

The Unforgiven Ones

- ¹ God 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.
- 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.
- ⁷ 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.)
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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,
- 43 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.

Genesis 36:1-43

A Tragic Chorus

Eighth notes embark on an up and down dance as fingers pluck the acoustic guitar. Slowly, from tip to heel, the bow brings forth long whole note vibrations from the violin. Behind them, a lonely bell chimes once and again. Suddenly, a somber, dour base-baritone voice starts his verse. Low and melancholy it begins alone. Soon, the haunting harmonies of an almost ghostly sounding female vocalist join in accompaniment. Their duet rises to a crescendo as the pipe organ begins shaking the Sacred Heart cathedral (Duluth, MN) turned recording studio where an ironic song is being recorded:

Some are sinners, some repent
 Some are never done
 And then there's those like you and I
 The unforgiven ones
 The unforgiven ones

It's a song from the apocalyptic 2004 album *Songs of the Unforgiven* by the Winnipeg band Crash Test Dummies. But it seems to me, it could have been sung by the choir of names that make up the genealogy in our text today.

For 43 verses, Genesis 36 delineates family trees of Jacob's unchosen brother Esau and kings that later came to rule the land he settled. It is a straight forward text, written in **the genre of the list-genealogy**, which we have seen several times in Genesis. Name after name could tell its own unique story, becoming chapters in a book that was the early history of the Edomite people, the cousins of Israel. Of course, almost all we know today is simply the names from this list. The rest is long forgotten. The doom that came upon these people erased most of their history from the face of the earth. All that is left are the prophets warnings, a few late fortresses, and the wraith-like voices of these who died damned and unforgiven.

There are **two basic divisions** in the chapter, both begin with Genesis' important, **"These are the generations of..."** formula (36:1-8; 36:9-43). This formula marks the natural divisions of the book. Since both of these formulas concern Esau, we may refer to them together as the tenth of twelve "generations of..."¹

This two-fold division of the chapter can be **broken down further**. **Verses 1-8** tell us about Esau, his three wives, and five sons. It then tells us why and where they ended up settling. Starting in vs. 9, we have five subsections each with nice symbolic totals of names. **Verses 9-14** give us the names of the **five** sons and now **ten** grandchildren² of Esau under that same heading "the generations of..."³ **Vv. 15-19** give us the same descendants of Esau, but this time refers to them as what the ESV calls "chiefs." There are a total of **fourteen** of them.⁴ **Vv. 20-30** then move away from Esau to a fellow called Seir the Horite. His **seven** sons (also called chiefs) then have **nineteen** sons and **two** girls.⁵ These are grandchildren or great-grandchildren, making a total of twenty one or 7 x 3) who were the inhabitants of the land before Esau got there. **Vv. 31-39** tell us about **eight** kings who would come much later, after Esau was long dead, yet **"before any king reigned over the Israelites"** (36:31).

¹ See the basic outline of the book in the first sermon on Genesis 1:1 at the end of the sermon.

² Eliphaz son of Adah has 6 sons; Reuel son of Basemath has 4.

³ The sons of Oholibamah (Jeush, Jalam, and Korah) do not have their own sons recorded, yet these 3 are mentioned in the list.

⁴ Previously, there was 5 sons and 10 grandsons. Now, there are 7 sons from Eliphaz rather than 6 (the name Korah is added). Reuel still has 4. Oholibamah still has 3 sons. This gives a total of 14.

⁵ There is a difficulty here. Gen 36:2 says that Oholibamah was the daughter of Anah who was the "daughter" of Zibeon the Hivite. However, vv. 24-25 have Zibeon having Anah who is a man. He then has Oholibamah. So there is a question of whether or not Anah is a man or a woman. The Samaritan Pentateuch harmonizes by giving "son" in vs. 2 rather than "daughter." It also harmonizes "Hivite" with the genealogy of Seir the "Horite" whose son was Zibeon, by calling him a Horite in vs. 2. I believe all the other names are male, save two.

