

The Identity, Privileges and Responsibilities of God's People (1 Chronicles 1:1-9:34)

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Levi in the Center (6:1-81); Other Tribes Easily Forgotten (7:1-40); Benjamin in Honor (8:1-40); and The Continuation of Israel (9:1b-34)

Levi in the Center (6:1-81)

As we have already noted, the Chronicler highlighted the importance of the tribe of Levi by placing it in the center of his genealogies (see figure 7). This literary arrangement reflected the symbolic arrangement of the tribes of Israel depicted in Numbers 2:1-34. When the tribes encamped during the wilderness march, they arranged themselves on all sides of the tabernacle with the sons of Levi in the center of the camp. The symbolism in the Mosaic period was plain. The worship of the Lord and the servants of that worship were to be the focus of hope for the traveling Israelite community. The Chronicler reflected this symbolism in his model of the post-exilic community by setting the genealogies of Levi in the center of his description of the sons of Israel.

The Chronicler's emphasis on Levi reveals the importance of the temple and its services after the exile. Both kingship and temple were the central institutions in his vision of Israel (see *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*). If the returnees were to see God's blessing, then not only the royal family (Judah), but also the temple personnel (Levi) must have their proper place among the tribes.

Structure of 6:1-81

The Chronicler's sketch of the tribe of Levi divides into four large sections (see figure 6). The high priestly families appear first (6:1-15). The duties of various Levites follow (6:16-47). Priestly responsibilities appear (6:48-53) just before the geographical records of the tribe (6:54-81).

The High Priestly Family (6:1-15)

The account of the tribe of Levi begins with a focus on one line of Aaron's descendants, the high priestly family (6:1-15). He set this genealogy at the head of this chapter to symbolize the leading role of the high priests over all other members of the tribe. The Chronicler identified the high priestly family from its origins to the time of exile in two steps (see figure 6).

High Priestly Line Distinguished (6:1-4a)

The Chronicler first distinguished the high priests from other descendants of Levi (6:1-4a). Out of all the sons of Levi (6:1), he focused on **Kohath** (6:2). From all of Kohath's children, he narrowed attention to **Amram** (6:3). **Aaron** (6:3) was Amram's child of special interest. Of Aaron's four sons, only **Eleazar** continued the selected line (6:4a). Out of all of Eleazar's sons, only **Phineas** represented the high priestly line (6:4b).

This material eliminates a number of families from high priestly service without explanation. The Chronicler relied on his readers' knowledge of Israel's history to supply additional information as it was needed.

High Priestly Line Continued (6:4b-15)

With other branches of Aaron's family eliminated, the Chronicler concentrated on the high priestly descendants of Phineas (6:4b-15). This material is very similar to Ezra 7:1-5. A number of high priests do not appear in this list: Jehoiada (2 Kgs 12:2; 2 Chr 23:8-18; 24:2-3,6,12,14-15,17,20,22,25), Uriah (2 Kgs 16:10-16), possibly two other Azariahs (see 2 Chr 26:17,20; 31:10-13), as well as the descendants of Ithamar - Eli (see 1 Sam 1:9; 14:3) and Abiathar (see 2 Sam 8:17).

Within these verses the Chronicler paused on two occasions to add his own comments (6:10,15). These comments reveal his chief concerns in this section. First, the Chronicler mentioned that **Johanan ... served as priest in the temple Solomon built** (6:10). This comment is significant because the Chronicler viewed Solomonic structures as normative for his post-exilic readers (see: *Introduction: 14 Standards*). The patterns followed in Solomon's temple were to be reinstated in the new temple after exile. In the Chronicler's day, many families could lay claim to having high priestly ancestors, but only one family of Aaron was the legitimate high priestly line. By referring to Solomon's temple, the Chronicler responded

to any objection that may have been raised against the exaltation of this line of Aaron as the exclusive high priestly family.

Second, the Chronicler also mentioned that **Jehozadak was deported ... by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar** (6:15). This historical note brings the genealogy of high priests to within one generation of the post-exilic community. Jehozadak was the father of Joshua, the high priest of Zerubbabel's reconstruction program. Joshua had returned from exile and displaced other Levites who had led worship in the ruins of the temple. By ending this genealogy of high priests with Jehozadak, the Chronicler settled any question regarding the legitimacy of Joshua's program. God had chosen him; no other son of Levi could function as the high priest.

Duties of Levi's Descendants (6:16-47)

The second section begins with the title **the sons of Levi** (6:16) just as the preceding section (see 6:1). This list, however, focuses on the duties of two kinds of Levites (see figure 6). The Chronicler dealt first with those whom we may call "Ordinary Levites," those with a variety of responsibilities (6:16-30). He then turned to those whom we may call "Musical Levites," those in charge of music in worship (6:31-47). These divisions of duties provided guidance for the restoration of proper temple worship after the exile.

Ordinary Levites (6:16-30)

The "Ordinary Levites" appear in two parallel lists (6:16-19a; 6:19b-30). The former half lists the sons of the second generation of each family (6:16-19a). The latter half traces a number of generations of each family (6:19b-30). Both passages include titles (6:16,19b), Gershonites (6:17,20-21), Kohathites (6:18,22-28), and Merarites (6:19a,29-30).

