

## Learning Patience on the Road of Faith

Genesis 36.1-37.1

Genesis 36 is a tiresome and seemingly useless list of Esau's family tree...but it tells a story. Esau conquered the land of Edom; his sons and grandsons are prosperous and powerful. In contrast, Jacob is in Canaan, going nowhere. Why? What lessons are there for us here?

Genesis 36: Esau's Secular Success and Greatness

- Account 1: Esau's family and their move to Edom (1-8)  
*Esau marries Canaanite wives, and moves his family to Edom*
- Account 2: Esau's nation, with chiefs and kings (9-43)  
*Esau quickly is wealthy and powerful, controlling all Edom*

Genesis 37.1: Jacob's

- The baton is passed from Isaac to Jacob  
*Jacob lives in Canaan, but with no worldly power or influence*

What We Learn About God Here

- *A faithful life may not always lead to worldly success*
- *Waiting while others prosper is a test of faithfulness*
- *Experiencing God's promises demands patience in faith*



## Digging Deeper

1. Genesis 36 has two *tôledôts* in it – both of Esau. A *tôledôt* is an account of a person's life; it is usually translated something like *these are the records of the generations of*, or *this is the account of*, and it tells what became of someone. The first *tôledôt* here is verses 1-8, and the second is verses 9-43. Compare verse 1 and verse 9: How is Esau described in each case? Now compare the contents of each *tôledôt*: What is the same? What is different?
2. Christians often think that if they live a 'godly life' (pray every day, go to church, etc.), God will bless them (they'll be healthy and wealthy) – and *vice versa*. But Genesis 36 presents Esau as very blessed even though he was openly ungodly (see 26.34-35 and 28.8-9). Why? What prophecies and promises are fulfilled in Esau's life (see 25.23; 27.39-40)? Do you see God's grace in this? First, *if God keeps His promises to Esau, how much more can we count on Him to keep all His promises?!* Secondly, God blesses Esau in spite of his unbelief, and his descendants have a future. How can we reflect this grace in our lives as Christians today? Compare God's instruction of Peter in Acts 10.1-11.18.
3. The narrator does something intentional in Gen. 36.31. Before listing the kings who reigned in Edom – the nation founded by Esau, he writes this: *Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel*. Why do you think this is mentioned? What does this historical note tell us about Jacob?
4. Genesis 37.1 should be connected with Genesis 36 – it's part of the 'closing summary' of the chapter – a simple statement: *Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan*. Why is this recorded here? Contrast this with the impressive account of Esau's prestige, power, and progeny in Genesis 36! What will Jacob's descendants have to endure before they become a nation? Do you think God had a purpose in this? One Hebrew scholar put it this way: *Secular greatness grows up far more rapidly than spiritual greatness*. What kind of greatness are you pursuing in your life?