

## **Exod 03-03-30b**

We're ready now to resume our study in Exodus chapter 6. Having reviewed a little bit of the significance of this genealogical section here, once again, the point is that God designed the way history unfolds. Each of these names is significant. If we had the time to do a detailed study, I could go through the sons of Simeon and the sons of Levi and demonstrate by their connections exactly what the outcome is.

But it's similar to what we did with the sons of Reuben. In each case, it demonstrates that there is a potential available. The priesthood in Israel is the issue.

Who is going to be the priest? We know that there are several family blessings that devolve. They all should go to the firstborn son. But if he disqualifies himself, much the way that the kingdom was supposed to go to God's firstborn, Israel, and Israel, disqualified as a nation, takes a back seat to the younger son, who is the church.

And we end up inheriting things that would have gone to Israel. But because God's promises will be fulfilled, they will catch up with us. And without us, they will not be fulfilled.

And so we get the first foretaste of blessing, of closeness to God, having a heart of flesh, and having the ministry of the Spirit, and the Spirit that has been given now that Christ is glorified, and participation in the kingdom, all of the potential blessings we saw in Revelation 2 and 3. All of that is available to us who are the latecomers, the younger son, as it were. And that comes to us because of a failure on the part of Israel. Well, the firstborn is Reuben.

To him should have gone the double portion that goes all the way down the list to the eleventh son, Joseph. And his two sons are both adopted by Jacob into the family and have an equal share and equal rights as individual tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh. And even then, Jacob crosses his hands, and it is the younger son of Joseph who is treated as the elder.

And so the priesthood, the family priesthood, which will become the Levitical priesthood, is the same way. It is a privilege. It's an opportunity.

They don't lose their salvation. Reuben and Simeon and the rest of them did not lose their salvation, but it's loss of opportunity. If you love God to the extent that you love God, you're going to want to be in a place to serve Him and be used by Him and reflect His glory.

To some people, it would matter little. Well, so I didn't get the double portion. So I didn't get the priesthood.

There's an old gospel song that says, I'll be happy if I can just get inside those beautiful heavenly gates. Anything beyond that I don't even have an ambition for. Well, people might think that that is the part of humility or of not being overly ambitious.

But God calls us to grow. God calls us to a place of service. And we are given the opportunity

and given the potential and given the power.

And it is a mark against us if we fail because it is our apathy, it's our indifference, it's our self-centeredness that takes away the fulfillment of that potential. And it grieves God. And there's a sense in which it wastes the work of Christ on the cross.

Hebrews says, you're counting the blood, you're trampling underfoot the Son of God. And in another place it says, those who have been redeemed and don't pursue the plan of God count the blood by which they were sanctified as a common thing. Sort of desecrate or defile the blood of Christ that was used to sanctify them.

Because we've been saved for a purpose. We've been called out of this present evil age. So, the next time you think about this section, Exodus 6, verses 14-19, it talks about these generations.

It does two things, it establishes two things. The point of application for us is, I don't want to be Chanoch. I don't want to be Enoch that failed.

I want to be the Enoch that walked with God. I don't want to be establishing a city and naming it after myself in this life only to have everything rolled up like a scroll and put away. I want heavenly citizenship.

This is what we are called to. You look at these sons and it is a roll call of missed opportunity through faithlessness, through disobedience. And it is a challenge, it's a warning, that God will search the earth until He finds someone who will honor Him and then He can honor them.

Secondly, this provides a context for Aaron. Why is Aaron and his seed, through Eleazar, in charge of the priesthood? Well, here are all the people who were eligible and defaulted. And so, these are the bona fides.

This is the legal register on which the Aaronic priesthood can base its claim. God moves the priesthood row by row and generation by generation until He arrives at Aaron. Obviously, if Aaron and Moses are actual brothers, Moses is three years younger than Aaron and Aaron is the oldest son.

It would make sense that in the clan of Amram, and if there were two Amrams, then in the family of their father Amram, it would go to Aaron. But the ideal, which is fulfilled in Christ, is prophet, priest, and kingship all co-located in a single individual. The Lord Jesus Christ is prophet, priest, and king.

