

FOUNDATIONS: GLEANEALOGY 2



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

T . M . M O O R E

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Foundations
Gleanealogy Part 2
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Introduction

Gleanealogy 2: Foundations

As we have seen already, genealogies serve a variety of purposes in the Bible. This becomes especially clear when we study the genealogies in the book of Genesis. After looking at the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, we'll turn to the *toledoth* of Genesis to discover their role in laying the foundations of God's redemptive plan.

The genealogies of Genesis solidify the place, people, and project God intends to fulfill. And they point us forward to the One Who alone can accomplish all that God intends and promises.

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Thank you, and may the Lord bless your worship and study in this *Scriptorium* series.

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1 Genealogical Rosetta Stone

Pray Psalm 110.3.

Your people *shall be* volunteers
In the day of Your power;
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.

Sing slowly and contemplatively Psalm 110.1-3.

(Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation)

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the Lord says to my Lord,
“until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”
From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies,
while those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

Read Matthew 1.1-17

Prepare.

1. How many different aspects of this genealogy can you identify?
2. Why should Matthew begin his gospel with a genealogy?

Meditate.

The Rosetta Stone, you will recall, is a *stèle* which includes a royal decree in three ancient languages. Its importance lies in the fact that the *known* languages on the Stone unlock the languages formerly *unknown*. That is, the Greek text of the decree holds the key for unlocking the Egyptian hieroglyphs, which, before the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, were an impenetrable mystery.

The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 is the key to unlocking the treasures in all the other genealogies of Scripture. Matthew composed his genealogy to speak powerfully to his generation about the pedigree of Christ.¹ I encourage you to read and meditate on these verses, seeking the Spirit's guidance to yield more of the fruit He has hidden there (Prov. 25.2).

Right away we observe that this genealogy is unique, in that it consists of both an *ascending* and a *descending* aspect. The ascending aspect is in verse one – rising from Jesus through David to Abraham – and provides an outline of the genealogy and summarizes its purpose: Jesus is the Davidic King, and the Seed of Abraham! He is the “end of the line” for the promises of God's covenant and the kingdom entrusted to David and his heirs forever. The ascending and descending character of this genealogy makes us think about going up and down on a ladder, an image Jesus applied to Himself from the dream of the patriarch Jacob (cf. Jn. 1.51). The form of the descending aspect is rhythmic (*begat, begat*), with only brief intermittent asides to remind readers of important moments of grace to Gentiles (with Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, David and Bathsheba).

Beginning in verse 2, the genealogy descends from Abraham. We recall from John's gospel that being in Abraham's line was the identity most of the Jews of Matthew's day would have acknowledged as their own (cf. Jn. 8.33-39). Right away, Matthew ran the risk of making his gospel a stumbling stone

¹ I'm grateful to my colleague, David Sincerbox, for sharing with me his research on this genealogy.

for Jewish readers, since in a line descending from Abraham, he includes Gentiles, deliberately mentioning three women in the list of those who have a claim to the promises of Abraham and the Kingdom of David (vv. 3, 5). Our great Savior and Threshold gathers all the harvest to Himself, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, sinners of every stripe.

The literary structure of this genealogy captures our attention. It is not merely implicit, but made explicit by Matthew's introduction (v. 1) and his comment in v. 17. The genealogy is composed in three segments: Abraham to David, David to the captivity, the captivity to Joseph, thus suggesting a *triune design*, and implying the work of the Triune God in superintending the unfolding story bound up in this genealogy. Each section consists of fourteen generations, which is two times seven, the number of perfection. Is Matthew pointing to the perfection of Jesus both in His deity and His Manhood? Alternately (see the anonymous quote below), we might consider the 42 generations as six periods of seven generations each, each generation a complete "week" of work and rest, and the six "weeks" of seven being a "week" itself, but only of work. The seventh day/week of rest comes now, with Immanuel (cf. Heb. 4.1-11).

The genealogy "turns" on crucial moments in the history of God's covenant: Abraham, David, Babylon and Matthew's own day. Each of these historical moments is of enormous significance in the fulfillment of God's covenant with His people, and serves to highlight the covenantal focus of the entire genealogy. The events of Matthew's day are the culmination of a long history of God's covenant faithfulness.

We further note that the names of many who are included (not all are) point to God and His continuous work of keeping covenant with His people. We see the divine morphemes - *yah, jeho-, 'el* – especially from the mention of David on (one of those bearing the name of God is a Gentile, Uriah the Hittite). This injects an energy of the Presence of God among His people, which is realized in the birth of Immanuel.

