

Durham:

Vs. 1: What Moses thinks has not begun has indeed begun, as he is now soon to see; Yahweh's work on Pharaoh is already under way. It began with the confrontation by Moses himself, to which Pharaoh responded with such sarcastic arrogance. . . What has appeared to Moses and the Israelites as a serious deterioration of an already bad situation has been instead a careful preparation for what is to come, an anticipation of the hardening-of-the-mind-of-Pharaoh motif, against which the all-controlling and powerful Presence of Yahweh will be seen in dramatic relief. Durham, 69-70.

6:2–7:7, a parallel account of the call and commission of Moses.

“Here, Moses and Aaron fail to accomplish what they had hoped to bring about; at the end, the experience threatens to undo Moses until Yahweh assures him that he is already at work.” From the outset, the essential purpose of this narrative is to make plain the real and active Presence of the incomparable Yahweh. ⁽⁷⁰⁾

he covenant made with those fathers is not only still in effect, but about to be brought to fulfillment ¹

Motyer:

Finally, the still-despondent Moses, completely lacking in self-confidence (6:30) and warned again of battles ahead (7:3-4), at last settled down to obey the word of the Lord: (7:6). As the rest of Exodus shows, Moses had learned this lesson well. Apart from his bad-tempered and costly disobedience in Num 20:11-12, he did not diverge again from the divine word and was consequently the master of every situation. 103.

“Circumcision signifies one who has been given the promises of God, and therefore, has been touched by the transforming grace of God. Moses was unaware of any such change in himself.” N. 13, p. 103.

¹Durham, J. I. (2002). *Vol. 3: Word Biblical Commentary : Exodus*. Word Biblical Commentary (74). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

⁶ ^aAnd David organized them in divisions ^bcorresponding to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

⁷ ^aThe sons of Gershon¹ were Ladan and Shimei.

⁸ The sons of Ladan: ^aJehiel the chief, and Zetham, and Joel, three.

⁹ The sons of Shimei: Shelomoth, Haziël, and Haran, three. These were the heads of the fathers' houses of Ladan.

¹⁰ And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, and Jeush and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei.

¹¹ Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second; but Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons, therefore they became counted as a single father's house.

¹² ^aThe sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four.

¹³ ^aThe sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. ^bAaron was set apart to dedicate the most holy things, that he and his sons forever should ^cmake offerings before the LORD and ^dminister to him and ^epronounce blessings in his name forever.

¹⁴ But the sons of Moses the ^aman of God were named among the ^btribe of Levi.

¹⁵ The ^asons of Moses: Gershom and Eliezer.

¹⁶ The sons of Gershom: ^aShebuel the chief.

¹⁷ The sons of Eliezer: Rehabiah the chief. Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very many.

¹⁸ The sons of Izhar: Shelomith the chief.

¹⁹ The ^asons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.

²⁰ ^aThe sons of Uzziel: Micah the chief and Isshiah the second.

²¹ ^aThe sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and ^bKish.

²² Eleazar died ^ahaving no sons, but only daughters; their ^bkinsmen, the sons of Kish, married them.

(1Ch 23:6-22 ESV)

Of the Hebronites, ^aJerijah was chief of the Hebronites of whatever genealogy or fathers' houses. (In the fortieth year of David's reign search was made and men of great ability among them were found at ^bJazer in Gilead.) (1Ch 26:31 ESV)

Conclusion: If no gap is allowed, Jerijah, the great-grandson of Levi is alive during David's reign.