Here, Moses is the prophet, Aaron is the priest, and the rulership in Israel is the Lord God. He is in the cloud. He is in the tabernacle.

He will later be in the temple. When people get dissatisfied with that and say, well, we want to be like the other nations, we want to have that king part in a visible human being, they're going to be warned, but they'll be given it. And that's what we're going to see in 1 Samuel when we

start studying 1 Samuel on Tuesday nights.

But this provides a context ever after when Israel says, well, how did these Levites get to be the priests, and how come only some of them are priests and the rest of them are hewers of wood and haulers of water and singers and other functionaries in worship, but they're not eligible to be the actual priests? This is the reason. Everybody who should have had it prior to Aaron was disqualified for one reason or another, and it's built into these names. So then we have the description here of Amram taking for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife, and she bore him Aaron and Moses.

Now, there's a lot that I could give you here by way of Hebrew, but this term, bore him, does not always mean giving physical birth to. It is used in Genesis for the various wives of Abraham giving birth to nations when they were actually several generations down. They weren't the immediate sons, Abraham and Keturah, for example.

Midian is one of the offspring of nations, or racial groups at least, from the union of Abraham and Keturah. And this verb is used often in the Old Testament of someone begetting something in the sense of being a progenitor, but not necessarily involved in physical birth. So if, like me, you think that there is a strong possibility that Aaron and Moses were cousins, Aaron and Miriam were brother and sister for certain.

Miriam is described as the sister of Aaron, and it seems quite obvious that they would have a familial relationship. I personally think Moses was an only child. But feel free to take the traditional view.

It doesn't do violence to the application of this, which is God placing us in human history at a particular time, in a particular family, facing a particular set of options with a particular set of human gifts. Some of us are smart in one area, not so smart in another. We have opportunities to fulfill.

It goes on down and talks about the different sons, Aaron's wife Elisheba. I actually saw someone translate this Elisheba, because Sheba is the Hebrew word for seven, and so it would be, my God is seven, or sevenfold. And you might say, well, maybe this ties into the sevenfold spirit of God or some such thing.

But I think it's far more likely that this is from Shabbat, not the word for seven or seventh day, where we get the word Sabbath, but Shabbat, which means to make a covenant promise, to pledge, and my God has promised, is I think a more accurate etymology for this. That's the name of Aaron's wife, daughter of Amenadab, sister of Nashon, as wife. Sheborim, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

All of these individuals are going to show up in our story in the future. There's going to be rebellion. There's going to be all kinds of events taking place in which these men will figure.

And so this tells us the story of their birth. You also have the sons of Korah, and these are the

family of the Korahites. Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife, and sheborim, Phineas.

And Phineas is also going to figure prominently in some of the events that will take place in the near future. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites, according to their families. And of course, all of the Levites are going to have responsibilities divided to them.

And this brings up another point. Some of us were born male. Others of us were born female.

Some of us were assigned spiritual gifts in certain areas, and others of us have differing gifts. We didn't have any say. We didn't get to sign up in a raffle.

We didn't put down a list of preferences. When you sign up for email, they say, well, give us two or three options, because some of them may already be taken. And so I might want to be schull at whatever provider, and they say, well, schull is already taken.

You've got to pick something else. Well, I could rail and fret and stew and say, how dare they? My initials are schull. But in the case of email, you just try to find something that nobody else has that has some reasonable memorability to it that someone can remember that it's your email address.

You pick it and you move on. We are assigned functions, and we are assigned places. There are women who rail against the fact that they cannot pastor a church, or they cannot stand up and exercise authority in spiritual assemblies.

Even in a lot of Christian organizations, recognize the prohibition of women in that role. And people get real upset about it. Homosexual people think that they ought to be able to have church and just ignore certain portions of God's Word.

And they get real upset if somebody says, we really think unless you're contemplating leaving this lifestyle, you don't have to leave it to come to our church, but you have to be open to the idea of leaving it because this is what the Word of God teaches. And they say, absolutely not. We're going to have our own little gay church over here, and we're just going to clip up our Bible and keep the parts we like and throw away the parts we don't.

