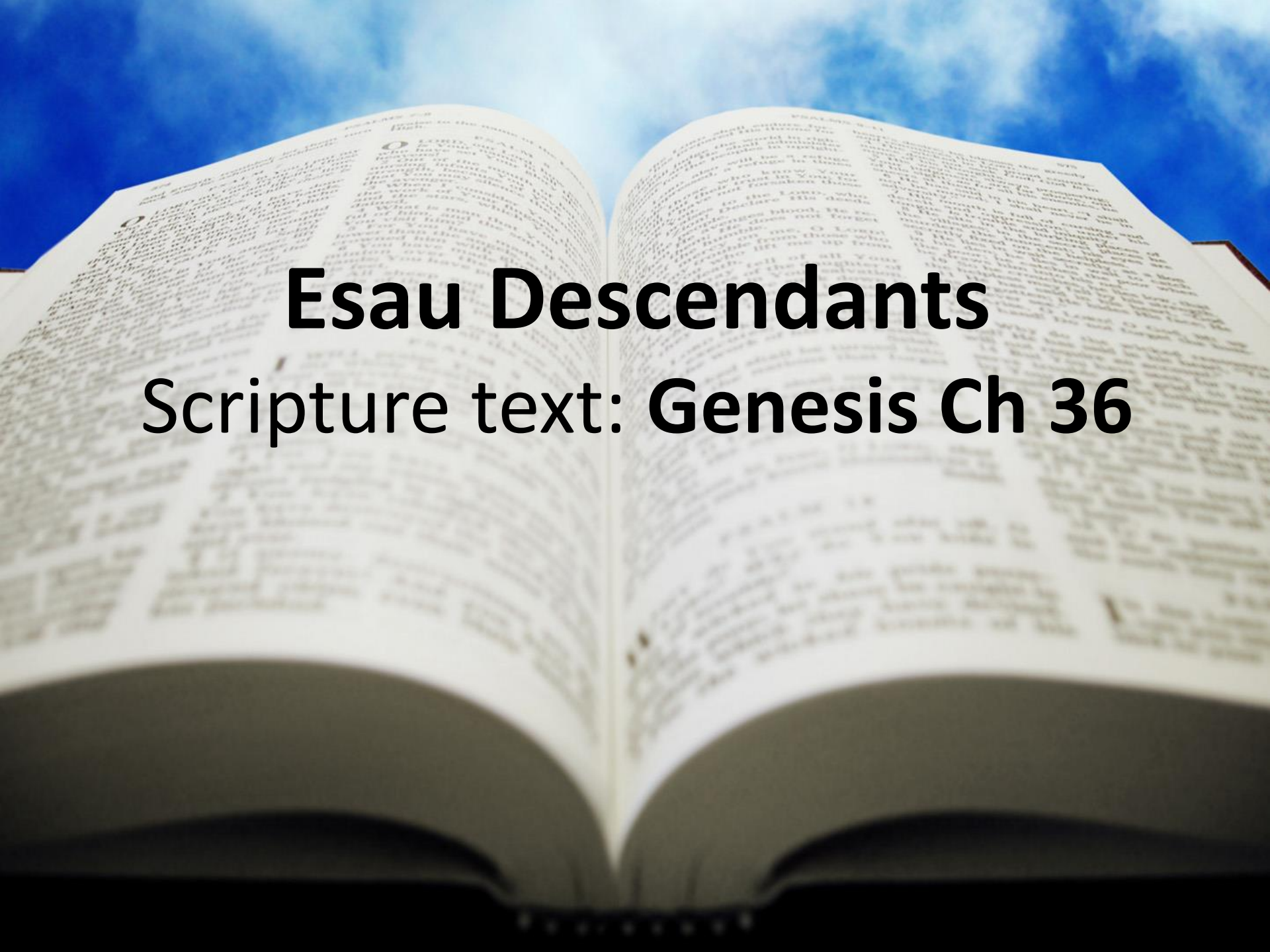


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# Esau Descendants

Scripture text: **Genesis Ch 36**

## The succession from Esau (36:1–8)

This chapter is complicated and difficult, the details quite baffling. The *account* of Isaac (25:19–35:29) has closed, so the book discusses the successions from his sons, following the custom of wrapping up the history of the unchosen line (chap. 36) before going to the chosen (chap. 37; Similar of that with Cain and Seth in Genesis Chapter 4 and 5; **Noah's Children** Genesis 10:1–20 with 10:21–31; **Ismael and Isaac** Genesis 21:8–21 with 22:1–18).

