



## First Chronicles - Chapter Nine

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

#### I.i 1 Chronicles 8:1-9:2 - Descendants of Benjamin (continues/concludes)

#### Summary of Chapter Nine

The Chronicler now focuses on the worship personnel who return to inhabit Jerusalem. In addition, there is a list of the heads of families from various tribes who returned and settled in Jerusalem. The chapter concludes with a repeat of the genealogy of King Saul.

<sup>1</sup> So all Israel was enrolled by genealogies; and these are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. And Judah was taken into exile in Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. <sup>2</sup> Now the first to live again in their possessions in their towns were Israelites, priests, Levites, and temple servants.

#### 1 Chronicles 9:1-2

So all Israel was enrolled by genealogies. The first eight chapters of 1 Chronicles list these genealogical records. These records were inscribed in the Book of the Kings of Israel, but these are not the same books known as 1 or 2 Kings. This is probably the records referred to by the authors of Kings as the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel, or Judah, that were a separate record from Kings and Chronicles to which the authors had access that recorded everything of significance that occurred during the reign of the kings.

And Judah was taken into exile in Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. In one sentence, the Chronicler provides a reminder that it was not the clash of

empires or the intrigues of the geopolitical scene that doomed the kingdom of Judah. It was their unfaithfulness to God. If they had remained faithful, God would have protected them amid the rise and fall of a hundred powerful empires.

**Now the first to live again in their possessions in their towns were Israelites.**

The Chronicler completely skips over the seventy years of captivity between vv.1-2. His interest is not only in the past, demonstrated by eight previous chapters of genealogies, but also in the present and in the future. The Israelites were back in the land. All this means that Chronicles has taken the history of Israel a stage further than 1 and 2 Kings. Although Second Kings ends on a note of genuine hope with news of the sole remaining Davidic king: *<<In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, King Evil-merodach of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released King Jehoiachin of Judah from prison; he spoke kindly to him, and gave him a seat above the other seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes. Every day of his life he dined regularly in the king's presence. For his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, a portion every day, as long as he lived>>* (2 Kings 25:27-30), it is restrained and Israel is still in exile. However, now winter is over, and these lists are a definite sign that spring has begun to arrive.

There was no longer a kingdom of Judah and another kingdom of Israel; now they were all Israelites. Called here by the general name of Israelites, which was given to them before that unhappy division of the two kingdoms, and now is restored to them when the Israelites are united with the Jews in one and the same commonwealth, so that all the names and signs of their former division might be blotted out.

**To live again in their possessions.** The idea is that the people of the tribes of Israel came back to their ancestral lands, promised to them by God and first possessed in the days of Moses and Joshua. Their ancestral land is a term rarely found in Chronicles; indeed, it is elsewhere only in 1 Chronicles 7:28, 2 Chronicles 11:14 and 31:1. Its occurrence here evokes its frequent use in the time of Moses and Joshua.

God kept the land empty for them during the exile. This was a wonderful providence of God that as the land kept its Sabbaths for those seventy years, so the country should be all that time kept empty, until the return of the Jews.

**Priests, Levites, and temple servants.** These were three categories of workers at the temple, who had the task of restoring the temple and its worship in the days of Ezra:

- **Priests** were the descendents of Aaron who had the right to offer sacrifice and take care of the Holy Place in the temple.

- **Levites** were the much broader class of religious workers, who served in many ways: practical, artistic, and spiritual.
- The **temple servants** or *Nethinim* were special servants given to the temple. The temple servants were literally ‘given ones.’ They might consist of captives who had been spared but enslaved to temple service. Early Hebrew examples include the certain Midianite women in Numbers 31:35 and 31:47, or the people of Gibeon in Joshua 9:22-23, but their organisation as a class is credited to David: <<*also Hashabiah and with him Jeshaiiah of the descendants of Merari, with his kin and their sons, twenty; besides two hundred and twenty of the temple servants, whom David and his officials had set apart to attend the Levites. These were all mentioned by name*>> (Ezra 8:19-20).

