



Genesis – 36:1-43 Esau and the Nation of Edom (Lesson #45)

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Outline for this week in your notes:

- I. Esau's sons that were born in Canaan (36:1-5)
- II. Esau leaves the Promised Land and moves to Mt Seir (36:6-8)
- III. Esau's descendants including those born in Mt Seir (36:9-14)
- IV. The Chiefs of Edom (36:15-19)
- V. The descendants of Seir the Horite (36:20-30)
- VI. The kings of Edom (36:31-39)
- VII. The Chiefs of Edom restated (36:40-43)

36:1 These are the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). **2** Esau took his wives from the Canaanites: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite, **3** and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. **4** And Adah bore to Esau, Eliphaz; Basemath bore Reuel; **5** and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

Vs 1 - Here we are told that these are the **generations of Esau** (who will become known as the nation of Edom or the Edomites).

The nation of Israel will have many **brushes with the Edomites**. Here we are learning where they came from and how they ended up where they ended up. We will look more at one of the brushes with the Edomites here in a bit.

The Hebrew word translated generations is the Hebrew word **תולדה (towl'dah)**, it means **descendants, genealogies, or generations**. We have seen this word used a number of times already, as we have walked through the different genealogies here in Genesis (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2).

Here in Genesis chapter 36, we find **two תולדה (towl'dahs)** of Esau.

Vs 2 – First, we are introduced to Esau's three wives Adah, Oholibamah, and Basemath.

Now before we get started I need you to know that there is some confusion and even disagreement over Esau's wives.

Here is why, earlier in Genesis we were told when Esau took the first two wives:

“When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite,” (Ge 26:34 ESV)

Then we were told:

“8 So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, 9 Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.” (Ge 28:8-9 ESV)

Here is **the problem** when we **compare these** it initially looks **very confusing**:

As we start comparing these accounts it seems that each of these ladies had **two names**, we are not sure why.

- First look at **Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite** and **Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. Same person?**
- Next look at **Basemath Ishmael's daughter and sister of Nebaioth** and notice that **Mahalath has the same lineage. Same person?**

- That leaves **Oholibamah the daughter of Anah**, and (as you will see in a moment) the **granddaughter of Zibeon**. The Hebrew word can be used that way. Many believe this is also **Judith the daughter of Berri**. But we cannot be positive, for we are not sure who Berri is and the Hebrew can be used for anyone in the family line.

So two match, one is a possible match as a wife Esau married. It is possible that Judith never had any children or she left the scene somehow. We may never fully be sure.

It is possible that Jacob knew them with one set of names, and Esau referred to them under another set. If people having two different names seems odd to us, consider Abram, Saria, and Jacob.

Henry Morris, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, John Gill, and Matthew Poole all believe that these are the same three women and provide a number of different possible reasons for the two sets of names.

So, Esau took at least three wives and possibly four from the **surrounding nations**.

First mentioned is Adah, who was the **daughter of Elon**, who was a **Hittite**. (**Canaanite nation**). She is also known as Basemath. **Adah** means (**ornament**).

Second here mentioned is Oholibamah, who was the **daughter of Anah**, the **granddaughter of Zibeon** (you will see this soon enough and the Hebrew word can be used that way). Now Zibeon is said to be a **Hivite** (**another Canaanite nation**). This is possibly **Judith** from Genesis 26. **Oholibamah** means (**tent of the high place**)

Thirdly is Basemath, who was the **daughter of Ishmael**, the **sister of Nebaioth**. **Basemath** means (**spice**). We met her previously (Gen 28) under the name **Hahalath**, which means (**stringed instrument**).

So Esau was a **polygamist** and takes (at least) **two Canaanite wives** and one who descends **from Ishamel**.

I would remind us what it was like for the family when Esau took the two Canaanite wives:

“and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.” (Ge 26:35 ESV)

To get to get a picture of Esau, I would remind us what he did following **Issac’s blessing of Jacob and Isaac and Rebekah** sending Jacob to Haran to secure a wife (Gen 28:6-9).

APPLICATION: Esau had a deep **disrespect** and **disregard** for his parents. I would remind us:

“2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),” (Eph 6:2 ESV)

REVIEW: So why was marrying the Canaanites a problem (Gen 9:22-25)?

REVIEW: Why were the Canaanites were a cursed people?

Ham would have four sons Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan. Why following this event, would Noah curse Canaan?

Remember we looked at Levitus 20 and saw a laundry list of their sins.

God through Noah pronounced a prophetic curse on the Canaanite people for the wicked people they would become! **Remember Dinah, Shechem, and Hamor?**

APPLICATION: You and I are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2Co 6:14 ESV)

Sadly, in most cases, not in all, but in most the **unbeliever pulls the believer down**, not the other way around.

