened, it was quickly ascertained that these are Judah's personal items and that Tamar had been in possession of these things. Therefore, the messengers and Judah realize that Tamar is pregnant with his child. And he is calling for her execution, as the father of the cuckolded son. Awkward.

All of this suggests that there was some semblance of law in Canaan and that people could not simply take vengeance into their own hands. On the other hand, this does not appear to be something which takes place in an open court (although, Tamar may have possibly been tried in absentia).

This is all a pretty amazing scene. Messengers show up at Judah's door with his signet ring and other personal items. What Judah has accused Tamar of—fornication—he is equally guilty of committing.

At the very least, Judah and his friend were aware of Judah's dealings with the prostitute; and even more people, given that Judah's friend asked around about the prostitute in that area. But, when these messengers showed up with his personal possessions that Tamar had, the pieces of the puzzle began to come together.

What happened here would have been the talk of the town. What could be more salacious than Judah, who has called for the execution of his pregnant daughter-in-law; and then it turns out, he is the father! For months—perhaps longer—this would have been all the gossip.

This narrative also helps us to better understand a set of instructions given by Moses in Deut. 17:6–7. When witnesses are found who sentence a man to his death by their testimony, those witnesses are to be the first to cast a stone in his execution. The idea is, some people are willing to lie in court, but, if they must then begin the execution process, they know, in their own hearts, that they are committing murder. A false witness might be able to lie about a defendant in court, but if he must afterwards throw the first stone, it would be more difficult for him to lie. It does not matter that the end result is the same; it is the personal participation that makes the difference and better assures accurate testimony.

Note that Judah has testified against Tamar, but he is not there to witness her execution. He finds it easy to accuse her; not easy to view her execution.

Genesis 38:25 [While] being brought out, she sent [a message] to her father-in-law, saying, "I [am] pregnant by the man that these belong to." And she said, "Therefore acknowledge whose [are] the signet, the cords and the staff?" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

### Genesis 38:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253



Genesis 38:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâkar (נָכַר) [pronounced naw-KAHR]	<i>regard, observe, pay attention to, pay regard to, notice, recognise (as formerly known), perceive, be willing to recognize or acknowledge, acknowledge with honour, be acquainted with, contemplate, behold, recognize, know, know how, care for; point out</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #5234 BDB #647
The NET Bible: Or "recognize; note." This same Hebrew verb (נָכַר, <i>nakhar</i> ) is used at the beginning of v. 26, where it is translated "recognized." <sup>35</sup>			
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> hoo-DAW]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

**Translation:** Judah acknowledges [ownership of these personal items],...

Judah, not necessarily out of honesty, but simply because he was caught (and everyone knew about this). All of these things are his and they indicate that he was intimate with Tamar. The entire backstory is not necessary for the rest of the people, although we know it in Scripture.

Did two or three guys show up carrying this stuff, and then did Judah say, "Where did you find my stuff?"

Whether Judah ran around and said, "Okay, this is how this all happened" is unknown. It seems unlikely, even though Judah might be the person who recorded this chapter. I don't see Judah has anything to gain by telling others, "Well, I thought Tamar was a prostitute."

Genesis 38:26b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
tsâdaq (צָדָק) [pronounced tsaw-DAHK]	<i>to be righteous, to be just, to be justified; to have a just cause; to be in the right; to be vindicated; to conduct oneself with integrity</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6663 BDB #842

<sup>35</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

## Genesis 38:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

The NET Bible: *She is more upright than I. Judah had been irresponsible and unfaithful to his duty to see that the family line continued through the levirate marriage of his son Shelah. Tamar fought for her right to be the mother of Judah's line. When she was not given Shelah and Judah's wife died, she took action on her own to ensure that the line did not die out. Though deceptive, it was a desperate and courageous act. For Tamar it was within her rights; she did nothing that the law did not entitle her to do. But for Judah it was wrong because he thought he was going to a prostitute. See also Susan Niditch, "The Wronged Woman Righted: An Analysis of Genesis 38," HTR 72 (1979): 143-48.<sup>36</sup>*

**Translation:** ...and so he said, "She is more righteous than me,..."

In the Christian way of life, there is no relative righteousness which is legitimate. However, Judah had called for the execution of this woman; and he had just been with a prostitute when he called for this execution. He withheld his son from her; which he should not have done.

This is relative righteousness; it is possible that Judah could have been burned to death also for this crime of having relations with a woman who was promised to another man; however, he was deceived and he was the one who had done the promising but did not follow through.

However, it is also legitimate for Judah to have stepped in, instead of his son, to father a child to his name.

## Genesis 38:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i> ]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
kîy 'al kên (כִּי עַל כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kee ahl KANE</i> ], which means, literally, <i>for therefore</i> . together they mean <i>inasmuch (as), forasmuch as, since, because</i> .			
lô' (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

<sup>36</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

## Genesis 38:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l'	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Shêlâh (שֵׁלַח) [pronounced shay-LAW]	a petition; transliterated Shelah	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7956 BDB #1017
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** ...inasmuch as I did not give Shelah my son to her.”

Now, it is possible and even reasonable for Judah and his son to choose not to engage with Tamar in the first place. You may recall that, in the Law, there was a ceremony which was done. This suggests that societal pressure would be to provide this woman with a child and protection and support; but that this was not absolutely required. However, Judah had made promises, and then reneged on those promises.

**Judah and Tamar**, a painting by Cornelis van Haarlem (1562–1638); painting 1596; taken from [Wikimedia](#); accessed May 31, 2016.

**Genesis 38:26a-c** And Judah acknowledged them, and said, “She has been more righteous than I have, because I did not give her to my son Shelah.”

Judah fully realizes that Tamar was the prostitute that he had; and that the child she was carrying (actually, twins) belonged to him.

It is quite difficult, given what is known, for Judah to hide what he has done. He has impregnated his daughter-in-law, and has, by this act, fulfilled the custom of the kinsman-redeemer by becoming the kinsman redeemer himself. He has raised up a son (actually, sons) through his daughter-in-law. He should have given over his son Shelah to her, but impregnated her instead, not knowing who she was.

Tamar became a part of Judah’s family by his choice. She was not some Canaanite gal that Er picked up in a bar (I am exaggerating using a scene from today). Judah himself chose Tamar; and because he did that, he was doubly responsible for her. Sending her back to her father was completely the wrong thing to do.

He did not fulfill his responsibility to her by giving his third son to her; but he unintentionally took that responsibility on himself (which was culturally legitimate). Judah actually clears himself and Tamar by making the statement,



“She has been more righteous than I have, because I did not give her to my son Shelah.” If he did not give her to his third son, she has not committed that form of adultery. If he takes her to himself in marriage and provides for her, then both she and he are off the hook.

Since we now have a better understanding of a levirate marriage, we understand that providing seed is only a part of the social arrangement. He now must take care of her and her child (actually, children—she will give birth to twins—which may be why she is big enough to be showing at 3 or 4 months).

When Judah said, “She is more righteous than me;” he is acknowledging his duty to this young girl. It was wrong for him to ask her to return to her father’s home and then just wait for him to call upon her. When she married his son, Tamar became a part of the family of Judah. When his son died, Judah remained responsible for this young lady. He abdicated his responsibility (much as his son, Onan, had done).

Does everyone in this city/town/village know the whole story here? Judah’s friend, Hirah, has, no doubt, figured it all out. Judah obviously knows what happened, as does Tamar. Whether the messengers or those who were taking Tamar out of her home understood all that happened is not known, although, they no doubt realized that Judah is the father of the unborn twins of Tamar.

Very likely, for the people of this village who did not get all of the details, this would have been discussed among the locals for some time, and there are logical questions which would have come up. Why did Tamar have Judah’s personal items? How did that come about? Why did Judah first call for Tamar’s execution, but now he is not? If he is the father, then why did Judah do what he did? It would be somewhat confusing for Judah to impregnate Tamar, but then later, call for her execution. Knowing the entire narrative explains all of this.

Judah cannot hide the facts of what he did, nor can he demand Tamar’s execution, as she is carrying the next generation of Judah’s line. This was his duty. He would be the son’s father by nature and the son’s grandfather by law (the firstborn would be the heir of Er).

### Genesis 38:26d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
lô’ (לא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong’s #3808 BDB #518
yâçaph (יָצַף) [pronounced yaw- SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong’s #3254 BDB #414
With the negative, this verb means <i>to stop, to discontinue [doing something], to no longer [do something], to never again [do something]</i> .			
‘ôwd (וַיִּוֹד) [pronounced <i>gohd</i> ]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong’s #5750 BDB #728
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ’]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510



## Genesis 38:26d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
yâda' (יָדָע) [pronounced yaw-DAHG']	to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

**Translation:** But he did not know her again.

Judah did not take up with Tamar as his wife; but her children, by Judah, would be a part of the line of Christ.

**Genesis 38:26d** And he never knew her again.

It was an odd relationship between Judah and Tamar, as Tamar will go into the land of Egypt with Judah (presumably, as he took her two sons by her into Egypt—Genesis 46:12); but, as we are told here, he did not continue a sexual relationship with her. She would have lived with him in his house; she would have been supported by him (and their children); but, for whatever reason, Judah did not continue relations with her. I find that to be an interesting statement, knowing his predilections. He was exposed to the entire city, embarrassed by this situation with Tamar; but the exact nature of their relationship is not fully known. He apparently supports her; he raises her children, but they do not have relations again. I guess the missing piece of information is, did Judah marry Tamar? This is no doubt one of the most unusual relationships in the Bible.

Genesis 38:26 Judah acknowledges [ownership of these personal items], and so he said, “She is more righteous than me, inasmuch as I did not give Shelah my son to her.” But he did not know her again. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

That they do not continue to have sexual relations has been stuck in the back of my mind for sometime now, but I think that I now understand why. There are probably two reasons for their lack of relations: (1) Judah is afraid of Tamar. Two sons had sexual relations with her and they are dead. Judah has had sexual contact with Tamar, but he did not know who she was. So now, Judah appears to be wedded to Tamar, without the benefit of conjugal relations, as he seems to think that he might die if he continues to have relations with her. (2) Judah just tried to have Tamar executed. Tamar is willing to have his sons and be supported by him, but she may not have the warmest of feelings toward him after all of this. Therefore, she may not want intimate relations with this man either.

What this reminds me of is the author **O’Henry**, who often had an unusual twist of circumstances which came out at the end of his stories (**The Gift of the Magi** is an excellent example of this, and it is a short story).

Judah has let his sexual desire lead him into a bad marriage with a Canaanite woman and later to having relations with a prostitute (with someone who he thought was a prostitute). We have no idea if there were others (I don’t think that there were; but this could be argued). His sexual desire leads him into a marriage, first to the wrong woman; and then into a second marriage where he is afraid to have sex with his wife (both sons were legitimately married to Tamar when they had relations with her). We, the readers of this narrative, know that he can have legitimate marital relations with Tamar; but, because Judah lacks Bible doctrine in his soul, he does not realize this. Tamar, because she seduced Judah in the first place, may have had an honest desire for him—but then, he took steps to have her executed. Nothing kills a romance like setting up your partner to be executed.

This might give us some confidence. I personally identify far more with the likes of Judah and Tamar than I do with Abraham. My goal in life is not necessarily to be called the *friend of God* but at least to be *tolerated by God*.



Genesis 38:25–26 [While] being brought out, she sent [a message] to her father-in-law, saying, “I [am] pregnant by the man that these belong to.” And she said, “Therefore acknowledge whose [are] the signet, the cords and the staff?” Judah acknowledges [ownership of these personal items], and so he said, “She is more righteous than me, inasmuch as I did not give Shelah my son to her.” But he did not know her again. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:25–26 When being brought out to later be executed, Tamar sent a message to Judah, saying, “I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong.” Then she said, “Therefore, acknowledge ownership of this signet, the cords and the staff.” Judah acknowledges that these personal items were his, and he said, “Tamar is more righteous than I am, because I did not give my son Shelah to her.” However, Judah discontinued relations with her. (Kukis paraphrase)

## Chapter Outline

## Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

### Tamar Bears Twins

**A Review of Genesis 38:1–26:** We are studying Judah and how much he had been affected by the culture in which he lived. He was a brutal man with very little empathy. He married a Canaanite woman and he fathered three children, two of whom died the sin unto death—suggesting that neither child was brought up well.

