

Moses And Aaron, Sons of Levi

Exodus 6:14-27, "These are the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. And the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These are the families of Simeon. These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty-seven. The sons of Gershon were Libni and Shimi according to their families. And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty-three. The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their generations. Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven. The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. And the sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And the sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites. Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families. These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron."

Let's pray. Dear heavenly Father God, we do praise You that You are the God that has ordered all of time. You are One that established all of our lineages, You are the One that established the lineage of Moses and Aaron, You are the One true and living God. You are the One who numbers our days. Father, we do praise You for this. We praise You that You have given us this passage today. We pray oh Lord that You would help us, that You would instruct us, that You would cause us by Your Spirit to understand these things. We pray for the preaching of Your word and the proclamation of Your word, and the declaration of the things that You've done Father. We pray that You would help us and instruct us through these things. We pray that You would bless our time now. Bless Mr. Horn as he proclaims Your word Father. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

As we come to a genealogy, I think it's worth considering why God would intersperse genealogies through the Pentateuch, especially in Genesis. Where does the New Testament start? With the genealogy of Christ. Luke talks about the genealogy of Christ, it's very clear that God has a purpose for genealogies because He keeps going back to them and putting things into historical perspective by giving a genealogy. I believe this is the only one in Exodus, but there were a number of them in Genesis. The reason God puts them in a text, they're frequently

put at a point where there is a major change of the subject of the narrative. Before this the subject of the narrative was on Israel, but now it's going to focus on two people, Aaron and Moses. It's a way to connect what went before to what goes after, just like the genealogy in Matthew 1 is to connect the Old Testament to the New Testament, to connect the prophecies about the Messiah in the Old Testament to the coming of Jesus Christ. So there is a point where there is a transition and there's a sense that Moses has been talked about since chapter 2, but as we go forward we will see the establishment of the Levitical priesthood which will be much more about the descendants of Levi than about the descendants of Moses. As the subject changes in a real sense what it means for Aaron and Moses and what they mean for redemptive history, God takes them almost aside because He says the same thing after these verses, to make sure we know the context of what's happening. That's the pattern of genealogies. The first major genealogy in Scripture is in Genesis 5, and it's transitioning there from everything talking about Adam and it switches from Adam and his direct descendants to Noah for a while. A genealogy is put there to transfer from talking about Adam and filling the whole earth to talking specifically about Noah and how he is walking by faith in the midst of a perverse generation. He's pretty much the main topic, it's what Scripture is talking about, Noah and that picture of Christ which is the ark. In chapter ten there is now another genealogy. It has been talking about Noah, but it's going to switch and start talking about the nations and how all the nations came to be in the genealogy. That's going to be the focus for a bit, that they refuse to scatter like they are commanded so the Tower of Babel and that story. But then chapter 11, is going to switch from talking about all the nations to talking about a particular man, Abraham, who will be the focus for the next fourteen chapters. To explain who Abraham is, to do this transition of the narrative, God uses another genealogy. Then chapter 25 of Genesis is another genealogy where it talks about and switches from talking about Abraham to talking about Jacob and it skips forward two generations. The focus for the next eleven chapters is on Jacob and what he does. Thirty-six talks about the genealogy of Esau, the contrast of him and Jacob as he takes over a land and fills it with people. It ends though with going to what's happening with Jacob, he has Joseph and Joseph becomes the central figure of the narrative until chapter forty-six. That's the last genealogy before this one and that genealogy is again how it went from one person to expand and be these seventy people that go into the land of Egypt. Up until this point the focus is how God is going to deliver Israel so again, God uses genealogies to change the focus of what's happening. The other purpose that He uses genealogies for is to give a timeline so we can understand how things happen and the length of time between these events. I've said before that Israel was in Egypt for 250 years, but there's lots of people who argue that's not true. If you go to this genealogy it is very clearly true, it can't be much different than that because we find out from this genealogy that Moses was the grandson of Levi. There's not 430 years between Levi and Moses. The other purpose of genealogies is for us to understand the pace at which God is working through redemptive history. With that introduction, let's talk about the first two sons of Jacob.