Verses 1–8. These verses give the tôledôt of Esau. He had **three wives**: Adah ... Oholibamah, and Basemath.

Since two of these wives' names are not the same as those listed earlier (26:34; 28:9), either the others had died or he favored these three among his six or the two **took different names**.

Taking a different name was more common and most likely to be the case.

**Genesis 36:1-5** These are the generations of **Esau (that is, Edom)**. 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, and **Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth**. And Adah bore to Esau, **Eliphaz**; Basemath bore **Reuel**; and Oholibamah bore **Jeush, Jalam, and Korah**. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

**Esau who is Edom**—A name applied to him in reference to the peculiar color of his skin at birth [Ge 25:25], rendered more significant by his inordinate **craving for the red pottage** [Ge 25:30], and also by the fierce sanguinary character of his descendants (compare Ez 25:12; Ob 1:10).

**Genesis 25:29-30** Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, "**Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!**" (Therefore his name was called Edom.)

**Ezekiel 25:12-13** "Thus says the Lord GOD: Because **Edom acted revengefully against the house of Judah** and has grievously offended in taking vengeance on them, 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.

**Obadiah 1:9-10** And your mighty men shall be dismayed, O Teman, so that every man from **Mount Esau will be cut off by slaughter**. Because of the **violence done to your brother Jacob**, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever.

**Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan—**  
**There were three, mentioned under different**  
for it is evident that Bashemath is the same as  
Mahalath (Gen. 28:9), since they both stand in the  
relation of daughter to Ishmael and sister to  
Nebajoth; and hence it may be inferred that **Adah is**  
**the same as Judith, Aholibamah as Bathsemath** (Gen.  
26:34). **It was not unusual for women, in that early**  
**age, to have two names,** as Sarai was also Iscah [Gen.  
11:29]; and this is the more probable in the case of  
Esau's wives, who of course would have to take **new**  
**names when they went from Canaan to settle in**  
**mount Seir.**



**Genesis 26:34-35** When Esau was forty years old, he took **Judith** the daughter of Beerli the Hittite to be his wife, and **Basemath** the daughter of **Elon the Hittite**, and **they made life bitter** for Isaac and Rebekah.

**Genesis 36:2-3** 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, and **Basemath, Ishmael's daughter**, the sister of Nebaioth.

**Judith (ju'-dith)** = Praised; the praised one.

**Adah (a'-dah)** = Ornament; to adorn; adornment; beauty; pleasure; (roots = [1] Jehovah adorns; [2] ornament from Jehovah).

**Bashemath (bash'-e-math)** = Pleasant smelling; fragrant; perfumed; (root = to smell sweetly; to be pleased). Spice.

**Aholibamah (a-hol'-ib-a'-mah)** = Tent of the high place; my tent on high.

**Genesis 28:8-9** So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, 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.

Oholibamah was a great-grand-daughter of Seir the Horite, whose descendants were living in Edom when Esau went there (36:20, 25). **From these three wives Esau had five sons.**

**Genesis 36:4** And Adah bore to Esau, **Eliphaz**;  
Basemath bore **Reuel**;

**Eliphaz (el'-if-az)** = My God is fine gold; God the strong; to whom God is strength. My precious God; God is dispenser. My God has refined.

**Reuel (re-u'-el)** = Friend of God; God is a friend. Same as Raguel = Friend of God; (root = to feed; to shepherd; to use as a friend). Associate ye with God; tend ye God.

**Genesis 36:5** and Oholibamah bore **Jeush, Jalam,** and **Korah**. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

**Jeush (je'-ush)** = Same as Jehush = He will gather together; to whom God hastens; (root = to assemble together). He will succor.

**Jaalam (ja'-a-lam)** = He will be hid; he will hide; whom God hides; hidden; (root = to hide).

**Korah (ko'-rah)** = Ice; icy; hail. Baldness; bald.

The narrative stresses **two elements**. First, **Esau's sons were born in the land** (Canaan, v. 5) before **he moved to Seir** (v. 8). This contrasts sharply with **Jacob, whose children were born out of the land**, and who then moved into the land. Second, **Esau was Edom**. In fact all through the chapter the reader is reminded of this. Certainly Israel would understand the import of this because she often struggled with the Edomites (cf. Obad.), Esau's descendants (Gen. 36:43).

