

## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### Talk Genesis 36:1-43: Esau's Descendants and the Early History of Edom

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In Genesis 36 we have the record of Esau's descendants, and the early history of the kingdom of Edom, which Esau established. We're not going to read this entire chapter because of the many names involved, but we'll read selected verses and summarize the rest. We'll give the background notes as we read and summarize.

*" Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom. 2 Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; 3 and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. 4 Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel. 5 And Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.*

*6 Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. 7 For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock. 8 So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.*

*9 And this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. 10 These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. 11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho,<sup>[a]</sup> Gatam, and Kenaz.*

*12 Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.*

*13 These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.*

*14 These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.*

*15 These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn son of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, 16 Chief Korah,<sup>[b]</sup> Chief Gatam, and Chief Amalek. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah.*

*17 These were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.*

*18 And these were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and Chief Korah. These were the chiefs who descended from Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah. 19 These were the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these were their chiefs.*

*20 These were the sons of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.*

*22 And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam.<sup>[c]</sup> Lotan's sister was Timna.*

23 These were the sons of Shobal: Alvan,<sup>[d]</sup> Manahath, Ebal, Shepho,<sup>[e]</sup> and Onam.

24 These were the sons of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This was the Anah who found the water<sup>[f]</sup> in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon. 25 These were the children of Anah: Dishon and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 These were the sons of Dishon:<sup>[g]</sup> Hemdan,<sup>[h]</sup> Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 27 These were the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.<sup>[i]</sup> 28 These were the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

29 These were the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah, 30 Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, and Chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.

31 Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: 32 Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 33 And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. 34 When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. 35 And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Avith. 36 When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. 37 And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. 38 When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. 39 And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadar<sup>[j]</sup> reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Pau.<sup>[k]</sup> His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Mezahab.

40 And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah,<sup>[l]</sup> Chief Jetheth, 41 Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, 42 Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, 43 Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau was the father of the Edomites."

## **Background Notes**

In the first section of Genesis 36 we see that Esau had three wives and five sons. We know about Esau's three wives from Genesis 26 and Genesis 28. Let's read Genesis 26:34, *When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.*" And then in Genesis 28:9, we read: *"So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had."* You'll notice that there is some variation in the names when we compare them. Some commentaries favor the idea that Esau had more than three wives. But most likely the answer is that the wives went by more than one name, especially since these were cross-cultural marriages.

*Verses 7- 8 tell us of the separation between Jacob and Esau. "For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock, so Esau dwelt in Mount Seir." This reminds us of the separation between Abraham and Lot, doesn't it? This separation was after Jacob had come back from his 30 years of absence.*

*Mount Seir, where Esau migrated and founded the nation of Edom, was southeast of the Dead Sea. Esau had taken over Mount Seir even before this time, because when Esau met Jacob returning home, Esau was coming from Mount Seir with four hundred men (Genesis 33). But when Jacob returned home, it seems that Esau then moved his family and all his possessions permanently over to the Mount Seir area. This may have occurred at the time of Isaac's death.*

*Esau grew so powerful in this new area that his name became synonymous with Edom. "So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom"(v8). And, "These were the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these were their chiefs"(v19). Edom and Esau are inseparably linked in this chapter. Edom means red, and not only refers to the reddish rocks of Mount Seir, but goes back to the red lentil stew for which Esau sold his birthright, in Genesis 25:30, "And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom."*

Verses 9-14, the next section of Genesis 36, focus on Esau's descendants who were born after he had migrated to Mount Seir (v9). In all, Esau had five sons ten grandsons, and a number of daughters and granddaughters. In verse 12, we read that one of Esau's grandsons was Amalek. He was the father of the Amalekites. Remember how the Amalekites became a "thorn in Israel's side" -- from the time of Israel's wilderness wanderings, right on into the time of the kings in Israel!

In verses 15-19 we have a list of the descendents of Esau who became chiefs in Edom. This list of chiefs shows the transition from just families to a tribal structure in Edom; similar to the period of Judges in Israel, only much earlier. The in verses 20-30 we have a listing of descendents of Seir the Horite. *"These were the sons of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah..."*

We come to the end of this section in verse 29. These were the chiefs of the Horites. The Horites, or Hivites, as they are also called, were the original inhabitants of the land of Edom. However, when Esau took over this area, he subjugated these people to himself. Deuteronomy 2:12 tells us, *"The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them."* And then Deuteronomy 2:22: *just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day..."*

So the prophecy made by Isaac about Esau way back in Genesis 27 was fulfilled. *'By your sword, you shall live'* (Genesis 27:40). Esau emerged as a powerful overlord in this area. There was some intermarriage between the Horites and the descendents of Esau. In fact, from this section (verses 20-30), we see that one of Esau's wives was a descendent of Seir the Horite.

