

Genealogies from Jacob to the Babylonian Captivity

1 Chronicles 2-3

1 Chronicles 2:1-4 - *“These were the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, ² Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.*

From Judah to David

³*The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, and Shelah. These three were born to him by the daughter of Shua, the Canaanitess. Er, the firstborn of Judah, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; so He killed him. ⁴And Tamar, his daughter-in-law, bore him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah were five.*

Verse 5 to the end of the chapter is the family tree of Perez, the son of Judah. The important line in that family tree traces to David. Look at verses 12-15, *“Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse; Jesse begot Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, and David the seventh.”*

Background Notes

In 1 Chronicles 1 we traced the genealogy from the start of mankind in Adam up to Abraham, then from Abraham to Jacob. We might think that this seems kind of slanted. How about all the other family trees? The reason is: God’s purpose.

These biblical genealogies are not slanted – they are **selected**. God’s primary purpose for including the genealogies in Holy Scripture is to show that Jesus, the Messiah, descended from Adam, through the line of Abraham, and through the line of David. The One who would conquer Satan and bring salvation to mankind had to be **truly human**. From what God declared to Satan in Genesis 3:15, we know that the Redeemer of mankind would be human. *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”*

The Messiah had to be in the line of Abraham because of the covenant God made with Abraham. God told Abraham, *“In you all the families of the earth will be blessed”* (Genesis 12:3). The fulfillment of that promise is only possible because of Jesus.

And then there’s the covenant God made with David. God promised David, *“Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever”* (2 Samuel 7:16).

So these biblical genealogies in 1 Chronicles aren't slanted. They were specifically selected to show that God was fulfilling His promise to provide salvation for mankind through a Messiah who would come from the kingly line of David.

Ezra was probably the author of both 1 and 2 Chronicles, and all this information would be very encouraging to the Jewish people of Ezra's day. In Ezra's time, the glory days of Israel under David and Solomon were long past. The rebuilt Temple had none of the magnificent grandeur of the Temple built by King Solomon. The returning captives were relatively few and very poor, and many had backslidden. In fact, the nation was but a small subdivision of the Persian Empire's government.

Had God forgotten His people? Were His promises no longer valid? No, God had not forgotten His people! In spite of their sinful ways, the promises were still good. God's promises never fail - and the genealogies support this truth.

Doctrinal Points

1. The genealogy from Jacob to David is important.

The genealogy in 1 Chronicles 2 is important. The Jewish people all trace back to Jacob. His sons and two of his grandsons are the heads of the tribes of Israel - then and today!

Where did Jacob's sons get their wives? We know that Joseph married an Egyptian woman named Zaphnath-Paaneah, and she became the mother of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. We know that Judah had a Canaanite wife, the daughter of Shua (v3 and Genesis 38). But where did the rest of Jacob's sons find their wives? Most likely they also married Canaanite women. And it's possible that some of them were the Canaanite women of Shechem, who were widowed when the men of Shechem were massacred (Genesis 34).

Judah had five sons (v4). His oldest sons, Er and Onan died because of their sin (Genesis 38). According to the custom, Judah's twice-widowed daughter-in-law Tamar should have been given in marriage to Shelah, Jacob's third son. But when Shelah came of age, Judah did not have Shelah marry Tamar. So Tamar tricked Judah into a relationship by pretending to be a prostitute. *"Tamar was told, 'Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.' So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law" (Genesis 38:13-16).* As a result of this relationship, twin boys were born to Judah, Perez and Zerah. And through Judah's son Perez the Messianic line traced down to King David.

Another well-known biblical name that we see in this chapter is Caleb. *"Caleb the son of Hezron had children by Azubah, his wife, and by Jerioth" (v18).* However, this is not the same man as "Caleb, the faithful spy" at the time of

Moses. That Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, and he is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 4:15. The Caleb in 1 Chronicles 2 is the son of Hezron, and he was an ancestor of Caleb the faithful spy. Just as Caleb the son of Hezron named his daughter Achsah (v49), many years later Caleb the son of Jephunneh named his daughter Achsah (Joshua 15) - probably in memory of his ancestor, Caleb, and his daughter, Achsah.

So why is Caleb the son of Hezron included in this genealogy, even though he is not in the direct line to David? Besides the reasons already given for genealogies, verses 19-20 reveal that this Caleb was the great-grandfather of Bezalel. Bezalel was the skilled master-craftsman who was in charge of making all the items for the Tabernacle (Exodus 31&35).

Another significant historical note for this particular Caleb is that by one of his wives, Ephrathah, he was also the great-grandfather of a man named Bethlehem (v51), who apparently founded the town of Bethlehem. That's why Micah's prophecy reveals that the birthplace of the Messiah would be Bethlehem Ephrathah (Micah 5:2).

So - the genealogy from Jacob to David is important!

2. The genealogy from David to the captivity is important.

1 Chronicles 3:1-4 - *“Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: The firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelitess; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah. These six were born to him in Hebron. There he reigned seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years.”*

In verses 5-9 more sons of David are listed. The rest of the chapter traces the line of David down to the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon.

1 Chronicles 2:15 says that David was the seventh son of Jesse, whereas 1 Samuel 16 indicates that Jesse had eight sons. Most likely one son had died, so that David occupied the *significant* seventh place in the list of sons. How many children did David have? Nineteen sons and one daughter are listed - and he had more sons through his concubines (v9).

Verse 10 tells us that Solomon's son was Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the king when Israel's united monarchy (under Saul, David and Solomon) split into the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah. Rehoboam was the first king of the southern kingdom of Judah.

In the verses that follow we have a list of the kings who reigned over the southern kingdom of Judah. Wicked queen Athaliah is not listed, because she usurped the throne. Jeconiah (v17) is King Jehoichin. The prophet Jeremiah said that no physical descendant of Jeconiah or Jehoichin would sit on the throne of David (Jeremiah 22:3). Zerubbabel (v19) was a descendant of Jehoichin. He led Israel back from the Babylonian captivity, but he never ruled as king. The Lord Jesus,

because of His virgin birth, is not a physical descendant of Jeconiah or Jehoichin, even though He has the legal right to the throne through Jehoichin.

So - the genealogy from David to the captivity is important.

Practical Application

Don't be a "troubling" in your church or fellowship group.

1 Chronicles 2:7 says, *"The son of Carmi was Achar, the troubler of Israel, who violated the ban on taking devoted things."* This is the same man as "Achan" in Joshua 7. After Jericho was defeated, Achan took some valuable items from the city for himself, in violation of the direct command of the Lord. As a result, all Israel was affected by Achan's sin. *"But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things that Achan... took some of them. So the Lord's anger burned against Israel" (Joshua 7:1).*

The name "Achan" means "troubling." Because of his sins of selfishness and greed, Achan caused trouble and grief and defeat **for the entire nation!** The Lord allowed the army of Israel to be defeated at Ai, and 36 Israeli soldiers were killed.

Are you a "troubling" in your church or your fellowship group? Do you cause dissension and division by selfishly trying to make everything go *your* way, or by complaining about minor problems, or by constantly pushing to gain a leadership role? Is the rest of the body hurting because of *your* selfishness? Is the rest of the group weakened - or even being disciplined by the Lord - because of *your* sin?

You can't sin in a vacuum. **Your sin affects others!** Don't be a "troubling" in your church or fellowship group!