There is going to come a time when people in Israel say, how come only the sons of Aaron can be priests? We're descended from some fancy people in the house of Jacob. Why can't we be priests? We've even got Scripture. God says, are you not all priests? In the sense that the nation of Israel represents God to the world.

And so they're going to take this Scripture and twist it and say, I want to be a priest. And this same argument is used in the modern day for the ordination of women in various churches. I've been in a church.

I had to go there for a family reason where there was a lady who stood up there and served

communion. What do you say? Not proceeded, presided. Presided over the whole thing.

And it really causes you mental stress when you know that that's against the Word of God. You're supposed to be in a church. Here's the point.

Do not rail against whatever lot in life God has given us. We might look over the fence and say, well, that situation is better than my situation. That gift is better than my gift.

That opportunity is better than my opportunity. Why wasn't I given the gift of evangelism so that I could go and win souls to the Lord and be well thought of and stand up and have people ooh and ah at me? Or why wasn't I given the gift of pastors so that I could stand up and do this and that and the other? Why me in my situation? Why am I not over in that person's situation? God is laying the groundwork here and saying, look, I've got this whole thing mapped out. I know who I want in what position.

Some people are going to be officers and some people are going to be enlisted men. Some people are going to be in positions of authority. Others are going to be in positions of submission.

Jesus said to His disciples, we just saw it in Luke chapter 22, when they start arguing about who is the greatest, what does He say? Who is greater, the one who reclines or the one who serves? It's obviously the one who reclines. And yet He says, I am among you as one who serves. He's already wrapped a towel around His waist and washed their feet like a servant.

And He says, if any of you wants to be great, look for the serving roles. Don't be looking at how can I elevate, how can I build my city, how can I set myself apart. Look at all of these names of the sons of Reuben.

And we can do the same with these other names. Don't be looking for ways to distinguish yourself according to a human standard. Look for a way to distinguish yourself according to God's standard.

How did Enoch get one of the greatest, the good Enoch, the father of Methuselah, how did he get one of the greatest distinctions in the whole Bible? He walked. It's all in the world he did. He walked.

Didn't conquer a city, didn't build an ark, didn't lead a people out of bondage, didn't split a rock with a stick, didn't take the top off a mountain with prayer, didn't hold up the rain or bring it, didn't raise the dead. All he did was walk. And Enoch was so dear to God that God just had to bring him home early.

It is the little things that count. I had a conversation with a very close friend via email this week. We were talking about some of the things that we've been learning.

And the idea that we were commiserating with each other about is that we tend to want to gear

up for big tests and big challenges in life. And while we're looking at the freight train that we see on the horizon approaching us and we're trying to get ready for it, there are small daily tests that we miss and that we only catch in hindsight and realize that we failed. And it occurs to me that our grade... Have you ever had a class where you have a lot of daily work and daily assignments and little pop quizzes and things? And then you also have the midterm and the final exam.

And the professor or the teacher at the beginning tells you, here's the way your grade is going to break down. So much of your grade is going to be daily grades, homework, quizzes. So much is going to be the midterm.

So much is going to be the final. So much may be some paper that you have to write. And it's all split out.

The Word of God indicates to us that the vast majority of our grade at the judgment is our daily homework, our daily assignments. We keep thinking, well, as long as I can pass a big giant test or as long as I can do a big giant accomplishment, that's what will determine my fate at the judgment. That's how God will view me and judge me.

And it's really not. A lot of people can gear up for one test and pass it, but it's the daily homework, the daily practical exercises that God is grading. And the vast majority of our grade at the judgment is going to be these daily things.

That's where all of these individuals fell short. That's what's going to trip up Moses. It isn't parting the Red Sea where he fails.

It isn't skirting the Amalekites or getting past the Moabites or failing to sustain the people in the wilderness. Moses, for 40 years, does a superb job of leading the children of Israel, but it's a couple of small tests that he fails to pass, that he should have passed. He nearly gets himself killed on the way back into Egypt over a relatively small thing.

And that's what we have to watch for. It is the daily tests. God has given us our circumstances.

God has assigned us our place and our role. And to rail against that or wish that we had someone else's is to say that God doesn't know what He's doing. So verse 26, these are the Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts.

