

Genesis

The Book of Beginnings

18. Jacob returns to Canaan

An outline of the Book of Genesis *

* Approximate chapter divisions only

Genesis 1 to 11

Creation

Genesis 1 to 2

The Fall

Genesis 3

Before the Flood

Genesis 4 to 5

The Flood

Genesis 6 to 8

After the Flood

Genesis 9 to 11

Genesis 12 to 50

Abraham

Genesis 12 to 23

Isaac

Genesis 24 to 27

Jacob

Genesis 28 to 36

Joseph

Genesis 37 to 50



Genesis

The Book of Beginnings

Genesis 31 to 36

Three themes:

- ✓ God is faithful to the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob.
- ✓ God is building and preserving a nation for the coming of the Messiah.
- ✓ God is working in His people individually, leading them into fellowship with Himself.

Genesis

The Book of Beginnings

Genesis 31 to 36

An outline of the action

- Jacob secretly flees from Laban with his family and all his possessions to return to Canaan.
- Laban pursues him but they make a covenant.
- Jacob, in great fear, prepares to meet Esau who is coming with 400 men.
- **Jacob has an encounter with God at Peniel and limps away with a new name.**
- Esau and Jacob meet after 20 years separation.
- Dinah, Leah's daughter, is abused by Shechem. Her brothers take savage revenge on his city.
- Jacob returns to Bethel where God speaks to him.



Jacob flees from Laban

Chapter 31

Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying,
“Jacob has taken all that was our father’s...”

And Jacob saw that Laban
did not regard him with favour as before.



Then the LORD said to Jacob,

***“Return to the land of your fathers
and to your kindred, and I will be with you.”***

***“I am the God of Bethel,
where you anointed a pillar
and made a vow to Me.”***

(See Genesis 31:1-3, 11-13)

Jacob flees from Laban

Chapter 31

So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels.
He drove away all his livestock...
to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac.
Laban had gone to shear his sheep,
and **Rachel stole her father's household gods.**
And **Jacob tricked Laban** the Aramean,
by not telling him that he intended to flee....

(Genesis 31:17-21)

Jacob flees from Laban

Chapter 31

When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days....

But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him,

“Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

(See Genesis 31:22-25)



God is faithful

Jacob flees from Laban

Chapter 31

And Laban said to Jacob...

“Why did you flee secretly and **trick** me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? ...

“It is in my power to do you harm.

But the God of your father spoke to me last night...

“...you longed greatly for your father's house, **but why did you steal my gods?”** ...

Now Jacob did not know that **Rachel had stolen them.**

(See Genesis 31:26-32)

Jacob flees from Laban

Chapter 31

Self-righteous
anger

Then **Jacob became angry** and berated Laban....

“What is my offense? What is my sin,
that you have hotly pursued me? ...

“I served you 14 years for your two daughters,
and 6 years for your flock,
and you have changed my wages 10 times. ...

Deceiver against
deceiver

God is faithful

“God saw my affliction and the labour of my hands
and rebuked you last night.” ...

Then Laban answered and said to Jacob...

“Come now, **let us make a covenant**, you and I.”

(See Genesis 31:36-44)

What can you see?

- **God has chosen Jacob** and will not leave him until He has accomplished all that He has promised.
- Despite his experience of God's mercies, Jacob's life is governed by insecurity and fear, not faith.
- **God has chosen many Jacobs** and will not leave them until He has accomplished all that He has promised.

Jacob prepares to meet Esau

Chapter 32

Jacob went on his way, and **the angels of God met him.**

Encouragement

And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place **Mahanaim.**

Two camps

(Genesis 32:1-2)



Jacob prepares to meet Esau

Chapter 32

And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau... instructing them,

“Thus you shall say to **my lord Esau**:

Thus says **your servant Jacob**,

‘I have sojourned with Laban....
I have oxen, donkeys, flocks,
male servants, and female servants.
I have sent to tell **my lord**, in order
that I may find favour in your sight.’”

‘I have no
need of
anything.’

And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying,

“**We came to your brother Esau,**
and he is coming to meet you,
and there are 400 men with him.”

(Genesis 32:3-6)



Jacob prepares to meet Esau

Chapter 32

Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.

He divided the people who were with him... into two camps...

And Jacob said,

“O God of my father **Abraham** and God of my father **Isaac**,
...I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of **steadfast love**
and all the **faithfulness** that You have shown to Your servant...
Please deliver me from the hand of my brother...

Jacob prays!

