

Teacher/Facilitator Notes
TAMAR - Study Guide One
Sylvia De Jong

I would be very interested in hearing your feedback when you have used these materials for a Bible study group. I am looking for constructive criticism in ways to improve the materials for effective use. Please let me know what works, what doesn't work and how God uses the study to change or bless people's lives.
Sylvia@dejongministries.com

Following are the intent and answers to the questions. The questions are formed to draw the student's mind to better understand the topic and God's overall sovereignty.

TAMAR
A Study of Triumph

There are eight Hebrew words for "triumph" – all used with reference to God in praise and prayer and also in discussion concerning God (Strong's Concordance). He triumphs in our lives. The triumph in the study of Tamar is the triumph God brought about by using the life of Tamar: enabling her to become an ancestress of King David and of Jesus Christ in spite of her failure to trust God and her deceptive scheme. God be praised that there is hope! God will overcome our failures if we seek Him and His intervention in our lives.

Please have the students read *Tamar - A Study of Triumph* in the *Widows of the Old Testament* book before answering the questions.

1. *In this study, we learn about God and the beginnings of life. Paul describes God's sovereignty or rule over all in Acts 17:24-28. What are five actions of God described here?*

- a) God made the world and everything in it.
- b) He gives all men life and breath and everything else.
- c) From one man he made every nation of men
- d) He determined the times set for them.
- e) He determined where they should live.

2. *Why did God do these things (v. 27)?*

So that men would seek Him and reach out to find Him. He is not far from each one of us. In Him we live and move and have our being.

3. *How can you know who God is today and what He expects from you?*

By reading God's Word and studying it (see Psalm 119:105-108).

Discuss how the people of Genesis knew about God. God spoke directly to Adam and Eve, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel). This

knowledge and history was passed down in families orally. Tamar didn't have a Bible to read but we do and are without excuse. Defind reading / studying.

4. Read Ezekiel 28:11-17, Isaiah 14:12-15 and Revelation 12:5-9. Why was Lucifer (created by God as an angel) cast out of heaven with one third of the angels?

He used his free will to desire or covet God's position and power. One third of the angels became his followers. God cast them out of heaven.

Note – Keep discussion focused on Lucifer and the angels who followed him and why God cast them out. This is not the time for a thorough study of these verses.

5. Adam and Eve were led astray by Satan (Lucifer) and disobeyed God's commands to them. God gave Satan a promise concerning the curse of sin brought on mankind. What was the promise and who fulfilled it (Genesis 3:15)?

God promised Satan that a woman would bear a Son who would crush him, but he (Satan) would strike Him first. Jesus, God's Son, born of the virgin Mary, fulfilled the promise when he died on the cross and rose from the grave.

6. Who was the father of the great nation from which Jesus the Christ (Messiah) would come (Genesis 12:1-4)?

Abraham.

7. In what way is Genesis 12:1-4 significant to you today (answers will vary)?

a) If I bless the nation Israel, God will bless me.

b) If I curse the nation Israel, I will be cursed.

c) I have been blessed through my Savior, Jesus Christ, a Jew.

d) I am blessed through the Scriptures, written and preserved by Jewish scholars. The physician Luke was the only Gentile writer.

Note – Belief about the nation Israel is controversial today. Talk about what this verse says but avoid getting into a discussion of dispensational or replacement theology at this time. It would draw you away from the topic of O. T. history surrounding Judah and Tamar.

8. How was Judah related to Abraham (see book pg. 16)?

Judah was Abraham's great grandson.

9. What relationship did/does God intend to be the most beautiful fulfilling relationship between humans on earth (pg. 16)?

The marriage relationship between a man and his wife.

Discuss how It is often used as an illustration in the Bible for God's desired relationship with Israel (Isaiah 54:5) and Christ's desired relationship with His Church (Ephesians 5:31-33; Revelation 19:6-8). The relationship of trusting love between the bridegroom and his bride.

10. Judah and Tamar's story isn't often shared. Why do you think that is? Why is it important for the churches today to discuss sexual issues?

To discuss sex is important because moral values/abstinence until marriage help prevent HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases. God forbids sexually intimate relationships outside of marriage. When adults and teens disregard God's law of marriage, they open themselves to sexually transmitted diseases.

11. What does God offer to people who have lost spouses through death or broken marriage vows; to people with HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases?

