

FORWARD, EVER FORWARD: GLEANEALOGY 3



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

T . M . M O O R E

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Forward, Ever Forward
Gleanealogy Part 3
Copyright 2020 T. M. and Susie Moore
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Cover Art: “The Gleaners” by Jean-Francois Millet, 1857

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

Introduction

Gleanealogy 3: Forward, Ever Forward

We think of genealogies as looking back – back to forebears in the faith and the events that made up their lives. They taught the people of their day that God had been faithful to those who went before, in whose lineage they could count themselves.

But the genealogies also helped God’s people look forward, both by helping them get organized for the work God appointed for them, and by reminding them that precious and very great promises remained to be fulfilled.

The genealogies of Luke 3 and the Lamb’s Book of Life do the same for us.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to discover the many resources available to help you in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of God’s Kingdom.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

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

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Getting Organized

Pray Psalm 106.47, 48.

Save us, O LORD our God,
And gather us from among the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise.
Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, “Amen!”
Praise the LORD!

Sing slowly and with gratitude Psalm 106.46-48.

(Trust in Jesus: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus)

Save us, Lord, from every nation; gather us from all our ways.
And we to Your Name will offer glorious thanks and endless praise!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Read Numbers 1.1-44, chapter 26

Prepare.

1. Why did God require this census, this numbering of the people?
2. Who was to help Moses in this? Why?

Meditate.

Here is the first of two “numberings” of the people of Israel. We recall that the book of Genesis ended with a census of the seventy people of Jacob’s family who went down to Egypt. Now we’re more than 400 years after that event, and it’s time for the people of Israel to look back and look ahead. As they do, genealogy plays an important role.

We note that the task must have been considerably larger this time around, as Moses needed a man from each tribe to assist (v. 4). We are given the names of those men in Numbers 1.5-17, with the specific note that they are appointed by name. Next begins the actual census of the people.

Right away we seen that genealogical records matter (cf. Num. 1.22, 24, 26, etc.). The people maintained their genealogies throughout the period of their sojourn and captivity in Egypt. This indicates both that they understood the importance of maintaining their roots, and that they hoped for the promise to their father Abraham, to be a blessing to all families of the earth. At this point following their departure from Egypt, they had arrived at Mt. Sinai, received the Law, built the tabernacle, and put the priests in order (Exodus, Leviticus). Shortly, they would begin their eleven-day journey to Canaan (Deut. 1.2), which, tragically, would take them nearly forty years.

The numbering of the tribes is summarized first (Num. 1.18-44), and a tally is provided of the men able to go to war: 653,550 men. This is not all the people, only those able to go to war – a

foreshadowing of what awaits them. The tribe of Levi was not numbered here, because they would be tending to the tabernacle and the services that were conducted there (Num. 1.47-54).

Further organizing of the people is recorded in Numbers 2-4, first, where they will camp in relation to the tabernacle (Num. 2). In chapter 3, the descendants of Aaron and Moses (the *toledoth* of Aaron and Moses) is recorded, and the Levites are now numbered for service (vv. 14ff.), in particular, those who belong to the family of Kohath (Num. 4). Would any of this have been even remotely possible without some written record of who belonged to which tribe? That genealogies played an important role in getting Israel organized for her journey to the land of Canaan is quite clear. Their role in this census-taking should remind us that God requires order among His people, lest chaos and confusion obtain.

A second census of the people comes in Numbers 26, after a series of events that threatened to unravel the people and leave them disorganized and vulnerable. First, they refused to enter the land of promise, and were turned back to the wilderness, where they wandered for nearly 40 years, until that unbelieving generation perished (Num. 14, 15). Next, a rebellion against Moses and Aaron was put down by God in a most dramatic and devastating manner (Num. 16). A variety of complaints on the part of the people led to a challenge to Aaron's authority, which God reasserted (Num. 16, 17). Moses' prideful act at Kadesh left him embarrassed and excluded from the land (Num. 20). Aaron's death shortly after that must have raised questions about leadership. Then came various confrontations with the people of the land, and compromise with sin on the part of the people (Num. 21-25). After all this, and forty years traipsing around in the wilderness, we can imagine that the threat of confusion and disintegration was great.

