

# (Genesis) Genesis 36 Introduction

by J. Vernon McGee

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*The 36th chapter of Genesis deals with Esau, a man of the flesh who opposed God's will and purposes, and the prophecy of Edom, which will be brought down by God because of its pride and declaration of independence from God.*

**Duration:** 13:35

**Scripture:** Genesis 35:6-35

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of Rachel's death in the life of Jacob. Despite Jacob's flawed character, Rachel was the one positive influence in his life, and he loved her deeply. The speaker also highlights the contrast between Jacob and his brother Esau, emphasizing Jacob's spiritual nature compared to Esau's fleshly desires. The chapter in focus, Genesis 35, is marked by multiple deaths, including Rachel, Deborah, and Isaac, highlighting the theme of mortality and the consequences of wrongdoing in our lives.

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## Transcript

Now, today we come in our study to the 36th chapter of the book of Genesis, and it deals entirely with Esau, the entire chapter. And the Spirit of God follows this pattern all the way through this book. In fact, it's followed all the way through the Scripture.

The seed that is being followed is Christ. Paul makes that clear, there are seeds, not many, but one, Christ. And so, as you go through the Scripture, beginning actually with Adam and Eve and Seth, and then come on down to Abraham and Isaac, and now Jacob, the method and the pattern that is followed, God will give the rejected line first, and it's dismissed as far as any purpose is concerned in the Scripture, and then the other line is picked up after that.

So that is the place and the purpose of the 36th chapter. Now when we left off last time, we were talking in the 35th chapter about the death of Rachel. And I'm sure that many folk who have heard me speak on this section before have said, well, you certainly fail to give your usual eulogy of Rachel.

And that's true. I didn't tell the truth. I didn't have time.

But I do want to come back to make a connection here that's going to be very important later on. Rachel was the one fine thing in the life of Jacob, even in those years in Padan-Aram that are sorted in so many ways, where there's so much evidence of just the flesh of self. But he loved Rachel, no question about that.

And he was willing to do most anything for her. He was totally devoted to her. He permitted her, for instance, to keep those images that she'd taken from her father.

I don't think Leah would have got by with it or anyone else would have. But he was indulgent with her. He loved her.

And she had this boy, first Joseph. Then she had this boy, Benjamin. And it was at the birth of Benjamin that she died.

His life meant her death in this particular connection. And it was a great heartbreak to Jacob. To begin with, the other ten boys were no joy to him at all.

God reminded him, I think, every day and 24 hours every day that it was sinful to have more than one wife. He didn't need all of them. That wasn't God's method.

God will overrule, of course. He does in your life, friends, and he does mine. Thank God he'll overrule.

But it doesn't mean God approved of this at all. In fact, these facts reveal he didn't approve of it, and especially what happened to Joseph. Now, he loved Joseph and Benjamin, very frankly.

The other boys were jealous of that. He should not have shown such partiality to Joseph because he had experienced that in his own home, and he was the one that his own father more or less pushed aside, and he knew the trouble it had caused, and he should not have practiced it, but he did. And I ordinarily don't defend Jacob, but after all, when Rachel died, and she says, call this boy Ben-Oni, he's the son of my Sarah.

And I think Jacob would have said, yes, he's the son of Rachel's Sarah. But when he looked down at the little fellow, and I guess he looked like Rachel, probably had her eyes, or reminded him of Rachel, he said, I can't call him, he's not the son of my Sarah. He's the only one I've got to lean on now.

He's the son of my right hand, he's my walking stick, he's my staff, I'm going to lean on him. And you'll find out this is very important later on, because this is part of the great this man was called to go through later on, all of this around one fact, and that is God did not approve of this. And God does not approve of that which is wrong in our lives, friends.

We think we get by with it, but we actually do not get by with it at all, and Jacob did not get by with it. But his lovely Rachel now is gone, buried at Bethlehem. And this chapter 35 that we had last time, did you notice that it is a chapter that is made prominent by deaths? First the death of Deborah, the maid of Rebecca, and then in that the suggestion of the death of Rebecca herself, and now the death of lovely Rachel.

Then the sons of Jacob are mentioned here, and he had no joy in them, and lo and behold it closes with the death of Isaac. So that here is a chapter that the most prominent thing in it are the deaths and the funerals of these different ones, three in this chapter. Now when we come to chapter 36 of Genesis, we

now turn to Esau, and it's all given over to Esau.

It's almost humorous in places, by the way, and may I say that this would not be too interesting for a great many of us. This would be a marvelous study for someone who wanted to follow through on these names, follow through on those that came from them. You find some of the names that are mentioned here that are names you hear out there on that great Arabian desert today.