Levi

Kohath (23:6)

Hebron (23:19)

Jerijah (1 Ch 26:31)

Abishua
 Bukki
 Uzzi
 Zerahiah
 Meraioth
 Amariah
 Ahitub
 Zadok
 Ahimaaz
 Azariah
 Johanan
 Azariah (Priest in Solomon's temple)
 Amariah
 Ahitub
 Zadok
 Shallum
 Hilkiyah
 Azariah
 Seraiah
 Jehozadak

Ithamar
 Moses
 Miriam
 Izhar
 Korah (from Ex 6... Amminadab? 1 Chr 6:)
 Assir
 Elkanah
 Abiasaph
 Nepheg
 Zichri
 Hebron
 Uzziel
 Mishael (from Ex 6)
 Elzaphan
 Sithri

Merari
 Mahli
 Mushi

22: Kohath
 Amminadab
 Korah
 Assir
 Elkanah
 Amasai
 Ahimoth
 Elkanah
 Zophai
 Nahath
 Eliab
 Jeroham
 Elkanah

Ebiasaph
 Assir
 Tahath
 Uriel
 Uzziyah
 Shaul

Why Lord, and Why Me?

²² Then Moses turned to the LORD and said, "O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me?"

²³ For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all."

^{ESV} **Exodus 6:1** But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

² God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD.

³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

⁴ I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners.

⁵ Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant.

⁶ Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.

⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

⁸ I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD."

⁹ Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.

¹⁰ So the LORD said to Moses,

¹¹ "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land."

¹² But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?"

¹³ But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt: to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ These are the heads of their fathers' houses: the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; these are the clans of Reuben.

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

¹⁶ These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, the years of the life of Levi being 137 years.

¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their clans.

¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, the years of the life of Kohath being 133 years.

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

²⁰ Amram took as his wife Jochebed his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses, the years of the life of Amram being 137 years.

²¹ The sons of Izhar: Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri (not mentioned anywhere else).

²² The sons of Uzziel: Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

²³ Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

²⁴ The sons of Korah: Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph; these are the clans of the Korahites.

²⁵ Eleazar, Aaron's son, took as his wife one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites by their clans.

²⁶ These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said: "Bring out the people of Israel from the land of Egypt by their hosts."

²⁷ It was they who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the people of Israel from Egypt, this Moses and this Aaron.

²⁸ On the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt,

²⁹ the LORD said to Moses, "I am the LORD; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

³⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. How will Pharaoh listen to me?"

Exodus 5:22-6:30

Israel was dwelling in Shittim on the plains NE of the Dead Sea. This was Moabite country. Moab was the oldest son of Lot, Abraham's nephew. So these are distant cousins of the Israelites. But the Moabites were idol worshippers. And the Israelites began to profane themselves by stripping their bodies to the image of Peor. And

they began to commit fornication with the Moabite women who brought the Baal idols to them in secret under their bundles. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their idols and the people ate in their feasts and bowed themselves to their idols. And the Israelites joined themselves to the Baal of Peor “like the nail in the wood, which was not separated but by breaking up the wood into splinters.”² So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. He sent a plague, which began to sweep through the nation, eventually killing 24,000 people!

Then God said to Moses, “Take all the chiefs of the people and impale and hang them in the sun before the LORD, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel” And Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you kill those of his men who have yoked themselves to Baal.” But no one listened. Instead, they all sat there, weeping because of the plague in front of the entrance to the tabernacle.

Then, in great defiance of Moses, even while the plague was beginning, a man of Israel brought to his family the seductive daughter of a Midianite chief—a woman named Cozbi.³ Cozbi enchanted an Israelite chief named Zimri. Soon the two influential people made their way to her tent-shrine where they immediately began to engage in some form of sexual activity, whether as a married couple or as part of cult-prostitution, we do not know. But Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron saw what was transpiring. And he immediately rose and left the weeping assembly, taking his spear in hand. He went into her tent temple-shrine and pierced both of them through the belly.⁴ Then the plague was stopped.

This is one of the more violent and bizarre stories in the OT. But it serves a very important purpose in God’s word. Because what Phinehas did here was seen as the highest act of obedience by the LORD. In fact, for his heroism in the face of so much cowardice and disobedience, Phinehas is awarded a mighty covenant promise. “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Phinehas has turned back my wrath in that he was

² These embellishments are taken from Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (PJE) and I’m using them for rhetorical effect.

