

Series: God & Abraham #1206

**Title: Exodus 2, 6, 28; Numbers 26
The Levitical Priesthood**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. I hope that you are anticipating another fruitful week together in the Word of God. If you have access to your Bible, please open it to Exodus chapter 2. (The Book of Exodus chapter 2.) I will be reading from there momentarily.

Today I want to begin with a story. This is a story taken right out of the pages of the Bible, but instead of reading it to you, from multiple passages, I first want to just tell it. Later I will give you some specific references. And the reason I am telling you this is because this story, once understood, will help us answer a question we have been asking about Melchizedek. I have not forgotten about him over the weekend.

You will (most likely) remember that we are in the Book of Genesis, chapter 14, verses 18-20 and Abram has met Melchizedek. And right now we want to know how it is that Melchizedek is a type of Jesus Christ? How does he picture, predict, and prefigure the Lord Jesus? So, let me share with you this narrative. *Then*, I will tie this back into our outline and show you how this fits together with what we were saying at the end of last week.

This is a short story about fathers and sons. As you may already know, at least I hope you know, this man Abraham that we have been studying, he had a son named Isaac. And then Isaac had a son named Jacob. And Jacob had twelve sons, and one of those sons (his third son with his wife Leah) was named Levi. That is spelled L-E-V-I. Levi is a name that you will want to keep in mind this week. As the story unfolds, Levi has a son by the name of Kohath. If you want a spelling that is K-O-H-A-T-H. And, you know where I am going with this, Kohath had a son named Amram. And finally, Amram marries a woman named Jochebed, and they have one daughter and two sons. The name of the daughter is Miriam. The name of the oldest son is Aaron and the name of the youngest son is Moses. And the name of that eldest son, Aaron, is another name you want to keep in mind this week. Highlight: *Levi* and *Aaron*.

I am telling you this so that we can follow a specific lineage, that of Levi. By way of review, Levi has a son named Kohath, Kohath has a son named Amram, Amram has a son named Aaron. Do you have it? OK, we are off to a great start. At this point, here is what you must understand: **Aaron is a Levite**. Aaron is a descendent from the tribe or the family of Levi. Levi was Aaron's great grandfather. In fact, *both* Aaron's father *and* mother were Levites. They descended from this same line. And I would now like to turn to the Scripture so I can show you this. If you have your Bible, please join me in the Book of Exodus, chapter 2. I am reading Exodus chapter 2, verses 1-4.

"Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him." That was Exodus chapter 2, verses 1-4.

This is the beginning of the story of the great man, our forefather in the faith, the man Moses. The son in this story is Moses. And he is hidden in the wicker basket, covered with tar and pitch, because he was born to Hebrew parents in Egypt at the time when the Egyptian Pharaoh had declared that all Jewish baby boys were to be murdered at birth. His Mom saves his life by putting him in that basket and floating him among the reeds by the bank of the Nile River. And notice also that his older sister stood at a distance and watched to see what happened to the baby Moses. The sister's name was Miriam.

For the purposes of our discussion, Moses is not our focus. His father and older brother are our focus. And I will show you where Aaron is in a moment. But before we leave Exodus 2, notice that in verse 1 the Bible says,

“Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi.” This man is Amram and he is a Levite. He is from the house of Levi. This woman is Jochebed and she is a Levite. She is from the house of Levi. These are Levites. We are dealing with Levites. And this is crucial to note. As to Aaron, over in the sixth chapter of this same Book, Exodus, we find his birth described. I am turning forward a few pages to Exodus chapter 6 and verse 20, **“Amram married his father’s sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses.”** Ah, there is Aaron. So that in total, the complete family is Amram, Jochebed (the parents), Miriam the oldest child, Aaron the middle child, and Moses the baby of the family.

If you want a nice, concise verse for this family, read Numbers chapter 26 and verse 59 which says, **“The name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi...and she bore to Amram: Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam.”** (That was Numbers 26, verse 59.)

And, again the important thing to note: *everyone* in this family is a Levite. Their genealogy just showed us that they all belonged to the tribe of Levi.

What, you may be wondering, is the point of telling you all of this? Here it is: according to the Bible, God chose this Levite Aaron, the older brother of Moses, to be the first priest in a line of priests that God would use in the Lord’s tabernacle and then in the Lord’s temple. Aaron’s younger brother Moses is also chosen by God to write the Law of God and in that Law – what we call the Mosaic Law – is stipulated the priestly service, roles, and responsibilities that Aaron and his descendants will have. Aaron and his male offspring will offer sacrifices to God. They will sacrifice on behalf of the people of God, serving as mediators between holy God and sinful man and woman.

This is what we call the – listen – *Levitical Priesthood*. The name Levi is in that word Levitical. Levi is spelled L-E-V-I. And Levitical begins L-E-V-I. Why is this called the Levitical Priesthood? Because Aaron, descended from the Israelite tribe of Levi, and Aaron is to serve God as priest. This is why I have been careful to show you the familial connection between Aaron and Levi.

Let’s read about God’s command for this priesthood further along in the Book of Exodus, chapter 28. I will skip over some names for the sake of clarity in identifying the key names.

In Exodus chapter 28, verses 1-4 God says to Moses, **“Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me—Aaron... [and] Aaron’s sons. ² You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. ³ You shall speak to all the skillful persons whom I have endowed with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him, that he may minister as priest to Me. ⁴ These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash, and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.”** These are the words of God to Moses in Exodus 28.1-4.

What this clearly tells us is that the Levitical Priesthood began with Aaron. God specifically chose Aaron and his sons to serve Him as priests. And when we continue to read the Hebrew Bible we follow this Levitical Priesthood closely. Let me tell you something: we have to understand what the Levitical Priesthood is so that we can see why the priestships of Melchizedek *and* of Jesus Christ were superior to the Levitical Priesthood. Melchizedek was a priest. Jesus Christ is a priest. The Levites were priests. But the priestships of Melchizedek and Jesus are *greater than* the Levitical Priesthood.

Dear friends, it is impossible to completely grasp who Melchizedek was and, frankly, who Jesus is unless you know about the Levitical priests, the head of which is Aaron the Levite. So, I will say more about this as we continue along, Lord willing, tomorrow. It is extraordinary what God did through the family of Amram, Jochebed, Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. He used them mightily. I hope that this story, retold today, will fascinate you and draw you further into the Bible. Let’s continue in God’s Word tomorrow because God Is!

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