Verses 14-15, "These are the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. And the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite

woman. These are the families of Simeon.” Part of what God is explaining is why the narrative goes from Jacob and Joseph to the third born son of Jacob. Levi is the third born son by Leah. It first starts by explaining who the older two were, they are the heads of the father’s houses. So Moses is recording the different houses, the different tribes that make up Israel, that make up Jacob. The father’s houses are important because God is giving different responsibilities when they move into the Promised Land, different tribes will rule over, will have control over. There are different areas that each of the heads of the families of the Levites will have responsibility for. God is laying this out, not to explain what went before, but as a precursor for what’s going to come so we can understand the things He is going to declare later. “The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel.” As the firstborn, as it said in Genesis 49, he’s the beginning of his might and the beginning of the strength of Jacob, but yet God’s going to pass over him to go to Aaron and Moses. So Reuben really means, ‘see a son’, so this is what Leah says when she has Reuben because she is desiring Jacob to love her. From Genesis 49 that Noel just read, but let me read verses 3-4, “Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father’s bed; Then you defiled it— He went up to my couch.” Because of this, because Reuben laid with Bilhah, Jacob’s concubine, the slave of Rachel, because of that he loses his position as the firstborn because he dishonored his father. So even in here there’s a reason why it’s fleshing out who Levi was, but it doesn’t flesh out who Reuben was because Reuben is passed over. So he has his four children, “Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.” This is about the only time we hear about his children. We hear in Numbers that each of them have a household after him. There’s large numbers of people that are Reubenites, but the sons aren’t significant because God has passed over them in terms of who are known as the people of God, who are the people of authority among the Israelites. “These are the families of Reuben.” Then they are never mentioned again after Numbers. Then you have the sons of Simeon, Jacob’s second born son. He was also cursed by his father along with Levi. Genesis 49:5-7, “Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.” Simeon and Levi both conspired to use the things of God, specifically circumcision, in order to murder a city filled with people. Simeon and Levi, both are scattered but scattered in different ways. Simeon, when Israel comes into the Promised Land, is immediately scattered. Joshua 19:9, “The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.” So Simeon is being passed over, they stop being a tribe even. This is God inspiring Jacob so he curses who God wants to curse because God’s plan is to shift the people, shift the focus to Levi. Levi is scattered throughout all of Israel, and we remember that Aaron is appointed to be high priest, or the priest of Moses because God is angry at Moses because he won’t do what he’s told. When we think of the Levites being scattered among Israel, that is part of the cursing and the position they received is part of a cursing. “And the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman.” The first five are assumed to be the offspring of his first wife, and again, after the Pentateuch they are never mentioned again. The cases where Shaul is

named, he is always named as the son of a Canaanite woman. Either Simeon had a concubine who was a Canaanite woman or Simeon married again. Shaul is the same as the name Saul, the Hebrew name. I'm not sure why they transliterate them differently, but this is the same name. Shaul is mentioned again in Numbers 25:14, "Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites." Salu is Shaul, again I'm not sure why in the translation they keep changing the transliteration, but these are all the same person. Remember when the Israelites go and Balaak tries to get Balaam to curse all the Israelites and he goes up three times and each time that he goes up to curse he ends up blessing them because he says he can only say what God says, then Balaam goes to Balaak and says to send in his daughters and seduce them so they get sent in and they start to seduce all the Israelites. One man stands up after Moses says you need to kill those who are laying with the Moabites, and Phineas, the grandson of Aaron stands up and he puts a spear through the Midianite woman and Zimmery who was the son of Shaul. So he's even named and separated because he's one of the first who goes after the Midianites and then God stops the plague that had already killed 24,000. So again, God is laying out the genealogies so we can understand the things that come later because all these people are being put into context. "These are the families of Simeon." In this case, five of them are listed in Numbers as having a people named after them. Ohad did not, he probably did not have any male offspring. With that let's move on to Levi because the first two sons are basically rejected as the leaders of Israel, as the heirs of Jacob.

Verses 16-19, "These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty-seven. The sons of Gershon were Libni and Shimi according to their families. And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty-three. The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their generations." So this becomes the focus of the narration through the book of Leviticus, and the narration through the Pentateuch is really about the offspring of Levi and really Aaron and Moses. "Gershon, Kohath, and Merari", these are the three sons. Each one of these sons has a significant role going forward, each one of them is appointed by God to various responsibilities so their families we will hear a lot about going forward through the Old Testament. Not like the sons of Reuben or the sons of Simeon where you hear about them in a couple places, but never hear about them otherwise. That's not true with Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. They're given responsibilities and people still identify whether they are a Gershonite, Kohathite, or Merari, even at the time of Christ because to be a high priest you had to be of the offspring of Kohath. Even the offspring of Levi are historically significant as the offspring of Jacob. They're remembered until the coming of Christ. "And the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty-seven." Again, another reason for the genealogies is to fix timeframes so we understand what the length of time is of these biblical narrative. We know that Levi had these three sons before going to Egypt and we know he had a long life. It's told that he lived to be a hundred and thirty-seven and he didn't live to be as old as his father Jacob who lived to be a hundred and forty-seven and he only lived in Egypt for seventeen years. This means Levi only lived in Egypt for around fifty-seven years give or take a year. That's going to be significant