³ PJE says that the man said to Moses, “What is it that is wrong to have company with her? If you say, ‘It is forbidden, didn’t you take a Midianitess [as wife], the daughter of Jethro?’ When Moses heard, he trembled and swooned. But the people wept and cried. And the stood at the door of the tabernacle.”

⁴ Even more interesting, PJE says about Phinehas that 12 miracles were done by him, among which include holding the two skewered people up, alive, and carrying them with his right arm through the camp on his spear in the air for six miles without fatigue. This shows how important Phinehas had become to later Jewish priests.

jealous with my jealousy and has slain the sinners among them, so that I did not consume the people of Israel in my jealousy.” “Therefore, Behold, I give to him my covenant of peace, and it shall be to him and to his descendants after him the covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the people of Israel” (Num 25:12-13).⁵

Today I intend to preach through most of Exodus 6. Before we are finished, you will come to understand why I wanted to begin this chapter with this story of Phinehas and Zimri. Exodus 6 is a chapter very familiar already, because it reiterates the call of Moses by giving him a second call that is in many places word for word with his first call on Mt. Sinai. We should first try to understand why the LORD would basically tell Moses to do the same things that he has already called him to do once. **Why does God feel the need to call Moses all over again?**

It has to do with Moses’ previous disobedience and now his present bewilderment as to why things are not going the way promised the first time. At least, that is the way it appears to Moses, who seems to have forgotten some important details of God’s plan. In 5:22 Moses comes up with two complaints in relation to the events that have just now transpired. And with them, Moses is undone.

First, Moses turns to the LORD in one of the great blame-games in the Bible. He begins, “O Lord,” calling him Adonai rather than Jehovah. This is significant in the context, but not necessarily wrong. You might remember how the Psalm says that David called his Lord “Adonai” in Psalm 110:1. “The LORD (YHVH) said to my Lord (Adonai), ‘Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.’” In this verse, Jesus says that David was calling him (Jesus) Adonai (Mt 22:43-46). Nevertheless, in this situation, Moses is about to be reminded again how God is the God of the covenant, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **Yahweh** is his name!

“Lord, why have you done evil to his people?” It is incredible to think, but Moses actually blames God *to his face* for doing evil to Israel! Now, I know a lot of non-Christians who like to blame God. It is a strange justification for not believing in him. And when pious Evangelicals get whiff of it, they quickly come rushing in to

⁵ PJE does not end here with its Phinehas veneration. It says, “I will make him an angel of the covenant, that he may ever live, to announce the Redemption at the end of the days.” And it says that because of what he did, “the priests shall be held worthy of the three gifts of the shoulder, the cheekbone, and the inwards; and it shall be to him, and to his sons after him, an everlasting covenant of consecration.”

rescue God saying, “God never does anything evil.” That is good theology, because it is true. God never does anything evil. Yet, it is equally true that many *Christians* like to blame God (at least hypothetically speaking), when they are considering the Biblical doctrine of God’s sovereignty over his creation. It is a justification for not believing in it. As we have seen, God has told Moses that he would harden his heart, and this makes many even in our own day angry, so that they will not believe what it says.

Moses realizes that Pharaoh is the one doing the evil, because in the next verse he says, “Since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to his people” (5:23). Moses is not a hyper-Calvinist, denying that Pharaoh has any responsibility in the matter, because he is some kind of a robot. Yet, Moses rightly says, “You have not delivered your people at all.” And this is why he blames God for doing evil to them.

