

## Tracing Aaron's Family Tree (Exodus 6:14-27)

### Jacob/Israel

- I. Reuben, Israel's first-born (6:14)
  - Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi
- II. Simeon (6:15)
  - Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul

### III. Levi (6:16)

- A. Gershon (6:17)
  - a. Libni and Shimei

### B. Kohath (6:18)

- a. Amram – married Jochebed (6:20)
    - i. Aaron – married Elisheba (6:23)
      - 1. Nadab
      - 2. Abihu
      - 3. Eleazar (6:25)
        - a. Phinehas
    - 4. Ithamar
  - ii. Moses
- b. Izhar (6:21)
  - i. Korah (6:24)
    - 1. Assir, Elkanah, Abiasaph
  - ii. Nepheg
  - iii. Zichri
- c. Hebron
- d. Uzziel (6:22)
  - i. Mishael, Elzaphan and Sithri

### C. Merari (6:19)

- i. Mahli and Mushi

**Exodus 6:13-27**  
*Tracing Aaron's Family Tree*

It's good to get back into our study of Exodus

- It was good to take a break for Resurrection Sunday and remind ourselves of the simplicity of the Gospel
  - o The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ from 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
- I then gave a special message from Ephesians 5:15-21 on the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit continually
- Duen Yan spoke from Jeremiah 3 on the tale of two sisters
  - o What a picture of the sinfulness of mankind and the grace of God!
- Last week, I wanted to bring to you a message that drives us as pastors/shepherds
  - o The Text from Colossians 1:28, **“that we may present every man complete in Christ”**

But we return this morning to Exodus

- I love expository preaching
- I love teaching through a book of the Bible

Perhaps it would be good to go back and see where we have been

- Get a running head start for this morning's message

Exodus, of course, builds on the foundation of Genesis

- God created everything
- Then God established a covenant with a man, Abram

It would be through this family that the Promised Seed would come into the world

- The Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15, **“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel”**
- This was the first promise of the Gospel

We miss much of the meaning and intent of the Old Testament if we don't continue to trace this lineage of the Deliverer

God's people were forced to move to Egypt in order to escape the famine

- Joseph had providentially been sent to Egypt in order to spare them from death

Genesis ends on a positive note

- Joseph promised the sons of Israel, **“God will surely take care of you”** (Gen 50:25)

But what do we find as Exodus opens up?

- A new king comes to power who doesn't know Joseph (Ex 1:8)
- This king begins to punish Israel and put her to forced labor

When Pharaoh told the Israelite midwives to kill every Hebrew son, they had a tough choice to make

- They chose to protect the lives of the Hebrew boys

One of those little boys was named Moses

- He was spared by the midwives

But his mother knew that she couldn't keep him

- So she put him into a wicker basket and set it in the Nile River

The daughter of Pharaoh noticed the baby

- She raised Moses as her own

About 40 years later, we see Moses as a grown man

- In protecting the Israelites, Moses killed an Egyptian
- He hid the Egyptian in the sand

The next day, Moses tried to mediate two Hebrews who were fighting

- But his attempts failed
- They would not accept his leadership

So Moses fled to Midian where he would spend the next 40 years of his life

- He met Reuel and ended up marrying his daughter, Zipporah

God then appeared to Moses as he was tending to his father-in-law's flock

- God told him, "And now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." (Ex 3:9-10)

Moses gave plenty of excuses to God

- Who am I?
- What's Your name, Lord?
- I won't be heard
- I can't speak well
- I don't want to obey

But God wouldn't hear the excuses

- Moses would be the means through which God delivered Israel from Egypt
- Aaron, Moses' brother, would accompany him

So Moses and Aaron go into the presence of Pharaoh

- Perhaps they expected a quick repentance
- But that's not what they received

Instead of rescuing Israel, Moses' appearance only made things worse

- The Egyptians took away the straw needed to make bricks
- But Pharaoh didn't decrease the workload

The Israelite foremen cried out to Pharaoh for an explanation

- Pharaoh responded, "You are lazy, very lazy; therefore you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.'" (Ex 5:17)

God reassured Moses by reminding him of who God was

- God is Yahweh who established His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- God would bring Israel out of Egypt
- God would bring Israel to the Promised Land

Last time, we left off in Exodus 6

- Moses asked the question, “Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?” (6:12)

In other words, what’s the use?

- If the sons of Israel won’t listen to Moses, how would Pharaoh?

Moses is reverting back to some of his old excuses

- He is looking at himself instead of God
- He is doubting the plan of God based on his inability to speak well

Where do we go from here?

- What’s next in Exodus?

To the mountaintop where God shows His glory to Moses?

- Not yet

The parting of the Red Sea?

- Not yet

The death of the first-born after which Pharaoh drives Israel out?

