

# CHAPTER 38

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 38

This chapter is wholly taken up with matters relating to Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, from whom the Jews have their name, and from whom Christ sprung: it treats of his marriage with a Canaanitess, his children by her, their character and end, (~~01301~~Genesis 38:1-11); of his incest with his daughter-in-law, though unknown by him, (~~01302~~Genesis 38:12-23); of his resentment against her, when he heard she was with child, and his confusion when he found it was by himself, (~~01304~~Genesis 38:24-26); and of the birth of twins by her, named Pharez and Zarah, (~~01307~~Genesis 38:27-30).

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass at that time*, etc.] This some refer to the time of Jacob's coming from Padanaram into Canaan, soon after he came to Shechem, and before the affair of Dinah; but to this may be objected the marriage of Judah at an age that may seem too early for him, his separation from his brethren, and having a flock of his own to keep, which seems not consistent with the above history: wherefore it is better to connect this with the history of Joseph's being sold into Egypt; for though there were but twenty three years from hence to Jacob's going down into Egypt, Joseph being now seventeen, and was thirty years when he stood before Pharaoh, after which were seven years of plenty, and two of famine, at which time Jacob went thither with two of Judah's grandsons, Hezron and Hamul, (~~0462~~Genesis 46:12), which make the number mentioned; yet all this may be accounted for; at seventeen, Er, Judah's firstborn, might marry, being the eighteenth from the selling of Joseph, and the marriage of his father; and Onan at the same age, which was the nineteenth; and allowing two or three years for Tamar's staying for Shelah, there was time for her intrigue with Judah, and bearing him two sons at a birth, before the descent of Jacob into Egypt; as for his two grandsons, they may be said to go into Egypt; as Benjamin's sons did in their father's loins, being begotten there during Jacob's abode in it:

*that Judah went down from his brethren*: not from Dothan to Adullam, as Ben Melech observes, as if this separation was at the time and place of the selling of Joseph; but rather from Hebron thither, after he and his brethren

were come home to their father, and had reported and condoled the death of Joseph; and Judah is said to go down, because he went from the north to the south, as Aben Ezra notes; whether this departure from his brethren was owing to a misunderstanding or quarrel between them on account of the affair of Joseph, or on any account, is not certain:

*and turned in to a certain Adullamite*; an inhabitant of Adullam, a city which afterwards fell to the tribe of Judah, and where was a famous cave, that had its name from thence in David's time; it was ten miles from Eleutheropolis to the east <sup>f1662</sup>, and eight from Jerusalem to the southwest <sup>f1663</sup>; hither he turned, or stretched out <sup>f1664</sup>; that is, his tent, with his flock, which he extended to Adullam, as Ben Melech interprets it, and joined to this man,

*whose name [was] Hiram*; whom the Jews <sup>f1665</sup> fabulously report to be the same with Hiram king of Tyre, in the days of David and Solomon, and that he was the husband of Nebuchadnezzar's mother, and lived twelve hundred years.

**Ver. 2.** *And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite*, etc.] Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Ben Gersom, interpret it a "merchant", to take off the disgrace of his falling in love with, and marrying a Canaanitish woman, which was forbidden by his ancestors Abraham and Isaac, and which his father avoided:

*whose name [was] Shuah*; not the name of the woman he married, but the name of her father, as appears from (<sup><01382></sup>Genesis 38:12); and who very probably was a man of note in the country:

*and he took her*; to be his wife, with her and her father's consent, not by force:

*and went in unto her*; cohabited with her as his wife.

**Ver. 3.** *And she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Er.*] Which signifies a "watchman": but the reason of the name given by the Targum of Jonathan is,

"because he should die without children;"

as if it was the same with Ariri, "childless".

**Ver. 4.** *And she conceived again, and bare a son,* etc.] As soon as she well could:

*and she called his name Onan;* the first son Judah gave the name to, but his wife named this, so called from grief or sorrow; the reason of it, according to the above Targum, was,

“because his father would mourn for him;”

he was a Benoni, (see <sup><0518></sup>Genesis 35:18), whose sin and immature death caused sorrow.

