

Genesis 36

Moses gave Cain's lineage (4:17-25) before he focused on Seth's (chapter 5). He recorded Ishmael's lineage (25:12-18) before he focused on Isaac's (25:19ff). Here, Moses will give us Esau's lineage before he leaves Esau and focuses on Jacob, through Joseph (chapter 37). This is one of the longest chapters in Genesis. Among the ideas we gain from this chapter is that God is interested in all mankind, not just the chosen seed. Simply because the seed came through Jacob does not mean God ignored Esau. He still blessed Esau (cf. Mal. 1:2-3). The names are all Semitic names.

TRANSLATION - 36:1-7:

1 Now these [are] the generations of Esau; he [is] Edom. **2** Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah, daughter of Ana, daughter of Zibeon, the Hivite, **3** and Basemath, daughter of Ishmael, the sister of Nebaioth.

4 Then Adah gave birth for Esau to Eliphaz and Basemath gave birth to Reuel. **5** And Oholibamah gave birth to Jeush and Jalam and Cora. These [are] the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

6 Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and every soul of his house and cattle and every animal and all his property which he acquired in the land of Canaan and he went to the land away from Jacob, his brother. **7** Because their possessions were too many to dwell together and the land was not able their travels to sustain them because of their property.

ARCHAEOLOGY:

For "Hittites", see 15:20; 23:10; 25:9. The nationality is found 48 times in the OT. The Hivites were found first, and not since, 10:17. They are only found 25 times in the OT.

COMMENTS:

This is the ninth appearance of the word translated "generations" which we understand to be divisions of the book of Genesis (see also at verse 8, which is the only time this word is used twice with one individual; we do not know why). See the Introduction for a discussion of these divisions. "Edom" is found twelve times in the chapter. Moses simply reiterates here what he had informed the reader in 25:30; Esau is the forefather of the Edomites.

Esau had three wives: Adah, Oholibamah, and Basemath. Adah had one son: Eliphaz. Basemath had one son: Reuel. Oholibamah had three sons: Jeush, Jalam, and Cora.

The area where he and Jacob had been living was not able to sustain both men with all their families, servants, and herds. So, Esau, like his grandfather Abraham and great uncle Lot before him (chapter 13), moved.

APPLICATION:

Contemporaries in the text - Despite Jacob stealing the birthright and the blessing from his oldest twin brother, Esau has still found himself blessed by God. He is mentioned 97 times in the OT. Esau's wives' names had been given at 26:34 and 28:9. We do not know, but it is likely, that Basemath (36:3) and Mahalath (28:9) are the same woman.

Contemporaries of Moses - When Israel was coming out of Egypt, Moses forbid them to pass through the land of Edom because he had given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession (Deut. 2:4-5). See also Num. 20:14-21.

Later Hebrew writers - King David will subjugate the Edomites (2 Sam. 8:14; 1 Kings 11:15-17). Amaziah reestablished firm control in Edom (2 Kings 14:7). Obadiah, the prophet, dedicates his entire message to rebuking the Edomites for their lack of concern for their brother, Israel, when Babylon attacked and overran Israel. Jeremiah will also rebuke the Edomites for their sins (49:8-10; Lam. 4:21-22), as will the author of Psalm 137 (137:7) and Amos (1:11-12).

“Eliphaz” was a friend of Job (2:11) who came from Teman, an Edomite city (Jer. 49:7, 20). Teman was Eliphaz’s son’s name (36:11, 15). Perhaps the city was named after his son.

NT writers - Esau is mentioned three times: Rom. 9:13; Heb. 11:20; 12:16.

TRANSLATION - 36:8-14:

8 So Esau dwelt in the mountain of Seir. Esau, he [was] Edom. **9** Now these [are] the generations of Esau, the father of Edom, in the mountain of Seir. **10** These are the names of the sons of Edom: Eliphaz, son of Adah, the wife of Esau, Reuel, son of Basamath, the wife of Esau.

11 Now the sons of Eliphaz were: Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam and Chenaz. **12** Now Timna was the concubine to Eliphaz, son of Esau, and she bore to Eliphaz Amalech. These [are] the sons of Adah, wife of Esau.

13 Now these [are] the sons of Reuel: Nahath and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, wife of Esau.

14 These were the sons of Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, daughter of Zibeon, wife of Esau and she gave birth for Esau to Jeush and Jalam and Chora.

COMMENTS:

Esau settled in the mountainous country of Seir. The Horites (see 36:20-21) had been living in Seir (14:6). They are associated with the Hurrians who seem to have inhabited the land as early as the first half of the second millennium B. C. This paragraph traces Esau’s descendants to the third generation.