- Not yet

You might be a little surprised, but Moses lists a genealogy next

- *A genealogy?*
- *A listing of people’s names?*

Some of you may be wondering, “What could we possibly learn from a genealogy?”

- If you are asking that question, then I pray that you will be pleasantly surprised after this morning’s message

Perhaps some of you even skip over the genealogies

- You can’t pronounce the names
- You don’t see the purpose

But we need to keep in mind that every word in the Bible is inspired<sup>1</sup>

- “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:16-17)

“All Scripture”

- Not just the parts that we like to read
- But every single word in the Bible

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Graham Ryken, *Preaching the Word, Exodus*, 182.

That means that even the genealogies are inspired and profitable

- Do you believe that?

This morning, you may be very surprised as to what this genealogy has to teach us

- There are some tremendous nuggets within our preaching Text this morning

### Let's read Exodus 6:13-27

These verses address two key issues

- The leaders of Israel (6:13)
- The lineage of Israel (6:14-27)

#### I. The leaders of Israel (6:13)

13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a charge to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Verse 13 contains some key information for the leaders of Israel

- Moses and Aaron

Despite how poorly their first visit with Pharaoh went, the LORD didn't change His command to them, "to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt"

- This is the same as saying, "Let My people go" (5:1)

As we have seen, Moses' first encounter with Pharaoh about letting Israel go didn't go very well

But God repeated the same instruction for Moses and Aaron

- This wasn't an option
- This was a command

Notice that this command was aimed at two audiences

- To the sons of Israel
- To Pharaoh

The sons of Israel would have been reminded that they would not be in Egypt forever

- God would deliver them

Pharaoh would have been reminded that he wasn't sovereign

- God would deliver Israel despite his best attempts to stop it from happening

Moses had asked, "Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?" (Ex 6:12)

- He needed to trust in the Lord, not in himself

Moses needed to be reminded that rejection doesn't thwart God's plan<sup>2</sup>

- Regardless of the objections, Moses had a Divine mission to fulfill!

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<sup>2</sup> John L. Mackay, *A Mentor Commentary, Exodus*, 124.

So there needed to be a reassurance given to Moses and Aaron

- **The leaders of Israel (6:13)**

## **II. The lineage of Israel (6:14-27)**

Now we descend into the genealogy

- It runs from verse 14 through verse 27

I realize that it is hard to visualize these words

- So I put them into an outline format
- You should have a copy of this in your bulletin

The lineage starts with Jacob/Israel

- It focuses in on Phinehas

I have highlighted the “chosen” person in each level

- Jacob
- Levi
- Kohath
- Amram
- Aaron
- Eleazar
- Phinehas

If you wanted a short summary of why this genealogy is listed, then here it is

- To show that Moses and Aaron were authentic Hebrews
- They have the genealogy to prove it!

Genealogies may not mean much to us today

- We may not give a lot of thought to our family tree

If I were to ask you who your great-grandfather was, could you tell me?

- Where does your family name originate?
- When did your family come to America?

Again, these are questions that we might research for a school paper

- But they aren't common knowledge to most of us

For descendants of Israel, however, their lineage was extremely important

- It was part of their past
- They took pride in their family lineage

The Israelites believed strongly that God was shaping events in this world so that His purposes would be achieved<sup>3</sup>

- The tracing of individuals and families proved that point

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 125.

We know from the New Testament that Paul knew his roots

- In Philippians 3:5, he writes, “circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews”

Paul could trace his lineage all the way back to Jacob’s son, Benjamin

- The second son born to Rachel (Gen 35:24)

14 These are the heads of their fathers’ households. The sons of Reuben, Israel’s first-born: Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben.

In the very first line of the genealogy, we read, “These are the heads of their fathers’ households”

- This was a term for the major sub-divisions of the tribes

Moses follows the same birth order of Jacob’s children as described in Genesis 29-30

- Reuben – the firstborn
- Simeon
- Levi

But then the lineage stops

- There is no mention of the other children of Israel

Why is this?

- Why is only a partial listing given?

Part of the answer is that many genealogies are selective

- Only enough of the genealogy is given to satisfy the point of the author

In other words, Moses is establishing the legitimacy of Aaron’s bloodline

- He mentions Reuben and Simeon only to arrive at Levi, the main line of Aaron

He could have mentioned the other children of Israel

- But he chose not to

Four sons of Reuben are mentioned

- Hanoch
- Pallu
- Hezron
- Carmi

This list can be verified by looking elsewhere in the OT (Gen 46:9; Num 26:5; 1 Chr 5:3)

Because this isn’t the focused lineage, nothing more is said

- So we move on to Jacob’s second son, Simeon

15 And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon.

Six sons of Simeon are mentioned

- Jemuel
- Jamin
- Ohad
- Jachin
- Zohar
- Shaul

What is significant in this lineage is that Shaul is “**the son of a Canaanite woman**”

- God warned His people numerous times about the sin of intermarriage

God wanted His people to remain pure and chaste

- Not to intermingle with other pagan races

This would be especially important after Israel left Egypt and went to the Promised Land<sup>4</sup>

16 And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon and Kohath and Merari; and the length of Levi’s life was one hundred and thirty-seven years.

