

Multi-Colored Grace for Israelis, Arabians, and Us (Genesis 35-36)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at GCBC on January 19, 2014

Our text this morning will pick up where we left off last week and cover the rest of Genesis 35 and Genesis 36 and it really wraps up the generations of Isaac and his sons, then the rest of Genesis is focusing mostly on Joseph. In Gen 12-25 I called that section on Abraham "the life of faith." Gen 25-36 I have been calling "the next generation" (the life of Isaac and his sons Jacob and Esau). It shows the life of faith must be passed on to the next generation

We'll be looking at a new section and series of messages on the providence of God in the life of Joseph. I want to introduce it today as the multi-colored grace of God (a phrase from 1 Peter). But before the coat of many colors in Gen 37, we can't miss this important transition. In Gen 12-35, God speaks audibly to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, giving and reaffirming promises to them and their descendants. But with Joseph until the time of Moses more than 400 years later, God works through providence (everyday events that God's invisible hand is working all things together for good, as Gen 50:20 explains at the end). Gen 35 is God's last audible speech in this way till Moses 400+ years later.

Gen 35:10 *God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name." Thus He called him Israel.* ¹¹ *God also said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you."* ¹² *"The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you."* ¹³ *Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him.* ¹⁴ *Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it.* ¹⁵ *So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.* ¹⁶ *Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor.* ¹⁷ *When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for now you have another son."* ¹⁸ *It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.* ¹⁹ *So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).* ²⁰ *Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.* ²¹ *Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.* ²² *It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob* ²³ *the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun;* ²⁴ *the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin;* ²⁵ *and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali;* ²⁶ *and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.* ²⁷ *Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.* ²⁸ *Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.* ²⁹ *Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.*

36:1 *Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom).* ² *Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite;* ³ *also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth.* ⁴ *Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel,* ⁵ *and Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.* ⁶ *Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the*

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land of Canaan, and went to another land away from his brother Jacob. ⁷ *For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock.* ⁸ *So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir [Northern Arabia]; Esau is Edom.* [They're called Edomites in the next verse, later called Arabians]

v. 4-5 is Esau's 5 sons, 9-14 is Esau's grandsons, v. 15-19 talks about how Edomites became chiefs of various tribes, even as Jacob's 12 sons became 12 tribes of Israel. Older English versions had "dukes" instead of "chiefs." I like v. 43 in the old KJV: '*these be the dukes of Edom*' (it just sounds cool).

In v. 20-30 it talks about other nations who intermingled with the Edomites, and then v. 31-39 names kings over Edom centuries before Israel had kings. I won't read all the names here out loud as I have no idea how to pronounce them. Just make sure you know how to spell them on the quiz for next week

How are we to understand a passage like Gen 36? Is it kind of like a movie and at the final credits it lists a bunch of names no one reads? Or is it like one of those movies we watch that's based on a true story where at the end it gives some details on what happened to all these characters after the main story, where they lived and what they did, their family details, and so on? If it's a make-believe story with a complex plot, do we just watch 1 scene? If we have no context, it's like walking in on a scene of *The Lord of the Rings* You could read names of hobbits and elves and what they did and watch a scene with them without reading the books or watching the movie from the beginning, but if you don't know the context, background and storyline of the different people groups, you'll be hopelessly confused. The same is true with the 2 people groups here, the Israelites and Edomites in their storyline. [We could call them Israelis and Arabians (Seir=N. Arabia)]

Gen 35-36 is just one scene in the first book of the drama of redemption. In chapter 3, the battle between good and evil begins. Sin, like the temptation of the ring, transforms man into a spiritual version of Gollum. But prophecy told of a King to come to break the power of the dark lord of darkness, and to cast him, his forces, his followers into a lake of fire, destroying sin. Gen 3 records a time this King walked with man in His kingdom before He left physically, but it also records a prophecy of the return of the King. And in the meanwhile, the chosen ones are on a long journey as weak, struggling little people, who stumble and fall, and are in conflict with their dark world. But this story is no fiction or fantasy. It's the true story of a chosen people like I just described, and it's not just their story, it's for other people groups. This story runs from Genesis to Revelation and it includes our lives as well. [it runs Abraham-Isaac-Jacob, but includes others outside it]

Gen 35 lists the family of Isaac's son Jacob. Gen 36 is Jacob's brother Esau. How does Gen 36 fit in? Why interrupt the Israelite's history book for a whole chapter with a detailed genealogy of the Edomites? This is by far the longest family tree listed in Genesis. Why give so much space to Esau, the rejected son? With Ishmael, Gen 25 spent 4 verses listing the names of his sons, but with Esau this chapter spends 43 verses. If God says *Jacob I loved but Esau I hated* (Mal. 1. Rom. 9, i.e., rejected as outside his covenant love and plan), why this chapter? The Bible does later give genealogies for the Jewish people, but this is the only time the rest of the Bible does

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this from here on out for non-Jews. Why this long list of names, most of which aren't anywhere else in the Bible and don't mean much of anything to us today?