The first half of this material reflects traditional records of Levitical descent. Close parallels appear in Ex 6:16-19 and Num 3:17-20; 26:57-61. The second half, however, extends for seven generations. The second Kohathite genealogy (6:22-28) is difficult to translate and appears to have suffered corruption through transmission (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). Some reconstructions of this material, however, suggest that it originally extended seven generations as well.

The mention of well-known **Elkanah** (6:25) and **Samuel** (6:27-28) focuses the Kohathite line on the man who anointed David king over Israel (see 1 Sam 1:20; 16:7,12-13). In 1 Samuel 1:1 Elkanah is identified as "an Ephraimite," but the Chronicler clarified here that Elkanah and his son Samuel were Levites living among the Ephraimites.

The mention of Samuel suggests that the seven generations of these genealogies reach David's kingdom. If this understanding is correct, the Chronicler brought these genealogies to an end in David's day because he considered David's division of labor among the Levites as normative for his post-exilic readers (see *Introduction: 14) Standards*).

Musical Levites (6:31-47)

This portion of the Chronicler's account of Levi lists **the men David put in charge of the music** (6:31). It points out that these families not only served in David's **tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting** (6:32), but also in Solomon's **temple of the Lord in Jerusalem** (6:32). Thus the orders described here stand on the authority of David and Solomon, the Chronicler's ideal kings (see *Introduction: 14) Standards*).

Musicians were selected from each family of Levi: **Heman, the musician** from the Kohathites (6:33-38), **Heman's associate Asaph ... at his right hand** from the Gershonites (6:39-43), and **at his left hand ... Ethan** from the Merarites (6:44-47).

The Chronicler frequently mentioned musical guilds (see 15:16,27; 25:1-31; 2 Chr 29:25-26; see also *Introduction: 8) Music*). His keen interest in this aspect of temple service has led some interpreters to think that the Chronicler himself may have been a Levitical musician. This understanding may be correct, but it is also possible that the Chronicler was simply addressing controversies among Levites in his day (see Neh 7:43-44; 10:9-13,28-29; 11:15-18; 12:24-47).

Duties of Priests (6:48-53)

The Chronicler turned next to the duties of the Aaronic priests. While the high priesthood was restricted in his day to the Zadokite family, all the descendants of Aaron served as priests. This material divides into two parts (see figure 6).

Priestly Responsibilities (6:48-49)

This section begins with a notice about the Levites (6:48). The Chronicler explained that other Levites took care of **all the other duties** related to the temple (6:48). The sons of Aaron, however, had special responsibilities in the worship of Israel. They **presented ... burnt offering** (see Lev 1; 6:8-13) and **incense in connection with all that was done in the Most Holy Place** (see Lev 16:13-16). They also made **atonement for Israel** (6:49) through a

variety of services. As was his typical practice, the Chronicler appealed to Mosaic legislation to justify his point of view. His outlook was **in accordance with all that Moses ... had commanded** (6:49; see *Introduction: 14 Standards*).

Priestly Leadership (6:50-53)

With these general Levitical and priestly duties established, the Chronicler noted which families were high priests in charge of all the other sons of Aaron. The Chronicler gave a short genealogy tracing high priests from **Aaron** to **Zadok** and his son **Ahimaaz** (6:50-53). This list extends to the days of David and Solomon like those of the preceding section (see 6:16-30). Joshua, the high priest with Zerubbabel after the exile, descended from this line. Like Ezekiel (see Ezek 40:46; 43:19; 44:15), and Zechariah (see Zech 3:1-10), the Chronicler supported the Zadokite priesthood as the only legitimate high priesthood for Israel after the exile.

Lands for Levi's Descendants (6:54-81)

The Chronicler closed this section on the tribe of Levi by listing settlements allotted to various Levites (6:54-81). His description depends heavily on Josh 21:4-39 and divides into three parts (see figure 6).

The text deals first with Aaronic possessions (6:54-60); then it constructs two parallel lists (ABC A'B'C') of land allotments to the Kohathites (6:61, 66-70), Gershonites (6:62, 71-76), and Merarites (6:63, 77-81).

The Chronicler had at least two reasons for including these details. First, most of the sites mentioned here were outside the boundaries of the post-exilic province of Judah. They reflected the Chronicler's interest in the territorial expansion of the restored community. He encouraged the sons of Levi to keep the hope of repossessing all the territories they had lost to foreign dominion. (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes see comments on 2:42-55.)

Second, the Chronicler also instructed all the tribes to remember their responsibilities to Levi. According to Mosaic legislation, the sons of Levi received parcels of land within the boundaries of other tribes (see Lev 25:32-34; Num 35:1-5; Josh 21:1-3). The distribution of these properties came from God through the casting of the **lot** (6:54; For the Chronicler's outlook on casting lots see comments on 24:5.). Moreover, these possessions enabled the Levites to support their families. As **the Israelites gave the Levites ... towns and their pasturelands** (6:64), the post-exilic community was to honor the Levites in these ways (see also 2 Chr 11:14; 31:4).

