



The Sermon

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Genesis 46:8-27

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"One Big Family"

TRANSCRIPT

Well, we have a lot that we're going to be looking at today, so I need to just dive right into this. And so I want you to take your Bible and turn with me to the book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 46. And for those of you who are visiting with us today, we are preaching verse by verse through the entire book of Genesis. We've been in this for a couple years, and we're approaching the end of the book, and we come to a very interesting portion of scripture; we come to the genealogy of Jacob. And rather than just hydroplaning over this and moving on to something that's maybe easier to preach, I've decided we're going to hunker down today in this genealogy; and there's much for us to learn. So as we begin the message, the title of this is "One Big Family," and I think you'll see why. I want to begin reading in verse 8, and we will go through verse 27 today.

And the Word of God reads, "Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. The sons of Reuben: Hanoch and Pallu and Hezron, Carmi. The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, Merari." Verse 12, "The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan)." That means they died before they were able to reach Egypt in this journey. And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul." Verse 13, "The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvvah, Iob, Shimron. The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, Jahleel. These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah; all his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three.

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"The sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, Areli. The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. And the sons of Beriah: Heber, Malchiel. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; and she bore to Jacob these sixteen persons.

"The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph, Benjamin. Now to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh, Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, bore to him. The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard. These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob; there were fourteen persons in all.

"The sons of Dan: Hushim. The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, Shillem. These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore these to Jacob; there were seven persons in all.

"All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all, and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy." This is the reading of the genealogy of Jacob. So let us now go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, this is a long list of names, and we want to know, "What should we learn from this? What is the impact of this? What is the value of this? What is the importance of this?" And I pray that Your Holy Spirit would teach us, would enlighten and illumine us, and that we would be greatly blessed by this study today of this genealogy. So we ask now that You come among us and that you instruct us for our edification, and perhaps even for some here today for their conversion. So we look to You, look nowhere else but to You, in Christ's name. Amen. [End]

In these verses we see the genealogy of Jacob that includes multiple generations of descendants. Most of us do not normally consider the genealogies to be a part of Scripture that really excite our hearts. I've never preached a sermon on this genealogy before in my life, and I would venture to say you've probably never heard a sermon on this genealogy, and there's 5622 Dyer Street, Suite 200 | Dallas, Texas | 75206 | 214.972.9679 | TrinityBiblechurchofdallas.com

probably a good reason for that. But I will attempt to do what has never been done before in the history of the church over the last 2,000 years. Just because Mount Everest is there, we're going to climb it, OK.

So, just pronouncing all of these Hebrew names is a challenge in itself. To say nothing of most of these names, we are unfamiliar with. And most of these names do not mean much to us; and yet here they are. These are 20 verses that are occupying my Bible. And why are they here? And what is the purpose of this?

This not the first time that we've encountered a genealogy in the book of Genesis. In fact, this is the seventh genealogy. The first was in Genesis chapter 4, and it was a genealogy from Cain to Naamah; it was eight verses. And then the second was Seth to Enosh, and that was two verses. And then we advanced to Genesis chapter 5 and it's the third lengthy genealogy; it covers an entire chapter, it's longer than this. It covers 32 verses, and it goes from Adam to Noah's sons with great detail. And then we go to Genesis 10 and there is the table of nations that comprises the fourth genealogy in the book of Genesis, and it goes from Noah's sons to Joktan; and again, it's another whole chapter, it's 32 verses occupying space in our Bibles. And then in Genesis 11 there's the fifth genealogy and it goes from Shem, one of Noah's sons, to Abraham; and that's a grand total of 23 verses. And then in Genesis 25 there is the sixth genealogy, and it goes from Abraham to Isaac, and that's 20 verses. And so to this point, when you add all this up - which I did yesterday - it's 117 verses. And then when you add this genealogy, which is the seventh, which is comprised of 20 verses, the total is 137 verses in Genesis that is just a genealogy.