Vs 4 - Next we are told **Adah** bore Eliphaz, **Basemath** bore Reuel, and **Oholibamah** bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. There are the sons of Esau that were born to him in the land of Canaan.

Thus, it appears that while Jacob was in Haran forming a family, Esau was in the Promised Land forming a family as well.

6 Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob.

Here in verses 6-8 we see Esau's **departure from the land of Canaan**, from the Promised Land. This shows that at some point, Esau ceded the land of Canaan to Jacob. Esau accepted the patriarchal blessing and moved out of and away from the land of Canaan which was promised to Jacob and his descendants:

Remember Isaac's blessing prior to Jacob leaving for Haran (Gen 28:1-5).

Keep in mind his father had blessed him (sort of) as well (Ge 27:39-40 ESV).

Vs 7-8 For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock. 8 So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. (Esau is Edom.)

So while Jacob is becoming a very rich man in Haran, Esau is becoming very rich and powerful in Canaan.

At this point in the story, it seems that Esau leaves his father's home, he takes all that he had built-up and he moves away from his brother's inheritance.

Again, it seems that Esau did this while Jacob was in Haran, for when Jacob came back from Haran **Esau was already living in Seir. Seir is east of the Jordan rift valley and south of the Dead Sea.**

9 These are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir. 10 These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. 11 The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. 12 (Timna was a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son; she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.) These are the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.

Vs 9 - Here we come to a **second toldoh of Esau**, this one **seems to review** and then **cover those who were born outside the land of Canaan** in Mount Sier.

Now Moses is about to start walking us through the generations of the Edomites who live in the hill country of Seir.

Keep in mind, these were not all alive when Jacob and Esau were living.

Here we are told plainly two things:

- 1) Esau became the father of the Edomites
- 2) They lived in the hill country of Seir

Vs 10 - Here Moses reiterates what he told us in verses 1-4 of this chapter. So we are told about two of Esau's sons.

Vs 11 - Moses outlines the **sons that were born to Eliphaz**, you can see there were sons to an unnamed wife as well as one son to a concubine.

Eliphaz, who would be Esau's oldest son had the following sons. Now before we read the list we are **not provided with the mother's name**, but here are the sons; **Teman, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz**.

NOW, before we go any further, I need to show you something.

There is a **possibility** that this **Eliphaz**, is the same Eliphaz that we read about in the book of Job:

*"Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, **Eliphaz** the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him." (Job 2:11 ESV)*

Now, as you consider what I am proposing you should think to yourself, a **matching name is not enough**. I agree.

Next notice that Eliphaz is called a **Temanite**. **He was likely from Teman**, which is in **Edom**:

"therefore thus says the Lord GOD, I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off from it man and beast. And I will make it desolate; from Teman even to Dedan they shall fall by the sword." (Eze 25:13 ESV)

We just read that Teman was the grandson of Esau and a son of Eliphaz! In the book of Job, Eliphaz was an Edomite from Teman. Here we have ran into an Edomite named Eliphaz who has a son named Teman.

Do you remember two weeks ago how we saw the **city of Shechem**. The **chieftain** had named the city after his son. **Hamor was the king**, who lived in **Shechem, (the name of his son)**.

Finally, we are told in the book of Job that the setting is in Uz:

"There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil." (Job 1:1 ESV)

Here is what Jeremiah wrote in Lamentations, it is a prophecy against Edom:

"Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, you who dwell in the land of Uz; but to you also the cup shall pass; you shall become drunk and strip yourself bare." (La 4:21 ESV)

It seems clear that Uz was in the land of Edom. It seems clear that Job's friend and very poor counselor (Eliphaz) was an Edomite was from a town or city called Teman.

Interestingly enough, Esau has a son named Eliphaz, who has a son named Teman. This Teman, as you will see in a moment is a chief and so having a town named after him, like Shechem is no big surprise.

So is this Eliphaz the Eliphaz in Job. I leave that for you to decide.

Vs 12 - Next we are told about a concubine of Eliphaz, her name was Timna. Timna also bore to Eliphaz, **Amalek**.

The descendants of Amalek, known as the Amalekites, popped up at various times with the nation of Israel (Nu 13:29; Ex 17:8-11; 17:14).

- They would **subjugate Israel** during the times of the Judges (Judg 3:13; 6:3 and 7:12).
- They were attacked under Saul's reign (I Sam 14:48).
- Later they were attacked by David (I Sam 27:8; 30:1).
- The remainder were **eliminated during the reign of Hezekiah** (I Chr 4:42-43).

APPLICATION: If God says it, you can count on it!