“You said, *‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring
as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’*”

The covenant

(Genesis 32:7-12)

Jacob prepares to meet Esau

Chapter 32

So he stayed there that night,
and from what he had with him
he took a present for his brother Esau...

(Genesis 32:13)

‘They belong to your servant Jacob.
They are a present sent to my lord Esau.
And moreover, he is behind us.’ ...

For Jacob thought,
“I may appease him with the present
that goes ahead of me,
and afterward I shall see his face.
Perhaps he will accept me.”

(See Genesis 32:18-21)

What can you see?

- God shows Jacob yet again **His faithfulness**.
- Jacob prays and remembers God's covenant.
- But still, Jacob, in fear, relies on his own devices.
- Are we seeing **the first shoots** of a growing faith?
- Are we seeing **ourselves** in Jacob?

The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.

He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had.

And Jacob was left alone.

(Genesis 32:22-24)

And Jacob was left alone.

And a Man wrestled with him
until the breaking of the day.

(Genesis 32:24)

*In the womb he took his brother by the heel,
and in his manhood he strove with God.*

*He strove with the Angel and prevailed;
he wept and sought His favour.*

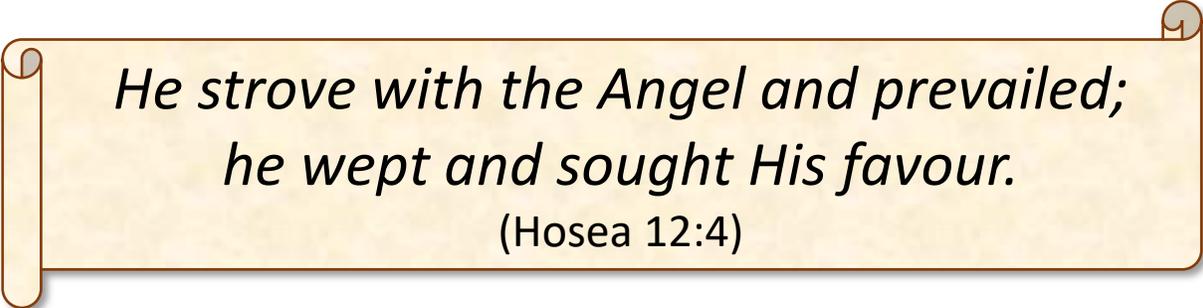
(Hosea 12:3-4)

When the Man saw that He did not prevail against Jacob, He touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with Him.

Then He said, "Let Me go, for the day has broken."

But Jacob said, "**I will not let You go unless You bless me.**"

(Genesis 32:25-26)

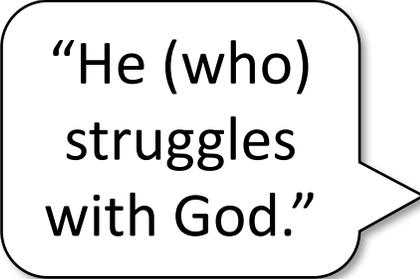


*He strove with the Angel and prevailed;
he wept and sought His favour.*

(Hosea 12:4)

And He said to him, "What is your name?"

And he said, "**Jacob.**"



"He (who)
struggles
with God."

Then He said,

"Your name shall no longer be called **Jacob**,
but **Israel**, for you have striven with God
and with men, and have prevailed."

Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me Your name."

But He said, "Why is it that you ask My name?"

And there He blessed him.

(Genesis 32:27-29)

So Jacob called the name of the place **Peniel**,
saying,

“For I have seen God face to face,
and yet my life has been delivered.”

The sun rose upon him as he passed **Penuel**,
limping because of his hip.

(Genesis 32:30-31)

“Face of God”



What can you see?

- Jacob has had enough. He sees his deep sinfulness.
- He wants the blessing he knows he doesn't deserve.
- The wrestling is his desperation for blessed deliverance.
- Even when crippled he insists on the blessing.
- It is given. Jacob, the deceiver, becomes Israel, the one who strives for the undeserved blessing of God.

Jacob and Esau meet

Chapter 33

And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and 400 men with him.

So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants....

He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times....