**Ver. 5.** *And she conceived, and bare a son,* etc.] A third son:

*and called his name Shelah;* which signifies tranquil, quiet, peaceable and prosperous, and is a word that comes from the same root as Shiloh, that famous son of Judah that should spring from him, (<sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10) the reason of the name, as given by the Targum, is,

“because her husband forgot her:”

*and she was at Chezib when she bare him;* Chezib is the name of a place, by some taken to be the same with Achzib or Ecdippe, now Zib, (see <sup><3001></sup>Micah 1:14); it seems to be a city in the tribe of Judah; and Jerom <sup>f1666</sup> says, in his time there was a desert place of this name near Adullam, on the borders of Eleutheropolis; the reason of her being here at the time of her delivery, and of this circumstance being related, is not certain.

**Ver. 6.** *And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn,* etc.] Chose one for him, and presented her to him for his liking, whom he approving of married:

*whose name [was] Tamar;* which signifies a “palm tree”: the Targum of Jonathan says, she was the daughter of Shem; but it is altogether improbable that a daughter of his should be living at this time, and young enough to bear children: it is much more probable that she was daughter of Levi, Judah’s brother, as an Arabic writer <sup>f1667</sup> asserts; but it is more likely still that she was the daughter of a Canaanite, who was living in the same place, though his name is not mentioned, (<sup><0381></sup>Genesis 38:11).

**Ver. 7.** *And Er, Judah’s firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] That is, exceedingly wicked, as this phrase signifies, (<sup><0131></sup>Genesis 13:13), was guilty of some very heinous sin, but what is not mentioned;

according to the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi, it was the same with his brother Onan's, (<sup><0E8D></sup>Genesis 38:9), which it is suggested he committed, lest his wife should prove with child, and lose her beauty; but if it had been the same with his, it would have been expressed as well as his. An Arabic writer <sup>f1668</sup> says, that he cohabited with his wife not according to the course of nature, but in the "sodomitical" way:

*and the Lord slew him*; by his immediate hand, striking him dead at once, as Ananias and Sapphira were stricken, (<sup><4R5></sup>Acts 5:5,10); or by sending some distemper, which quickly carried him off, as a token of his displeasure at his sin.

**Ver. 8.** *And Judah said unto Onan*, etc.] Some time after his brother's death:

*go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her*; Moses here uses a word not common for marriage, but which was peculiar to the marrying of a brother's wife according to a law given in his time: it appears to have been a custom before, and which the patriarch might be directed to by the Lord, in such a case when a brother died, and left no issue, for the sake of multiplication of seed, according to the divine promise, and which in the time of Moses passed into a law, (see <sup><6Z5></sup>Deuteronomy 25:5);

*and raise up seed unto thy brother*; that might bear his name, and enjoy his inheritance. For this law or custom was partly political, to continue the paternal inheritance in the family, and partly typical, to direct to Christ the firstborn among many brethren, (<sup><6X9></sup>Romans 8:29), who in all things was to have the preeminence, (<sup><5018></sup>Colossians 1:18); and this was not taken from the Canaanites, among whom Judah now was, but from the ancient patriarchs, which they had no doubt from divine revelation, and was taught in the school of Shem, and handed down from father to son; for as to this being a law among the Egyptians in later times, and which continued to the days of Zeno Augustus <sup>f1669</sup>, it is most likely they took it from the Jews.