OK, back to the story. Then we are told that these are the sons of Adah. These are actually the sons and grandsons of Adah and the Hebrew word is used like that quiet regularly.

Observations about the Tribes of Esau:

- 1) Esau had a total of **5 sons**.
- 2) Esau had a total of **10 grandsons**.
- 3) Overall there were **13 tribes** with tribal chiefs under Esau.
- 4) Of all these names only **two contain the name of God** in any form:
 - a. **Reuel** (friend of God)
 - b. **Jeush** (Yahweh help)

This points, I suspect to the direction the Edomites are going. Away from God!

One other point. Esau's ability to muster 400 men and meet Jacob as Jacob returned to the Promised Land makes sense now.

13 These are the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These are the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. 14 These are the sons of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: she bore to Esau Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

Vs 13-14 - Next Moses walks us through the grandsons of Esau.

These are the sons of Basemath, again the Hebrew word can be used that way for literally they are the grandsons of Basemath. Then we are told again about the **sons of Oholibamah**.

15 These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau: the chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, 16 Korah, Gatam, and Amalek; these are the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah. 17 These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: the chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah; these are the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

Vs 15-16 Here we are told plainly who the "chiefs" of the sons of Esau:

This word is translated **chief, duke, or governor**, although across different versions, **chief is the most common translation**. Chiefs were **normally tribal leaders**; these verses indicate that **Esau became the father of 13 tribes**.

This is the formation of the fledging nation of Esau in the land of Edom.

Then Moses reiterates the sons of Eliphaz, except he clearly tells us that they were each chiefs in the nation of Edom.

** Chief Korah, a son of Eliphaz is missing from the list in verses 9-14 and is missing from I Chr 1:36. Many scholars believe that Korah's name was miscopied from verse 18.

Vs 17 - Here we see the **chiefs** who **descended from Reuel**, named **Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah**, all of those born to Esau's son Reuel, and notice they were born to Reuel in the land of Edom

Again, these are not literally sons, but grandsons, but the Hebrew word can be used that way.

18 These are the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife: the chiefs Jeush, Jalam, and Korah; these are the chiefs born of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. 19 These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their chiefs.

So, we are seeing the formation of the **Edomite nation under Esau** and we are seeing the establishment of **chiefs within that nation**.

Here we are told the **chiefs under Oholibamah** are the sons **Jeush, Jalam, and Korah**.

It seems that are 13 chiefs in the **Edomite nation**. For some reason **Eliphaz and Reuel** and not listed as chiefs.

These are the sons, and grandsons of Esau and the chiefs of Edom, with the exception of Eliphaz and Reuel.

20 ¶ These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. 22 The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna. 23 These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

Vs 20 - Now Moses shifts gears, having outlined the chiefs of the nation of Edom, he now moves to talk about the sons of Seir the Horite.

Again, Chiefs were **normally tribal leaders**; these verses indicate that Seir, the original inhabitants of the land became the **father to 7 tribes**.

As you consider this you might be wondering why in the world are we **picking up these pagan people on a discussion about Esau**.

As you will quickly see, there is a **connection between the Horites and the Edomites**.

The Horites, were the original inhabitants of the land of Mt Seir, they were the original tribes that lived there. The meaning of Horite is cave dweller.

Outside the Bible the Horites are known as the Hurrians, and they are frequently mentioned in the Nuzi Tablets.

The Horites (Hurrians) were an independent nation. We saw this when the Meopotamian kings swept down from the north in the event where Lot was capture, but there we were told:

“and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness.” (Ge 14:6 ESV)

But the Edomites defeated them, subjugated them, and likely absorbed them into the Edomite nation:

“The Horites also lived in Seir formerly, but the people of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them and settled in their place, as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.)” (De 2:12 ESV)

Seir the Horite had **seven sons** who **were all princes**. These men were the chiefs of the Horite people, they were the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.

Vs 22 - So Lotan had two sons from an unnamed wife, their names were Hori and Hemam. Next we are told that Lotan had a sister who is named Timna.

If you are wondering, why are we being told about these **pagan Horite chiefs**, I believe this is one of the reasons.

This is the same Timna who was also the **concubine to Eliphaz (Esau's oldest son)**. This is one thing that connects the Edomites and the Horites together.

Vs 23 - Next we are provided with the sons of Shobal, through an unnamed Horite woman and their names are **Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam**.

24 These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah; he is the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he pastured the donkeys of Zibeon his father. 25 These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah. 26 These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 27 These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. 28 These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

Vs 24 - Moses provides us with the sons of Zibeon through an unnamed wife and their names are **Aiah** and **Anah**.