The problem that Moses has is *not* his insistence that God could have delivered the people and is so the active agent directing the Pharaoh’s heart like a stream of water, directing it as he wills (Prov 21:1). In fact, that is God’s prerogative. The problem is that Moses’ *blames* God for doing something *evil*, because he did not deliver the people on *Moses’* timetable! Moses’ arrogantly burst into Pharaoh’s court, thinking he could just tell Pharaoh whatever he wanted, however he wanted, in complete disregard to the LORD’s instructions, and yet because God met with him and said he would be with him, *Moses thinks God should have softened Pharaoh’s heart and let the people go right there on the spot*. Or at least he thinks that God shouldn’t have let the outcome of that little encounter with king be such an added burden on the people. Now Moses is being blamed by He is the one that has to suffer their intolerable blaming and whining. “If you are going to harden his heart, Lord, don’t make me pay for it!” *It’s just not fair*.

So Moses, the one who added to God’s word and related to the Serpent-King in the name of the LORD words that the LORD had not said, now continues his little role-playing and *like Eve*, blames God for all of his problems. *Have you ever known anyone that has done such a thing? Have you ever done it yourself?* Certainly not! We are all too far above that kind of thing to ever act like Adam and Eve and Moses and the people! I could keep going on this topic, but it is enough for us to remember that Moses should not have been surprised by the king’s reaction,

since **God had told him** that this was exactly what was going to happen. Likewise, Moses is going to learn that he has no right to complain to God for doing something evil, when the All-Good, All-Sovereign God has a very different purpose in mind for hardening the Pharaoh than Moses suspects. The LORD wants his people to learn what kind of a God he is, how he is in absolute control of all things, and how he is able to deliver in the darkest, bleakest times when everything seems utterly hopeless. **God is ready to gain a mighty name for himself.**

This is what the majority of the repetition from the previous call is going to demonstrate. In **Ex 6:1** the LORD says to Moses, “**Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh.**” NOW you shall see. Once you have been humbled of your arrogance and disobedience. Once the people have gone into the deepest pit of despair. Once you think that there is no chance at all that the king will now let anyone go.

It will occur “**with a strong hand.**” God’s hand will cause Pharaoh to send them out, to drive them out of his land. And as we know, because we have all read ahead, the hand of the LORD will powerfully demonstrate itself in the unsurpassed 10 plagues of Egypt. But that is not the focus of the discussion between God and Moses.

The Lord returns to the earlier themes of covenant. Just as we saw God make a covenant with Phinehas, the LORD “**established his covenant**” (**vs. 4**) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (**vs. 3**). It says that he appeared to them as *El Shaddai* (God Almighty). The meaning of this name is not known, though it probably has something to do with God’s sufficiency to meet his people’s needs and keep his promises.⁶

But now God is making himself known by the name Yahweh. It is best to understand this to mean, not the God was not called Yahweh before this time, but that **the full significance of his covenant name was not known until the days of the Exodus.** In other words, Abraham knew Yahweh as sufficient, but Abraham never saw the full-blown miraculous power of God. Perhaps you can’t understand how I could say such a thing. So let me take you to another passage.

⁶ Motyer, *Exodus*, 104.

Isaiah 52 is a prediction of God’s mighty work that will occur at the time when his Servant is revealed (cf. 52:13). In those days, Jerusalem shall loose the bonds from her neck (52:2). She shall be redeemed without money (52:3). Even as he told Moses, Isaiah predicts, “The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (52:10). For he “servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up (a prediction of the cross)” (52:13-4). He shall “sprinkle many nations,” and “kings shall shut their mouths” (52:15). This is the very heart of the gospel in the OT, and “how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news. . . who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns’” (52:7; cf. Rom 10:15).

It is because of all of this that Isaiah says, “Therefore my people shall know my name.” Jeremiah speaking of the same thing puts it this way, “They shall know that my name is the LORD” (Jer 16:21). It is not that they had never known the name Yahweh before. It is that he has not revealed himself *in this way* before. And through the Lord Jesus Christ, God-incarnate would gain a mighty name for himself and the people would see him in a brand new way.⁷

With that word, God re-swears his promises to Moses, promises that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob believed and did not doubt. I have heard the groaning Moses (vs. 5). I have remembered my covenant (vs. 5). I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians (vs. 6). I will deliver you from slavery. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment (vs. 6). I will take you to be my people and I will be your God (7). And you will know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out of Egypt (vs. 7). God now and tell the elders all about this again.