**Ver. 9.** *And Onan knew that the seed should not be his*, etc.] Should not be called a son of his, but a son of his brother Er; this is to be understood only of the firstborn; all the rest of the children born afterwards were reckoned the children of the real parent of them; this shows this was a custom in use in those times, and well known, and was not a peculiar case:

*and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife;* to cohabit with her, as man and wife, he having married her according to his father's direction:

*that he spilled [it] on the ground, lest he should give his seed to his brother:* lest his brother's wife he had married should conceive by him, and bear a son that should be called his brother's, and inherit his estate; and this is the sin, which from him is called Onania, a sin condemned by the light of nature, as well as by the word of God, and very prejudicial to mankind, as well as displeasing to God, as follows:

**Ver. 10.** *And the thing which he did displeased the Lord,* etc.] Being done out of envy to his brother, and through want of affection to the memory of his name; and it may be out of covetousness to get his estate into his own hands, and especially as it frustrated the end of such an usage of marrying a brother's wife; which appears to be according to the will of God, since it afterwards became a known law of his; and it was the more displeasing, as it was not only a check upon the multiplication of Abraham's seed as promised, but since the Messiah was to come from Judah. This was doing all to hinder it that lay in his power:

*wherefore he slew him also;* in like manner as he had slain his brother, (<sup><0307></sup>Genesis 38:7).

**Ver. 11.** *Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law,* etc.] After the death of his two sons, who had successively married her:

*remain a widow at thy father's house till Shelah my son be grown:* who was his third and youngest son, though perhaps not more than a year younger than Onan; but he might not choose he should marry so soon as his brethren had done, for a reason following: according to the custom and law of marrying a brother's wife, who died without issue, she in course was to be the wife of Shelah; since if there were ever so many brothers, they all married such an one in turn, until there was issue by one of them, (see <sup><0225></sup>Matthew 22:25); as Judah knew this, he pretended at least to give her to his son for wife, only would have it put off till he was at age of maturity, or was more grown; and therefore desires her to keep herself unmarried to any other person until that time; and advises her to go to her father's house, and continue there, which he did to prevent any intrigues between them, lest his son should be tempted to marry her sooner than it was his will, and she should solicit him to it:

*for he said*; not to Tamar, but within himself:

*lest peradventure he die also as his brethren [did]*; by which it seems, that he was ignorant of the true cause of their death, but thought it was either owing to their marrying too young, or to something in the woman unfortunate and unhappy; and he might not really intend he should marry her at all, only made use of an excuse for the present:

*and Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house*; she had dwelt in Judah's house in the time of her two husbands, but now by his advice she removed to her own father's house; which very probably was in the same place, and her father yet living, who received her, and with whom she continued, (see <sup><0213></sup>Leviticus 22:13).

**Ver. 12.** *And in process of time the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died*, etc.] Shuah was his wife's father, who was a Canaanite, (<sup><0130></sup>Genesis 38:2); what her name was is not certain, nor the exact time of her death; it was some time after Tamar was sent home to her father's house; and some take the death of Judah's wife to be a correction and reproof to him for his ill usage of his daughter-in-law, in neglecting to give her to his son, or not designing to do it at all:

*and Judah was comforted*: he mourned awhile for the death of his wife, according to the custom of the country, and of those times, and then he laid aside the tokens of it, and his sorrow wore off, and he appeared in company and conversed with his friends:

*and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath*; a city in the tribe of Judah, (<sup><0157></sup>Joshua 15:57), said <sup>f1670</sup> to be six miles from Adullam, where Judah lived; here he had his flocks of sheep, at least this was judged a proper place for the shearing and washing of them, and this time of the year a proper time for it, at which it was usual to have a feast; and Judah went up to his shearers, not only to see how they went on with their work, but with this view to make an entertainment for them, (see <sup><0218></sup>1 Samuel 25:3,4,36):

*he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite*; he took him along with him for a companion, and to partake of the entertainment.

**Ver. 13.** *And it was told Tamar*, etc.] By some of her neighbours, or by some of Judah's family;

*saying, behold, thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep;* which might be told her as an indifferent thing, without any design in it; but she took notice of it, and it gave her an opportunity she wanted.