These final verses provide a summarising conclusion to the tribal genealogies of all Israel in Chapters 2-8. Judah’s exile to Babylon for breach of faith, Hebrew *ma’al*, parallels the fate of the northern tribes (1 Chronicles 5:25-26) and represents the culmination of the narrative of the post-Solomonic dynasty in 2 Chronicles 10-36; refer especially to 2 Chronicles 36:14-20.

#### I.j 1 Chronicles 9:3-34 - The Resettlement of Jerusalem

The resettlement of Jerusalem and Judah after the exile indicates that a new chapter has opened in Israel’s existence. The punishment of exile is past (2 Chronicles 36:22-23), so the people should respond to God’s grace by ordering their lives in the right way, in the hope of a fuller restoration than their present experience. Their obedient response includes repopulating Jerusalem (vv.2-17), and a renewed commitment to supporting the temple and its services, signified here by its personnel (vv.10-33). For an account of how the repopulation was encouraged by Nehemiah refer to Nehemiah 11:1-19, which is closely related to the first part of this passage,

#### I.j.i 1 Chronicles 9:3-9 - Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the Exile

The repopulated Jerusalem includes people from Ephraim and Manasseh, as well as Judah and Benjamin, as a representative nucleus of all Israel. The Judahites are listed as descendants of the patriarch’s sons Perez, Shelah (assuming the word Shilonites should have the vowels for Shelanites; refer to Numbers 26:20), and Zerah.

<sup>3</sup> And some of the people of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh lived in Jerusalem: <sup>4</sup> Uthai son of Ammihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, from the sons of Perez son of Judah. <sup>5</sup> And of the Shilonites: Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons. <sup>6</sup> Of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel and their kin, six hundred and ninety. <sup>7</sup> Of the Benjaminites:

Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Hodaviah, son of Hassenuah, <sup>8</sup> Ibneiah son of Jeroham, Elah son of Uzzi, son of Michri, and Meshullam son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel, son of Ibnijah; <sup>9</sup> and their kindred according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty-six. All these were heads of families according to their ancestral houses.

### 1 Chronicles 9:3-9

And some of the people of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh lived in Jerusalem. This begins a list that is in some ways similar to a list in Nehemiah Chapter 11 and in some ways different. Biblical researchers debate if the lists are more similar or more different, and the exact points of connection and difference can be difficult to assess.

### I.j.ii 1 Chronicles 9:10-13 - Priestly Families

This is an account of the descendants of Aaron who returned from exile to Jerusalem and were therefore authorised to serve as priests to the people of God.

<sup>10</sup> Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, <sup>11</sup> and Azariah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the chief officer of the house of God; <sup>12</sup> and Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, and Maasai son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer; <sup>13</sup> besides their kindred, heads of their ancestral houses, one thousand seven hundred and sixty, qualified for the work of the service of the house of God.

### 1 Chronicles 9:10-13

Of the priests. The priests in postexilic Jerusalem are commended for their ability and commitment to the temple ministry (v.13). Their numbers, one thousand seven hundred and sixty, have grown significantly since earlier days in the return, i.e. one thousand one hundred and ninety two in Nehemiah 11:12-14.

Pashhur, son of Malchijah, served King Zedekiah shortly before the exile to Babylon: <<*This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur son of Malchiah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, saying, 'Please inquire of the Lord on our behalf, for King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon is making war against us; perhaps the Lord will perform a wonderful deed for us, as he has often done, and will make him withdraw from us'*>> (Jeremiah 21:1-2).

Qualified for the work is translated ‘mighty men of valour’ in many other OT such as Joshua 1:14, Judges 6:12, 1 Samuel 16:18 and many others. It shows that when it came to doing the work of the service of the house of God, it takes a man of strength and courage, the same qualities that are needed in a warrior.

