

“A Walk Through a Cemetery”

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Cemeteries have been with us from Gen. 4 on where we surmise that Cain buried the corpse of his brother Abel whom he had murdered. Both the institutions of marriage and family are older than cemeteries. There is an unmarked cemetery on our farm in Hio (Bridgton, Maine)—we were told that six Indians were buried in the southeastern corner of the inner field and a memorial stone was erected there. It is the place of internment for six individuals who died of smallpox on their way to St. Francis, Canada. Our ancestors took them in and ministered to them in their last days. Their courageous kindness did not go unnoticed—relatives of the deceased would visit, announced, from time to time to pay their respects. *The visits were always friendly for there was no hostility between the Indians and the white settlers who were honored for their kindness!* Stone Cemetery lies about a hundred yards further southeast, alongside the Stone Road; it is a family cemetery and many of our relatives are buried there. The fence is a little worn down, but most of the headstones are intact and erect—bearing the names and dates lived of those laid to rest in the tranquil beauty of their situation. Some of the stones bear inscriptions that speak to life, purpose or reputation of the dead. A few flags mark the place of veterans of our wars from the French and Indian Wars forward. Wonderful that cemeteries for two such distinct races lie within reach of each other. On the fourth of July, the honors of Memorial Day, are still fresh in our minds and our hearts are moved with gratitude for the dead, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice for God and country. It's quite a heritage. Those who came to escape the maw of bloody religious wars (Christian and Ottoman), trade wars (European national struggles for domination of world trade—rule of the sea), political tyranny and absolutism and who courageously sought freedom, opportunity and prosperity away from the legacies of the Old World. The bodies of all awaiting the day of Resurrection—some unto glory and others unto everlasting perdition for their cause is sealed.

Genesis 36 is placed in Genesis like a cemetery—it is where the descendants of Esau are buried, Edomites all. The whole of the human race (all its diverse strands and mixtures) is divided biblically into two nations. The phrase **the generations of Esau** refers to the ninth of ten **totendots** (Heb.) found in Genesis—ten genealogical lists which defines what a **totendot** is. The **totendot of Jacob** is the only one remaining in Genesis (it begins in Gen. 37:2) and as with each of the preceding ones it serves as a marker, or divisions in the narrative. The recognition of these marker reveals the intricate structure, and artful design of the whole book! *It is far from a haphazard, patchwork quilt of editing and redactions. As if to say, nothing inspired, divine or special here—it's just another human book.* One puzzling thing though, Genesis was written when there were no books, no publishing houses and no boards of editors. There is nothing in Genesis that is not here on purpose. So we are going to look into why Genesis 36 is included.

Back in the **totendot** of Isaac (begins Genesis 25:19), in verse 22 of that chapter we read: **The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire to the Lord. 23 And the Lord said** (prophetically, I might add), **“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older will serve the younger.”** Rebekah, as we all know, bore twins: Esau and Jacob. I want us

to pay particular attention to the details disclosed here. First, according to God's plan, there will be **two nations . . . and two peoples** from the marriage of one couple. There is no racist point of origin, no these two nations/peoples will have a common ancestry, come from the same parents and, initially, dwell in the same home and family. *The division into two nations/two peoples is God's idea* and, as such, it is diametrically opposed to globalist agenda, the monist concept captured in phrases such as "it takes a village to raise a child" and "we're all in this together." ***We are not all in this together because it is not God's plan for us all to be together—he has ordained our division between the tribe of Esau (the Edomite) and the tribe of Jacob (God's chosen people) a division that persists to our own day.*** National allegiance, or your people group (Edomite, or Jacobite), transcends all other distinguishing marks (racial, ethnic and cultural)—they do not matter ultimately and the diversity of all is found within both nations.

Jesus' teaching, in places echoes this divisive theme. See Matthew 10:34-38:

34 "Do not think that I came to [a]bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

A paraphrase of verse 37 might read: *those who have no interest in me are plainly not worthy of me.* Edomites have no interest in spiritual things, things like God, God's promises and God's covenants¹ and they resent/hate Jacobites. They have a decidedly secular bent, are materialists, sensualists and pleasure-seekers—many new atheists are simply Edomites in contemporary garb. Of course, they reject God, they have no interest in him, his ways, or his people. These *national traits* distinguish Edomites from Jacobites.

Now the Edomites (in the way of the wicked) are bound for perdition and Jacobites (in the way of the righteous, or saints) are headed to heaven; for eternal co-residence with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are **co-heirs** with Christ! They both live forever, each of them, but their quality of life, the nature of their existence could not be more disparate. That is the plan, that is God's pleasure. Edomites (whom Jesus calls **children of Satan**) and Jacobites whom Jesus calls **the children of God, or, children of his Heavenly Father—his brothers and sisters**), as divided, are totally different (despite being entirely human!)—however, because we are talking about *national allegiance*, not innate differences or immutable characteristics, some from the Edomite group can, might be recruited to the other side—and vice versa. So recruitment is a live issue. Not only is it live, it is urgent. We are to persuade as many as we can, and as many as God would have "saved," to cross over and ascribe to the Jacobite side. (We say become naturalized!, become citizens.) Or, in more "Christian" terms, we urge

¹ Esau had no taste for God's covenant, he moved out of the Promise Land voluntarily *and removed himself from Salvation History*. Perhaps he married Canaanite women to spite his father and to dishonor his mother, Rebekah. He resented her preference for Jacob entirely.

conversion to the Kingdom of God, the rule of Christ side²—choose to become one of his people. ***Understanding these things clears a lot of things up!*** The reason that Richard Dawkins thinks as he does, writes and acts as he does, is ***that he is an Edomite, pure and simple.*** Bart Ehrman and Joshua Harris, also Edomites, are examples of those who have crossed over to the Edomite side—I pray that no one will take these diagnostic observations about apostates as name-calling, or verbal aspersions—they are really sad and painful things to say.