Gen 36 is a chapter that puzzles scholars and they give different answers to these questions, but let me give you 2 answers I see that will be our outline:

1. It shows God's promises are true
2. It shows God's plan for all peoples (He doesn't hate/reject all Edomites)

First, Genesis 36 shows God's promises are true

If we consider these 2 chapters together (remember, when it was written, there were no chapter divisions, those came later to help us in reading), the genealogy of Esau in Gen 36 I think is part of the fulfillment of Gen 35:11. Look back at 35:11: *I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation [that's the nation of Israel] **and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you*** [repeating promise to Abraham, 17:6]

Isaac's son Jacob produced the nation Israel, and its kings came 1,000 years later. Later other nations would be enfolded into Israel by adoption (Gen 48) or marriage (Ex 2), by faith in Israel's God (Ex 12). In Gen 36 from Israel's twin brother Esau first comes a company of many nations. Kings come forth in Esau's family first in v. 31. Isaac's son Esau was the first in Abraham's family tree to see nations develop from him and kings come forth, as God promised Abraham a multitude of nations and kings back in Gen 17:6. Gen 36 isn't irrelevant, it's very relevant in showing us God's promises are true. [like we just sang 'we will stand as children of the promise...']

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, reaffirms Gen 17 promises in 35:11

- "*I Am God Almighty*" (El Shaddai) - 35:11 is exactly the same as 17:1
- "*multiply*" in 35:11 fulfills what Abraham was promised in 17:2 (Jacob having 12 sons at the end of the chapter is certainly fruitful multiplying)
- "*Nations*" from him in 35:11 echoes promise of 17:4-5 (Jacob's 12 sons would be the original nation, but it would incorporate many nations by faith in the God of Jacob, and later in the Law it explains that process)
- "*kings shall come forth from you*" in 35:11 is verbatim from Gen 17:6

The Gen 17:6 promise of kings through Abraham and Isaac's family begins to be fulfilled in Gen 36:31 through Isaac's son Esau, before in Jacob/Israel. In both Gen 17 and 35 God gives a new name, new identity, new destiny in the new name. Abram is renamed Abraham in 17:5 ('father of a multitude'). Jacob is renamed Israel in 35:10 ('God prevails' over that former 'deceiver'). Both conversations with God begin saying God 'appeared' (17:1, 35:1), and both end with the same phrase in 35:13 'God went up from' him (17:22). In all these parallels we're to see the same Almighty God, *El Shaddai*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all His promises are true to all His people

One of the big points of Gen 36 is showing fulfillment of the land promises to Abraham's chosen descendants. Look at 35:12: "*The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you.*" That's word for word a repetition of what God had promised Abraham in Gen 17:8. Gen 36 begins in v. 6-8 explaining why Esau, Abraham's grandson outside the covenant, left the Promised Land, and it ends in v. 43: *These are*

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the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of the Edomites), according to their habitations in the land of their possession.

37:1 Now Jacob lived in *the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.* ² *These are the records of the generations of Jacob.*

That last word of Gen 36, "possession" is the same Hebrew word as Gen 17:8, where God promised the land of Canaan as the continual "possession" of Abraham and his descendants. Esau, the father of the Edomites, peacefully lets his brother have Canaan as his *possession* and parts ways by moving to Seir in Arabia in v. 6-8, as that land would be Esau's *possession*, v. 43 says.

v. 7 says there wasn't enough room for both in the land, so Esau moves on. The boys had been struggling since before they were born sharing the same womb and there wasn't enough room in Rebekah's womb, so they wrestled.