**Genesis 36:7-8** For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings **could not support them because of their livestock**. So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. (Esau is Edom.)

The wording in verse 7 is striking. One thinks of Lot: the **land was not able to bear both of because their herds were so great** (cf. 13:5–6). Esau, like Lot, left for the East and greener land (cf. 13:8–12).

**Genesis 13:9-12** Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left." And Lot **lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the LORD,** like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So **Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley,** and Lot journeyed east. Thus **they separated from each other.** Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled among the cities of the valley and **moved his tent as far as Sodom.**



Verses 6-19: The latter part of chapter 36 (vv. 9–40) also begins with tôledôt (the account, v. 9; cf. v. 1), though most see this as a minor division **within the account that traced what became of Esau.**

The sons of Esau also had sons. Thus Esau had 5 sons and 10 grandsons (*either literal descendants and/or tribes founded them*). (Esau had 11 grandsons if Korah [v. 16] is included. The Heb. MT lists him here but not in v. 11 or in 1 Chron. 1:36. Perhaps he died soon after becoming a chief. Or perhaps the word Korah in Gen. 36:16 is a scribal error, picked up by dittography from the Korah in v. 14.) In the Hebrew, each of the 10 grandsons and 3 of the sons—13 in all—was called a “chief” (*ʿallûp*, vv. 15, 17–18), a head of a tribe. **A picture of Esau as an overlord was emerging (cf. vv. 40–43).**

36:20–30. These verses list the sons (i.e., sons, grandsons, and granddaughters) of **Seir the Horite**, inhabitants of the land. These sons were probably native Edomites conquered by Esau (Deut. 2:12). Seir’s 7 sons (Gen. 36:20–21) became Horite chiefs (cf. v. 29) and from those came 20 “sons” or “daughters” (i.e., **tribes**). of Esau’s wives was Oholibamah, a great-granddaughter of Seir (cf. vv. 2, 14, 18, 25; Seir gave birth to Zibeon, v. 20, who bore Anah, v. 24, whose daughter was Oholibamah.)

36:31–39. It is not certain how the kings of Edom were related to Esau, but they were kings who reigned in Edom, and **“Esau ... is Edom”** (v. 8). The organization of the clans in Edom apparently paralleled that in Israel. They ultimately chose a king from one of their tribes and carried on a line of succession from him. Whether or not the line of eight kings mentioned here extends beyond the time of Jacob and Esau is unclear. The point is comparative, though: **there were kings in Edom before any Israelite king reigned** (v. 31).

36:40–43. These verses list the names of the chiefs who descended from Esau ... according to their families, after their places, and by their names. **Esau was thus a great, powerful overlord:** the father of the Edomites (v. 43) over clans and regions (v. 40), with 11 chiefs descended from him. **Isaac's promises to Esau were thus being fulfilled: and by being away from Jacob he was shaking the "yoke" of his brother from his "neck" (27:39–40).**

**Genesis 27:37-40** Isaac answered and said to Esau, **"Behold, I have made him lord over you,** and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: **"Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck."**

37:1. In dramatic contrast with the expanding, powerful Esau, Jacob was dwelling in the land of the sojournings of his father ... the land of Canaan. Unlike Esau, Jacob had no “chiefs” or kings (35:11) yet, no lands to govern, and no full tribes. He was a sojourner. Delitzsch pertinently remarked that secular, **worldly greatness comes swifter than spiritual greatness**

*(A New Commentary on Genesis). A promised spiritual blessing demands patience and faith. **Waiting while others prosper is a test of one’s faithfulness and perseverance.***

**Genesis 36:31** These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, **before any king reigned over the Israelites.**

**Genesis 36:40-43** 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, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, 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.

**Deuteronomy 2:12** 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.)

**Seir (see'eer; Heb. 'hairy')**. 1 The mountainous region southeast of the land of Canaan inhabited by the Edomites. Also called 'Mt. Seir,' the region may have encompassed not only the mountains east of the Arabah (the Rift Valley), but those on the west side as well.



**Mark 8:34-8** And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, "**If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. **For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?** For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

**Matthew 16:24-27** Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. **For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?** For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he repay each person according to what he has done.

**Luke 9:23-27** And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and **follow me**. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. **For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?** For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

**Proverb 11:27-31** Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favor, but evil comes to him who searches for it. **Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.** Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise. **If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!**

**Romans 8:35-39** **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**