Now just to put this in perspective, this is longer than many individual books in the Bible. So I also did a lot of counting and did some math on this yesterday, and this is striking that these genealogies in the book of Genesis are longer than the entire book of Ruth, longer than the entire book of Joel, longer than Jonah, longer than Nahum, longer than Habakkuk, longer than Zephaniah, longer than Haggai, longer than Malachi. These genealogies are longer than eight individual books in the Old Testament. That's staggering.

And then when we come to the New Testament, it's just more the same. These genealogies put together are longer than the book of Philippians, the book of Colossians, the book of 1 Thessalonians, it's longer than 2 Thessalonians, it's longer than 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon. It's longer than James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John. It's longer than Jude. When you add all this up, it's longer than 23 individual books in the entire Bible. There's only 66 books in the Bible, so it's longer than a third of the books in the Bible.

And this is to say nothing of the other genealogies that are in the Bible. I looked them all up yesterday, and we don't have time to go into those genealogies; we're barely going to have time to go into this genealogy. But there are other genealogies in Exodus, 1 Chronicles, Ezra 2, Ezra 10. The New Testament begins with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then when we come to Luke's gospel, there is another genealogy of Christ.

This is very important to God. This is His word, and so we just can't hydroplane over this, we just can't pass this by going 80 miles an hour. We need to stop and tap the brakes and look into this. And there are three questions that need to be raised as we look at this. Number one, "What is the structure?" because this is not laid out like an omelet where everything, all these names are just thrown into a pot and stirred up and there's no real order or structure, and names are just being pulled out seemingly randomly.

What is the structure? I want you to see the structure of this today. And then, second, the importance. What is the importance of this? Why would God devote so much space and so many verses in the Bible, especially when I would love to have so many of my questions answered that the Bible does not give a definitive answer. And yet here we have genealogy stacked on top of genealogy on top of genealogy. What is the importance of this? I want to help us to see that today.

And then, third, what are the lessons for my life? So why should this impact my life Monday morning? Why should this help me on Saturday morning or on Friday night? What is the application? What is the take home from this? And so those are the three things that I want to address with us today, OK.

So let's start with number one, "the simple structure." I want to help you see the structure of this complex, detailed genealogy; and it breaks that into six parts, and I want you to see the six parts. It begins with the introduction, that's at the first of verse eight: "Now these are the names of the sons of Israel," referring to Jacob. And so the first part of verse 8 is really like what we call the topic sentence of a paragraph. It's like an umbrella sentence that is over the whole of what follows, and it orients us as the reader into what follows.

And then what follows after the introduction are four sections. They are divided by four women who bore the children of Jacob, and I want to walk us through this. Two of the women were wives. There's Leah and she's mentioned in verse 15, and there's Rachel and she's mentioned in verse 22, and their names appear at the end of their section. And then there are two other women who bore children for Jacob and they were housemaids. There was Zilpah and she's mentioned in verse 18, and there's Bilhah and she's mentioned in verse 25. And so those four women are the anchor points. They are the cornerstones, if you will, in how Moses has arranged this genealogy.

So I've told you about the introduction. Now the second division is the descendants through Leah, and that is in verses 8 through 15, and Leah's name will be mentioned at the end in verse 15, and she has produced all the sons in verses 8 through 15. This is Jacob's first wife. She produced six sons. And just let your eye look down the page. In verse 8 is Reuben, in verse 10 is Simeon, in verse 11 is Levi, in verse 12 is Judah, in verse 13 is Issachar, and in verse 14 is Zebulun.

And as Moses records this, he even includes the grandsons, and with Judah two great-grandsons. And so Reuben has four grandsons, Simeon has six grandsons – I earlier read their names – Levi had three grandsons, Judah five grandsons, Issachar four grandsons, and Zebulun three grandsons. You can see that right there in your Bible. And then it all builds up to verse 15, and verse 15 is like the bottom line, it's the summary of Leah's descendants that have come through her. It's six sons, one daughter – daughter is Dinah, verse 15 – and it totals thirty-three descendants. And I want you to see just how precise and accurate the Bible is. I want you to see just how specific in detail the Bible is written.

