

## **GENESIS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 36 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In this chapter the Lord gives us the genealogy of Esau and as you read through this section, picture Esau as a type of the flesh and I think you will see the other reason God includes this in His Word besides showing us Esau's lineage. It is as Paul said in Romans 15:4, "**For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**" Thus, let's begin reading in Genesis chapter 36, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

## **GENESIS 36**

### **VERSES 1-5**

1. As we will see, Esau is going to live in the area of Edom, which is southeast of the Dead Sea, outside the Promise Land. This is the area where Petra, the rock city is located. And folks, the flesh also lives outside the Promise Land, doing its own thing, trying to satisfy self and living outside of the blessings and promises of God.

2. Not only that, but Esau took Canaanite wives, something his parents and God did not want him to do. But that flesh nature does what it wants. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 6:14, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”**

And yet, how many Christians do the opposite and suffer the consequences of their disobedience to God!

#### VERSES 6-8

1. Isn't it amazing how the flesh can prosper! You can cheat, steal, do whatever you want but in the end the flesh will not prosper – it will go back to the dust of the earth and what will you be left with? Don't fall prey to this fleshly prosperity, walk with God and see the blessings He will bring into your life!

#### VERSES 9-13

1. Here in verse 12 we read of Eliphaz. This could be the same Eliphaz the Temanite spoken of in the book of Job, which gives us then a time frame for the book of Job being one of the oldest books of the Bible since Genesis through Deuteronomy were written by Moses.

VERSES 14-16

1. The Amalekites were wicked and as Moses was leading the children of Israel to the Promise Land, they attacked those in back, the weaker and sick ones as Deuteronomy 25:17-18 tells us, **“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.”**

VERSES 17-43

1. Some say that Jobab spoken of in verse 33 is Job, which is possible, we don't know for sure. But if this is the same Eliphaz, it would seem to fit!

2. I know we didn't read through all those names, the descendants of Esau, but I can mess them up as good as you and we are going to move on in our study since this is not the lineage from which the Messiah will come.

**GENESIS 37****VERSE 1**

1. Notice the dramatic contrast between Esau and Jacob. Esau had it all, all the possessions you could ask for, while Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, the Promise Land, the land of Canaan. How true this is, that secular and worldly greatness comes far more quickly than spiritual greatness. You see, God is taking these lumps of coal and through pressure and heat – trials and tribulations, He is making us into precious diamonds, and that does take time. But God will finish the work He started in each of us!

**VERSES 2-4**

1. We now begin this fascinating story of Joseph that covers 12 out of the last 14 chapters and as you are reading through the life of Joseph, see how he is a type of Christ. Regarding the life of Joseph, Boice makes these comments, “He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man.”

2. One of the problems for Joseph is that his father Jacob loved him more than his other sons, and they were well aware of this, it was obvious to them. Also, I believe Jacob trusted Joseph more than he did his other sons and thus, he put Joseph in charge over them. How do I know that? Because this “tunic of many colors” is really a long sleeved robe and it extended down to the ankles. Thus, it was not a workingman’s garment even though Joseph did assist them in the work. That was just the type of guy he was. Also, Joseph’s brothers did not work as they should and thus, Joseph told his dad about their work ethics, which didn’t help his relationship with his brothers, and it is only going to get worse!

#### VERSES 5-8

1. Now some, in reading this say that Joseph was wrong in the way he handled this. He laced tack or even worse, he was boasting. I don’t believe so. You see, God spoke to Joseph in a dream and the message may have been unpleasant for his brothers to hear, but it was the truth and they needed to hear the truth, even though they couldn’t handle the truth! We hear that same garbage today that we need to be more positive. Well, okay, outside of Jesus Christ I am positive you are going to Hell, thus, ask Him to be your Lord and Savior and I am positive you will be saved! How’s that, it is positive, isn’t it?

