

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

TAMAR: LESSON ONE

by Sandy Harber

"And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren...." Genesis 38:1a

The chapter that records Tamar's story for us begins when her future father-in-law is a young man. Tamar and her future husbands were not even born "at that time." What time? Back up a chapter and we see a band of brothers who turned on their own. Out of jealousy, Joseph's brothers sold him to nomadic merchants (Gen. 37:28). Whose idea was it to sell Joseph? It was Judah's idea (Gen. 37:26-27).

Joseph is taken to Egypt and sold into slavery (Gen. 37:36). Jacob, the father of the ten conspirators and their victim, is deceived and brokenhearted (Gen. 37:34-35). Judah, meanwhile, continues with his life, making friends, getting married, and having children.

Judah was not a role model. Apparently, he had leadership qualities because his brothers (except Reuben who was not present) follow his advice and pulled Joseph out of the pit (where they put him in the first place) and sold him (Gen. 37:27-29). But he was also a jealous, greedy, and heartless man who sold his seventeen year old brother into slavery and tricked his grieving father into believing the boy was dead (Gen. 37:31-33). Yet God chose Judah to be the ancestor of the kings of Israel, beginning with David. And God promised the scepter would not depart from Judah's family (Gen. 49:10). Ultimately, the Messiah, Jesus, would be born into this family and will occupy the throne for one thousand years (Rev. 20:4).

Why did God choose Judah for such honors? Why not Joseph who was faithful and trusted God throughout his ordeal in slavery and prison? I don't know the answer.

This is God' sovereignty at work. He chooses who He chooses for His Own reasons. He's not obligated to explain His actions to us.

This is true in our own lives. Why did God allow my husband to die from Covid when so many other people survived? You may have your own difficult situation that causes you to ask, "Why me?" We may never know why God has allowed certain things into our lives. Our part is simply to trust that He knows what is best. If we believe the Bible we know God is good, He loves us, and whatever He does is for our benefit. We don't have to understand why. We just need to respond with faith in Him.

*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."
Proverbs 3:5*