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. And their greatest contribution in this deliverance of an entire people from bondage and slavery in Egypt is to speak.

They said what they were supposed to say. Now verse 28, Aaron is Moses' spokesman. It came to pass on the day the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt.

We know now that God spoke to Moses on three separate occasions. We can confirm from Scripture. Once at the burning bush, once back in Midian, and now again here in Egypt.

On the day the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, I am Yahweh. I am the Lord. Speak to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all that I say to you.

But Moses said before the Lord, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. How shall Pharaoh heed me? There is an ancient papyrus document that has been unearthed in Egypt. And it is a story that describes a man that is not eloquent.

And as Egyptologists have studied the history of that land in ancient times, eloquence was highly prized in Egypt. The ability to speak, if you had been a Daniel Webster or a great orator, William Jennings Bryan or another of these that are well-spoken. In our generation, you have Bill, who's the guy that had a firing line for years and years? Buckley, William F. Buckley.

And others are well-spoken and are noted for their oratory. President Reagan, in terms of being able to communicate with people via a speech, is noted as being the great communicator. Well, this was prized in Egypt.

And Moses, even in his youth as a prince in Egypt, evidently did not have the silver tongue. The Egyptian language was a second language to him. He was raised as a small boy speaking Hebrew.

And then he transferred from that to Egyptian as a youth. And evidently, he never really mastered Egyptian to be able to be an eloquent orator. And he wasn't all that eloquent in Hebrew either because he had only spoken it as a child.

So he's kind of betwixt and between. You figure that either language that he spoke, he probably spoke it with an accent because he was kind of betwixt and between. So he might have had a legitimate reason for saying, I'm not eloquent.

I don't have the ability to persuade and to sway the conscience and to elevate a concept so that people rally to it. So the Lord said to Moses, this is chapter 7 now, Look, I have made you God to Pharaoh. So how much power of persuasion do you think Moses has? I mean, who's going to top that? Well, I've made you Williams Jennings Bryan or I've made you Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln-Douglas debates or I've made you some other great orator, Seneca or one of the great speech makers of the past.

He says, well, I've made you God to Pharaoh. That's about as eloquent as you can get. Who's going to top God when it comes to eloquence? I have made you God to Pharaoh.

It says as, but you'll notice it's in italics. There's no as there. He says, I have made you God to Pharaoh.

Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you. Aaron your

brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land.

So you get the idea that they go in. You've seen how sometimes people who think they're real important speak of themselves in the third person. And they say, well, I see you've brought George peas.

George doesn't like peas. George likes corn. Bring George some corn.

And it's George that's talking. They talk about a majesty. They had Princess Orr, I think her name is, the widow of King Hussein of Jordan.

She was on the radio the other day. And so people were calling on the phone and asking Princess Orr these questions. And they were referring to her as, well, could Her Majesty explain? We're talking about her in the third person.

She's right there. And you say, well, could Her Majesty explain? And that's the proper way. Some of them said, could Your Majesty explain? And of course that's incorrect.

But they don't know. But the idea here is, God says, look, when you go into Pharaoh, you're going to stand there and you're going to say, tell Pharaoh to let God's people go. And then Aaron is going to say, Pharaoh, God says, let my people go.

And so Moses is elevated to such an extent that he will not speak directly to Pharaoh. This elevates Moses above Pharaoh. He is the one who is spoken to in the third person.

He does not deign or condescend to speak directly to Pharaoh. And he's not pleading. The use of an intermediary this way is a sign of majesty and of authority and of untouchability.

You're so far removed from the mundane interactions that you delegate your talking to someone who does it for you. And so you just stand there in your royal majesty and your spokesman speaks and you just stand there looking important. And God says, this is how we're going to work it.

You're going to be like God. And Aaron will be your prophet. So God talks to the prophet.

The prophet talks to the audience. And he says, I will harden Pharaoh's heart and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. I know how anxious everyone is to dig into the hardening of the heart, but we're going to save that discussion for the moment because we want to get the larger picture first.

I will harden Pharaoh's heart. I will multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt, but Pharaoh will not heed you so that I may lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts and my people...