The census taken in Numbers 26 was designed to reestablish God's order among His people, and ready them for the invasion of Canaan. This census, we note, goes all the way back to the sons of Jacob, tracing their line through the first generation after the twelve tribal heads to the present generation, struggling through the wilderness. By taking the census within genealogies, God reestablished Israel as His chosen *people*, reorganizing to take up His covenant *project*, in the *place* – the land of Canaan – God had chosen for them. The total of men over twenty years of age was 601,730. For all their struggle and rebellion, they were not diminished, and this census would be the basis on which the land was divided following the conquest of the Canaanite nations (Num. 26.52ff.).

Once again, genealogy served a valuable purpose for the people of Israel, pointing them back, helping them get organized, and preparing them to go forward in laying hold on the promises of God.

Reflect.

1. How should you read these genealogies as you come upon them in your reading of Scripture? What do they teach us about how God works with His people?
2. The census/genealogy of Numbers 26 includes reference to historical information, which would have served to remind Israel of their covenant obligations (cf. vv. 8-11, 19). Explain.
3. This census/genealogy seems to say to the people of Israel, "Look back, look around, and get ready to look ahead." Can genealogies play a similar role in our walk with the Lord? Explain.

... the reason for thus numbering the people a second time was, because they were very soon about to remove their camp from the wilderness of Sinai to take possession of the promised land. Since, however, their impiety withheld them from doing so, there was a third census taken just before their actual entrance into the land, and with this object, that it

might be obvious, on comparison, how marvellously the people had been preserved by the springing up of a new generation, in spite of so many plagues and so much slaughter; for although a great proportion of them had been cut off, almost as many persons were found as before. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Numbers 1*

I rejoice, Lord, that my name is written in Your book of names! Help me to be faithful in my calling as Your child today as I...

Pray Psalm 106.1-12.

Thank the Lord for His saving mercy, and for including you among His covenant people. Confess your sins, praise Him for His grace, and commit the day ahead to serving Him.

Sing Psalm 106.1-12, 48.

Psalm 106.1-12, 48 (*Trust in Jesus: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*)

Praise the Lord! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!
More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!
Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Lord, when You Your people favor, help me, O, remember me,
that I may Your blessings savor and in joy and glory be!

Refrain

We have sinned, just like our fathers; we have done iniquity.
Just like them, our hearts have wandered; we have acted wickedly.

Refrain

For Your love we have forgotten; we rebelled against Your grace.
Yet You save us by Your power, make us stand before Your face.

Refrain

2 Settling the Land

Pray Psalm 80.1-3.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
You who lead Joseph like a flock;
You who dwell *between* the cherubim, shine forth!
Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
Stir up Your strength,
And come *and* save us!
Restore us, O God;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

Sing contemplatively Psalm 80.1-3 .

(St. Theodulph: All Glory, Laud, and Honor)

O God of grace, restore us, and shine on us Your face!
O save us, Lord, work for us; renew us by Your grace!
Give ear, O gracious Savior, Who leads us as Your flock:
Stir up Your pow'r and favor, our King and Lord and Rock!

Read Joshua 14.1-5; 21.43-45.

Prepare.

1. What role do you suppose genealogies played in Israel's parceling the land of Canaan?
2. How was Israel able to subdue the land and drive their enemies from it? How does this relate to the genealogies of Scripture? What do they teach us about the faithfulness of God?

Meditate.

Joshua chapters 14-21 are not genealogies, but they're some pretty serious lists; and it should be possible to see the intimate connection between what is reported in these chapters and the role genealogies must have played in this part of Israel's history.

A preliminary question might be in order: Why was it so important that the land of Canaan be apportioned by tribes? Why couldn't people just live where they wanted? I think one of the answers to that question relates to the role of family in the divine economy. From the beginning, families and their lineages mattered, and family members worked together to preserve the memory of their heritage, contribute to its continuity, and make sure its pedigree was passed on to subsequent generations. Families have a kind of natural affinity that keeps them together, and the genealogies of Scripture played an important role in helping those family lines to remain intact. It would have been *unnatural* for the Israelites to settle the land of Canaan in any other way, because family was how they thought about their place in God's covenant.