Some people perceive the world only as it applies and interacts with them. *Good* is defined as what is good for that person; and *bad* is whatever is harmful to that person. So, what is good one day might be bad the next, depending upon how that affects the individual. Some pass this on to their children, where the child begins thinking of himself as the center of the universe, and the parent never disabuses the child of that notion.

This is an important study because the line of the Messiah will go through Judah. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all Hebrews; but that particular line will be narrowed even further to lead us to Jesus Christ.

He had given his first son in marriage to Tamar, and that son died the sin unto death. He gave his 2<sup>nd</sup> son to her and he also died the sin unto death. The problem was not Tamar; the problem was the actions of Judah’s sons. Judah promised that he would give his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to her, but he did not, apparently worried that Tamar was the problem.

We studied this and understood it to be a levirate marriage, which both continued the name of the son who prematurely died, also protected and provided for the wife of the man who has died. Because Israel was a patriarchal society, many things are viewed from the point of view of the male, which things can be misunderstood today.

At first, Judah had promised to give his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to Tamar, but the son was not yet old enough at that time to become her husband/kinsman redeemer. Judah sends Tamar packing to her father’s house, telling her to wait until his 3<sup>rd</sup> son became of age. As we have studied, Judah had no intention of letting this son marry Tamar.

Time passes, and it became clear that his 3<sup>rd</sup> son was old enough, but not given to Tamar. Therefore, Tamar put off her widow’s clothing and dressed like a prostitute, wearing a veil to cover her face. She waited for Judah at a city where he would travel through to get to his sheep, and he stopped, saw her veiled face, and propositioned her, supposing Tamar to be a prostitute (which is the look she was going for). They decided on a price for her services, and they had sex and she was impregnated by him. Since he did not have a young goat to give her, he gave her some personal items, to be exchanged for a goat at a later date (so Judah thought). As we will see, Tamar wanted those personal items.

Time passes. Judah, by means of his friend Hirah, cannot locate the prostitute (not realizing that it is Tamar) but, around that time, he also finds out that Tamar is pregnant. He brings his case before whatever legal council existed at that time, and recommends that she be executed (burned) for her outrageous behavior. She immediately proves that he was the man who impregnated her. This pretty much takes the wind out of Judah's sails. Furthermore, all of this is very public, so this time, Judah cannot just send Tamar back to her father anymore. He cannot ignore that her pregnancy was caused by him. He is now responsible for her and for her children (she will give birth to twins).

Now, she is pregnant by Judah and she will give birth to twin sons, one of whom would continue the line of Judah that would lead to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so he is in a time of her giving birth and behold twins [are] in her womb. And so he is in her giving birth and so he gives out a hand and so takes the midwife and so she binds on his hand a scarlet [thread], to say, "This [child] came out first." And so he is as returning his hand and behold came out his brother and so she says, "How did you break through upon him a breach?" And so he calls his name Perez. And following came out his brother that upon his hand the scarlet [thread]. And so he calls his name Zerah.

Genesis  
38:27–30

And it was in the time of her giving birth that there were [lit., *behold*] twins in her womb. While she is giving birth, he [the unborn infant] puts out his hand and the midwife takes and binds a scarlet [thread] on his hand, saying, "This [child] came out first." And it was, as he returned his hand, suddenly his brother came out, so she said, "How did you break forth beside your brother—a breach?" Therefore, he [Judah] called his name Perez. And afterwards his brother came out, [the one] who [had] the scarlet [thread] on his hand. [Judah] called his name Zerah.

When she gave birth, there were twins found to be in her womb. Therefore, while she was giving birth, the midwife attached a scarlet thread on the son whose hand came out first. "This is your firstborn," she said. However, his hand disappeared back into the womb and suddenly, his brother came out. Therefore, she said, "How did you come out beside your brother?" Because of this, Judah called his name Perez. Afterwards, his brother came out—the one with the scarlet thread on his hand. Judah called his name Zerah.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he is in a time of her giving birth and behold twins [are] in her womb. And so he is in her giving birth and so he gives out a hand and so takes the midwife and so she binds on his hand a scarlet [thread], to say, "This [child] came out first." And so he is as returning his hand and behold came out his brother and so she says, "How did you break through upon him a breach?" And so he calls his name Perez. And following came out his brother that upon his hand the scarlet [thread]. And so he calls his name Zerah.

Dead Sea Scrolls  
Targum (Onkelos)

.  
And he added not again to know her. And it was the time of her giving birth, and, behold, twins were in her womb. And it was in giving birth that one of them put forth a hand; and the midwife took and tied scarlet upon his hand, saying, This came the first. And it was when he had drawn back his hand that his brother came forth: and she said, How much greater strength is with thee, that thou hast prevailed! And she called his name Pharets. And afterwards came forth his brother who had the crimson on his hand, and she called his name Zarah.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	But it was in the time of her giving birth, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it was in being born that the child stretched forth his hand; and the midwife took it, and bound it with a scarlet thread, saying, This came the first. And after the child had withdrawn his hand, behold, his brother came forth, and she said, With what great power hast thou prevailed, and for thee will it be to prevail; for thou wilt possess the kingdom. And she called his name Pharets. And afterward came forth his brother, upon whose hand was bound the scarlet thread, and she called his name Zarach.
Jerusalem targum Revised Douay-Rheims	. And when she was ready to be brought to bed, there appeared twins in her womb: and in the very delivery of the infants, one put forth a hand, whereon the midwife tied a scarlet thread, saying: This shall come forth the first. But he drawing back his hand, the other came forth: and the woman said: Why is the partition divided for you? and therefore called his name Phares. Afterwards his brother came out, on whose hand was the scarlet thread: and she called him Zara.
Latin Vulgate Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	. It happened in the time of her travail, that behold, twins were in her womb. When she travailed, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This came out first." It happened, as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out, and she said, "Why have you made a breach for yourself?" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out, that had the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass in the time of her travail that, behold, there were twins in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that one of the babes put out his hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out; and she said, What a breach has been made for you! Therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his hand; and she called his name Zarah.
Septuagint (Greek)	And it came to pass when she was in labour, that she also had twins in her womb. And it came to pass as she was bringing forth, one thrust forth his hand, and the midwife having taken hold of it, bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This one shall come out first. And when he drew back his hand, then immediately came forth his brother; and she said, Why has the barrier been cut through because of you? and she called his name, Phares. And after this came forth his brother, on whose hand was the scarlet thread; and she called his name, Zara.
NETS (Greek) Brenton's Septuagint	. .

Significant differences:

### Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And when the time came for her to give birth, it was clear that there were two children in her body. And while she was in the act of giving birth, one of them put out his hand; and the woman who was with her put a red thread round his hand, saying, This one came out first. But then he took his hand back again, and his brother came first to birth: and the woman said, What an opening you have made for yourself! So he was named Perez. And then his brother came out, with the red thread round his hand, and he was named Zerah.
Easy English	The time came for Tamar to give birth. And she had two babies. As she was giving birth, one baby put out his hand. So, the woman who was helping Tamar tied something red to that baby's arm. She said 'This baby came out first.' But the baby put his hand back inside Tamar. And his brother came out. And the woman said 'So

Easy-to-Read Version	<p>you have come out!' And Tamar called him Perez. Then his brother came out. He had something red on his arm. And Tamar called him Zerah.</p> <p>The time came for Tamar to give birth. She was going to have twins. While she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out. The nurse tied a red string on the hand and said, "This baby was born first." But that baby pulled his hand back in, so the other baby was born first. So the nurse said, "You were able to break out first!" So they named him Perez. After this, the other baby was born. This was the baby with the red string on his hand. They named him Zerah.</p>
<p><i>God's Word™</i> Good News Bible (TEV)</p>	<p>When the time came for her to give birth, it was discovered that she was going to have twins. While she was in labor, one of them put out an arm; the midwife caught it, tied a red thread around it, and said, "This one was born first." But he pulled his arm back, and his brother was born first. Then the midwife said, "So this is how you break your way out!" So he was named Perez. Then his brother was born with the red thread on his arm, and he was named Zerah.</p>
<p>International Children's B. <i>The Message</i></p>	<p>When her time came to give birth, it turned out that there were twins in her womb. As she was giving birth, one put his hand out; the midwife tied a red thread on his hand, saying, "This one came first." But then he pulled it back and his brother came out. She said, "Oh! A breakout!" So she named him Perez (Breakout). Then his brother came out with the red thread on his hand. They named him Zerah (Bright).</p>
Names of God Bible	<p>The time came for Tamar to give birth, and she had twin boys. When she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand. The midwife took a piece of red yarn, tied it on his wrist, and said, "This one came out first." As he pulled back his hand, his brother was born. So she said, "Is this how you burst into the world!" He was named Perez [Bursting Into]. After that his brother was born with the red yarn on his hand. He was named Zerah [Sunrise].</p>
NIRV	<p>The time came for Tamar to have her baby. There were twin boys inside her. As the babies were being born, one of them stuck out his hand. So the woman helping Tamar took a bright red thread. The woman tied it on the baby's wrist. She said, "This one came out first." But he pulled his hand back, and his brother came out first instead. She said, "Just look at how you have forced your way out!" So he was called Perez. Then his brother, who had the red thread on his wrist, came out. So he was named Zerah.</p>
New Simplified Bible	<p>When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand. The midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said: »This one came out first.« When he drew back his hand, his brother came out. She said: »So this is how you have broken out!« He was named Perez. Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his wrist, came out and he was given the name Zerah.</p>

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	<p>When she gave birth, she discovered she had twins in her womb. At birth, one boy put out his hand, and the midwife took it and tied a red thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." As soon as he pulled his hand back, his brother came out, and she said, "You've burst out on your own." So he was named Perez. Afterward, his brother with the red thread on his hand came out, and he was named Zerah.</p>
Contemporary English V.	<p>Tamar later gave birth to twins. But before either of them was born, one of them stuck a hand out of her womb. The woman who was helping tied a red thread around the baby's hand and explained, "This one came out first." Right away his hand went back in, and the other child was born first. The woman then said, "What an opening you've made for yourself!" So they named the baby Perez. When the brother with the red thread came out, they named him Zerah.</p>

The Living Bible	In due season the time of her delivery arrived and she had twin sons. As they were being born, the midwife tied a scarlet thread around the wrist of the child who appeared first, but he drew back his hand and the other baby was actually the first to be born. "Where did you come from!" she exclaimed. And ever after he was called Perez (meaning "Bursting Out"). Then, soon afterwards, the baby with the scarlet thread on his wrist was born, and he was named Zerah.
New Berkeley Version New Century Version	. When the time came for Tamar to give birth, there were twins in her body. While she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out. The nurse tied a red string on his hand and said, "This baby came out first." But he pulled his hand back in, so the other baby was born first. The nurse said, "So you are able to break out first," and they named him Perez. After this, the baby with the red string on his hand was born, and they named him Zerah.
New Life Version	When the time came for Tamar to give birth, there were two babies. While she was giving birth, one put out a hand. The nurse took his hand and tied a red string around it, saying, "This one came out first." But when he pulled away his hand, his brother was born. Then she said, "What an opening you have made for yourself!" So he was given the name of Perez. After that, his brother came out with the red string around his hand. He was given the name Zerah.
New Living Translation	When the time came for Tamar to give birth, it was discovered that she was carrying twins. 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." 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. Then the baby with the scarlet string on his wrist was born, and he was named Zerah.

### Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then when she went into labor, it was found that she had twins in her womb. 28 And as they were being born, one pushed his hand out. So the midwife took hold of the hand and tied some scarlet [thread around it], and said, 'This is the firstborn.' But then he drew his hand back and his brother came out immediately thereafter. And she asked, 'Why have you broken the barrier between you?' So she named him Phares (Breach). It was then that his brother (around whose hand the scarlet thread was tied) was born. And she named him Zara (Scarlet).
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	. Later, when it was time for Tamar [Lit. <i>her</i> ] to give birth, she was carrying twins in her womb! While she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand, so the midwife grabbed it and tied something scarlet around his hand, observing, "This one came out first." As it was, he withdrew his hand, and then his brother was born. Amazed, the midwife [Lit. <i>Amazed, she</i> ] cried out loud, "What's this? A breach birth?" So that boy [Lit. <i>So he</i> ] was named Perez [The Heb. name <i>Perez</i> means <i>breach</i> ]. Afterwards, his brother came out, and around his hand was the scarlet. So they named him Zerah [The Heb. name <i>Zerah</i> means <i>rising</i> ].
New Advent (Knox) Bible Revised Knox Bible	. When she was near her time, it proved she had twins in her womb. And at the very moment of her delivery, one of the children put his hand out; so the midwife tied a red cord round it, thinking to herself, This one is the first-born. But he drew his hand in again, and the other was born first. Whereupon the woman said, would you break your way out? And so he was called Phares, which means, A breach in the wall.



And when his brother was brought to birth after him, with the red cord round his hand, he was called Zara, the Dawn.

Translation for Translators

When it was time for her to give birth, she was surprised that there were twin boys in her womb. As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand. So the midwife fastened a scarlet thread around his wrist, saying, "This one came out first." But he pulled his hand back inside the womb, and his brother came out first. So she said, "So this is how you break your way out first!" So she named him Perez, *which sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'breaking out.'* Then his younger brother, the one who had the scarlet thread around his wrist, came out. And he was named Zerah, *which sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'redness of dawn.'*

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

At the time she is to bear forth, there are twins in her womb. As she is to bear forth, a hand was put out, and she being midwife was to take it, and was to tie on his hand, crimson, to the intent: This one is to have come out first. He is bringing back his hand, and his brother is to have come out. She was to say: You is to have broken out in a breach. His name was to be called Pharez. Afterwards is to have come out his brother, with the crimson on his hand. His name was to be called Zarah.

Conservapedia

Eventually, at the time of her parturition, twins were discovered in her womb. It happened, while she was in labor, one of them thrust out his hand. The midwife tied a double-dipped token on his hand, saying, "This came out first." But what actually happened was that he drew his hand back, and then his brother came out. The midwife said, "How did you break out like that?" And she named him Pharez [Which in Hebrew means "a breach" or "a breakout."]. Afterward his brother came out, the one having the double-dipped token on his hand. He was named Zerah.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

When, however, the time for her delivery came, there were twins in her belly, and it happened in her childing one put out his hand, so the midwife took it, and tied a scarlet thread upon its hand, remarking, "This came the first." But it occurred that he drew back the hand, and then his brother was produced, when she said, "What? Have you broken? The breach be upon yourself:" therefore she called his name Pherez; \* and afterwards his brother was born, upon whose hand was the scarlet thread; so she called his name Zarah.-

God's Truth (Tyndale)

When time was come that she should be delivered, behold there was two twins in her womb. And as she travailed, the one put out his hand and the midwife took and bound a red thread about it saying: this will come out first. But he plucked his hand back again, and his brother came out. And she said: wherefore have you rent a rent upon you? and called him Pharez. And afterward came out his brother that had the red thread about his hand, which was called Zarah.

HCSB

Jubilee Bible 2000

H. C. Leupold

And it came to pass at the time of birth, lo, there were twins in her womb. And it happened in birth that one put out a hand and the midwife took it and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying: This one came out first. Then it happened that he drew back his hand, and lo, his brother came out. And she said: How you have forged your way through! And they called his name Perez (forging through). And afterwards his brother came out, upon whose hand was the scarlet thread. And they called his name Zerach.

Lexham English Bible

NIV, ©2011

Tree of Life Version

Now when it was time for her to give birth, behold there were twins in her womb. While she was giving birth, one stuck out his hand, and the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it to his hand saying, "This one came out first." But as he was pulling

his hand back in, behold, his brother came out. So she said, "How you have broken through! The breach is because of you." And he named him Perez. Afterward his brother, on whose hand was the scarlet thread, came out. And he named him Zerah.

### Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

- Christian Community (1988) When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. And when she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand and the midwife tied a scarlet thread around his wrist saying, "This one is the firstborn." But he withdrew his hand and his brother came out first and she said, "What a rift you have made for yourself!" And he was called Perez. Then his brother with the scarlet thread on his wrist came out and he was given the name Zerah.
- The Heritage Bible And it was in the time of her bearing, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it was, in her giving birth that the one gave out his hand, and the midwife took and bound on his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it was, as he drew back his hand, that, lo, his brother came out; and she said, How have you broken out a break for yourself? And his name was called Pharez [Break Forth.]. And afterward his brother came out, on whose hand was the scarlet thread; and his name was called Zarah [Rising Light.].
- New American Bible (2002) When the time of her delivery came, she was found to have twins in her womb. While she was giving birth, one infant put out his hand; and the midwife, taking a crimson thread, tied it on his hand, to note that this one came out first. But as he withdrew his hand, his brother came out; and she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was called Perez [the Hebrew word means "breach."]. Afterward his brother came out; he was called Zerah [a name connected here by popular etymology with a Hebrew verb for the red light of dawn, alluding apparently to the crimson thread.].
- New American Bible (2011) When the time of her delivery came, there were twins in her womb [1 Chr 2:4.]. While she was giving birth, one put out his hand; and the midwife took and tied a crimson thread on his hand, noting, "This one came out first." But as he withdrew his hand, his brother came out [Ru 4:12; Mt 1:3; Lk 3:33]; and she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was called Perez [the Hebrew word means "breach."]. Afterward his brother, who had the crimson thread on his hand, came out; he was called Zerah [a name connected here by popular etymology with a Hebrew word for the red light of dawn, alluding apparently to the crimson thread.] [Nm 26:20; 1 Chr 2:4; Mt 1:3].
- New Jerusalem Bible When the time for her confinement came, there were twins in her womb! During the delivery, one of them put out a hand, and the midwife caught it and tied a scarlet thread to it, indicating that this was the first to arrive. Whereupon, he drew back his hand, and out came his brother. Then she said, 'What a breach you have opened for yourself!' So he was named Perez. Then his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, so he was named Zerah.
- New RSV When the time of her delivery came, there were twins in her womb. While she was in labour, one put out a hand; and the midwife took and bound on his hand a crimson thread, saying, 'This one came out first.' But just then he drew back his hand, and out came his brother; and she said, 'What a breach you have made for yourself!' Therefore he was named Perez [That is *A breach*]. Afterwards his brother came out with the crimson thread on his hand; and he was named Zerah [That is *Brightness*; perhaps alluding to the crimson thread].
- Revised English Bible When her time was come, she was found to have twins in her womb, and while she was in labour one of them put out a hand. The midwife took a scarlet thread and fastened it round the wrist, saying, "This one appeared first." No sooner had he drawn back his hand, than his brother came out and the midwife said, "What! You

have broken out first!" So he was named Perez. Soon afterwards his brother was born with the scarlet thread on his wrist, and he was named Zerah.

### Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	When she went into labor, it became evident that she was going to have twins. As she was in labor, one of them put out his hand; and the midwife took his hand and tied a scarlet thread on it, saying, "This one came out first." But then he withdrew his hand, and his brother came out; so she said, "How did you manage to break out first?" Therefore he was named Peretz [breaking out]. Then out came his brother, with the scarlet thread on his hand, and he was given the name Zerach [scarlet].
exeGesés companion Bible	And so be it, in the time of her birthing, that, behold, twins in her belly. And so be it, as she births, the one gives out a hand: and the accoucheuse takes and binds scarlet on his hand, saying, This came out first. And so be it, as he turns back his hand, behold, his brother comes out: and she says, How have you breached? This breach be upon you! - and he calls his name Peres. And afterward his brother comes out, with the scarlet on his hand: and he calls his name Zerach.
Hebrew Roots Bible	And in the time of her bearing, behold, it happened! Twins were in her womb. And in her bearing, it happened that one put forth a hand, and the midwife took it and tied crimson on his hand, saying, This one came out first. And it happened as he withdrew his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, How have you broken a break for yourself? And one called his name Pharez (divider). And then his brother came out, on whose hand was the crimson. And one called his name Zarah.
Israeli Authorized Version JPS (Tanakh—1985)	. When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb! While she was in labor, one of them put out his hand, and the midwife tied a crimson thread on that hand, to signify: This one came out first. But just then he drew back his hand, and out came his brother; and she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez. Afterward his brother came out, on whose hand was the crimson thread; he was named Zerah.
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	. When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. As she was in labor, one of them put out an arm. The midwife grasped it and tied a crimson thread [See Exodus 25:4.] on it. 'This one came out first,' she announced. He pulled his hand back, and then his brother came out. 'You have asserted yourself with such pushiness (peretz)!' she said. [Judah] named the child Perez [He was the ancestor of King David; see Ruth 4:18-22. Compare note on Genesis 19:36. See 1 Chronicles 2:5, 2:9 ff.]. His brother, with the crimson thread on his hand, was then born. [Judah] named him Zerach [Literally, 'shining forth.' See 1 Chronicles 2:6.].
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, hinei te'omim (twin boys) were in her beten. And it came to pass, when she travailed in labor, that the one put out his yad; and the midwife took and bound upon his yad a scarlet thread, saying, This came out rishonah (first).

And it came to pass, as he drew back his yad, that, hinei, his brother came out; and she said, How hast paratzta (thou broken out)? This paretz (breach, breaking) be upon thee; therefore shmo was called Peretz [Breaking out].

And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his yad; and shmo was called Zerach.

Restored Names Version  
The Scriptures 1998

### Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

*The Amplified Bible*

Now when the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. And when she was in labor, one [baby] put out his hand, and the midwife took his hand and tied a scarlet thread on it, saying, "This one was born first." But he pulled back his hand, and his brother was born first. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself [to be the firstborn]!" So he was named Perez (breach, break forth). Afterward his brother who had the scarlet [thread] on his hand was born and was named Zerah (brightness).

The Expanded Bible

When the time came for Tamar to give birth, there were twins in her ·body [-womb]. While she was ·giving birth [in labor], one baby put his hand out. The ·nurse [midwife] tied a ·red [crimson] string on his hand and said, "This baby came out first." But he pulled his hand back in, so the other baby was born first. The nurse said, "·So you are able to break out first [or What a breach you have made]," and they named him Perez [<sup>C</sup>sounds like "break out" in Hebrew]. After this, the baby with the red string on his hand was born, and they named him Zerah [<sup>C</sup>shining/brightness, perhaps referring to the red string].

The Geneva Bible  
Kretzmann's Commentary

And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand, due to an abnormal position; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. She thought this would be the first-born. And it came to pass as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out; and she said, How hast thou broken forth? This breach be upon thee; therefore his name was called Pharez (breach). The midwife's cry of vexation: Why didst thou make a breach in thy interest; upon thee be the breach! was thus retained in the name of the son. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zarah (rising), because he wanted to appear first. The entire story of Tamar, with all the attendant sins, is here told because Pharez, the son of harlotry, became one of the ancestors of Christ, whose suffering and death atoned also for these sins of His forefathers, whose perfect righteousness covers the sin and shame of all men. Cf Matthew 1:3.

NET Bible®

When it was time for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. While she was giving birth, one child [The word "child" has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.] put out his hand, and the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." But then he drew back his hand, and his brother came out before him [Heb "Look, his brother came out."...The words "before him" are supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons]. She said, "How you have broken out of the womb [Heb "How you have made a breach for yourself!"]!" So he was named Perez. Afterward his brother came out – the one who had the scarlet thread on his hand – and he was named Zerah.

