

Genesis 26:34 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

Genesis 28:9 Then went Esau unto 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 36:2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;

Genesis 36:3 And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

1. Judith..... of Beeri the Hittite
2. Bashemath.... of Elon the Hittite
3. Adah..... of Elon the Hittite
4. Aholibamah... of Anah (whose grandfather is Zibeon the Hivite)
5. Mahalath..... of Ishmael – sister of Nebajoth
6. Bashemath.... of Ishmael – sister of Nebajoth

QUESTION: is Bashemath of Ishmael & Mahalath of Ishmael one and the same woman or are they different people – did Esau marry sisters or is this another "unfortunate scribal error" as the liberal scholars insist? Several answers are possible.

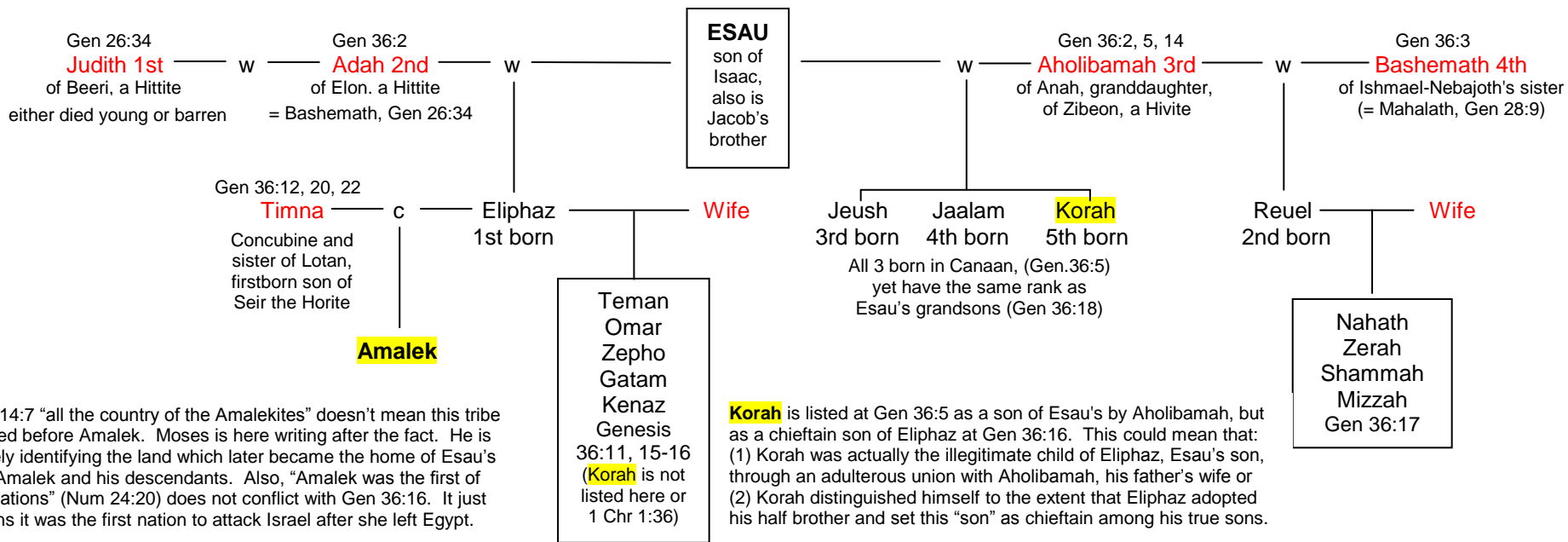
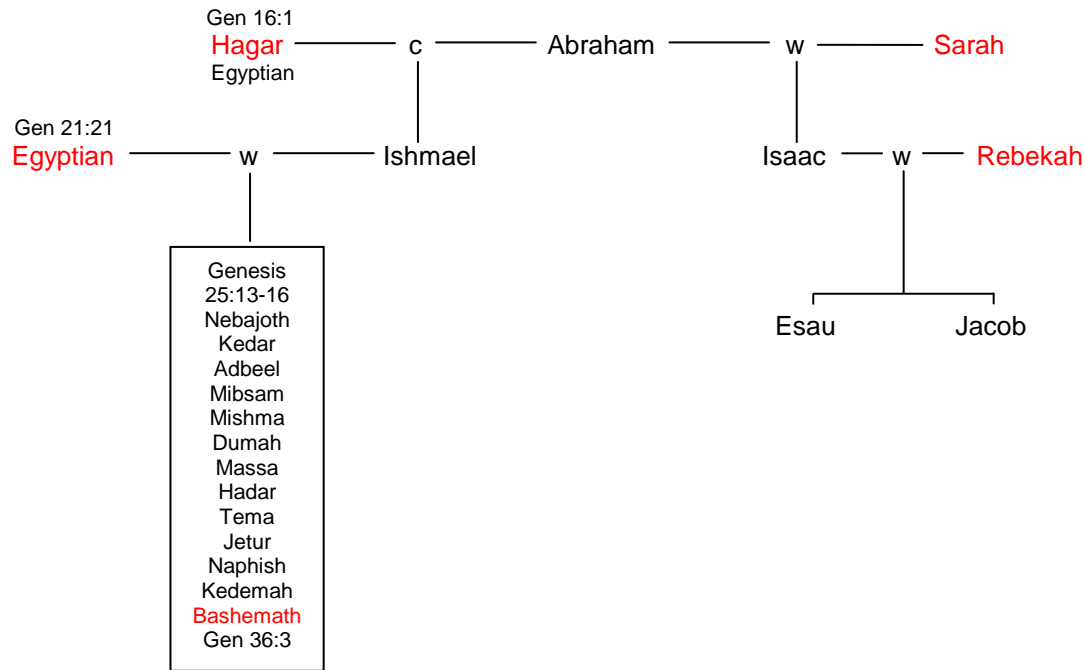
1. As two of Esau's wives were both named Bashemath (Gen.26:34; cp.36:2c), He gave each of them a "nick" name or name of endearment (Adah means beauty or ornament, Mahalath means mild, or to dance or to sing) in order to avoid the confusion. Thus, Bashemath of Ishmael & Mahalath are the same person & Adah of Elon is the same as Bashemath of Elon (i.e., Esau had "only" 4 wives).
2. or he had 6 wives and married 2 sets of sisters (e.g., Jacob married sisters, Rachel & Leah, Gen.29).
3. or Bashemath & Mahalath of Ishmael are different names for the same person, and Adah & Bashemath (both of Elon) are sisters - thus Esau had 5 wives.