The struggle for preeminence or possession had marked their birth and life. In fact, that same Hebrew root for possession from v. 43 was used in a verb form of Jacob literally possessing the heel of his newborn twin, having his brother by the heel. But despite Jacob's grasping ways, God promised Jacob the possession of the land of Canaan, and it's fulfilled as Gen 36 ends, 37:1. Gen 36 fulfills 25:23, two nations in 1 womb, who would be separated from mom, the older Esau would serve the younger Jacob. All fulfilled in Gen 36 [and by God's grace they bury their dad together and now part in peace]

So to apply point #1: be encouraged to know God's promises to you are true

The same God who was working all things together for good in Jacob's life (as Gen 50:20 says), He promises the same to all who love God (Rom 8:28).

The same God who says in Gen 35:11 '*I am God Almighty,*' the same words He said to Abraham in Gen 17, the same God in human flesh as Jesus said: '*Before Abraham was born, I Am*' (John 8:58). From Genesis to Revelation, from beginning to end, He says in Rev 1:8 "*I am the Alpha and the Omega ... who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*" He promises us:

- **like Abram and Jacob we get new name, too** (Rev 2:17 '*To him who overcomes, to him I will ... give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives*')
- **land** (Mt 5:4 '*blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*')
- **possession** (Ephesians 1:14 promises when we believe, God's Spirit '*is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it*' ESV)
- **a chosen people, royalty, a nation** (1 Pet 2:9 '*but you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...belonging to God*' NIV)
- **Kings from you, a company of many nations** (Rev 5:9 '*Worthy are You...for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom...and they will reign upon the earth.*')

That brings us to point #2: Gen 35-36 shows God's plan for all nations

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The prophetic promise through Isaac to Jacob was ‘*a company of nations*’ (28:3, 35:11), or another translation has ‘*a community of nations*’ (NIV) or ‘*an assembly of nations*’ (HCSB). It’s the OT equivalent of the word *church, ekklesia*, a called out assembly of peoples from all nations. And Gen 36 lists some who would later make up the NT church, a many-nations multi-ethnic community from every people, every color, purchased by Christ’s red blood. Edom meant red, his descendants included brown-skinned Arabians, and the family of Jacob will include African blood before Genesis is over (in Joseph marrying from the land of On in Africa). But whatever our skin color, we all have the exact same color blood as a Middle Eastern Messiah for all nations. We’re not see Arabs as enemies to hate, but to evangelize and love like Jesus [Mk 3:8 says people from Edom/Idumea came to Jesus]

But even in Gen 36 I see God's plan for Israel was not just for Israel. Or to say it another way, God has always had an interest in all nations, including individuals by name. God's plan is not just for the 12 tribes of Israel we read about at the end of chapter 35. God's plan includes every tribe and tongue as Gen 36 reminds us before we move on to Joseph's story. Yes, God promises Jacob he will be a nation in 35:11, but that same verse also promises nations in the plural, a promise beyond the one nation Israel. We may forget Esau's family as we move on in history and the story of Jacob's family, but God doesn't want us to forget Esau and his family, and God doesn't forget them.

In Gen 35, v. 8, God's care for people we often forget is also on display. As Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah dies, Gen 35:8 draws special attention to her and honors her as she dies. Rebekah, Jacob's mom, had already died, but her nurse from another nation, who had been a faithful servant to the family for so many years, God's Word records God's care for this non-Jewish servant Deborah. Gen 36 also includes names of women in Esau's family tree. The ancient world genealogies didn't include women, but inspired Scripture does

In Gen 35:18 Rachel who earlier felt forgotten by God is remembered in her death by His grace. When her first son was born, she named him “Joseph” (*May He add another*) and in v. 18 God adds another son she so longed for. He graciously granted her dying wish. She had been barren and battling for love and affection from Jacob and God, even saying “*Give me children or I die.*” Now as she dies God graciously grants her children, a second son who shows God’s love for her, and in v. 20 Jacob builds a lasting legacy to honor his wife and his affection and love for her that made years seem like days. Benoni (son of sorrows) is renamed Benjamin (son of my right hand/honor). And there’s this little note in v. 19 Rachel was buried on the way to Ephrath, near a little town called Bethlehem. Centuries later in the redemption drama this little place is where the bigness of God’s plan is revealed for the nations as Ruth a Moabite Gentile is saved in this little town of Bethlehem. As Boaz the kinsman-redeemer marries her, Ruth becomes a full part of Israel, and at their wedding, the people of Bethlehem remember what happened near this very place in Gen 35 and the wedding’s witnesses say to Boaz “*May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel ... may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem.*” (4:11)

Ruth's great-grandson in this little town of Bethlehem was a little shepherd boy who would become very famous and wealthy: King David. And this descendant of Jacob would also bring fame to the Lord’s name among the nations, including believing Gentiles in his armies and service, and in the building of the temple completed under his son. Some of the Gentiles from