Then we come to the next section, and that's in verses 16 through 18. These are the descendants through Zilpah. Now Zilpah is mentioned in verse 18 in the summary and she was Leah's maid who became Jacob's concubine. She was a wedding gift given to Leah by her father Laban; and through the initiative of Leah, Zilpah became a surrogate wife to Jacob to bear children to Jacob, and she bore two sons, you see them right there: Gad in verse 16, Asher in verse 17. And Gad - you can count it - had seven grandsons, and Asher had four grandsons, one granddaughter, and two great-grandsons. And so verse 18 puts a bow around it, verses 16 through 18, and there are sixteen descendants. Everything is very neatly packaged and precisely in order, everything in place.

And then the next section is verses 19 through 22, and these are the children that came through Rachel. And Rachel is actually mentioned in the first verse, verse 19, and she's also mentioned in verse 22 in the summary. Now she had two sons. And Rachel was the second wife of Jacob - really his favorite wife, the younger sister of Leah - and she bore Jacob two sons. And we're very familiar with these two sons, because we've been studying them for multiple weeks as we've been going through these chapters in Genesis, and those two are Joseph in verse 20, and Benjamin in verse 21. And you'll see that Joseph has two grandsons and Benjamin ten grandsons. So verse 22 is the summary of verses 19 through 22, and there are two sons and twelve grandsons, which make a total of fourteen descendants. And again, I draw your attention to how specific and detailed the Bible is.

And then finally in verses 23 to 25 these are the descendants of the fourth woman who is Bilhah. And Bilhah was given by Rachel to Jacob to be a surrogate mother, to be a wife, because Rachel was barren; and so she provided Bilhah so that there would be children. And so Bilhah, who was a maid in the house, gave birth to two sons: Dan in verse 23, and Naphtali in verse 24. And verse 25 now is the summary statement of Bilhah. She produced two sons and five grandsons. You can do the math on this. It totals seven descendants, as verse 25 says.

Everything's in perfect order; there's a place for everything, and everything is in its place. There's nothing out of place here. And so it all leads to the sixth and final division of this genealogy, which is the summation, which is like a conclusion, and this is in verses 26 and 27. And what these verses are in reality is they are a summary of the summaries. There are four summary

statements, remember, at the end of each of these divisions, and so Moses just pulls all the summaries together and he comes up with one final climactic summation.

And in verse 26, the total, he says, is sixty-six persons, and in verse 27 he says the total is seventy persons. And both are correct. Verse 26 is the qualified total, because some died before they got to Egypt, and some were born later in Egypt, never actually made the journey, and so there's some addition and subtraction that goes on, and seventy in and verse 27 is the grand total. Now I'm certain you don't want me to explain the difference in the sixty-six and the seventy, that would take another 30 minutes to walk through all of that. But that's a flyover of this genealogy, that's an overview of this genealogy, and we'll talk about it later. But we should be struck with the precision and the detail and the accuracy of the Word of God. And this is only representative of the entire rest of the Bible, and we'll talk about that a little bit later.

So this leads us now, second, to the second main heading that I want to put in front of you, which is the strategic importance. And I think it's a fair question to say, "So what is the importance of all this?" First of all, "Why is this important to God?" and second, "Why is it important to us? Why would God devote so much, so many verses and so much attention to this genealogy?"

Well, I want to give you several reasons, and the first is the lineage of the Messiah. That's not a secondary matter, this is of a primary matter for us. This genealogy is invaluable in helping confirm that Jesus is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the long-awaited, promised Savior and Deliverer of His people, the long-awaited King of Israel, but King of the world and King of the universe as well. Not just anyone could be the Messiah. The Messiah is not going to come out of right field. The Messiah, His name's not going to be just pulled out of a hat. There's going to be nothing random about who the Messiah would be. There is a specific lineage as to your family line as to who the Messiah will be, and with each generation that focus becomes narrower and narrower and narrower, until you're left with the conclusion, there's only one person in the history of the world who could have been the Messiah, who could have been the Savior of sinners, and it is the Lord Jesus Christ who will be the greater Son of Abraham and the greater Son of David.

