



First Chronicles - Chapter Two

I 1 Chronicles 1:1-9:44 - A Genealogical Presentation of the Tribes of Israel (continues)

Summary of Chapter Two

Following a summary of Jacob's children, the focus shifts to a more detailed genealogy from the patriarch Judah down as far as David. The author includes some historic details concerning some of the individuals listed.

I.b 1 Chronicles 2:1-4:23 - The Tribe of Judah

Following a list of the patriarchs, the first and most extensive place is given to the tribe of Judah. This material is of diverse origin and much of it is fragmentary, but the author has arranged it as follows into an artistic whole according to the principles of a large scale inclusio or concentric ring structure in which the last elements repeat the first:

- Shelah, the oldest surviving son of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:3).
- Perez and Zerah, Judah's sons by Tamar (1 Chronicles 2:4-8).
- Hezron, ancestor of David and his line (1 Chronicles 2:9-3:24).
- Perez's other descendants (1 Chronicles 4:1-20).
- Shelah's descendants (1 Chronicles 4:21-23).

As is common in such literary arrangements, the central unit of 1 Chronicles 2:9-3:24 is the focus of chief interest because it leads to David, the central human character in Chronicles. This unit has its own complex arrangement of materials

I.b.i 1 Chronicles 2:1-55 - The Sons of Israel and the Descendants of Judah

Refer to the chapter summary above.

¹ These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, ² Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

1 Chronicles 2:1-2

These are the sons of Israel. The line of divine election culminates in the sons of Israel, the subject of the following genealogies. However, the Chronicler does not consider them in the traditional order of these verses drawn apparently from Genesis 35:22b-26. Further, his actual listing of the twelve tribes differs because it includes the half-tribes of Manasseh in Transjordan (1 Chronicles 5:23-26), and west of the Jordan (1 Chronicles 7:14-19), but omits mention of Zebulun and Dan.

The line of the patriarchs began with Abraham, and was passed down to Isaac and not Ishmael, and then to Jacob/Israel and not to Esau. Yet with the sons of Israel, all the sons were chosen as inheritors of the covenant.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. These twelve sons of Israel actually became thirteen tribes in Israel, because two tribes came from the first two sons of Joseph, i.e. Manasseh and Ephraim. They are traditionally referred to as the twelve tribes of Israel because the Levites inherited no land in Israel but were especially privileged to have the Lord as their inheritance: <<*Therefore Levi has no allotment or inheritance with his kindred; the Lord is his inheritance, as the Lord your God promised him*>> (Deuteronomy 10:9).

The order of names follows Genesis 35:23-26, with one exception. Dan is expected after Benjamin, and no convincing reason has been put forward for the change. A different order is used in the following chapters.

³ The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, and Shelah; these three the Canaanite woman Bath-shua bore to him. Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death. ⁴ His daughter-in-law Tamar also bore him Perez and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all.

⁵ The sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. ⁶ The sons of Zerah: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara, five in all. ⁷ The sons of Carmi: Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the matter of the devoted thing; ⁸ and Ethan's son was Azariah.

1 Chronicles 2:3-8

The sons of Judah. In the Chronicler's presentation, Judah is preeminent in Israel as a matter of divine choice, both as 'leader' of the other tribes and as the source of David and his line, who are the bearers of divine promises of good for Israel: <<*Yet the Lord God of Israel chose me from all my ancestral house to be king*>>

over Israel for ever; for he chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah my father's house, and among my father's sons he took delight in making me king over all Israel>> (1 Chronicles 28:4). Judah's five sons demonstrate both Yahweh's judgement on disobedience, i.e. Er, Onan, and Shelah, and his electing grace in continuing the lines of Perez and Zerah, the twins born from Judah's illicit union with Tamar; refer to Genesis Chapter 38.

Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death. This listing of the line of Judah also includes those with a darker testimony of life, including Er, Onan, Tamar, and Achar.

The sons of Carmi. According to the great grammarian and scholar Rabbi David Kimchi or RaDaK (AD 1160-1235), Camri was the son of Zimri. The entire story is related to the sin of Achan and its punishment recorded in Joshua Chapter 7, where Zimri is referred to as Zabdi and Achar is called Achan.