OBSERVATIONS: Genesis 36 gives only Adah (v.4), Aholibamah (v.5) and Bashemath of Ishmael (vs.13 & 17) the sister of Nebajoth (Ishmael's firstborn son - Gen.25:13 - by an Egyptian wife, Gen.21:21) as having had sons.

Scenario [1] would leave only Judith as barren, sonless or she died young before she had any sons. [2] leaves three such wives (i.e., 1, 2, & 5). Although this is not decisive, it is less likely. Case [3] is a viable alternative, but it results in 2 of the 5 wives being childless (1 & 2). Thus, *best* is scenario [1] with the result that Esau had 4 wives:

1. Judith.....of Beeri the Hittite (Gen. 26:34)
2. Adah.....of Elon the Hittite (Gen. 36:2 = Bashemath of Elon a Hivite: Gen. 26:34)
3. Aholibamah....of Anah (grandfather is Zibeon the Hivite: Gen. 36:2, 5, 14 & 18)
4. Bashemath.....of Ishmael & sister of Nebajoth (Gen. 36:3 = Mahalath: Gen. 28:9).

Esau's Wives and Sons
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Gen 14:7 "all the country of the Amalekites" doesn't mean this tribe existed before Amalek. Moses is here writing after the fact. He is merely identifying the land which later became the home of Esau's son Amalek and his descendants. Also, "Amalek was the first of the nations" (Num 24:20) does not conflict with Gen 36:16. It just means it was the first nation to attack Israel after she left Egypt.

Korah is listed at Gen 36:5 as a son of Esau's by Aholibamah, but as a chieftain son of Eliphaz at Gen 36:16. This could mean that: (1) Korah was actually the illegitimate child of Eliphaz, Esau's son, through an adulterous union with Aholibamah, his father's wife or (2) Korah distinguished himself to the extent that Eliphaz adopted his half brother and set this "son" as chieftain among his true sons.