Now the Bible teaches that the Messiah, Jesus, would be a descendant of Jacob, who would then be a descendant of his father Jacob who would be Judah, and He would be a descendant of the son of Judah who is Perez, who would then be a descendant of Perez who would be the son of Hezron. That's all right here in verse 12, by the way. Verse 8 and verse 12, there is your messianic line, there is your pipeline to the cross. There is your lineage for the Messiah, and no one else could be the Messiah unless you come through this family history. This is God pointing a finger out of heaven to point to His Son. You can read it just in looking at the genealogy who the Messiah is.

This is how the New Testament begins, as I mentioned earlier, and in Matthew 1:1-3 the New Testament begins by giving the genealogy of Jesus, and it begins with what we just walked through. I don't want to take the time to turn to it, but you can turn to it when you go home. Matthew 1:1-3 is just a setting of Genesis 46:8-12 at the very front doorstep of the New Testament, on the front porch of the New Testament. You cannot even get into the New Testament without stepping through the genealogy of Genesis 46. That's how strategic and important this is. So we can't just fly past this. And it's so important it is repeated again in Luke chapter 3:33-34.

So I want to stress again, there wasn't a sign-up sheet to be the Messiah. There was no invitation, "Whosoever will may come. Whoever would like to be the Messiah, step forward." No, this was determined long ago, and there's a bloodline, there is a lineage of ancestors that you must be right in the very middle of, or you're unqualified to be the Messiah.

Now in between Genesis 46 and Matthew 1 is an important verse, it's a Christmas verse, it's Micah 5:2. I want to read it for you, Micah 5:2. But it's so spot on to what we're saying: "But as for you, Bethlehem, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth were from long ago, from the days of eternity."

That's a staggering prophecy hundreds of years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, and what this is saying is that the Messiah stepped out of eternity past. He is without beginning, He has never been created, His goings forth are from long ago. From how long ago? From eternity past. He
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stepped out of eternity into Bethlehem to become the ruler of Judah and the ruler of Israel, the ruler of Israel, and He steps into Bethlehem which is in the land that was apportioned to Judah. It's a staggering promise, prophecy. God had already marked out the path of where the Messiah would enter into this world. He would go to the land that was divided up and apportioned to the son of Jacob whose name was Judah; and one of the smallest little cities, little bump on the road, Bethlehem, that's where the ruler will enter the human race, having existed from all eternity past.

But Judah is very important, so much so that in Matthew chapter 2, you remember when the magi from the east, they saw His star and stare - really I think it's the glory of God just leading them to Israel, and they said, "Where is He who was born King of the Jews?" Well, verse 3 it says Herod was troubled when he heard this, because he thought he was in charge over Israel. And so in verse 4 we read in Matthew 2, "Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he" - Herod - "inquired of them," - of the chief priests and scribes who know the Bible - "where the Messiah was to be born." Verse 5, "In Bethlehem of Judea," - well, that's the land given to Judah - "for this is what was written by the prophet," and they quote Micah 5:2.

This genealogy that we see right here in Genesis 46 is critically important to help establish who He will be, but where He will enter the human race, and when He will come. And the rest of the New Testament confirms this, and I need to give you these two other cross-references because they support everything that's being said here.

Hebrews 7:14 says, "It is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah," evident meaning it as clear as day. Anyone who can pick up a Bible and read it can see for themselves that when Jesus comes, He won't come from just anywhere on the map, and He will not come from just any family; no, He will be a descendant of Judah as it had been marked out by God the Father from before the foundation of the world. And this is so important that throughout all eternity future we will be identifying Jesus with Judah.

