

**God Kills Judah's Two Sons—Er and Onan (c. 1880–1878 BC)**

Genesis 38:6–11

6 Judah acquired a wife for Er his firstborn; her name was Tamar.

7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the LORD's sight, so the LORD killed him.

8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Have sexual relations with your brother's wife and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her so that you may raise up a descendant for your brother."

9 But Onan knew that the child would not be considered his. So whenever he had sexual relations with his brother's wife, he withdrew prematurely so as not to give his brother a descendant.

10 What he did was evil in the LORD's sight, so the LORD killed him too.

11 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 don't want him to die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

**The Great Famine Begins (Nisan [April] 1878 BC)**

Genesis 41:53–57

53 The seven years of abundance in the land of Egypt came to an end.

54 Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had predicted. There was famine in all the other lands, but throughout the land of Egypt there was food.

55 When all the land of Egypt experienced the famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh said to all the people of Egypt, "Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you."

56 While the famine was over all the earth, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians. The famine was severe throughout the land of Egypt.

57 People from every country came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain because the famine was severe throughout the earth.

**Tamar Seduces Judah (c. 1878 BC)**

Genesis 38:12–26

12 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 his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 Tamar was told, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

14 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 she saw that she had not been given to Shelah as a wife, even though he had now grown up.)

15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face.

16 He turned aside to her along the road and said, "Come on! I want to have sex with you." (He did not realize it was his daughter-in-law.) She asked, "What will you give me in exchange for having sex with you?"

17 He replied, "I'll send you a young goat from the flock." She asked, "Will you give me a pledge until you send it?"

18 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. She became pregnant by him.

19 She left immediately, removed her veil, and put on her widow's clothes.

20 Then Judah had his friend Hirah the Adullamite take a young goat to get back from the woman the items he had given in pledge, but Hirah could not find her.

21 He asked the men who were there, "Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim by the road?" But they replied, "There has been no cult prostitute here."

22 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.'"

23 Judah said, "Let her keep the things for herself. Otherwise we will appear to be dishonest. I did indeed send this young goat, but you couldn't find her."

24 After three months Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has turned to prostitution, and as a result she has become pregnant." Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

25 While they were bringing her out, she sent word to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong." Then she said, "Identify the one to whom the seal, cord, and staff belong."

26 Judah recognized them and said, "She is more upright than I am, because I wouldn't give her to Shelah my son." He did not have sexual relations with her again.

**Joseph's Brothers First Trip to Egypt (1877 BC)**

## Genesis 42

**Jacob Sends His Sons to Egypt for Grain**

- 1 When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why are you looking at each other?"  
2 He then said, "Look, I hear that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy grain for us so that we may live and not die."  
3 So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt.  
4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "What if some accident happens to him?"  
5 So Israel's sons came to buy grain among the other travelers, for the famine was severe in the land of Canaan.

**Joseph Accuses His Brothers of Being Spies**

- 6 Now Joseph was the ruler of the country, the one who sold grain to all the people of the country. Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the ground.  
7 When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger to them and spoke to them harshly. He asked, "Where do you come from?" They answered, "From the land of Canaan, to buy grain for food."  
8 Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.  
9 Then Joseph remembered the dreams he had dreamed about them, and he said to them, "You are spies; you have come to see if our land is vulnerable!"  
10 But they exclaimed, "No, my lord! Your servants have come to buy grain for food!  
11 We are all the sons of one man; we are honest men! Your servants are not spies."  
12 "No," he insisted, "but you have come to see if our land is vulnerable."  
13 They replied, "Your servants are from a family of twelve brothers. We are the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is with our father at this time, and one is no longer alive."  
14 But Joseph told them, "It is just as I said to you: You are spies!  
15 You will be tested in this way: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not depart from this place unless your youngest brother comes here.  
16 One of you must go and get your brother, while the rest of you remain in prison. In this way your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If not, then, as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!"  
17 He imprisoned them all for three days.

**Joseph Sends His Brothers Back to Canaan But Keeps Simeon**

- 18 On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do as I say and you will live, for I fear God.  
19 If you are honest men, leave one of your brothers confined here in prison while the rest of you go and take grain back for your hungry families.  
20 But you must bring your youngest brother to me. Then your words will be verified and you will not die." They did as he said.  
21 They said to one other, "Surely we're being punished because of our brother, because we saw how distressed he was when he cried to us for mercy, but we refused to listen. That is why this distress has come on us!"  
22 Reuben said to them, "Didn't I say to you, 'Don't sin against the boy,' but you wouldn't listen? So now we must pay for shedding his blood!"  
23 (Now they did not know that Joseph could understand them, for he was speaking through an interpreter.)  
24 He turned away from them and wept. When he turned around and spoke to them again, he had Simeon taken from them and tied up before their eyes.  
25 Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to return each man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. His orders were carried out.  
26 So they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.  
27 When one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey at their resting place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack.  
28 He said to his brothers, "My money was returned! Here it is in my sack!" They were dismayed; they turned trembling one to another and said, "What in the world has God done to us?"  
29 They returned to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan and told him all the things that had happened to them, saying,  
30 "The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us and treated us as if we were spying on the land.  
31 But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies!  
32 We are from a family of twelve brothers; we are the sons of one father. One is no longer alive, and the youngest is with our father at this time in the land of Canaan.'  
33 "Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, 'This is how I will find out if you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for your hungry households and go.  
34 But bring your youngest brother back to me so I will know that you are honest men and not spies. Then I will give your brother back to you and you may move about freely in the land.'  
35 When they were emptying their sacks, there was each man's bag of money in his sack! When they and their father saw the bags of money, they were afraid.

36 Their father Jacob said to them, “You are making me childless! Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. And now you want to take Benjamin! Everything is against me.”

37 Then Reuben said to his father, “You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my care and I will bring him back to you.”

38 But Jacob replied, “My son will not go down there with you, for his brother is dead and he alone is left. If an accident happens to him on the journey you have to make, then you will bring down my gray hair in sorrow to the grave.”

### Tamar Gives Birth to Twins—Perez and Zerah (c. 1877 BC)

Genesis 38:27–30

27 When it was time for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb.

28 While she was giving birth, one child put out his hand, and the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.”

29 But then he drew back his hand, and his brother came out before him. She said, “How you have broken out of the womb!” So he was named Perez.

30 Afterward his brother came out—the one who had the scarlet thread on his hand—and he was named Zerah.

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