These kings are not related by birth, but by office, as one deposed the other, probably in war. Finally, vv. 40-43 return to the idea of the chiefs of Esau. Along with Esau, there are eleven other names here, and they may represent administrative districts that would later spring up in Edom.⁶

OUTLINE GENESIS 36

- I. “The generations of Esau...” (36:1-8)
- II. “The generations of Esau...” (36:9-43)
 - A. 10 grandchildren of Esau (9-14)
 - B. 14 chiefs of Esau (7 + 7)⁷ (15-19)
 - C. Descendants (7 + 21) of Seir the Horite (20-30)
 - D. Later kings (8) of Edom (31-39)
 - E. 11 chiefs and Esau (11 + 1) (40-43)

Esau and His Family: Foolish Move, Faithless Marriages

I’ll admit that preaching through a genealogy like this one is a challenge, because what do you do with a list of mostly names which are never talked about any place else in the Bible (this is probably why you won’t find a lot of sermon series on Chronicles)? The first part of the chapter is a bit easier, because it gives us more information than just names. First, it tells us about the three wives of Esau and their total of five sons. Let’s look at Esau’s wives.

The three wives are named Adah (36:2), Oholibamah (2), and Basemath (3) in this passage. However, earlier in Genesis we saw something different. There, the names were Judith, Basemath, and Mahalath (and Basemath there is not the same person as the one here):

Genesis 26:34 and 28:9	Genesis 36:2-3
^{26:34} 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 ...	^{36:2} 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,
^{28:9} 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.	³ and Basemath, Ishmael’s daughter, the sister of Nebaioth.

⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 340.

⁷ The names are the same as the previous section, but “Korah” appears twice to give us 14 rather than 13 names. The Korah in vs. 16 seems to be a second Korah not mentioned in the previous section.

How should we account for these differences? There are a few options that are open to us. One would be that the scribe that put Moses' book into its final form either 1. used source material that was confused or 2. Messed up in his own copy. Neither is impossible. Human copyists were not Xerox machines. They were capable of errors.

Another less skeptical option is that these women had **more than one name**. This is certainly possible, as even Esau in this very chapter (**vs. 1**) is called Edom. An example of this might be **Basemath** who is here called "**Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth**" (**Gen 36:3**). However, **Genesis 28:9** says that "**Mahalath**" was "**the daughter of Ishmael.**" In another example, here **Adah** is called the "**daughter of Elon the Hittite,**" while in earlier it is **Basemath** who is the "**daughter of Elon the Hittite.**" A final solution is that **Esau had more than three wives**, but some of them died. So for example, it is at least logical that Basemath and Adah were two daughters of Elon the Hittite, just like Leah and Rachel were two daughters of Laban. Perhaps one or more wife died childless.

The reason to mention this in a sermon has to do with **the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture**. I don't really know anyone who is willing to say that in the form we have the Bible today, there are not a few discrepancies like these. We have different ancient copies and these copies have minor errors. Skeptics like to call them contradictions. Whatever they are, this is why most Evangelicals have in their statement of faith that the "original autographs" were without error. Scribal errors are not what we are referring to when we talk about biblical infallibility. But with the last two options in mine, I want to point out that there are perfectly rational ways of accounting for the differences without having to cry "contradiction." Sadly, too many people run much too quickly into their skepticism. But this is God's word, and I would think that because it is so, we ought to be slow to make such judgments and quick to at least think of the possibilities that do not demand them.

But frankly, there is nothing in these differences that has anything important to do with our faith. In fact, the disagreements in a strange way actually **root our faith in history**. Even if there was different source material available to the final editor (that material would have itself been copies of copies, that is how old Genesis is), all that proves is that people were recording actual history rather than making it all up. In other words, everything we are talking about here has the ring of history attached to it, rather than the smell of fiction. And this is precisely why genealogies are given to us, so that we might know that what we are reading concerned **real people**, real nations, is real parts of the world. The Bible is telling us about actual things in our past. This is what we root our faith in, not feelings, but historical

persons, places, and things that we learn come into contact in one way or another with the Living God.

