



First Chronicles - Chapter Seven

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

Summary of Chapter Seven

This chapter contains briefer details of those tribes, including part of Benjamin, that belonged to the old northern kingdom of Israel. They are enclosed within the genealogies as part of the Chronicler's ideal conception of 'all Israel' as a unity that existed in David's time, even though their lands were no longer under Israelite control at the time of the Chronicler's writing.

I.h 1 Chronicles 7:1-40 - Other Northern Tribes

Refer to the chapter summary above.

I.h.i 1 Chronicles 7:1-5 - Descendants of Issachar

The list of the descendants of Issachar is composed from Genesis 46:13 and Numbers 26:23-25, and a military census from David's reign.

¹ The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four. ² The sons of Tola: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their ancestral houses, namely of Tola, mighty warriors of their generations, their number in the days of David being twenty-two thousand six hundred. ³ The son of Uzzi: Izrahiah. And the sons of Izrahiah: Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah, five, all of them chiefs; ⁴ and along with them, by their generations, according to their ancestral houses, were units of the fighting force, thirty-six thousand, for they had many wives and sons. ⁵ Their kindred belonging to all the

families of Issachar were in all eighty-seven thousand mighty warriors, enrolled by genealogy.

1 Chronicles 7:1-5

By their generations, according to their ancestral houses, were units of the fighting force, thirty-six thousand. For Israhiah and his four sons, even with many wives, to have thirty-six thousand warriors seems unlikely, as does the total (vv.2-5) of 145,600 for just one tribe of the Twelve. This appears to be the first of nine passages in Chronicles where *elep* or thousand might be better interpreted as *allup*, i.e. chief.

I.h.ii 1 Chronicles 7:6-12 - Descendants of Benjamin

These details of the tribe of Benjamin differ from other lists in Genesis 46:21, Numbers 26:38-39 and 1 Chronicles 8:1-3, and originate mainly in military registers, probably the same as for Issachar. A second Benjaminite genealogy is given in Chapter 8, although for a different purpose.

⁶ The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, and Jediael, three. ⁷ The sons of Bela: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri, five, heads of ancestral houses, mighty warriors; and their enrolment by genealogies was twenty-two thousand and thirty-four. ⁸ The sons of Becher: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Becher; ⁹ and their enrolment by genealogies, according to their generations, as heads of their ancestral houses, mighty warriors, was twenty thousand two hundred. ¹⁰ The sons of Jediael: Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar. ¹¹ All these were the sons of Jediael according to the heads of their ancestral houses, mighty warriors, seventeen thousand two hundred, ready for service in war. ¹² And Shupim and Hupim were the sons of Ir, Hushim the son of Aher.

1 Chronicles 7:6-12

Ehud was the famous leader for Israel noted in Judges 3:12-30.

Many believe, including Malbim, that the sons of Aher is a veiled reference to the tribe of Dan, who is not otherwise mentioned in this genealogy. However, some commentators take the Hebrew word *aher* for a common, not proper name, and render the words this, another son, or the son of another family or tribe, i.e. of Dan, as may be gathered.

There are at least four things that support the idea that this is a veiled reference to the tribe of Dan:

- In Genesis 46:23 Hushim is mentioned as the son of Dan.
- The next verse, v.13, mentions the sons of Bilhah, who was mother to both Dan and Naphtali, also mentioned in that verse.
- Otherwise the genealogy of Dan is left out.
- Hebrew writers sometimes used the word another (*aher*) to describe an abominable thing which the writer disdained to mention; such as a reference to swine, which to them was a very unclean and loathsome creature, i.e. another thing.

It must be remembered that the tribe of Dan had made themselves and their memory infamous and detestable by that gross idolatry, which began first and continued longest in that tribe; refer to Judges Chapter 18.

The sons of Ir. According to RaDak, Ir is the same as Iri (v.7), who was Benjamin's grandson.

I.h.iii 1 Chronicles 7:13 - Descendants of Naphtali

This information is drawn from Genesis 46:24 and Numbers 26:48-49. The extreme brevity may reflect the limitations in the Chronicler's sources. Details for Dan and Zebulun are also missing, probably because of the fragmentary nature of records from the early monarchy.

¹³ The descendants of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum, the descendants of Bilhah.

1 Chronicles 7:13

Bilhah was Rachel's maidservant with whom Jacob had two children, Dan and Naphtali; refer to Genesis 35:25.

