

## Sons of Esau and Seir: 1 Chronicles 1:29-54 Explained

### Scriptures for Today:

**1 Chronicles 1:29-54** *These are their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, 30 Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema, 31 Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael. 32 Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan. 33 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Henoah, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these are the sons of Keturah. 34 And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau and Israel. 35 The sons of Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah. 36 The sons of Eliphaz; Teman, and Omar, Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek. 37 The sons of Reuel; Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. 38 And the sons of Seir; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan. 39 And the sons of Lotan; Hori, and Homam: and Timna was Lotan's sister. 40 The sons of Shobal; Alian, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon; Aiah, and Anah. 41 The sons of Anah; Dishon. And the sons of Dishon; Amram, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. 42 The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, and Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran. 43 Now these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel; Bela the son of Beor: and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 44 And when Bela was dead, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. 45 And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead. 46 And when Husham was dead, Hadad the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith. 47 And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. 48 And when Samlah was dead, Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. 49 And when Shaul was dead, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. 50 And when Baal-hanan was dead, Hadad reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pai; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. 51 Hadad died also. And the dukes of Edom were; duke Timnah, duke Aliah, duke Jetheth, 52 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, 53 Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, 54 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram. These are the dukes of Edom.*

### Introduction

We are back in the book of 1 Chronicles. As you have most likely noticed from the scripture reading, this book starts out with long lists of names. In fact, the first 9 chapters of this book is almost entirely lists of names and genealogies.

When one opens to the book of 1 Chronicles, the first instinct is to say, "I'm not reading all these names that are difficult to pronounce, I'm just going to skip over them". Many people do that, but understand you are missing out on extremely important information that God wants you to know. The Holy Spirit did not make a single mistake when He moved holy men to speak and record the Word of God.

**2 Timothy 3:16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

All scripture, even the lists of names and genealogies are given by inspiration of God.

So what is the purpose of the long list of names? I want you to remember what is the main subject of the entire Bible? It all centers around one man. It's not an ordinary man. It is the God man Jesus Christ. That's what this entire Bible is about. This book from cover to cover is about God redeeming mankind by His own power and love through Jesus Christ. Once you understand that, more and more things will make sense as you read through the scriptures.

Since Jesus Christ is the main subject, all genealogies in the Bible point to and end with Jesus Christ. That's what these lists of names are, they are sort of like a road map and a detailed record of everything that will eventually lead up to the birth of Jesus.

Last time we were in 1 Chronicles, we studied verses 1 – 28. Let's go over a quick recap of what we learned last time.

• **Adam to Noah (vv. 1–4) — God Is Faithful When We Fail**

- Traces the line from **Adam to Noah**, covering creation, the fall, and the flood.
- These names represent generations marked by sin, judgment, and mercy.
- Though mankind became completely wicked (Genesis 6:5), God preserved a remnant through Noah.

**Big Picture Significance:**

God's purposes are never stopped by human failure. From the very beginning, even after Adam sinned and the world collapsed into violence, God remained faithful. His redemptive plan continued forward through grace, not human perfection. Just as He preserved Noah, He preserves His work today.

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• **The Descendants of Noah (vv. 5–23) — God's Mission Includes Every Nation**

- Lists the sons of **Japheth, Ham, and Shem**.
- Every nation on earth descends from these three brothers.
- All humanity traces back to one family — ultimately to Adam.

**Big Picture Significance:**

God's redemptive plan has always been global. There is no superior race, no separate origin — we are "of one blood" (Acts 17:26). Because all are descendants of Adam, all are sinners in need of a Savior. The gospel is for every nation, every background, every person. The church's mission is not selective — it is universal.

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• **Shem to Abraham (vv. 24–28) — God’s Promise Still Stands**

- The genealogy narrows from many nations down to **one man: Abraham**.
- This is the line of promise that would bring forth Israel — and ultimately Christ.
- God’s covenant purposes move steadily through each generation.

**Big Picture Significance:**

God’s promises do not expire. The flood could not erase them. Time could not weaken them. Empires could not stop them. The line from Shem to Abraham shows the unbroken chain of redemption that leads to Jesus Christ. Our foundation, like Abraham’s, is faith in God’s promise — and that promise is fulfilled in Christ alone.

Now let's it pick back up and look at the next portion of 1 Chronicles 1

## **Exposition of 1 Chronicles 1:29-54**

Let's go back to verse 28 so we can understand the context.

**1 Chronicles 1:28** The sons of Abraham; Isaac, and Ishmael.

So every name that we are about to read in the next 26 verses is a direct decedent of Abraham.

Who was Abraham? ...

Abraham was a man God **chose and called** out of a family that “served other gods” (Joshua 24:2–3).

**Joshua 24:2-3** And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. **3** And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

Abraham came out of an environment of pagan worship. Why did God choose him?

Because God found his heart faithful before him. **Neh 9:8** — It doesn't matter where you came from or what your upbringing was. God can still use you if you have faith.