The greater point made in the text itself is where Esau's wives **come from**. It says that "**Esau took his wives from the Canaanites**" (**Gen 36:2**). Here we need to remember the directive of Abraham and Isaac to their sons. Of Isaac, Abraham had told his servant, "**Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac**" (**Gen 24:3-4**). But of Ishmael it says, "**his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt**" (**Gen 21:21**). Again, of Jacob, Isaac says, "**You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother**" (**Gen 28:1-2**). But Esau is marrying Canaanite women.

What is the big deal here? Since the promise was to come through Shem, Nahor, Terah, and Abraham, the Seed would also have to come through them. This is why it was so **vital for Isaac and Jacob not to take Canaanite wives**. They were not the right lineage. Of course, the promise would not go through Ishmael or Esau, so why the big deal for them? It is because these Egyptian and Canaanite women did not know the God of Israel. He had not revealed himself to them in a saving way, he did not covenant with them, and thus to marry them would be to invite spiritual disaster, spiritual adultery.

This is the principle we see in the NT where we are "**not to be yoked with unbelievers**" (**1 Cor 6:14**). This would be epitomized in Solomon many hundred years later, "**He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father**" (**1Kg 11:3-4**). Too many Christians think that they can win their spouse or person they love over. But dating and marriage is a terrible place for evangelism. Just ask Solomon.

It seems clear that Esau knew this was wrong, and so it is curious that his **third wife was a daughter of Ishmael**. Perhaps he thought this would appease Isaac. But all it does for us, the reader, is confirm that this man has **no regard for the promises of God**. After giving us the names of Esau's wife, it tells us about his sons. It gives us five of them. Adah had **Eliphaz**. Basemath had **Reuel** (4). Oholibamah has **Jeush, Jalem, and Korah** (5). It is curious that Oholibamah, daughter of Ishmael, has no children's children named, thus giving us the impression that even this attempt of Esau to marry "in the family" was met with disaster. They didn't produce any

grandchildren for him. The line ended, thus leaving him only Canaanite descendants mixed with his own Abrahamic blood.

The last part of this section tells us where Esau settled with his family. It says that he had amassed much in the way of material possessions (6) and that “**he went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together**” (6-7). This reminds us of the disagreement between Lot and Abram, when Lot went down to Sodom, thus separating from Abram because they both had too many possessions (**Gen 13:6-11**). But, of course, Canaan is a massively large place for two families. No, something else is going on here. “**Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. (Esau is Edom).**” Seir is outside of Canaan, outside of the Promised Land, and therefore in both his marriages and his place of dwelling, Esau is showing himself to be **faithless**. Even though he is a generally nice man, a man who forgave his brother, and a man whom God blesses greatly, we never see a hint in anything that he does that he ever believed in God by faith. It just isn’t there. This is the tragedy of the life of Esau and of his descendants. Esau is why you should never let niceness be your test of Christainity. **The true test is, are they forgiven?**

Godless Descendants

Generations of Esau

The rest of the chapter gives us scores of names with little commentary other than the basic outline of **sons**, **chiefs**, and **kings**. First, we will look as briefly as possible at the remaining 35 verses. Then we will think about what it may mean for us. **Vv. 9-14** recount the five sons of Esau whom we have just seen. Two of these sons have grandsons. These are **Eliphaz** and **Reuel** (**Gen 36:10**). **Eliphaz has five sons** born to a wife (wives?), **and one son** born to a concubine. The concubine’s name is **Timna**, and her name appears later in **vs. 22**. She is, apparently, the sister of Lotan, a descendant of Seir the Horite. Her name then appears again in **vs. 40** as one of the chiefs of Esau.⁸ She was obviously a woman of power and importance.

