

THE SCARLET THREAD
OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE
Genesis 38

INTRODUCTION

Genesis 37 began our study of Joseph's life. His brothers sold him into slavery and deceived their father by presenting Joseph as dead. Genesis 38 records one of the lowest moments in Israel's history as man's depravity is on full display. Judah impregnates Tamar, his daughter-in-law. But there is also something else to observe in Genesis 38 – the providence of God in these events as they unfold. Even in the midst of this tragic recording in Genesis 38, God will allow us to see **The Scarlet Thread Of God's Providence**.

DIGGING DEEPER

Read through Genesis 38. Observe how selfish, immoral and wicked the heart of man is (*Jeremiah 17:9*). Judah commits wanton and shameful deeds, then acts hypocritical as Tamar is found to be pregnant by him. Yet, the goodness and sovereignty of God shines through. Contrasting man's depravity with God's glory in His sovereignty and redemption, rejoice in **The Scarlet Thread Of God's Providence**.

Pray for wisdom and understanding, and let's begin.

I. Genesis 38:1-6. Judah's sins. Judah had come up with the idea to sell Joseph, and then he married a Canaanite woman. His nature is being exposed. We have no idea how really wicked the heart of any man is. *Jeremiah 17:9*

II. Genesis 38:7-10. The Levirate marriage. Judah did not follow the Levirate law (*Deuteronomy 25:5-6*), which was intended to carry on a family line. He had taken Tamar as wife for his eldest son, Er, who was killed by the Lord. Onan, Judah's second son, abused Tamar. The Lord killed him, too. God knows and judges righteously (*Psalms 7:11-13*), even as He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (*Ezekiel 18:23 & 32, 2 Peter 3:9*). Finally, Judah did not give his other son, Shelah, to Tamar as he should have. He sent Tamar home to her family.

III. Genesis 38:12-26. Judah, unknowingly thinking she was a harlot, lies with Tamar and she becomes pregnant. Then he plays the hypocrite in calling for her judgement! This sordid behavior reveals such depravity. Can God really work with this family? YES!! *Romans 5:20*

IV. Genesis 38:27-30. Twins, Perez and Zerah, are born. *Matthew 1:1-6* records 4 women who stand out – Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba. Jesus came into the world through sinners and for sinners. Think about **The Scarlet Thread Of God's Providence**. This wonderful plan of God interrupts and directs human history, pointing all to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

Events in Genesis 38 display an example of God's PROVIDENCE. In addition to God providing for His creation and His creatures, God's providence reveals His control over all events and creatures including guidance. His control and guidance is harder to accept sometimes because we often don't recognize what God is doing (or allowing) as things occur. God does intervene in human history. All Bible characters experienced this – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph..... and on down the line. Even Nebuchadnezzar recognized God's providence. *Daniel 4:34-35*

As you meditate upon God's providence, do other examples from Scripture come to your mind - Peter, Paul, others...? *Selah*

When life seems confusing, God is in control and guiding. Be comforted and at rest, beloved.

CONSIDER Christian, God's providence in your life is intended to bring you to Him, and cause you to have hope.

- God is over both successes and failures, even events that look like set-backs. *Luke 22:31-32, Romans 8:28*
- Things that appear completely accidental or arbitrary are not. *Psalms 37:23, Proverbs 16:33*
- God's providence will not infringe upon your liberty or responsibility. *Proverbs 16:9 & 19:21*

*For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord,
thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding,
In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your steps. Proverbs 3:5-6*

PRAY

- again for the Shepherd's School – that the Lord would speak to each and every heart as they seek His face.
- for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Veterans Day Assembly.
- for Divine appointments this week that would enable you to share the goodness and hope found in Jesus!
- that you might personally see the hand of the Lord in every situation you are presently dealing with.
- the teams who are endlessly ministering to the needs in Puerto Rico, that they may be supernaturally strengthened!