



### The Importance of Genealogies

The detailed genealogies underscore the historical and cultural context of the Bible, affirming its reliability and the continuity of God's plan through generations. They remind us that every person and every family has a role in God's plan.

**In verse 1 “the account of the family line” or “the generations of”**, depending on the translation, is the Hebrew word, *toledoth* (to-led-aw'), used to mark family histories in Genesis (6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). Genealogical information often accompanies the family histories, as in this chapter. Generally speaking, there are two types of genealogies in the OT, linear and vertical. Linear genealogies focus on one person in each generation—they connect one individual to one specific ancestor in a previous generation. Vertical (segmented) genealogies treat more than one person per generation—they depict relationships within a generation and from one generation to another.<sup>1</sup>

**There are two genealogies** for Esau in these passages: vv. 1–8, and 36:9–43. This chapter is the last mention of Esau in Genesis. The remainder of the book (chs. 37–50) focuses on Jacob's descendants.<sup>2</sup>

**The wives of Esau** In the earlier passages, Esau's wives are Adah (aw-daw' - meaning "ornament", "beauty") daughter of Elon the Hittite, sometimes called the daughter of Ishmael, [Gen. 36:3,4,13](#) her second name is also Bashemath (bos-math' - meaning "spice" in [26:34](#). Aholibamah's second name is Judith (26:34) and Basemath also had a second name, Mahalath (28:9). To summarize, Esau's wives are Aholibamah/Judith, Basemath/Mahalath, and Adah/Basemath (26:34). Three wives are listed in chapter 36 who bore him children.

**The migration of Esau and his family clan to Seir** at this point in the narrative is chronologically problematic. Earlier Esau was already depicted as living in Seir and then returning to Seir again after his meeting with Jacob (32:3–4; 33:14, 16). This means that this chapter likely presents a parenthetical summary and elaboration rather than a chronological account. This would mean that Jacob and Esau living in proximity to one another as adults with large families (vv. 7–8) occurred at some point between 33:11 and 33:16.<sup>3</sup>

Notable among the chiefs of Esau's descendants was **Amalek**. From him came the Amalekites, notable enemies of Israel ([Exodus 17:8-16](#); [Deuteronomy 25:17-19](#); [1 Samuel 15:1-8](#))

---

<sup>1</sup> (Blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8435/esv/wlc/0-1/)

<sup>2</sup> John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), [Ge 5:1](#).

<sup>3</sup> John D. Barry et al., Faithlife Study Bible (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), [Ge 36:2](#).



Edom and the Edomites are mentioned some 130 times in the Bible. They were an important group of neighbors to Israel. ([Numbers 20:21](#), [Numbers 21:4](#), [Deuteronomy 23:7](#), [1 Samuel 14:47](#), [2 Samuel 8:14](#), [2 Kings 8:16-22](#), [Jeremiah 49:17-18](#), [Ezekiel 25:12-14](#))

**The Horites** (*those who dwell in a "cave" or "hole"*) were an ancient people group who had some dealings with Abraham's family and the Edomites. The little we know of the Horites comes completely from Scripture.

The Horites are first mentioned in [Genesis 14:6](#). They were defeated by the alliance of kings that also defeated the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and took Lot and his family captive. The Horites are mentioned as living in Mt. Seir at that time.

The Horites are next mentioned in [Genesis 36](#) where Esau's descendants are listed. Esau settled in the hill country of Seir, which was also the territory of the descendants of Seir the Horite. It would make sense that, if Seir was the leader of the clan, he would name the mountain area where he and his clan settled as Mt. Seir. The descendants of Seir are given in some detail in verses 20–30, and they are noted as Horite chieftains. [Deuteronomy 2:12](#) tells us that Esau's descendants displaced and destroyed the Horites. [Deuteronomy 2:22](#) tells us that the Lord destroyed the Horites so that Esau's descendants could inhabit their territory, also called Edom.

Beyond this, there is no more information about the Horites. They are last mentioned in [Deuteronomy 2](#), except for [1 Chronicles 1](#), which simply reiterates the information found in the Pentateuch.

## Observation

1. In what land were Esau's sons born and to what land were they headed?

2. In what land were Jacob's sons born and to what land were they headed?



## Interpretation

3. What promise of God's does the genealogy of Esau represent?

4. What are we to make of the two nations? Edomites and Israelites? (to help you with this read [\(Romans 9:6-29\)](#))

## Application

5. If God blesses so abundantly those who are not chosen, how much more will He bless those who are chosen?