The reason she is mentioned here is that she gives birth to **Amalek** (12). Now, most commentators see this Amalek as the nation that ends up fighting against Moses in the wilderness (**Gen 17:8-16**). Moses places a curse upon this Amalek, who is later said to be the “**the first among the nations**” who end will be in destruction (**Num 24:20**). But to me, this seems quite incorrect, for why in the world would this Amalek be said to be the first among the nations?

The Amalek that fought against Moses seems to have been one of the giant clans from **Genesis 14:7**, a clan that was around a long time before Esau was ever born. So, I think that Eliphaz is naming his son here after one of the very early

⁸ “Timna” may mean “restraint” or “unapproachable.”

heroes of the whole of Canaan, a man named Amalek. The Amalek from Esau's line became a chief (36:16), but not much more. The older Amalek has roots that continue on into Samuel's day with Agag the Amalekite and Haman the Agagite in Esther's day. Naming your son this would have been akin to a Greek naming his kid Hercules. The history of the Amalekites in the OT is a very tangible example of the battle of the two seeds predicted in Genesis 3:15.

The other sons of Eliphaz (vs. 11): Teman = "South," Omar = "Eloquent," Zepho = "Fortune," Gatam = "Thin," Kenaz = "Hunting" are just as obscure as Amalek. The same goes for the four sons of Reuel (vs. 13): Nahath = "Descent," Zerah = "Rising," Shammah = "Astonishment," and Mizzah = "Terror." Together, these are the ten grandchildren of Esau that are mentioned. Notice that Oholibamah has no grandchildren, and so only her sons are mentioned again (14).

Chiefs, but Not from Kansas City

This list is basically repeated in the next section, except now these sons are called "chiefs" (*alluph*).⁹ The first four names mentioned (15) are four of the five sons from vs. 11. Vs. 16 adds the last two sons of Eliphaz, but also has a seventh name: Korah. The name "Korah" is one of the sons of Oholibamah (14). This does not refer to the Korah who is Moses' cousin, for he is a Levite, not an Edomite. It is unclear if this Korah is the same Korah from vs. 18, where he is again a son of Oholibamah. Probably, this is a different Korah, another grandchild not mentioned previously.¹⁰ At any rate, vv. 15-16 have seven chiefs.

The same is true of the next part of this section. Together, the sons of Reuel and of Oholibamah also have seven chiefs. Reuel has four sons (vs. 17): Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah (the same as vs. 13). And Esau's wife Oholibamah has her same three sons (rather than grandsons; vs. 18; cf. vv. 5, 14). It closes the section with "These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their chiefs" (19). The point of this section is that not only did Esau have grandchildren, but they went on to become rulers in their own right, as the kingdom of Edom began to grow. This is in accordance with the promise and blessing of God to make Esau into a great nation (Gen 25:23). God keeps his promises, even to the likes of godless, faithless Esau.

⁹ A normal word for a "chief" is rosh, which also means "head." Here, the word being used seems to be focusing more on the idea of clans that spring forth from these chiefs, rather than on the chiefs themselves.

¹⁰ **Going Deeper:** The question of why Korah (or other grandchildren) would be left out of the previous list while being mentioned in this one is an important one as it concerns biblical genealogies. As we have seen in chs. 5, 10, and 11, numbers are very important in biblical genealogies. This is no exception. The number of grandsons in Gen 36:9-14 is 10. Adding Korah to that list would have made an uneven and non-theological number. However, adding Korah in vs. 16 now gives us the number 7, and obviously symbolic and significant number. Having Korah in vs. 18 also serves to give us 7 more names in vv. 17-18, for a total of 14 names in this section.

Sons of Seir the Horite

At this point, I want to call your attention to how Esau has now three times been called “Edom” (36:1, 8, 19) and how the land of Edom or the Edomites have also been mentioned three times (9, 16, 17), for a total of six usages. Esau means “Hairy.” “Edom” means “Red.” There were wordplays on this back when Esau came out of the womb “red” and “hairy” (Gen 25:25), and when Jacob gave up his “red” porridge in exchange for Esau’s birthright (Gen 25:30). But Edom also happens to be a land of redness, just like Colorado (“color red”).



