

The Clans of Esau

36: 40-43b

These were the eleven clans descended from Esau, by name, according to their families and regions. We know something about four of these names. Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz and the sister of Lotan, son of Seir. She became a clan leader of her own name. Next was **Oholibamah**, who was the daughter of Anah and the wife of Esau. She became the leader of her own clan. We also know about **Kenaz** and **Teman**, who were the sons of Eliphaz and grandsons of Esau. They became the leaders of their own clans. But seven of these names are new to us and appear here for the first time in this chapter. They are **Clan Alvah**, **Clan Jetheth**, **Clan Elah**, **Clan Pinon**, **Clan Mibzar**, **Clan Magdiel** and **Clan Iram**. These were the chiefs of Edom; according to their settlements in the land they occupied (36:40-43b). Isaac's promises to Esau were being fulfilled.

The major problem with the eleven in this clan list of Esau's is its relationship, if any, to the fourteen names in 36:15-19. There are only two names, **Kenaz** and **Teman**, common to both lists. Three solutions are possible. First, this list is an ad hoc creation without any historical value. Secondly, this list could be later than the previous one. And thirdly, this list is arranged genealogically, whereas the previous list is arranged geographically.

It is interesting that most of the descendants of Esau are included in the genealogical lists of **First Chronicles 1:35-54**. Not only Moses, but also the chronicler who came much later, considered them important enough to include in the genealogical records of Israel. It was vital that there be a perpetual distinction between the descendants of Jacob and Esau, but the Holy Spirit perhaps would assure us by the inclusion of these names in the inspired Word of God that He is forever concerned about every single person.