In verses 31-39 we have the names of some of the early kings of Edom. These all reigned long before there was any king in Israel. Look at verse 31, *"Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel:"* There doesn't seem to be any dynasty here, just the most powerful ruler taking over when the former king died. Again this emphasizes Isaac's prophecy about Esau in Genesis 27:40: *"By your sword, you shall live....."*

In the final section of the chapter, verse 40-43, we have another listing of the chiefs of Esau, but this list is different from the listing in verses 15-19. The list here seems to refer to family districts or dukedoms, as we read in verse 40: *"And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth,..."*

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. Time is the true test of spiritual blessing.**

Look at the first verse of Genesis 37: "Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan."

What we read of Jacob in Genesis 37:1 is definitely in contrast to what we read of Esau in chapter 36. From all outward appearances, at this point it looked like Esau was more blessed than Jacob! He had emerged as a powerful overlord with many people subject to him. Already he had become the nation of Edom. Edom was well on its way – it had kings long before Israel had kings. Meanwhile, Jacob was still a stranger in the land of Canaan. It's true that he was blessed with flocks and herds, but he certainly didn't have the power and the kingdom that Esau had. Up until the time of David and Solomon, Edom, the older brother, was more developed than Israel, the younger brother.

But time is the true test of spiritual blessing. When King David conquered Edom many years later, the full force of the prophecy in Genesis 25:33 was seen: "the older shall serve the younger." And where is Edom today? Edom is no more! How history changes things! Read the book of Obadiah and the predictions of Edom's downfall there. They have come true. And the prophet Ezekiel wrote in Ezekiel 35:7-9: "*Thus I will make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns. 8 And I will fill its mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those who are slain by the sword shall fall. 9 I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; then you shall know that I am the LORD.*"

Edom is no more -- but look at Israel! Israel is once again in the land of promise as a nation, a **powerful** and prosperous nation! And it is just a matter of time before a spiritual revival comes to the sons of Jacob. Read Romans 11 in this connection. Time is the true test of spiritual blessing.

## **2. Time is the true test of spiritual character.**

We have seen in our studies in Genesis that Esau was not a spiritual person. Right from the start in Genesis 25, we see that he despised his birthright, and that birthright included spiritual privileges and responsibilities. Esau never changed throughout his life. Even though he nobly left the land of Canaan to Jacob, Esau never turned to the Lord. Hebrew 12:16 says this about Esau, "*lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright..*"

On the other hand, we have seen that Jacob emerged as a man of spiritual character. Even though he had to learn the hard way, and had to go through the School of God for many years because of his selfish, deceitful, and crafty ways, there was in Jacob a desire for God. And Jacob slowly but surely matured as a believer. I love the picture that we get of Jacob in Hebrews 11:21: "*By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.*"

Jacob did graduate from the school of God. His last years were spent in worship! Time is the true test of spiritual character.

## **Practical Application**

**Don't feel bad if it looks like you've been left behind!**

How do you think Jacob felt when, on the one hand, he had the promises from God Himself that he would be blessed, but then he saw his brother Esau become powerful, and the head of a kingdom? Jacob was wealthy, with many flocks and herds, but he was still a shepherd and a nomad. Esau, however, had a kingdom! It looked like Jacob had been left behind, and that must have been a little hard to take. But God had his reasons.

God has his reasons today. Spiritual blessing demands patient faith. Waiting on God while others appear to prosper is a test of faith and perseverance! Don't feel bad if it looks like you have been left behind.

Maybe you are in that situation right now. People you grew up with, or university friends, seem to be way ahead of you when it comes to career, and material prosperity, etc. Listen! If you are walking with the Lord, you don't have to feel bad if it looks like you have been left behind. The story is not over yet! It's spiritual blessings that count in the end.

This is a good practical application for me. Most of you know that I changed from a career in research science and engineering to full time ministry. Sometimes when I hear about the success and the material prosperity of my former colleagues, I have to remind myself of this lesson. We all do! Don't feel bad if it looks like you've been left behind!