So Moses goes, this time greatly humbled and broken. And he told the people of Israel, but it says, “They did not listen to Moses” (vs. 9). This isn’t like the first time. Perhaps Moses is getting a taste of his own medicine, the medicine that he has been dishing out to the LORD. It says that they did not listen *because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery* (vs. 9). And at this I want to stop and make a point.

⁷ So Calvin says, “He says that He was not known to them by His name ‘Jehovah;’ signifying thus that He now more brightly manifested the glory of His divinity to their descendants.”

Friends, it is true that if you hear the word and receive it with joy and then fall away in times of testing that you will be broken. Your bondage to a cruel world coupled with your doubts about God's promises will cause you to not believe in his powerful word and in his Son. This was the experience of Israel here.

I plead with you that if now is not a time of testing for you, that you **believe God's promises** and do not doubt. He will save whoever comes to him by faith alone. But if you doubt, you are a wave tossed about by the wind. Believe that God is there in the times of suffering, and that those times are given by him for good purposes in your life. That will not make the suffering any easier in terms of its ability to break you against a rock. Suffering is always hard. But the **rock you will be broken on will be Christ** and not some jagged island of your own making, from which you will plummet to the bottom of the sea. Christ is a rock that breaks, but he is also a rock that saves and protects and upholds and nourishes in times of testing and great suffering. And if you are going through great suffering, or know that you soon will, then friend I tell you to fall upon that Rock that guided Israel through the wilderness in safety and protected him from all harm. And help one another trust more in Christ through your words and actions and prayers. You are a body for a reason. Do not isolate yourself from your brothers and sisters. If you do, you will not be put to shame. You will endure. You will have hope. And you will have peace in the time of testing.

At this point, I want to now tell you about the **second problem** that Moses had with God. In **5:22** he asks, "**Why did you ever send me?**" Moses completely doubts his sufficiency to do anything. And now this is a good thing, because he is finally ready to *hear* that it is God's arm and not Moses' that will deliver the people.

A little later we see the root of Moses' complaint. In **6:12** he says, "**The people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of *uncircumcised lips*.**" This is a rather crude Hebraism. But the LXX makes it clear when it says, "**I am not eloquent.**" Maybe Moses had a speech impediment. Or more probably, he just was **not a trained orator**. He would flunk preaching 101 in most Southern Seminaries. He would probably read his manuscripts, have very few illustrations, and never look at his audience. Or better yet, he would have Aaron do all the talking.

Perhaps you can see from this that Moses is basically questioning his own pedigree. Who is Moses that God should use him? Many a Christian has asked that same question. **How does God respond?** He responds by having Moses insert a **genealogy** at what seems to be one of the strangest places in the whole Bible.

As you probably know, the Jews took genealogical records like no one else in ancient history. For them, these genealogies were deeply rooted in who they were as a covenant people called by God. This is especially true of the priests, who I am told even to this day know if they are from the tribe of Levi. They are apparently the only tribe that it still traceable to its Patriarchal origin.

The genealogy starts off commonly enough. It talks about the heads of the sons of **Reuben**, the firstborn of Jacob (**Ex 6:14**). It mentions four names that are always listed as the four sons of Reuben. They are four of the seventy that originally came down into Egypt with Jacob and his family (**Gen 46:9, 27**).

Next, it lists the sons of **Simeon** (**6:15**). This is also quite normal, as Simeon was the second born of Jacob. Here, the list begins to get selective, leaving out as many as two of the sons of Simeon.⁸

Third, it names the three sons of **Levi**: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari (**6:16**) as well as each of their sons (**17-19**). The theological point now becomes clear. This is the last of the 12 tribes to be listed in this genealogy. **It is selective in who it lists**, because it is establishing the answer to the question: Who is Moses. Gershon, Kohath, and Merari were the three sons of Levi that entered into Egypt with the seventy (**Gen 46:11, 27**). These three sons become quite important, as it will be the job of their ancestors to guard and serve the tabernacle. To put it another way, these are the people we think of as Levites.