One final note which I consider to be very important: Mention is made of Israel's being "carried away to Babylon", "brought to Babylon", and in "captivity in Babylon" (twice!); but no mention is made of the return. It's as if Matthew was saying to his readership, "We're still captive and waiting for our deliverance today."

Hold this genealogy up to the Light of God's Word, and you can see how it reflects His workmanship, and how at every stage it points us to Christ and His mission. It thus serves as a kind of Rosetta Stone for understanding other genealogies in the Scriptures. Matthew wants us to see that, from the beginning of God's dealings with His people, His covenant has been reliable, sure, and orderly, advancing ineluctably through the corridors of time to bring forth the Christ. In every age, God raised up faithful men and women to receive His grace and diffuse it throughout the world in faith and obedience. Matthew thus teaches us to see such divine order and work in all the genealogies of Scripture, and to see them all as pointing forward to the coming of Christ. And he encourages us to admire these faithful – though fallible – generations, to thank God for their faithfulness, and to hope that we might be included among their ranks.

Reflect.

1. How many different aspects of this genealogy could you take as a focus for more concentrated meditation and prayer?
2. Choose one of those. Think about it deeply, as it shows up throughout the genealogy. Listen as the Spirit prompts you to focus on this name or that. Offer prayers of praise for God's work, thanks for

His people, and longing to be found in the genealogy of God's people.

3. How would you summarize the teaching of this genealogy in one sentence?

The reason why forty-two generations are given according to the flesh of Christ being born into the world is this: forty-two is the product of six times seven. Six, however, is the number that signifies work and toil, for the world was made in six days—it is a world made in work and toil and pain. So, appropriately, there are forty-two generations before Christ being born into the world in toil and pain, and these generations contain the mystery of work and toil.

Anonymous, *Incomplete Work on Matthew, Homily 1*

Lord, Your story is written with beauty, wonder, faithfulness, mystery, and love. My part in that story today is to...

Pray Psalm 110.

Rejoice in the beauty and power of Jesus, exalted in glory. Thank Him for the faithful people who have gone before you in His covenant. Offer yourself in specific ways as a “volunteer” today.

Sing Psalm 110.

Psalm 110 (*Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation*)

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the Lord says to my Lord,
“until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”

From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies,
while those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

Filled with the Spirit's power, in holy robes of love,
from early morning's hour they serve their Lord above.
Christ reigns a priest forever, the King of Righteousness
and King of Peace who ever His chosen ones will bless.

The Lord at Your right hand, Lord, in wrath shall shatter kings,
when judgment by His strong Word He to the nations brings.
Then, all His foes defeated, He takes His hard-won rest,
in glorious triumph seated with us, redeemed and blessed!

2 Setting the Stage

Pray Psalm 67.1, 2.

God be merciful to us and bless us,
And cause His face to shine upon us,
Selah
That Your way may be known on earth,
Your salvation among all nations.

Sing joyfully and with confidence Psalm 67.1-3.

(Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less)

O bless us, Savior, by Your grace, and shine upon us with Your face,
that we Your way may loud proclaim and tell to all the earth Your fame!

Refrain v. 3, 5

Let all the peoples praise You, Lord,
Rejoicing in Your holy Word!
Rejoicing in Your holy Word!

Read Genesis 5.1-32.

Prepare.

1. What strikes you as unique about this genealogy?
2. What does this genealogy “bridge”?

Meditate.

As we have seen, one of the primary purposes of the genealogies is to unite the Scriptures within the framework of God’s covenant. Like all Scripture, genealogies are meant to edify those who believe (2 Tim. 3.15-17), not to divide them. In Paul’s day, people were using genealogies wrongly, to vaunt their pedigrees rather than seek unity in God’s covenant (1 Tim. 1.3, 4). But as we shall see in this first genealogy of Scripture, God intended to unite His people around a special purpose.

This genealogy begins with the phrase “This is the book of the genealogy...”, which in the Hebrew is *zeh sepher toledoth*.² We have seen that the *toledoth* is an ancient literary form not unique to ancient Israel, used to introduce a record of some sort. Here the record begins with Adam and ends with Noah and his sons. This genealogy thus spans the time from creation to the flood. This genealogy appears against the backdrop of a brief one given in Genesis 4.17-22, the genealogy of the descendants of Cain, who murdered his brother Abel and was cast out from the presence of God. His descendants begin the line of those who have no faith in God and who pursue an autonomous ethic based on power (Gen. 4.23, 24; 6.1-5). The line that descends through Seth, on the other hand, represents the first generations of those who trust in the Lord.

