

Come to Understanding

They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24

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The Hidden Things of Esau

Esau, the older twin brother of Jacob, was forty years old when he grieved his parents, Isaac and Rebekah, by marrying two Hittite women:

- 34 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:
35 Which were a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah. -Genesis 26

The Hittites descended from Heth, a son of Canaan:

- 13 And Canaan begot Zidon his firstborn, and Heth, -1 Chronicles 1

Canaan had been cursed by Noah:

- 25 And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. -Genesis 9

The curse was put upon Canaan because of the sin of his father, Ham (see Genesis 9:22). Some suggest that Ham had “uncovered his father’s nakedness,” which is a euphemism for an incestuous relationship (see Leviticus 8:18). Whatever the exact meaning of Ham’s sin, the offence against Noah was sufficient to bring his curse upon Canaan, the family into which Esau married.

Before his death, Isaac sought to bless Esau. Rebekah, however, devised a plan to deceive Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob instead of to Esau (see Genesis 27). As a consequence, Isaac gave this blessing to Jacob, who would also be called “Israel:”

- 29 Let people serve you, and nations bow down to you: be lord over your brethren, and let your mother’s sons bow down to you: cursed *be* every one that curses you, and blessed *be* he that blesses you. -Genesis 27

As a consequence, Esau hated Jacob, vowing within his heart to take revenge upon his brother:

- 41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. -Genesis 27

The conflict grew out of the decision by Esau to take Canaanite wives. Worried that Jacob might also marry a “daughter of Heth,” Rebekah asked Isaac to send him back to the land of her family so that he might find a wife among her people (see Genesis 27:46). Upon sending him to find a wife, Isaac gave him another

blessing. Jacob would receive the inheritance that God had promised Abraham:

- 3 And God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a multitude of people;
4 And give you the blessing of Abraham, to you, and to your seed with you; that you may inherit the land wherein you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham. -Genesis 28

When Esau learned that he had lost the blessing because he had married two Canaanite women, he then proceeded to take a third wife. She was named Mahalath, a granddaughter of Abraham by Isaac’s half-brother, Ishmael:

- 8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;
9 Then went Esau to Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham’s son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife. -Genesis 28

Even this marriage was not acceptable. Many years earlier, Sarah, Abraham’s wife and Isaac’s mother, had ordered Ishmael and his Egyptian mother, Hagar, to be cast out to prevent Ishmael from sharing in Isaac’s inheritance:

- 9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.
10 Therefore she said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac. -Genesis 21

Nevertheless, God told Hagar that He would make Ishmael “a great nation:”

- 18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in your hand; for I will make him a great nation. -Genesis 21

Living in the wilderness of Paran, Ishmael eventually married an Egyptian:

- 21 And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. -Genesis 21

Now married to an Ishmaelite, as well as to two Hittites, Esau left the land of the promised inheritance. He was living in the “land of Seir,” a mountainous region of Edom located southwest of Israel in the northern Arabian Peninsula, when Jacob returned to Canaan with his Hebrew wives and family:

- 3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. -Genesis 32

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

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In the apparently joyous meeting of the two brothers, Jacob sought to reconcile with Esau by offering him gifts. Esau politely refused them:

9 And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep what you have to yourself. -Genesis 33

In spite of the vow which Esau had made in his heart to slay Jacob, it now appeared that they were at peace. Soon after Esau returned to Seir, Jacob built booths in Succoth and came to Shalem (meaning “peace”), where he bought land from the Hivites in which to pitch his tents.

The peace in the land, however, soon ended. The Hivite prince of the country where Jacob had purchased the land “defiled” Dinah, Jacob’s only daughter:

2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. -Genesis 34

The Hivites wanted to marry the children of the family of Jacob so that they might become “one people.” If so, then the Hivites would also share in the inheritance that Yahweh had promised to Abraham, which Isaac gave to Jacob. If Esau were also married to the Hivites, then his family would participate in the inheritance too!

Yahweh says the “hidden things” of Esau will be revealed:

6 How are *the things* of Esau searched out! *how* are his hidden things sought up! -Obadiah 1

While Jacob was away, the names of each of Esau’s wives had been changed. Curiously, one of his Hittite wives, Judith, was revealed to be a Hivite!

2 Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

3 And Bashemath Ishmael’s daughter, sister of Nebajoth. -Genesis 36

Those moving to new lands are often given names that honor the local gods. An example of this was seen after the people of Judah were moved by their captors to Babylon:

7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave to Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego. -Daniel 1

Therefore, it is also likely that the new names given to

Esau’s wives after they moved to Seir also had religious significance. Judith, for example, was first known as the daughter of her Hittite father, Beerli. However, while living in Seir, she became known as Aholibamah, the daughter of her Hivite mother, Anah. The Hivites were Canaanites, whose name was based on the name of Eve, the first woman and the mother of all living. The Hebrew word for Hivite, חִוִּי (Chivviy), is derived from the word חַוְוָה (chavvah), which is also translated as “Eve.”

The name Aholibamah means “tent, or tabernacle, of the high place.” The “high place” is called “Bamah,” where idols are worshipped with sacrifices, incense, and drink offerings:

28 For when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up my hand to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering: there also they made their sweet savor, and poured out there their drink offerings.

29 Then I said unto them, What *is* the high place whereunto you go? And the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day. -Ezekiel 20

Through her pride, Edom has lifted herself up to high places as an exalted eagle:

4 Though you exalt *yourself* as the eagle, and though you set your nest among the stars, there will I bring you down, says Yahweh. -Obadiah 1

The spirit of Edom is compared to that of an eagle, which is among the unclean birds described in Leviticus 11:13-19. Unclean birds represent evil spirits, such as those that will inhabit Babylon (see Isaiah 13:21, Jeremiah 50:39, and Revelation 18:2).

The land of Idumea (another name for Edom), the place from which the “satyr,” the “hairy” goat which is often identified with the Devil, cries out, is also described as the resting place of the great mother owl. “Lilith,” the demonic goddess of the night, whose name is also translated as “screech owl,” will rest there:

14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; Lilith also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

15 There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. -Isaiah 34

The “great owl” of Edom is the mother of others who are like herself. According to Isaiah, “every one,” meaning “every woman,” gathers as vultures with “her mate,” meaning “female companion.” These feminine spirits are attracted to each other under the shadow of the “great owl” of Edom.

If the identity of the “great owl” mother is among the “hidden things” of Edom, her identity will be revealed by Yahweh. He knows what is in the darkness:

22 He reveals the deep and secret things: he knows what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. -Daniel 2

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