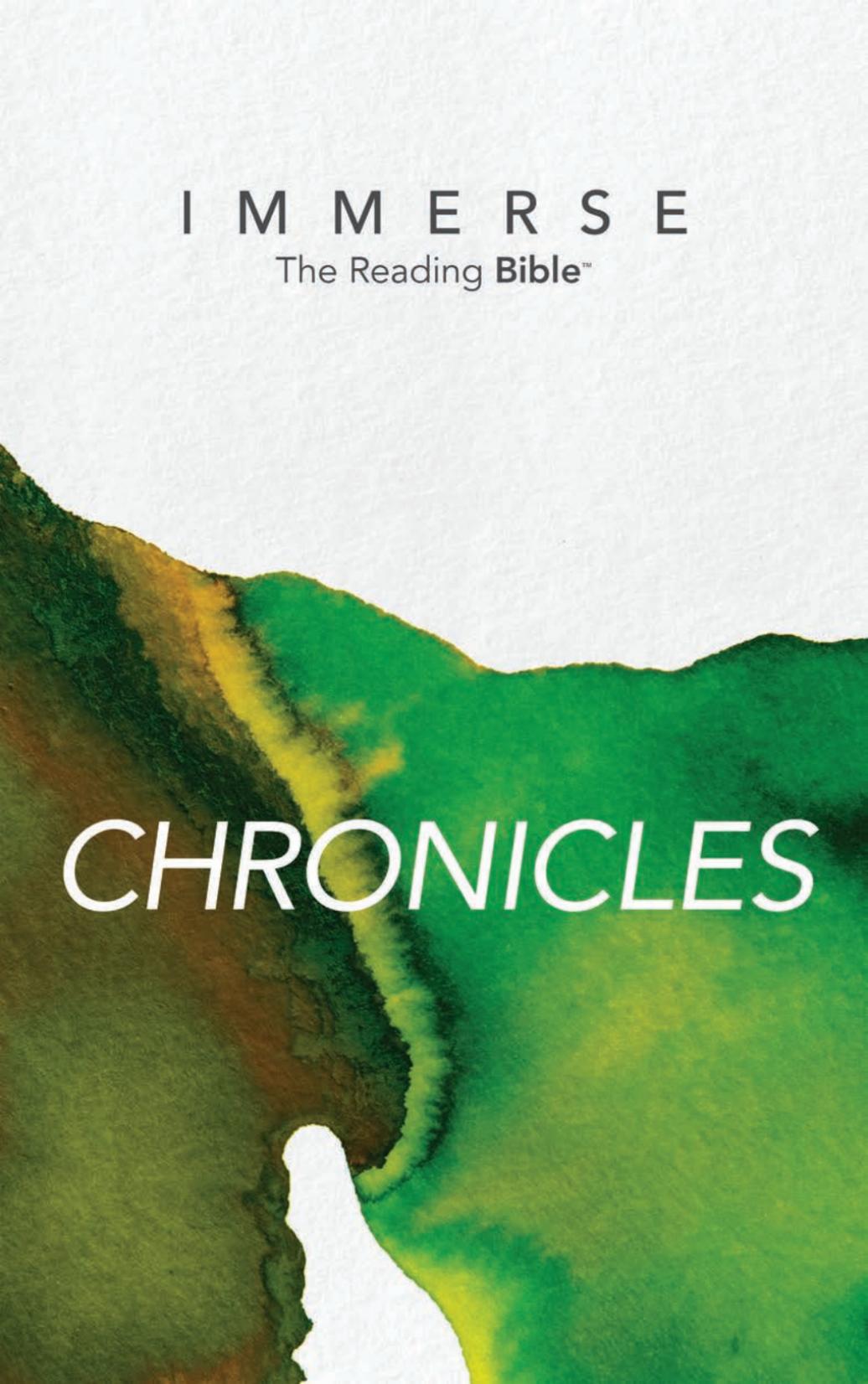


I M M E R S E

The Reading Bible™

CHRONICLES

The background of the cover is an abstract watercolor wash. It features a mix of vibrant green, earthy yellow, and muted brown tones. The colors are blended together, creating a soft, painterly effect. The top half of the cover is white, which transitions into the watercolor wash. The overall aesthetic is clean and artistic.