We can see this in various ways. The introduction to this *toledoth* (Gen. 4.25, 26) tells us that with Seth’s line, “*men* began to call on the name of the LORD.” We see in the names of certain of his descendants the suggestion of ongoing trust in the Lord: Mahalalel (“praise of God”), and Jared

² For this and subsequent installments on *toledoth*, I am indebted to Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledoth* Structure of Genesis,” *JETS*, Vol. 56. No. 2, June 2013.

(which can carry the meaning “to bow down”). We also note that Enoch is described as having “walked with God three hundred years”, during which time we can be sure he had an influence on many of the descendants of Seth. Enoch’s having been “taken” by God raises the question, “Taken where?” At the very least, this means to point us beyond the present life to some other existence where God takes people at His pleasure.

It is possible that, in the generation following Enoch, the people of Seth’s line and those of Cain’s began to interact in ways that brought compromise and turmoil. Lamech named his son Noah, which means “rest”, and expressed the hope that in his day, the people might once again be comforted. They were beginning to find the burden of their labors irksome (v. 29), and they may have begun to experience conflict with the descendants of Cain. We know that, by Genesis 6, the men of this line had begun to intermarry with the “daughters of men”, thus introducing compromise and conflict, which may also have helped to provoke Lamech’s longing (I accept “sons of God” in Genesis 6.2 as referring not to angels, as some suggest, but to the faithful descendants of Seth).

We also note in this genealogy the mention of how long people lived, which seems extraordinary to us today, but which we accept as a faithful record. The mention of daughters is also a unique factor in this genealogy, and precludes our wondering where all these men found wives.

This *toledoth* sets the stage for a struggle between two families of people – those who trust the Lord and those who look to autonomy and power to accomplish their ends. These two families are anticipated in Genesis 3.15 by the “Seed of the woman” and the serpent’s seed. But we should point out that this is not the first *toledoth* in Genesis. Genesis 2.4 informs us, “This *is* the history (*toledoth*) of the heavens and the earth when they were created...” The *toledoth* in Genesis 5 connects by association with this *toledoth*, which provides the temporal setting in which the drama of the two families will unfold.

The mission of the family of Seth, in a world where creation groans and men grasp for power, is to bring comfort and rest to the world. Place, people, project: Creation, the faithful seed (pointing to the Seed of the woman), and rest. The stage is set for the divine covenant and the economy of redemption that comes with it.

Reflect.

1. Three genealogies present three foundational ideas that will run through all of Scripture. What are they?
2. Why do you suppose God in His sovereignty allowed people to live so long in those days?
3. Why do we need to know not only that there was a *Godly* line of people, but a line of people who did not believe in God? Is it just to condemn that second line? Or are they part of the project of God’s people?

Then the Scripture states that after some time had elapsed, there was a man named Enoch, whose justice merited a singular privilege: that he should not experience present death but should be transported to immortality from the midst of mortals. Augustine 354-430), Christian Life 7

Lord, as I am part of the line of those meant to bring comfort and rest to the world, use me today to...

Pray Psalm 67.

How will you help the nations and peoples of the earth sing the praises of Jesus today? Give thanks

to God for all His bounteous blessings, then commit yourself and them to making Him known today.

Sing Psalm 67.

Psalm 67 (*Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*)

O bless us, Savior, by Your grace, and shine upon us with Your face,
that we Your way may loud proclaim and tell to all the earth Your fame!

Refrain v. 3, 5

Let all the peoples praise You, Lord,
Rejoicing in Your holy Word!
Rejoicing in Your holy Word!

Let all the nations gladly sing and joyous praise before You bring!
You judge them by Your holy worth and guide the nations of the earth.

Refrain

The earth in full its bounty yields – the blessed harvest of the fields.
We gather blessings from Your Word that all the earth may fear You, Lord.

Refrain

3 Man of Promise

Pray Psalm 143.1, 2.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.
Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

Sing slowly, chant-like, and contemplatively Psalm 143.1, 2.

(Divinum Mysterium: [Of the Father's Love Begotten](#))

Hear my earnest prayer, O Lord! Give ear to my pleas for grace!
In Your faithfulness and righteousness, look upon me with Your face!
Enter not to judgment with Your servant, Lord, with Your loving servant, Lord:
None can stand before Your Word.

Read Genesis 11.10-32

Prepare.

1. What period of time does this genealogy bridge? How do you see that?
2. This is actually two genealogies in one – like pulling out the lengths of a telescope. What is the effect of the second genealogy in preparing for the next section of Scripture?

Meditate.

The genealogy that leads to Abram (Abraham) brings the story of God's covenant and redemption forward from the catastrophe of the flood to the new day of promise. Abraham is the man of promise, the one with whom God clearly set forth the goal of His *project*: All the families of the earth are to be blessed (Gen. 12.1-3)!