Achar is 'Akar or 'trouble' in the Hebrew text, an example of wordplay on the troubler, Hebrew 'oker, of Israel; refer to Joshua 7:24-26. His breach of faith, i.e. transgression or broke faith (Hebrew *ma'al*), is the first instance of a key term in the book that denotes Israel's failure to reverence Yahweh and render to him his due in obedience and worship: *<<But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their ancestors, in that they committed treachery against me and, moreover, that they continued hostile to me>>* (Leviticus 26:40). The Chronicler sees this as the archetypal sin of Israel that punctuates its history from beginning to end. The terrible consequences of *ma'al* include the loss of the Promised Land and the pain of exile; nevertheless, the Chronicler will show that these penalties can be reversed by heartfelt repentance and faithful obedience. Such a response is expressed above all in true worship according to the Law of Moses. The election of David, whose ancestry is given next, is concerned primarily with the establishment of such worship in Israel.

⁹ The sons of Hezron, who were born to him: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai. ¹⁰ Ram became the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, prince of the sons of Judah. ¹¹ Nahshon became the father of Salma, Salma of Boaz, ¹² Boaz of Obed, Obed of Jesse. ¹³ Jesse became the father of Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, ¹⁴ Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, ¹⁵ Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; ¹⁶ and their sisters were Zeruah and Abigail. The sons of Zeruah: Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, three. ¹⁷ Abigail bore Amasa, and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.

1 Chronicles 2:9-17

The sons of Hezron. This section of genealogy deals with the line of Judah to David, the founder of the Davidic dynasty that ruled over Israel and Judah. Verses 10-12 are drawn mainly from Ruth 4:19-22. In the Chronicler's presentation, only the line of **David** (v.15) is derived from **Ram**, and the rest of Judah is considered under the rubric of Hezron's other sons, **Jerahmeel** and Caleb, note **Chelubai** is a variant of Caleb. The genealogy of Ram down to David and David's own descendants listed in 1 Chronicles 3:1-24 form an inclusio or literary 'bookends' around the Calebites (vv.18-24 and vv.42-55) and Jerahmeelites (vv.25-41).

Although 1 Samuel 16:10-13 indicates that **David** was the eighth son of **Jesse**, the Chronicler presents him as **the seventh**, perhaps to indicate his favoured place in God's purpose, since the number seven represents completion or perfection. Telescoping, the omission of names, is a common feature of these genealogies, and often carries theological significance. Refer also to the comment made on 1 Samuel 16:10.

Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, and **Amasa**. The genealogies of these four warriors, made famous under their half-uncle David (2 Samuel 2:18-19 and 19:13), are not drawn from 2 Samuel 2:18 and 17:25; but apart from this later passage, it would not have been known that their mothers, **Zeruiah** and **Abigail**, were step-daughters of Jesse, born to David's mother by her presumably earlier marriage to Nahash.

¹⁸ Caleb son of Hezron had children by his wife Azubah, and by Jerioth; these were her sons: Jeshur, Shobab, and Ardon. ¹⁹ When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who bore him Hur. ²⁰ Hur became the father of Uri, and Uri became the father of Bezalel.

²¹ Afterwards Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub; ²² and Segub became the father of Jair, who had twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead. ²³ But Geshur and Aram took from them Havvoth-jair, Kenath and its villages, sixty towns. All these were descendants of Machir, father of Gilead. ²⁴ After the death of Hezron, in Caleb-ephrathah, Abijah wife of Hezron bore him Ashhur, father of Tekoa.

1 Chronicles 2:18-24

Caleb the son of Hezron is to be distinguished from the later contemporary of Joshua who appears in 1 Chronicles 4:15. This Caleb referred to as Chelubai in v.9. He was a forefather of **Bezalel**, the principal craftsman for the tabernacle; refer

to Exodus 31:2 and 2 Chronicles 1:5. By placing a reference to Bezalel directly after the genealogy of David, the author indicates the very close connection between the Davidic monarchy and the temple, one of the central themes of his historical narrative.

Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. These obscure names connected with the tribe of Judah are listed for an important general reason. Most of the returning exiles in time Chronicles was written were connected to the tribe of Judah.

Caleb married Ephrath. According to the Sages, this was Caleb ben Jephunneh, a leader of the tribe of Judah in the wilderness. His wife was Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron (Sotah 11b). She was called Ephrath because Israel became fruitful through her.

All these were descendants of Machir. Although Segub's father Hezron was from the tribe of Judah, Segub and his son Jair were counted as descendants of Machir, Manasseh's son. They would eventually settle in the Transjordan with the half tribe of Manasseh: <<*The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, captured it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were there; so Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of Manasseh, and he settled there. Jair son of Manasseh went and captured their villages, and renamed them Havvoth-jair*>> (Numbers 32:39-41). A person's lineage is traced through his father only if his parents are actually married, but since his mother was only a concubine to Hezron, his lineage was traced through his mother to Manasseh (Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Wisser, or Malbim).