You see, Paul admonished Timothy to, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** II Timothy 4:2-5. It doesn't matter what they want, you give them what they need, the Word of God! I believe that is all that Joseph was doing, sharing God's Word. And think about it, they did not have the Scriptures; they had God's Word spoken to individuals!

2. Here is what the dream means. Joseph will reign over them one day and thus, in hearing this, they hated him even more, but Joseph isn't done yet!

#### VERSES 9-11

1. In Joseph's second dream he now sees his parents and his brothers all bowing down before him and even though Jacob rebuked Joseph for this, he knew that God was doing something powerful in Joseph's life and he was going to watch and see how this would all play out!

2. We see this dream spoken of in Revelation 12:1-2 where we are told, “**Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.**” You see, this illustration was taken out of Genesis chapter 37, and thus, you need to understand the Old Testament if you want to understand the book of Revelation. It was out of the tribes of Israel, that the Messiah would be born!

#### VERSES 12-17

1. Do you think Jacob, or should I say Israel was a little concerned about what his sons were doing in Shechem? I do, and I believe that is the reason he sends Joseph out to see what is going on, what they are up to! Also, it seems that Shechem was not necessarily the wrong place to be, but when you realize what took place there back in Genesis chapter 34, they should have stayed clear, but they didn't! Thus, Hebron to Shechem was about 50 miles to the north and then add another 15 miles north to Dothan.

VERSES 18-22

1. They are so envious of Joseph and what God was doing in his life they wanted to kill him, thus, putting an end to his dreams. First of all, if God has said it, it will come to pass no matter what man may try to do to stop it or kill it! And folks, we too need to be careful of envy because this ugly monster can destroy lives! Be excited for what God is doing in people's lives and don't be envious! Look at the Scriptures that speak of envy in the New Testament and see how murder is listed next to it or murder is the result of it. I think you will be surprised. Also, we can murder people with our tongue, and that is just as bad as we can also destroy people's lives. James tells us, **“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”** James 3:14-16. A life filled with envy is a confused life and is focused on self as the brothers of Joseph were!

2. Rueben, the son that slept with his father's concubine, tries to do right but does not want to offend his brothers. Thus, he tells them not to kill Joseph but to throw him into this dry pit, thinking this will work, things will cool off and Joseph can go home, but in the end, Joseph will not go home to his father. You see, if you want to be a man pleaser you will never succeed. Be a God pleaser and you won't lose!

VERSES 23-28

1. Talk about your cold, heartless behavior. They not only ripped off Joseph's tunic, but they threw him into a pit and then they sat down to eat! That couldn't happen today, could it? During the Nuremberg Trials or the War Crimes against the Germans, when these men that did these atrocities were on trial, everyone wanted to see what kind of monsters these men were. And, to their horror, what they found out is they looked like you and me. They had families, they did the things families do and yet, they would go and do these horrific murders and think nothing of it, it was just a job and then go home to their families!

This is a shocking demonstration of the depravity of the human heart - but it isn't the last demonstration. For example, in 1995 Susan Smith deliberately drowned her own children and lied to the country about the children being kidnapped. We usually think someone who committed such an act would be overwhelmed by remorse, but her ability to put on a false face about such a horrific crime shows how deceitful our hearts are. Thus, before you are too quick to judge a person, what is lurking in your heart, who is on the throne? May it be Jesus!

2. Now who are these traders? It can be confusing here because two different groups of people are listed, so let me try to clear it up. The Ishmaelites did speak of the descendents of Abraham by Hagar, (Genesis 16:15). And the Midianites were the descendents of Abraham by his concubine Keturah, (Genesis 25:2). But that term “Ishmaelite” can speak of desert tribes so these Midianite traders were known as Ishmaelites also. And they sell Joseph for 20 shekels of silver; they figured they would make a profit off him even though it was not much!

#### VERSES 29-35

1. Yes, they didn't murder Joseph, but to his father Jacob, he might as well be dead, sold into slavery, and thus, Reuben tore his clothes over what his brothers did and his ineffectiveness of saving him from this fate.

