



In Israel's world a person's genealogy had possible implications for his social standing. This was true in terms of family of origin, with wealthier families often having more social sway. But it was true also (for males) in terms of birth order, with firstborn sons being regarded as the "firstfruits" of a father's strength (Gen. 49:3) and entrusted with extra family responsibilities (cf. comment on 4:21–23).

In this genealogy, however, many key characters neither are the firstborn nor do they descend from the firstborn. The Levites play a crucial role at the all-important tabernacle but descend from Jacob's third son (6:14–16). The priestly family is the most important among the Levites but come from Levi's second son (6:16, 18, 20, 23, 25). And second-born Moses, not firstborn Aaron, is Israel's key leader. The same occurs elsewhere. The Lord chooses second-born Jacob over firstborn Esau (Gen. 25:23). He likewise chooses David, who is eighth-born and the youngest of his brothers (1 Sam. 16:6–12).

Such decisions make clear the Lord does not abide by society's rules when choosing those he will use. No matter our social status, family of origin, or place in our family, the Lord can use us as much as anyone else. If anything, the weaker we are in the world's eyes, the more God delights to use us, so that the world might see that someone far greater than us has chosen to work through us (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26–29).²²

ICEBREAKER

What's the most interesting thing you can remember about your own genealogy?

READ IT

Read Exodus 6:14–7:7

²² Jay Sklar, "Exodus," in *ESV Expository Commentary: Genesis–Numbers*, vol. 1, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025), commentary on Exodus 6:10–7:7.

EXPLORE IT

1. After mentioning Reuben (Ex. 6:14) and Simeon (Ex. 6:15), on which tribe does our passage stop to focus?
2. Which important message listed twice defined Moses and Aaron's legacy? (Ex. 6:26-27)
3. What was Moses' big fear, as recorded in Ex. 6:30?
4. Which six actions does God tell Moses He will take? (Ex. 7:3-5 ESV)
5. How old was Moses while engaged in this ministry of delivering messages from God? (Ex. 7:7)

APPLY IT

When Things Go from Bad to Worse, Remember Who You Are (Exodus 6:14-25)

This section transitions between the failed attempt at deliverance that led to the people's discouragement (5:1-6:9) and the coming display of the Lord's mighty hand that will lead to the people's departure (7:8-11:10). It comprises three parts.

In the first the Lord reissues his charge to Moses to go to Pharaoh, and Moses expresses his inability to do so (6:10-12). In the second the story is interrupted to provide Moses and Aaron's genealogy (vv. 13-27). This is significant information for the original audience (cf. discussion below) and appropriately placed for the central role Moses and Aaron are about to play. The third part resumes the story and gives an overview of the coming chapters, underscoring the Lord's coming deliverance of Israel (6:28-7:7). This should give the audience hope as the narrative turns to describe Moses and Aaron's confrontations with Pharaoh (7:8-11:10).²³

6. How far back can you trace your spiritual genealogy? What moments of obedience made a difference?

²³ Sklar, "Exodus," at Exodus 6:10-7:7.

7. This genealogy lists people with notable moments from Scripture. In those moments, some honored God, and some didn't. Choose one cross reference and write down what was done, and whether or not you think it honored God. Nadab and Abihu (Strange Fire): Leviticus 10:1–3; Korah (The Rebellion): Numbers 16:1–35, Phinehas (The Zealous Intervention): Numbers 25:6–13.

The genealogy in Exodus 6 is full of practical instruction for Christian work and worship. The lives of the men and women in Aaron's family teach us to remain faithful in our worship day and night and to stand up for what is right even when everything seems to be going wrong. At the same time, the tragic deaths in the family warn us not to seek our own way in the work or worship of the church.

Imagine if your own name appeared in the Biblical genealogies. What would they say about you? Would they be able to say that you were faithful in your ministry, no matter how large or small it may have been? Would they be able to say that even when everyone else got caught up in sexual immorality and spiritual adultery, you were zealous for God's glory? Or would they say that you offered strange worship and rebelled against the church's spiritual authority?

These questions are interesting to think about, but the question that really matters is this: What does God say about you? Is your name written in his family record, the Book of Life? Do you belong to him by faith in Jesus Christ? For no matter how faithful we are, we can only be saved by the grace that God has shown through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.²⁴

8. What sort of legacy do you want future descendants to remember about you?

²⁴ Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), chap. 15, "They Were the Levites (Exodus 6:13–27)."