**Ver. 14.** *And she put her widow's garments off from her,* etc.] By which it appears that in those times and countries it was usual for widows to have a different apparel from others, especially in the time of their mourning, as it has been since in other nations, and with us at this day, and which is commonly called “the widow’s weed”:

*and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself;* in it, or in a cloak, or some such like garment, which the Arabs now call “hykes”; this she did that she might not be known, and not that she might appear as an harlot; for it was common to all women in those countries to go abroad with their veils: and on the contrary, whatever might be the custom here in those early times, which cannot be said what it was; in other countries, and in later times, harlots have been used to appear unveiled<sup>f1671</sup> and open to the view of all; though Juvenal<sup>f1672</sup> represents the Empress Messalina as covering herself with a night hood, and hiding her black hair under a yellow bonnet or peruke, that she might appear as an harlot going to the stews: and so the Arabs now, their whores as well as other women, veil themselves in the streets, but in Egypt they are used to sit at the door, or walk in the streets unveiled<sup>f1673</sup>:

*and sat in an open place, which [is] in the way to Timnath;* the Septuagint version renders it, “at the gates of Aenan”; some take it to be the name of a place, and suppose it had its name, as Aben Ezra observes, from two fountains of water that were in the way, like a door, through which Judah passed when he returned home: so Philo the Jew<sup>f1674</sup> reads, (~~Gen~~ Genesis 38:21); “where is the harlot which was in Ainan by the way?” and Jerom<sup>f1675</sup> speaks of Aenan as you go to Timnath, now a desert place, and near to the great village Timnath, which is between Aelia and Diospolis (i.e. Jerusalem and Lydia), and there is a fountain in the above place, from whence it has its name: the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

“in the division of the ways where all eyes look;”

for the word has the signification of eyes as well as of fountains; and seems to design a place where two ways or more met, which were not only open and obvious to every eye, but required persons to make use of their eyes, and look about them, and consider which way they should go; and where

perhaps a way mark was set up for them to look to, to direct them; and here Tamar placed herself as harlots used to do: hence Catullus <sup>f1676</sup> calls common prostitutes “semitariae moechae”, pathway whores; and on the contrary, such an one as was a secret whore, and less exposed, Horace <sup>f1677</sup> calls “devium scortum”, an whore that was at some distance from the public road, not so common as others: so in the Apocryph,

“The women also with cords about them, sitting in the ways, burn bran for perfume: but if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow, that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken.” (Baruch 6:43)

whorish women are represented as sitting in the ways and by the roadside, girt with cords (of bulrushes, and so easily broken), to be picked up by men as they passed by; referring to what Herodotus <sup>f1678</sup> reports of the women in the temple of Venus at Babylon. This method Tamar took:

*for she saw that Shelah was grown*: was at least at the age of her former husbands when, married, if not older: this might be two or three years after his brother’s death: for it was in process of time, or when there had been a multiplication of days after this, that Judah’s wife died, and now his mourning for her was over, (<sup>Q382</sup>Genesis 38:12);

*and she was not given unto him for wife*: as he had given her reason to expect, (<sup>Q381</sup>Genesis 38:11), and as was usually done.

**Ver. 15.** *When Judah saw her, he thought her [to be] an harlot*, etc.] By her posture and the place she was in:

*because she had covered her face*; with her veil, that he did not know her; for this is not given as a reason why he took her to be an harlot; the reason of this was, because she sat in the public road; but having covered her face he could not discern who she was, and therefore, from the other circumstance, concluded that she was an harlot, and sat there to prostitute herself to any that passed by.

**Ver. 16.** *And he turned unto her by the way*, etc.] Which led to her; he turned out of the way in which he was to that where she sat; and very probably it was at some little distance from the way, and therefore he turned aside to it, his lust towards her being excited at the sight of her; perhaps he left his friend Hirah the Adullamite, and sent him on his way, while he committed the following crime:



*and said, go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee;* that is, lie with her:

*for he knew not that she [was] his daughter in law;* or otherwise, it is suggested by the historian, he would not have offered such a thing to her; but though this may excuse him from wilful incest, yet not from fornication; for he took her to be an harlot, and however knew she was not his wife, and whom he ought not to have had any concern with in such a manner:

*and she said, what wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?* perhaps she said this with a very low voice, that he might not know her by it; and she behaved like an harlot by requiring an hire, on condition of which she consented: she knew Judah though he did not know her, and therefore cannot be excused from wilful incest: some indeed extenuate her crime, by supposing that she, though a Canaanite, was become a proselyte to the true religion by marrying into Judah's family, and had knowledge of the Messiah being to be born of Jacob's line; and therefore was desirous of being the mother or ancestor at least of that great Person, and so took this method; that since she could not have the son for her husband, was desirous of enjoying the father, not for the gratification of her lust, but in hopes of the promised seed; and accordingly she has a place in the genealogy of the Messiah, (<sup>400B</sup>Matthew 1:3).

**Ver. 17.** *And he said, I will send [thee] a kid from the flock,* etc.] Either from Timnath, where his flock was shearing, or rather from Adullam, where he lived; since it is probable he was now returning from Timnath, where he had been feasting and making merry with his shearers, and so in a disposition to commit such an action:

*and she said, wilt thou give [me] a pledge, till thou send [it]?* she made no objection to the hire or present, only required a pawn, or security for it till she had it; and this was her view indeed in asking an hire that she might have something to produce, should she prove with child by him, to convince him by whom it was.

**Ver. 18.** *And he said, what pledge shall I give thee?* etc.] Being willing to part with anything for the gratification of his lust:

*and she said, thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that [is] in thine hand;* she asks all these, that if one should be lost, or fail of being sufficient proof, the other might: the first of these the Septuagint version renders, "thy ring"; the ring upon his finger, which had a seal on it, and was the

signet of his right hand; so Onkelos and Ben Melech: the second word seems not so well rendered, since “bracelets” were wore by women and not men: Jarchi takes it to be a garment with which he was covered; so Ben Melech and the Targum, a cloak, which is not likely, that she should desire him to strip off his clothes: it seems to be either a covering of his head, a wrap of linen such as the Turks wear, or else a handkerchief he had in his pocket; and the staff in his hand was either his walking staff or a shepherd’s crook or staff:

*and he gave [it] her*, all the above things as a pledge:

*and came in unto her*; not on the public road, but in some private place at some distance, to which they retired. Maimonides <sup>f1679</sup> says, before the law was given, if a man met a woman in the street, and he and she agreed, he gave her hire, and he lay with her, and went away, and such an one was called “Kedeshah”, a harlot, the word used afterwards for Tamar:

*and she conceived by him*; she proved with child upon it.

**Ver. 19.** *And she arose and went away*, etc.] To her father’s house immediately, as soon as ever she had parted with Judah; and lest she should be found by the person that would be sent with the kid, and be discovered, she made all the haste she could:

*and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood*; that it might not be known or suspected that she had been abroad.

**Ver. 20.** *And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite*, etc.] Who went with him to Timnath, and was privy to all this wickedness, and kept the secret; but would have acted the more friendly and faithful part had he dissuaded him from it: him he employed to carry the kid he had promised, and not any of his servants, for the greater secrecy: and

*to receive [his] pledge from the woman’s hand*; his signet, bracelets, and staff, or whatever they were:

*but he found her not*; she was gone from the place where she sat, or where she retired to with Judah.

**Ver. 21.** *Then he asked the men of that place*, etc.] Or “of her place” <sup>f1680</sup>, of the woman’s place, supposing that she dwelt somewhere thereabout:

*saying, where [is] the harlot that [was] openly by the wayside?* that sat there very publicly some little time ago: the word for “harlot”<sup>f1681</sup> comes from another, which signifies to sanctify or separate to holy uses; and harlots were so called, either by an antiphrasis, by way of contradiction, being unholy; or because, as Jarchi observes, they were separated and destined to whoredom; or because they were such as were devoted to Venus, and the worshippers of her, and prostitutes in her temple, and in the temples of other Heathen deities; but it is questionable whether such practices as yet were used;

*and they said, there was no harlot in this [place];* they had not known any harlot to frequent that place lately, and Tamar sat there so small a time as not to have been observed by them.