In Genesis 8-11 the foundations we saw in Genesis 1-5 are shored up and enlarged. Following the cleansing of the earth by the great flood (Gen. 6, 7), the *place* of God's redeeming work is renewed, and He extends His covenant to the earth, promising never again to destroy it in a flood, but to keep and bless it indefinitely, and this in spite of the sinfulness of people (Gen. 8.20-22). God appoints the rainbow to remind Him and us of His covenant Word (Gen. 9.8-17).

The first genealogy in this section traces the descendants of Noah's sons Japheth, Ham, and Shem (Gen. 10.1-32). The primary focus of this genealogy is to account for the origins of the various peoples of the earth. The Hebrew morpheme *-im*, which appears on the end of so many of these names, indicates the plural, and thus not merely a *person* but *people*. The earth God is sustaining is beginning to yield the blessings of food and culture for many peoples, according to God's covenant and promise (Acts 14.17). In blessing these peoples, and granting them their own cities and borders, God's intention was that they might seek Him (Acts 17.26, 27). That desire of the Lord has not changed to this day. This genealogy should remind us to pray for the nations of the world, that they might hear the wooing (striving) of God's Spirit (Gen. 6.3) and seek the Lord while He may be found.

The genealogy of Shem – which will yield the man of promise and, through him, the chosen *people* – is given last (Gen. 10.21-31). It will be repeated and extended in two genealogies in Genesis 11.10-32), following the interlude of the story of the tower of Babel.

What does this story of hubris and vanity tell us? It is placed after the genealogy giving the various nations and peoples – including Shem – to demonstrate that the rebellion of people against God continued, in spite of the flood and many recurring rainbows. People could see God and His promise in the creation, but they chose to ignore Him and His Word. People want to make their own rules and wield power to their own ends. They were not content to disperse to the ends of the earth, so God, in His grace, undertook to do that for them (Gen. 11.1-9). Then, to show that His plan was still on track, the genealogy of Shem is repeated and extended, all the way to Abram, the man of promise.

As we read through the names of those in Shem's genealogy we notice no names containing any of the divine morphemes. This suggests that the descendants of Shem were not as God-minded as those who descended from Seth, or those who will follow. Indeed, the names in this genealogy sound much like those of the nations. We also note that people are not living as long as they did from Seth to Noah. God is settling the duration of human life and slowing down the action for us here. The genealogy of Terah (Gen. 11.27-32) puts a gradual brake to these three chapters, extending the narrative and refining the focus on *place*, as God prepares us for the next stage of His unfolding plan and work. The next stage of God's *project* will unfold with the *people* descended from Abraham in the midst of the *place* where ungodly nations are flourishing.

Reflect.

1. How does the Spirit use the genealogies of Genesis 10 and 11 to renew our focus on the foundations He established in Genesis 1-5?
2. Why should we care about the nations that rebelled against God? Why did He care?
3. How can the *toledoth* in this section of Genesis serve to guide your prayers?

We must therefore introduce into this work an explanation of the generations of the three sons of Noah, insofar as that may illustrate the progress in time of the two cities. Augustine (354-430), City of God 16.3

I pray, Lord, that Your Spirit would strive with lost people everywhere to prepare them for the Gospel, and that He would strengthen and fill me so that I...

Pray Psalm 143.7-12.

Seek the Lord's will for the day ahead. Call upon Him to teach and guide you, and to fill you with His Spirit. Seek grace to be revived and renewed in Him, according to His promises.

Sing Psalm 143.7-12.

Psalm 143.7-12 (*Divinum Mysterium: [Of the Father's Love Begotten](#)*)

Answer quickly, O my Lord! Do not hide from me Your face!

For my spirit fails and I am like those who do not know Your grace.

In the morning let me hear Your steadfast love; Lord I trust You, show my way!

I lift up my soul and pray!

Rescue me from all my enemies! Lord, I refuge seek in You.

Let me know Your will, O Lord my God; make me know what I must do.

Let Your Spirit lead me on to level ground; save my life! Preserve my soul!
Rescue, Lord, and make me whole!

4 The Promised Seed and His Seed

Pray Psalm 105.42-45.

For He remembered His holy promise,
And Abraham His servant.
He brought out His people with joy,
His chosen ones with gladness.
He gave them the lands of the Gentiles,
And they inherited the labor of the nations,
That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.
Praise the LORD!

Sing joyfully and with thanksgiving Psalm 105.26-45.

(Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise)

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations' land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

Read Genesis 22.20-24 and Genesis 25.19-28.

Prepare.