But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

(Genesis 33:1-4)

For joy

Jacob and Esau meet

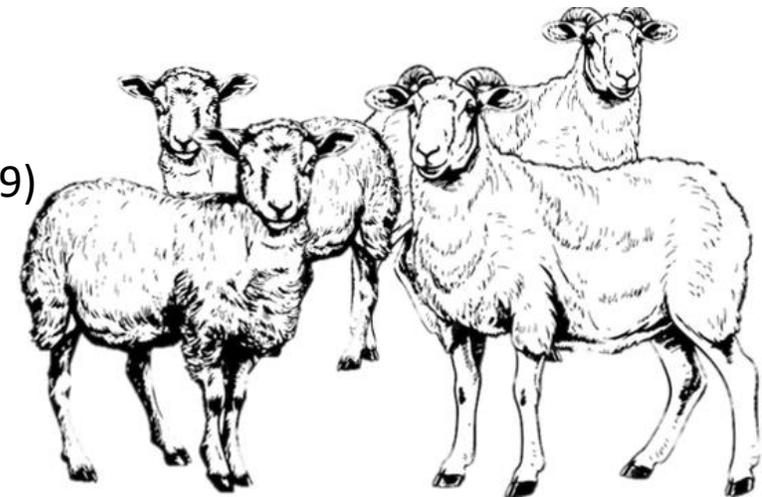
Chapter 33

Then Esau said,
“What do you mean
by all this company which I met?”

Jacob answered,
“To find favour in the sight of my lord.”

But Esau said,
“I have enough, my brother;
keep what you have for yourself.”

(Genesis 33:8-9)



Jacob and Esau meet

Chapter 33

So Esau returned that day on his way to **Seir**.

But Jacob journeyed to **Succoth**,
and built himself a house
and made booths for his livestock....

And Jacob came peacefully to the city of **Shechem**,
...and he camped before the city.

And from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father,
he bought for a hundred pieces of money
the piece of land on which he had pitched his tent.

There **he erected an altar** and called it **El-Elohe-Israel**.

(Genesis 33:12-20)

God, the God of Israel



What can you see?

- God is ever faithful – Jacob's fears were unnecessary.
- The altar represents his worship of his faithful God.
- Esau seems to be a good man, but a man of the world.
- Only Jacob is learning to know and walk with God.

The abuse of Dinah and the revenge

Chapter 34

- When Dinah, Leah's daughter, went out to see the women of the land, Shechem, a prince, seized her and violated her. Royal privilege? No sense of guilt
- Shechem loved Dinah and wanted to marry her, but Jacob's sons were very angry and planned to avenge her.
- Shechem's father, the king, came to Jacob, asking for Dinah and he welcomed them to settle there, intermarry and trade in the land. But the covenant...
- The sons of Jacob replied deceitfully that first all the men must be circumcised.
- They agreed, but after 3 days Simeon and Levi attacked the city and killed all the men. Then their brothers joined them, looted the city of everything and took the women and children as captives.
- Then Jacob greatly feared that in revenge the Canaanite tribes would wipe out his entire family. But his sons said it was justified. A shame and honour culture

What can you see?

- Jacob was never reconciled to the cruel violence of Simeon and Levi (Genesis 49:5-7).
- Jacob's sons were by no means virtuous (Genesis 35:22).
- Nevertheless, God graciously protected Jacob (Genesis 35:5).

Jacob returns to Canaan

Chapter 35

God said to Jacob,

“Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there.

“Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.”

So Jacob said to his household...

“Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments.

“Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.”

A better influence

Jacob's changed life begins to shine through

(Genesis 35:1-3)

And as they journeyed, **a terror from God** fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

God's mercy

And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel)... and there **he built an altar** and called the place **El-bethel**, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother.

God of the house of God

(Genesis 35:5-7)

God appeared to Jacob again... and blessed him.

And God said to him,

*“Your name is **Jacob**; no longer shall your name be called **Jacob**, but **Israel** shall be your name.” ...*

And God said to him,

*“I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply....
The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you,
and I will give the land to your offspring after you.” ...*

And Jacob set up a pillar in the place
where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone.

He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it.

(See Genesis 35:9-14)

Jacob returns to Canaan

Chapter 35

Rachel's death

Then they journeyed from Bethel.

When they were still some distance from Ephrath, **Rachel** went into labor, and she had hard labor.

...the midwife said to her,
“Do not fear, for you have another son.”

And as her soul was departing...

she called his name **Ben-oni**;

Son of my sorrow

but his father called him **Benjamin**.

Son of my right hand

So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem), and Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb.

(Genesis 35:16-20)



Jacob returns to Canaan

Chapter 35

Isaac's death

And Jacob came to his father Isaac at **Mamre**,
or **Kiriath-arba** (that is, **Hebron**),
where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.

Now the days of **Isaac** were 180 years.

And Isaac breathed his last...

And his sons **Esau** and **Jacob** buried him.

