

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

TAMAR: LESSON THREE

by Sandy Harber

"And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her." Genesis 38:2

Judah not only made an idolater his best friend, he also married one. Judah's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had all taken wives from among their own relatives. But Judah saw a daughter of the idol-worshipping Canaanites and chose her for his bride. The name of Judah's wife is not given anywhere in Scripture. We only know she is the daughter of Shuah.

Judah seems to have made his choice based on the lady's appearance. He "saw" her and apparently desired her. Thus, he married her. The "lust of the eyes" is one of the three avenues of sin (I John 2:16). All three - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - were in play when the serpent tempted Eve. She saw the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and it would make her wise (pride of life) so she ate the fruit (Gen. 3:6).

Judah's choices and his associations are not conducive to a godly life. There are many examples in Scripture where men were led away from the Lord and into idol worship by their wives. There is no evidence Judah embraced idol worship, but he does indulge in immorality down the road (vv. 15-16).

It seems that Judah is moving away from the Lord step by step. First, he separates himself from his brothers who worship the same God that he does (v. 1). Then, he allies himself with Hirah, an idol worshipper (v. 1). Finally, he marries and takes into his home, the daughter of Shuah, an idol-worshipper (v.2). Judah unites himself (becomes one) with an idolater.

Moving away from the Lord usually happens like that. It is a gradual process. But the end result is that you have separated yourself from God's people and married (united with) the world.

What triggered Judah's downward mobility? Guilt, perhaps? His hatred and jealousy of his brother had led Judah into committing unspeakably cruel sins. He took a 17 year old coddled boy and callously sold him to a passing caravan. Then he deceived his father into believing the boy had been torn into pieces by a wild animal. His father's grief was unbearable. Did seeing his father's distress make him realize just how awful his actions had been? Did he separate himself from his family because he could not bear to see the misery he had caused?

Guilt can be an awful thing. It can tear us apart inside. It can rob us of peace. It can cause us to draw back from God, just as Adam and Eve's guilt caused them to hide from God. Confession is the cure. Admit your sin before God and repent. He will forgive and restore you to peace and fellowship with Him and the brethren.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9