This emphasis on families would also help them to keep in mind that their *project as a people* in this *place* to which God had brought them was to be a blessing to all the *families* of the earth – their families bringing the blessing of God to the families of the nations around them. Initially, Israel had to reclaim her family territory, and for this to happen, other families had to be displaced. But this was

always only intended as a temporary situation. The full covenant blessings of God would come to Israel at the first Christian Pentecost, when the mandate to make all the families of the earth disciples would be launched.

In chapters 13 and 15 we notice an interesting development. Following the practicality of getting the two-and-a-half tribes back to their families on the east side of the Jordan, the first family to receive its allotment is not Reuben – Jacob’s first-born – and not Ephraim and Manasseh – the sons of Joseph. Suddenly, the family of Judah has become preeminent, and this development flows out of what we saw in Genesis 49.8-12. Judah is now the lead family of the nation of Israel.

Following the apportionment to Judah was that to the sons of Joseph (Josh. 16), then the allotments to each of the other tribes (chs. 18-21). We note also that these allotments are identified by cities or regions, not tribal family names. The actual designating of which families would live in which villages or towns was apparently left for the families to decide, based on whatever criteria they may have found most useful. This emphasizes that the inheritance consisted of land, specific tracts and locales – Personal Mission Fields, if you will – where God’s people were to put down roots, practice the Law of God, and prepare to take their place in the divine *project*.

The Levites are allotted cities and lands throughout all the territories, since they would serve the spiritual needs of all the families of Israel. In the end, the writer acknowledges that all this distributing of lands was the work of God in fulfillment of His promise to the fathers (21.43-45); and we can be sure that the genealogies – which God Himself inspired, and which the people cherished and preserved – made this distribution and settlement proceed with much greater ease and efficiency than if they did not exist at all.

Reflect.

1. How can you see that the settling of the land of Canaan is a kind of template or foreshadowing for the Great Commission of Matthew 28.18-20?
2. As you read the names of these cities, what do you imagine? What can you see with your mind’s eye? Can you see people? Occupations? Neighborhoods? What are the people doing? How are they relating to one another?
3. How can these lists of cities and territories, given by God to Israel, help us in pursuing our calling within our own Personal Mission Field?

God promised to give to the seed of Abraham the land of Canaan for a possession, and now they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the promise of the heavenly Canaan is as sure to all God’s spiritual Israel; for it is the promise of Him that cannot lie. There stood not a man before them. The after-prevalence of the Canaanites was the effect of Israel’s slothfulness, and the punishment of their sinful inclinations to the idolatries and abominations of the heathen whom they harbored and indulged. There failed not ought of any good thing, which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. In due season all his promises will be accomplished; then will his people acknowledge that the Lord has exceeded their largest expectations, and made them more than conquerors, and brought them to their desired rest. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Joshua 21.43-45

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 80.12-19.

God revived His people through the judgment of the wilderness, and led them into the land of promise as His people. We need God to lead and move us, as in Joshua’s day, that His Kingdom may

come on earth as it is in heaven. Seek His Presence and power for revival, beginning in your own life today.

Sing Psalm 80.12-19.

Psalm 80.12-19 (*St. Theodulph: All Glory, Laud, and Honor*)

Now You in wrath have spoken and bruised Your chosen vine.

We languish, Lord, are broken by wrath, deserved, divine.

Once more, Lord, hear our pleading; return and heal this vine!

Look down on us, so needy, and show Your love divine!

Though we be burned and perish because of Your command,

Revive us, Lord, and cherish this son of Your right hand.

Then let us not return to our sinful, selfish ways,

But call on You and learn to surround You with our praise.

3 Genesis to the Kingdom

Pray Psalm 72.18, 19.

Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel,
Who only does wondrous things!
And blessed *be* His glorious name forever!
And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory.
Amen and Amen.

Sing with thanksgiving Psalm 72.18, 19.

(Martyrdom: [*Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*](#))

Now bless the God of Israel Who wondrous works performs.
And bless His Name, His glory tell both now and forevermore!

Read Ruth 4.13-22.

Prepare.

1. What does this *toledoth* connect?
2. Is this a complete *toledoth* or partial? What does this suggest about its purpose?

Meditate.

The book of Ruth is a pivotal story in three ways. First, it demonstrates the sovereignty of God in delivering His people from the chaotic and destructive period of the judges into the flourishing and prosperous realm of David. The book begins in the time of the judges; its last word is David.

