

Introduction

I would call your attention to a verse in Chapter Thirty-six that puts this portion of Scripture into perspective:

Genesis 36:31 Now these *were* the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel

Esau gave birth to *kings* and *kingdoms*; Jacob was a *stranger* in the land and a *shepherd* of livestock. As Esau's descendants grew more *prosperous*, Jacob's descendants remained *pilgrims*. As the Edomites became more *powerful*, the Israelites came to be *persecuted*. The Edomites rose to *sovereignty* while the Israelites fell into *slavery*. While Esau's descendants had *established* a kingdom, Jacob's descendants were still *expecting* a kingdom.

The comparisons and contrasts between Esau and Jacob are not unlike those between unbelievers and believers throughout human history:

- { While unbelievers grow more prosperous, believers remain pilgrims
- { While unbelievers secure power, believers come under persecution
- { While unbelievers rise to sovereignty, believers fall into slavery
- { While unbelievers establish their kingdoms, believers are still expecting a kingdom.

Genesis Thirty-six was given to encourage the children of Israel at a time when they were emerging from slavery in Egypt, heading into the promised land to eventually enjoy a kingdom on earth under King David..

Genesis Thirty-six is given to encourage God's born-again children who emerge from slavery to sin, who live by the promises found in His Word, and who expect Jesus Christ to return as King and establish the Kingdom of heaven on earth.

You can learn something about yourself from these verses. Esau preferred an earthly kingdom; Jacob pursued a heavenly kingdom. You and I want to be like Jacob and unlike Esau!

Ask yourself the following questions: Are you *apathetic* towards the coming of the King to establish His Kingdom, or Are you *anticipating* the coming of the King to establish His Kingdom?

#1 Are You Apathetic Towards The
Coming Of The King To Establish His Kingdom?

Pastor and author John Phillips wrote concerning our text,

"...Chapter 36...is one of the more difficult chapters of the Bible, the kind of chapter we normally skip over in our reading...it is not without its rewards for those who will venture thoughtfully down its somewhat thorny path."¹

The phrase "this is the genealogy of Esau..." occurs twice in Chapter Thirty-six, in verses one and nine. In verses one through eight you have an account of Esau's wives and the sons born to him while Esau was in Canaan. Beginning in verse nine you have an account of Esau's grandsons and others who rose to prominence when he left Canaan for Seir.

While the genealogy is important by itself for many historical and archaeological reasons, our purposes are practical and spiritual. We want to glean the practical, spiritual insights that will expose whether or not we are growing apathetic towards the coming of Jesus Christ as King to establish His Kingdom on earth. We will look at four divisions of Chapter Thirty-six and make four discoveries about spiritual apathy.

As we said, verses one through eight give the account of Esau in Canaan:

Genesis 36:1 Now this *is* the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom.

Genesis 36:2 Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

Genesis 36:3 and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

Genesis 36:4 Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel.

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

In Canaan, Esau had married three wives and from these had received five sons. The difficulty is that the names of his wives differ from the names given in Genesis 26:34 and in Genesis 28:9.

f Genesis 26:34 names Judith, daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Basemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite.

f Genesis 28:9 names Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael.

f Genesis 36:2-3 names Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite, Basemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah, daughter of Ishmael.

The explanation is both simple and insightful. Each wife had more than one name, *one* for living in Canaan and the *other* for living among the Hittites. Adah is the same as the Basemath of Genesis 26:34, for both are identified as the daughter of Elon the Hittite. Similarly, the Basemath of Genesis 36:3 is the same as Mahalath, for both are said to be the daughter of Ishmael. This leaves Aholibamah to be identified as Judith, though in this case the wives are said to be descended from different fathers. It is probably the case that the "two" fathers are actually one also, they too having been known by two different names - Anah and Beerli.²

¹Exploring Genesis, p. 283

²see Boice, Genesis, Volume 2, p. 353

The names of Esau's wives in Chapter Thirty-six are their real, or original, names. You will remember from earlier in Genesis that Esau's marriage to them was a grief to his parents, Isaac and Rebekah. While they lived in Canaan, in his father's house, their pagan names were changed to please Esau's father.

Here, then, is our first insight concerning whether or not you are apathetic. These women had their names changed, but not their natures. While in the father's house they were outwardly submitted; away from the father's house they each expressed the nature of their own father.