1. What role do these two genealogies play in the unfolding story of redemption?
2. What is different about Isaac's *toledoth*?

Meditate.

These two *toledoth* are excellent examples of the role genealogies play in linking and enlarging key aspects of God's project. The first *toledoth* is a continuation of Abram's in Genesis 11.10-32. There, we note that Nahor took a wife, but no children were mentioned (v. 29). Moses did not want to get ahead of himself in telling the story, so he didn't introduce Rebekah at this point, so far away from her crucial place in God's *project* (ch. 24). His first concern was to get from Abram (Abraham) to Isaac, the promised seed and prefiguration of the greater promised Seed to come, and the continuation of the line of the chosen *people*.

Once Isaac has been established in his role as the promised seed of the man of promise (chapters 20-22), Moses returns to prepare the stage for the next generation in the covenant line. In Genesis 22.20-24, we are introduced to Rebekah, so we'll know who she is when we encounter her again two chapters later. We can see here how this *toledoth* is not only recording an important history of a real person; it's also knitting the story line of God's *project* together in an elegant and effective manner.

Isaac's *toledoth* is unique in that it only contains two offspring, but includes more extensive annotation than we saw in the *toledoth* of the nations or of Abraham. In some ways, Isaac's genealogy harks back

to that of Adam and Seth in Genesis 5, where we were given more annotation to provide a careful setting of the stage for what was to follow. Moses is doing this again, taking the *toledoth* he had received – whether orally or in the form of some clay tablet – and annotating it to keep building on the foundations already laid.

We note the restatement of the *people* or “two nations” theme (Gen. 25.23-23), which was first introduced in Genesis 2-5. Implied in that restatement is also a bit more information about the divine *project*: One of those peoples will be subject to the rule of (“serve”) the other. Jacob is a shepherd – one who manages property and herds, caring and conserving things for the future. While Esau is a hunter, who lives off the land, and puts nothing back into it. In the divine *project*, those who care for the earth and its creatures (the *place*) – like God does – will exercise dominion over those who merely take from it.

These *toledoth* also remind us that many new peoples and nations are coming into being, yet God has set His focus on one line – that descending from Abraham through Isaac to Jacob – through which He will accomplish His agenda.

Reflect.

1. How does including the *toledoth* of Rebekah and that of Jacob help to focus the story the book of Genesis is developing?
2. These and all the *toledoth* of Genesis may have existed in the form of clay tablets, without any annotation. Moses may have seen these tablets or known what they contained, but he rearranged and enlarged on them to suit the purposes God appointed for him as the author/compiler of Genesis. What does this suggest about how the Holy Spirit worked to bring the Scriptures into being (2 Pet. 1.19-21)?
3. What is implied by the idea that the nation of *people* represented by Esau (all those *not* Jacob) will “serve” the chosen people of God (cf. also Gen. 22.18)? Is this idea still valid in our day? Explain.

In the period from Isaac’s birth to his seventieth year, when his first children were born, there is one memorable fact: He asked God that his wife, who was barren, might bear him a child. God heard the prayer, and she conceived twins who leaped while still in her womb. She was troubled by the disturbance, and, asking the Lord, she received this answer: “Two nations are in your womb; two people shall stem from your body. One people shall be stronger than the other, and the elder shall serve the younger.” Augustine (354-430), City of God 16.35

Great is Your faithfulness, O God! We can trust Your Word and promises, and I will do so today as I...

Pray Psalm 105.1-12.

Praise God for His covenant and faithfulness, and that He has grafted you into the line of Abraham’s offspring (Rom. 4.13-18). Commit your day to the Lord, to live as an heir of the promises which are “Yes!” and “Amen!” in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sing Psalm 105.1-11.

Psalm 105.1-12 (*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, You chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

5 Separate for Now

Pray Psalm 66.17-20.

I cried to Him with my mouth,
And He was extolled with my tongue.
If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear.
But certainly God has heard *me*;
He has attended to the voice of my prayer.
Blessed *be* God,
Who has not turned away my prayer,
Nor His mercy from me!

Sing joyfully and with thanksgiving Psalm 66.17-20.

(Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory)

When we cried to You, You answered, filled our mouths with highest praise.
Let not sin abide within us, lest we languish all our days.
Bless the Lord, Who hears our pleadings and preserves His love always.

Read Genesis 25.1-5, Genesis 25.12-18, and Genesis 36.1-43.

Prepare.

1. In these genealogies of the nations, how many names do you recognize that show up later in the Old Testament? In what role do these names appear later on?
2. How does Genesis 25.5 put these genealogies into the context of God's project?

Meditate.

