



Tamar



Parasite or Persistent?

“This Is Your Life, Tamar!”

- Text: Genesis 38
 - Tamar
 - Chosen one (a Canaanite) to carry on line of Jacob.
 - Marries Judah’s oldest son, Er
 - After Er’s death, marries Onan, second son. He dies.
 - Sent home to her father –wait for Shelah, third son of Judah to grow up – remains a widow.
 - Tricks Judah. Bears him two sons: Perez & Zerah.
 - Perez – lineage of Judah from which King David will descend and the Messiah will come.
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Dangerous Liaisons



- *Judah and Tamar*
 - Artist: Aert de Gelder
 - C. 1700
 - Oil on canvas, National Gallery, London

Strange Bedfellows

“Levirite Marriage” Discussion

- hand-out
 - Review of Historical Context of Women in the First Testament
 - Hand-out
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Power vs. Authority

- Power: The ability to affect change and control over events unofficially.
 - Authority: Culturally legitimated power to make decisions and command obedience.
 - Who demonstrated *power* and who demonstrated *authority* in this story?
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Questions to Ponder

- Whose “property” was Tamar? To whom did she belong? Who was responsible for her?
 - What type of future did Tamar look toward?
 - What part does *fear* play in this story?
 - Was Tamar playing a harlot?
 - Does this narrative draw any moral conclusions about the behavior of either Tamar or Judah?
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Righteous?

- *“Then Judah acknowledged them and said, ‘She is more in the right than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.’” vs. 26*
- Community, relationships emphasized in First Testament. Faithfulness may mean going beyond the law.
- A person who stands outside the community proves to be faithful to what Gods intends for humanity community, ..for the community of promise. (Result: Judah receives a praiseworthy place in the ancestral narrative.)

The Veiled Lady In Red



- *Tamar, daughter-in-law of Judah*
 - Artist: Marc Chagall, 1960.
 - lithograph

Questions to Ponder

“Tamar actively takes steps to change her destiny, by an act that defies the patriarchal order, in the interest of allowing her, ultimately, to fulfill herself according to its terms.” - Leila Leah Bronner, *From Eve to Esther*

- Do you agree with this statement?
 - Do you think Tamar did the right thing?
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How Will Tamar Be Judged?

- Assertive of her rights?
- Subversive of convention?
- Loyal to Judah's family?
- Qualities akin to
 - Ruth (Ruth 4:12)
 - King David

Question: Parasite or Persistent?

Coming Attraction

Rahab
Vice or Victor?
