

## *In Search of Nimrod: Nimrod and Esau as Parallel Figures*

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### Introduction

This study seeks to arrive at an understanding of the enigmatic character Nimrod, the mythical Assyrian conqueror and builder who plays a prominent role in the Genesis accounts of the development of evil after the flood. The methodology for arriving at such an understanding lies in an analysis of the parallel relationship between Nimrod and Esau, and by association, Assyria and Edom, the nation-states that they represent. The research presented here leads to an understanding of Esau/Edom as the literary successor of Nimrod and the Assyrian monarchy that he founded.

### Nimrod

Most academic discussions concerning Nimrod focus on the improbable task of identifying him with an extra-biblical, known historical figure.<sup>1</sup> S.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. for example, Y. Levin, "Nimrod the Mighty, King of Kish, King of Sumer and Akkad," *VT* 52.3 (2002): 350–64; Cf. also Nahum Sarna, *Genesis*, The JPS Torah Commentary, (ed. N. Sarna; Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 73, who attempts to identify Nimrod with Naram-Sin; some have argued that Nimrod has his roots in a Mesopotamian deity. This was first suggested by J. Grivel, "Nemrod et les écritures cunéiformes," *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 3 (1874), p. 136–144, and revived by E. Lipinski, "Nimrod et Assur," *Revue Biblique* 73.1 (1966), p. 77–93, who related Nimrod to Marduk in the Babylonian creation myth *Enuma elis*, "when on high." Van der Toorn and P. W. van der Horst, *Harvard Theological Review* 83.1 (1990), p. 1–29, argue against the identification of Nimrod with Marduk and propose an association with the Mesopotamian god Ninurta.

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