(Genesis 35:27-29)



Jacob is: 97

Jacob leaves Laban

108

Joseph's dreams

120

Isaac dies

130

Jacob to Egypt

Esau's descendants

Chapter 36

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.

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.)

These are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir. These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau.

These are the sons of Adah, Esau's firstborn; she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Basemath Esau's wife. These are the sons of

Adah; these are the chiefs of Amalek; these are the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the chiefs of Jeush, Jalam, and Korah; these are the chiefs born of

Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the Hivite; these are the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the hill country of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah. These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. These are the chiefs of the Horites: the chiefs Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the chiefs of the Horites, chief by chief in the land of Seir.

These are the sons of Seir the Horite who dwelt in the land of Edom. The sons of Lotan the Horite: Hori, Hori, and Hori. The sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah; he is the man who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he pastured the donkeys of Esau his father. These are the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah. These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. These are the chiefs of the Horites: the chiefs Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan; these are the chiefs of the Horites, chief by chief in the land of Seir.

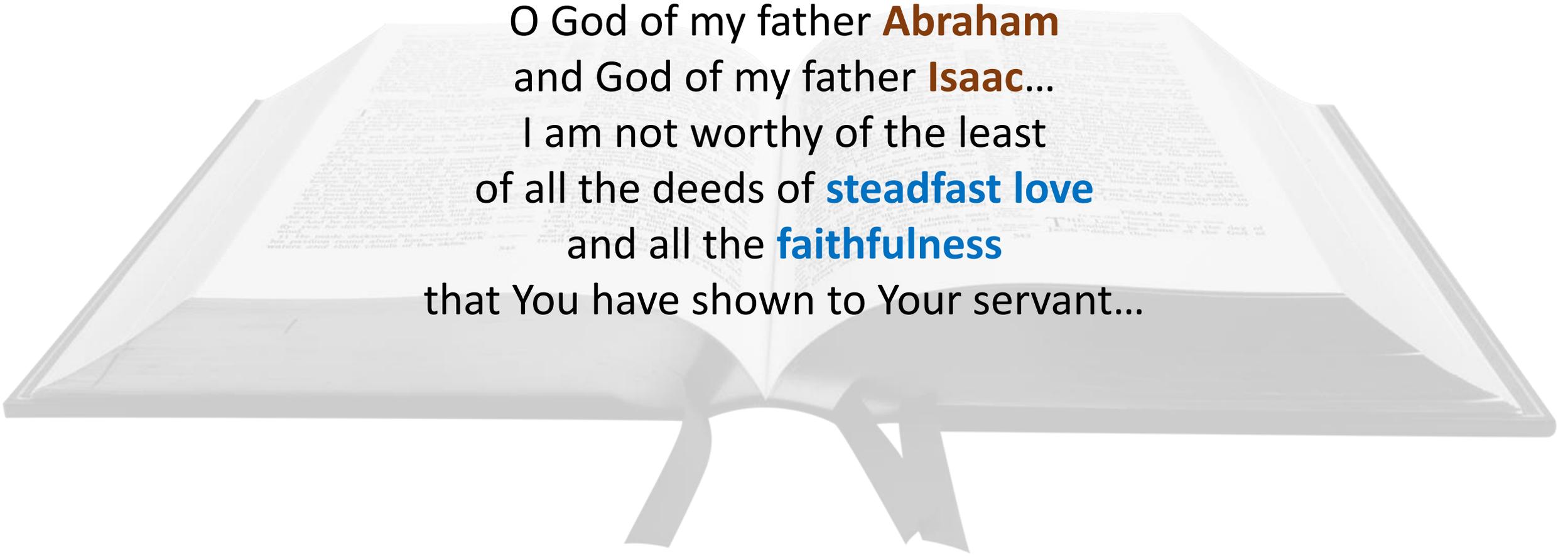
These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites. Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, the name of his city being Dinhabah. Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, reigned in his place, the name of his city being Avith. Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates reigned in his place. Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place, the name of his city being Pau; his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab.

These are the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans and their dwelling places, by their names: the chiefs Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram; these are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of Edom), according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession.

- Jacob and Esau were reconciled in their own day but there was great enmity between their descendants.
- The book of the prophet Obadiah tells of God's judgement on the sins of the Edomites.

Genesis

The Book of Beginnings



O God of my father **Abraham**
and God of my father **Isaac**...
I am not worthy of the least
of all the deeds of **steadfast love**
and all the **faithfulness**
that You have shown to Your servant...