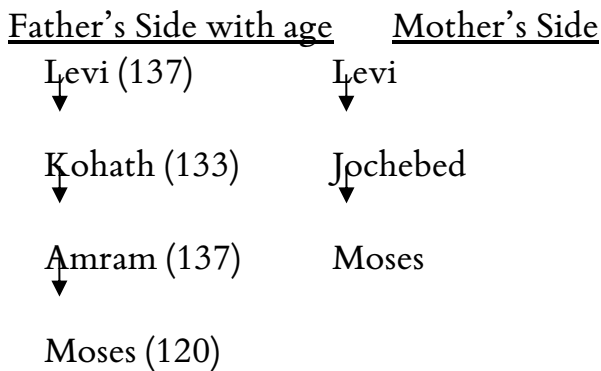
From here the genealogy talks about a man named Amram and his wife Jochebed (**6:20**). It is important to establish **who these two people are and who they are not**, before we continue on. Here you will learn a little about the way genealogies in the Bible work. It tells us that Jochebed was Amram's father's sister. In other words, she was at least his half-aunt. Now, don't be disgusted by this, because up until the

⁸ Jarib (1 Chron 4) and Zerah (Num 26 and 1 Chron 4).

giving of the Law at Sinai, the LORD had not put restrictions on the children of Noah for who they could and could not marry. Imagine if he did! There would have been no way to populate the earth, because everyone would have been either your sister or your aunt.

Numbers 26:59 tells us a little bit more about Jochebed. It says that she was “**the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt.**” This verse apparently says that Jochebed is not the ancestor of Levi, but his actual daughter. This would put her near the beginning of the time in Egypt while Moses comes at the end (however far between the coming down into Egypt and the Exodus there actually is, is a disputed topic).⁹ This seems to be confirmed by the identification of Amram, not as a man, but as a whole tribe called *Amramites*, consisting of something like 2,000 males a month old or greater in Moses’ day (**Num 3:27-28**).

I bring this up because **Exodus 6:20** *appears* on the surface to teach that Amram and Jochebed were Moses and Aaron’s mother and father. The normal genealogy for Moses would be:



⁹ The two best guesses are 210 years on the early side and 400 years on the later. The debate rages over textual variants of Exodus 12:40-41 [the MT (with the Onkelos Targum {circa 200 AD} in agreement) says “The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years” while the LXX (with Targum Pseudo-Jonathan {probably later than Onkelos} in agreement) has, “. . . while they sojourned in the land of Egypt *and the land of Chanaan, was* four hundred and thirty years.”] as well as conflicting genealogies like Moses (who seems to have only four ancestors to Jacob [Moses, Amram, Kohath, Levi, Jacob] and a person like Joshua who has either 11 or 18 ancestors to Jacob [see 1 Chron 7:20-27]). Two very good articles on this debate are H. W. Hoehner, “The Duration of the Egyptian Bondage,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* Volume 126:504 (1969), 306-16 (http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/OTeSources/02-Exodus/Text/Articles/Hoehner-DurationEgypt-BSac.htm); and J. R. Riggs, “The Length of Israel’s Sojourn in Egypt,” *Grace Theological Journal* 12 (1971), 18-35 (http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/otesources/02-exodus/Text/Articles/Riggs-EgyptSojourn-GTJ.htm).

Yet, it is difficult to believe that Moses had 2000 other brothers (let alone sisters). And it is further difficult to believe that Levi was actually Moses' grandfather on his mother's side and great grandfather on his father's side. Thus, because of other passages that bring more information to us, I think we need to see Amram and Jochebed as two important figures in the early days of the Levites, while Moses' father and mother continue unnamed, as they were presented unnamed in **Exodus 2:1-2**. The point of mentioning them by name is to root, as we will see, the lineage of Aaron and Moses in the heart of the Levitical tribe.