Then, as if his **reputation** those many years ago **proceeded him**, Moses tells us **that Anah was the one who found the hot springs in the wilderness and pastured the donkeys for his father**.

The Hebrew word translated “**hot springs**” is **יַם (yem)**. This word is a **hapax-legomenon**, meaning it is a word that is only used here in the entire Hebrew bible.

The meaning is a **little uncertain**, but the best bet is **hot springs**.

Vs 25 - Next we are told about the children of chief Anah. First Dishon, we can assume that this is a different Dishon than his brother of the same name and a woman named Oholibamah.

Here in Oholibamah, we find a second connection that connects the Edomites to the Horites. This Oholibamah is one of **Esau’s wives**. Thus Oholibamah, who is Esau’s wife is a Horite, she is the daughter of Anah, one of the sons of Seir.

Vs 26 - Next Moses lists for us the sons of Dishon born by an unnamed wife, namely **Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran** and **Cheran**.

Vs 27 - Moses continues to work his way through the chiefs of the Horite nation and he now focuses on the chief Ezer. The sons born to chief Ezer are **Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan**.

Vs 28 - Moses now closes out the last of the **chief of the Horites**, the last of the sons of Seir, namely **Dishan**. Dishan’s sons were **Uz** and **Aran**.

29 These are the chiefs of the Horites: the chiefs Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 30 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the chiefs of the Horites, chief by chief in the land of Seir.

Here Moses reiterates the chiefs of the Horite nation were the seven direct (immediate) sons of Seir namely Lotan, Shobal Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan

So as we close this small section you should recognize that the Edomites, the **Edomite nation** was a people of **mixed heritage, Semitic (through Esau) and Canaanitic (through Seir who was a Horite/ Canaanite)**.

31 ¶ These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites. 32 Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, the name of his city being Dinhabah. 33 Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. 34 Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. 35 Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, reigned in his place, the name of his city being Avith.

Vs 31 - Here we are about to be told about **7 kings** who ruled in the **land of Edom before Israel ever had a king to rule over it**.

Keep in mind it will be **hundreds of years** before Israel would receive a king and the Edomites as they expanded set up under the arrangement of Kings!

Moses is about to tell us about the **kings of Edom**, the nation that rose to power after it **defeated and subjugated** the **Horite nation**.

Some things to look for that are very different that what we will find in the Judean kings:

- 1) The **son did not become the next king**, in fact the crown did not stay in the family line but moved around. The next king was **either elected** or it was the one who **had the power and will to take the throne**.
- 2) The **capital did not stay in the same place** but moved to the hometown of the new king.
 - The first king is Bela, the son of Beor, he reigned from Dinhabah. But then he died.
 - The second is Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, where he reigned from is not listed, but then he died.
 - The third is Husham, his father's name is not provided, he was from the land of the Temanites, but then he died.
 - The fourth is Hadad, the son of Bedad, he is the one who **defeated Midian** in the **country of Moab**, the name of his **city was Avith**.

36 Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. 37 Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates reigned in his place. 38 Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. 39 Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place, the name of his city being Pau; his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab.

- But then Hadad died...
- The **fifth king** of Edom is Samlah, father's name is not provided, he was from Masrekah, but then he died.
- The **sixth king** was Shaul, father's name is not provided, who he was from Rehoboth on the Euphrates, but then Shaul died.
- The **seventh king** Baal-hanan, the son of Achbor, then came into power. But Baal-hanan died.
- Next and finally, **Hadar came into power**, his father is not listed, but the name of his city was Pau, then we are told additional information, his **wife's named was Mehetabel**, she was the **daughter of Matred**, and the **daughter (likely granddaughter) of Mezahab**.

But notice what is missing. It **does not say** that Baal-hanan died. Rather than death, we have the information about his wife. Some scholars believe that **Baal-hanan was alive and reigning when Moses wrote this account**.

Also, **Dr. Henry Morris** believes that **Baal-hanan was the king** who was alive when what we read in **Numbers chapter 20** occurred.

40 These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans and their dwelling places, by their names: the chiefs Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, 41 Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, 42 Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, "Magdiel, and Iram; these are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of Edom), according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession.

Here Moses wraps with a review of what he has already told us namely:

These are the **chiefs of Esau**. We are reminded that **Esau** is synonymous with **Edom**.

This is **Edom**, in their **dwelling places**, in the **land of their possessions**, which is NOT in Canaan, it is NOT in the Promised Land.

With this account, Esau disappears from the Genesis record and is never mentioned again.

In fact, Esau name is **not mentioned again in Genesis**, it is not mentioned in **Exodus**, it is not mentioned in **Leviticus**, it is not mentioned in **Numbers**.