I.h.iv 1 Chronicles 7:14-19 - Descendants of Manasseh

This section concerns the half of Manasseh that lived west of the Jordan. Details are drawn from Numbers 26:29-33 and Joshua 17:1-3. This genealogy is of a different character from the preceding ones, with a particular emphasis on women i.e. Maacah, Zelophehad and Hammolecheth, suggesting an origin in the domestic social world. Maacah is called the sister of Machir in v.15, then his wife in v.16; but 'sister/brother' often has the sense of 'relative' in the OT.

¹⁴ The sons of Manasseh: Asriel, whom his Aramæan concubine bore; she bore Machir the father of Gilead. ¹⁵ And Machir took a wife for Huppim and for Shuppim. The name of his sister was Maacah. And the

name of the second was Zelophehad; and Zelophehad had daughters.¹⁶ Maacah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she named him Peresh; the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rekem.¹⁷ The son of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead son of Machir, son of Manasseh.¹⁸ And his sister Hammolecheth bore Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.¹⁹ The sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

1 Chronicles 7:14-19

Asriel was a great grandson of Manasseh and the leader of the Asrielites; refer to Numbers 26:29-31. The Aramæan concubine was Manasseh's.

Zelophehad had daughters. This account came up earlier in the history of Israel with regard to female inheritance rights when a man had no son but only daughter to leave his estate to. The law then allowed for the daughters to inherit providing they married within their own tribe so that the land allocation would not pass from one tribe to another; refer to Numbers 26:33 and 27:1-11.

According to RaDak, Hammolecheth ruled part of the land of Gilead for a time.

Shemida was another of Gilead's sons; refer to Numbers 26:30-32.

I.h.v 1 Chronicles 7:20-29 - Descendants of Ephraim

The vertical genealogy of Joshua, the most famous Ephraimite, is given in vv.20-27 and taken from Numbers 26:35. Into this list a historical note (vv.21b-24) has been inserted that probably refers to the post conquest period: the building of Lower and Upper Beth-horon fits better with the time of tribal settlement. In this case, Ephraim (v.22) would refer not to the patriarch but to a later descendant of the same name. Gath may be Gittaim, on the Ephraimite border. Verses 28-29 draw on Joshua Chapters 16-17 for details of the settlements of Ephraim and Manasseh, since both tribes descended from Joseph.

²⁰ The sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son,²¹ Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. Now the people of Gath, who were born in the land, killed them, because they came down to raid their cattle.²² And their father Ephraim mourned for many days, and his brothers came to comfort him.²³ Ephraim went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son; and he named him Beriah, because disaster had befallen his house.²⁴ His daughter was Sheerah, who built both Lower and Upper Beth-horon, and Uzen-sheerah.²⁵ Rephah was his son, Resheph

his son, Telah his son, Tahan his son, ²⁶ Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, ²⁷ Nun his son, Joshua his son. ²⁸ Their possessions and settlements were Bethel and its towns, and eastwards Naaran, and westwards Gezer and its towns, Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah and its towns; ²⁹ also along the borders of the Manassites, Beth-shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these lived the sons of Joseph son of Israel.

1 Chronicles 7:20-29

The sons of Ephraim. Shuthelah, Bered and Tahath were sons of Ephraim but Eldah, Tahath, Azbad, etc. were sons of Bered according to RaDak. The Ephraimites were famous for their wealth, power, and prowess; but they were noted as insolent, proud, and quarrelsome.

During the Egyptian exile, large numbers of Ephraim's grandchildren escaped to the land of Canaan. They raided the area of Gath, where they were vanquished (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer).

I.h.vi 1 Chronicles 7:30-40 - Descendants of Asher

Genesis 46:17, Numbers 26:44-46, and details from a military register (v.40) provide the information for Asher. The total of fighting men for Asher of twenty six thousand (v.40) is significantly less than that in Moses' day as recorded in Numbers 26:47.

³⁰ The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. ³¹ The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith. ³² Heber became the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and their sister Shua. ³³ The sons of Japhlet: Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These are the sons of Japhlet. ³⁴ The sons of Shemer: Ahi, Rohgah, Hubbah, and Aram. ³⁵ The sons of Helem his brother: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. ³⁶ The sons of Zophah: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, ³⁷ Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera. ³⁸ The sons of Jether: Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara. ³⁹ The sons of Ulla: Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia. ⁴⁰ All of these were men of Asher, heads of ancestral houses, select mighty warriors, chief of the princes. Their number enrolled by genealogies, for service in war, was twenty-six thousand men.

1 Chronicles 7:30-40

Their sister Serah; their sister Shua. The rabbins say that the daughters of Asher were very beautiful, and were all matched with kings or priests.

Shemer in v.34 is the Shomer of v.32. Likewise, Helem in v.35 is Hotham. Jether (v.38) is to be identified with the Ithran of v.37.

The sons of Ulla were apparently descendants of Jether.