

## UNIT 9

# THE ANCESTRY OF THE DELIVERER

### (Exodus 6:14-27)

#### INTRODUCTION

#### The Text and Textual Notes <sup>1</sup>

**6:14** These are the heads of their fathers' households:<sup>2</sup> The sons<sup>3</sup> of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. These were the families<sup>4</sup> of Reuben.

**6:15** And the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamim, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. These were the families of Simeon.

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<sup>1</sup> The point of this list of names seems to be to show that Moses and Aaron are in the line of Levi that came to the priesthood. It authenticates them as recipients of revelation and as spokesmen for God. To Israel it was important to know that the spiritual leaders fit into the covenant this way.

<sup>2</sup> The expression is literally "the house of their fathers." This is an expression which means that the household or family descended from a single ancestor. It usually indicates a subdivision of a tribe, that is, a clan, or the subdivision of a clan, that is, a family. Here it refers to a clan (Driver, *Exodus*, p. 46).

<sup>3</sup> Or, "descendants"

<sup>4</sup> Or, "clans"

**6:16** And these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their records:<sup>5</sup> Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Now the years of the lifetime of Levi were 137 years. **6:17** The sons of Gershon, by their families, were Libni and Shimei. **6:18** The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Now the years of the lifetime of Kohath were 133 years. **6:19** And the sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These were the clans of Levi, according to their records.

**6:20** And Amram took Jochebed his father's sister for a wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. Now the years of the lifetime of Amram were 137 years. **6:21** And the sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zikri. **6:22** And the sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri. **6:23** And Aaron took Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, for a wife; and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. **6:24** And the sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These were the Korahite clans. **6:25** Now Eleazar son of Aaron took one of the daughters of Putiel for a wife; and she bore him Phinehas.

These are the heads of the families of Levi according to their clans.

**6:26** It was the same Aaron and Moses to whom Yahweh said, "Bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt according to their divisions."<sup>6</sup> **6:27** They were the men who were speaking to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in order to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. It was the same Moses and Aaron.

## EXPOSITORY DEVELOPMENT

I would doubt that anyone would make this passage a separate homiletical presentation. Verse 13 seems to be a summary of the commission of Moses and Aaron, and so that seemed to the narrator to be a plausible location to show the lineage of these from Jacob. The notation comes at the end of the preparation of the men and prior to the great plagues.

The listing of the names has all the evidence of an adaptation of an ancient list. It starts with Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, but then moves to three sons of Levi, and then the descendants of one of them to get to Aaron and Moses. But Moses does not seem to be the key figure here, because it continues with Aaron's

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<sup>5</sup> Or, "generations"

<sup>6</sup> Or, "by their hosts/armies"

descendants Nadab, Abihu, Eleazer, Ithamar, and Eleazer's son Phinehas. The list looks like the line of the High Priestly family.

Its point seems to be that both Moses and Aaron are in the line of Levi that came to the priesthood. The table authenticates their connection to Levi as the later priests. It points them out as the recipients of revelation and spokesmen for God. To Israel it was important to know where their spiritual leaders fit in the development of the covenant people. Moreover, if the later priests could show their connection to Moses and Aaron, i.e., the great spokesmen for God and founders of the theocracy, their credentials would be unchallenged.