God promised to make Abraham a great nation, and—most importantly—that through his seed **all the world would be blessed**. Ultimately, that blessing and that promised Seed is fulfilled through **Jesus Christ**. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

To understand the rest of this chapter, we have to understand the difference between **Isaac and Ishmael**.

### **Ishmael — Born After the Flesh**

God promised Abraham a son. But years passed. Sarah was barren. They grew impatient.

So instead of waiting on the Lord, they decided to take matters into their own hands. Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to be his wife, and Ishmael was born. That was not God's Will.

There are moments in our lives when we lose patience. We have a lack of faith. And we think that we must take matters into our own hands. Instead of trusting that God is able to provide in His timing we often go outside of God's Will. We think that we can provide for ourselves better than God can.

We forget who God is and what He is capable of. You don't want to do that in your life. Stay strong in faith.

Ishmael was Abraham's son — but he was the result of **human effort**, not the miraculous fulfillment of God's promise.

And Paul explains this in **Galatians 4**:

**Galatians 4:23** — “But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh...”

“After the flesh” means according to natural human ability.

Ishmael represents what man produces by his own strength.

### **Isaac — Born By Promise**

But then, when Abraham and Sarah were beyond natural childbearing years, God fulfilled His word.

Isaac was born.

**Galatians 4:23** — “...but he of the freewoman was by promise.”

Isaac represents something different:

- Not human effort
- Not human strength
- Not natural ability

But **God's supernatural intervention**.

Paul tells us these two sons illustrate two covenants:

- Ishmael pictures bondage — trying to obtain righteousness through works.
- Isaac pictures freedom — receiving righteousness through promise.

**Galatians 4:28** — “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.”

Salvation does not come through: Works, Effort, Religious performance...

Salvation comes through **believing the promise of God**.

Abraham had two sons: One born after the flesh, one born by promise.

Ishmael represents human effort.

Isaac represents God’s supernatural promise.

## Verses 29 - 31

Even though Ishmael was not the covenant line, God still blessed him for Abraham's sake.

**Genesis 17:20** And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

So when we come to 1 Chronicles 1:29, we are seeing that God kept that promise. These names are not random, this is the direct fulfillment of God's word.

**1 Chronicles 1:29-31** These *are* their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, **30** Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema, **31** Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael.

These names are a testimony to God’s unchanging faithfulness. When God speaks, it happens. Ishmael’s sons were not chosen to carry the covenant promise, but God still did exactly what He said He would do. And though they were not the line of redemption, they were still part of the nations that could one day be blessed through Abraham’s Seed.

## Verses 32 – 33

**1 Chronicles 1:32-33** Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan. **33** And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Henoah, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these *are* the sons of Keturah.

After Sarah died, Abraham had additional children through **Keturah**. So what we see from the scriptures is that Abraham had a total of 8 sons. But again, Isaac was the only son who was counted as the child of promise.

While these sons from Keturah were not heirs of the covenant, their families grew into nations that would later appear throughout Israel's history.

One of those sons was **Midian**.

Midian becomes very significant in the Old Testament. When Moses fled Egypt for killing an Egyptian, where did he go? He went to the land of Midian. That's where he got married, worked as a shepherd, and encountered God in the burning bush.

Before God used Moses to deliver Israel, He prepared him in Midian.

Later, the Midianites would appear again, but mainly as enemies of Israel. However, there were certain Midianites that God used:

- Moses' wife, (Zipporah who saved Moses from being destroyed by God in Exodus 4)
- Moses' father-in-law Jethro who gave Moses wise council on how to distribute the burden of overseeing the children of Israel.
- Jael the wife of Heber, who killed Sisera, delivered the finishing blow against Israel's oppressors. She was connected to Moses' In-Laws from Midian.

Even though God chose Isaac as the child of promise, God still used Abraham's other children in a big way. God used unlikely people from other nations like Midian to accomplish His will and bring glory to Him.

That reminds us that even though we don't have a perfect background (let's say you come from a family that has not done right generation after generation). Understand that God can use you in amazing ways.

Just fear God. Obey His Word. Have faith. God is not a respecter of persons.

So we just looked at descendants of 7 of Abraham's sons. Ishmael (His 12 sons) and the sons from Keturah. Now we're about to zoom in on Isaac and his descendants.

## Verse 34

**1 Chronicles 1:34** And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau and Israel.

So remember the promise that God made to Abraham that all nations of the earth would be blessed through his Seed. That promise would continue through Isaac. And Isaac had two sons: Esau and Jacob. Jacob later became Israel.

If you remember the story, Esau was the firstborn. But he despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for one morsel of meat. Imagine giving up a double portion of your inheritance just so you can get a little bit of food that lasts for a few hours. That's an emotional decision. You don't want to make emotional decisions in your life.

He also later lost the blessing as well through Jacob's deception.