Syndein/Thieme  
The Voice

When the time came for her to deliver, she discovered she was carrying twins. While she was in labor, one of them put out a hand; and the midwife tied a scarlet thread on it, so she would know which one came out first. But just then he drew his

hand back *into the womb*, and his brother came out *first*. *The midwife had never seen anything quite like this.*

**Midwife:** What a breach you've made here, *little one!*

So the child was named Perez. His brother followed, the one with the scarlet thread on his hand. He was named Zerah.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

American KJV	.
Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and it came to pass in the appointed time of her knowing and look, twins were in her womb, and it came to pass in her bringing forth and he gave a hand and the midwife took and she tied upon his hand a scarlet saying, this went out first, and it came to pass as his hand was returning and look, his brother went out and she said, how did you break out upon you a breach and he called out his title Perets <sup>[Breach]</sup> , and after, his brother went out which had the scarlet upon his hand, and he called out his title Zerahh <sup>[Dawn]</sup> , ...
Concordant Literal Version	And coming is it, at the time of her bearing, that, behold! Twins are in her belly. And coming is it, in her bearing that one is putting out a hand. And taking it is the midwife and tying on his hand a double-dipped token, saying, "This fares forth first. And coming is it, as his hand is returning, then, behold! Forth fares his brother. And saying is she, "What! Breached have you. On you be the breach!" And calling is she his name Pharez. And afterward forth comes his brother, who had on his hand the double-dipped token. And calling is she his name Zarah.
A Conservative Version	.
Context Group Version	In the time of her travail, look, twins were in her womb. When she travailed, one put out a hand: and the midwife took and bound on his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. As he drew back his hand, look, his brother came out: and she said, Why have you made a breach for yourself? Therefore his name was called Perez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread on his hand: and his name was called Zerah.
Darby Translation	.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	.
English Standard Version	.
English Standard V. – UK	When the time of her labour came, there were twins in her womb. And when she was in labour, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterwards his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.
Evidence Bible	.
Green's Literal Translation	.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	.
King James 2000 Version	.
Modern English Version	When it was time for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. While she was giving birth, one put out his hand, and the midwife took and tied on his hand a scarlet thread, saying, "This one came out first." But as he drew back his hand, his brother came out. Then she said, "How have you made a breach for yourself?" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out, the one that had the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.
Modern KJV	.
NASB	.
New European Version	.
New King James Version	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.

Owen's Translation  
Third Millennium Bible

And it came to pass in the time of her travail that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, "This came out first." And it came to pass as he drew back his hand that, behold, his brother came out; and she said, "How hast thou broken forth? This breach be upon thee." Therefore his name was called Perez [that is, A breach]. And afterward came out his brother who had the scarlet thread upon his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

Updated Bible Version 2.11  
A Voice in the Wilderness  
Webster's Bible Translation  
World English Bible  
Young's Literal Translation  
Young's Updated LT

And it comes to pass in the time of her bearing, that lo, twins are in her womb; and it comes to pass in her bearing, that one gives out a hand, and the midwife takes and binds on his hand a scarlet thread, saying, "This has come out first." And it comes to pass as he draws back his hand, that lo, his brother has come out, and she says, "What! you have broken forth—on you is the breach;" and he calls his name Pharez; and afterwards has his brother come out, on whose hand is the scarlet thread, and he calls his name Zarah.

**The gist of this passage:**

Tamar is carrying twins in her womb and she gives birth to a son Perez and another Zerah. Zerah begins to come out first, but then takes his hand back in.

27–30

Genesis 38:27a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָא) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
'êth (עַתָּ) [pronounced gayth]	time, the right time, the proper time; opportunity	feminine singular construct	Strong's #6256 BDB #773

## Genesis 38:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
With the bêyth preposition, this means <i>at the right time, at the proper time</i> .			
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHd]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

**Translation:** *And it was in the time of her giving birth...*

This literally begins, *and so he is*; without a specific subject and object, this can be rendered *subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which*. At this time, something significant will be discovered.

**Genesis 38:27a** *And it happened, in the time of her travail,...*

The *time of travail* refers to her giving birth. Tamar has twins in her womb by Judah.

## Genesis 38:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
An argument could be made that this wâw conjunction plus the demonstrative could be translated <i>and suddenly...</i> ; or, <i>and he saw that...</i> , or, <i>he observed [that]...</i>			
tôw'im (טֹאֲוִים) [pronounced toh-IHM]	<i>twins</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #8380 BDB #1060
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
beten (בֶּטֶן) [pronounced BEH-ten]	<i>womb; belly, stomach [in reference to a man]; inside; appetite, craving</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #990 BDB #105

**Translation:** *...that there were [lit., behold] twins in her womb.*

They determine that there are twins in the womb; and I must confess ignorance as to how this is done without ultrasound. However, the gist of these two verses suggests that the midwife figured this out and dealt with that.

**Genesis 38:27** *And it was in the time of her giving birth that there were [lit., behold] twins in her womb.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 38:28a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

**Translation:** [While she is giving birth,...](#)

We have the same construction of the beginning of v. 27. This can simply indicate time frame.

## Genesis 38:28b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
All of the BDB meanings for the Qal stem of nâthan are as follows: 1) <i>to give, put, set; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1a2) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1a3) to make, constitute.</i>			
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542

## Genesis 38:28b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>a midwife; one giving aid to a woman in giving birth</i>	feminine singular, Piel participle; with the definite article	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qâshar (קָשַׁר) [pronounced kaw-SHAHR]	<i>to bind; to conspire; a state of being compact and firm [and therefore] robust</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7194 BDB #905
‘al (עַל) [pronounced ġahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
shânîy (שָׁנִי) [pronounced shaw-NEE]	<i>crimson, scarlet; scarlet clothing</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8144 BDB #1040

Properly, the insect ‘coccus ilicis’, the dried body of the female yielding colouring matter from which is made the dye used for cloth to colour it scarlet or crimson. This came from BDB.

**Translation:** ...he [the unborn infant] puts out his hand and the midwife takes and binds a scarlet [thread] on his hand,...

The wâw consecutive along with a set of imperfect verbs usually indicates successive or contemporaneous events. So, it sounds as if Tamar is giving birth; when the first child is come out, he sticks out an arm first (with the assistance of the midwife). So it sounds as if, the midwife ties the scarlet thread to his hand that comes out first. Now, it is possible that all of this happens so fast that, the midwife, when helping Tamar to give birth, realizes that she has twins, and marks the first twin with scarlet thread.

## Genesis 38:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
‘amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

## Genesis 38:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
rî'shônâh (רִשׁוֹנָה) [pronounced ree-show-NAW]	<i>first [in time, in degree], chief, former [in time], past, ancestors, former things; foremost; beginning</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #7223 BDB #911

**Translation:** ...saying, "This [child] came out first."

Since the firstborn was given some preeminence, it was important, even with twins, one of the twins was considered to be the firstborn.

The first-born was next in line to receive all that came from his father's estate, even in the situation of twins. The midwife identified the child with a scarlet thread.

**Genesis 38:28** And when she travailed, it happened that one put out a hand. And the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This one came out first.

The firstborn was always an important consideration in the ancient world, even when dealing with twins. Therefore, steps were taken in order to identify which child this is, until the children could be more easily distinguished. The first child who put his hand out had a string tied around it. But then he withdrew his hand and the other son came out first instead.

I have no idea whether this is possible or not. I have read some commentators who claim this is a miracle. This is outside my own field of expertise to say one way or the other. If I were to guess, I would think that something like this is possible apart from a miracle.

Genesis 38:28 While she is giving birth, he [the unborn infant] puts out his hand and the midwife takes and binds a scarlet [thread] on his hand, saying, "This [child] came out first." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

## Genesis 38:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered *subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which*. Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).



## Genesis 38:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
shûwb (בוש) [pronounced shoo <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>causing to return, bringing, being caused to turn back mentally, reminiscing, returning something, restoring, bringing back, sending back, regaining, recovering, making restitution, reconsidering, thinking again, being caused to return</i>	Hiphil participle	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** *And it was, as he returned his hand,...*

So, one child appeared that he would emerge first. So a scarlet thread was attached to his wrist to mark him as the firstborn. However, he brings his hand back in, something that was completely unexpected.

## Genesis 38:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, *he observed [that]; he saw; suddenly*. This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.

The NET Bible: *By the use of the particle הִנֵּה (hinneh, "look"), the narrator invites the reader to view the scene through the midwife's eyes.*<sup>37</sup>

yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
'âch (אָח) [pronounced awhk]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

<sup>37</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

**Translation:** ...suddenly his brother came out,...

Instead, his twin brother, the one without the thread, came out.

Genesis 38:29c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
pârats (פרץ) [pronounced paw-RATS]	<i>to break, to break down, to destroy; to break asunder, to scatter, to disperse, to spread abroad; to break forth upon, to produce by breaking through; to act violently; to break through [negative volition, a bad attitude, a mindset, or whatever]; to spread, to distribute</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6555 BDB #829
'al (על) [pronounced gah!]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
perets (פרץ) [pronounced PEH-rets]	<i>a bursting forth, a breach, a break, a rupture [in a wall], gap; an outburst</i>	masculine singular noun pausal form	Strong's #6556 BDB #829

The NET Bible: *The Hebrew verb translated “make a breach” frequently occurs, as here, with a cognate accusative. The event provided the meaningful name Perez, “he who breaks through.”*<sup>38</sup>

**Translation:** ...so she said, “How did you break forth beside your brother—a breach?”

The midwife exclaims, “How did you come out instead of your brother?”

Genesis 38:29d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

<sup>38</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

## Genesis 38:29d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שָׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Perets (פֶּרֶץ) [pronounced PEH-rets]	<i>a bursting forth, a breach, a break, a rupture [in a wall], gap; an outburst; transliterated Perez, Pharez</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6557 BDB #829

The NET Bible: *The name Perez means "he who breaks through," referring to Perez reaching out his hand at birth before his brother was born. The naming signified the completion of Tamar's struggle and also depicted the destiny of the tribe of Perez who later became dominant (Gen 46:12 and Num 26:20). Judah and his brothers had sold Joseph into slavery, thinking they could thwart God's plan that the elder brothers should serve the younger. God demonstrated that principle through these births in Judah's own family, affirming that the elder will serve the younger, and that Joseph's leadership could not so easily be set aside. See J. Goldin, "The Youngest Son; or, Where Does Genesis 38 Belong?" JBL 96 (1977): 27-44.<sup>39</sup>*

**Translation:** Therefore, he [Judah] called his name Perez.

*Perez means breaking out, a bursting forth, a breach.* This describes what this kid did; so he is named *Perez*.

Genesis 38:29b is a mess in most translations when it comes to understanding what it says. NASB: *...behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez.* The ever-literal *The Emphasized Bible* reads: *...lo! his brother had come. And she said, "Wherefore hast thou made for thyself a breach? The Amplified Bible: ...his brother was born first. And she said, What a breaking forth you have made for yourself! Therefore his name was called Perez [breaking forth].* As you can see, this is not easy to unravel, our chief problem being this *breach* stuff. What the hell are they talking about? What is this breach stuff? I think that I half-understand what a breach birth is, but I wouldn't want to jump into giving anyone a definition feet first for fear of embarrassing myself.

The word in question is used twice in the Hebrew, once as a verb and the second time as a noun. The verb is the Qal perfect, 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular of pârats (פָּרַץ) [pronounced paw-RATS] and it means *to break out, to burst forth*, and breach is used in a similar fashion to breaching the walls of a castle. The kid was so feisty that he practically jumped out of the womb, even though his *older* brother's hand came out first. What follows is the preposition 'al (עַל) [pronounced gah/] and it can mean *forth, out of, upon, against* often with a downward movement implied. The noun that follows is the masculine singular with a 2<sup>nd</sup> masculine singular suffix of the word perets (פֶּרֶץ) [pronounced PEH-rets] and it means *a breach, a gap, a hole*. Strong's #6556 BDB #829.

Perez, as you have no doubt surmised, is the word perets (פֶּרֶץ) [pronounced PEH-rets] and it means *a breach, a gap, a hole*. The kid was a go-getter. We know very little about Perez, but more was known about his family in the days of Ruth. In a blessing (or, if this helps to understand, *in a toast*) to Boaz and Ruth, the grandparents of David, the elders of Israel and the court said, *"Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the Lord shall give you by this young woman."* (Ruth 4:12)

<sup>39</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.

We find that our Lord is descended from through Tamar through Perez in Ruth 4:18 and Matthew 1:3, so even though we as Christians may think these lines of names particularly boring and without spiritual impact, behind every name there was a person's life from whose example we can often profit.

**Genesis 38:29** And it happened as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, “How have you broken a break for yourself?” And his name was called Pharez.

Interestingly enough, the child who was thought to be the firstborn, actually took back his hand, and the other child, Pharez, was born first instead.