Other Tribes Easily Forgotten (7:1-40)

In the seventh chapter of his genealogies, the Chronicler rounded off his list of the tribes of Israel by quickly mentioning six other families easily overlooked.

Structure of 7:1-40

This record divides into six sections (see figure 6). It touches on Issachar (7:1-5), Benjamin (7:6-12), Naphtali (7:13), Manasseh (7:14-19), Ephraim (7:20-29), and Asher (7:30-40). Compared with other portions of his genealogies, this material is characterized by brevity and a paucity of authorial comments. Even so, general features of this chapter reveal the Chronicler's chief concerns.

The Tribe of Issachar (7:1-5)

The record of **the sons of Issachar** (7:1) draws from Genesis 46:13 and Numbers 26:23-25, but many of the names do not appear elsewhere in Scripture. This list focuses first on Issachar's four sons (7:1) and narrows attention to the descendants of **Tola** the first born (7:2). The descendants of **Uzzi**, the firstborn of Tola, and his son **Izrahiah** follow (7:3-4). Then the genealogies close a reference to **the relatives**, other Issacharites not mentioned in the preceding verses (7:5).

By mentioning large number of soldiers as well as **many wives and children** (7:4), the Chronicler once again pointed to the blessing of God illustrated in the increase of progeny. The tribe of Manasseh had been greatly blessed by God and should not be forgotten in the post-exilic period (see *Introduction: 25 Increase and Decline of Progeny*).

The most prominent feature of this section is its military focus. Each step of the genealogy closes by citing a number of soldiers: Tola's **fighting men** (7:2), the **men ready for battle** from Izrahiah's sons (7:4), and the **fighting men** from **all the clans of Issachar** (7:5). Previous genealogies mention fighting men on occasion (see 1:10; 2:22-23; 4:38,41-43; 5:24), but this theme does not appear there as prominently as it does here.

The Chronicler's concentration on fighting men drew attention to at least two issues. First, Issachar had offered vital service to the nation of Israel in the past by participating in warfare. In acknowledgment of these contributions, the post-exilic readers were not to exclude this tribe from their vision of restored Israel (see *Introduction: 2 Northern Israel*).

Second, the post-exilic readers should desire the return of Issachar so that the holy army of Israel could be reconstituted. Earlier prophets had already indicated that warfare against the nations would come after exile. After returning from exile, Israel faced threats from enemies; warfare was a constant menace (see Ezr 4:1-6; 5:3-5; 6:3,6-7,11-12; 7:11,21,24,26; Neh 2:7,9-10,19; 4:1-23; 6:1-19; 7:3). By concentrating on the military contributions of Issachar, the Chronicler indicated that the return of Issachar would strengthen the post-exilic community against her enemies.

The Tribe of Benjamin (7:6-12)

A brief account of the tribe of **Benjamin** (7:6) appears here prior to the more substantial record in 8:1-40. This material introduces three sons of Benjamin: **Bela**, **Beker**, and **Jediael** (7:6). It then covers their descendants in the same order (Bela [7:7], Beker [7:8-9], and Jediael [7:10-11]). The section closes with the mention of several other descendants of Benjamin (7:12).

In this passage, the Chronicler did not follow Genesis 46:21 nor Numbers 26:38-41 as closely as he did in other places (compare 7:14-19; 7:20-29; 7:30-40; 8:1-40). The uniqueness of this genealogy has been explained in different ways. Some interpreters have suggested that it was originally a record of Zebulun that suffered corruption through transmission (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). However, there is little support for this view. Others have suggested that the Chronicler simply followed a source that was different from other lists. Even if this is correct, we must still ask why the Chronicler chose to present this limited account of Benjamin here and reserve more extensive material for 8:1-40.

Once again, an important clue to the Chronicler's purpose here lies in his emphasis on military matters. The records of Benjamin's three sons end with the numbers of **fighting men** (7:7,9,11). The longer Benjamite genealogy in 8:1-40 occasionally mentions military matters (see 8:13,40), but it provides a much broader picture of Benjamin. This shorter list focuses explicitly on Benjamin's former military might.

It seems likely, therefore, that the military focus of Issachar's preceding genealogy (see 7:1-5) led the Chronicler to add a brief list of another tribe of military importance. The surrounding peoples who threatened the post-exilic community made it essential for more descendants of Benjamite warriors to return to the land and join with the few Benjamites who had already come (see 9:7-9; see also *Introduction: 2) Northern Israel*).

The Tribe of Naphtali (7:13)

One verse covers the **sons of Naphtali** (7:13). This genealogy is by far the shortest among the Chronicler's records. The brevity and fragmentary character of this verse have led some interpreters to suggest that a portion of the original text has been lost. It may have been here that the Chronicler originally mentioned Zebulun and Dan (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). This proposal has some merit and could explain the anomalous character of this passage.