9. What happens when an entire church starts to forget who they are in Christ? How can we combat that pitfall?

When You're Afraid of Failure, Remember God's Calling (Exodus 6:26-30)

For a man who complained that he couldn't speak, Moses sure had a lot to say! We have heard him raise this same objection before. He raised it back at the burning bush, when God first called him to be a prophet: "Moses said to the LORD, 'O Lord, I have never been eloquent.... I am slow of speech and tongue'" (Exod. 4:10). He said virtually the same thing at the beginning of chapter 6: "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips?" (v. 12). Now he says it again, trying to convince God that he was the wrong man for the job. Pharaoh would never listen to him because he was not a gifted speaker.

Perhaps this was a summary of what Moses said earlier rather than a separate conversation. But it seems more likely that Moses was dragging up the same old excuses again. It is easy to grow impatient with Moses for this, but what he did is not uncommon. People often come up with excuses for not doing what God tells them to do. Like Moses, we tend to use the same objections over and over. It takes some Christians years to get past their tired old excuses for not giving, not going, not witnessing, or not serving. We need to discover what Moses discovered: God's call is always accompanied by God's gift.²⁵

10. In what area of your walk with God are you afraid of failure?

²⁵ Ryken, *Exodus*, chap. 15.

11. Go back and read Exodus 6:12-13. There and in Exodus 6:30, Moses makes identical excuses. Why is it so easy to make excuses based on our own weaknesses?
12. Is there a gift God has given you that you aren't stewarding well? What would good stewardship of that gift look like?
13. What are the cultural or practical warning signs of a church that is burying its gifts instead of stewarding them well? Do you see any of those in our church? If so, what can be done about them?

When God Gives You a Hard Task, Remember He Has a Good Plan (Exodus 7:1-7)

The Lord then overviews the coming events (7:3–5). He begins by affirming his sovereignty over Pharaoh: “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart” (v. 3a), that is, he will take Pharaoh’s heart, which is already hardened in rebellion, and make it harder still (cf. comment on 4:21–23). This will lead to several results:

- (1) The Lord will multiply in Egypt his signs and wonders, which continually witness to Pharaoh and the Egyptians that he is the Lord and should be heeded (7:3b).
- (2) Despite the signs, Pharaoh will repeatedly refuse to heed the Lord’s words (7:4a).
- (3) Nonetheless, the Lord will put his hand on Egypt and bring his people out with great judgments on Egypt’s evil (7:4b; cf. 2 Chron. 24:24; Ezek. 5:9–10; 28:22–23).
- (4) Therefore, the Egyptians will know that he is the Lord (Ex. 7:5).

In short: “Moses and Aaron, your faithfulness will seem to have no effect, and for a time my mighty acts will seem to have no effect, but my purposes and power will prevail, so that I will lead Israel—my people!—out of Egypt, showing all Egypt that I am Yahweh, sovereign God and King!”²⁶

14. How might knowing the future make following Jesus easier? How does knowing the past make following Jesus easier?

²⁶ Sklar, “Exodus,” at Exodus 6:10–7:7.

The heart refers to the whole of the intellect, will, and emotions from which a person acts. The various Hebrew verbs used to describe the hardening of Pharaoh's heart all refer to a desire to act contrary to the Lord rather than in accord with him. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is referred to throughout chs. 4-14 with the implication that Pharaoh is answerable for his own actions (e.g., 8:15). However, the Lord states here that it is his sovereign hand that ultimately governs the events. This is also indicated by the recurring "as the LORD had said" (see 7:13; 8:15, 18; 9:12, 35). Though one might conclude that, if God hardens someone's heart, the latter is not answerable for his actions, this is not the biblical view, and certainly here the narrative is also careful to point out that Pharaoh also hardened his own heart (8:15, 32; 9:34). The sinner remains responsible for his sin.²⁷

15. As Pharaoh was exposed to God's power, glory, and commands, his heart was hardened. What does this passage and Rom. 9:16-18 teach us about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?

16. Where in your life do you need to remember that God has a good plan? What would it look like for you to take a step of faith in that area?

17. What hard tasks are only possible if our church decides to take steps of faith together?

²⁷ *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).