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people groups in Gen 36 serve the Lord under David. In 35:15 Bethel was the first place called “the house of God” (that’s what Bethel means), but as the Jerusalem temple is built, it was to be ‘a house of prayer for all nations’

And Benjamin born near Bethlehem is a key link in this redemption chain to all nations, like a chain or scarlet rope that runs from Genesis to the gospels. King Saul came from this mighty tribe. 1,000 years after him, a religious Jewish family of the same tribe of Benjamin named their son in Tarsus Saul after the OT Saul from their tribe. This family of privileged Roman citizens was able to send their son to the finest private schooling under Gamaliel in Jerusalem, and he became a man of great learning, an elite Jewish scholar, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee of the Pharisees. They were separatists from Gentiles, often racists towards non-Jews, and Pharisees separated from even most Jews who weren’t legalistic enough. He had probably memorized all of Genesis-Deuteronomy, and knew well this chapter on his tribe’s origin

At the untimely death of beloved Rachel, Benjamin in Gen 35 was untimely born, years later than the rest of the 12 tribes. Saul of Tarsus from the tribe of Benjamin, when he was born again and called as an apostle, years later that the rest of the 12 Apostles, he writes in 1 Cor 15:8 of a resurrected Jesus “*last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*” Saul met the Messiah promised in Genesis, born **at the right time** (Titus 1:3) in this little town of Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 *O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are **too little** to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is **from of old, from ancient days.***

Matthew 2 makes this connection when Christ was born in Bethlehem and it also alludes to Gen 35 I think by mentioning Rachel’s sorrow over her son. And in a greater way than what she wanted to call Ben-oni in Gen 35 ‘my son of sorrows,’ the Son of God would be the ‘man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering and grief.’ And in a greater way than Jacob could imagine in naming him Ben-yamin ‘son of my right hand,’ Jesus is the Son at the right hand of His Father always, the place of strength, blessing, honor, and love. [I marvel at how God weaves His OT truths in Christ and His followers!]

Just as Jacob the father of the Hebrews had his name changed encountering God, Saul ‘the Hebrew of Hebrews’ had his name changed to Paul after his encounter with Jesus. Benjamin in Gen 35 while still in his mother’s womb was set apart in God’s plan of grace like the later apostle in Benjamin’s tribe [is all this coincidence, or the same God at work?]

The apostle Paul writes in Gal 1:15 “*when God, who had set me apart even **from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace**, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not ... go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia ... Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem ...*” [Paul the former separatist racist is now an evangelist to Arabs and all!]

Paul finally understood the OT he had memorized and he goes first to the land of Gen 36, the land around Seir, the land of Arabia. It may be Arabian descendants of Esau where the first to hear Paul’s testimony? I wonder if he showed them from the first book of the Jewish Torah how there’s a whole chapter dedicated to the Arabian peoples, and how in context, they’re part of the immediate context of God’s promise to bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham’s

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seed?! Whether they were his descendant from Esau or Ishmael (or both/others), all can be Abraham's descendants by faith in Jesus. That's what Paul writes in Gal 3, salvation blessing for all nations was part of the gospel proclaimed to Abraham in advance for male and female, Jew and Gentile, Arab and Israeli, all in Christ are father Abraham's many sons. And Paul realized his Jewishness and upbringing and super-duper-religious life was all rubbish and could not save, only knowing Christ could (Phil. 3). He didn't have to look any further than this same part of Genesis for proof. Gen 34-35 shows the original 12 tribes and their father Jacob were sinners big-time; deceivers, idolaters, even murderers in Gen 34. And in Gen 35:22 Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, even commits the sin of incest with the mom of his brothers (compare v. 22 and v. 25, Bilhah mom of Dan and Naphtali).

Why list Reuben's sin right before listing the 12 tribes?...To show Israelites in Gen 35 need a Savior just as much as the Edomites in Gen 36 (and us)!

Remember Israel and Esau/Edomites had the same DNA. They were twins!