when we look at the timeline when you look at Levi's grandchildren. Again, one of his grandchildren is Moses. "The sons of Gershon were Libni and Shimi according to their families." Again, Gershon is important because they were given specific responsibilities for the tabernacle. Even when they moved around the desert there was a specific place for the tabernacle that the Gersonites were always supposed to encamp because they weren't part of the armies that were protecting where the defenders of Israel. Instead they had a responsibility specifically for the tabernacle. Numbers 4:24-26, "This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and carrying: They shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tabernacle of meeting with its covering, the covering of badger skins that is on it, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the screen for the door of the gate of the court, the hangings of the court which are around the tabernacle and altar, and their cords, all the furnishings for their service and all that is made for these things: so shall they serve." They were given a specific role and a specific purpose by God and so they're kept separate and have different heads than the Levites, and Simeonites, and Reubenites. We even have a count, we have a census in Numbers 3:23, there were 7,500 males that were assigned this responsibility. "And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel." The second son was Kohath, and they had specific responsibilities too. In Numbers 3:31, "Their duty included the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the screen, and all the work relating to them." They had responsibilities for everything the priests worked with because they were the family that the priests were supposed to come from because Aaron, the high priest, comes from that family. So they had responsibility for everything that was related to the sacrifices and related to the ministering to the temple. Now we get another timeframe. "And the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty-three." Which gives another data point for the timeline. We know he was alive before they went into Egypt based on Genesis 46, so we can begin to calculate how long they could have been in Egypt. We don't know when his children were born but we can get an idea on the time span based on the length of time Kohath lived. "The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi." Again, they were given specific responsibilities so the family of the Merarites, that's also remembered for a long time well after who the sons of Reuben were. Numbers 4:31-33, "And this is what they must carry as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting: the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, and the pillars around the court with their sockets, pegs, and cords, with all their furnishings and all their service; and you shall assign to each man by name the items he must carry. This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting, under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest." So a couple things here. One is that they are put under the authority as is Gershon, but as an offspring of Kohath, but later they continue to be given a responsibility. In 1 Chronicles 15, they're given the responsibility to be the singers in the temple, they bring music in the temple day and night. "These are the families of Levi according to their generations." While there will be much discussed about Israel going forth, specifically in Joshua, for most of the Pentateuch the narration is on the Levites and not on the other tribes and what God is doing with the Levites. Then it narrows down again. It starts with Jacob and is narrowed down to Levi and now it's going to narrow down to Amram.

Verses 20-25, "Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven. The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. And the sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And the sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites. Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families." So now, again, it's going to go to a particular person, Amram, who took Jochebed. The focus is back to the second son Kohath, because Mahli and Mushi are not specifically important in God's plan, but Amram is because from him come Moses and Aaron. The Kohathites are given a greater responsibility, not because there was some significance about them before this, but their significance is that God chose to speak to Aaron and Moses and that's why they are significant, because God had a purpose for them. So Amram was the firstborn son of Kohath and he "took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife." It's not going to be long, a few months from now in terms of the narration where this becomes illegal, where it's illegal to marry your father's sister. Leviticus 18:12, "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is near of kin to your father." So this will become illegal in a short time, but at this point it's not. It has to do with nearness of kinship, but it wasn't against the law. Obviously at the time of Seth, the only people he could marry would be his sister so he had to marry her sister. You get until the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai, the nearness of relative that we think is obvious that you don't marry them, it wasn't a law to not marry your aunt until the giving of the law. It changes because of the effects of sin. Adam sinned and that sin permeates through the world and if you look at the timeframe of how long people lived, they lived from 900 years down to this point where it's 133 years and at the time of Moses he is writing the average is seventy and sometimes eighty. There's this decline and decaying that's going on and it's because of this decay that God changes the rules about who you can marry because the sin of Adam causes all of creation to wear out like a cloak. So what was acceptable in the eyes of God becomes unacceptable. That also means that she is directly a daughter of Levi. If Levi lived in Egypt for around fifty-seven years, that means even if she was born at the end of his life, they were in Egypt for 430 years, which is how some people read that's how long Israel sojourned in Egypt rather than how long Israel sojourned and ended up in Egypt. If it's 430 years, that means if the time frame was that they were in Egypt 430 years, that means she was 293 when she gave birth to Moses. There's nobody in the Bible, it's considered miraculous that Sarah gives birth at ninety so if Jochebed is giving birth at 293, it pretty much proves that they can't be in Egypt for 430 years. If you drop the timeline, which is the correct way to read it, it's that it goes back to when the promise was made to Abraham, that they would be sojourners for 430 years, then that would give her an age of 78 which is still pretty old, but not 293 and not even that unreasonable considering that her husband and father both lived until they were 137. Again, one of the reasons to give genealogies is to correct the interpretation of other Scripture, as you get a timeline and understand the timeline it constrains interpretations of other passages. So "she bore him Aaron and Moses." We also know that she had Miriam and Miriam go out with them in the wilderness. She doesn't get mentioned because typically in genealogies because they are known by their offspring that are males, they are known by the fathers and not the parents. Female children are