In verse 16, we finally reach the “chosen” line of Jacob that Moses wants to highlight

- The line of Levi

Three sons of Levi are mentioned

- Gershon
- Kohath
- Merari

What did Levi do to be chosen?

- Nothing
- It was God’s sovereign choice

Reuben had committed sexual sin with his father’s concubine (Gen 35:22)

- Simeon and Levi took matters into their own hands after their sister, Dinah, was raped by Shechem in Genesis 34
- Simeon and Levi killed every male in the city

When Jacob was on his deathbed, he called his sons near to him

- Jacob recalled this act on the part of Simeon and Levi (Gen 49:5-7)

You would think that God would choose not to use the tribe of Levi

- But you would be wrong

Moses and Aaron were both from the tribe of Levi

- The tribe of Levi is also known for being the priests
- The Levitical priesthood

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<sup>4</sup> John D. Currid, *An EP Study Commentary, Exodus*, 146.

Imagine this!

- God's grace in using the children of Levi
- Even with a flawed, sinful past

17 The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, according to their families.

The first-born son of Levi is given, "Gershon"

- He isn't the chosen lineage, but his sons' names are given
  - o Libni
  - o Shimei

18 And the sons of Kohath: Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel; and the length of Kohath's life was one hundred and thirty-three years.

The second born son of Levi, "Kohath" is given next

- His is the chosen lineage, so more information is given

Four sons of Kohath are listed

- Amram
- Izhar
- Hebron
- Uzziel

19 And the sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations.

Although Moses will focus more on the line of Kohath, the focused lineage, he wraps up the lineage of Levi

- The third son of Levi, Merari, is listed here in verse 19

Two sons were born to Merari

- Mahli
- Mushi

Nothing else is said about this branch of the tree

20 And Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and the length of Amram's life was one hundred and thirty-seven years.

Now we go back to the line of Kohath

- The chosen seed of Levi
- The chosen seed of Jacob

We are finally told the name of Moses' mother

- Jochebed

She is only mentioned twice in the Bible

- Here in Exodus 6:20 and Numbers 26:59

Jochebed's name means "the LORD is glory"<sup>5</sup>

- It is the only name before the time of Moses that uses the name Yahweh<sup>6</sup>

The marriage of a man with his aunt would be forbidden later in the Pentateuch (cf. Lev 18:12-13)<sup>7</sup>

- This account, however, took place before the Law was given

**Again, without your handout, I admit that this can get confusing!**

### 21 And the sons of Izhar: Korah and Nepheg and Zichri.

"Izhar," the second born son of Kohath, is mentioned

- Along with his three sons
  - o Korah
  - o Nepheg
  - o Zichri

Korah will be revisited in verse 24

- But nothing else is said about the other sons

### 22 And the sons of Uzziel: Mishael and Elzaphan and Sithri.

"Uzziel," the third born son of Kohath, is mentioned

- Along with his three sons
  - o Mishael
  - o Elzaphan
  - o Sithri

### 23 And Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

In verse 23, Moses discusses Amram's lineage

- He had two well-known sons
  - o Aaron and Moses

We are told that Aaron "married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon"

- Why this much detail?
- What is Moses pointing out?

If you look at the NT, Amminadab and Nahshon both occur in the genealogy of Christ

- The amazing reality is that the priestly and royal lines intersect at this point in the genealogy
- Of course, Jesus Christ is both King and Priest

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<sup>5</sup> Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary, Exodus*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> Mackay, 127.

<sup>7</sup> R. Alan Cole, *Tyndale OT Commentaries, Exodus*, 87.

We are also told that Aaron had four sons

- Nadab
- Abihu
- Eleazar
- Ithamar

Nadab and Abihu

- They were invited by the LORD Himself to accompany Moses on the mountain, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance” (Ex 24:1)

But in Leviticus 10, we read of their act of defiance while acting as priests

- “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them.”

There isn't agreement even about what happened

- But God executed them in His holy and righteous judgment

Moses continues in Leviticus 10, “And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said to Aaron, ‘It is what the LORD spoke, saying, “By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.” So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.”

- Can you imagine hearing that your children were struck dead because they failed to revere God?

Hearing the names “Nadab and Abihu” would have sent a clear signal to the reader

- Fear God!
- Keep His commandments!

#### 24 And the sons of Korah: Assir and Elkanah and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korahites.

In verse 24, we are told about “the sons of Korah”

- Assir
- Elkanah
- Abiasaph

Does the name “Korah” bring up any memories?