*Almighty God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
grant, we pray,
that we might be grounded and settled
in your truth
by the coming of your Holy Spirit
into our hearts.*

*What we do not know,
reveal to us;
what is lacking within us,
make complete;
that which we do know,
confirm in us;
and keep us blameless in your service,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.

I M M E R S E TM
— The Reading Bible —

CHRONICLES



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois

CREATED IN ALLIANCE WITH



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C O N T E N T S

Welcome to Immerse: The Bible Reading Experience A7
Introduction to Chronicles A9



These books were all written after the Jewish people fell under the control of foreign empires and were scattered among the nations. They reminded God's suffering people of their identity and calling to faithfully represent God to the nations.

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—— Welcome to ——

I M M E R S E

The Bible Reading Experience

The Bible is a great gift. The Creator of all things entered into our human story and spoke to us. He inspired people over many centuries to shape words into books that reveal his mind, bringing wisdom into our lives and light to our paths. But God's biggest intention for the Bible is to invite us into its Story. What God wants for us, more than anything else, is that we make the Bible's great drama of restoration and new life the story of our lives, too.

The appropriate way to receive a gift like this is to come to know the Bible deeply, to lose ourselves in it precisely so that we can find ourselves in it. In other words, we need to immerse ourselves in it—to read God's words at length and without distraction, to read with deeper historical and literary perspective, and to read through the Bible with friends in a regular three-year rhythm. *Immerse: The Bible Reading Experience* has been specially designed for this purpose.

Immerse: The Reading Bible presents each book of the Bible without the distractions of chapter and verse markers, subject headers, or footnotes—all later historical additions to the text. The *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, is presented in a single-column format with easy-to-read type. To provide meaningful perspective, book introductions give historical and literary context, and the books are often reordered chronologically or grouped with books that share similar ancient audiences. Every feature in this unique Bible enhances the opportunity for readers to engage with God's words in simple clarity.

A more complete explanation of this unique Bible presentation can be found in the articles that begin on page 183 at the back of this volume.

— Introduction to —

CHRONICLES

WE BEGAN OUR JOURNEY into the Bible's First Testament with a comprehensive telling of Israel's history, from the creation story to Israel's exile from the Land of Promise. Then we heard the prophets delivering the word of the LORD to Israel, intervening as the people wandered again and again from their allegiance to God. We joined with Israel in singing songs of both lament and praise, entering into the worship of God in a way that acknowledges a full range of human emotions. We listened in as Israel's wisdom teachers taught the good way of life meant for all the Creator's people.

This final part of the *Immerse* First Testament contains its three remaining books. This last collection focuses once again on telling stories. The Hebrew expression translated as *Chronicles* means "words or events of the days." That is, it's a record of day-to-day events, much like a diary or journal. The stories in this volume are all "chronicles" that tell how the people of God lived out their faith after his covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David were established.

First comes the book of Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah. This unique telling of Israel's history is presented in most Bibles as four separate books, although it was originally a unified work. (Notice that the ending of 2 Chronicles overlaps with the beginning of Ezra.) This book of Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah emphasizes the importance of the true worship of God. The shorter books in this volume, Esther and Daniel, show God's people facing extreme challenges in foreign lands. Whether in their careful day-to-day observance of God's Law or in their willingness to suffer death through persecution, faithful and courageous men and women demonstrate an unflinching loyalty to God.

All three works presented here were written after the Jewish people were conquered by foreign empires and scattered among the other

nations. These books tell stories that carry on the grand Story of God's covenants into later centuries. It is important to read these final books of the First Testament with the overall development of the Bible's story in mind.