Petra

Ancient Edom is today in the land of Jordan. Its most important landmark has to be the ancient ruins of Petra. This was made famous in *Indiana Jones: The Last Crusade*. Built around the 5th century B.C., Petra is carved out of this amazing red sandstone, the kind that you will see if you go over to Moab, UT or the Colorado National Monument. In other words, Petra in Edom is red. I’ll return to this idea a bit later.

For now, we are entering into a section that moves away from Esau properly speaking and to those who dwelt in the land he moved to. These people will become related to Esau via Timna (36:22) who was the concubine of his son Eliphaz, and Oholibamah (36:25), who will become the wife of Esau. The section talks about “the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land” (Gen 36:20). Again we have seven names: Lotan (“Covering”), Shobal (“Stream”), Zibeon (“Dyed” or “Robber”), Anah (“Answer”), Dishon (“Gazelle”), Ezer (“Treasury”), and Dishan (“Treading”; 20-21). Personally, I find these names much more fun to say than the previous names. The same goes for their descendants. Lotan has Hori and Hemam and Lotan is Timna’s sister (22). Shobal has Alvan (“Unrighteous”), Manahath (“Rest”), Ebal (“Stony”), Shepho (“Prominence”), and Onam (“Iniquity”; 23). Zibeon has Aiah (“Bird of Prey”) and Anah (“Answer”; 24).

At this point, the Scripture gives us the only piece of historical information about any of these people saying that “Anah ... found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he pastured the donkeys of Zibeon his father” (24). That information,

however, pales in comparison to something found in a book called *The Book of Jasher* at this point.

There is a book called Jasher mentioned in **Josh 10:13**. This book told the story of the **sun standing still**, which, thanks to the final editor of Joshua, made it into the Scripture. This book of Jasher did not appear until the 1,600s. However, it may be describing very, very old traditions. It's author probably used the name Jasher in order to give it more credibility, as many pseudepigrapha do. This book of Jasher is in some ways like **Jubilees**, in that it recounts much of the book of Genesis. Also like Jubilees, it adds other information. The origin of the following story is unknown, but I mention it for a couple of reasons that I will tell you about after you hear it.

Jasher has our basic genealogy in it. When it comes to this section of the descendants of Seir, it gives some very curious history. Immediately after telling us about the springs¹¹ it says:

²⁹And whilst he was feeding his father's donkeys he led them to the wilderness at different times to feed them. ³⁰And there was a day that he brought them to one of the deserts on the sea shore, opposite the wilderness of the people, and whilst he was feeding them, behold a very heavy storm came from the other side of the sea and rested upon the asses that were feeding there, and they all stood still. ³¹And afterward about one hundred and twenty great and terrible animals came out from the wilderness at the other side of the sea, and they all came to the place where the donkeys were, and they placed themselves there. ³²And those animals, from their middle downward, were in the shape of the children of men, and from their middle upward, some had the likeness of bears, and some the likeness of the keephas, with tails behind them from between their shoulders reaching down to the earth, like the tails of the ducheephath, and these animals came and mounted and rode upon these donkeys, and led them away, and they went away unto this day. ³³And one of these animals approached Anah and smote him with his tail, and then fled from that place. ³⁴And when he saw this work he was exceedingly afraid of his life, and he fled and escaped to the city. ³⁵And he related to his sons and brothers all that had happened to him, and many men went to seek the donkeys but could not find them, and Anah and his brothers went no more to that place from that day following, for they were greatly afraid of their lives.

¹¹ “And the children of Lotan were Hori, Heman and their sister Timna, that is Timna who came to Jacob and his sons, and they would not give ear to her, and she went and became a concubine to Eliphaz the son of Esau, and she bare to him Amalek. And the sons of Shobal were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam, and the sons of Zibeon were Ajah, and Anah, this was that Anah who found the Yemim in the wilderness when he fed the asses of Zibeon his father” (**Jasher 36:27-28**).