The son who comes out first is named Perets (פֶּרֶץ) [pronounced *PEH-rets*], which means, *a bursting forth, a breach, a break, a rupture [in a wall], gap; an outburst*; which is transliterated *Perez, Pharez*. Strong's #6557 BDB #829. He broke out of the womb first, even though it appeared at first that his younger brother, Zarah, would be born first.

**Genesis 38:29** And it was, as he returned his hand, suddenly his brother came out, so she said, “How did you break forth beside your brother—a breach?” Therefore, he [Judah] called his name Perez. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 38:30a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
'âch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i> ]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
shânîy (שָׁנִי) [pronounced <i>shaw-NEE</i> ]	<i>crimson, scarlet; scarlet clothing</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8144 BDB #1040

**Translation:** And afterwards his brother came out, [the one] who [had] the scarlet [thread] on his hand.

The next brother came out—the one who the midwife thought was going to emerge first.

## Genesis 38:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's #
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Zerach (זֶרַח) [pronounced ZEH-rahkh]	<i>dawning; shining; rising; sunrise; scattering; transliterated Zerah, Zarah</i>	proper singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #2226 BDB #280

The NET Bible: *Perhaps the child was named Zerah because of the scarlet thread. Though the Hebrew word used for "scarlet thread" in v. 28 is not related to the name Zerah, there is a related root in Babylonian and western Aramaic that means "scarlet" or "scarlet thread." In Hebrew the name appears to be derived from a root meaning "to shine." The name could have originally meant something like "shining one" or "God has shined." Zerah became the head of a tribe (Num 26:20) from whom Achan descended (Josh 7:1).<sup>40</sup>*

**Translation:** [Judah] called his name Zerah.

The son who should have been first, but was not, is named *Zerah*, which can mean *shining, rising; scattering*. I don't quite get the meaning here.

**Genesis 38:30** And afterwards his brother came out, on whose hand was the scarlet thread. And his name was called Zarah.

The second son born, who was thought to be the firstborn, still had the scarlet thread on his wrist. He is named Zarah (which may be equivalent to *Zerah*).

The second son, who, for a short while, appeared that he would emerge first, is named Zerach (זֶרַח) [pronounced ZEH-rahkh], which means *dawning; shining; rising; sunrise; scattering*; transliterated *Zerah, Zarah*. Strong's #2226 BDB #280.

Genesis 38:30 And afterwards his brother came out, [the one] who [had] the scarlet [thread] on his hand. [Judah] called his name Zerah. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Perez's brother, the more logy of the pair, Zerah, is found in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:3 also), even though he is not a progenitor of our Lord's humanity. In fact, he is mentioned by name in this context whereas the other sons of Israel who make up the twelve tribes of Israel are called mere the brothers of Judah in this same genealogy. His name means *shining, dawning, rising*. His progeny will become a sub-tribe of the tribe of Judah (Num. 26:20) and he, of course, is not the same Zerah as we have seen in Genesis 36, who was descended from both Ishmael and Esau.

<sup>40</sup> From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed October 9, 2016.



I have noticed a few things. You may recall that there was some interesting details regarding the birth of Jacob and Esau; recall that Jacob was holding Esau's heel upon his exit from Rebekah's womb. Here, one child sticks out his hand, and then it is withdrawn and his brother exits.

We had Abraham lie about his wife when he moved to a foreign area; and Isaac later did the same thing. There were also problems with the water wells for both men.

Isaac got his wife from his relatives back in Syria; and Jacob did as well.

I believe that the idea is, having so many parallel situations will cause us to look later for similar parallel situations in Jesus Christ, looking backward.

Gen. 38:27–30 *When the time of her labor came, there were twins in her womb. And when she was in labor, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." But as he drew back his hand, behold, his brother came out. And she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.*

This seems like an odd postscript to this unusual narrative (and without having it explained, the whole narrative seems pretty odd). This is what is going on. Onan tried to protect his double-portion inheritance by not impregnating his wife, Tamar. By not giving Tamar a child to be raised in Er's name, Onan was the one to receive the benefits of being the firstborn. He has fought—somewhat like that baby in the womb who stuck out his hand—to come out ahead. However, he died the sin unto death, and the infant who stuck out his hand, as if to try to grab the benefits of being firstborn, would not be the firstborn.

We understand, by virtue of the Scripture and hindsight, that the two sons of Judah did not die because of Tamar, but because they were evil and God killed them (the sin unto death). However, Judah believed that Tamar was the problem (Genesis 38:11), so he did not allow his 3<sup>rd</sup> son, Shelah, to marry her.

Ironically, Judah has relations with Tamar, not knowing that she is his daughter-in-law, and the result is two healthy boys; but then Judah does not have relations with her again (although, it seems reasonable to assume that he finds her to be attractive). No doubt, he was trying to preserve his own life. No doubt, she no longer viewed him with any respect, as he tried to have her executed. It does not appear that their relationship was viewed as incestuous.

Judah tried to preserve his son Shelah by not giving him to Tamar; so she outsmarted him. You might say, she was like Perez, fighting to come out of the womb first. And Judah, who had given in to sexual temptation in the past, fell prey to it one more time with Tamar; and then stopped having sex altogether out of fear (when it would have been legitimate and safe for him to continue having relations with Tamar, but he did not—if he knew some doctrine, then he could have correctly understood this).

Furthermore, if Tamar understood Bible doctrine and forgiveness, than she may have been able to make their relationship work as husband and wife.

Just as Tamar found a way to be taken in to the Judah household and to be given a child; so Perez, who is in the line of Jesus, found a way to break out of the womb first.

Genesis 38:27–30 *And it was in the time of her giving birth that there were [lit., *behold*] twins in her womb. While she is giving birth, he [the unborn infant] puts out his hand and the midwife takes and binds a scarlet [thread] on his hand, saying, "This [child] came out first." And it was, as he returned his hand, suddenly his brother came out, so she said, "How did you break forth beside your brother—a breach?" Therefore, he [Judah] called his name Perez. And afterwards his brother came out, [the one] who [had] the scarlet [thread] on his hand. [Judah] called his name Zerah. (Kukis mostly literal translation)*

Genesis 38:27–30 When she gave birth, there were twins found to be in her womb. Therefore, while she was giving birth, the midwife attached a scarlet thread on the son whose hand came out first. “This is your firstborn,” she said. However, his hand disappeared back into the womb and suddenly, his brother came out. Therefore, she said, “How did you come out beside your brother?” Because of this, Judah called his name Perez. Afterwards, his brother came out—the one with the scarlet thread on his hand. Judah called his name Zerah. (Kukis paraphrase)

Chapter Outline		Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines
Beginning of Document	Doctrines Covered or Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded to
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## A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 38:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masorettes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

### Judah and Tamar

What appears to be the case is, most of the sons of Jacob were encouraged to speak about a few things from their past as a part of the Hebrew narrative. At this point, we have the words of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Logically, what about Jacob's sons, as every Jew on this planet, living or dead, came from one of the twelve sons (apart from any gentiles who converted)?

We have read about the acts of Simeon and Levi (Genesis 34), which were quite brutal; and we have heard Reuben tell about his intentions regarding Joseph (all of Genesis 37 could have been written/spoken by Reuben rather than by Joseph).

Here is how I picture it. When the sons of Jacob were living in Egypt (which has not yet taken place in our narrative), many of them stood up and spoke all of the words that we have been reading and studying (that is, the book of Genesis).

First Jacob, as the patriarch, stood up and spoke from memory the book of Genesis, starting with chapter 1 and going through Genesis 33. Then either Levi or Simeon stood up, speaking about what they did when their sister was violated (Genesis 34). Then Jacob stood back up and spoke the words of Genesis 35–36. Then Reuben probably stood up and gave the events of Genesis 37 (I assume Reuben, as his personal thoughts are given in this chapter). In Genesis 38, Judah stands up and talks about the events of this chapter. In Genesis 39–50, Joseph probably stood up and gave the events of their lives in Egypt (as far as they had gone in the time of his *reading*).

Now, these men knew these words by heart. We do not know how often they spoke these words, but I would suggest at least every Sabbath. Maybe the entire book was read in two or three Sabbaths (we don't know if anyone stood up and explained anything). During these Sabbath reads in Egypt, all Egyptians were welcome to come and listen.

We will find out in the final chapters of Genesis, that Jacob had become a beloved man, particularly by the Egyptians. Now, how exactly does this happen, because we have studied Jacob for a long time, and he is not a man who engenders trust, respect or love. Yet the people of Egypt loved him. How did this come to pass? It happened because Sabbath after Sabbath, Jacob stood up and spoke from memory the words of God (the very words that we are studying). Also, his various sons stood up and spoke their own chapters from memory as well. When hearing the words of *the History of Man and God* (also known as, the book of Genesis), the people of Egypt—those with positive volition—became very impressed by Jacob and the words which he spoke to them. Therefore, he was a beloved man in Egypt, despite his many shortcomings.

Interestingly enough, Jacob and his sons did not tell stories which were self-aggrandizing or designed to make others like them. These are simply the things which happened. Sometimes they looked good; but most of the time, they did not.

Genesis 38 is all about Judah, and we may call the early part of this chapter, Judah chasing whores.

Genesis 38:1 [And at that time it came to be that Yehuḡah \[= Judah\] left his brothers, and turned aside to a man, an Adullamite whose name was Hirah.](#)

Judah had a buddy named Hirah.

Given what had taken place with the brothers of Joseph, it certainly makes sense the Judah might avoid his brothers. In fact, he may have left the family never expecting to return.

Genesis 38:2 [And Yehuḡah saw there a daughter of a certain Kena'anite \[= Canaanite\] whose name was Shuwa \[= Shua\]. And he took her and went in to her.](#)

Judah was very attracted to a Canaanite women, and he had sex with her. Since *Shua* is a masculine singular noun, this is a reference to the father, not the gal that Judah has sons by.

Genesis 38:3 [So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Ęr.](#)

She produced a son, Er.

Genesis 38:4 [And she conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan.](#)

Shua had a second son named Onan.

Genesis 38:5 [And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shĕlah. And he was at Kezib \[= Chezib\] when she bore him.](#)

Judah sires a third son named Shelah.

Genesis 38:6 And Yehuḥah took a wife for Ĕr his first-born, and her name was Tamar.

Judah sought out a wife for his firstborn, and she is Tamar.

Genesis 38:7 But Ĕr, Yehuḥah's first-born, was evil in the eyes of הוהי [= YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah], and הוהי took his life.

Er does evil in God's sight and he dies the sin unto death.

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

Judah tells his second son to have relations with Tamar and raise up a son to his brother's name, to continue his line. This is known as a levirate marriage, and this son becomes an heir to the deceased father (in this case, Er).

Genesis 38:9 And Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. And it came to be, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled on the ground, lest he should give an offspring to his brother.

For all intents and purposes, this son would not really be Onan's line, and Onan was aware of this. In fact, this son would be in line as the firstborn, as he would have been son to the firstborn (not Onan, but of Er). If Er is out of the picture, and Er has no descendants, then Onan is the firstborn, the recipient of all the advantages of being the firstborn.

Onan did not like this, so at the last moment, before completing the act of this levirate marriage, he spills his seed onto the ground. His purpose was not to raise up a son to his older brother.

Genesis 38:10 But what he did displeased הוהי, so He took his life too.

This was wrong. The boy could have refused altogether, but he did not. He took advantage of Tamar but there was no son given. God took his life under the principle of the sin unto death.

Genesis 38:11 Then Yehuḥah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shēlah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die as his brothers did." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

Judah tells Tamar, just keep living with your parents and when Shelah is grown, he can give you a son to be raised up to your husband Er. However, Judah is concerned that somehow Tamar is cursed and that she is the reason that his sons have died.

Since Tamar is sent to live with her father, no one took any responsibility for Tamar. However, she should have remained a part of Judah's family. In any case, she stayed with her father. She was promised to Shelah, but Judah did not follow up on this.

Genesis 38:12 And after a long time the daughter of Shuwa, Yehuḥah's wife, died. And Yehuḥah was comforted, and went up to his sheep-shearers at Timnah, he and his friend Ḥirah the Aḏullamite.

Some time later, the daughter of Judah and Shuwa dies. Judah goes up to Timnah and hangs with his buddy Hirah.

Notice that a long time has gone by and Judah has not returned to his family. He had a bad taste in his mouth because of what was done to Joseph.