**Ver. 22.** *And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her,* etc.] That is, the Adullamite returned to him, and informed him that he could not find the harlot to whom he was sent to deliver the kid and receive the pledge, after he had made the strictest inquiry for her he could:

*and also the men of the place said, [that] there was no harlot in this [place];* by which it appears, that near the place where Tamar was, there was a town or city, and which was so free from such infamous persons, that there was not one in it that was known to be of such a character, at least, that in such a public manner exposed herself: it would be well if the same could be said of many other places.

**Ver. 23.** *And Judah said, let her take [it] to her,* etc.] The pledge, and make no further inquiry after her;

*lest we be shamed;* Judah for committing fornication, which even among Heathens, at least at that time of day, was reckoned a shameful action; and be laughed at also, for committing such a pledge to an whore, who had tricked him out of it; and his friend Hirah for conniving at the sin, and being employed on such an errand:

*behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her:* who could be a witness for him, if there should be any occasion, that he was faithful to his promise.

**Ver. 24.** *And it came to pass about three months after,* etc.] The above affair happened, and when the pregnancy of Tamar began to be somewhat visible, as it does in women with child about that time:

*that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot:* her being with child being observed by some of the family, or her neighbours, and knowing that she did not cohabit with Shelah, who, according to custom, ought to have been her husband, concluded that she had had a criminal conversation with some other person, which they were officious enough to report to Judah:

*and also, behold, she [is] with child by whoredom;* which was judged to be a plain proof and evidence that she had played the harlot:

*and Judah said, bring her forth, and let her be burnt:* not that Judah can be thought to be a civil magistrate in a Canaanitish and Heathen city where he sojourned, and as such pronounced this sentence on her at once, or even had the power of life and death in his own family; and besides Tamar was not in his, but in her own father's house: but the sense seems to be, that as he was a man of credit and esteem in the neighbourhood, and had an influence and interest in it; he moved that she might be brought out of her father's house, and take her trial before the civil magistrates, and be committed to prison until she was delivered, for it would have been barbarous, and contrary to the law and light of nature, to have burnt her when quick with child, and then indeed to be burnt to death, according to the usage of this country; and as we find adultery in later times was punished with this kind of death, even among Heathens, (~~302~~Jeremiah 29:22,23); as it was in Egypt in the times of Sesostris the second <sup>f1682</sup>; so Salaethus, prince of Croton in Italy, made a law that adulterers should be burnt alive, as Lucian <sup>f1683</sup> relates; as did also Macrinus the emperor, that those that were guilty of adultery should be burnt alive together, their bodies joined to each other <sup>f1684</sup>: and this criminal action of Tamar was judged adultery, because she was, of right, and according to a custom or law then in use, the wife of Shelah: the Targum of Jonathan intimates, she was judged deserving of this death, because the daughter of a priest; the same law obtaining among the patriarchs as did in the times of Moses, (~~1210~~Leviticus 21:9); and some, as Jarchi relates, say she was the daughter of Shem <sup>f1685</sup>, the same with Melchizedek, priest of the most high God: one reason why Judah was in haste to have the sentence pronounced on her, and as soon as could be executed, was not only the disgrace she brought upon his family, but that she might be dispatched, and so his son Shelah freed from being obliged to marry her, which he did not care he should, and was glad of this opportunity to prevent it.

**Ver. 25.** *When she [was] brought forth*, etc.] From her father's house, not to the place of execution, or in order to be burnt, but to the court of judicature, in order to take tier trial:

*she sent to her father in law, saying, by the man whose these [are, am] I with child*; she sent a messenger to him, and by him the signet, bracelets, and staff, be they what they may, she had received from him as a pledge for the kid he promised her; and ordered the messenger to say, at the same time he showed him these things, that she was with child by the person to whom they belonged; which was a very modest way of laying it to his charge, and yet very striking and convincing:

*and she said*; by the messenger she sent:

*discern, I pray thee, whose [are] these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff*; which were the things given her as a pledge till she received the kid, the hire she was to have for his lying with her.