Completely bizarre, right? Even more bizarre is how it is told as if everyone just knew it was and could be true. So why bring it up here? **First**, I wanted to give a flavor for the way stories could and have been told about some of these people. Notice how the Bible doesn't mention such a story. Scripture is more sober minded. **Second**, it is just simply fascinating. **Third**, I wanted to bring up a **curious wordplay** that the Bible uses when it talks about **demonic entities**. This will help us think more properly about the Doom of Edom at the end of the sermon.

Isaiah describes what the ESV calls “**wild goats**” (**Isa 13:21; 34:14**). These appear in his cursing of Babylon (**13**) and, importantly, **Edom (34)**. But the ESV is simply wrong. The LXX calls them “**devils**” (*daimonion*, from which we get “demon”) and “**satyrs**” (*onokentauros* from which we get Centaurs) respectively.¹² In the inspired commentary on these texts, Revelation refers to them as “**demons**” (**Rev 18:2**, *daimonion*), so we know from the NT how it should be translated.

Satyrs are ancient half-human, half-animal creatures in the form of goat. C. S. Lewis employs their imagery when they surround Aslan as he is about to be put to death. Curiously, on the Day of Atonement, the Israelites were supposed to cast lots over two goats, one becoming the scapegoat and the other going to **Azazel**, the goat-demon (**Lev 16:8-10**).¹³

Now, there is a reason why Genesis is telling us about **Seir the Horite**. Before it was called Edom, it was called **Seir**. It was named after this fabulous figure of prehistory known as Seir the Horite (**Gen 36:20**), who there is little doubt in my mind was a Rephaim giant before the days of Abraham, and whose descendants were involved in those crazy wars of Genesis 14. Deuteronomy is explicit about this, “**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**” (**Deut 2:11-12**). This is said in the context of various tribes dispossessing the giants around Canaan.

Now understand that the word translated as “demon” and “satyr” is the Hebrew word *sair*. *Seir* and *sair*. It is a wordplay. My point is two-fold. **First**, there is a reason why Jasher tells this kind of a story with respect to the Seir and his descendants. Its prehistory is highly demonic.¹⁴ **Second**, this fits into the point we need to understand not only about the descendants of Seir, but by marriage, Esau

¹² There are all kinds of mythological creatures found in these lists from centaurs and satyrs, to sirens, Lilith, and “howlings.” See Douglas Van Dorn, *Giants: Sons of the Gods*, 202.

¹³ At the foot of Mt. Hermon there is an ancient shrine to the satyr named Pan. This was later corrupted and became known as **Banias**. Jesus refers to it as “the gates of hell.” See *Giants*, 194-95.

¹⁴ No, I'm not saying I believe there was such a thing as a real satyr, though if any physical evidence ever showed up it would do nothing to hurt my faith. In the Bible, these creatures of myth are used demonically, to describe evil spirits that dwell in various places. As the belief of the early church and Jews was that the origin of demons was the Nephilim, I certainly find these connections curious at the least.

himself. In marrying into this family, Esau's downward spiral as a nation was sealed. Powerful sons rose up, and Esau made political alliances with them, so much so that he was eventually known as the father of that land. But he wasn't. That title belongs to Seir the Horite.

Genesis gives other names from **vv. 25-28** that tell us about these children of Seir. All told, there are **21** of them for another nice number divisible by seven. Probably the most interesting of these people is a man named **Uz**. It is possible that this is the Uz (**28**) who settled a town which eventually becomes famous in the book of Job. The most important has to be **Oholibamah**, the woman who married Esau, the daughter (or son, see **note 5**) of Anah, the only figure about which we know anything from the Bible. This links the family of Esau to the family of Seir via marriage. This is not good, because it means that Esau is almost certainly mixing with giant clans.¹⁵

Kings and Cities of Edom after Esau

After the short genealogy of Seir the Horite, we come to a section that tells us about **the kings who reigned** in Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites (**31**). Though we do not know how far back these kings go (it is possible they go back prior to Esau, see below) because we do not know how many kings are skipped, we can say that this section was added by a later scribe for some purpose. But what could it be?

