

Sermon Notes 6/6/21

“The Legacy of Esau”

How should we respond to Genesis chapter 36?

1. Choose to live with _____.

Genesis 36:2

Genesis 27:46

1 Corinthians 15:33

2 Corinthians 6:14

2. Choose to value _____.

Genesis 36:7-8

Genesis 25:30-34

Hebrews 12:16-17

3. Choose to seek _____.

Genesis 36:12

Genesis 36:31

Matthew 2:1-3

Matthew 6:31-33



“See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.” Hebrews 12:16

Life Group Discussion Questions

Week 36: June 6-13

Genesis 36

At first glance, Genesis 36 may seem like a boring list of names. However, the genealogy of Esau's descendants includes some practical principles for us today. Esau and the nation of Edom are often presented in Scripture as symbols of human arrogance. They represent the pride of humanity that seeks to build up the kingdom of man rather than the kingdom of God. John Walton notes,

Before proceeding to the account of what comes from Jacob (the Jacob *toledot*, 37:2), the text first disposes of Esau, following the procedure that the line that is of less interest is addressed first. This identifies the origins of some of Israel's neighbors to the desert audience. Most notable of these from the biblical record is Amalek, the son of Esau's son and a concubine (36:12). Also of interest is that just as there were twelve tribes from Jacob, there are twelve from Esau (36:9-14).¹

Read Genesis 36:1-8

1. Who were the wives of Esau? Where did they come from? (36:2-3)
2. How is the information about Esau's wives in this passage different from what we read in Genesis 26:34-35 and 28:9?

Paul Kissling explains the apparent differences. He writes,

In preparation for the genealogical material the author reiterates three of the wives of Esau, although the names differ from the earlier accounts. It is possible that these wives were additional to the wives mentioned in chapters 26 and 28. Another possibility is that they had alternative names (a common phenomenon in the ancient world when last names were lacking).²

¹ John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 633.

² Paul Kissling, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Genesis Volume 2* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2009), 402.

3. Who were the sons of Esau who were born in the land of Canaan? (36:4-5)

4. What did Esau do in verse 6?

5. Why did Esau settle in the hill country of Seir? (36:7-8)

Even though Jacob was the brother through whom the Messiah would come into the world, both Jacob and Esau were descendants of Abraham and Isaac, and both were blessed by God. Kissling observes,

Although this is never made explicit, Esau has apparently moved back to Canaan from Seir. This happened either when Jacob returned from Paddan-Aram or perhaps near the time of the death of their father, Isaac. Esau takes everything and everyone who belonged to him and moved away to the south to live in Seir. The narrator tells us that their possessions, in terms of livestock needing pasturage and water, were too great to be sustained by the land.³

Read Genesis 36:9-43

Verses 9-43 is another genealogy of Esau given in more detail. Verses 9-19 give a list of Esau's grandsons who became chiefs. Verses 20-39 describe the descendants of Seir, a Horite chief. The descendants of Seir intermarried with the descendants of Esau. Verses 31-39 list the kings Edom had before Israel had any kings. Verses 40-43 provide another list of the chiefs from Esau's line. Kissling writes,

The NIV's paraphrase, "this is the account of for the *toledoth* formula has the potential to confuse the English reader. This is the standard structural marker in the book of Genesis. This is the second structural marker which concerns Esau (36:1), something unique in the book of Genesis. This shows the importance of Esau and his descendants to Israel.⁴

6. Who were the parents of Amalek? (36:12) How did the Amalekites treat the Israelites in Exodus 17:8-14?

³ Kissling, 404.

⁴ Kissling, 407.

Bruce Waltke comments,

The Amalekites are punished for their treacherous, unprovoked aggression against Israel during her Exodus journey from Egypt to the Promised Land (Ex. 17:8-16; cf. Judg. 3:13; 6:3-5, 33; 7:12; 10:12). Samuel commands Saul to annihilate the Amalekites in the area south of Telaim. When Saul spares Agag their king, Samuel himself slays him (1 Sam. 15).⁵

7. Who were the seven Horite chiefs living in the region? (36:20-21)
8. How does verse 24 distinguish this Anah from the Anah in verse 20?
9. What is the timetable for the kings listed in this section? (36:31)
10. Who are the eight kings listed in verses 32-39?
11. Who are the chiefs listed in verses 40-43?
12. Why did the author of Hebrews describe Esau as a godless man? (Heb. 12:16-17)
13. How did God bless Esau even when Esau did not deserve it?

Waltke notes,

In spite of Esau's unbelief, his descendants have a future. Under God they too have a story (cf. Deut. 23:7: "Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother"). Today, in Christ, the remnant of Edom has been reconciled to his brother and has become a member of Christ's kingdom (Amos 9:4; Acts 15:16-18; Rev. 7:9).⁶

14. How has God blessed you even when you did not deserve it?
15. How can we encourage future generations to build their families on the foundation of God's word?
16. What will you do to build up the Kingdom of God this week?

⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2001), 485.

⁶ Waltke, 489.