Second, it demonstrates again God's determination to bring the nations of the world into the family of the blessed people. Strong condemnations had been pronounced against all the people of Moab for their treachery against Israel as they approached Canaan (Deut. 23.3, 4). Yet here a Moabitess is redeemed and incorporated not only into the people of the tribe of Judah, but into the very line of David.

Third, the concluding *toledoth* of Ruth links her and her grandson David all the way back to Judah's son Perez, using the formula – וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹתַי – *elle toledoth*, or “this *is* the genealogy” – which we saw to be so foundational in establishing God's *people*, *place*, and *project* in the book of Genesis. These five verses (18-22) construct a genealogical bridge all the way back to the patriarchs, through the journey in the wilderness, the conquest of the land, and the time of the judges, to the coming of Israel's first great king. It is a very condensed genealogy, because the writer does not want us to miss the connection he was trying to make.

But why start this genealogy with Perez and not Judah? Because Perez – like Ruth, and like Rahab, wife of Salmon (Matt. 1.5) – was a Gentile, and not one of the descendants of Abraham. Ruth's incorporation into the people of Israel is thus consistent both with what God had promised Abraham (“all the families of the earth”) and what He had done previously. It reminds us of the promise of God's covenant and points us forward to the day when all the families of the earth will know the blessings of God's grace.

Reflect.

1. We recall that David only became king after seven years of civil war (2 Sam. 5.1-5). How might this *toledoth* have helped David in seeking to establish his claim to the throne of Israel?
2. How does this genealogy serve to remind us of the faithfulness of God?
3. Write a prayer of thanksgiving, using names from this *toledoth* to outline your prayer.

Ruth was a foreigner, but nevertheless she was married to Boaz. So, too, the church is from among the Gentiles. For like Ruth, these Gentiles had been foreigners and outside the covenants, yet they forsook their people, their idols and their father, the devil. And as Ruth was wed to Boaz of the seed of Abraham, so too was the church taken as bride by the Son of God.. Theophylact (ca. 1050-ca. 1108), *Explanation of Matthew 1.3, 4*

Great is Your faithfulness, Lord! Help me to be faithful to Your Word today as I...

Pray Psalm 72.7-17.

Ruth points us forward to David, and David points us forward to Christ through Solomon. His prayer for his son envisions the coming of Christ's Kingdom. Pray that God will give you a clearer vision of what it means to seek and advance His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Sing Psalm 72.7-17.

Psalm 72.7-17 (*Martyrdom: [Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed](#)*)

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures.

Let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low.

Let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

The Lord the needy rescues when he cries to Him for grace.

All they who suffer violence find mercy before His face.

Let Christ be praised and all the gold of Sheba be His right.

Let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

And let the earth abound with grain, let fields His fame proclaim.

And may our King forever reign and nations bless His great Name.

4 Backup to Go Forward

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 1 Chronicles 9.1-44.

Prepare.

1. When were these genealogies published? Why?
2. The genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-8 lead to this chapter. What is the focus of this chapter? Why does it end with Saul?

Meditate.

We come at last to the “big frog” of our study of genealogies. The motherload. The encyclopedia of genealogical records. The big kahuna: The genealogies recorded in 1 Chronicles 1-9. Take a deep breath.

We can't do these nine chapters justice in one brief note. Instead, I want to illustrate some things from these lists, and I encourage you to read through these chapters over the next few days, letting my comments guide your eyes.

First, the genealogies reach all the way back to Adam, tracing through Abraham and all his sons, up to the generation of those returning from captivity in Babylon to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem (cf. 1 Chron. 1.1.1, 28; 9.3-27). Included are key names recalling important moments in Israel's covenant relationship with God: Seth (1.1), Noah (1.4), Tamar (2.4), Caleb (2.42), David (3.1), and Jeconiah (3.17 – king when Israel went into captivity). This is like a highlights reel of Israel's history. Each of these names would have brought to mind images and affections to remind the

returning exiles of their duties and calling.

Next, strangely enough, there are all the genealogies of the nations around Israel (1.29-33; 1.38-54). God did not want His people to forget the nations. The nations are their *project*, even though they have been their enemies for generations.