Many people come into the Father's house today. They take His Name for themselves while they are there, claiming to be Christians. Away from the Father's house, however, they express the nature they were born with, the nature of their father, the devil.

Everyone is invited to the Father's house and should be made to feel welcome. Jesus said,

Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
Matthew 11:30 "For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a "whosoever will" come invitation to come as you are. It is essentially, though, a message of change. When you are saved there is a change in nature, not in name only. You do not convert to a new religion; you come into a new relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Because the change is within, if it is real it will affect everything in your life.

Those who only change their names while in the Father's house, but give no evidence of having a changed nature outside of it, are apathetic towards the coming of Jesus. He is not truly their King; they are not truly anticipating His coming to establish His Kingdom.

As Genesis Thirty-six continues we have an account of Esau's descendants in Seir.

Genesis 36:9 And this *is* the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir.
Genesis 36:10 These *were* the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau.
Genesis 36:11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.
Genesis 36:12 Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These *were* the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.
Genesis 36:13 These *were* the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.
Genesis 36:14 These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.
Genesis 36:15 These *were* the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn *son* of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz,

Genesis 36:16 Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, *and* Chief Amalek. These *were* the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They *were* the sons of Adah.

Genesis 36:17 These *were* the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These *were* the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These *were* the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

Genesis 36:18 And these *were* the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and Chief Korah. These *were* the chiefs *who descended* from Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah.

Genesis 36:19 These *were* the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these *were* their chiefs.

The detail to note in these verses is that many of Esau's sons and grandsons are introduced twice - first as *offspring*, then as *overlords*, first as *children*, then as *chiefs*. His children, like their father, turned their backs on the promised land and made their home in the world.

Esau never valued spiritual things. He passed his values on to his children.

The values you are passing on to your children say a great deal about whether you are apathetic towards the coming of Jesus Christ. While all of us want our children to be successful in the world, we want them first to be spiritual towards the world. The world values *sovereignty, superiority, and selfishness; submission, service, and selflessness* should be the values you seek to instill in your children. If you are not teaching these, then you must not believe that a Kingdom is coming in which we will be servants to the great King of all kings!

Genesis 36:20-30 gives an account of Esau's predecessors in Edom.

Genesis 36:20 These *were* the sons of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,

Genesis 36:21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These *were* the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.

Genesis 36:22 And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister *was* Timna.

Genesis 36:23 These *were* the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

Genesis 36:24 These *were* the sons of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This *was the* Anah who found the water in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon.

Genesis 36:25 These *were* the children of Anah: Dishon and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

Genesis 36:26 These *were* the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.

Genesis 36:27 These *were* the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

Genesis 36:28 These *were* the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

Genesis 36:29 These *were* the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah,

Genesis 36:30 Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, and Chief Dishan. These *were* the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.

The Horites were the original inhabitants of the land that Esau made his own. They are traced back to Seir the Horite. The name Horite is derived from *hor* signifying "a hole" or "a cave" - an obvious reference to the caves and holes hollowed out in the sandstone cliffs by those rockdwellers. The impregnable fortress of Petra, with its caves and carvings, remains an object of wonder to tourists even today.

Special attention is given to Anah, Oholibamah's father. He discovered "water in the wilderness." He seems to have been so impressed with himself that he actually changed his name to Beeri, meaning "my well," by which name he was called in Genesis 26:34.

Anah, or Beeri, had a vast source of water which made him powerful and which brought him riches. Despite the discovery of that well, he lived in spiritual drought, never discovering God as the source of living water which would bring power to his parched soul.

Those who are apathetic towards the coming of Jesus Christ prefer the resources of this world to the Source of life. They live for riches here and now rather than for rewards in the future Kingdom.

Genesis Thirty-six closes with a listing of kings and their cities.

Genesis 36:31 Now these *were* the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel:

Genesis 36:32 Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah.

Genesis 36:33 And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place.

Genesis 36:34 When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place.

Genesis 36:35 And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city *was* Avith.

Genesis 36:36 When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place.

Genesis 36:37 And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-*by-the-River* reigned in his place.

Genesis 36:38 When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place.

