

1 Chronicles 1:1-54

The genealogies of the first nine chapters of *Chronicles* show the restored Jewish community's continuity with the past. The great deeds of God on behalf of Israel prior to the rise of David are passed over in silence, but the genealogies serve as a skeleton of history to show that the Israel of the restoration stands at the center of the LORD's purpose from the beginning of time (from Adam). And the genealogies serve the very practical purpose of legitimizing the present. They provide the framework by which the cultural and religious purity of the people can be maintained. They also establish the continuing line of royal succession and the legitimacy of the priests for the postexilic Temple service. The first chapter covers the time frame from Adam up to but not including Jacob. The subsidiary lines of descent are presented first: Japheth and Ham (1:5-16), and then Shem (1:17-27) the ancestor of Abraham. Same for Shem's sons, the sons of Abraham's concubines, the descendants of Esau and so on. Several features of this genealogy are striking when compared with non-Biblical lineages. The genealogy begins without an introduction. Two sections of the genealogy have no kinship terms and are only lists of names: the first 12 names (1:1-4, 24-27). In 1:5-16,27 kinship terms are used. Both segmented (those tracing several lines of descent) and linear (those tracing a single line of descent) genealogies are included. This identical structure is found in a copy of the *Assyrian King List*: there is no introduction, and the scribe has drawn lines across the tablet dividing it into four sections, two of which are lists of names without kinship terms, alternating with two lists in which relations are described; both segmented and linear genealogies are used. This suggests that the Chronicler (Ezra?) was following a known literary practice for his composition.

1. If you were compiling a family tree, how would you decide who gets included and who doesn't? Would you include low-lives or would you only include high-lights?
2. Verses 1-4 is taken from Gen 5:1-32. What two men are notably omitted from this list and why? **The tragic depressing story of Cain and Abel is omitted. This demonstrates the Chronicler's interest in the chosen line and in hopeful stories.**

"The sons of Noah" is not found in the Hebrew text, and parallels the pattern of the *Assyrian King List*. It is included in the *Septuagint* (2nd century B.C. Greek translation of the *Old Testament*) and most modern translations. So, a "textual criticism" (the process of attempting to ascertain the original wording of a text) question for you: was "The sons of Noah" original, why or why not? **One of the first rules of textual criticism is, "Less is more." In other words, copyists tended to add words for explanation or context, so often/ usually, the shorter reading is the original. Also, in this instance, the Chronicler's readers would have known that these were the sons of Noah, so they wouldn't have needed the explanation. Later translations* likely added the phrase to clarify the relationship. Of course, neither change the meaning of the text.**
3. Thinking like the Chronicler, what is the purpose his depiction of Noah's descendants (1:5-26)? **The record of Noah's descendants establishes Abraham's place in history.**
4. In ancient Near Eastern genealogies, the terms "sons" and "fathers" are often used literally (1:5). Is that how they are used by the Chronicler? **Actually, the Chronicler used these terms more loosely, referring to relatively distant family relations or other social or geographical connections. He often used "sons" to point to cultural and geographical relationships (2:42-55, 4:1-23, 28:43, 6:54-81, 7:20-29; 9:2, 11:10-47).**

5. The Chronicler seems to have given more attention to the Hamites (1:8-13) than the Japhethites (1:5-7). Why do you suppose? **Because Israel had, in her history, many more dealings with the Hamites than the Japhethites. The list begins with all four sons of Ham, but records only the descendants of Cush, Egypt, and Canaan. "Cush" is the Hebrew for "Ethiopia," meaning the remote areas south of Egypt.**

Who was Nimrod? **"Nimrod was the first heroic warrior on earth. Since he was the greatest hunter in the world, his name became proverbial. People would say, 'This man is like Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.' He built his kingdom in the land of Babylonia, with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh. From there he expanded his territory to Assyria, building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, and Resen (the great city located between Nineveh and Calash) (Gen 10"8-12).**

What is ironic about the future for Ham's son Canaan and his descendants (1:13)? **The LORD would eventually give to Abraham, a descendant of Ham's brother Shem, the land of Canaan as a promised land. The Canaanites had become an idolatrous and wicked people. Across many centuries, Abraham and his descendants defeat and drive out Ham's offspring, "the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites."**

Ham's son Mizraim was the father of the Casluhites who were infamous in a significant period of Israel's history. How so? **From Samson's day until the time of David when they were weakened, the Philistines who came from the Casluhites, were the major enemy force in the land and a constant threat to Israel. The Philistines were fierce warriors; they had the advantage over Israel in numbers, tactical expertise, and technology. They knew the secret of making weapons out of iron (1 Sam 13:19-22). But none of that mattered when LORD was fighting for Israel.**

6. Arphaxad, one of Shem's sons, had a great grandson named Peleg. What did his name mean, and was he so named (1:19)? **Peleg means "division. He was so named "because in his time the earth was divided." That division probably referred to the scattering of Noah's descendants as God's judgment following the attempt to build the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:8,16-19).**

7. The conclusion of Shem's line with Abram (Abraham) reveals the LORD's sovereign plan of election is in the descendants of Abraham. As we have seen, the Chronicler deals first with those not chosen and then with the chosen line. Does that mean that all of those other nations and people are shucks-out-of-luck? **Not at all. From Adam forward, people receive grace, forgiveness and reconciliation with God by faith. Anyone from these people groups could have put their trust in God and have been saved, and no doubt, many did. The LORD chose the line of Shem by grace, not because he was more deserving than His brothers. God chose a line through which He would send His promised Redeemer, a line through which He would progressively reveal His Word and will to the world.**

Can you give an example of this from Chapter 1 ... the blessing of God given to a non-chosen line, both individuals and families? **As did the *Book of Genesis*, the *Chronicles*' account distinguishes Ishmael and his descendants from the covenant line. Ishmael was promised great blessings from God (Gen 16:11,12), but he was not the heir of the covenant of grace God made with Abraham (Gen 17:18-21).**

8. Why do you suppose the Chronicler always refers to Isaac's second son Jacob by his "other" name (1:34)? **Israel is another name for Jacob, given to him by God (Gen 32:28). It means "someone who struggles with God." Jacob, the ambitious deceiver, became Israel, the one who struggles with God and overcomes.**
9. Why do you suppose the Chronicler gave so much information in this genealogy about the descendants of Edom, who were Israel's enemies (1:43-54)? **Esau (Edom was the name given to Esau after he traded his birthright to his brother Jacob for a meal of red stew, Gen 25:29-34), ancestor of the Edomites, was Isaac's oldest son and thus a direct descendant of Abraham. As Abraham's first grandson, he deserved a place in the Jewish records. However, it was through Esau's marriages to pagan women, that the nation of Edom began. Edom was an enemy of Israel and King David because they were an enemy of the LORD. Amalek, Esau's grandson, was the ancestor of the wicked tribe known as the Amalekites, the first people to attack the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land.**
10. At one time, everyone spoke a single language. But some people became proud of their accomplishments and gathered to build a monument to themselves — the tower of Babel. The building project was brought to an abrupt conclusion when God caused the people to speak different languages. Without the ability to communicate with one another, the people could not be unified. God showed them that their great efforts were useless without Him. What is the danger of success or pride in our achievements? **They can lead to feelings of autonomy, self-righteousness, independence from God. We actually have to work at refusing to let God's blessings lead us to conclude that we don't need God or need to be close to Him.**
11. Some of the names in chapter one are familiar, but most are not. They are like most of the billions of people who have lived, in that they are unknown/ forgotten. As we live our humble mostly anonymous lives, why should we think our lives count for anything? **Because in Christ, God says so, and so it is! Seth, for instance, Adam's son, was like a substitute player, taking the field in a world burned by murder and greed (Gen 4:25), but through him God established a chosen nation. Refuse to "compare and despair." Trust that God uses you exactly as He has planned, "for it is God Who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Phil 2:13)! "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:10).**