As we walk through the cemetery of Esau, we see there row upon row of lost souls, the names of the self-excluded Edomites; the powerful, worldly (chiefs, kings and rulers) men and women who went the wrong way and lost out. This is like walking through an enemy cemetery in which you hope never to find your ancestors, or your descendants! It is a Godforsaken place designed for those who forsake God! Those who are named there are condemned to punishment/to hell—however high, noble and admirable their inscriptions may read, their works/accomplishments did not last and they are mere the dust of futility.

I want to suggest that Genesis is a work of stellar genius! It is framed in literary and theological sophistication (besides being without error as the inspired word of God). I suppose that any praise on top of inerrancy might sound superfluous and empty, but, humanly speaking, it is worth pointing out. Perhaps, the “higher critics” were a tad snobbish, when they looked down their redactive noses at the text and suggested that, in their view, this piece would fit better over here and has to appear after that piece—claiming superior editorial discretion and wisdom (“if we had written this . . . we would have done better than to write so carelessly, so shabbily”). The great patchwork quilt approach to the Old Testament has, frankly, worn out—through excessive use³? It became preposterous after being presumptuous because once the reactive tool is applied there’s no stopping the theoretical overreach. It dissolves of its own weight: no one know that the sources actually were (no copies, no manuscripts) and no one knows who the editors were, what the credentials are or when and where and why they convened. Was it a committee job, a group of scholars, or philosophical revisionists? What authority did they possess to rend and alter Holy Writ? All anonymous, undateable and unsearchable! How moderns work is anachronistically applied to Old Testament times for starters. And, politically, the accusation of being a theological hit job: elevating our “human authority,” as above divine authority. Is this scholarly source/redaction theory is to be trusted above the divine authority of Spirit guided inspiration and divine revelation? Such a valid criticism seems waiting in the wings to pounce on the unwary. Having the last word, because of our historical position in today, does not guarantee that we have the true word. I assert that a “stellar genius” wrote Genesis because I prefer that to “clumsy, awkward, haphazard and presumably flawed” being applied to scripture—for that is exactly what higher criticism implies about the text. In their rush to exclude revelation and prophecy, supernatural features(!), I fear they were misled and have misled others. Dare I suggest that they thought like Edomites? I do, I must . . . the evidence of skeptical unbelief is before us. Excessive doubt is an Edomite trait.

² In common terms, the contest is a like “Red Rover, Red Rover . . . Let _____ Come Over.” This can serve as a playful analogy for the change of allegiance, to sides.

³ It was overrated from the start. Proudly scientific? That is profoundly presumptuous. And I am not retreating to “mystery” when I oppose this theory. I am suggesting we let the text stand.

Genesis 36 exists to show forth more than 1. that God's promises come true, and 2. to explain how the bitter relations between true Israel and Edom have come about—we remember that Ishmael was rejected before Esau and his descendants are heavily represented in the Edomite tribe. (This is so even through intermarriage!) Genesis 3 introduces the idea of division: **enmity between your offspring/seed** (Satan) **and her** (Eve's) **offspring** (Gen. 3:15). Then, in Gen. 4, the division reappears: between the **offspring of Cain** and the **totendot** of Adam through Seth (Gen. 5:1-32). The nation of unbelief is deployed in this world as well as the nation of faith. The dominance of the rebellious and fallen is faced squarely in Gen. 6; there God redresses this through the Flood, saving the righteous Noah and his family. He cancels the wicked. This "restart" precedes the call of Abraham *which is the divine decision to call "a people" out of fallen humanity (another people) to be his own*. Therefore what is reprised in Rebekah's womb, **the struggle of two nations**, mirrors much of whatever it was that came before—there's a huge element of precedent and of antecedence (leading to repetition, and cycles) in the biblical narrative.

Esau's beautiful wives and lovely children do not signify that his family is blessed.

Esau's material prosperity does not mean he was rich in the things of God.

Political power and influence in this world does not mean he has power with God.

Temporal fame does not register as eternal recognition by God.

All this secular, transient success, success by the world's standard, does not prevent one from failing with God, from being a spiritual loser. The sheikdoms of Esau are dust blowing in the wind—let us be wary of judging anyone before his time. Those who patiently wait for the Lord of fulfill his covenant promises, they are, in the end the real winners. So many Edomites have come and gone and most of them are scarcely remembered. The question to be asked is this: do relive as citizens of the city of man, or the city of God—the kingdom we cling to determines our eternal state and standing. We do not come from the same nation, the same family line—the chasm between the two kingdoms is definitive. Which side we are on determines our thinking, places us in one moral and spiritual universe or the other. Worldly people are innovative, talented and bright—to an admirable degree! But their works fade and accomplishment passes away. Their lives are defined by an ignorance of God—that ignorance warps everything. We share the world now, but not the future. Edomites go where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth . . . Jacobites to bliss, joy and peace. That makes the choice worth knowing about. The latter is good news, the former is not so good.

Amen