

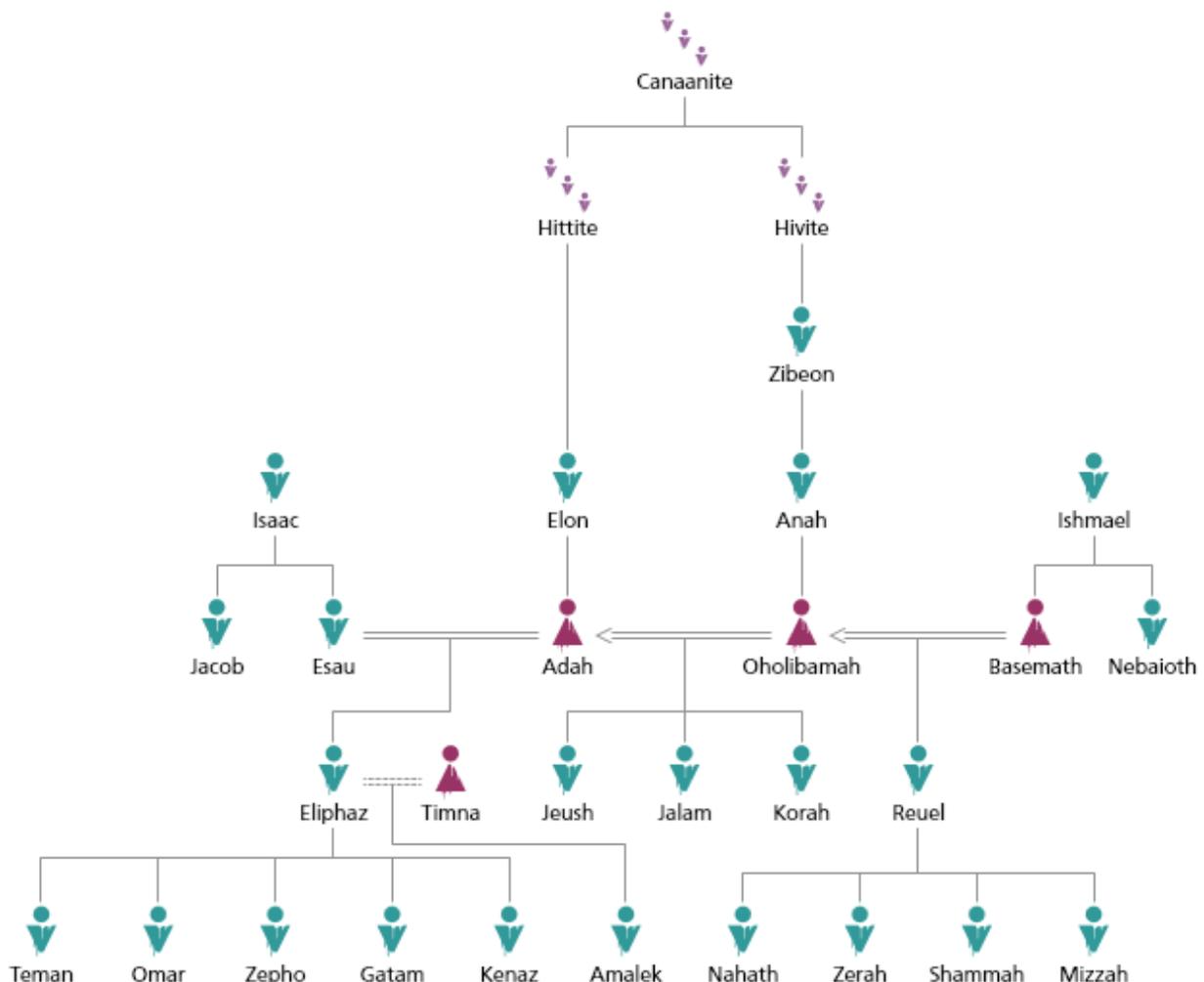
“A quick look at chapter 36 is enough to make some Bible readers skip to chapter 37. At first glance it seems to be no more than a list of Esau’s descendants and might seem to make about as interesting reading as a telephone directory.

