

JANUARY 16

Genesis 36

Well, today, we have just a very brief commentary on the lineage of Esau and an introduction to Joseph.

Chapter 36, of course, gives us the summarized account of how Esau's family prospered and developed. God blessed Esau just as he had kept his promise to bless Ishmael. (And, as Esau is married to one of Ishmael's daughters, God is keeping two promises at once.) He made a nation of both of them just as He did for the chosen line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Esau, not valuing spiritual principles or godly heritage, married at least two Canaanite wives and a daughter of Ishmael. His descendants did not worship the God of his father Isaac, but turned instead to the gods of their mothers. This should serve as one more warning against spiritual intermarriage.

Some of the names mentioned in chapter 36 are very interesting ones. One of the tribal chiefs descended from Esau is named Amalek. You may know that one of Israel's most implacable enemies in later days would be the Amalekites. The largest group of tribes descending from Esau (whose nickname was Edom or "Red ") was the Edomites, who also were worshipping other gods and became staunch enemies of the people of God. The names of Esau's wives in chapter 36 do not entirely correspond with the earlier list we found in chapter 26. Judith, his first Hittite wife, is not mentioned at all in chapter 36, and Oholibamah, who appears in chapter 36, is not previously noted. The solution to this discrepancy may be found, as some have suggested, in the common practice of having more than one name by which a person was known. (Esau was also Edom, for example,) or it may simply be that Esau had more than three wives and each passage for reasons of its own omits some of them.

Today you read Genesis chapter 36 and were introduced to the fourth major character of the second part of the book of Genesis - Joseph, the much beloved son of Jacob. Twelve of the last thirteen chapters of the Book of Beginnings are given over to telling his story, which in so many ways parallels the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that many Bible scholars have proclaimed him to be a "type" of Christ. We should be tempted to do so also except for one reason - the Scripture itself never makes the connection between Joseph and Christ in the same way it does, for example, between Melchizedek and Christ, or the serpent in the wilderness and Christ on the cross (a type that we will encounter in the book of Numbers). Nevertheless, just as certain features of the account of Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah were suggestive of the Gospel account, so it is with the entire story of Joseph.

Joseph is also noteworthy in that he breaks the cycles of deceit, manipulation and selfishness of his family. Although he makes a number of choices that are unwise, his overall demeanor is one of kindness, faithfulness to God, and faithfulness to his people - no matter where he lands. Watch for this in the first person of the lineage of Abraham who would be considered a man of righteousness.

This is Mark Ashton reminding you of Psalm 119:1-2 "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart."