

**Torah:** B’resheet (Genesis) 37:1-40:23  
**Haftarah:** ‘Amos 2:6-3:8  
**B’rit Hadashah:** Luke 6:27-71

	<i>year 1</i> 37:1-36	<i>year2</i> 38:1-30	<i>year 3</i> 39:1-40:23
1	37:1 – 3	<b>38:1 – 5</b>	39:1 – 6
2	37:4 – 7	<b>38:6 – 11</b>	39:7 – 10
3	37:8 – 11	<b>38:12 – 14</b>	39:11 – 18
4	37:12 – 17	<b>38:15 – 19</b>	39:19 – 23
5	37:18 – 22	<b>38:20 – 23</b>	40:1 – 8
6	37:23 – 28	<b>38:24 – 26</b>	40:9 – 15
7	37:29 – 36	<b>38:27 – 30</b>	40:16 – 23

and it was in that time / and Judah went down from his brothers /and pitched his tent with an Adulamite named Hirah	<i>va’yehiy ba’et ha’hi                  va’yéred Y’hudáh me’et e’khav                  vayet ad-ish Adulami u’sh’mo                  Khirah</i>	וַיְהִי בְעֵת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֵד יְהוּדָה מֵאֶת אָחָיו וַיֵּט עַד-אִישׁ עַדְלָמִי וַשְּׁמוֹ חִירָה׃
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The story of Yosef is abruptly interrupted by this narrative about Y’hudah, part of Torah’s beautiful literary design. Framed by the concluding statement of Chapter 37 and the first verse of Chapter 39. repeated key-words form verbal connection to those chapters. To go down (37:5/38:1/39:1), to recognize (37:32/38:25,26,33), to comfort (37:32,35/38:12,33, 38:25,26), to pledge (38:17,18, 43:9, 44:32), a kid from the flock (37:31, 38:17-18,20) along with falsified evidence (37:32-33, 38:25-26).

**Aliyah Highlights**

1. **Gen. 38:1-5** The description of Y’hudah’s marriage could fit within the 22 years that elapse between the sale of Yosef and the descent into Egypt. His wife is not named. All of the places noted will be in the tribal inheritance of Y’hudah. Mothers name their children.
2. **Gen. 38:6-11** Marriage between a man and his brother’s wife is forbidden in future Torah law (Le. 18:16, 20:21) except when the brother dies without a son. Levirate marriage is the exception (De. 25:5-7), widely documented in extrabiblical sources of the time, protecting the widow. Onan became the inheritor of his father’s estate. If he provided an heir for his brother, his inheritance would become less. This is likely what was “displeasing,” not the practice of birth control.
3. **Gen. 38:12-14** Going “up” contrasts with going “down” (v.1). The season of sheepshearing was busy, joyful and celebratory. Widow’s clothes expressed unfulfilled levirate obligation, in contrast to Y’hudah’s comfort (v.12), and connecting to the deception of clothing in Yosef’s story. Y’hudah, not Shelah, was responsible for levirate obligation.
4. **Gen. 38:15-19** The text emphasizes that Y’hudah would never had relations with Tamar had he known her identity. His actions were impulsive (turning aside, not having ability to pay), showing that HaShem can redeem human fault to accomplish his purposes. The collateral Tamar collected was highly personal and identifiable. Y’hudah was a person of means; payment of a kid was little.
5. **Gen. 38:20-23** Y’hudah did not even bother to ask her name, emphasizing casualness. The term cult-prostitute (*q’deshah* – קַדְשָׁה), or holy one, is used here vs. harlot (*zonah* – זֹנָה) in v. 15.
6. **Gen. 38:24-26** Y’hudah acts with pomp, exercising his authority as head of his family. His assumption was adultery (she was awaiting a betrothed) with the death penalty defined in future Torah law (Le. 20:10, De. 22:22), but likely by Kena’ani practice of burning. Tamar’s restraint is

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remarkable, presenting unrefusable evidence in a minimally embarrassing way, allowing a respectable response from Y'hudah. The outcome reflects a justice system much earlier than Mt. Sinai.

7. **Gen. 38:27-30** Twins were not expected until labor; possibly comparable to Y'hudah's two lost sons. Peretz (פֶּרֶץ) is the only name in defined, reflecting the importance of his clan in the tribe of Y'hudah, from whom David would descend in 10 generations (Ruth 4:18-22, 2Ch. 2:5, 9-15).

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### Theme

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**Moral Clarity** – Y'hudah eventually found the moral clarity that caused him to act righteously. His story here is framed by his role in betraying his brother and his father, and his future action that restores and saves his entire family and his role in messianic purpose. We must find that same clarity!

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### Thought Focus

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**Tamar – Date Palm:** The name, Tamar is the word for the Date Palm, one of the seven species that can grow to 70 feet, with clusters up to 50 lbs, symbolizing prosperity (Ps. 92:12-14). This name can also mean “the end of bitterness” (*tam-mar* – תָּמַר מָר). Date Palms thrive in salty, bitter water, transforming it into sweet dates. Tamar's life portrayed this characteristic. The light of Messiah is the fruit of redemption that emerges from the bitterness of sin and death, a sweet transformation!

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### Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

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- (37:1) Ya'akov returns to the promise given his father, a different man. How have those who have gone before influenced you? What never changes, and what is “new?” (Jer 6:16, Luk 5:39, Is 48:6, Jude 3)
- (37:12) Ya'akov seems suspicious of his sons, sending Yosef to report on them. How do you behave when no one is watching? (Mat 7:21-23, Job 13:7-9, Psa 44:21, Pro 18:17, Jer 17:10, Gal 6:7)
- (37:23) Yosef entreats his brothers but seems to submit to their mistreatment (42:21). How did Yeshua respond to mistreatment? (Mar 10:33-34, 14:61) How do you respond? (Gen 50:20, Mar 14:61, Rom 12:18-19, Mat 5:38-41, 10:16-22)
- (38:1) Y'hudah went “down” and separated himself from his brothers. Was this because of his role regarding Yosef? How does sin separate us from one another? (Rom 7:11, Pro 9:13-18, Heb 3:12-14)
- (39:1) Y'hudah went down but Yosef was taken down, both resulting in God's plan being accomplished. How do you view your “ups” and “downs?” (Php 2:6-11, Isa 50:4-7, Isa 45:23-25)
- (39:9) Torah had not yet been given. How did Yosef know what sin was? How do you know? (1Co 6:9, Act 15:28-29, Heb 13:4, Jam 2:11)
- (40:1) “Sometime later...” God's time and timing is perfect. Is He in control of your timeline? (Ecc 3:1, Act 1:7, Joh 2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 13:1, Psa 102:13)