We've all heard of Omar the tentmaker, and he belonged out there. We've heard of Timon, Kenaz, and Zepho. Well, you read the 15th verse here, and you find out all of them are mentioned.

Here's the family of Esau. That's where they are out in that desert. Now they settled in the land of Edom, and Edom is south and east of the Dead Sea.

It's in a mountainous area, and the capital of Edom, the rock-hewn city of Petra, is there today. Prophecy is given concerning that, remarkable prophecy that stands fulfilled. In fact, it's fulfilled there today.

God said it would be just exactly as it is. It's a prophecy. We'll see when we get to it.

Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel all mention this particular section and this particular nation. Now this nation came from Esau, and three times in this chapter it's made very clear to us that Esau is the father of Edom and that they are synonymous terms. If you look at verse 8, for instance, "...thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir." Esau is Edom.

Somebody says, well, what's the difference? Well, the difference is just simply this. When you look at this boy Esau, as we first met him in the family of Isaac, and we see him there, the outdoor, rugged type, athletic type, fine-looking boy, by the way, I'm sure that our snap judgment would be, my, there's a fine boy. And outwardly, it might look that way, but if there ever was a man of the flesh, he's the man of the flesh.

Several years ago, a Christian girl talked to me about she'd met a fine-looking young man, and tell the truth, they both were fine-looking young people. She had been born in China, not of missionaries. Father was in the oil business and made very wealthy.

And she had met this young man. He was a bank clerk. And I was a bank clerk when I was a young fellow, and I knew something about it.

I knew one thing. He was a very poor boy. And I know a lot of bank clerks look around for a good marriage, especially among customers that have daughters, that the customer has money in the bank.

So this boy had met this girl, and he was a handsome brute, fine-looking, rugged type. To me, he looked like Esau. I have a notion Esau looked very much like it.

And she was a Christian girl, had been led to the Lord by missionaries out in China years ago. And so she insisted she was going to marry him, and I said I would not marry him. I had counsel with him.

She said, I believe that he'll come to the Lord. I talked with him. He had no notion of coming to the Lord.

He was wanting to marry that girl. She was beautiful and had money, and he was a man of the flesh, and she married him. And I didn't perform it, I can assure you.

In fact, she was provoked with me at the time. But later on, she came back, and she was telling me they got a divorce. She said, I never met a person in my life, Dr. McGee, that was so given over to the things that were secular and carnal and of the flesh.

She said, I never dreamed that there could be any person anywhere that in his entire life never had a high, noble, spiritual, wonderful thought. Why, she said he was as crude as they come, that he gave a good impression on the surface. She said he would open the door of the car for me to get in.

He was quite lovely when we were courting, but he was as crude as any person I've ever met. Well, may I say to you, that's Esau. And when you see Esau in the family there, maybe you, if you were an attractive young lady and he wanted to date you, chances are you'd date him because he was attractive.

But he was a man of the flesh, that's who he is. Now, somebody might want to argue with me about that and argue with God about it. You made a mistake in setting this man aside.

Well, God says, and he always protects himself, over in the little book of Obadiah, you find that Esau is unveiled. Now Esau is Edom, that's what Moses says here, Esau is Edom, all right? Go down the centuries, in fact, you'll have to go down over a thousand years, and one little Esau now is about a hundred thousand Edomites. Each one of them is a little Esau.

Now take a look at the nation and you see what came from Esau. It is like putting Esau under the microscope, or as the photographer out here in Hollywood told me about a picture of mine, he says, I want to blow it up. I didn't know what he really meant by that at first.

I thought that it was so bad he wanted to put a stick of dynamite under it, but what he meant was he wanted to take a small one and make it a great big picture, all right? If you want to see a real picture of Esau, go to Obadiah, and what do you see there? Again, a nation filled with pride, and God says, though you be lifted up like the eagle and you make your nest yonder in the tops of the mountains, God says, I'll bring you down. And what is pride of heart that they were guilty of? Well, it's the declaration of independence of a soul that says, I can live without God and I don't need God. That's Esau, and you'll have to wait until we get over there.

And then when you come to the last book of the Old Testament, God says, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated, and God never said that until you go down over a thousand years. Now, God knew it at the beginning, but you didn't know it and I didn't know it, and when they worked their way out in history, you can be sure God's accurate. Esau turned out, and so three times in this chapter we are told Esau is Edom, and he says that three times so we make sure that we get it.

But that's not the funny part of that. In fact, that's not funny, but this is.

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