Genesis 38:13 And it was reported to Tamar, saying, "See, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

Tamar finds out where Judah, her father-in-law, is going to be.

Genesis 38:14 *And she took off her widow's garments, and covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat at the entrance to Ĕnayim [= Enaim] which was on the way to Timnah. For she saw that Shēlah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.*

Tamar removes her widow's garments and she goes to Enaim, which Judah would pass through on his way to Timnah. She did this because Shelah was grown, but she had not become his wife as Judah had promised.

Tamar should be a part of Judah's family, but Judah is unwilling to follow through.

When Tamar goes to Enaim, she covers herself with a veil. She knows that Judah will see her and she will let nature take its course.

Genesis 38:15 *And Yehuḥah saw her, and reckoned her for a whore, for she had covered her face.*

When Judah sees her, he figures her for a whore, not being able to see her face.

Genesis 38:16 *And he turned aside 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. And she said, "What do you give me to come in to me?"*

Judah propositions her and she asks, "What price do you think is fair?"

Genesis 38:17 *And he said, "Let me send you a young goat from the flock." And she said, "Do you give me a pledge until you send it?"*

Judah suggests a young goat; and she requires a pledge of some sort since he does not have the goat with him at the time.

Notice that she negotiates the terms and conditions before having intimate relations with Judah.

Bear in mind that a levirate marriage does not have to be with a brother, but it can involve any close relative to the deceased husband. Essentially, she is going to trick Judah into performing the levirate duty.

Genesis 38:18 *So he said, "What pledge should I give you?" And she said, "Your seal and your cord and your staff that is in your hand." And he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.*

She asks for his seal, his cord and his staff as a pledge. The idea is, she would get the goat later and return this stuff to Judah. Or, that is what Judah expected was going to happen.

Genesis 38:19 *And she arose and went away, and removed her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.*

After this was done, Tamar removed her veil and put back on her clothes of mourning.

Genesis 38:20 *And Yehuḥah 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.*

Judah sends along his friend with the young goat, which would be exchanged for his pledge, but he did not find her.

It is interesting that Judah does not return himself with the goal, but I would only be speculating as to why. Perhaps he did not want to be tempted again.



Genesis 38:21 And he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the cult prostitute who was beside the way to Ēnayim?" And they said, "There was no cult prostitute in this place."

Judah's friend Hirah asked around for the location of this prostitute, but no one knew who he was talking about.

Genesis 38:22 And he returned to Yehuḥah and said, "I have not found her. And the men of the place also said there was no cult prostitute in this place."

Judah's friend returns to him with the goat and says, "That person does not exist."

Genesis 38:23 And Yehuḥah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we become despised, for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

Judah decides to leave it at that.

Genesis 38:24 And it came to be, about three new moons after, that Yehuḥah was informed, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has whored, and see, she has conceived by whoring." And Yehuḥah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

Three months later, Judah finds out that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, is pregnant. Judah says, "Bring her out and let her be burned."

She appears to have violated the marriage agreement, which was for her to marry Shelah, even though it does not appear the Judah was going to honor this agreement.

Because of this supposed infidelity, the woman would be killed and her body burned.

Genesis 38:25 When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant." And she said, "Please examine whose these are: the seal and the cord and the staff."

When Tamar was brought out publically, before whatever council existed at this time, she says she will reveal the identify of her lover. She brings out the seal, the cord and the staff. Judah is as guilty as she is.

Genesis 38:26 And Yehuḥah examined and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shēlah my son." And he never knew her again.

Judah recognizes all these things as being his. She was more righteous than he was in her actions.

Interestingly, Judah never knew her again. I would assume that he raised her sons, however.

Either she and Judah were innocent together or guilty together. If Judah assumes the responsibility for her and her two children, then he has preserved Er's name through a levirate marriage.

Let me suggest that Judah, for all of his life, believed Tamar to be bad luck; and he did not have relations with her for that reason.

Genesis 38:27 And it came to be, at the time for giving birth, that see, twins were in her womb.

Tamar is pregnant with twins.

Genesis 38:28 And it came to be, 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."

The first son begins to come out, and the midwife places a scarlet thread in his hand, to indicate that he is the firstborn. Only his hand is visible.

Genesis 38:29 *And it came to be, as he drew back his hand, that see, his brother came out! And she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" So his name was called Perets [= Perez].*

However, this son is not born first. His hand goes back inside the mother and the other son is born. The other son becomes the firstborn. Perez is taken from a verb that means, *to break through, to break out*.

Genesis 38:30 *And afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. So his name was called Zerah.*

Zerah is the second son born. It is his hand which was tied with the scarlet thread. His name means *seed*.

### Closing Points on Genesis 38 from Robert Dean

- 1) God brings about justice. He utilizes the principle of an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. He brings about the principle that you will reap what you sow. So in the life of Judah, what has happened? Judah has been bitter against Joseph because Joseph the younger was going to rule over the older brothers. So what do we have in Judah's own family? There was competition over inheritance. Now the younger is going to rule over the elder in terms of the twins that are born to him. God uses the same weaknesses and sins to bring about justice. The lesson here is that those who pursue their life for their own gratification will ultimately deal with the justice of God.
- 2) God's plans are never thwarted by man's sins. God is going to bring about what He desires to bring about and human sinfulness is never going to be great enough to destroy or end the plan of God. Man's failures cannot even subvert the plan of God.
- 3) God turns human failures into triumphs of His grace, because when this story ends with Pharez, it doesn't end there, it ends at the cross; because this family, then becomes a critical link in the whole line down to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

From [Robby Dean's Notes](#); accessed June 14, 2016 (slightly appended).

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Interestingly enough, the sons that Tamar bears bypass the Canaanite wife of Judah's. Judah's Canaanite wife contributes nothing genetically to Tamar and Judah's twin sons. However, by the actions taken by both Judah and Tamar, it is clear that the culture and morality of the Canaanites had infected the sons of Jacob. This is why God will move them all to Egypt.

There are 4 women named in the line of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mary. In every case, the woman is unique in history. It is very rare for a woman to be named in any ancient genealogy, let alone the genealogy of the Messiah.

This all goes back to the Revealed God promising redemption through the *Seed of the Woman* in Genesis 3:15.

This helps us to understand the purpose of Genesis 38.

### The Context of Genesis 38 (Robert Dean)

- 1) First of all, it is here to remind the reader [which would be people of Israel] again of the assimilation of Israel with the Canaanite culture, which is spiritually problematic. Judah who is the fourth-born son to Leah leaves the family and he goes down to a Canaanite city and takes a Canaanite wife. He is the first

## The Context of Genesis 38 (Robert Dean)

- one openly to assimilate completely with Canaanite culture. This is problematic because, they are supposed to live separately from the Canaanites. So that puts the promise, the seed, and the family in danger.
- 2) Secondly, this episode illustrates the paganism and the carnality in Jacob's family in contrast to the obedience and the chasteness of Joseph. In the next chapter we see how Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph and he flees from her, but in this chapter we see the seduction of Judah by a roadside prostitute. Joseph flees from Potiphar's wife; Judah runs toward the prostitute.
  - 3) Third, the story in chapter 38 reveals the background of the plan of Pharez. Judah is going to have twins through Tamar. There are only two sets of twins in all of the Bible-Esau and Jacob and the twins born to Tamar. So when we look down the road the divine viewpoint interpretation from Scripture of the birth of Pharez is that this is a line of blessing. When we look at what goes on in this chapter it is like, *What is going on here? These people are really messed up.* But this is going to be the line of blessing as we shall see. God is able to take sinful man, his wrong-headed decisions, and still bring His Own will to pass.
  - 4) This is here to record for us the inauspicious beginnings of the tribe of Judah, from which the Lord Jesus Christ will eventually come.
  - 5) It magnifies the immeasurable grace of the God whom we serve. God is working here and He turns the judgment into blessing. God takes a lot of confused human actions and uses them to glorify Himself.
  - 6) The absence of any mention of God in the story does not mean that God is not involved. On the contrary, what we see again and again is the unseen hand of God in divine guidance. God's plan and purposes never really gets jeopardized in history despite human failures. We have to realize that much of history is directed by God in a covert manner. He is not appearing on every mountain top in history telling people what they are supposed to do, He is working behind the scenes in terms of what is called divine providence. In the same way much of the guidance for the believer is given mediately through the Scripture and not immediately through dreams and visions or through direct revelation. Very few Old Testament saints ever got direct revelation, and those that did didn't get it all the time.
  - 7) God's hand is just as involved in the line of Judah as it is in the life of Joseph (which will become our primary focus throughout the remainder of Genesis).
  - 8) The end result of this narrative is: (1) separation from the line of Canaan; (2) an honorable resolution for the person of Tamar (she will bear sons and she will be taken care of); and (3) an established line of the Messiah, despite a myriad of problems.
  - 9) The lesson to take from all this: God's plan cannot be derailed by man's sins and failures. God's plan is always greater than man's failures and confused plans.

From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen145.htm> accessed April 26, 2016 (edited and appended).

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Most of the time, I place the chiasmic approach to a chapter at the beginning; however, this is so complex as to be better understood after the chapter has been studied.

The organization of this chapter is quite unusual and complex. Notice that we have a chiasm within each overall topic, which is a chiasm as well. Because of its complex nature, I have placed it at the end of this chapter, so that we can look back at what we have already studied with a better understanding.

### William Ramey Organizes the Chiasmi of Genesis 38:1–30

Introduction: Judah leaves his father's homestead and fathers three sons (1-5)

A The childless widow (6-11)

B a Tamar exchanges her widow's garb for that of a prostitute (14)  
 b Judah's proposition to Tamar (15-16b)

### William Ramey Organizes the Chiasmi of Genesis 38:1–30

- x Exchange of pledges (16c-18b)
- b' Judah's consummation with Tamar (18c)
- a' Tamar exchanges her prostitute's garb for that of a widow (19)
  
- X
  - a The kid is sent for the pledge; Tamar is not found (20)
  - b The Adullamite's inquiry about the prostitute (21a)
    - x The town people's response (21b)
  - b' The Adullamite's report to Judah (22)
  - a' The pledge is forfeited; Tamar is not found (23)
  
- B'
  - a Judah is informed that Tamar has a child by harlotry (24a-b)
  - b Judah's edict that Tamar should be burned (24c)
    - x Judah recognizes the items of his pledge (25-26a)
  - b' Judah's edict that Tamar is more righteous than he (26b)
  - a' Judah does not have relations with Tamar again (26c)
  
- A' The birth of twins to a widow (27-30)

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

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This is simply a suggestion; these are not exact dates nor are they exact time periods.

### Ron Snider's Timeline for Genesis 38

1. Judah moves away and marries. 1682 B.C.
2. His unnamed wife gives birth to two sons in quick succession. 1681-1680 B.C.
3. She gives birth to Shelah 3 or 4 years later. 1676 B.C.
4. Er is married off at early age say, 14. 1667 B.C.
5. Er is killed at age 15. 1666 B.C.
6. Onan sins and dies the sin unto death within a year. 1665 B.C.
7. 3 or 4 years pass while Tamar waits. vs 12. 1661 B.C.
8. Tamar tricks Judah and gives birth to twins. 1661 B.C.

There are some things which ought to be considered. It appears that Judah separating from his family and marrying a Canaanite woman happen pretty close to the same time. Bear in mind that, he must separate from his family, marry, have 3 male children, have them all grow to adults (which could mean *young adults, teens*), lose a wife, and impregnate Tamar all within 20–25 years.<sup>41</sup> Obviously, given all that happens, this reasonably requires at least 20 years for all of these things to take place.

After all of this takes place, then Judah must return to his father and family, as 10 of the sons will go down to Egypt for grain. It would not be unlikely that most or all of the brothers have their own separate families and households within, say, 10 miles of one another.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed May 17, 2016 (Word document will open in Word or WP on your computer); with some editing.

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### Summarizing Genesis 38/postscript:

<sup>41</sup> You may recall that Ron Snider guesses approximately 22 years for these various things to take place with Joseph in Egypt.

We have been studying Judah and his daughter-in-law, Tamar in Genesis 38. The *big picture* question about this chapter was, *why is this chapter in the Joseph narrative and, more importantly, why is this chapter found in the Word of God?* I hope that our study has answered these questions.