We recall that the narrative of God's redemptive program – which begins in Genesis and takes shape around the various *toledoth* given there – includes a focus on *place* (the earth, then narrowing to the land of Canaan), two *peoples* (the chosen people and all the rest of the peoples and families of the earth), and a *project* (bringing the blessing of God through His people to all the families of the earth, Gen. 12.1-3). We have been focusing on the line of God's chosen people, but we must not lose sight of the other families of the earth, whose peoples and nations, descending from Noah, include those listed in these three genealogies.

Why should we care about these nations and peoples, these families who are beyond the pale of the chosen people? Because God does. With loving care God preserved these three *toledoth* to come into Moses' possession, that he might include them in the unfolding story of God's redemptive love. Moses did not want the people of his generation to think that God was not concerned for all the families of the earth. We see them listed here, adding to the lists previously given (Gen. 4, 10), and creating the impression that they who are beyond the pale of God's promises are a growing population. Let's look a little closer at each *toledoth*.

The offspring of Keturah (25.1-4), Abraham's wife after Sarah died, are given in Genesis 25.1-4. But to make certain we understand that nothing has changed in God's program, after their names are given, we are told that "Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac" (v. 5). Isaac was the promised seed. We note in the names of those descending from Abraham through Keturah, nations that will become

a bane to Israel in later generations: Midian (v. 2) and Assyria (Asshurim, v. 3). These families of the earth lost sight of their descent from Abraham and God's promise to bless them through Isaac's seed; but those who are of the line of promise must not forget their heritage.

Ishmael (25.12-18) was also Abraham's son, and his descendants would occupy a crescent from east of Egypt under the land of Canaan and up to Assyria (v. 18). Their *place*, in other words, was not within the place of the chosen seed. As Abraham sent Keturah's sons away to the east of Canaan (25.6), so Ishmael's were dispersed to the west and south.

The *toledoth* in Genesis 36 gives extensive treatment to the offspring of Esau, rejected brother of Jacob, but brother still. In these lists we recognize the names of many of the nations which occupied Canaan when Israel arrived from Egypt (Hittites, Hivites, Temanites, Philistines [Timna]). The insertion of a personal note in v. 24 indicates a measure of appreciation for these peoples; and the mention of war between nations (v. 35) gives us a hint about their nature. These too are separated from the people of Isaac and Jacob, but in the case of Esau, it seems almost to have been a gesture of love that he moved, rather than drive his brother out (vv. 6-8).

The emphasis here is on the increasing number and dispersion of the families of the earth, away from the descendants who are the focus of God's promises. God is separating them for now, but He does not want us to forget them, because He is not finished with them yet (cf. Mic. 4.1-8, Is. 54.1-3; Matt. 28.18-20). Use these three *toledoth*, as you come across them in your regular reading of Scripture, to pray for the nations of the world today, and to thank God for the grace He has shown them.

Reflect.

1. Why was it important for Israel to remember the origins of the various nations around them?
2. How do these *toledoth* teach us to regard the nations of the world in our day?
3. Why was it important for us to know that the chosen people were kept separate from the other families of the earth? Is there a principle here that could guide us in our own walk with the Lord?

Abraham took for himself a concubine after the death of Sarah, so that through the uprightness of his many sons who were to be scattered throughout the entire earth, knowledge and worship of the one God would be spread. Abraham then had sons from Keturah, and he sent them eastward with gifts. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373), Commentary on Genesis 22.1

Lord, You have commanded us to make all the nations disciples, and for me, today, that means...

Pray Psalm 66.1-16.

Pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field, and for the nations of the world, that they might turn too the Lord with thanksgiving and praise, that His grace might reach and save them, just as it has reached and saved you.

Sing Psalm Psalm 66.1-16.

Psalm 66.1-16 (*Regent Square: Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Shout for joy to God, all people, sing the glory of His Name!

Give Him glorious praise and say, "How great Your pow'r and great Your fame!

All the earth shall worship gladly as they praise Your glorious Name!"

Great and awesome is our Savior in the works which He has done.

He the sea and river dried to let His people cross as one.
Then our joy was great to worship Him our mighty, sovereign One.

He the nations watches ever – all you rebels, humbled be;
Bless our God, all men and nations, praise His Name eternally!
He preserves our souls, and He will keep His paths beneath our feet.

You have tried us, Lord, as silver, and have brought us into nets,
Made us carry heavy burdens, let men trample o'er our heads.
But through all Your grace sustained us and has brought us through to rest.

To Your house we come with offerings, what we vowed, Lord, help us do.
O, receive our praise and homage as we give ourselves to You.
Come and listen, all who fear Him: hear what this great God can do!

