

# Tamar

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GENESIS 38:11-19, 24-30

Sometimes the Bible is hard to read. It certainly isn't a collection of light, happy stories designed to inspire positive feelings and a clean-cut moral life. Sometimes the darkness and depravity are almost overwhelming. Today's passage is one example. Read Genesis 38:11-19, 24-30.

Commentators point out that Tamar means "palm tree." It's an image of youth and beauty that no doubt felt fitting to Tamar in her younger, optimistic days. But then her life became anything but beautiful. Widowed. Childless. Abused. The victim of powerful, respected men who were supposed to work for her welfare and good.

There are various twists and turns in the story. Some are outrageously sinful. Some are ethically dubious. But all are heartbreaking and tragic. And in some ways, that's the point. One commentator, Iain Duguid, puts it this way: "It is the story of God triumphing over the evil in and among us."

We see this by the end of the chapter, where two things happen:

- First, God breaks Judah, and he repents. This is good news for the rebellious among us. There's always enough grace to forgive even our deepest sins.
- Second, God elevates Tamar. Her honor is restored, and she goes down in history as an ancestor of the Savior. This is good news for the defeated among us. God sees us and is at work for our good.

Amid darkness and depravity – our own and that of others – stands our God. And in the end, he makes sure that his will is done.



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## PRAYER

*Father, I thank you that you are in control and that, in the end, you triumph over the evil in and among us. We see this most clearly at the cross, where you used the greatest evil in human history to work redemption for your own. I bring my sin and pain to you. Grant forgiveness and healing. In Jesus's Name. Amen.*



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