We have just studied one of the most unusual narratives in all of Scripture. Judah, who would become the ruling tribe (concerning which he was totally unaware), seems to have separated from his family, and we can certainly understand that. He was instrumental in selling his half-brother, Joseph, into slavery; and he was complicit in the lie that Joseph had been killed by some wild animal. This would have broken the heart of their father, Jacob, who loved Joseph more than his other sons. After all of this took place, Judah appears to have put some distance between himself and his brothers.

Gen. 38:1 **It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.** (ESV)

He probably could not bear to look his father in the eye; and he probably could not interact normally with his own brothers, as they were all involved in this lie about Joseph. His father's heart was broken; his brothers had to keep up this big lie, and Judah probably could not take it any more.

Judah began to hang out with an Adullamite named Hirah, and Judah's decisions in life were less than stellar. First mistake, he marries a Canaanite woman. This appears to be such a wrong move that God the Holy Spirit does not even include her name in Scripture. Furthermore, 2 of their 3 sons will die the sin unto death and their mother appears to die early in life as well.

No doubt Judah told himself a number of things to justify his own behavior with his father and half-brother. "If my father would have simply treated us as equals, all of this would not have happened." People tell themselves a great many things to justify their lives. But now, it is Judah who is married, and he fathers 3 sons, and, apparently, he does not do a very good job as a father himself. Judah may have come from a messed up family, but he messed up his own family even more.

Was his marriage to a Canaanite a mistake? That appears to be the case, because Judah arranges a marriage for his first son, Er; and Er marries Tamar. All of this occurs at a very young age because, as we had studied, we are dealing with a very limited time frame here. No doubt, Judah spent more time evaluating and choosing Tamar than he did his own wife.

His son Er dies—again, at a very young age—and it is customary for Tamar to remain a part of the family, even though she does not have any children by Er. The tradition is, Er's younger brother, Onan, will marry Tamar and their first son will be considered to be Er's son.

Even though Onan married Tamar, he was careful not to have children by her. In my opinion, this was all about inheritance. If Onan has a son by Tamar, he will continue Er's line, and, presumably, receive Er's share of the inheritance (a double portion for the firstborn), thus cutting deeply into Onan's share of the inheritance (who, if he has no children, supplants Er as the firstborn). God removes Onan from this life as well.

Tamar is still Judah's responsibility, but he shirks this responsibility. As the older brother of Joseph, Joseph was Judah's responsibility, and he shirked that responsibility as well. Joseph promises his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to Tamar, and he sends her back to her father. Judah had not intended to give his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to her, but to let her live her life out as a childless widow.

In the ancient world, a woman married into a family. She became a part of that family. This approach to marriage and family is found throughout much of the world today, and as recently as the 1950's in the United States. As a part of this new family, the patriarch of that family is responsible for this young woman. Tamar became Judah's responsibility, not her father's. But Judah sends her packing back to her father, with no intention of giving his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to her. That is Judah's plan; but it is not God's plan. In God's plan, Tamar is still Judah's responsibility, and



the line of the humanity of Jesus is going to go through Judah and Tamar. Now, Judah does not know this, nor does Tamar.

A couple of years pass and Shelah, Judah's 3<sup>rd</sup> son, is old enough to be given to Tamar, but Judah won't do it, fearing that Tamar is some kind of black widow and that Shelah will die if he marries her. Judah is unable to recognize that his sons are dead because they lived their lives in opposition to God, possibly as a result, to some extent, of their training.

About the time that Shelah is old enough to be given to Tamar, Judah's wife dies. Judah mourns, but not for a great deal of time, and he goes back to his business.

No doubt, there were people in Judah's household, servants probably, who understood that Tamar is a part of his family now, and that he ought to be responsible for her. When Tamar contacted them and asked them to provide her with information about any future movements of Judah, she found a sympathetic ear who was more than willing to help her out. When Judah was going for an out-of-town trip, Tamar was told right away, and she apparently had a plan in place already (she is probably not that different from Rebekah, Jacob's mother).

Judah, when traveling through a very small town, comes across a prostitute and he propositions her. Because she is wearing a veil, Judah does not realize that this is Tamar, his daughter-in-law. They have relations and, because he does not have the proper, agreed-upon payment with him, Judah gives Tamar some personal items. This was Tamar's actual intention, to get these personal items.

3 or 4 months later, Tamar is known to be pregnant, and Judah calls for her to be executed (by burning). It is cold-hearted, but Judah tells himself, "She is guilty; she must pay the price!"

The most natural question put to Tamar, as she is being taken out of her home to be burned is, "Who is the father?" She says, "I have some of his personal items right here. Judah can identify to whom they belong." And she sends these personal items (his staff, seal and cord) via messenger to Judah to be identified. Judah admits that these are his things, and thus, it becomes known that she is pregnant by Judah.

Judah is the patriarch of his very small and dwindling family, and raising up a child by Tamar to Er is his responsibility (not directly). He is to find a kinsman-redeemer for Tamar, and she would rejoin his family (he should have never forced her out). Now, Judah himself has impregnated Tamar, so she and her sons (she had twins) are his responsibility—he cannot put that on anyone else. We know that he assumed this responsibility, because they will go with him into Egypt (Genesis 46:12).

In a very unusual postscript, we find out that Judah no longer had relations with Tamar, even though he apparently provides for her and her sons from thereon out.

It was difficult to ignore the O'Henry quality of this narrative. Judah, a man who too often gave in to his baser urges, is given another responsibility by God. He failed in his responsibility to Joseph; so he is now given Tamar. He nearly fails with her. However, the very man who married a Canaanite and sought the company of a prostitute, now provides for a woman whom he chooses not to enjoy conjugal relations with. By today's standards, we do not appreciate how much Judah was obsessed with sex; and yet, by his own choosing, lived out much of his life without it.

We hypothesized that, Judah is concerned that he might die if he had relations with Tamar; and that Tamar was none to pleased that Judah was so willing to have her executed. However, Judah would have been publically shamed to take care of Tamar and their children.

Tamar, who is trying to find her way back into a proper relationship with Judah's family, by her scheming, revealed Judah's nature, which is less than pleasant. He was willing to see her executed. Now, these two remain united by their sons, for the rest of their days; but not by love and mutual respect.

Carroll summarizes portions of the Genesis narrative very much like Edersheim does.

### B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 38

The thirty-eighth chapter is devoted entirely to some rather scaly incidents in the life of Judah. The chapter is of such a character that it forbids discussion in a public address. Read it and gather your own lessons. It commences with Judah's sin in marrying a Canaanite woman. Two of the sons born of this marriage God killed for their wickedness. This wife became an ancestress of our Lord. He derives his descent from four women not Jewesses. Rahab, the harlot; Tamar, the Canaanite; Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, whom David took; Ruth, the Moabitess.

From *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by Dr. B.H. Carroll; from e-sword; Genesis 25:19-28:9. Updated.

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Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant. This volume of the book is entitled *The World Before the Flood, and The History of the Patriarchs*.

This comes from Chapter 19, entitled *Joseph's Early Life - He is Sold by his Brethren into Slavery - Joseph in the House of Potiphar - Joseph in Prison (GENESIS 37-39)*.

### Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 38

FOR the proper understanding of what follows, it is necessary to bear in mind that what may be called the personal history of the patriarchs ceases with Jacob; or rather that it now merges into that of the children of Israel - of the family, and of the tribes. The purpose of God with the patriarchs as individuals had been fulfilled, when Jacob had become father of the twelve, who were in turn to be the ancestors of the chosen people. Hence the personal manifestations of God to individuals now also ceased. To this there is only a solitary exception, when the Lord appeared unto Jacob as he went into Egypt, to give him the needful assurance that by His will Israel removed from Canaan, and that in His own good time He would bring them back to the land of promise. By way of anticipation, it may be here stated that this temporary removal was in every respect necessary. It formed the fulfillment of God's prediction to Abram at the first making of the covenant (Genesis 15:12-17); and it was needful in order to separate the sons of Jacob from the people of the land. How readily constant contact with the Canaanites would have involved even the best of them in horrible vices appears from the history of Judah, when, after the selling of Joseph, he had left his father's house, and, joining himself to the people of the country, both he and his rapidly became conformed to the abominations around. (Genesis 38)

Like Carroll, Edersheim spent very little time discussing this chapter.

From [http://philologos.org/\\_eb-bhot/vol\\_1/ch19.htm](http://philologos.org/_eb-bhot/vol_1/ch19.htm) accessed October 10, 2016.

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Genesis 38 is one of the more unusual narratives in Scripture. Therefore, we should ask, *why is it here?*

### Summing up the Reasons for Genesis 38

1. We find a further contrast between the character of Joseph and his brothers
2. We see the negative affect upon the children of Israel living in the land of Canaan under the influence of the Canaanites
3. This gives us a hint of the degeneracy prevalent within the tribe of the Canaanites so that we can better understand God's mandate that they be executed in the later books of Moses
4. This gives us a bit more insight on the custom, divinely authorized, of raising up children on behalf of a

## Summing up the Reasons for Genesis 38

- husband who has died prematurely and childless
5. Whereas we thought that we lived in a modern world, what with many couples living together without the benefit of marriage, we have Judah indulging in the same activity nearly 4000 years prior to our day
  6. We see that the double-standard got an early start in human history
  7. Finally, we had a chance to see three of the progenitors of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ

God did not design us to go to the Bible and read for ourselves to dig all of this information out for ourselves. I cannot imagine back in the early years as a Christian every reading this chapter and getting 1% of what it there. Even today, after a great deal of training, I still needed a jump start from the wonderful Christian, the late J. Vernon McGee. God gave us pastor-teachers to guide us in the Word and if we have the positive volition—if we desire to know God's truth—it will be revealed to us.

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### Addendum

#### Judah and Tamar: A postscript.

Tamar will only be named in Scripture three more times, but her sons and her presence continue to be found in several passages.

Genesis 46 names most of the 70 people descended from Jacob who would move into the land of Egypt. Genesis 46:5–8 *Then Jacob set out from Beersheba. The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They also took their livestock and their goods, which they had gained in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him, his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters. Now these are the names of the descendants of Israel, who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons. All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt. Genesis 46:12 describes those of Judah's family who went into the land of Egypt with him: The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, **Perez**, and **Zerah** (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of **Perez** were **Hezron** and **Hamul**. (All ESV) Their respective wives are not named. Tamar is not named.*

Tamar and her two sons will go with Judah into Egypt, indicating that Judah has taken responsibility for Tamar and these sons. Although Tamar is not named in Genesis 46 (nor are the other wives of Jacob's sons), there is no reason to exclude her.

Genesis 46:12 is the last time the line of the Messiah is followed out in the book of Genesis. The book of Ruth will pick up with this line and take us all the way to King David (Ruth 4:18–22).

This particular portion of the Messianic line will lead us to another important marriage between another widow and her kinsman redeemer, where Boaz will marry Ruth, a Moabite. Their relationship is almost the polar opposite of the relationship between Judah and Tamar.

Ruth 4:9–10 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

Boaz has purchased (*redeemed*) Ruth from her mother-in-law Naomi. Ruth's Israelite husband, Mahlon, had died before giving her children. Boaz has unselfishly perpetuated Mahlon's name forever (although in Scripture, we understand the line to go through Boaz and Ruth).

Ruth 4:11–12 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman." (ESV)

Notice that Tamar is mentioned in the same breath with sisters Rachel and Leah, the two wives of Jacob, from whom came the Jewish race (with the help of their personal servants). These women call upon Ruth to enjoy the same fruits of motherhood as did Rachel, Leah and Tamar; and the line of Jesus Christ would go through Leah, Tamar and Ruth.

The nature of Tamar's relationship to Judah is not alluded to.

In the genealogies of 1Chronicles, the two sons are named:

1Chron. 2:3–5 The sons of Judah: Er, Onan and Shelah; these three Bath-shua the Canaanite bore to him. Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death. His daughter-in-law **Tamar** also bore him **Perez** and **Zerah**. Judah had five sons in all. The sons of **Perez**: Hezron and Hamul.

*Bath-shua* is not the name of Judah's Canaanite wife; that is a transliteration rather than a translation. What it means is, *daughter of Shua*, which is exactly how she is described in Genesis.

