



First Chronicles - Chapter Three

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

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

Summary of Chapter Three

The genealogy of Ram is resumed in this composite list of David's descendants, recounted in three distinct sections: David's children (vv.1-9); Solomon and the kings of Judah (vv.10-16); and the postexilic generations (vv.17-24). The literary arrangement of this material is an important indicator of the author's message: just as Judah heads the genealogies of Israel, although Reuben was in fact the firstborn, the line of David's descendants is placed in the centre of the genealogy of Judah as the focus of hope and expectation.

I.b.ii 1 Chronicles 3:1-24 - Descendants of David and Solomon

The chapter opens by focusing on the sons of David born to him by his various wives at Hebron and Jerusalem. The focus then turns to Solomon with his descendants, with special attention given to the line of the kings of Judah, culminating in those of the immediate postexilic period.

¹ These are the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelite; the second Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelite; ² the third Absalom, son of Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur; the fourth Adonijah, son of Haggith; ³ the fifth Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth Ithream, by his wife Eglah; ⁴ six were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned for seven years and six months. And he reigned for thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ⁵ These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon,

four by Bath-shua, daughter of Ammiel; ⁶ then Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, ⁷ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, ⁸ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine. ⁹ All these were David's sons, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister.

1 Chronicles 3:1-9

These are the sons of David. David had several wives - seven are listed here; Ahinoam the Jezreelite, Abigail the Carmelite, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah, Bath-shua. Many commentators believe that Eglah is another name for Michal, the daughter of King Saul, David's first wife as recorded in Scripture: <<*Saul gave him his daughter Michal as a wife*>> (1 Samuel 18:27b). Bath-shua is an alternative spelling of Bathsheba. These wives were in addition to his concubines (1 Kings 3:9).

The children of concubines are not generally listed as only the children of married couples are given the heritage of their father. Others are given that of their mother.

Elishama (v.6) is also called Elishua in 2 Samuel 5:15. The Bible commentator Meir Leibush ben Yehiel Michel Wisser (Malbim) suggests that he was originally named Elishama, but when a younger brother was born and given that same name (v.8), the first was changed to Elishua, so as to distinguish between the two sons. Another possibility is that it is a scribal copy error here.

Two sons Eliphelet (v.6 and v.8) are recorded. Jewish commentators believe that the first of the two died before the second was born and he was given the same name as his then deceased brother.

Drawn mainly from 2 Samuel 3:2-5 and 5:14-16 (refer to the comments made there), with a few textual variations, i.e. Daniel for Chileab, and the addition of Eliphelet (v.6), and Nogah (v.7). The Chronicler's narrative omits discussion of the troubles that beset David's family in later years and recorded in 2 Samuel Chapters 13-19 and 1 Kings Chapter 1, but mention here of Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah, and Tamar implies that the reader is expected to be familiar with these accounts.

Six were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned for seven years and six months. And he reigned for thirty-three years in Jerusalem. David was first accepted as the king of Judah and ruled from Hebron. Once he was accepted as the king over all Israel he relocated to the neutral city of Jerusalem, which was in the land given to the tribe of Bethlehem.

These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, four by Bath-shua, daughter of Ammiel. Surprisingly, Solomon is listed as the fourth son of Bathsheba, whereas the reader might have supposed him to be the second based on the account of their affair, which led Bathsheba to become pregnant and then subsequently lose the child: <<*Then David consoled his wife*>>

Bathsheba, and went to her, and lay with her; and she bore a son, and he named him Solomon>> (2 Samuel 12:24).

¹⁰ The descendants of Solomon: Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, ¹¹ Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, ¹² Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, ¹³ Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, ¹⁴ Amon his son, Josiah his son. ¹⁵ The sons of Josiah: Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.

1 Chronicles 3:10-15

The complete Davidic line down to the exile is given here, following the spelling used in the Books of Kings. Azariah is a variant of Uzziah (2 Chronicles Chapter 26). The pattern is altered in v.15 because Josiah was succeeded by three of his sons, but not according to their birth order: Shallum whose throne name was Jehoahaz. He was replaced by Jehoiakim who was succeeded by his own son, Jeconiah (a variant of Jehoiachin), then Zedekiah, the last king of Judah.

Queen Athaliah, the daughter of King Ahab of Israel, is not included in the list even though she was queen over Judah following the death of her son Ahaziah. She had tried to eliminate the Davidic line by killing all the male heirs but Joash survived as a young child and was eventually made king in her place, refer to 2 Kings Chapter 11.

Johanan the firstborn son of Josiah is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and is assumed to have died before his father.

¹⁶ The descendants of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son; ¹⁷ and the sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Shealtiel his son, ¹⁸ Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah; ¹⁹ The sons of Pedaiah: Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister; ²⁰ and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed, five. ²¹ The sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jeshaiah, his son Rephaiah, his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, his son Shecaniah. ²² The son of Shecaniah: Shemaiah. And the sons of Shemaiah: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat, six. ²³ The sons of Neariah: Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam, three. ²⁴ The sons of Elioenai: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani, seven.

1 Chronicles 3:16-24

The sons of Jeconiah, the captive. These were the descendants of the line of David born after the fall of Judah. Although the monarchy ceased to function as a political entity with the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, the continuation of David's line after the exile still testified to God's promise of an enduring 'house' for him, through which God's kingdom would be eternally established; refer to 1 Chronicles 17:10b-14.

Jeremiah had said that Jeconiah or, as he calls him, Coniah, should be childless; but this must refer to his posterity being deprived of the throne, and indeed the prophet interprets it that way himself: <<*Thus says the Lord: Record this man as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days; for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David, and ruling again in Judah*>> (Jeremiah 22:30).

The text may appear to list Malchiram, Pedaiiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah as the sons of Jeconiah, but according to RaDak they are the sons of Shealtiel. Some commentators link Shenazzar with Sheshbazzar in Ezra 1:8, while others believe that Sheshbazzar was the Babylonian name for Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel played a central role in the restoration of the temple: <<*Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak set out to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God, helping them*>> (Ezra 5:2), and: <<*Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of the prophet Haggai, as the Lord their God had sent him; and the people feared the Lord. Then Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, spoke to the people with the Lord's message, saying, I am with you, says the Lord. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the month, in the sixth month*>> (Haggai 1:12-15). Possibly Ezra 3:2, which also calls Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, implies an adoption or levirate marriage. It is unclear from v.21 whether this list runs for six generations or more into the postexilic period, but in either case it appears to extend down to, or close to, the Chronicler's own day.

Levirate marriage, taken from the Latin *levir* which means brother-in-law, whereby the surviving brother of a childless, deceased man was obligated to marry his sister-in-law in order to provide for her needs and to preserve the deceased brother's family line: <<*When brothers reside together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her,*

taking her in marriage, and performing the duty of a husband's brother to her, and the firstborn whom she bears shall succeed to the name of the deceased brother, so that his name may not be blotted out of Israel>> (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

The preservation of the Davidic line in the family of Elioenai (v.24) should inspire trust among the postexilic community in God's ancient promises, although no particular individual is identified here as David's successor. The Chronicler holds to the ancient messianic hope focused on the house of David, but does not specify how or through whom it will be fulfilled.

The sons of Zerubbabel. Matthew 1:13 and Luke 3:27 both trace Jesus' descent from David through sons of Zerubbabel other than those mentioned here, Abiud and Rhesa respectively. Apparently they were using other historical records than those preserved in First Chronicles, although it is possible they were also known by different names. It is also common in Jewish genealogical records to miss out one or more generations and that too would explain the differences.