This is confirmed by the amount of detail that the genealogy now goes into regarding the clan of Kohath. Where as the list does not name any of Gershon or Merari's grandchildren, it lists ("great" etc.) grandchildren from most of Kohath's sons. There is a reason for this.

Kohath has four sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Uzziel has three sons (**Ex 6:22**), two of which Moses talks to in the famous chapter: Leviticus 10. In this chapter Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu are killed by God for offering strange fire in the tabernacle. Moses tells Mishael and Elzaphan, uncles of the dead boys, to carry to bodies out of the camp.

Izhar has three sons listed (**Ex 6:21**), two of which are not mentioned anywhere else. But one is quite famous. He is Korah, the cousin of Moses and Aaron who defiantly challenge their leadership in Numbers 16 saying, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" (**Num 16:3**). For his crime, he is swallowed whole into the ground (**vs. 32**) in a scene out of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. Yet, the genealogy lists the sons of Korah (**vs. 24**) in order to show that God did not destroy the entire line, and this becomes quite important, since it is his descendants that write at least 11 of the Psalms! Here I hope that you can see that these were real people who play an important role later in the life of Moses.

But it is the clan of Amramites that gets the most attention. Obviously, this is because Moses and Aaron come from him. Yet, the genealogy does not stop with those two as you might think that it would, since it does stop with their cousins in the other lineages. Rather, we are told that Aaron took as his wife Elisheba.

Elisheba has an interesting lineage. She is not a Levite! Rather, she is from the tribe of Judah. We know this because it says that her cousin is Nahshon and his father was Amminadab. These two men are mentioned later in the Pentateuch ([Num 1:7; 2:3; 7:12, 17; 10:14](#)). Nahshon was the chief of the people of Judah. In other words, Aaron married into a sort of royalty from the tribe of Judah.

At any rate, it says that she had Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar as sons. And these are the four sons of Aaron. Nadab and Abihu were killed by God, leaving only Eleazar and Ithamar. Both of these men have sons and in the days of David and Solomon, they vie for the right to be high priest of Israel. This is important as the lineage suggests, because it does not name any of the children of Ithamar.

Rather, it tells us that Eleazar had a wife, one of the daughters of Putiel. We know nothing about Putiel. But he is not important anyway. The important person is their son: [Phinehas](#), whom I began this sermon by telling you about. It is Phinehas that the LORD makes a covenant with. And I want to tell you just a little bit about this covenant.

[The covenant of peace with Phinehas does not spring out of thin air](#). Nor is it some insignificant covenant that we should doom to the deep recesses of history. Nor is it merely an appendage to the Mosaic covenant.¹⁰ Systematicians simply have not thought clearly enough about this covenant, yet it is critical to understanding our purpose here which is to answer Moses' question: Who am I?

In [Judges 18:30](#) we read about the tribe of Dan setting up carved images for themselves with a man named Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses serving as priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity. Now, as you should see here, this was not right. It was not right for these priests to aid and abet the Danites in their idolatry. But it was also not right that any Mosaic descendant would serve as a priest. Rather, "[Aaron your brother and his sons \[will\] serve me as priests](#)" ([Ex 28:4](#)).¹¹ Levites, including sons of Moses, could serve the priests in the tabernacle/temple.

¹⁰ Per O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, p. 27 footnote.

¹¹ So we see in the Scripture that all Priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests (cf. 2 Chron 13:10 for the distinction).

The distinction between Aaron and Moses came because Moses refused his original call. So the LORD says, “What about Aaron your brother, I know that he can speak well.” Later in the story we learn that God gives Aaron a covenant, “You will have no inheritance in the land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance” (Num 18:20). You might recall a similar promise to Abraham, “I am your shield, your reward” (Gen 15:1). And on that day the LORD made a covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:18), just as on this day the LORD made a covenant with Aaron (Num 18:19).