As it stands, however, this genealogy offers little information other than the fact that Naphtali was a child of Jacob's concubine **Bilhah** (see Gen 30:3-8). This comment may have been a response to controversy among the Chronicler's readers. Perhaps some early returnees questioned the legitimacy or importance of Naphtali's descendants because they were children of Bilhah. If this was so, the Chronicler asserted here that the descendants of Naphtali certainly belonged among the people of God (see *Introduction: 2) Northern Israel*).

The Tribe of Manasseh (7:14-19)

The Chronicler himself acknowledged that Manassehites were among the early returnees (see 9:3). Moreover, he already listed some Manassehites who settled east of the Jordan (see 5:18,23). This genealogy, however, deals with families of the tribe who settled west of the Jordan. It draws from Num 26:29-34 and Josh 17:1-18, but differs from both sources in several ways. The Hebrew text of this section presents a number of difficulties that have led some interpreters to think it was corrupted through transmission along with the preceding genealogy of Naphtali (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). This possibility cannot be ruled out completely. As it appears, however, Manasseh's record divides into four parts: **Asriel** and **Zelophehad** (7:14-16), **Ulam** (7:17a), **Gilead** (7:17b-18) and **Shemida** (7:19).

The main purpose of this material was to indicate the rightful place of Manassehites among the people of God (see *Introduction: 2) Northern Israel*). One interesting feature of this section is the prominence of women. In these six verses the Chronicler mentioned women five times: the **Aramean concubine** (7:14), Makir's sister **Maacah** (7:15), Zelophehad's **daughters** (7:15b), Makir's wife **Maacah** (7:16), and **Hammoleketh** (7:18).

The well-known stories about Zelophehad's daughters (see Num 26:33; 27:1-11; 36:1-12; Josh 17:3-4) deal with the inheritance rights of women in Israel. Zelophehad died leaving only daughters to inherit his land. As a result, Moses made a special ruling affirming that in such situations women should receive their fathers' land so that it would remain a permanent possession of the same tribe.

The Chronicler's mention of Zelophehad's daughters and other women suggests that he used these records to reaffirm the Mosaic legislation regarding the property rights of Israelite

women. In the post-exilic period there would undoubtedly be families only represented by women. Questions would arise regarding ownership of family inheritances. The Chronicler appealed to the records of the Manassehites to settle such questions. The restoration of all Israel included the rightful place of women. This focus corresponds to a number of passages in Chronicles which draw attention to children and women (see 2 Chr 20:30; 21:14,17; 28:8; 29:9; 31:18; see also *Introduction: 1) All Israel*).

The Tribe of Ephraim (7:20-29)

The tribe of Ephraim was represented among the early returnees (see 9:3), but the Chronicler wanted to encourage his readers to expect much more for the tribe. This material breaks into four sections: the beginning of Joshua's genealogy (7:20-21a), a brief narrative (7:21b-24), the continuation of Joshua's genealogy (7:25-27), and a summary of settlements (7:28-29).

Out of all of **the descendants of Ephraim** (7:20), the Chronicler chose to concentrate on the line leading to **Joshua**, the son of **Nun** (7:27), who led the conquest of the promised land (see Num 13:8; Josh 1). The opening genealogical information (7:20-21a) follows Num 26:35, but the continuation to Joshua (7:25-27) does not appear elsewhere in Scripture.

The Chronicler focused on Joshua because of his interest in military matters. As he called attention to the military accomplishments of Issachar (7:1-5) and Benjamin (7:6-12), the Chronicler reminded his post-exilic readers that Joshua, the famous leader of the conquest, came from the tribe of Ephraim. In a day when Israel's land must be taken again and warfare threatened Israel on every side, having the family of Joshua would be a great asset.

The two remaining portions of Ephraim's record (7:21b-24; 7:28-29) point to locations where various descendants of Ephraim settled. The first section is a brief digression to narrative (see 4:9-10; 5:18-22,24-26). This story divides into four symmetrical steps (see figure 6). It begins with aggression against Gath (7:21) and continues with Ephraim mourning for his sons (7:22). Then this story concludes with the birth of another son **Beriah** (7:23), and Ephraimites settling away from Gath (7:24)

Identifying the character "Ephraim" in this passage is difficult. He may have been the patriarch of the tribe or an unknown descendant with the same name as the patriarch. The former option would place the aggression in Gath before Israel's sojourn in Egypt. The latter possibility may locate the event after the conquest and settlement. Whatever the case, at some point Ephraimites attempted to move westward toward Gath, but were driven back toward the east. This event provided an explanation for the location of Ephraimite settlements in **Lower and Upper Beth Horon** and **Uzzan Sheerah** (7:24). Uzzan Sheerah has not been identified, but we should assume from this context that it was east of Gath.

The Chronicler's interest in this event probably resulted from some issue raised in his day. The mention of building settlements points to the blessing of God on the Ephraimites at this time (see *Introduction: 24) Building and Destruction*). Thus the Chronicler highlighted the right of this tribe to be represented among the people of God. Perhaps some of his readers had heard of ancient westward movements of Ephraimites and wondered about the extent of their tribal lands. In this narrative the Chronicler explained where Ephraimites were to settle.

The final list of **lands and settlements** (7:28-29) further established the rightful inheritance of Ephraim. The Chronicler included these materials to inspire his readers to hope for lands beyond the borders of post-exilic Judah. (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes see comments on 2:42-55.)