The father of Tekoa. In the context of Chronicles, the father of a town is the progenitor of the majority of the people who eventually settled there (RaDak). Refer also to the similar comment made on vv.42-55

²⁵ The sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron: Ram his firstborn, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. ²⁶ Jerahmeel also had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. ²⁷ The sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel: Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. ²⁸ The sons of Onam: Shammai and Jada. The sons of Shammai: Nadab and Abishur. ²⁹ The name of Abishur's wife was Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. ³⁰ The sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim; and Seled died childless. ³¹ The son of Appaim: Ishi. The son of Ishi: Sheshan. The son of Sheshan: Ahlai. ³² The sons of Jada, Shammai's brother: Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died childless. ³³ The sons of Jonathan: Peleth and Zaza. These were the descendants of Jerahmeel. ³⁴ Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters; but Sheshan had an Egyptian slave, whose name was Jarha. ³⁵ So Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage to his

slave Jarha; and she bore him Attai. ³⁶ Attai became the father of Nathan, and Nathan of Zabad. ³⁷ Zabad became the father of Ephlal, and Ephlal of Obed. ³⁸ Obed became the father of Jehu, and Jehu of Azariah. ³⁹ Azariah became the father of Helez, and Helez of Eleasah. ⁴⁰ Eleasah became the father of Sismai, and Sismai of Shallum. ⁴¹ Shallum became the father of Jekamiah, and Jekamiah of Elishama.

1 Chronicles 2:25-41

The sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron. This traces a sideline in the tribe of Judah, separate from the line that culminated in David. Two lists (vv.25-33 and vv.34-41) have been joined together here, probably from material preserved by this clan. The Jerahmeelites lived in the Negeb, on Judah's southern frontier, in David's day: <<*When Achish asked, 'Against whom have you made a raid today?' David would say, 'Against the Negeb of Judah', or 'Against the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites', or 'Against the Negeb of the Kenites'*>> (1 Samuel 27:10). If this record of 23 generations is complete, Elishama may have been a contemporary of David, and the Chronicler would be drawing on ancient records from the early monarchy.

Now Sheshan had no sons. His son Ahlai apparently died young and therefore was unable to continue the family name.

⁴² The sons of Caleb brother of Jerahmeel: Mesha his firstborn, who was father of Ziph. The sons of Mareshah father of Hebron. ⁴³ The sons of Hebron: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. ⁴⁴ Shema became father of Raham, father of Jorkeam; and Rekem became the father of Shammai. ⁴⁵ The son of Shammai: Maon; and Maon was the father of Beth-zur. ⁴⁶ Ephah also, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran became the father of Gazez. ⁴⁷ The sons of Jahdai: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph. ⁴⁸ Maacah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. ⁴⁹ She also bore Shaaph father of Madmannah, Sheva father of Machbenah and father of Gibeab; and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah. ^{50a} These were the descendants of Caleb.

^{50b} The sons of Hur the firstborn of Ephrathah: Shobal father of Kiriath-jearim, ⁵¹ Salma father of Bethlehem, and Hareph father of Bethgader. ⁵² Shobal father of Kiriath-jearim had other sons: Haroeh, half of the Menuhoth. ⁵³ And the families of Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraitites; from these came the

Zorathites and the Eshtaolites.⁵⁴ The sons of Salma: Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joaab, and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites.⁵⁵ The families also of the scribes that lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath, father of the house of Rechab.

1 Chronicles 2:42-55

The sons of Caleb brother of Jerahmeel. This also traces another sideline in the tribe of Judah, separate from the line that culminated in David.

The sons of Jahdai. Jahdai was apparently a descendant of Caleb, but his lineage is not made clear.

The daughter of Caleb was Achsah. Achsah was only a distant descendant of Caleb the son of Hezron, although she was an immediate daughter of Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the faithful spy listed in 1 Chronicles 4:15. She is remembered as the bride of Othniel, the first of the judges (Judges 3:9-11), having been promised to him for his conquest of Debir; refer to Joshua 15:15-19 and Judges 1:11-15.

The sons of Hur the firstborn of Ephrathah. This is an addition to vv.18-24, comprising early lists of the descendants of Caleb (vv.42-50a) and his son Hur (vv.50b-55). Personal and place names are found together in this section (Hebron, Beth-zur, Kiriath-jearim, Bethlehem), so father here sometimes denotes the founder or leader of a city. Refer also to the comment made on vv.18-24.

These are the Kenites who came from Hammath. The Kenites were originally a foreign people: <<*On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites'*>> (Genesis 15:18-19), some of whom, by marriage or adoption, became incorporated into the tribe of Judah.