



First Chronicles - Chapter Twenty Four

II 1 Chronicles 10:1-2 Chronicles 9:31 - The United Kingdom of David and Solomon (continues)

II.e 1 Chronicles 21:1-29:30 - David's Census and Preparation for the Temple (continues)

Summary of Chapter Twenty Four

The priesthood is divided into twenty four family groups: sixteen descended from Eleazar and eight from Ithamar because of the number of descendants. These twenty four groups were then allocated to perform their duties on rota basis. Other Levites are then listed to conclude the chapter.

II.e.vii 1 Chronicles 24:1-19 - Divisions of the Priests

David's provision for the temple services included organising the priests into twenty four divisions selected by lot. A duty roster of twenty four divisions provided for two weeks of service by each division, based on a lunar calendar of forty eight weeks.

¹ The divisions of the descendants of Aaron were these. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ² But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no sons; so Eleazar and Ithamar became the priests.

1 Chronicles 24:1-2

Nadab and Abihu died. God judged Nadab and Abihu because they dared to bring unauthorised fire before the Lord, thus blaspheming God's commandments for sacrifice; refer to Leviticus 10:1-3.

The priesthood was hereditary, and descended through the lines of [Eleazar](#) and [Ithamar](#), the two surviving sons of Aaron.

³ Along with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, David organised them according to the appointed duties in their service. ⁴ Since more chief men were found among the sons of Eleazar than among the sons of Ithamar, they organised them under sixteen heads of ancestral houses of the sons of Eleazar, and eight of the sons of Ithamar.

1 Chronicles 24:3-4

[Zadok](#) was the priest in David's time and when Abiathar tried to succeed his father David instead of Solomon, Zadok was one of the key figures who did not support him but remained faithful to his calling; refer to 1 Kings 1:8. Abiathar was the priest in Solomon's day but the king replaced him with Zadok in 1 Kings 2:35.

[Ahimelech](#), was the son of Abiathar (2 Samuel 8:17), with whom Zadok is usually paired (2 Samuel 15:35 and 1 Kings 4:4).

David organised them according to the appointed duties in their service. David took the descendants of Aaron - the priestly family of Israel - and together with Zadok he divided them into twenty four divisions, to serve according to the schedule of their service. Two aspects of this service are emphasised: that it is to be regulated in an orderly system of twenty four duty periods (vv.1-19), and that it provides a pattern to be followed by the priests' Levitical assistants (vv.20-31).

⁵ They organised them by lot, all alike, for there were officers of the sanctuary and officers of God among both the sons of Eleazar and the sons of Ithamar. ⁶ The scribe Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite, recorded them in the presence of the king, and the officers, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech son of Abiathar, and the heads of ancestral houses of the priests and of the Levites; one ancestral house being chosen for Eleazar and one chosen for Ithamar.

1 Chronicles 24:5-6

They organised them by lot. While David appointed the priestly divisions, duties were allocated impartially by the drawing of lots. The lots were drawn alternately between the families of Eleazar and of Ithamar for the first sixteen lots; then the remaining eight assignments to duty fell automatically to the families of Eleazar.

⁷ The first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, ⁸ the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, ⁹ the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to

Mijamin, ¹⁰ the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, ¹¹ the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, ¹² the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, ¹³ the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, ¹⁴ the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, ¹⁵ the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez, ¹⁶ the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel, ¹⁷ the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, ¹⁸ the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. ¹⁹ These had as their appointed duty in their service to enter the house of the Lord according to the procedure established for them by their ancestor Aaron, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him.

1 Chronicles 24:7-19

Jehoiarib appears as the ancestor of Mattathias in 1 Maccabees 2:1.

The descendants of Hakkoz were among the first three family groups of priests identified following the return from Babylonian exile; refer to Ezra 2:61-63.

Abijah was an ancestor of John the Baptist: <<*In the days of King Herod of Judæa, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth*>> (Luke 1:5).

These had as their appointed duty in their service to enter the house of the Lord according to the procedure established for them by their ancestor Aaron, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him. David knew that because there were so many descendants of Aaron by this time, the priests should be divided so they could fairly be assigned the privileged service of the temple.

In later Jewish practice, the twenty four duty periods were based on a lunar calendar of forty eight weeks, with each course serving for a week at a time and thus twice in a year. With the passage of time, some of the Davidic divisions died out or had to be consolidated with others, and new ones were formed to take their places. At the first return from exile in 527 BC, only four divisions were registered. By 520 BC twenty two were again in operation; refer to Nehemiah 12:1-7, but only half of them were the divisions as originally organised by David.

II.e.viii 1 Chronicles 24:20-31 - Other Levites

The list of Levites in 1 Chronicles 23:6-23 is updated to include another generation in six of the Levitical families. Like the Aaronic priestly families, the Levites also cast lots without distinction for their duties.

²⁰ And of the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. ²¹ Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, Isshiah the chief. ²² Of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. ²³ The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. ²⁴ The sons of Uzziel, Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. ²⁵ The brother of Micah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. ²⁶ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Jaaziah: Beno. ²⁷ The sons of Merari: of Jaaziah, Beno, Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri. ²⁸ Of Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. ²⁹ Of Kish, the sons of Kish: Jerahmeel. ³⁰ The sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Levites according to their ancestral houses.

1 Chronicles 24:20-30

And of the rest of the sons of Levi. These were the descendants of Kohath's son Amram who were not of the family of Moses and Aaron; refer to Exodus 6:18-27.

³¹ These also cast lots corresponding to their kindred, the descendants of Aaron, in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of ancestral houses of the priests and of the Levites, the chief as well as the youngest brother.

1 Chronicles 24:31

These also cast lots corresponding to their kindred, the descendants of Aaron. These other descendants of the family of Kohath were divided according to the schedule for their service, along the same pattern as the priests.

The chief as well as the youngest brother. The lots of the elders and younger men were promiscuously put together, and the order was settled as the lots were drawn, without any regard to the age, or dignity, or number of the people or their families, the youngest family would receive the first duty if they had the first lot, etc. There was a tactful mingling in the arrangement of the older and the younger men, so that in this highest and holiest national service the experience of age and the enthusiasm of youth were naturally inspiring and complimentary.