The Tribe of Asher (7:30-40)

The Chronicler finalized this portion of his genealogies with **the sons of Asher** (7:30). His record follows Gen 46:17 for three generations and also reflects Num 26:44-46 at several points. Apart from these initial names, however, the material here has no parallels in Scripture. The genealogy of Asher divides into three sections: the four sons of Asher (7:30), the line of Beriah (7:31-39), and military information (7:40).

The Chronicler's purpose in this genealogy was at least twofold. First, his exclusive concern with the line of Beriah may have reflected the limitations of his sources, but the Chronicler may also have chosen this strategy because of questions among his readers regarding the descendants of this family.

Second, a more obvious purpose was to inform the post-exilic community of Asher's military contributions in the past. The descendants of Asher listed here included **heads of families, choice men, brave warriors and outstanding leaders** (7:40). After the exile, Israel needed the military power of Asher. This tribe should not be forgotten (see *Introduction: 2) Northern Israel*).

Benjamin in Honor (8:1-40)

The Chronicler's genealogies of Israel close with a second lengthy account of Benjamin (see 7:6-12). The opening of this material (8:1-5) compares with Gen 46:21 and Num 26:38-41, but the ending of this material (8:6-40) goes its own way. By closing his genealogies with a long account of Benjamin, the Chronicler raised this tribe to the level of Judah and Levi (see figure 7).

As noted above, this passage is the Chronicler's second record of Benjamin (see 7:6-12). The most likely explanation for this repetition is that the Chronicler distinguished two groups of Benjamites. When the northern tribes broke away from Judah in c. 922 B.C., the tribe of Benjamin split its allegiance. Some Benjamites seceded with the North (see 1 Kgs 11:31-32) while others remained aligned with Judah (see 1 Kgs 12:21). It is likely that the Chronicler presented the Benjamite genealogy in chapter 7 as representative of those who sided with the North. That list appears among northern tribes (Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim and Asher [7:1-40]) and has only slight affinities with the second Benjamite genealogy. The second record, however, concentrates on Benjamites who were loyal to Jerusalem. As we will see, it focuses on geographical locations in or near post-exilic Judah. These Benjamites received lengthy attention because they were faithful to the Jerusalem monarch and temple just as Judah and Levi had been.

Structure of 8:1-40

This chapter divides into four sections (see figure 6). The Benjamites in Geba appear first (8:1-7). Those located in several other places follow (8:8-12). The Chronicler then turned to Benjamites in Jerusalem (8:13-28) and closed with others associated with Jerusalem (8:29-40).

Benjamites in Geba (8:1-7)

The first section of this record of **Benjamin** (8:1) narrows quickly to Benjamin's grandson, **Ehud** (8:6) (**Abihud** [8:3] should probably be translated "father of Ehud" [see NIV text note]). Ehud is the well-known judge who brought victory for Israel over the Moabite king Eglon (see Jdg 3:12-30). The Chronicler recorded that his descendants lived **in Geba** (8:6), a Levitical city lying on the southern border of Benjamin only six miles north-northeast of Jerusalem (see Josh 18:24; 21:17; 1 Chr 6:60). King Asa of Judah fortified Geba during his reign (see 2 Chr 16:6).

This geographical note was important for the Chronicler's readers because Benjamites repossessed Geba in the early post-exilic period (see Ezr 2:26; Neh 7:30; 11:31; 12:29). The Chronicler noted that at some point, these families had been **deported to Manahath** (8:6) (probably Malah, three miles southwest of Jerusalem). Yet, the Chronicler affirmed that Geba was the Benjamites' rightful claim. (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes, see comments on 2:42-55.)

Benjamites in Moab, Ono and Lod, Aijalon and Gath (8:8-13)

The second portion of Benjamin's record concentrates on the **Shaharaim** (8:8) and then on **the sons of Elpaal** (8:12). Several locations are mentioned in these verses. Shaharaim lived **in Moab** (8:8), probably during the early years of settlement (see 1 Sam 22:3f; Ruth 1:1-7). Elpaal's descendants **built Ono and Lod** (8:12). The Chronicler often mentioned successful building projects to indicate the blessing of God (see *Introduction: 24 Building and Destruction*). God was pleased with the people who settled and built in these places. These cities south of Joppa were well-known in the Chronicler's time. A number of returnees in the post-exilic community settled in these regions (see Ezr 2:33; Neh 7:37; 11:35). Later generations, **Beriah and Shema** (8:13), lived in **Aijalon** and took control of **Gath** (8:13). Both of these cities were located in the post-exilic province of Judah. By mentioning these clans of Benjamites in connection with these locations, the Chronicler addressed issues pertinent to the resettlement of these cities after the exile. In a word, the Benjamites had rights to these places. (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes see comments on 2:42-55.)

Benjamites In Jerusalem (8:14-28)

The Chronicler next reported a series of genealogical references that end with **all these were heads of families, chiefs ... and they lived in Jerusalem** (8:28). Two comments should be made about this ending.