typically not named and Miriam is not named here because they're not the heads of the families. But Jochebed has already been prominent in the story of Moses so it's not that she's unimportant. Exodus 2:2, "So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months." Jochebed is the one who preserved Moses so she is very significant in God's plan for the delivery of Israel from Egypt. That's typically why women are named in genealogies because they personally did something very significant so it's not about the household or the family and their offspring that obviously came from them, but they are known as the head based on the husband. When they do something significant, frequently they are mentioned in genealogies as well. "And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven." Again, when we hear Moses living until the age of 120, it's clear when it says that that he is a very old man compared to everyone else because everyone else over the age of twenty had died. They were living shorter lives because they were rebellious in the wilderness due to unbelief. The reality is that Moses died at a younger age than his father and his maternal grandfather who was Levi. "The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri." Now the genealogy covers the rest of the children of Kohath. Izhar was Kohath's second son and he had three children. Moses is giving us information that will be useful. As we get into Numbers and we see the rebellion, who's the one who rebels? Korah, so God is putting these in place so later we can see how they fit in. When Korah gathers the children of Israel and the children of Levi to rebel against Moses, we're being told ahead of time that this is Moses' cousin who is doing this, not some distant relative. His first cousin, his uncle's child. This wasn't someone who was unknown to Moses, it was someone that was likely very familiar to Moses. "And the sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri." These would also be cousins of Moses and they also appear later in the narrative in Leviticus 10:1-5, "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'" So Aaron held his peace. Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp." So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said." Moses is giving us this information because later these people will be significant. They are people who, when Abihu and Nadab rebel against God and refuse to worship God as He commands, as close relatives, they are assigned the task of carrying their body outside the camp. Now we continue on to the next generation of Aaron. "Aaron took to himself Elisheba." So he married Elisheba who we haven't heard of before. There is nowhere in Scripture where her name is mentioned so the only significance to why she is named is perhaps her namesake is going to come. The name Elisheba means 'God of the oath', but if you translate it from Greek rather than Hebrew, the name is Elizabeth. If you look at it, this is the same name as the mother of John the Baptist so God starts the Levitical priesthood with Elisheba and He ends it when Jesus Christ comes after John the Baptist, He ends it with Elizabeth. So to some extent they're the beginning and end of the Levitical priesthood because after we are not priests according to the order of Levi, we are priests according to the order of Melchizedek. So Elizabeth ends up being the marker of the beginning and of the end of the Levitical priesthood. She's the "daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife." So

