



BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 5

### Genesis 36: Burned, But Still Blessed

*Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.*

– 1 John 2:15-17 NLT

- **Shifting Focus**

*These are the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). Esau took his wives from the Canaanites: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite, and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. And Adah bore to Esau, Eliphaz; Basemath bore Reuel; and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. – Genesis 36:1-5 ESV*

- Why is this chapter here?
- Why the sudden focus on Esau
  - o First, **all** scripture is inspired by God and there for a reason
  - o Secondly, it's a transition chapter
  - o It also provides a point of contrast between Jacob and Esau

*Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. The sons of Leah: Reuben (Jacob's firstborn), Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant: Dan and Naphtali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram. – Genesis 35:22b-26 ESV*

- More than meets the eye
  - o The juxtaposition of two brothers
    - The primary line of Jacob
    - The secondary line of Esau

*“These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.”*  
– Genesis 35:26 ESV

*“These are the generations of Esau (that is, Edom).”* – Genesis 36:1 ESV

- The “nation” versus the “nations”
  - This chapter raises the nation (*gôy*) and “nations” (*gôyim*) issue again

- Two groups of people on earth

**The nation (*gôy*)**

*“I will make of you a great **nation**.”* – Genesis 12:2 ESV

- Jacob’s line is the *gôy* – the children of the inheritance

**The nations (*gôyim*)**

*“...through your descendants, all the **nations** of the earth will be blessed.”*  
– Genesis 22:2 ESV

- Esau’s line is part of the *gôyim* – everyone else

- What becomes of the *gôyim*?

*Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock. So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. (Esau is Edom).* – Genesis 36:6-8 ESV

- Separation from Jacob goes smoothly
- Esau experiences the blessings of God
  - He becomes fruitful and prosperous
  - As a son of Isaac, he is still a legitimate conduit through whom God will fulfill His promise of offspring

*“I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...”* – Genesis 26:4 ESV

- But Esau’s descendants would not be considered part of the chosen nation (*gôy*)
- His blessing from Isaac was very different from Jacob’s

*“Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,  
and away from the dew of heaven on high.  
By your sword you shall live,  
and you shall serve your brother;*

*but when you grow restless  
you shall break his yoke from your neck.” – Genesis 27:39-40 ESV*

- Yet, he still ends up blessed by God

*“Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob.” – Genesis 36:6 ESV*

- Descendants

- Many would become great leaders  
*These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau. – Genesis 36:16 ESV*

*These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites. – Genesis 36:31 ESV*

*These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans and their dwelling places, by their names... – Genesis 36:40 ESV*

- Land

- God provided Esau and his descendants with ample land  
*So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. – Genesis 36:8 ESV*

- This land was a gift from God  
*“Do not contend with them, for I will not give you any of their land, no, not so much as for the sole of the foot to tread on, because **I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.**” – Deuteronomy 2:5 ESV*

*“And **I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess**, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt.” – Joshua 24:4 ESV*

- **Blessings without God**

- The Edomites are a picture of a life lived with God’s blessings but without God’s presence or power
- Esau was blessed by God
  - He had descendants, land, and livestock
  - By worldly standards, he had everything
  - He had the blessings of God but no relationship with Him
- Esau craved worldly pleasures
  - In his mind, earthly possessions were the indicator of blessing
    - The Edomites enjoyed wealth without true riches
    - They experienced power without God’s presence
    - They enjoyed worldly success without eternal hope

- Their story is a reflection of 1 John 2:15-17  
*Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.* – 1 John 2:15-17 ESV

- Esau was blessed by God, but did not **know God**
- In what ways do we love the world
  - Economic status
  - Work
  - Cars

- The danger of misinterpreting the blessings of God
  - God’s blessings may not appear in the form we desire

“While Esau and his descendants were busy making themselves at home in Edom, Israel and his descendants would be continuing their nomadic lifestyle established by Abraham and Isaac.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

- While Esau settled in Edom and flourished, Jacob (Israel) lived as strangers in the land of the promise
- Ultimately, they would become slaves in the land of Egypt
  - The *gôyim* seem to have it better than the *gôy*
  - But Jacob and his descendants were learning to have an eternal perspective, just like Abraham

*“It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for **he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob**, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.”* – Hebrews 11:8-10 NLT

- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never inherited all the land promised to them by God

*“All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth.”* – Hebrews 11:13 NLT

- They placed a higher priority on the future than the present
- They trusted God for eternal blessings rather than temporal ones