First, it is difficult to determine to whom the Chronicler specifically referred by the terms **all these** (8:28). He may have had in mind all of the names included in 8:14-27. It is more likely, however, that he had in mind only the last segment of his genealogies (8:26-27).

Second, whatever the extent of the reference, the more important fact is that he placed these descendants of Benjamin **in Jerusalem** (8:28). It would not be surprising that Benjamites faithful to the throne and temple of Jerusalem would have moved there during the divided kingdom. Their territories were often the battlegrounds of wars between the North and South.

The Chronicler noted that these Benjamites lived in Jerusalem to establish their prominence in the post-exilic period. Some families of the tribe had returned to Jerusalem in the early years after exile (see 9:7). They rightfully held an exalted position among the tribes.

More Benjamites Associated with Jerusalem (8:29-40)

In this final portion of the Benjamite genealogies, the Chronicler began with references to locations. **Jeiel, the father of Gibeon** (8:29) should be understood as "Jeiel, the founder of Gibeon." Many of these Benjamites in Gibeon eventually **lived near their relatives in Jerusalem** (8:32).

In 8:33-34 the Chronicler reported well-known figures such as **Kish** (see 1 Sam 9:1,3) and **Saul** the first king of Israel (see 1 Sam 9:18-27). He also mentioned **Jonathan** the close friend of David (see 1 Sam 18:1,3) and **Merib-Baal** the Saulide protected within David's court (also known as Mephibosheth (2 Sam 4:4; 9:6-13)).

In 8:35-40 a list of several generations ends with the note that some branches of the Benjamite family included **brave warriors** and **many sons and grandsons - 150 in all** (8:40). Once again, the Chronicler noted the military acumen of men in this tribe (see 7:6-12). Moreover, he pointed to the large progeny of this family to indicate God's blessing (see *Introduction: 25) Increase and Decline of Progeny*).

These prominent Benjamites who lived in Jerusalem were ancestors of Benjamites who returned to the land after the exile. The Chronicler was determined to see their descendants receive special honor.

Summation of Tribal Lists (9:1a)

In balance with 1 Chr 2:1-2 the Chronicler closed his focus on the breadth of God's people with a brief summation (see figure 6). Two aspects of this passage warrant comment. First, by mentioning **the book of the kings of Israel** the Chronicler indicated one of his principal sources for his genealogical information (9:1a). This record authenticated his outlook on Israel's families against any objections that may have been raised.

Second, the Chronicler characterized his lists as containing **all Israel** (9:1a). This terminology indicates that chapters 2-8 represented the breadth of the entire nation of Israel (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). Despite the highly selective character of these genealogies and lists, they stood as indications of how broadly the Chronicler wanted his original readers to conceive of the nation. His reason for emphasizing this motif is evident. Until the breadth reflected in these lists was represented among the returnees, the restoration of God's people would be incomplete.

The Continuation of Israel (9:1b-34)

The Chronicler closed his genealogical records by turning attention to the early post-exilic community (see figure 8). Portions of these lists parallel Neh 11:3-19 in significant ways. It is likely that the Chronicler and the author of Ezra-Nehemiah used a common source for their varying purposes.

The Chronicler reported the names of these returnees to connect his readers with the nation of Israel in the past. Although he mentioned that the returnees went to **their own towns** (9:2), his lists focus only on those who **lived in Jerusalem** (9:3,34). Jerusalem's inhabitants were the center of the restoration effort after the exile.

Structure

This passage divides into three parts:

- Introduction (9:1b-2)
- Laity among the Returnees (9:3-9)
- Priests among the Returnees (9:10-13)
- Levites among the Returnees (9:14-34)
 - Introductory Genealogy (9:14-16)
 - Gatekeepers (9:17-34)

Outline of 1 Chr 9:1b-34 (figure 8)

This material begins with an historical orientation toward the lists that follow (9:1b-2). Following this introduction, the Chronicler focused on three groups: lay people (9:3-9); priests (9:10-13), and Levites (9:14-34).

Introduction (9:1b-2)

The Chronicler began this portion of his genealogies with the reminder that the people living in **Judah** had been exiled **to Babylon** (9:1b). He referred to the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of its population by Nebuchadnezzar in c. 586 BC

In addition to this historical note, the Chronicler explained why the exile had taken place. The deportation occurred **because of their unfaithfulness** (9:1b). Infidelity appears

frequently in Chronicles as a description of flagrant covenant violation, especially in the area of worship (see *Introduction: 21) Unfaithfulness*). The Chronicler made it clear that Judah deserved her punishment because her apostasy was so great. These words anticipate a motif which the Chronicler applied to his readers time and again in later chapters. Put simply, he warned his readers that infidelity to God will not go unpunished (see *Introduction: 10-27) Divine Blessing and Judgment*). If post-exilic Israelites hoped to enjoy the blessings of God, they had to avoid infidelities of the past.