To appreciate this chapter, one must remember the role Moses assigned to it in his ten-part outline of the book of Genesis. It is the ninth of ten accounts that trace the early history of God’s saving activity. The tenth and final account, which brings the book to its conclusion, is the account of Jacob. But before picking up the thread of that narrative, the sacred writer disposes of the less important account of Esau. He documents how this son of Isaac, although not continuing the messianic line, nevertheless did develop into a nation, as God had promised before Esau was born. This was a distinct blessing of God, and chapter 36 traces how this blessing took shape.”

(People’s Bible Commentary: Genesis, p.294)

Read Genesis 36:1-8

- What is the purpose of these verses being recorded in Scripture?



- Why do verses 6-8 indicate that Esau moved away from his brother when his brother Jacob was living in Haran at the time of Esau's move?

- What problem confronts the reader in this chapter?
 - Genesis 36:2-3 – *Esau took his wives from the Canaanite women: **Adah** daughter of Elon the Hittite, **Oholibamah** daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite,³ and **Basemath** daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.*
 - Genesis 26:34-35 –³⁴ *When Esau was 40 years old, he took as his wives **Judith** daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and **Basemath** daughter of Elon the Hittite.³⁵ They made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.*
 - Genesis 28:8-9 –⁸ *Esau realized that his father Isaac disapproved of the Canaanite women,⁹ so Esau went to Ishmael and married, in addition to his other wives, **Mahalath** daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son. She was the sister of Nebaioth.*

- “This difference arose from the fact, that Moses availed himself of genealogical documents for Esau's family and tribe, and inserted them without alteration. It presents no irreconcilable discrepancy, therefore, but may be explained from the ancient custom in the East, of giving surnames, as the Arabs frequently do still, founded upon some important or memorable event in a man's life, which gradually superseded the other name (e.g., the name Edom, as explained in Gen. 25:30); whilst as a rule the women received new names when they were married. The different names given for the father of Aholibamah or Judith, *Hengstenberg* explains by referring to the statement in v. 24, that Anah, the son of Zibeon, while watching the asses of his father in the desert, discovered the warm springs (of Calirrhoe), on which he founds the acute conjecture, that from this discovery Anah received the surname *Beeri*, i.e., spring-man, which so threw his original name into the shade, as to be the only name given in the genealogical table.”

(Keil, Carl Friedrich, and Franz Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament: Pentateuch* p. 321)

Read Genesis 36:9-19

- Compare verses 1 and 10. Note that the Hebrew word Toledoth (that breaks the book of Genesis into its 10 divisions) is used twice in this 9th section.
- It is interesting to note that almost everyone born from Abraham's line became a great person or head of a large group of people. We saw this in Ishmael's case and now we see it in Esau's case. Note how so many of the descendants are called chiefs.

Read Genesis 36:20-30

- Who is Seir? Why are his descendants listed here?
 - Deuteronomy 2:12 – *The Horites had previously lived in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out, destroying them completely and settling in their place, just as Israel did in the land of its possession the LORD gave them.*

Read Genesis 36:31-43

- Why does verse 31 tell us that “These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled over the Israelites”?
 - Numbers 20:14-21 – ¹⁴ *Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, “This is what your brother Israel says, ‘You know all the hardships that have overtaken us. ¹⁵ Our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt many years, but the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly. ¹⁶ When we cried out to the Lord, He heard our voice, sent an angel, ¹⁷ and brought us out of Egypt. Now look, we are in Kadesh, a city on the border of your territory. ¹⁷ Please let us travel through your land. We won’t travel through any field or vineyard, or drink any well water. We will travel the King’s Highway; we won’t turn to the right or the left until we have traveled through your territory.’”*
 - ¹⁸ *But Edom answered him, “You must not travel through our land, or we will come out and confront you with the sword.”*
 - ¹⁹ *“We will go on the main road,” the Israelites replied to them, “and if we or our herds drink your water, we will pay its price. There will be no problem; only let us travel through on foot.”*
 - ²⁰ *Yet Edom insisted, “You must not travel through.” And they came out to confront them with a large force of heavily-armed people. ²¹ Edom refused to allow Israel to travel through their territory, and Israel turned away from them.*

- Note: from this point forward in Scripture, the Edomites are mentioned only when they came into direct contact with the nation of Israel.