2. Now they go back to their father Jacob and deceive him into thinking Joseph is dead and they do this by putting goats blood on the tunic of Joseph. How cold, how heartless were they? Jacob believes that Joseph has been eaten by a wild animal and is dead. Thus, he is mourning the loss of his favorite son and he refuses to be comforted. What is interesting to me is that years earlier Jacob deceived his father Isaac by wearing goatskin and now his sons are deceiving him with the blood of a goat! We do reap what we have sown!

3. One other point here and that is this. Jacob believed this lie that his son was dead, but he really wasn't. For us as Christians, Jesus has set us free from sin but Satan comes along and tells us, "You're not saved, look at what you did. God doesn't love you!" and as long as we listen to his lies, we will mourn, we will be depressed, we will be useless in ministry. You see, we are free; we just believed the lie of Satan instead of listening to the truth from God! Don't listen to the Devil. Listen to the Lord!

### VERSE 36

1. When we read this story we wonder how can God allow this to happen when He gave two dreams to Joseph that seem to be contrary to what is happening? Think of it like this because God has a plan, and His ways are far above our ways.

- If Joseph's brothers never sell him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt.
- If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar.
- If he is never sold to Potiphar, Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape.
- If Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape, then he is never put in prison.
- If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh.
- If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams.
- If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.
- If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he never is made prime minister.

- If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region.
- If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine.
- If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, the Messiah can't come forth from a dead family.
- If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came.
- If Jesus never came, you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world.

You see, God's perfect plan. It is as we are told in Isaiah 55:8-11, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”** We may not always understand what God is doing but may we learn to trust in Him as Joseph will do!

2. As we move into chapter 38 we will take a short departure from Joseph's life. And as you read this you may wonder why this is here in the first place. I think the reason is simple. God is giving to us the lineage of the Messiah and it is not always pretty!

**GENESIS 38****VERSES 1-5**

1. Here we read of Judah, Jacob's fourth son through Leah, (Reuben, Simeon and Levi were born before him). The tribe from which the Messiah would come, marries a Canaanite woman, living in Adullam, which is about 15 miles northwest of Hebron. He has three sons from this marriage: Er, Onan, and Shelah. Also, Judah was the one who suggested they sell Joseph into slavery back in Genesis 37:26. Not a very spiritual man to say the least and this story will support that.

**VERSES 6-7**

1. When you look at what Judah and his brothers did, you would think God would have killed them, but He didn't! But for Judah's son, Er, his first-born and who marries Tamar, he must have been very wicked for the Lord to take his life. Now Tamar is a widow.

**VERSES 8-10**

1. Since Er is dead, Judah has his next son Onan, marry Tamar to raise a son for his dead brother. This custom was known as the Levirate marriage, and in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 we see God establish this, but it was already being practiced. The reason this was done was so that the name of the dead brother would be carried on and to receive the inheritance. Now Onan understood that he would lose out on this so he engages in sex with Tamar but he allows his seed to go out on the ground, and thus, she could not get pregnant.

2. Now these verses have been used to support a few different things, like birth control being wrong, even masturbation, but that is not what the text is saying here. You see, Onan had sex with Tamar frequently, this was not a one-time thing, and every time he allowed his seed to fall out onto the ground. You see, Onan used this law for sexual gratification but refused the responsibility! In other words, he only cared for himself and nothing else, and God held him accountable for his actions and Onan died in God's judgment against him. He was to raise up an offspring for his dead brother, but he refused to do it. Now please don't get the idea that sex between a husband and wife is only for propagation, not at all. God has also given us sex for enjoyment; so don't read into the text something that is not there. Paul said in Hebrews 13:4 "**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**"

#### VERSE 11

1. Judah had only one more son and he didn't want to lose him. So he told Tamar to wait until he was older but he never intended to give Shelah to her. In Judah's mind it couldn't be his sons, thus, it must be Tamar and his rational keeps Shelah away from her. And so Tamar goes to live with her father.