A line is quickly drawn from Judah (recall Gen. 49.8-12) to David (2.3-15), and this is because the story of Israel will “pick up” with David and come forward from him to the present, once the genealogies have been established. The genealogies are like a prelude to an opera, in which you get snippets and quotes of all the songs and themes that will unfold once the curtain is raised. David’s family is elaborated in detail (3.1-24) before another recapitulation of the line of Judah commences (4.1ff.). This tracing of Judah’s line includes the conquest and settling of the land, as if to emphasize to those returning from captivity that they have a similar duty ahead of them (cf. 4.10). Genealogies that follow mention place-names, as if to broaden the vision of those returning beyond Jerusalem to all the land of promise (4.24ff.).

The genealogies of the other tribes are provided, so that the list includes all Israel, not unlike the censuses we saw in Numbers. We’re beginning to get the impression that this return from Babylon is meant to be like the first conquest of the land, only without all the violence.

Read slowly and in places you’ll feel a rhythm to these genealogies, and you’ll even come across some rhyming of names. These devices were used to help make the genealogies easier to remember. The people listed at the end of these genealogies were the returnees, the *people* with whom God was renewing His covenant. They were returning to the *place* God had appointed to them, to resume the *project* they had abandoned seventy years earlier. Everything about these lists of names is meant to conjure all the genealogies from the past, and the events of God’s sovereign care and leading attached to those lists.

The genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1-9 bend toward Saul and his offspring, before veering to David as the first king descended from Judah. The detailed arrangements for the temple which David provided are again rehearsed, undoubtedly to give guidance for the work that lay ahead for these returnees (1 Chron. 6, 9). David’s kingly line is traced all the way to Jeconiah, when the kingship ends (3.1-17). This list seems deliberately included to invoke the question, “Who is to be king now?” That question is left unanswered, and will remain so until the Lion of the tribe of Judah arrives. So these genealogies invoke not only memories but anticipation as well.

Israel took a second census in Numbers to show that God’s grace had sustained them through forty years of rebellion. 1 Chronicles 1-9 goes further, providing not only a census of the returning exiles but a genealogy tracing all the way back to Adam, and through all the epochs and stages of God’s covenant faithfulness. The genealogies are a reminder of God’s grace and a summons to return to His covenant *place* and *project* as His devoted covenant *people*.

Reflect.

1. What would the return to Jerusalem after seventy years of captivity in Babylon have been like *without* these genealogies?
2. The genealogy of Judah and David was recorded all the way through to those returning from Babylon? Why was there no king?
3. How do you expect to benefit, as a participant in God’s covenant *project*, by reading through these

genealogies?

This chapter expresses that one end of recording all these genealogies was, to direct the Jews, when they returned out of captivity, with whom to unite, and where to reside. Here is an account of the good state into which the affairs of religion were put, on the return from Babylon. Every one knew his charge. Work is likely to be done well when every one knows the duty of his place, and makes a business of it. God is the God of order. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 1 Chronicles 9.1

Thank You, Lord, for including me in Your people, and for giving me a place – my Personal Mission Field – to work on Your project, which today will require me to...

Pray Psalm 105.1-12.

The genealogies mark the faithfulness of God in keeping and advancing His Word. Praise and thank Him for His great faithfulness, and seek His faithfulness in specific ways for the day ahead.

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 Organizing for Progress

Pray Psalm 84.1-4.

How lovely is Your tabernacle,
O LORD of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
Where she may lay her young—
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King and my God.
Blessed are those who dwell in Your house;
They will still be praising You.

Sing joyfully and with thanksgiving Psalm 84.1-4.

(Holy Manna: Brethren, We Have Met to Worship)

Lord of hosts, how sweet Your dwelling; how my soul longs for Your courts!
Let my soul with joy keep telling of Your grace forever more.
Like a bird upon the altar, let my life to You belong.
Blessed are they who never falter as they praise Your grace with song!

Read Ezra 8.1-14; Nehemiah 7.5-7.

Prepare.

1. Why do you suppose it was important that this list be provided twice?
2. What two major projects did these returning people accomplish? Why was it important to record their names?

Meditate.

The genealogy/census listed in Ezra 8.1-14 is condensed. Just enough of the pedigree of each name was given so that officials in Jerusalem could check the credentials of those returning with Ezra against existing records. And where that was not possible (cf. Ez. 2.61-63), the returnees would have to wait for an adjudication of their claims by the priests.