First, the section gives a list of **eight kings**. They begin with Bela. It is certainly possible that this is the same **Bela** who fought in the Giant Wars in Genesis 14. He was called the king of Zoar (**14:2**). This area is very close to Edom. Whether it is this early Bela or some later man named after him, at some point Bela dies. **Jobab** of Bozrah reigns in his place.¹⁶ Speaking of Christ Isaiah asks, “**Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save"** (**Isa 63:1**). Six more names (**Husham**, **Hadad** who defeated Midian, **Samlah**, **Shaul**, **Baal-hanan**, and **Hadar**; **Gen 36:34-39**) are listed. These are the kings of Edom and it is clear that at least some of them are **Baal worshipers**.

Finally, a list of chiefs comes at the end of the genealogy. This returns us to Esau. It contains Esau plus eleven names, some of which we have seen before:

¹⁵ I should mention here that the Canaanites and Hivites and some of the other clans not found in Genesis 14 or Deuteronomy 2 (but mentioned together with known giant clans such as the Amorites in other lists like those found in Numbers 13) are probably only related to the giants via alliances and perhaps royal marriage like these. But the vast majority of these people were quite diminutive in stature, just like the Jews.

¹⁶ This town was a capital city. It is located about 30 miles north of Petra at the northern end of a mountain range that ends at Petra in the south.

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram (40-43). Scholars believe that this list actually tells us about cities that were established that became important in the land of Edom. Then the chapter ends.

A Tragic Lyric Indeed

Given that we have seen pre-Esau kings of the Horite (“cave-dwelling”) clan, a list that contains at least some post-Esau kings and towns that they established, it invites us to ask the question, “Why?” Certainly, one of the things this does is root the Scripture in real history. We’ve discussed that already. But why take so much time to talk about genealogies surrounding Esau? This is really the question we need to come away having an answer to this morning. So let me point out a couple of things we have not yet discussed.

The first concerns the **actual meaning of the names**. Dr. Boice went through 21 of the names in this list and came up with an observation. Of his list, only two of the names had anything whatsoever to do with God: Reuel (meaning “friend of God”), Esau’s son from Ishmael’s daughter and Jeush (meaning “God helps”), his son from his wife Oholibamah.¹⁷ The names are all what he calls “sensual” in nature, meaning that they are only concerned with life here and now:

Adah (v. 2) means “ornament” or “morning.”

Elon (v. 2) may mean “a region where deer are found.”

Zibeon (v. 2) means “hyena.”

Basemath (v. 3) means “perfume.”

Eliphaz (v. 4) means “pure gold.”

Nahath (v. 13) means “rest.”

Zerah (v. 13) means “rising” or “east.”

Dishon (v. 21) means “gazelle.”

Alvan (v. 23) means “wicked.”

Shepho (v. 23) means “bald.”

Aiah (v. 24) means “hawk.”

Eshban (v. 26) means “restorer.”

Ithran (v. 26) means “advantage.”

Keran (v. 26) means “turtle.”

Akan (v. 27) means “swift.”

Aran (v. 28) means “mountain goat.”

Jobab (v. 33) means “jubilation.”

Bozrah (v. 33) means “fold.”

Acbor (v. 39) means “mouse.”¹⁸

¹⁷ See James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 846.

¹⁸ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 846.

Along with marrying Canaanite women (and Horite women), and moving out of the Promised Land, this adds a third element of the godless streak that was the man Esau. He cared about the things of this world, but not the world to come.