- What was he famous for?

In Numbers 16, we read that Korah lead a revolt against Moses

- Listen to his words, “You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” (Num 16:3)

How did God deal with this rebellion?

- In a very unusual manner
- “the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah, with their possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.” (Num 16:31b-33)

Isn't it an act of God's grace that we are even talking about the sons of Korah?

- The family was swallowed by the Earth!

Yet here we are talking about them

- But that's not all

Do you realize that we have writings – *in the Bible* – from the descendants of Korah?

- Does the phrase “**sons of Korah**” ring a bell?

We have 11 psalms written by the sons of Korah (42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88)

- Psalm 42:1, “**As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God**”
- Psalm 46:1, “**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble**”
- Psalm 84:1, “**How lovely are Thy dwelling places, O LORD of hosts!**”

These are sons of the person who sought to start an uprising against Moses

- Sons of a rebel!

Oh, the grace that God has shown toward undeserving sinners

- The same grace that He has shown to us

25 And Aaron's son Eleazar married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' households of the Levites according to their families.

But we return once again to the focus on Aaron

- In particular, the focus on his son Eleazar

We are told a few things about Eleazar

- He “**married one of the daughters of Putiel**”
- He had one son, Phinehas

Eleazar would later become the chief leader of the Levites (Num 3:32)

- After Aaron's death, Eleazar became the high priest (Num 20:23-28)<sup>8</sup>

Phinehas was a faithful leader for Israel during a time of rank idolatry (Num 25:1-13)<sup>9</sup>

- He eventually served as a high priest (Josh 22:30-32)

Think about the timeframe that this genealogy spans

- All the way from the time of Jacob (Genesis) to the time of Phinehas (Judges)<sup>10</sup>

We have looked at a genealogy this morning

- But what's the big deal?

It was to demonstrate that Moses and Aaron were authentic, legitimate Levites

- Fully qualified to perform their tasks

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<sup>8</sup> Mackay, 128.

<sup>9</sup> Currid, 151.

<sup>10</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *NAC, Exodus*, 175.

You might object, saying, “But God called them. Isn’t that enough to make them qualified?”

- Yes

But there will always be critics

- And God has silenced them

Notice verses 26-27

26 It was *the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, “Bring out the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts.” 27 They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the sons of Israel from Egypt; it was *the same* Moses and Aaron.

In each verse, the names of Moses and Aaron are mentioned

- In verse 26, it is Aaron and Moses
- In verse 27, it is Moses and Aaron

Why inverse the order?<sup>11</sup>

- In terms of birth order, Aaron is first
- In terms of who was more well known, Moses is first

Let’s make a few observations as we finish this genealogy

- Some lessons we can learn

### **1. Notice that the attention is on Aaron, not Moses**

Up until this point, the focus has been on Moses<sup>12</sup>

- His birth
- His upbringing
- His excuses
- His leadership

It would be the children of Aaron who would be the priests in Israel

- Not the sons of Moses

### **2. Election is not based on human merit, but God’s gracious choice**

There was nothing special about Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Aaron, Eleazar, or Phinehas<sup>13</sup>

- There is nothing special about us, either
- Outside of the fact that God set His love on us

There is only One who is worthy of God’s love

- That is Jesus Christ

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<sup>11</sup> C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, Exodus*, 306.

<sup>12</sup> Ryken, 185.

<sup>13</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Exodus*, 344-45.

The rest of us are undeserving sinners

- Who have been saved by God's amazing grace

### **3. The wages of sin is death**

Did you notice that only three individuals are mentioned in terms of their age at the time of death?

- Levi (137)
- Kohath (133)
- Amram (137)

How different are the ages of these men compared to those in the beginning of Genesis!

- The consequences of sin are setting in
- People are dying earlier

Today, it would be crazy to expect someone to live 137 years old

- To survive until 100 is above average

### **4. Salvation isn't found in a lineage, but in the Lord**

Don't make the mistake in trusting in the faith that your spouse or parent or friend might have

- Each person has to make a choice for himself/herself

As Dr. Philip Ryken says in his commentary on Exodus, "[We cannot travel to Heaven on our parents' passport.](#)"<sup>14</sup>

We have looked at the tribe of Levi this morning in some detail

- We have established Moses and Aaron as authentic Levites

But the Promised Deliver did not come from the tribe of Levi

- He came through the tribe of Judah

Listen to these verses

- "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah" (Heb 7:14)
- "one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals'" (Rev 5:5)

Jesus Christ descended from the tribe of Judah

- He is the Promised Seed described in Genesis 3:15!

Our hope is not in the Levites

- It's not in Moses or Aaron

Our hope is in Jesus Christ

- The sinless One
- The all-powerful One
- The One who died as our Substitute and Sacrifice

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<sup>14</sup> Ryken, 191.