Notice how Nehemiah begins his record of the returning exiles (Neh. 7.5), which is the same record as provided by Ezra 2. Let's note two important things.

First, Nehemiah says "God put it into my heart" to record the census/genealogy that follows in this chapter. If there was ever any doubt in our minds about whether the genealogies of Scripture are inspired, this should dispel it once and for all. The genealogies are a bit like the superscriptions in the psalms – which almost nobody reads. In our English versions, those superscriptions don't even merit a verse numbering! But we should follow the Hebrew Bible and include those superscriptions as inspired text (cf. the superscription of Psalm 18 with 2 Sam. 22.1), just as the genealogies are. And we should consider that, as inspired texts, they have something of God's love to teach us – as we have seen throughout this study of the genealogies.

Second, Nehemiah assembled the whole population “to be registered by genealogy.” Here he is updating the existing genealogy by having every person enrolled (the Hebrew verb is actually reflexive: “enrolled themselves”). With the temple rebuilt, the wall finished, and the people disbursed to their various cities and villages, it was time to go forward. And to do so, it was essential that the existing census and genealogies should be accurate and up to date. Here is yet another indication of the importance these documents held for the people of ancient Israel.

The attention given in these two books to getting the lists of names and pedigrees right should speak to us about the role of the genealogies of Scripture. It was important to know who’s in and who’s not when it comes to laying hold on the promised blessings of God. Family records, church membership rolls, even theological and denominational traditions have some affinity to the making of genealogies that we see in Scripture. They can help us to know who we are and from whom we are descended, – which branch of God’s *people* – where we belong – God’s *place* for us – and how we fit into God’s *project* for knowing, loving, and serving Him, and making all the nations disciples.

Reflect.

1. How is the return from Babylon in some ways like the conquest of Canaan under Joshua? What role did censuses and genealogies play in each of these?
2. Why was it so important to keep these records current? How would these records serve future generations of Israelites?
3. How do you suppose these genealogies and censuses helped Ezra and Nehemiah in finishing the tasks God had assigned them?

When, therefore, not only the nobles and officials but also all the common people had assembled before him, he diligently endeavored to make a census of their number so that, having made a review of the total of all the people, he might be able to determine which ones should dwell in the city of Jerusalem and which in the other cities The Venerable Bede (672-735), *On Ezra and Nehemiah* 3.25

Thank You, Lord, that my name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Help me live as a citizen of Your Kingdom today as I...

Pray Psalm 84.5-12.

Rejoice to be the dwelling-place and temple of the Lord! Commit all your activities today as offerings for His glory.

Sing Psalm 84.5-12.

Psalm 84.5-12 (*Holy Manna: Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

Blessed are they whose strength is founded in Your strength, O Lord above.

All whose hearts in You are grounded journey in Your strength and love.

Though they weep with tears of sadness, grace shall all their way sustain.

In Your presence, filled with gladness, they shall conquer all their pain.

Lord of hosts, my prayer receiving, hear me, help me by Your grace!

In Your courts I stand believing; turn to me Your glorious face!

Lord, our sun, our shield, our glory, no good thing will You deny to those who proclaim Your story, and who on Your grace rely.

6 Son of God, Second Adam

Pray Psalm 87.1-3.

His foundation is in the holy mountains.
The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God!

Sing joyfully and with thanksgiving Psalm 87.1-4.

(St. Anne: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past)

Upon the holy mountains rest the footings of the Lord,
Who loves of Israel's flock the best the keepers of His Word.

For glorious things are spoken of the City of our God;
The nations know His matchless love wher'er His feet have trod.

Read Luke 3.23-38.

Prepare.

1. Why is this genealogy important?
2. How does this genealogy lead us to think about Jesus?

Meditate.

The two genealogies of Jesus – here and in Matthew 1 – are important for tying Him into Abraham, Judah, and David. Each follows a bit of a different course, listing different names from David to Jesus. Luke follows the descent through David's son Nathan, while Matthew traces it through Solomon.