Amminadab was the son of Ram, the son of Herzon, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, so this is probably put into the genealogy also to connect that Levites weren't all marrying Levites, they weren't marrying within their tribe. She is marrying from the tribe of Judah into the tribe of Levi. "And she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar." These were the first four to minister with Aaron. Understanding the relationship is useful for the narrative that will come later when Nadab and Abihu end up being killed because they won't worship God as He commanded. They are of the same nature as Cain so Aaron's first two sons are like Cain the son of Adam. Adam and Aaron knew how to worship, but their sons immediately rebelled and God killed them. Well, He kills Nadab and Abihu, but He sends Cain to walk the earth. Now he talks more about who the sons of Korah were. "And the sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph." Just like the sons of Aaron, they are listed because they will be important later. The sons of Korah are not listed because they will be important in a positive sense but they are listed because they will be important in a negative sense. Again, they are a demonstration of refusing to accept the will of God. God appointed Aaron to be high priest and Korah didn't like that. Because of that he leads his family and they are the picture of false teachers. They say they are the ones who should speak God's word even though God is not speaking to them. "These are the families of the Korahites." These are the families that get swallowed up in Numbers 16:27-32, "So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children. And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord." Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods." This is what the end is of the sons of Korah. Again, God is laying it out so that we know who these characters are, who these people are and what their relationship is to one another before the events happen that they are significant for. Then it goes to the next generation. Nadab and Abihu are killed by God for disobedience and the head of the family falls to Eleazar. He is the only one of Aaron's sons who's genealogy is given here because it's through him that the high priest continues. "Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife." Again, women and genealogies are typically pretty significant. We don't know anything about Putiel except the name means 'to reject or despise the god of put'. Put was one of the sons of Ham and so one of the speculations is that she may have been named as one who, because her family rejected the worship of the gods of Egypt, so she may have reverted out of Egypt so she was basically known as the one who despises the god of Ham, the god of Egypt. "And she bore him Phinehas." Phinehas becomes the leader of the Levites in the generations after Eleazar. The giving of the genealogy, again Moses is declaring who the significant people are so as we go through the narrative we can put them in a framework and understand who they are and how they interact with one another and what their relationship is with one another. "These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families." This is how the Levites were supposed to be considered. This is how each one of these households is supposed to be considered, how they're split up and how

they're significant. We can see how their roles are prescribed so we can know how the various people come to be.

Verses 26-27, "These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron." So now Moses in writing this with inspiration of the Holy Spirit, goes back and says to remember why he told them all this about Phinehas and Korah and all these other ones, this is for you to remember who Moses and Aaron are. Aaron and Moses are the ones that the Lord said, they're significance is not because they had Levi for their grandfather and Jacob for their great-grandfather. Their significance is because God chose to speak to them. God could have chosen to speak to Korah and any of these other people, but what's significant, why we're supposed to know this genealogy, understand this genealogy, because what's significant is that God chose to speak to Moses and Aaron, that's where their significance came from, not because of their greatness or because Moses was such a beautiful baby. Their significance is because God chose to speak to them and to tell them to "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." It's interesting because He hasn't said this yet before. He said about delivering the people from Egypt, but not about according to their armies. God is saying that each one of these tribes is significant and that's what these armies are, the twelve tribes of Israel. They're being brought out not just as one people, but they are brought out as twelve different tribes, thirteen if count Ephraim and Manasseh as one or two. So when they go into the Promised Land they do maintain their armies, they maintain their separate groups of people and they get set into separate lands and they have their boundaries. Even though Moses is delivering all the people, he's delivering one group of twelve tribes. This is significant going forward because there is unity in the church but there is also diversity in the church and that's what this is a picture of. Christ is the deliverer of them all, but we shouldn't expect everyone to worship as we worship. Now in heaven when we are all purified and we're all made without sin, yes we'll worship all in the same manner, but we shouldn't think that now there wouldn't be divisions. There were divisions when the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt and there are divisions now when the church is delivered out of spiritual Egypt. So we are one people but we are also diverse people. "These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt." Moses and Aaron were spoken to by God and they were appointed to a role, they were appointed to the role to speak to the Pharaoh of Egypt, to command him "to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt." Understand, just like there's a parallel between we're one body, but at the same time there are different parts of that body, there's also truth that we are given the responsibility to be rulers of this world about who God is and about the people are supposed to repent and the children of Israel will come out of Egypt. This was the means that God was going to use Moses and Aaron, but this is still the means that God uses to deliver, by His children speaking and it's much broader than pastors. All Christians are commanded to speak the gospel to those around so people are delivered. The summary of the genealogy, the main focus is, "These are the same Moses and Aaron."