6 People of the Promise

Pray Psalm 105.1-5.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth

Sing joyfully and with thanksgiving Psalm 105.1-5.

(Warrington: [Give to Our God Immortal Praise](#))

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

Read Genesis 46.8-27.

Prepare.

1. This genealogy is more like a census. Explain.
2. Why did Moses think it was important to provide this list of names at this point?

Meditate.

We recall that Moses was compiling *toledoth*, and weaving them into the narrative which became Genesis, for those Israelites he had just led out of Egypt into the wilderness. Today's genealogy departs from the "these are the generations" format we've seen thus far, and begins with "these are the names". There is something much more specific and personal about this. The list that follows is not so much a genealogy as a census, but it would have been very important for the people of Israel in Moses' day. They were leaving surroundings they'd known for generations – over 400 years! They needed to re-establish their proper identity, and that identity must be rooted in the covenant God made with their forebears.

This list is a kind of outline Israel would have consulted to begin getting ready for the journey through the wilderness and the conquest of Canaan. Throughout the wilderness journey, the Lord through Moses will take various steps to help the people get organized according to their genealogical records. He will appoint heads of tribes and families. He will have them bring offerings by tribes. He will show them where to camp in relation to the tabernacle. All this will be preparation for entering the land, where each tribe will have its proper allotment of land. Without this list in Genesis 46, getting Israel in order for the journey to Canaan would have been much more difficult.

Let's make a few observations about this list of the sons of Jacob, and their children who came with them into Egypt. First, we note the use of Hebrew God-morphemes in many of the names (cf. Jemuel, Jaleel, Arel, Malchiel, etc.). We don't know much about the faith of these people, but including God in the name of children expresses something of a hope or longing – at least, a consciousness. Second, this list of names includes Gentiles, or those born to Gentiles, specifically, Shaul (son of a Canaanite woman, v. 10), Perez (born to Tamar, v. 12), and the children born to Joseph in Egypt (v. 20). The line of the chosen people included Gentiles, and this looks back to those Gentile *toledoth* we've considered, and encourages us to remember the promise to Abraham ("all the families of the earth"). The names in the list are given according to birthright, from the first-born to the last-born, a further ordering principle designed to help Israel get organized. This list is compiled as Israel is leaving the land of Canaan – God's chosen *place* for His *people*. They are coming under the protection of a Gentile nation, which God will use to bless His people, but from which He will ultimately extract them to bring them back to the land of Canaan. God's kindness through Egypt – allowing Joseph's family to dwell among them and work for Pharaoh – should remind the people that the nations are at God's disposal as part of His *project* of bringing His people and all the families of the earth the blessings of His covenant.

Finally, we note that the total of the promised people who began to sojourn in Egypt was 70 – a perfect number (the number for God, 3, plus the number for man, 4, times the number of completion, 10). It's as if Moses were saying to the people, God brought just the right number of us to Egypt. None of this happened by chance. The people would be reminded of this as they were leaving Egypt when they arrived at Elim, where seventy palm trees stood around twelve wells (Ex. 15.27), and they would have concluded that the sovereign God Who brought His people safely to Egypt will lead them safely home again.

Reflect.

1. This list reminds us that God is a God of order, and He expects His people to observe the order He wills for them. How is this instructive for us today?
2. The nations continue to factor in God's unfolding *project*. Why do we need to remember this?
3. This list, given that it is a complete list of the people of *promise* at that time, might serve to remind us to pray for all the people of God in our day. Explain.

We have here a particular account of Jacob's family. Though the fulfilling of promises is always sure, yet it is often slow. It was now 215 years since God had promised Abraham to make of him a great nation, ch. 12:2; yet that branch of his seed, to which the promise was made sure, had only increased to seventy, of whom this particular account is kept, to show the power of God in making these seventy become a vast multitude. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Genesis 46.5-27

Lord, I'm reminded to pray for the churches in my community, in particular that they may...

Pray Psalm 105.26-45.

Praise and thank God for the way He preserves and increases His people, even in the face of trial and difficulty. How will God preserve and increase you today?

Sing Psalm 105.26-45.

Psalm 105.26-45 (*Warrington: Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations' land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

7 Forward to Shiloh

Pray Psalm 132.11, 12.

The LORD has sworn *in* truth to David;
He will not turn from it:
“I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.
If your sons will keep My covenant
And My testimony which I shall teach them,
Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore.”

Sing contemplatively Psalm 132.11, 12..