Genesis 36:39 And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadar reigned in his place; and the name of his city *was* Pau. His wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

Genesis 36:40 And these *were* the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth,

Genesis 36:41 Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon,

Genesis 36:42 Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar,

Genesis 36:43 Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau *was* the father of the Edomites.

You noticed a phrase repeated throughout these verses - "reigned in his place." It is almost an epitaph - an inscription on the lives of these kings and their kingdom. It seems to be stated as a positive, glorious remark: There was always someone to reign on, and new and greater cities were added to their vast, unbroken kingdom. Nevertheless death took them all, one by one.

Do you want to know if you are apathetic? Jesus has the rightful reign over your life. Look at your life and see what might be reigning in His place...

"Only one life, will soon be passed;

"Only what's done for Jesus will last."

#2 Are You Anticipating The
Coming Of The King To Establish His Kingdom?

Just before the genealogy of Esau there were some important remarks about Jacob and his descendants, in Chapter 35:22-29. While Esau was prospering in the world, Jacob remained a pilgrim in the world. Esau preferred the earthly while Jacob pursued eternity.

Genesis 35:22 Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Genesis 35:23 the sons of Leah *were* Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun;

Genesis 35:24 the sons of Rachel *were* Joseph and Benjamin;

Genesis 35:25 the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, *were* Dan and Naphtali;

Genesis 35:26 and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, *were* Gad and Asher. These *were* the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

Genesis 35:27 Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that *is*, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt.

Genesis 35:28 Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.

Genesis 35:29 So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, *being* old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

The comparisons and contrasts between Esau and Jacob, on the surface, seem to favor Esau rather than Jacob. Why should you anticipate the coming of Jesus as King to establish His Kingdom?

First there is the remarkable fulfillment of prophecy. You and I have the advantage of past history. Today, in fulfillment of the prophecies of God, Edom is a wasteland, its people gone. The prophet Ezekiel wrote,

Ezekiel 35:7 & 9 "Thus I will make Mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns... I will make you perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; then you shall know that I *am* the LORD."

Israel is again established in the land promised to her by God - the land promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

I am fond of telling you about the significance of the rebirth of Israel as a nation. That historical event proves once and for all that God's promises to Israel as a nation are literal, and that there is a real distinction to be made between Israel and the Church. It also should heighten your anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ!

History is unfolding just as the prophets foretold that it would...

In addition to fulfilled prophecy, you have in these verses the hope of a future resurrection. Look again at verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine:

Genesis 35:28 Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.

Genesis 35:29 So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, *being* old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Isaac died physically and was afterward "gathered to his people." There *is* life after physical death, a gathering to those that have preceded you into eternity. The body is put in the ground while the soul goes on. One day the body will be raised and reunited with the soul for eternity.

If you are a believer, the hope of the resurrection of the dead will heighten your anticipation of the return of Jesus...

If you are living in unbelief, you, too, will be raised in the end - but to damnation and everlasting punishment...

Conclusion

History records a meeting that highlights everything we've been saying. Edom would eventually be called Idumea. From Idumea would come Herod the Great and his son, Herod Antipas. They ruled over Israel during Roman times. Herod was the one who slaughtered the babies of Bethlehem in his desire to exterminate Jesus. Herod Antipas was the one who had John the Baptist beheaded.

Jesus, the King descended from Jacob, came before Herod Antipas, the king descended from Esau:

Luke 23:8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.

Luke 23:9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.

Luke 23:10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him.

Luke 23:11 Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.

Jesus was and is the King of kings, the supreme King over all the kings of this earth. If Jesus had wished, He could have called forth legions of angels who would instantly have vindicated Him and removed Herod Antipas from the throne. But Jesus did not want the throne in that way. He did not want the throne until you and I could share it with Him. To achieve that, He would have to die on Calvary.

He did die on Calvary; then He rose from the dead in victory; then He ascended into heaven in triumph. There He is seated at the right hand of God the Father awaiting His glorious return as King to establish His

Kingdom. While He waits, He empowers those who believe on Him to evangelize those who do not believe on Him.

Don't be *apathetic* about the Lord's return! As days pass, remember that "with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). Remember that your "salvation is nearer" than when you "first believed" (Romans 13:11).

Live *anticipating* the Lord's coming. Jacob's descendants are back in their land; their King is alive and ready to return.