You remember in Revelation chapter 5 when the Father is upon the throne and He has a scroll in His right hand written in the front and on the inside. It's sealed up. It contains the end of human history, and no one was found

who could break the seals and open the scroll and execute God's final chapter of human history. And John begins to weep in heaven that no one would be able to bring all of the flow of history to its appointed end. And one of the elders said to John, who had been taken up into heaven, "Stop weeping. Behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah has overcome." That's in heaven. And throughout all the ages to come there will be multiple names for Jesus by which we will identify Him. But one of those is He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Well, we have His path marked out right here that will take Him to the cross, and will take Him to the throne of God above. I would say that's pretty important for this genealogy to be here, to drive a stake in the ground to help us see that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be. Now a couple more reasons I want to give you rather quickly.

Now, second, is the inheritance of the land. As you recall, as they come down to Egypt now, all seventy of them, plus wives and other extended family, they will be there for 400 years. This generation, of course, will die out, but their sons and their grandsons, et cetera, they will be there for 400 years until God raises up a deliverer named Moses who will lead them out of Egyptian bondage in the exodus. They will then spend the next 40 years wandering in the wilderness until they come to the time when Joshua will lead them into the Promised Land.

So as they enter into the Promised Land the question is, "So where is everyone going to live? Do you just go pick a spot to go live? Do you just roam through the Promised Land until you see something you like?" Is it like the Oklahoma land run where, you know, the sooners got a head start a couple days early and got into the state there in tribal territory and staked out certain parts of it, and everyone else had the leftovers who came at the appointed time?"

No, the Promised Land will be divided out in certain portions, and each of the sons of Jacob, their name will be associated with one of the parts of the land. So when you enter into the Promised Land you need to know what part of the promised land may you go to live, and it's going to depend upon what your ancestry is. I mean, is your great-great-great-great-great-grandfather Simeon, or is it Benjamin, or is it any one of these sons? Well, this

genealogy determines where you're going to live in the Promised Land. So that is important.

And then there's a third reason, which is the qualification for priests, because in this list Levi and the sons of Levi would be the priestly tribe, and there would be no land for them. They would be portioned certain cities that they could live in, but they don't have a swath of land. God would be their inheritance, and they would serve as priests. And in order to know who is qualified to be a priest, you have to come back to this genealogical structure here and show that you are related, in verse 11, to Levi through his three sons, and then they had sons, et cetera. So this is very important for even serving the Lord in ministry.

And then there's a fourth reason, which would be maybe a lesser reason – everything's lesser than the messianic lineage. But the fourth reason would be the transfer of property. The transfer of property required an accurate knowledge of the family tree. This was especially true in the book of Ruth, where Boaz acted as a kinsmen redeemer, right? And a kinsman redeemer must be a male relative whose responsibility it was to act on behalf of another relative who is in distress or who is in trouble, as Ruth was. And so in order to do so, you have to prove through genealogy that you're actually a relative of this one you're wanting to help. And so this genealogy also had this fourth value of importance. So it's multi-layered, and so I think we're beginning to understand a little bit why God would devote so much space in our Bible to this genealogy.

But this leads us to, third and finally, the spiritual lessons, because we believe that all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching and instruction, 2 Timothy 3:16-17. And so just as every portion of Scripture is inspired by God, so every portion of Scripture is relevant and is practical. And so we just have to pause a moment and think, "What are the practical benefits for my Christian life of this genealogy?" And I think we can say there are several.

First of all, we see in this genealogy, number one, the precision of Scripture. We see the absolute detailed accuracy of the Word of God, it's just right there before our very eyes. Every name is in the perfect place. Every son, every daughter, every grandson, every great-grandson is rightly

placed. No one is out of place. Even the numbers 66 and 70 are perfect. And as I said earlier, these names are not arranged in a haphazard fashion, this is not put together in a hurry. But instead, there is perfect precision. This is only the tip of the iceberg for the entire rest of the Bible. The entire rest of the Bible is written with the same accuracy as what we see here in this genealogy. In this genealogy, it's just for a moment, but it's like God is pulling back the veil and allowing us to see that the whole Bible is flawlessly perfect.