(Finlandia: Be Still, My Soul)

Remember, Lord, the oath You swore to David;
Do not turn back, do not deny Your Word:
“One of your sons, with your throne I will favor,
And He shall keep My cov’nant evermore,
And walk within My testimonies ever,
Thus He shall ever rule as Israel’s Lord.”

Read Genesis 49.1-28.

Prepare.

1. This is more a summation and prospectus than a genealogy. Explain.
2. How would Moses’ recording this have helped the people of his generation?

Meditate.

We’re fudging a bit here to include this passage with the *toledoth* of Genesis. But remember that the genealogies in the book of Genesis serve several purposes: They are bridges to connect various phases of God’s covenant; they distinguish the people of promise from the rest of the nations and peoples; and they provide hinges moving God’s *project* of redemption forward from one generation to the next. It is in this last sense, I believe, that our text for today qualifies as a genealogy, though not a *toledoth*.

The people Moses led into the wilderness would have needed these genealogies to remember who they were and what God had chosen them to do. Having just recounted the census of those seventy persons who went down to Egypt (Gen. 46), now Moses records Jacob’s final words to his sons, and provides a prospectus of what each tribe can expect in the days ahead. These blessings (v. 28) take the form of prophetic utterances. We cannot unpack each of them, and we do not know to what extent Jacob’s words were precisely fulfilled. The most important of these prophetic blessings is in verses 8-12, the prophesy concerning Judah, which is a kind of prophetic genealogy, looking forward to *people* and events that will bring God’s *project* to full realization.

Surprisingly, Judah will be the focus of Israel’s joy and praise – not Joseph, as we might suppose. Judah will receive his brothers’ praise and be the vanquisher of Israel’s enemies (v. 8). He is likened to a lion, in all forms of lion-ness, from whelp to maturity. As John will explain, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5.5) will prevail to carry God’s *project* to completion.

To the tribe of Judah, a scepter – the emblem of rule – will be given (v. 10), and with that, rulers whose mandate is to interpret and enforce the Law of God. A dynasty is indicated here (from Judah to Shiloh) which will rule in uprightness and according to the life-giving Law of God (cf. Ps. 45.6; Lev. 18.1-5; Deut. 17.18-20). That dynasty stops with One Whose name is Shiloh. When that Ruler comes, for Whom the rule and scepter have always been intended, then the dynasty descending from Judah ceases. That King, we are to understand, will be an eternal Ruler, “And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the *peoples*”, not “people” as in NKJV. All those genealogies of nations and peoples, and all the tribes of Israel, will bow and worship before the King Who receives the Kingdom which began with one of Judah’s offspring (David, as it turns out, Ps. 132).

The mention of a donkey and a donkey’s colt, garments red with wine, and teeth as pure as milk are associations which, as we know, Jesus the Messiah fulfilled completely. One is coming, Jacob prophesied, who will be the Seed of the woman to destroy all enemies and bring the Kingdom to God’s people (cf. Dan. 7.13-25).

What hope and courage that must have filled the people who followed Moses into the wilderness, as they read this prophesy by their father, Jacob!

Reflect.

1. What would have been the effect of this prophesy on Judah’s role among the people of Israel, as they entered Egypt?
2. How many different aspects of this prophesy point us to Jesus? In what ways?
3. What is the importance of Jacob’s saying that the obedience of the peoples would come to Shiloh? How does this help to define our calling as followers of Shiloh?

Again, he is called a Lion; not a man eater, but, as it were, showing by this title his kingly, strong and resolute nature, Then too, he is called a Lion in opposition to the lion, our adversary who roars and devours those who have been deceived. For the Savior came, not having changed his own gentle nature, and yet as the mighty lion of the tribe of Judah, saving them that believe but trampling upon the adversary. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386), Catechetical Lectures 10.3

Help me, Jesus, to seek Your Kingdom in all things today as I...

Pray Psalm 132.13-18.

Thank God for sending His Spirit to dwell within you, for giving you rest in Jesus, clothing you in His salvation, and equipping you to serve Him today and every day.

Sing Psalm 132.13-18.

Psalm 132.13-18 (*Finlandia: Be Still, My Soul*)

God dwells among us, and He will forever,
To meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.
He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior,
And made us His eternal resting-place.
His foes are banished from His presence ever,
But we shall reign with Him before His face.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What purposes do the genealogies of Genesis serve? How do they relate to God's covenant?

2. Who are the *people*, what is the *place*, and what is the *project* the genealogies of Genesis move forward?

3. Why did Moses include genealogies of nations and peoples beyond the pale of the chosen people?

4. How far forward in Scripture does the prophesy of Shiloh point?

5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from part 2 of our study in *Gleanealogy*? How are you putting that lesson to work in your own life?

For prayer:

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