God cares about each person and offers hope (Romans 15:13) through His loving care, compassion, forgiveness and peace for each one who comes to a personal relationship with God and believes in His Son Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Read Genesis 38:1-7

12. Who were Judah's three sons, born to Shua's daughter?

Er, Onan and Shelah.

13. How did Judah and his nine brothers deceive their father Jacob (Genesis 37:23-31)?

They took their brother Joseph and put him in a well to die. Judah saved Joseph's life by persuading them to sell him as a slave to a caravan going to Egypt. They deceived Jacob by telling him wild animals had killed Joseph. *Do you suppose Judah thought of Joseph later and wondered what happened to him?*

Discuss. Encourage the students to read the rest of Genesis on their own.

14. Of what descent was Tamar (pg. 17)?

Canaanite, quite possibly Philistine. Look at a Bible map (Patriarchs' Time). Adullam and Timnath are located between Jerusalem and Gaza. Look up Adullam and Timnath in a Bible Dictionary.

15. What caused Er's death (Genesis 38:7)?

He was so wicked the Lord put him to death.

16. Was there another time mankind became so evil it grieved God enough to destroy them (Genesis 6:5-8)?

Yes.

What did God do (Genesis 6:17-22, 7:6-12,23)?

He sent a flood to destroy the wicked people. Noah and his family were obedient to God, built an ark, and being in the ark, along with pairs of all the animals and birds, escaped death. Every living creature on earth perished.

17. *What is the Levirate Marriage Law (pg.19)? Read Deuteronomy 25:5-6.*
The brother of a deceased husband was to marry the widow and conceive a child that would be raised up in the deceased brother's name to receive the firstborn's birthright and inheritance.

Read Genesis 38:8-23.

18. *Why did God take Onan's life (vv. 9-10)?*
Onan married Tamar but refused to produce a child for his brother. He did not want a child that would have his brother's birthright and inheritance.

19. *What did Judah promise Tamar when he sent her to live as a widow in her father's house (v. 11)?*
He said she would be given to Shelah as a wife when he became a man.

20. *What were Judah's reasons for grieving?*
a) His son Er's death. b) His son Onan's death c) His wife's death.

21. *Tamar was also in grief for many reasons. What were they?*
She lost her husbands Er and Onan. Judah did not keep his promise when Shelah grew up. She was childless and had no son to receive Er's inheritance.

22. *What were two things Judah did following his time of grieving (vv. 12-16)?*
a) He went to shear his sheep b) He visited a prostitute on the way.

23. *Tamar made a plan to deceive the deceiver. What was it and how do you feel about it (vv. 17-19)?*
She took off her widow clothes, dressed as a prostitute with heavy veils and sat by the road Judah traveled on.

Discuss. *Is it ever right to be deceptive? Why or why not?*

Tamar knew Levirate marriage law (Hittite law codes in her culture) but had no Bible. Consider Romans 1:20. The source of lies is the devil (John 8:44, Acts 5:3). Allow students to share verses in Bible about lying.

24. *What did Judah give Tamar - who was disguised - as a pledge for payment (vv. 17-19)?*
He gave his seal with its cord and his staff.

25. *What happened when Judah sent the goat payment (vv. 20-23)?*
No prostitute was found. Judah must have felt uneasy, wondering if his seal and staff would ever show up, and if so, where.

26. *What did Judah do, three months later, when he heard that Tamar was guilty of prostitution and was pregnant (v. 24)?*
He ordered for Tamar to be burned to death.

27. *What was Tamar's response (v.25)?*

She sent a messenger ahead of her to Judah with the seal, its cord, and the staff, saying the owner was the father.

28. *How did Judah respond when he recognized his seal, cord and staff?*

He said "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah."

29. *Judah apparently forgave Tamar, allowing her to live. What was the result of her pregnancy (v. 25)?*

She gave birth to twin boys, Perez and Zerah.

30. *Describe their birth (vv. 28-30).*

A hand and wrist presented. A scarlet thread was tied on the wrist. When it was pulled back, Perez came first, then Zerah followed, with the red thread on his wrist.

31. *What is the meaning of the name Perez?*

Breaking out.

Of Zerah?

Scarlet.

32. *Joseph's genealogy of Jesus is in Matthew 1:1-16. Copy vv. 3 and 16 here.*

(3) Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram.

(16) And Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

Note - Perez is also in the genealogy of Mary and Jesus in Luke. See Luke 3:33.