Let me give you an important verse, Matthew 5:18. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said, "Not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." Smallest letter, smallest stroke. Now what is the smallest letter? Jesus is referring to the Old Testament, 39 books written in Hebrew.

What is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet? There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. The smallest letter is what's called a *yohd* (y-o-h-d), a *yohd*. And a *yohd* is like an eyelash, only smaller. A *yohd* is like an apostrophe in our letters and in our punctuation, like "Jacob's" genealogy (Jacob apostrophe) – it's just a tiny little eyelash and then the "s." That is the smallest letter in the Hebrew Bible, and Jesus says, "Down to the very smallest apostrophe eyelash it will all be fulfilled."

But there's more. He also says, "the smallest stroke." Now what is a stroke? A stroke is just a part of a letter. A *yohd* is a whole letter, very small; but a stroke is only one little minute part of a letter; and to use this illustration, in the English alphabet lower case letters, what differentiates a lowercase "l" from a lowercase "t"? It's just one little tiny horizontal line. And Jesus is saying, "No. The inspiration, the inerrancy, the infallibility of Scripture goes down to not just the smallest letter, but the smallest stroke on a letter." That's how precise, that is how accurate Jesus said that the Bible is.

And so what we see here in this genealogy is but an illustration. It's just an example of the absolute, accurate, detailed precision of the Bible. I'm going to give you one more very quickly, and that's in the book of Psalms.

In the book of Psalms there are what is known as psalms that are precisely arranged in what is known as an alphabetical acrostic, and what that means is the first letter of a line, or the first letter of a verse, or the first letter of a stanza, as you move through the psalm, each successive line, or each successive verse, or each successive stanza will begin with the next Hebrew letter. So to make this simple, using the English language to illustrate, it would be like A-B-C-D-E-F-G.

So for example, Psalm 119 is composed of 22 stanzas, because there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. And in each successive stanza it starts with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, then the next stanza is the second letter, and so on, down to the 22nd to the end, and then each verse inside of that stanza starts with that same letter. I mean, it's like God's showing off, just the perfection with which the word of God is just wired together, and it is to show that there is nothing out of place in the substance and content, that the structure itself and the form itself reveals something of the truth, the perfection of the truth that is found in the Bible. And if you're taking notes, these acrostic psalms are: Psalm 9, Psalm 10, Psalm 25, Psalm 34, Psalm 111, Psalm 112, and Psalm 119. It's not just an isolated incident in 119. And that's just an example of how perfect the structure of the Bible is, which represents how perfect the truth of the Bible is.

So that's the precision of Scripture, and we see it right here. I mean, it's worth God taking this many verses just for us to begin to appreciate that. But there's a second reason, a second lesson, and it is the historicity of Christianity, that Christianity is a historical religion that is rooted and grounded in time and space, and it involves real people who lived real lives in real places. Christianity is not just a philosophical religion, a gathering of ideas that came spinning out of the head of the founder of the movement like with cults.

No, Christianity involves the history of the world. It begins with creation. In Genesis 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and it goes all the way through to the end of Revelation and God creating a new heavens and a new earth, and there is this unfolding drama of redemptive history that unfolds all the way through the Old Testament. There's the 400 years of silence before the New Testament, and then the ministry of Christ, the expansion of the church in the book of Acts, the Epistles that define Christ and defend Christ, and then the consummation in the book of

Revelation. This is all taking place not just in a notebook, not just in someone's head, not just on a chalkboard; this is taking place in real people, in real life, in real places, in this real world, and it substantiates the validity of Christianity, and it says to you as a real person that you must believe upon the real Messiah, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, if you are to find acceptance with God in heaven.