The lists of kings adds fuel to this fire, but also begs us to ask, what happened to Edom. In the **beginning**, Edom was much more powerful than Israel. Then, in the days of **Moses**, they refused to let Israel pass through their land, even though they were cousins and Moses promised they would not harm them (**Num 20:14-21**). From here we learn that **David** conquers them (**2 Sam 8:13-14**) and from **Solomon** onward, they were subject to Israel. But **its end is mysterious**. They lost their independence in the fifth century B.C. It was around this time that they built up the impregnable city of Petra, known earlier as Sela. Petra was built into the sheer cliff walls of this impossibly narrow canyon, and was so well hidden that the west did not know about it until the 1800s.

Yet still, Edom was destroyed and that empire never again returned to prominence. This was according to the prophets of Israel who regularly preached against Edom (**Isa 34**; **Jer 49**; **Ezek 25**; **Amos 1**; etc). The short little book of **Obadiah** gives us several reasons for their destruction.¹⁹

The first sin is **pride**. “**Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall**” (**Pro 16:18 KJV**). This is perhaps the root of all other sins, for its first thought is on self. The language used by Obadiah is akin to that used in Isaiah and Ezekiel of both human rulers (Babylon and Tyre) and the supernatural rulers who stand behind them (Helel ben-Shachar and the Guarian Cherub of Eden). “**The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rock, in your lofty dwelling, who say in your heart, ‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’ Though you soar aloft like the eagle, though your nest is set among the stars, from there I will bring you down, declares the LORD**” (**Ob 1:3-4**).²⁰ This fits nicely with Isaiah’s demonic imagery of the place.

Second there was **unbrotherliness**. “**Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, ‘Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!’**” (**Ps 137:7**). When brother turns against brother, be it in a Civil War or in a Christian denomination, it is akin to the root sins of Edom. God is greatly displeased with such hatred as this.

These in turn originated earlier on in **seven things**. **First**, they **stood aloof** when Israel was in need. “**On the day that you stood aloof, on the day that strangers**

¹⁹ The following comes from Boice’s outline. See James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 850-54.

²⁰ See Isaiah 14:13; Ezek 28:14-17. The imagery of clefts in the rock and high eagle’s nests fits both with the previous Horite cave-dwellers and with sites such a Petra, which were built into the canyons and cliffs.

carried off his wealth and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you were like one of them” (Oba 1:11). The same could be said for when Israel wanted to pass through Edom in Moses’ day. Imagine your own brother in great distress and not doing a thing to help.

Second, they looked down on their brother’s misfortune. “But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune” (Oba 1:12). So, not only did they not do anything to help, they actually boasted in Israel’s demise, looking down their noses as if superior, and looking into Israel’s destruction with voyeuristic, morbid curiosity.

Third and fourth, they rejoiced and boasted over Israel’s end. “Do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress” (12). These are God’s chosen people, and here his own brother and cousin is wickedly gloating in every possible way over the fact that Israel is being punished by God for his sins. This is surely a demonic thing if ever there was one.

Fifth, they even marched through the gates of Israel in the day of their disaster (13). They trampled over the city where God chose to put his name. Sixth, they seized their wealth (13), taking the leftover booty from the wars with the powers of the east. Last, they even stood at the crossroads to cut off his fugitives; do not hand over his survivors in the day of distress (14).

Beloved, this is a terrible progress of sin, from pride to unbrotherliness arising from general aloofness, to laughing and scoffing at misfortune, to looting and handing over anyone who might have been spared in the wars. This in turn came because a first move was made, a move to reject the promises of God by leaving the promises behind. Esau, for all of his material wealth, powerful status, and even kind generosity soon found his descendants spiraling into the abyss of life without God. “Some are sinners, some repent. Some are never done.” Let it not be true of you and me that we are these, the unforgiven ones.

You need not sing the song of Esau. Flee to Christ to cover your sins, to take them away, to give you his righteousness, to become forgiven and justified once-for-all. Believe in his promises. Trust in his goodness, even in the day of disaster, and you will be saved from the wrath of God, the terrible wrath that took Esau away forever.

Family Tree: Esau (Ge 36:1-14)