This is an ascending genealogy; it begins with Jesus and works its way back through time to Adam and God. In so doing it locates Jesus in His heavenly, as well as His earthly provenance. He is the eternal Son of God Who became the Son of Man by virtue of His birth through the virgin. Some have suggested that the phrase “as was supposed” in relation to Joseph could indicate that this is Mary's genealogy – and that Heli (v. 23) was actually her father, and not Joseph's – whereas Matthew's genealogy is that of Joseph. Jesus would be Davidic in His pedigree on both sides, and divine as to His provenance in the eternal Godhead.

The genealogy lists 76 generations from Adam to Jesus, suggesting that the generation that descends from Jesus – all those who believe in Him – is the 77th generation, a number symbolic both of completion and forgiveness (cf. Lk. 17.4). In this view, the generation spawned by Jesus would be the generation that realizes the fulfillment of God's covenant. All who come to the Father through faith in Jesus are sons and daughters of God, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Luke's genealogy covers the entire scope of redemptive history from its beginning in eternity to the incarnation of Jesus and the beginning of His ministry. Prominent names – Zerubbabel, David, Judah, Abraham, Noah, and Seth, for example – invite us to pause, reflect, and give thanks to God for His sovereign maintenance of His covenant. Luke tells us that the book of Acts is the continuing record of what Jesus *began* to do, as he reported in his gospel. Here he suggests that his gospel is the

continuing record of what God *began* to do in the Old Testament. His genealogy has the effect of “Previously in the unfolding of the divine plan for redemption...”

In this genealogy Jesus is presented both as the Son of God and as the second Adam. Since Jesus is the new Adam, and forgiveness and wholeness are the gifts He brings, the Church is the new creation and the new garden of Eden, in and from which God unfolds His Kingdom of righteousness, peace, joy, and power in the Holy Spirit.

The genealogies in Luke and Matthew provide a two-sided lesson on how to read and understand the Word of God. Matthew shows us that Scripture and history lead to Jesus, move toward Him, unfold to reveal more of Him, create anticipation of Him, and do so in a carefully planned and orderly manner. Luke shows us that Scripture and history point us back to creation and upward to God and His purposes, which are revealed to us and fulfilled in Jesus.

Reflect.

1. Why do you suppose Luke waited until after Jesus’ baptism to introduce this genealogy? Why not put it at the very beginning, like Matthew did?
2. Why did Luke trace the genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam and God? Why not just stop at Abraham (hint: remember that all the names before Abraham were *non-Jews*)?
3. This list ascends in the order in which the names appear, but it descends as you read down through it. Should we attach any spiritual meaning to this?

Matthew’s list of the forefathers of Jesus showed that Christ was the son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed, and heir to the throne of David; but Luke shows that Jesus was the Seed of the woman that should break the serpent’s head, and traces the line up to Adam, beginning with Eli, or Heli, the father, not of Joseph, but of Mary. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Luke 3.23-38*

Lord, I rejoice to be in Your family! Thank You for the grace that has registered me with You. Help me to live like my faithful forebears in the faith today as I...

Pray Psalm 87.3-7.

Pray for the people of God worldwide, that all whom God is calling to Himself through Jesus may be “registered” for salvation, and may rejoice in the Lord and His goodness. Make a point to pray for specific believers you expect to see today, and ask the Lord to show you how you can encourage them in their walk with and work for Him.

Sing Psalm 87.3-7.

Psalm 87.3-7 (*St. Anne: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

For glorious things are spoken of the City of our God;
The nations know His matchless love wher’er His feet have trod.

From south and north, from east and west they come, called by His grace;
Thus Zion stands, full strong and blessed, before the Savior’s face.

The Lord will count and tally all in Jesus born again;
Then let them sing, who on Him call, “We joy in God, Amen!”

7 You and Me and Genealogy

Pray Psalm 106.1-5.

Praise the LORD!

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!

For His mercy *endures* forever.

Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD?

Who can declare all His praise?

Blessed *are* those who keep justice,

And he who does righteousness at all times!

Remember me, O LORD, with the favor *You have toward* Your people.

Oh, visit me with Your salvation,

That I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones,

That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation,

That I may glory with Your inheritance.

Sing joyfully Psalm 106.1-5, 48.

(Trust in Jesus: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus)

Praise the Lord! Give thanks and praise Him! He is good, His love endures!

More His works than can be spoken; let His praise be ever sure!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!

Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Lord, when You Your people favor, help me, O, remember me,

That I may Your blessings savor and in joy and glory be!