But why did God make this covenant with Aaron and with Phinehas? It is because of a promise that was spoken way back, to Levi by Jacob. “I will scatter and disperse you in Jacob and Israel” (Gen 49:7). The scattering of Levi promised, becomes the scattering of Levi fulfilled in the covenant with Aaron. So there appears to be the beginnings of a covenant between God and Levi. One tradition says “Levi dreamed that he had been appointed and ordained priest of the most High God, he and his sons forever” (Jub 32:1). This was an explanation used by the Jews to understand why God would call this covenant made with Aaron and Phinehas the “Levitical covenant” (Mal 2:4, 8; Jer 33:21; Neh 13:29).

So there was this promise given to Levi, many years before Moses and Aaron were even born. This, then, is the purpose of the genealogy in Exodus 6. Moses asks “Why did you send me?” And the LORD responds, “You are a Levite, Moses. And Aaron your brother is a Levite. And not only do I have a promise that I swore to Abraham. I have a promise that I swore to the Levites.”

You can see how important the genealogy is then because it ends by saying, “These are the Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, ‘Bring out the people’” (Ex 6:26). It was these men, born of Levi, born of Kohath, born of Amram. These men, Levites, who will serve me and do my bidding. “I have carefully chosen you, Moses, to be my instrument to the people and to Pharaoh. How dare you think I make mistakes. You have the pedigree. You have the promise. You have my providence. What more do you need?” Now, Moses will finally be ready to obey the LORD, though he will still wonder the rest of his life why God would want to use a man such as him.

And that brings me to the [point of application for this second question](#). For don't we all at one time or another question why God would choose us? Don't we wonder why me? Why would God want to save me? Why would God would want to send me. . . to be a pastor, to be a teacher, to be a missionary, to witness to the JW's at the door, or to my friend's dying aunt, or to righteousness when evil is done in the workplace or in the government or in the church?

Your answer lies in same seed of promise and in the choice that God showed Moses. Moses chose Moses, but never to be an end to himself. This was about [God gaining glory](#) over Pharaoh. God told Israel that he would be their God and they his people, and so he chose the whole nation to be a kingdom of priests, but she failed. God promised Aaron and Phinehas and their descendants a perpetual priesthood, but they were sinful.

But now Jesus has come and obeyed all of the priestly duties, as one in the order of Melchizedek. He even offered himself on a cross as the sacrifice and the priest who makes the sacrifice. And he did this so that you might have eternal life. Because, the high priest needs servants that will serve and guard the new covenant sanctuary: the church and the body.

So God promised to make Levites *out of the nations*. Isaiah rather cryptically says, [“Let not the foreigner or eunuch who has joined himself to the LORD say, ‘The LORD will surely separate me from his people.’ Rather, he will keep my Sabbaths and hold fast my covenant. And he will be my minister, and love the name of the LORD. I will bring him to my holy mountain. I will accept his burnt offerings and sacrifices. I will make him joyful in my house of prayer for all peoples”](#) (Isa 56:3-8).

In Jesus, this promise comes true. Remember when Jesus came and quoted one of these verses, [“My house is a house of prayer?”](#) Well, immediately after, he cleansed the temple and then went outside and healed the blind and lame at the entrance to the temple, *so as to make whole again those people in preparation for their new service to God*. Thus it would come to pass what Isaiah had also said, [“I will take for priests and Levites. . . survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, Lud, Tubal, Javan, to the coastlands far away that have not heard my fame or seen my glory”](#) (Isa 66:21, 19). And Jesus would offer them as offerings to his Father. And they will now serve before him as guardians of his temple.

Why you? Because it was always in the plan and promise of God. And God does not make mistakes. Don't question your pedigree or God's providence. But believe him. And obey his commandments, as Moses will now do. For he has brought you out of slavery to sin and into the glorious freedom of the children of God, a kingdom of priests to serve him forever.