After this historical note, attention shifts to those who were **first to resettle** (9:2). The Chronicler introduced representatives of the early post-exilic community, describing them as **some Israelites, priests, Levites and temple servants** (9:2b). The term **Israelites** refers to lay people not in the tribe of Levi. The **priests** were sons of Aaron and the **Levites** were descendants of Levi outside of the Aaronic family (see *Introduction: Appendix A - The Families of Levi*). Finally, **temple servants** were probably captured foreigners who served as assistants to Levites at the temple (see Num 31:30; Ezra 8:20). This is the only time the Chronicler mentioned these people by this title. He spoke of other foreigners, however, on a number of occasions (see 2:55; 4:25; see also *Introduction: 3) International Relations*).

The Chronicler also remarked that these early returnees went to **their own property in their own towns** (9:2). Preceding lists and genealogies often referred to the places where the ancestors of these Israelites lived before the exile (see 2:22-23,42-43; 4:10,14,21-23,28-43; 5:8-10,11-12,16,22,23; 6:54-81; 7:24,28-29; 8:6,8,12,13,28,29,32). We have already suggested that the Chronicler mentioned these locations to establish the inheritance rights of families in his own day (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes see comments on 4:42-55.) At this point, the Chronicler made his interest in repossession of these tribal properties explicit. The restoration of Israel was incomplete until those original tribal inheritances were possessed once again.

Laitiy among the Returnees (9:3-9)

The list of returnees begins with a selective account of Israelites **in Jerusalem** who were not associated with the tribe of Levi (9:3).

The Chronicler introduced this material by mentioning **Judah ... Benjamin ... Ephraim ... and Manasseh** (9:3). Ephraim and Manasseh appear only at the head of these lists; no names follow as they do for Judah (9:4-6) and Benjamin (9:7-9). This special attention to Judah and Benjamin parallels the Chronicler's earlier concentrations on these tribes in 2:1-9:1a (see figure 7). The Chronicler gave special place to Judah and Benjamin because they had been relatively loyal to the throne and temple in Jerusalem. Accordingly, in his list of lay returnees the Chronicler only listed specific names and numbers for Judah and

Benjamin to highlight their prominence in the post-exilic community. These tribes rightly held roles of leadership in the Chronicler's day.

At the same time, however, the mention of Ephraim and Manasseh reflects the Chronicler's continuing interest in the breadth of God's people. His preceding treatment of Israel's tribes displayed the Chronicler's commitment to encouraging the restoration of every tribe of Israel. Manasseh and Ephraim were prominent within the northern kingdom. Consequently, their appearance here reflected the Chronicler's view that the early restored community represented the entire nation of Israel (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). Although Judah, Benjamin and Levi were central, the tribes of the North were not to be forgotten. They too were among the first ones to return (see *Introduction: 2) Northern Israel*).

The verses that follow divide between lists of Judahites (9:4-6) and Benjamites (9:7-9). Judahite returnees appear in association with the three sons of Judah: **Perez** (9:4), Shelah (9:5 [**Shilonites** should probably be translated "Shelanites," i.e. sons of Shelah.]) and **Zerahites** (9:6). The total of **690** contrasts with 468 in Neh 11:6. Both texts probably represent loose approximations.

Benjamite returnees (9:7-9) appear in four groups descended from: **Hasenuah** (9:7), **Jehoram**, **Micri**, and **Ibnijah** (9:8). A number of differences appear between this passage and Neh 11:7-9. Yet, the Chronicler's count of **956** compares favorably with 928 in Neh 11:8.

In both of these lists the Chronicler revealed his outlook by his numerical references. Although the exile to Babylon had threatened the existence of these tribes, the Chronicler made it clear that a good number of Judahites and Benjamites came back to the land. Just as the Chronicler often mentioned the increase of progeny as a blessing from God, these numbers reflected the blessing received by these tribes (see *Introduction: 25) Increase and Decline of Progeny*).

Priests among the Returnees (9:10-13)

Having established the prominence of Judahites and Benjamites among the returnees, the Chronicler turned to the third tribe which he highlighted earlier, the tribe of Levi (see figure 7). In this passage the Zadokite priesthood is treated separately from the Levites in general. The priests were part of the tribe of Levi, but their role had become so specialized that the Chronicler listed them as a separate group. This list closely parallels Neh 11:10-14. Many of these names appear elsewhere in Scripture, but several identities are questionable. The importance of this material for the Chronicler appears in at least three aspects of this section. First, the Chronicler made it plain that this line included

the son of Zadok (9:11). The name **Zadok** was of great importance to the post-exilic community. The high priest Joshua (Jeshua) who served with Zerubbabel represented a controversial re-assertion of Zadokite dominance over other Levitical families after the exile (see *Introduction: Appendix A- The Families of Levi*). By giving this lineage separate treatment here, the Chronicler made explicit his support of Zadokite leadership. Zadok's descendant was **the official in charge of the house of God** (9:11).

Second, the Chronicler also noted that these priests were in control of the central operations of Israel's worship. He mentioned that **Ahitub** served in **the house of God** (9:11). Moreover, he repeated that others in this genealogy were **responsible for ministering in the house of God** (9:13). This repetition indicates that the Chronicler once again emphasized that the Zadokite family was to have exclusive charge of the services of the temple proper (see *Introduction: Appendix A - The Families of Levi*; see also *Introduction: Appendix B - The Structures, Furnishings and Decorations of Solomon's Temple*).