### I.j.iii 1 Chronicles 9:14-34 - Levitical Families

The rest of the returning Levites are now listed. Their roles would be to support the function of the priests and ensure that the temple was rebuilt and served.

<sup>14</sup> Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; <sup>15</sup> and Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zichri, son of Asaph; <sup>16</sup> and Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

#### 1 Chronicles 9:14-16

The Levitical singers and musicians include descendants of Asaph and Jeduthun, choir leaders in David’s day; refer to 1 Chronicles 6:39 and 25:1. Other singers lived in the villages of the Netophathites, near Bethlehem, as confirmed by: <<*The companies of the singers gathered together from the circuit around Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites*>> (Nehemiah 12:28).

<sup>17</sup> The gatekeepers were: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman; and their kinsman Shallum was the chief, <sup>18</sup> stationed previously in the king’s gate on the east side. These were the gatekeepers of the camp of the Levites. <sup>19</sup> Shallum son of Kore, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah, and his kindred of his ancestral house, the Korahites, were in charge of the work of the service, guardians of the thresholds of the tent, as their ancestors had been in charge of the camp of the Lord, guardians of the entrance. <sup>20</sup> And Phinehas son of Eleazar was chief over them in former times; the Lord was with him. <sup>21</sup> Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was gatekeeper at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>22</sup> All these, who were chosen as gatekeepers at the thresholds, were two hundred and twelve. They were enrolled by genealogies in their villages. David and the seer Samuel established them in their office of trust. <sup>23</sup> So they and their descendants were in charge of the gates of the house of the Lord, that is, the house of the tent, as guards. <sup>24</sup> The gatekeepers were on the four sides, east, west, north, and south; <sup>25</sup> and their kindred who were in their villages were obliged to come in every seven days, in turn, to be with them; <sup>26</sup> for the four chief gatekeepers, who were

Levites, were in charge of the chambers and the treasures of the house of God. <sup>27</sup> And they would spend the night near the house of God; for on them lay the duty of watching, and they had charge of opening it every morning.

### 1 Chronicles 9:17-27

The gatekeepers were. The Chronicler gives special attention to the Levitical gatekeepers, tracing their authority to their service under Phinehas (v.20); and their appointment by David; refer to 1 Chronicles 26:1-32. This was along with their primary duty of safeguarding the sanctity and security of the temple, which entailed regular shifts by Levites from the villages near Jerusalem (vv.22-25).

This describes the re-institution of the organisation of the temple work and workers in the early days of the second temple. They were anxious to organise things in the same manner as King David had done originally. It also denotes that there was definite organisation and division of labour among the Levites

Shallum was the chief, stationed previously in the king's gate on the east side. According to RaDak, this same family had also stood guard of the King's Gate of Solomon's Temple

The Korahites, were in charge of the work of the service, guardians of the thresholds of the tent, as their ancestors had been in charge of the camp of the Lord, guardians of the entrance. This was one of the holiest and most prestigious of duties as they guarded the interior of the tabernacle and later the temple building itself.

And Phinehas son of Eleazar was chief over them in former times; the Lord was with him. The Chronicler remembered the faithful work of Phinehas in the days of Moses (Numbers 25:7-13), and linked his faithfulness to the work of the gatekeepers in the days of Ezra. The fact that the Lord was with Phinehas indicates that the Lord was also with those gatekeepers of the Chronicler's day who followed in the same living tradition of divine service.

Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was gatekeeper at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Since both Meshelemiah and Zechariah served under David (1 Chronicles 26:8-11), this tent of meeting would seem to refer to the curtained form of God's house erected around the Ark of the Covenant prior to Solomon building the permanent temple.

David and the seer Samuel established them in their office of trust. The Chronicler points back to two of the most significant human leaders in Israel's history as the ones who designated the roles to these groups of Levites and thus their descendants can be entrusted with these same roles following the return

from Babylonian exile, i.e. so they and their descendants were in charge of the gates of the house of the Lord, that is, the house of the tent, as guards.