33. *The way Tamar chose to take care of her situation gave her sons but no husband. **Discussion question** – Could God have given Tamar a husband and children another way and still allowed her to be an ancestress in the lineage of the Messiah?*

Could she have appealed to Judah and asked for him to fulfill his promise about Shelah? Could she have prayed and trusted God to provide a solution that honored Him?

Fill in the blanks.

34. *Christ left heaven's glory to be born into an imperfect human family.*

*Philippians 2:5-11 tells us Christ humbled himself and became obedient to death on a cross. God exalted him to the highest place and gave him a name above every name, that **at the name of Jesus** every **knee** shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every **tongue** confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord** to the glory of God the Father.*

Personal Application

Give thought to these questions and answer them from your heart. **Answers will vary.**

35. What must it have been like for Tamar to live with a wicked husband – so wicked that God slew him?

Discuss ways you can deal with painful family situations.

Prayer and devotion to the Lord – Job 1:20-22, Psalm 16:8, Isaiah 43:1-3a

36. In what way can you identify with Tamar's widowhood or her longing for a child?

The answers to this question may bring awareness of hurting women in your group. Ask God to give you special opportunities to pray for and minister to these women.

*37. In God's amazing grace and forgiveness he **chose** Tamar to be an ancestress of His son Jesus Christ.*

Discuss – Tamar felt justified in deceiving Judah to get what she wanted. Does it honor God to deceive people to get what you want?

Earlier we discussed other ways Tamar could have addressed her plight of betrayal and rejection without yielding to deception. How should we respond, as followers of Christ, if someone treats us unjustly?

Prayer. Luke 18:1. Appeal. Matthew 18:15-17.

38. Are you trusting God and waiting on Him to grant you the desire of your heart?

Individual desires are different. Often desires are fulfilled in ways that do not honor God. Each one should be encouraged to bring these desires to the Lord and seek His will for them to be fulfilled. Jeremiah 29:11-13.

*39. God's hand is on your life. He wants you to believe and trust Him in all matters of your life. He wants you to be aware of your wrongdoings and **repent** so His **grace** and **mercy** can rule in your life. Repentance means a change of mind and heart which results in a changed life. Grace is undeserved favor. Mercy is compassion or withholding punishment.*

Note - This is a good time to invite individuals in the group to repent of their wrong doings. God in His grace restores those who come to him with honest confession of failures to obey and please Him and a desire to change. 1 John 1:7b,9. Some may prefer to do this alone. Some may want to seek your counsel and help. Help them feel comfortable either way.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, was born, lived and died here on earth so human kind could experience God in the flesh. He rose again and returned to heaven where He intercedes for believers before the throne of God. John 3:16. **If any in the group have not yet trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior, invite them to ask Him to be their Savior and come into their life now.** I have included "Simple

Steps to Introduce Someone to Christ” at the end of this guide. Close with the **written prayer** on page 26 in the book and encourage each one in the group to do the **exercise** in their study guide before beginning the next lesson.

Simple Steps to Introduce Someone to Christ

- 1) Pray for God’s Spirit to draw unbelievers to recognize their need for Jesus Christ.
- 2) Remember you cannot save anyone. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) The Holy Spirit prepares an individual’s heart to desire salvation.
- 4) Give the opportunity but never pressure a person to receive Christ.
- 5) There are many verses that could be used. The following ones are easy to recall.
- 6) Show a person who is seeking salvation the “ABC’s of Accepting Christ.”
 - a) All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23
 - b) Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Acts 16:31a
 - c) Confess with your mouth “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead and you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:9-10.
- 7) If the person has read these Scriptures and is desirous to pray to receive Christ, explain that it is a transaction that takes place between the individual and Jesus Christ by prayer – talking to the Lord.
- 8) An individual who needs help praying may wish to repeat a prayer after you. If there is not complete agreement, the person should be cautioned not to pray the words after you. “Lord Jesus,.....I believe you are the Son of God.....that you died for my sins and rose again.....I confess that I need You in my life to help me do what is right and be my Lord..... I put my trust in You for salvation and for eternal life.....Thank you for your forgiveness..... I pray in your name. Amen.
- 9) Pray audibly using the person’s name and thanking God for bringing her or him into the family of God. Pray for the individual to grow spiritually and ask God to help her or him to tell someone else about receiving Christ as Savior.
- 10) Follow up is very important. If the person who receives Christ continues to come to the Bible study it will help growth to take place. Encourage each new believer to attend a good Bible teaching church, read God’s Word daily, learn to pray, and share with others about their relationship with Christ.
- 11) Be diligent in prayer for new believers.