So the promise that God made would continue to be passed on through Jacob (Israel), but Esau decided to take a different path. He went the wrong way. The Bible calls him a fornicator and a profane person. God hated Esau. He did not have faith in God.

So now we are about see Esau's descendants and heritage...

## Verses 35-37

**1 Chronicles 1:35-37** The sons of Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah. **36** The sons of Eliphaz; Teman, and Omar, Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek. **37** The sons of Reuel; Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

Earlier on in Gen 25:23, God told Rebekah that there were two nations *in her* womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from her bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

So these verses right here are proof that God's word came true. Rebekah gave birth to Jacob and Esau. Jacob became the nation of Israel and Esau became the nation of Edom.

All the descendants of the five sons of Esau make up the Edomites who play a major role in Israel's history.

## Verses 38-42

**1 Chronicles 1:38-42** And the sons of Seir; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan. **39** And the sons of Lotan; Hori, and Homam: and Timna *was* Lotan's sister. **40** The sons of Shobal; Alian, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon; Aiah, and Anah. **41** The sons of Anah; Dishon. And the sons of Dishon; Amram, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. **42** The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, *and* Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran.

The Edomites—Esau’s descendants—became a nation that **dwelt in the land of Seir**, also known as Mount Seir. But Seir already had people living there before Edom was established.

So in verses 38–42, the Bible lists **the sons of Seir** because they are the **original inhabitants and clans of that land**. In other words, Scripture is showing us not only Esau’s family line, but also the **people and territory Edom came to possess**, which helps explain how Edom became a settled nation in that region.

## Verses 43 - 50

**1 Chronicles 1:43-50** Now these *are* the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before *any* king reigned over the children of Israel; Bela the son of Beor: and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah. **44** And when Bela was dead, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. **45** And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead. **46** And when Husham was dead, Hadad the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Avith. **47** And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. **48** And when Samlah was dead, Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. **49** And when Shaul was dead, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. **50** And when Baal-hanan was dead, Hadad reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Pai; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

In these verses we see that **Edom was already established with kings** long before Israel ever had one. They had structure. They had organization. They had visible power.

From the outside, Edom looked advanced and strong. But physical strength means nothing without God on your side.

There is something that all of these kings had in common. Every single one of them died. Their reigns ended. Their thrones passed on. And their names are now just lines in a genealogy.

## Verses 51 – 54

**1 Chronicles 1:51-54** Hadad died also. And the dukes of Edom were; duke Timnah, duke Aliah, duke Jetheth, **52** Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, **53** Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, **54** Duke Magdiel, duke Iram. These *are* the dukes of Edom.

And after the kings, we see the dukes — the chiefs, the rulers, the leaders of Edom. This was a structured nation. Organized. Established. Governed. From every outward appearance, Edom looked secure.

But the prophets later tell us what was happening in their hearts.

Obadiah says, “The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee.”

Edom trusted in their mountain strongholds. They believed their elevation made them untouchable. They believed their structure, their leaders, their position guaranteed their future.

But pride always precedes destruction.

Edom had kings. Edom had dukes. Edom had territory. Edom had power.

But Edom did not have the promise.

And in the end, their pride led to their fall. Their kingdom did not last. Their power did not endure. Their strongholds did not save them.

Man-made systems collapse. Political power fades. But God’s Kingdom does not end.

## **Application**

### **1. God is Faithful to Every Promise.**

Even though Ishmael and Esau were not part of the covenant line, God still promised to make them great nations. Every word God spoke came to pass. When God promises something in His word, you can guarantee it will happen exactly how He says.

### **2. God’s Timing is Better.**

Ishmael was the product of impatience and human effort. Isaac was the result of divine promise. When we try to “help” God, we create unnecessary problems. When we wait on God, we experience His power.

### **3. Pride Will Destroy You.**

Edom had kings. Edom had structure. Edom had mountain strongholds. But pride deceived them. They trusted in their position instead of in God — and they fell. We need to humble ourselves before God does it for us.

### **4. Your background doesn’t disqualify you.**

Abraham came out of a family that served other gods. Midian was not the covenant line, yet God used people from that nation. Where you came from does not determine what God can do through you.

**5. Bloodline doesn't bring the blessing.**

There are people who say, "We are the children of Abraham," because of their ancestry. Some trust in their physical descent. Some trust in geography. Some trust in heritage. But Scripture makes it clear — the blessing was never guaranteed by bloodline.

Ishmael was Abraham's son — but he was not the child of promise.  
Esau was Isaac's son — but he forfeited the blessing.

The promise does not pass through DNA.  
The promise passes through faith.

That is why Paul says in Galatians 3:29

"And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

So remember, 1 Chronicles 1 is not just a list of names, it's a record of God's faithfulness. We see God's plan play out even through Ishmael and Esau. Next time we are in 1 Chronicles we will start taking a closer look at the sons of Israel, specifically the tribe of Judah.

Let's Pray.