Applications:

1. God uses our ancestry. Korah had a particular position, which gives him the ability to rebel in different ways than other people did. The rest of the people around them when they see the position that Moses has and the position that Aaron has, because these are his cousins, they're able to lead people and gather people differently than if they were Simeonites or if they are from the tribe of Naphtali. They're in a different position so genealogy and our ancestry really matters. The context of our life matters. God goes over and over again about genealogies so we shouldn't think that even though we're each responsible for our own sin, we shouldn't think that the position we're placed in, the family we're placed in, the ancestors that we have don't have true significance to us because even as God chose Moses and Aaron, their ancestry still really mattered. If God gives these genealogies, it's because those who we have family connections with, they actually matter, they have an influence on opportunities we have, they have an influence on how people look at us. All these things have a significant effect so we need to recognize the opportunities that our ancestry gives us, but also the pitfalls. For Reuben, they lost their position because of what their father did for the Reubenites. Our response, whether we have a position where we're being used in our family and the past glorified God or they're glorifying God by being in rebellion to God, our response is still to always be the same which is to walk in righteousness and to do what's good and right in God's sight. We also need to recognize that God put us in a different place that gives us different advantages and different responsibilities.
2. Our behavior has real impacts on those who come after us. When we think of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi and what they did, Reuben by going into Jacob's wife Bilhah, Simeon and Levi by their destroying Shechem, these are just one day in their lives. It's not like they spent a long time doing this, but that one day in their lives have significant impacts, it means they lose their right, it means Judah is the one who becomes the firstborn son of Israel. It's to him that Christ comes, it's to him that he has the authority. So it's really easy to think what we do in one moment doesn't matter very much, but it does matter, it matters a great deal. It's one moment, but it's also a manifestation of who they are because Jacob doesn't say Levi and Simeon lost their temper so they went and killed the children of Shechem. It's not that he just went in to Bilhah, it's that Reuben was unstable as water. Simeon and Levi were filled with anger and self-will. We are judged by particular events, but we shouldn't think the events in our life aren't because of who we are and what we believe and think, that is what manifests itself and how we behave. So Jacob can go, 'Reuben, he went and slept with my concubine because he was unstable' because this is who he was. He can say this is who Simeon and Levi were and this is why they went and murdered all the males in Shechem. What we do is a manifestation of where our hearts are and where our thoughts are. I spent two weeks in Nigeria and this is the main message that I preached: don't deceive yourself. What you do is dictated by what you believe and who you are. If your heart has been made right by God then you walk in righteousness, not in perfection, but you walk in righteousness. These men did these evil things one day and they're judged for it and their children are judged for it and those that come after them are judged for it because it's who they were.

It's also important for us to remember that we're not bound by man. Exodus 20:5-6, "You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." The Reubenites were affected by what Reuben did. His great grandchildren were affected by what Reuben did. What Simeon did affected his great grandchildren. For generations after the Levites had tools of cruelty in their tents just like Jacob prophesied. It doesn't mean they were bound by that because God does show mercy to a thousand generations to those who love them and keep His commandments. Just because we have real impacts on our children, just because our parents have had real impacts on us, none of that gives us an excuse not to love God and to keep His commandments. Even though we have an impact on our children and as parents we have the responsibility to consider that impact and think about it and to mitigate it, you are either pointing your child towards righteousness or sin. No child should ever go, 'But look at who my parents were', because in reality God does show mercy and none of us have an excuse. God showed mercy to a thousand generations and Noah was a righteous man and we are all easily within a few generations of Noah.

3. Behavior allows a shift in inheritance. Jacob wasn't wrong to consider Judah his firstborn son. He looks at what Reuben does and goes, this isn't a true son. He looks at what Simeon and Levi do and says they aren't true sons. The real heir of Jacob was Judah and was not these other sons. When we think of Jesus, He was a Jew not a Levite. As he went through these other sons in Genesis 49:9-12, it's Judah that receives the blessing and the other three receive a curse. "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. Binding his donkey to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk." We see God shift inheritance based on behavior and it's valid for us to do the same. The things that we're given, the resources that we are given to pass onto the next generation, they're not given to us as free people but as servants of God. The rights, the responsibilities, the talents that we have, it's very valid to pass them onto the ones who will further the kingdom of God and not the ones who are in rebellion to the kingdom of God. This is what God did and I think we can use it as an example and it's valid to say this is my firstborn son but he hates God, this is my second born son is my firstborn son because he's the one who wants to serve God. As we go through this genealogy we see this a lot, that the leading one is not the firstborn son.
4. Read the Scriptures carefully. For years I have talked to well-known people with national ministries and large national followings and I have heard them preach from the platform that the Jews or the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years and it's just not true, it's not what the Scriptures say. Understand you go to commentaries and a lot of commentaries say they were in Egypt for 430 years. No, she did not have a child when she was 293. If you read the Scriptures carefully you find out that that's true and we have a duty to read