<sup>28</sup> Some of them had charge of the utensils of service, for they were required to count them when they were brought in and taken out.

<sup>29</sup> Others of them were appointed over the furniture, and over all the holy utensils, also over the choice flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, and the spices. <sup>30</sup> Others, of the sons of the priests, prepared the mixing of the spices, <sup>31</sup> and Mattithiah, one of the Levites, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, was in charge of making the flat cakes. <sup>32</sup> Also some of their kindred of the Kohathites had charge of the rows of bread, to prepare them for each sabbath.

### 1 Chronicles 9:28-32

The gatekeepers were also responsible for the utensils and supplies used in the daily sacrifices.

And Mattithiah was in charge of making the flat cakes. The flat cakes is probably a reference to the bread of the presence: <<*And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me always*>> (Exodus 25:30).



**The Gold Table for the Bread of the Presence**

The responsibilities of vv.28-31 may strike the modern reader as obscure and dull. Perhaps they seemed so to the ancient reader as well. Nevertheless, the

whole work of the sanctuary depended on the faithfulness of these men; and all of God's people may take comfort from this reminder that God both notices and remembers those who faithfully perform routine tasks in service to him. The mention of these servants was probably a source of pride to their later descendants.

<sup>33</sup> Now these are the singers, the heads of ancestral houses of the Levites, living in the chambers of the temple free from other service, for they were on duty day and night. <sup>34</sup> These were heads of ancestral houses of the Levites, according to their generations; these leaders lived in Jerusalem.

### 1 Chronicles 9:33-34

Now these are the singers, the heads of ancestral houses of the Levites, living in the chambers of the temple free from other service. The worship leaders had a full time role because the act of praise and worship to God should take precedence over everything else. That they were on duty day and night also demonstrates that song worship is not restricted to a weekly church meeting but is something that can and should be offered at anytime. Their chambers were called *Peturim*, which means 'exempt ones', because these Levites were excused from other responsibilities because of the importance of their worship duties: <<***Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the Lord***>> (Psalm 134:1-2).

### I.k 1 Chronicles 9:35-44 - The Family of King Saul

Saul's genealogy is repeated from 1 Chronicles 8:29-38. Its main purpose here is to introduce the Chronicler's account of Saul's reign in Chapter 10. While his dynasty ended with his death, nevertheless his family line continued for many generations as a part of Israel (vv.40-44).

<sup>35</sup> In Gibeon lived the father of Gibeon, Jeiel, and the name of his wife was Maacah. <sup>36</sup> His firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, <sup>37</sup> Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth; <sup>38</sup> and Mikloth became the father of Shimeam; and these also lived opposite their kindred in Jerusalem, with their kindred. <sup>39</sup> Ner became the father of Kish, Kish of Saul, Saul of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-baal; <sup>40</sup> and the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal became the father of Micah. <sup>41</sup> The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz; <sup>42</sup> and Ahaz became the father of Jarah, and Jarah of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza. <sup>43</sup> Moza became the

father of Binea; and Rephaiah was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. <sup>44</sup> Azel had six sons, and these are their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan; these were the sons of Azel.

#### 1 Chronicles 9:35-44

Ner became the father of Kish, Kish of Saul, Saul of Jonathan. For emphasis, some of the genealogy of the line of Saul, both before him and after him, is listed. This was to emphasise the fact that God did not wipe out the line of Saul, and that his descendants lived to the days of Ezra and the return from exile.

Saul of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-baal. Jonathan, Malchishua and Abinadab would all die with King Saul in a battle against the Philistines. Esh-Baal, also known as Ishbaal in Second Samuel, became king over Israel over most of the tribes of Israel for two years before being assassinated by his own men.

Since the genealogy continues for twelve generations after Saul, the fact that his dynasty crashed and his kingship was transferred to David did not remove his family's place in Israelite history. They too had lived in Jerusalem and, although it is not known whether this continued after the exile, even for them there were signs of hope.