VERSES 12-14

1. Judah's wife dies and all he can think about is being comforted by having sex, not seeking the Lord. He wanted to go out on the town you might say! Do you remember who else went down to Timnah? It was Samson and we are told in Judges 14:1-3, "**Now Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, 'I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.' Then his father and mother said to him, 'Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?' And Samson said to his father, 'Get her for me, for she pleases me well.'**" The flesh was in control of his life and Samson as well as Judah see nothing wrong with this. Folks, it truly is opening a door that leads to destruction and before that door can be closed, sin consumes you. Be careful, don't open the door, don't go down that road!

2. Tamar saw the handwriting on the wall, that Judah was not going to give his only son to her and thus, she takes matters into her own hands and dresses up as a temple prostitute. Isn't it interesting, she knew the only reason Judah was going to Timnah was to engage in sex with one of these temple prostitutes, and thus, she places herself in position to intersect Judah before he gets to the location so she can lay with him!

VERSES 15-18

1. Judah negotiates a price with this woman; not knowing it is Tamar his daughter-in-law, for she is covered. And for sex, she will get a goat; I guess it was a good deal back then. The problem is that Judah was not traveling with a goat so he leaves with her his signet ring and staff until the goat can be brought to her and they engage in sex. And guess what, she becomes pregnant! Then, before long they are on the Jerry Springer Show doing DNA testing to see who the father really is! No, but God has an interesting way of exposing Judah's sin!

VERSES 19-23

1. Judah sends his friend with this goat to pay this woman and she is nowhere to be found and the people of the area said that there were no temple prostitutes in this area, which tells me Judah must have been passing through here to get to the area where these women worked and ran into Tamar! Since she can't be found, Judah lets it go, she could have his staff and signet ring, he did his best but now she can't be found.

VERSES 24-26

1. I'm telling you, this could be on the Jerry Springer Show! Three months pass by and obviously Tamar is showing now, everyone knows she is pregnant. And when Judah, this righteous man finds out, he goes ballistic and calls for her to be burned to death! So Tamar tells Judah that whoever this signet ring and staff belong to, that is the father! I'm sure there was silence when Judah saw that it was his signet ring, his staff and thus, his child! And think about how hypocritical he is. He has sex outside of marriage and sees nothing wrong with it but now, when he calls for Tamar to be put to death for her actions; he finds out that he is the guilty party. Our sin looks so bad when others are doing it and yet we ignore it when we do it! Be careful, God will expose it! Now this could have been prevented if his sons walked with the Lord, if they were not so wicked and if Jacob would have given Shelah to Tamar, but he didn't. Also, this does not justify Tamar's actions but Judah was also wrong in a big way!

2. It is as Proverbs 6:27-35 tells us, **“Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house. Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away. For jealousy is a husband's fury; Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.”** If you play with fire, you will get burned!

#### VERSES 27-30

1. So Tamar has twins and according to Matthew 1:3 and Luke 3:33, Perez is listed in the lineage of the Messiah, of Jesus. How can this be? Neither Judah nor Tamar were examples of godliness, not even close! It is God’s grace and folks none of us deserve the blessings that God gives us, but that is ***GRACE*** – unmerited favor!

2. Paul put it like this in I Corinthians 1:25-31, **“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’”** May we not forget that!

You see, it is not about us or what we can do but it is about God and what He can and has done in our lives. Thus, He gets the glory. We are like a lump of clay that is molded into a masterpiece. I know, coal and clay, not the best things to be like and yet in God’s hands they are. And think about this. You would never hear anyone say, “What a great lump of clay!” Nor would a lump of clay appear on the tonight show to be interviewed. Why is that? Because it is clay and the value only comes because of the work of the masters hand upon it and thus, he gets the glory. Let us not forget that fact and let us not forget to praise the Lord for His grace and mercy that He extends to us through Jesus Christ!