Deuteronomy 23:7-8: *You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother ... the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD* [we must not hate Arabs, we should long for them to enter His assembly]

There was provision and grace by faith in the OT for them and other people ² *Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite* [later Hittites became believers in David's day, ex: Uriah] *and Oholibamah* [no relation to President Obama] *the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite ...* [Hivites became part of Israel in a protected status, and Levite priests even lived in their chief city; Josh. 9, 18]

³ *also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth...*

The Ishmaelites of Nebaioth are not outside grace either. Isaiah prophesies for these Arabs 'coming blessing on them...**Let the inhabitants of Sela** [Nebayot] **sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord"** (Isa. 42:11-12). These nations ... are mentioned first among Gentiles in God's plan of salvation for the nations ... Isaiah 60 explains ... they will proclaim the praises of the Lord. With their gifts they also bring their offerings for the Lord ... the rams of Nebaioth [shall serve or minister to Yahweh, Isa 60:7 says and adds] "**And they shall ascend with acceptance on My altar and I will glorify the house of My glory"**. What a marvelous prophecy ... In Old and New Testament times, as well as in future times, God does not forsake them. When we realize God's interest in the descendants of Ishmael and other Arabs, we should reject the common stereotypes of them as the enemies of God and the enemies of peace on earth. We should, instead, come to see them as those whom God has loved, still loves, and for whom he has plans of blessing. They are among those whom God sent his Son to save. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we should do everything possible to reach out to them with the good news."¹

¹¹ *The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho and Gatam and Kenaz.*

Kenaz is believed by some to be father of Kenizzites. Remember Caleb, the faithful believer when Israel first entered the land? Joshua 14:14: "*Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the*

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son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed the LORD God of Israel fully." Caleb is from a Kenizzite Gentile home, yet he follows the Lord faithfully and inherits the Promised Land. Numbers 32:12 says this Kenizzite son 'wholly followed Yahweh'

Look back at the first 2 names in v. 11: Eliphaz fathered Teman. Apparently Teman's people were called Temanites because v. 34 mentions "*the land of the Temanites.*" Job 2:11 says a believer named "*Eliphaz the Temanite*" was a friend of Job who also lived in Arabia. Job was the greatest Arab believer, or as Job 1:3 calls Arabians "*people of the East.*" Eliphaz the Temanite, the very same names as Gen 36 in the same era and area, this Temanite is also a believer in El Shaddai as you can tell from his speeches in Job. Eliphaz isn't a great counselor, but he believed in God and obeys God by sacrifice in 42:9

Jeremiah 49:7 concerning Edom. Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Is there no longer any wisdom in Teman ... "Flee away, turn back ... For I will bring the disaster of Esau upon him At the time I punish him ... 11 "Leave your orphans behind, I will keep them alive; And let your widows trust in Me."

Edomites and Arabians who reject the Lord do have judgment coming also, but grace is promised even in it for those who trust in Jesus. Turn to Acts 2 and as you do let me read one other prophecy about Edomites that's quoted in Acts as Gentiles join the church. Amos 9:12 promised Israel restored with '*the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My name.*' Acts 15 quotes it in these words '*SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.*' (v. 17, 18). James quotes from the Hebrew OT there to prove Peter's words: '*how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written...*' (v.15-16 NIV84)

The words of the OT prophets are also in agreement with the beginning of the OT in Genesis and the beginning of the NT church. Look at Acts 2:11: *Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.*"¹² *And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"* [Peter tells them in v. 16] ... *this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:*¹⁷ *'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND ...*²¹ *'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'* [and some of them do in v. 41 and are among the 3,000 saved who repent and are baptized and join the first church. End of v. 10 says Jews and non-Jews, v. 11 says even Arabians] [this is the sequel to Gen 36, a NT answer to why it's there in the OT!]

Now turn to Acts 13. Acts 11:26 says the title *Christian* was first used of the church in Antioch. Who were the leaders of that first "Christian" church?

Acts 13:1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch.

Herod and his family were Idumeans, the Greek term for Edomites. Herod was a descendant of the people of Gen 36, who for much of the OT were the bitter enemies of the Jews, and the

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racism went both ways between them. In the Christian church, though, someone saved from the very household of the hated Edomite is not only worshipping next to Saul the Israelite, he's one of the first leaders serving side-by-side with him, along with another guy from Africa (Cyrene was in mid-north Africa)! I love seeing what the gospel does in the integration of God's multi-ethnic family! I long for seeing more of its work in our midst, more incorporation of our world, more evangelization of our community and all the nations, and more glorification of Christ for His multi-colored grace. He gets the last word, and it combines today's 2 points:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... [that's His plan for all, us]

What's His promise, point #1? *I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

ⁱ *Emmaus Journal* 13, no. 2 (2004): 234-237.