The line of the humanity of Jesus would go through Pharez (Perez). Perez will have a son Hezron and Hezron's 3<sup>rd</sup> son is Ram, and the line of David comes through Ram (Ruth 4:13–22 1Chronicles 2:1–12). Or see **1Chronicles 2** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Perez is also named in Num. 26:20–21 1Chronicles 27:3 Nehemiah 11:4, 6 Luke 3:33.

When the entire Jewish line of Jesus is given, Tamar will be named for the final time:

Matthew 1:1–3 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and **Judah** the father of **Perez** and **Zerah** by **Tamar**, and **Perez** the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram,... (ESV)

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

### Why Genesis 38 is in the Word of God

1. The line of Jesus is found in this strange relationship between Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. Their union produces twin sons, Perez and Terah, the first of whom is in the line of promise (the line of Christ).
- 2.

These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

### What We Learn from Genesis 38

1.

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The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

### Josephus' History of this Time Period

#### From The Death Of Isaac To The Exodus Out Of Egypt (220 Years) .

I found no material by Josephus on this chapter.

From: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/antiquities-jews/> accessed October 10, 2016. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 1.

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It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

### A Complete Translation of Genesis 38

#### A Reasonably Literal Translation

#### A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

#### Judah's three sons

It is at this time that Judah goes down away from his brothers. And so he turns even to a [certain] man, an Adullamite, whose name [is] Hirah.

It is at this time that Judah left his brothers and went to a certain man, an Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite (his name [is] Shua). Judah [lit., *he*] took her and he went into her. She conceived and bore a son, and he called him Er. Then she conceived again and she bore [another] son and she called him Onan. Then she adds again and bears a son, and she calls him Shelah.

While he was there, Judah saw a woman who caught his eye, who was a Canaanite, the daughter of Shua. Jacob took her and he went into her. She conceived and bore a son that Jacob named Er. Then she conceived again, bearing another son, and she named him Onan. Then she bore another son and called him Shelah.

And Jacob [lit., *he*] was in Chezib when she bore him.

Jacob was in Chezib when she bore the last son.

#### The levirate marriage

Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name [was] Tamar. Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, so that Y<sup>e</sup>howah executed him.

Judah took a wife for Er, his firstborn. Her name was Tamar. Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the estimation of Jehovah, so Jehovah killed him.

Judah said to [his son] Onan, "Go in to the wife of your brother and do the duty [on behalf of your brother] to her, and raise up seed for your brother."

Judah told his son, Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform your levirate duty to her, to raise up descendants for your brother."



<b>A Complete Translation of Genesis 38</b>	
<b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>	<b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>
Onan knew that the descendant [would] not be his; and it was, whenever he went into his brother's wife, he wasted [his seed] on the ground to not give a descendant to his brother. What he did was displeasing to Y <sup>e</sup> howah, and He killed him also.	Onan knew that this descendant would not be his, so, whenever he had relations with his brother's wife, he would spill his seed onto the ground, so that he would not be giving his brother a son. This displeased Jehovah, and God subjected him also to the sin unto death.
So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's home until Shelah, my son, grows up." (For he thought, "Lest he die also as his brothers.")	So Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Stay a widow in your father's home and let my son Shelah grow up." However, Judah also thought to himself, "I am worried that Shelah might die as his brothers have died."
So Tamar went and lived in the house of her father.	So Tamar went to live at the house of her father.
<b>Tamar deceives Judah</b>	
The days became many and the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; and Judah was comforted [by friends and family]. Sometime later he went up to the shearers of his flock—he and his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, to Timnah.	Time passes, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died; and Judah was comforted by friends and family. Sometime after that, he went up to meet with the shearers of his flock. He went with his friend Hirah, the Adullamite, up to Timnah.
And it was made known to Tamar, saying, "Listen, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flock." So she puts off her widow's garments from upon her and covers herself with a veil and disguises herself.	And it was made known to Tamar, saying, "Listen, your father-in-law will be going up to Timnah to shear his flock." Therefore, she put off her widow's garments and she wore a veil, disguising herself.
Then she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is along side the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah had grown [up] and that she had not been given to him in marriage.	Then she sat down at the entrance of Enaim, which is along the road to Timnah, for she knew that Shelah had grown up, but that she had not been given to him in marriage.
Judah saw her and he took her for a prostitute, for she had hidden her face. So he veered toward her on the road and said, "Come [to me], now, [and] I will come in to you." (for he did not know that she [was] his daughter-in-law)	Judah saw her and took her for a prostitute, for she had her face covered. So he veered off the road toward her and said, "I would like to come in to you;" (as he did not realize that she was his daughter-in-law).
So she said, "What will you give me that you will come in to me?"	So she said, "What will you give me in order to have pleasure with me?"
He said, "I [even] I will send a kid of the she-goats from the flock."	He said, "I guarantee you that I will send you a young goat from my flock."
And she said, "[That is fine], if you give me a pledge until you send [that gift]."	So she said, "I agree to this, if you give me some sort of pledge for me to hold until you send me the goat."
He asked, "What pledge should I give you?"	He asked her, "What should I give to you as a pledge?"

<b>A Complete Translation of Genesis 38</b>	
<b>A Reasonably Literal Translation</b>	<b>A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase</b>
And she answered, “[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., <i>that [is] in your hand</i> ].” Therefore, he gave [those things] to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him.	She answered, “Give me your signet ring, your cord and the staff that you carry.” Therefore, he gave these things to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him.
She arose and departed. She removed her veil and put [back] on the clothing of her widowhood.	Tamar then arose and departed. She removed her veil and put back on the clothing indicating that she had been widowed.
<b>Judah unsuccessfully tries to pay off the prostitute</b>	
Judah sent a kid of the she-goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take [back] the pledge from the hand of the woman; but he could not find her.	Judah sent the kid from the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman; but his friend could not find her.
Jacob’s friend [lit., <i>he</i> ] asked the men of [that] place, saying, “Where [is] the prostitute [who was here]? She [was] near to Enaim, [right] along the road.”	Jacob’s friend asked the men who lived around there, “Where is the prostitute who was here? She was near to Enaim, standing along the road side.”
And they replied, “The prostitute has not been here.”	But they replied, “No prostitute has been here.”
He returned to Judah and said, “I could not find her; furthermore, the men of that place said, ‘There was no prostitute here.’ ”	He returned to Judah and told him, “I could not find that woman; furthermore, the men of that place said that there had not been a prostitute there.”
Judah said, “She will keep [those things] as her own [lit., <i>to her</i> ], so that we are not shamed. Listen, I sent the kid and you, [even] you could not find her.”	Judah said, “Let her keep those other things, so that we are not shamed. Listen, we attempted to find her and to bring her the kid, but we could not find her.”
<b>When Judah finds out the Tamar is pregnant</b>	
And it was after about three months, it is made known to Judah, saying, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has been fornicating, and now [she is] pregnant by [these] acts of fornication.”	Three months later, Judah is told about Tamar: “Listen, your daughter-in-law Tamar has been sleeping around and, as a result, she is pregnant.”
Judah then said, “Bring her [here] and she will be burned [in judgment].”	Judah then ordered, “Bring her here and she will be burned with fire for her fornications.”
[While] being brought out, she sent [a message] to her father-in-law, saying, “I [am] pregnant by the man that these belong to.” And she said, “Therefore acknowledge whose [are] the signet, the cords and the staff?”	When being brought out to later be executed, Tamar sent a message to Judah, saying, “I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong.” Then she said, “Therefore, acknowledge ownership of this signet, the cords and the staff.”
Judah acknowledges [ownership of these personal items], and so he said, “She is more righteous than me, inasmuch as I did not give Shelah my son to her.” But he did not know her again.	Judah acknowledge that these personal items were his, and he said, “Tamar is more righteous than I am, because I did not give my son Shelah to her.” However, Judah discontinued relations with her.
<b>Tamar gives birth to twin sons</b>	

A Complete Translation of Genesis 38	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
And it was in the time of her giving birth that there were [lit., <i>behold</i> ] twins in her womb. While she is giving birth, he [the unborn infant] puts out his hand and the midwife takes and binds a scarlet [thread] on his hand, saying, "This [child] came out first.	When she gave birth, there were twins found to be in her womb. Therefore, while she was giving birth, the midwife attached a scarlet thread on the son whose hand came out first.
And it was, as he returned his hand, suddenly his brother came out, so she said, "How did you break forth beside your brother—a breach?" Therefore, he [Judah] called his name Perez.	"This is your firstborn," she said. However, his hand disappeared back into the womb and suddenly, his brother came out. Therefore, she said, "How did you come out beside your brother?" Because of this, Judah called his name Perez.
And afterwards his brother came out, [the one] who [had] the scarlet [thread] on his hand. [Judah] called his name Zerah.	Afterwards, his brother came out—the one with the scarlet thread on his hand. Judah called his name Zerah.
<a href="#">Chapter Outline</a>	<a href="#">Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</a>

### Doctrinal Teachers\* Who Have Taught Genesis 38

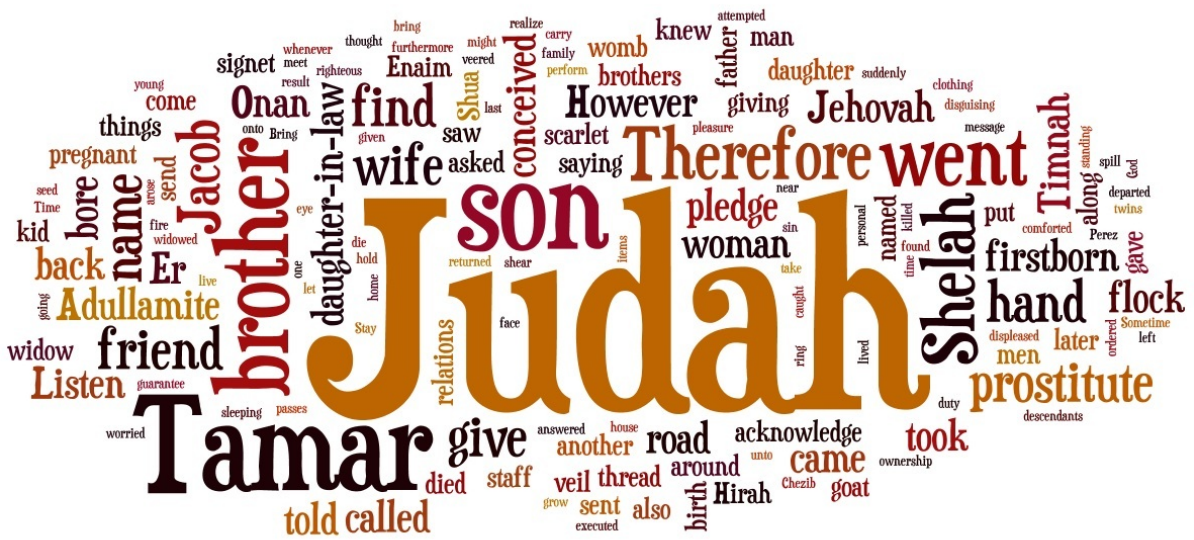
Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr. does not appear to have covered this chapter in any available series.		
Ken Reed	<a href="https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/">https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/</a>	Genesis 38–50
Dr. Robert Dean	<a href="https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem">https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem</a>	Genesis 1–50
Bill Wenstrom	<a href="https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124">https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&amp;view=libwritten&amp;selCat=2&amp;Itemid=124</a>	Genesis 1–50
Jack M. Ballinger	<a href="http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html">http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html</a>	Genesis 1–49
Ron Snider	<a href="http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html">http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html</a>	Genesis 1–50

\* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and rebound after less than a month in attendance.

When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching of the history of that time in order to understand the context of a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage, word-by-word whenever necessary).

### Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Genesis 38



### Word Cloud from Exegesis of Genesis 38<sup>42</sup>

These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Genesis 38 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines	
Beginning of Document	Doctrines Covered or Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded to
Definition of Terms	Introduction and Text	Addendum
<a href="http://www.kukis.org">www.kukis.org</a>	Exegetical Studies in Genesis	

<sup>42</sup> Some words have been left out of this graphic; including *Strong*, *BDB*, and *pronounced*.