the Scripture carefully and to harmonize the different passages. In Nigeria I kept having these conversations about once saved, always saved because going to Pentecostals and going to the Assemblies of God they are adamantly opposed to this concept. They were pointing to one verse, they point to Hebrews 10 or Hebrews 6. They point to one of the verses that are complicated to understand and they would say, 'See? This proves you can lose your salvation.' The answer is, 'What about the other hundred verses that say you can't?' Let's make sure that we're not doing that too, where we read something that says, 'they were sojourners in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years' and think that means that they sojourned in Egypt rather than that they were sojourners for 430 years and just in Egypt for 215 of those years. It's easy for us, until we are forced to harmonize the Scriptures and say these are what the various pieces are, then we have to say that our interpretation is wrong. I spent a lot of time over the last two weeks doing that and it can be profitable for people when they are forced to say, 'These two Scriptures that seem to be in contradiction to each other, how do they actually work together?' We need to make sure that we're doing that and that we don't just read it and go, 'Ok, I believe this verse, I believe this verse' even though our conclusions are contradictory. We need to make sure we harmonize our view of the Scripture, God's word is entirely consistent and we need to make sure our interpretation of it is entirely consistent as well.

5. God chooses who He wants to choose. While this passage puts Moses and Aaron in a historical framework, it's worthy to note that we have no reason to think that it should have been Amram rather than his brothers, that it should have been Aaron and Moses rather than Kohathites. We have no reason to understand this and in the end it's because God chose to do so. God chose to give Jacob the prophecy that said the three would be passed over. God chose these things so it's important for us to recognize that even as God is laying out what happened and who these people are, it is because He is doing His will. He is choosing what these people will do. He is choosing. Everything that God does is according to His own good pleasure. He's not forced by anything. We don't have any reason why God would pass over Gershon. We have no reason why it was first the third born son then the second born son and the next generation it's the firstborn son and the next generation it's the second born son. It's all because this is what God wanted and God in His sovereignty decided what was best, this is a manifestation of His glory.
6. I think this is a really significant application. Notice where the responsibilities of Aaron go versus the responsibility of Moses. Aaron's responsibility, along with the Kohathites, the Merarites, and the Gershonites, it continues. Each one of these heads of this family, they have responsibilities going forward even 1,400 years later when Christ takes on flesh, these people are still fulfilling their roles. The Merarites are still singing in the temple, the Kohathites are still being the priests in the temple, the children of Aaron are still being the high priest. What about Moses? Notice in this genealogy it didn't even list his sons so where did the responsibility of Moses go? It's not based on genealogy because Moses, when he comes to the end of his life, he tells people exactly where his responsibilities go. His sons aren't significant like the sons of Aaron because Deuteronomy 6:1-12 says, "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes

and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you —‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. “So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— then beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Moses is to declare what God expects and he doesn’t pass that role onto his children, he passes that role onto all the sons of Israel and the sons of Israel are to pass it onto their sons. Moses’ household is insignificant because his role doesn’t continue under any specific household, it is the household of Israel that has that responsibility. Of course, Israel is a type of the church and in the church it’s not pastors, even though Levites were supposed to correct the misunderstanding, so they were given the final interpretation. It wasn’t to the pastors or the priests, it was to the fathers and that’s still true today. We need to make sure we understand Moses’ genealogy doesn’t matter. Not because Moses was unimportant, Moses was far more important than Aaron, but his genealogy doesn’t matter because the responsibility he had doesn’t pass to his sons, it passes to all the children of Israel and it passes to us as those who are of the true Israel. So as we look at the genealogy it’s important for us not to just see what’s there, but to also remember what’s not there and why it’s not there.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank You that You give us a context to think about things that are going to come to pass afterwards, that You are the God who defines the people that we are going to see so we can understand how contextually to think about them. Lord, we thank You that You are a God who is trying to reveal Yourself and is successfully revealing Yourself to us. Let us not be blind to see the things that You are revealing for You are the God who does desire Your people to understand we are not like those who are spoken to in parables, we are spoken to in clarity. Lord, let us have a heart that desires to understand Your heart and understand Your ways. In Jesus Christ’s name we pray, amen.