The third lesson that we learn from this genealogy is the importance of each individual, that everyone created in the image of God is important to God, and that everyone that is in this chosen nation of Israel is important to God, and that this doesn't just say Jacob's family and we're just left with a conglomerate of unidentified people. Name after name, after name, after name, after name is listed here, and these, each and every one, are vitally important to God. They are but another link in the chain that God is forging through human history, that no one here is anonymous, no one here is unknown to God, no one here is just a number, but a name known by God.

That's the way it is in our salvation. Jesus said in John 10:3 that the Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name. "Zacchaeus, come down. Matthew, follow Me. Lazarus, come forth." He knows you by name. He knows specifically what you're thinking right now. He knows what's in your mind, He knows what's in your heart, He knows what steps you will take when you leave from here. You are individually known by God. And this reveals, really, the importance of each individual person, so much so that in Revelation 20:15 at the end of the Bible, it says, "If anyone's name is not written in the Lamb's book of life, he will be thrown into the lake the fire."

No, God's keeping up with every name. And God has a register, and God has a book containing the names of everyone who is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. And though the gospel goes out, "Whosoever will may come," nevertheless it is those who are foreknown by the Father by name who are brought into saving relationship with Christ.

Another lesson that we learn here is the influence of the family leader. What strikes me as I read this genealogy is that Jacob is such a strong figure in the family that when he decides to move to Egypt, the whole family moves to Egypt. You know, Jacob is the patriarch of the family, and he casts the longest shadow across the terrain of his extended family, such

that when he packs up, they all pack up; when he goes, they all go. It shows the solidarity of this family unit. They stay together intact. How different that is from the modern family today that goes in every separate direction and live all over the country and live around the world. But it strikes me here the influence of Jacob to hold the family together. It's remarkable.

And the next lesson we learn here is rather interesting, if you'll think with me for a moment. It is the grace of God, God's grace upon mixed families. Now when I say mixed families, I'm not referring to ethnically mixed, like a Caucasian marries a Chinese, or a Japanese marries a German or something like that. No. When I say mixed family, I mean one father, but siblings through different mothers, all living together under one roof. That's what we see going on here. There is, what we would say today, a lot of step-brothers that are living together. And they have gone through difficult times, and they have gone through problems and troubles. But at the end of the day, they stick together.

And the nation Israel, as they come into the Promised Land and the land is divided among these twelve tribes of Israel, the whole thing is built on top of a mixed family. This isn't a Norman Rockwell painting here where everything is just perfect. This isn't "Father Knows Best." This isn't "Ozzie and Harriet." This isn't what the American family once was. This is a mixed bag. And yet the grace of God is working through it in such a way that the purposes of God are moving forward.

So why do I bring out this observation? To encourage many of you. Some of you come from a mixed family with step-brothers, with step-daughters. May not have been God's original design for the family, though there are biblical reasons for divorce, and there is death. But some of you here today have grown up in a mixed family with a father and then a step-mother, or a mother and a step-father. That's what's going on here. And you should be encouraged to know that the grace of God can bring great good out of a family that is a broken family. God can bring great good through you and others in your family, and that comes through loud and clear here.

The last lesson that I see, and then we'll wrap this up, is the sovereignty of God, because God is in control over the birth order, God is in control of the gender of each child; and what strikes me as I read this list is how many

men there are. I mean, this is the opposite of Jonathan Edwards. You know who Jonathan Edwards is, the great preacher of the 1730s, 1740s, the Great Awakening. Do you know he had ten older sisters? That'll get your hair parted straight. He had ten older sisters who were all six feet tall, and it was said that he grew up with sixty feet of women; that doesn't even include his mother.

But this is the opposite. But God's in control of that. And there are wives that are not mentioned here, and there may be some daughters that are not mentioned here, but God has sovereignly ordained that these sons be the result of the procreation of Jacob. And God is in control of the birth order, God is in control of the gender, it's all a part of the sovereignty of God.