Third, as the preceding lists of Judahites and Benjamites emphasized their large numbers, the Chronicler also pointed out that the **heads of priestly families numbered 1,760** (9:13). This numerical reference approximates the total of priests given in Neh 11:12-14. The large numbers of returning Zadokites indicated God's blessing and approval of the new temple arrangements. By this means the Chronicler countered any objection to Zadokite leadership.

Levites among the Returnees (9:14-34)

To complete his record of the returnees, the Chronicler gave special attention to the other families of Levi. This material corresponds in many ways with Neh 11:22,28. It is likely that both passages used a common source. The account divides into four main parts: heading (9:14a), introductory genealogy (9:14b-16), gatekeepers (9:17-33), and a closure (9:34).

Introductory Genealogy (9:14-16)

The Chronicler began his record of returning Levites with a sampling of names representing important divisions of the tribe. After a formal heading (9:14a), these verses touch on the lines of the three chief Levitical families: a **Merarite** (9:14b), descendants of **Asaph** (9:15), and descendants of **Jeduthun** (9:16a). Each of these families appear elsewhere in the Chronicler's history. Here the Chronicler mentioned them to indicate

that these prominent families of Levi were represented in the early post-exilic community. They enjoyed the privileges and responsibilities of their ancestors.

In addition to these three major Levitical divisions, the Chronicler also noted Levites **who lived in the villages of the Netophathites** (9:16b). Netophah appears in close association with Bethlehem and Zerubbabel in post-exilic records (2:54; Ezr 2 :21-22; Neh 7:26). It is likely that the Chronicler drew attention to this group of Levites because of his interest in the mutual support of the royal and Levitical families (see 9:17; see also *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*).

Gatekeepers (9:17-34)

The structure of this material is somewhat obscure. It is possible that 9:24-34 touches on duties beyond those of gatekeepers, but this understanding is far from certain. Yet, it seems best to treat the entirety of 9:14-34 as focusing on duties assigned to the gatekeepers.

After a heading (9:17a), the Chronicler drew attention to the family of **Shallum** (9:17b-23). This line was especially blessed because it served at **the King's Gate** (9:18), a royal entrance to the temple which was highly honored after the exile (see Ezk 46). Once again, the Chronicler drew attention to the close connection between Levitical service and Judah's monarchy (see 9:16; see also *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*). This passage also honors this family of gatekeepers by noting their ancestral heritage. Among their ancestors were the **Korahites** who had guarded **the thresholds of the Tent** as well as **the entrance to the dwelling of the Lord** (9:18). The Chronicler's references are not altogether clear, but it seems likely that he had in mind the tabernacle in the days of Moses or David. Moreover, the Chronicler associated these post-exilic gatekeepers with **Phineas** and **Zechariah** who were well-known and honored figures (see Nu 25:11; 1 Chr 26:2,14). To draw attention to the honor of this Levitical heritage, the Chronicler remarked that **the Lord was with Phineas** (9:20; see *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). Once again, the Chronicler's desire to affirm the legitimacy of post-exilic Levitical arrangements is evident.

In 9:22-33 the Chronicler focused on the variety of responsibilities held by the post-exilic gatekeepers. He noted their number as **212** (9:22). He reminded his readers that **David and Samuel** had assigned duties to these men (9:22) in order to indicate the necessity of returning to these arrangements (see *Introduction: 14) Standards*). These duties were not only binding on those living in David's day, but **they and their descendants** were obligated to fulfill their proper roles (9:23).

Having established the permanence of these arrangements, the Chronicler moved to a number of practical considerations. His description looks back at other historical

precedence to establish current practices for the Levites. He mentioned that the gatekeepers were to serve **on the four sides** of the temple (9:24). Relatives of the gatekeepers had to come on occasion to **share their duties** (9:25). The four **principal gatekeepers** had to guard **the rooms and treasuries** even during **the night** in addition to opening the **house of God** with **the key ...each morning** (9:26-27). Beyond this, a number of gatekeepers were **in charge of articles used in the temple service** making sure they were brought in and out as needed (9:28). Various groups were also responsible for **furnishings, other articles**, and an assortment of items needed for the proper functioning of the temple (9:29-32). Finally, the Chronicler noted that **those who were musicians stayed in the rooms of the temple** (9:33). Lodging was provided for the musicians and **they were exempt from other duties** performed by Levites because their musical responsibilities kept them busy **day and night** (9:33). Once again, the Chronicler's keen interest in promoting music in Israel's worship is evident (see *Introduction: 8) Music*).

The Chronicler closed his discussion of the Levitical families by noting that they **lived in Jerusalem** (9:34). From time to time during the early post-exilic period, economic and political factors made it unattractive to live in the capital city of Judah (see Neh 11:1-2). The Chronicler, however, insisted that the proper place of residence for these Levites was the city itself. Just as other prophets saw the repopulation of Jerusalem as an essential element of the restoration of the kingdom of God, the Chronicler knew that only as the proper families remained in the city could the blessings of God come to his people.