

May 1, 2011

Judah Goes on Jerry Springer

Genesis 38:1-30

Genesis 38:1-5

- 1 “At that time”- about the time they sold Joseph to the Midianites
“Adullamite”- Adullam was about 10 miles West of Jacob’s home
2 “the daughter of a certain Canaanite”- this always goes badly! Think of Esau
3 Er- the name might mean watchful or vigilant but the text gives no explanation
5 Chezib- possibly referring to Achzib, 3 miles West of Adullam

Genesis 38:6-11

- 6 Tamar- the name means Palm Tree and she is probably a Canaanite
7 “Er...was wicked”- a pun in Hebrew, “was wicked” is Er backwards
“YHWH put him to death”- no explanation of what Er did is given
8 “the duty of a brother-in-law”- an ancient custom for the brother to care for a widow if she had no sons and provide a male heir for his deceased brother
9 “Whenever he went in...” the Hebrew makes it clear this happened repeatedly
“not to give offspring to his brother”- this heir would dilute the inheritance that Onan wanted
10 “Put him to death also”- Onan’s sin is many-fold and once again Judah loses a son
11 “he feared that we would die, like his brothers”- Judah sees Tamar as the problem

Genesis 38:12-23

- 12 “he went up to his sheepshearers”- sheep shearing was a time of mirth with lots of drinking
14 Tamar knows Shelah will not be given to her, so she gets that male heir the only way possible
15 “prostitute”- her dress and where she was waiting would aid him in this deduction
17 “I will send you”- Judah was empty handed, this is a spontaneous event and not premeditated
18 “your signet and your cord and your staff”- Very wise, these are unique enough to be evidence later
“went into her”- for Moses’ hearers this was SCANDELOUS! Lev 18:15 makes this grossly illegal
21 “cult prostitute”- someone who practiced prostitution in service to a false deity
23 “or we shall be laughed at”- though valuable, the items were not worth the public shame

Genesis 38:24-26

- 24 “let her be burned”- likely the law among the Canaanites for such infidelity
25 Tamar calls Judah out by sending him his own items
26 “She is more righteous than I”- what a confession! This is rare among the patriarchs!

Genesis 38:27-30

- 27-30 parallel Jacob & Esau very nicely. In each the first born twin gets second position
28-29 The mechanics of this may make you scratch your head, don’t think too hard about it!
29 Perez- the name means “breach”
30 Zerah- the name means “brightness”

From both of these brothers would come clans of the Tribe of Judah and from Perez would come King David and Jesus

Psalm 1

N: ¹Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,

S: nor stands in the way of sinners,

N: nor sits in the seat of scoffers;

S: ²but his delight is in the TORAH of YHWH,

N: and on his TORAH he meditates day and night.

S: ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water

N: that yields its fruit in its season,

S: and its leaf does not wither.

N: In all that he does, he prospers.

S: ⁴The wicked are not so,

N: but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

S: ⁵Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,

N: nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

S: ⁶for YHWH knows the way of the righteous,

N: but the way of the wicked will perish.

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son

And to the Holy Spirit

As it was in the beginning

Is now and will be forever. Amen