Refrain

Read Revelation 7.4-10.

Prepare.

1. Who are the people mentioned here?

2. How do they make us think about the genealogies we have considered in this series?

Meditate.

One final genealogy awaits our consideration in this series on *Gleanealogy*. This one is altogether unique, in that it existed even before the world was created, and has not been added to since; however, it will not be opened and read until the world as we know it comes to an end. Knowing that it exists draws God's covenant people forward, ever forward, to the coming day of glory

Nevertheless, God knows the names of those who are written in it, for He wrote their names in it Himself (Ex. 32.32; Luke 10.20). This is the Lamb's Book of Life, the census/genealogy of all those whom God has gathered, is gathering, and will gather to Himself to dwell forever with Him in the new heavens and new earth.

Who are these people? They include representatives from all the tribes descended from Jacob, as well as all the tribes and nations and peoples from the nations beyond Israel. They are a number greater than anyone could ever enumerate – more than the stars of the heavens, the dust of the air, or the

sand of the seas (Rev. 7.4-10). These are those who labor in the Gospel, seeking the Kingdom of God and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus (Phil. 4.3). They overcome all adversity to stand firm in their confession of Christ (Rev. 3.5). They worship only the Lamb of God, and will no way give their devotion to any other creature or thing (Rev. 13.8). These are they whose works in life are their credentials and calling card – like Ezra, when he showed up in Jerusalem – showing them to be recorded in the Book of Life. They rid themselves of everything that defiles, and every abomination and every lie (Rev. 21.27). And they hold fast to *every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God* – omitting none, changing none, and adding nothing to them (Rev. 22.19).

A day is coming when the Book of Life will be opened, and all whose names are listed there will be read out, and they will be welcomed to and registered in the Kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world.

The people who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon *knew* they were “on the list” to have a reservation in the land of promise. They had their pedigree. They fit the qualifications. They could trace their roots back to Abraham. Those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life know they are on that list (1 Jn. 5.13). Their pedigree is Jesus, and He is at work in and through them, bearing fruit that proves their faith and confirms their names are written in the only genealogy and census that finally matters (Matt. 7.19, 20).

Those who appear before the judgment throne of Christ, with no credentials to commend themselves, will find that their names have not been written in that ultimate list, and they will not be welcomed into the eternal City of God. We must not take for granted that our names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Instead, we must ever show ourselves eager to be found in that great genealogy. We must do all that God commands to “make our calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1.5-11), lest we be found to be no followers of Christ at all, but lawless and disobedient pretenders (Matt. 7.21-23).

Reflect.

1. Is it possible to know whether your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? Explain.
2. How should believers encourage one another to make their calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1.5-11)? Why should we do this for one another?
3. Christians are not saved *by* works, but we’re not saved *without* them. Why? Which works?

There is but one Book of Life, because in it are inscribed those who are the elect, that is, those blameless in virtue, who have trodden every rugged and steep path of virtue. Oecumenius (6th century), *Commentary on the Apocalypse* 20.11, 12

Thank You, Lord, that You have written my name in Your Book! Help me to prove my credentials today as I...

Pray Psalm 106.44-48.

Give thanks to God for His covenant, and for the grace He has shown you in Jesus. Pray that He will gather all those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and bring revival, renewal, and awakening in our day.

Sing Psalm 106.44-48.

Psalm 106.44-48 (*Trust in Jesus: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*)

Look upon us, Lord, with favor, see us in our sore distress!

Hear our cries, with love surround us – turn again to heal and bless!

Refrain v. 48

Blessèd be our God and Savior, evermore His praise proclaim!

Let all those who know Your favor praise Your holy, glorious Name!

Save us, Lord, from every nation; gather us from all our ways.

And we to Your Name will offer glorious thanks and endless praise!

Refrain

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What purposes do the genealogies looked at in this study fulfill? Why were they important?
2. Genealogies look backward, but, at the same time, they help the people of their day go forward. Explain.
3. Why are the genealogies of nations included in 1 Chronicles 1-9? How does that help God's people look backward and forward at the same time?
4. How can we know if we are included in the Lamb's Book of Life?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from part 3 of our study in *Gleanealogy*? How are you putting that lesson to work in your own life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

Thank you.