APPLICATION:

Contemporaries of Moses - The Edomites dispossessed the land of Seir (Deut. 2:12, 22; Josh. 24:4) just as Israel dispossessed the land of Canaan. Deuteronomy 23:8-9 forbid Israel to hate the Edomites. If Amalech (verse 12) is the forefather of the Amalekites, Israel fought against them when they came out of Egypt (Exo. 17:8-16; Deut. 25:17-19).

Later Hebrew writers - The author of 1 Chronicles repeats much of the substance of this chapter in 1 Chronicles 1:35-54.

TRANSLATION - 36:15-30:

15 These [are] the chiefs of the sons of Esau, the sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau, chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Chenaz, **16** Chief Cora, chief Gatam, chief Amalech. These [are] the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. These [are] sons of Adah.

17 These [are] the sons of Reuel, son of Esau: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These [are] the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These [are] the sons of Basamath, wife of Esau. **18** And these [are] the sons of Oholibamah, wife of Esau: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Cora. These are the chiefs of Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, wife of Esau.

19 These [are] the sons of Esau and these [are] their chiefs. He [is] Edom. **20** These [are] the sons of Seir; the Horites, [who] were dwelling in the land of Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah. **21** And Dishon and Ezer and Dishan. These [are] the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom.

22 Now the sons of Lotan [were] Hori and Hemam and Lotan’s sister [was] Timna. **23** And these [were] sons of Shobal: Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho and Onam. **24** And these [were] sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah, he [was] Anah who found the seas in the desert when he was pasturing the donkeys of Zibeon his father.

25 And these [were] the sons of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, daughter of Anah. **26** And these [were] the sons of Dishon: Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran. **27** These [were] the sons of Ezer: Bilhan and Zaavan and Achan.

28 These [are] the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

29 These [are] the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah. **30** Chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These [are] the chiefs of the Horites for their chiefs in the land of Seir.

WORDS:

“Chiefs” (verse 15) is found 43 times in this chapter; 60 times in the OT. It is related to the word “thousands” and is presumed to mean someone who leads such a number of people. It is not likely used literally here but means someone who rules a group smaller than a nation but larger than a clan.

COMMENTS:

This paragraph simply relates the political structure of the Edomites during this time in their history.

TRANSLATION - 36:31-39:

31 Now these [are] the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned for the sons of Israel. **32** And Bela reigned in Edom, son of Beor and the name of his city [was] Dinhabah. **33** Then Belah died and Jobab reigned in his place, son of Zerah from Bozrah. **34** Then Jobab died and Husham reigned in his place, from the land of the Temanites. **35** Then Husham died and Hedad reigned in his place, son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the field of Moab and the name of his city [was] Avith.

36 Then Hadad died and Samlah reigned in his place, from Masrechah. **37** And Samlah died and Shaul reigned in his place, in Rehoboth by the river. **38** Then Shaul died and Baal-Hanan reigned in his place, son of Achbor. **39** Then Baal-Hanan died, son of Achbor, and Hedar reigned in his place, and the name of his city [was] Pau and the name of his wife [was] Mehetebel, daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab.

ARCHEOLOGY:

“Bozrah” (verse 33) will serve as a capital of Edom (Isa. 34:6; 63:1; Jer. 49:13, 22; Amos 1:12). It was located 25 miles southeast of the Dead Sea.

COMMENTS:

Verse 31 notes that Edom had kings before Israel did. Some suggest that this verse shows Genesis was not written until after Saul or David, perhaps, was appointed king. But Moses had already told his audience that kings will come from the family of Abraham (17:6, 16) and Jacob (35:11).

In contrast with the Davidic line of kings of Judah, and a few other minor dynasties in Israel, Edom does not have any dynasties, at least in this chapter. No king here had a son who reigned after him. Additionally, there are three different capitals, apparently, and kings came from four different places. This may suggest the kings reigned over small areas of the land of Edom or it might mean there was considerable unrest among the Edomites during this early period of their history, perhaps similar to the time of the judges in Israel’s history.

APPLICATION:

Contemporaries of Moses - Moses will prescribe regulations for those who would rule as kings over Israel (Deut. 17:14-20).

TRANSLATION - 36:40-43:

40 Now these [are] the names of the chiefs of Esau, for their clans, at their places by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth. **41** Chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon. **42** Chief Chenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar. **43** Chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These [are]

the chiefs of Edom by their locations in the land of their possession. He [is] Esau, father of Edom.

COMMENTS:

The older brother, Esau, leaves biblical history as Moses turns his complete attention to Jacob, through his son Joseph.

APPLICATION:

NT writers - King Herod was an Idumean (Edomite).