**Ver. 26.** *And Judah acknowledged [them]*, etc.] He knew them, and owned them to be his:

*and said, she hath been more righteous than I*; he means, not with respect to the sin of uncleanness committed by them, in which she was the greatest criminal; she sat not only in the way to tempt him to it, but she knew who he was, and wilfully committed incest with him; whereas he thought and knew of nothing else but simple fornication; but with respect to the affairs in connection between them: she had on her part, according to his direction, kept herself a widow, in expectation of being given to his son Shelah for a wife; but he had not made good his part, he had not fulfilled his promise, he had neglected to give her to his son, which he ought to have done, according to the usage of those times, and as he had suggested to her he would; and his neglect of this had been the cause and occasion of this criminal conversation between them; and this is the reason he himself gives of her being more righteous than he:

*because I gave her not to Shelah my son*; as he ought to have done, and as he promised he would:

*and he knew her again no more*; in a carnal way; he did not repeat the sin, but abstained from it having, no doubt, true repentance for it; though Jarchi observes, that some interpret the words, and Ben Melech says some copies read, "he did not cease to know her"; but took her for his wife and married

her, which is supposed to be as justifiable as other things done before the law of Moses; but this is not likely, and it looks as if he never married any wife after, or, if he did, had no more children, since we read of no other but Shelah, and the twins he had by Tamar; and it seems as if Shelah also did not marry Tamar upon this, such an incest being committed with her, since he appears to have had children by another woman, (<sup>(085)</sup>Numbers 26:20).

**Ver. 27.** *And it came to pass in the time of her travail*, etc.] When her time to bring forth was come, and her pains were on her, and her midwife with her:

*that, behold, twins [were] in her womb*; which the midwife could discover before the birth of either.

**Ver. 28.** *And it came to pass when she travailed*, etc.] Her birth throes came strong and quick upon her:

*that [the one] put out [his] hand*; which showed that she was like to have a difficult and dangerous time of it; that the birth was not like to be according to the usual and natural order, which may be considered as a correction for her sin:

*and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, this came out first*; she tied this to his wrist, that she might know whose hand it was, and so which was the firstborn; which, to know was a matter of consequence, since to the firstborn there were some special and peculiar privileges.

**Ver. 29.** *And it came to pass as he drew back his hand*, etc.] Into the “uterus” again;

*that, behold, his brother came out*; out of his mother’s womb, and so was properly born first:

*and she said*; either Tamar, or rather, her midwife:

*how hast thou broken forth?* it was astonishing to her how it could be, having never met with the like in her practice before; she could not imagine how it was possible for him to come forth first, when his brother lay in the way of him, and nearest the birth, as appeared by his putting out his hand:

*[this] breach [be] upon thee*; if any damage comes either to the mother or to the brother, and so carries in it the nature of an imprecation; or rather,

that the memory of so strange an event might be preserved, she imposed a name on him that should continue it:

*therefore his name was called Pharez*: or “therefore he called”, etc. <sup>f1686</sup>; Judah called his name Pharez, agreeably to what the midwife had related. From him, in a line of succession, sprang the Messiah, the Pharez or breaker, (<sup><3213></sup>Micah 2:13); for the sake of which the whole history of this chapter seems to be recorded, (<sup><4003></sup>Matthew 1:3).

**Ver. 30.** *And afterward came out his brother that had the scarlet thread upon his hand*, etc.] By which it was known that he so far came out first; which confirms the remarkable birth of his brother, who notwithstanding got the start of him:

*and his name was called Zarah*; not from “rising”, or his coming forth like the rising sun, as is usually observed; but rather from his return, or drawing back his hand, and as it were returning to his mother’s womb; and so, according to Hillerus <sup>f1687</sup>, Zarah, by a transposition of letters, comes from **rzj** “Chazar”, to return: but Jarchi thinks he had his name from the refulgent appearance of the scarlet thread on his wrist.