- They had faith in the promises of God
- The descendants of Esau had earthly kings, wealth, and cities
- The descendants of Jacob did not – at least for more than 400 years
  - They had an eternal perspective

*“Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.” – Hebrews 11:14-16 NLT*

- **Life without God**

- Esau married Canaanite women, which was forbidden
  - All his descendants become pagans
  - They worship the gods of the nations inhabiting the land of the promise
  - And they end up turning against God’s people
  - This brings down God’s judgment on them

*“Is there no wisdom in Teman?  
 Is no one left to give wise counsel?  
 Turn and flee!  
 Hide in deep caves, you people of Dedan!  
 For when I bring disaster on Edom,  
 I will punish you, too!  
 Those who harvest grapes  
 always leave a few for the poor.  
 If thieves came at night,  
 they would not take everything.  
 But I will strip bare the land of Edom,  
 and there will be no place left to hide.  
 Its children, its brothers, and its neighbors  
 will all be destroyed,  
 and Edom itself will be no more.” – Jeremiah 49:7-10 ESV*

*The Lord says to Edom,  
 “I will cut you down to size among the nations;  
 you will be greatly despised.  
 You have been deceived by your own pride  
 because you live in a rock fortress  
 and make your home high in the mountains.  
 ‘Who can ever reach us way up here?’  
 you ask boastfully.  
 But even if you soar as high as eagles*

*and build your nest among the stars,  
I will bring you crashing down,”  
says the Lord. – Obadiah 1:2-4 ESV*

“God would bless Esau, resulting in the formation of a variety of nations and people groups. But they would fail to honor God and worship Him alone. Instead, they would seek and serve the false gods of Canaan, resulting in the pouring out of God’s divine wrath.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

- This should challenge us to live with an eternal perspective
- Are we living for temporal or eternal blessings?

*“Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal. You know that afterward, when he wanted his father’s blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears.” – Hebrews 12:15-17 ESV*

- **Discussion questions**

What are some ways in which we worship the gift more than the Giver? How do we end up enjoying God’s blessings but not His presence?

What would living with an eternal perspective look like in your life? Think practically and not just spiritually.

Close by reading together 1 John 2:15-17. When it comes to the craving for physical pleasure, the craving for everything you see, or the pride in your achievements and possessions, which is the greatest temptation for you, and why?



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SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

### WEEK 6 – Genesis 37-38: A Tale of Two Brothers

In this week's lesson, we will cover the stark contrast between two of Jacob's sons. One is Joseph, Jacob's favorite son on whom he showered his attention and affections, much to the chagrin of his ten older brothers. Their hatred for him will become so intense that they devise a plot to kill him. But instead, they allow him to live and sell him as a slave. Judah, one of Joseph's older brothers, will be used as a less-than-flattering counterpoint to the innocent and maltreated apple of Jacob's eye. Raised by the same father in the same home, they represent two radically different moral outcomes. And while one will take inappropriate steps to satisfy his own selfish desires, the other will suffer undeserved loss at the hands of his own flesh and blood.

- Read through chapter 37-38 and write down any verses or scenes that catch your attention.
- Now read pages 111-138 of Ken's Devotional™ on Genesis Part II.
- Notice that Moses opens up chapter 37 with the statement, "These are the generations of Jacob" (Genesis 37:2), then promptly begins telling the story of Joseph. After having read through the two chapters, what do you think is his reason for doing so?

What do verses 2-4 reveal about the dynamics going on Jacob's home?

What earlier event in Jacob's does this remind you of?

- What do you think is the significance of Joseph’s dreams recorded in verses 5-11?
- What evidence do you find in verses 12-36 that Jacob has been a less-than-stellar father figure to his 11 sons?

How could this traumatic experience have scarred Joseph for the rest of his life?

- Look at chapter 38, verses 1-5. What is significant about Judah’s choice of a wife?

According to verses 6-11, what are the eventual consequences from Judah’s marriage to a Canaanite woman?

List all the incidents of deceit found in verses 12-19. How is this an indication that Jacob’s old habits have taken root in his household?

Why do you think Tamar takes the steps she does to “get even” with Judah?

List the sins Judah is guilty of in this passage alone.

- In verses 20-26, Jacob tries to retrieve his belongings and pay off his debt to “the prostitute.” Do you see any signs of remorse, regret, or sorrow for his previous actions?

But how does Judah respond when he gets news that Tamar is three months pregnant?

- For a reminder of how God uses even our worst decisions to bring about good, compare verses 27-30 to Ruth 4:18-22; Matthew 1:3; and Luke 3:33. Write down what you discover.