And the same is true in your life as well. I mean, if we were to put your family tree together and come up with your genealogy, wherever you would find yourself on whatever branch of that family tree, that's where God put you, you had nothing to do with it. And God in His infinite wisdom and His grace and in His supreme authority, He had you brought into this world either firstborn or second born or third born, or as a male or as a female, and it's all a part of the intricate design of the providence of God to be carried out in this world; and there's a sense of acceptance that we need to have of that.

We see a world in rebellion against this today that want to change their gender. That's of the devil; I hope you know that. That is of the devil. That is shaking the fist in the face of your Creator and saying, "I will not be what You made me to be." And there's grace and forgiveness for such if they will repent of their sins and humble themselves; but if not, they're on a fast track to hell, without a Savior to deliver them from the wrath of God to come. It is a sign of a reprobate mind that has lost all capacity to think rationally and correctly whatsoever, and you have become an absolute fool at every level.

No, the sovereignty of God we see right here. He names the birth order, He names the gender, and that's what it is, regardless of whatever you think it may be. "Let every man be found a liar, let God be found true," Romans 3:4.

Well, I need to bring this to conclusion. You have probably never sat through a sermon on this genealogy, you probably will never again sit through a sermon on this genealogy, but there's a lot of truth in this. The main thing I want you to know is that this genealogy laid the foundation for the coming of God's Son by giving the messianic lineage. And the whole point of all of human history is for God to send His Son into this world on a mission of salvation, to go to a cross to be lifted up to bear the sins of His people, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Every angle and every approach of human history, it is all pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the years are identified as either before Christ or after Christ. The date of your birth, the year of your birth is identified by the coming of Christ into this world. How sad it would be, what a shame it would be to hear this message and to hear this truth and for your life not to be committed to the One who is the consummation of all human history, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Creator of this world.

If you've never believed upon Jesus Christ, I invite you in your heart to commit your life to Christ, to entrust yourself to Him. This would mean that you would need to confess your sin, because Jesus came into this world to save only one kind of person, and that is a sinner. He did not come to save good people, He came to save bad people. And there is none good, no, not one. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death, the second death, eternal destruction forever and ever away from the glories of heaven.

But there is extended to you a lifeline. There is extended to you a ladder that leads from this earth to heaven. There's extended to you the only way of salvation, and that is Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." There is no other hope, there is no other Savior; there's only one Savior. And so if you have never come to the place to commit your life to Christ, I beg you, I plead with you this very moment to do so in your heart of hearts. We don't ask you to get up and walk forward, we don't ask you to sign a card, we don't ask you to do anything except do business with God in your heart.

And so this very moment could be the most important moment in your entire life. Did you hear that? This moment could be your moment with God. It

could be the most important moment in your life, to repent of your sins and to entrust your soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered and bled and died upon Calvary's cross to wash away sin. So if you've never done that, behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, today is the day of salvation. The Bible says, "He who hardens his heart being often reprov'd shall suddenly be cut off, and that without remedy."

This is a day of grace. This is an hour, this is a moment of grace in which the gates of paradise are swung wide open to you. And you may never have an opportunity like this again for the rest of your life. Enter through that gate. Jesus is that gate that leads to abundant life, every other gate is closed. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the end of death."

So commit your life to Christ, and you will find forgiveness of all of your sins, you will be clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ. God will come to live inside of you, and the Person of the Holy Spirit, He will walk with you every step of the way; and when you come to the end of that journey when you die, He will take you to the Father's house, and there you will live in eternal bliss forever and ever and ever.

You've never had an offer extended to you so glorious as this. Will you take it? Will you accept Christ? Will you believe upon Christ? You will have no one to blame but yourself if you do not. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, thank You for the record of this genealogy, complex, difficult. Yet it speaks to us; yet it addresses us. And I pray that as we leave, we will leave with the blessing that can only come from You upon us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Would you stand for the closing benediction, and then you're dismissed. The Lord bless you; the Lord keep you; the Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace. May that be your experience this day. God bless you.