God created the world to be his temple, the place where he would dwell in fellowship with humanity. After sin entered the world, God chose Abraham and his family, the people of Israel, as those who would bring blessing and life back into the world. But most of the story so far has been about Israel's struggle to live up to its divinely given vocation. God initiated covenants with humanity in order to move the story closer and closer to his intention for all of creation. But the goal has not been reached. God wants a people who worship him well so they can go out into the world to share his light and life.

The Exile had caused a crisis in Israel's story, leading many to question God's own faithfulness to the covenant as well as their status as his chosen people. God's vision for Israel and for the world could not be fulfilled as long as foreign powers controlled God's people and their land.

These books at the end of the First Testament were written to remind the people of their true story and their ultimate hope. The issues raised will continue into the period between the First Testament and the New Testament. As the years go by and Israel's struggles persist, the longing for God to keep his covenant promises will grow stronger and stronger. This is a story begging for its fitting conclusion.

IMMERSED IN CHRONICLES – EZRA – NEHEMIAH

IN 407 BC, leaders of the Jewish community on the Egyptian island fortress of Elephantine wrote to the Persian governor in Judea for help. They explained that their ancestors had built a temple to Yahu (Yahweh) there but that it had recently been destroyed by a mob incited by the priests of the Egyptian god Khnum. These Jewish leaders complained that they had requested assistance from the priests and elders in Jerusalem but had heard nothing back. In response, the Persian governor authorized them to rebuild their temple. But why hadn't their fellow Jews in Jerusalem been the first to help?

This request for the Jerusalem community to invest in a temple in Egypt illustrates why the writing of a grand, new history of Israel was necessary. These Jews in Egypt were worshipping "Yahu" alongside other gods in a mix of Jewish and pagan rituals. This newly written history repeatedly makes a vital claim: True worship of God will follow the instructions God gave in the Law of Moses and will occur in the place God has chosen—the Temple in Jerusalem.

This history comprises the books commonly known as 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. It draws on accounts kept by prophets in earlier times, on the personal memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, and on community records. These materials were brought together into one large work to address the particular challenges of this time.

Israel's previously written history (from Genesis to Samuel–Kings) addressed the situation of Israel's exile and answered the question: *Why did the Exile happen?* Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah addresses the situation of the people after the Exile and answers the question: *Who are we now?*

This new telling of Israel's history begins with an elaborate genealogy (a list of ancestors) that goes all the way back to Adam and reveals the origins and development of the twelve tribes of Israel. Special attention is given to Judah (the tribe of King David) and Levi (the tribe of priests). This genealogy helps the current generation see that they are linked to Israel's most ancient people and stories. Thus, the lists begin the work of reminding them of who they are.

As the book changes to narrative, the reigns of David and Solomon come into the spotlight. The story alternates three times between accounts of David's wars and long descriptions of arrangements he made for true worship in the Temple. David is careful to ensure that God will be worshiped in the place and in the way that God himself has chosen. But since David is a man of bloodshed and war, God appoints his son Solomon to actually build the Temple. With its completion, the key sign of God's presence among his people is now in place.

The reigns of later kings are described more briefly, with the exceptions of Hezekiah and Josiah whose religious reforms restore the proper worship of the LORD after periods of idolatry. In contrast, most of the kings lead the people astray from God's ways. This unfaithfulness becomes chronic and widespread, and the people are ultimately punished with exile.

The story continues with the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, describing the people's return to Judea from exile. Following God's instructions and with his help, they rebuild Jerusalem's Temple and walls. As the story reaches its conclusion, the returned exiles diligently restore their ancient worship and community practices. At a grand ceremony, the Book of the Law of Moses is read aloud to the entire community, leading first to weeping and confession and then to celebration, as the people understand and respond to God's words.

The Temple and the Law lie at the heart of the true worship of God. The Temple represents God's new world, and the Law reveals the path for the community to become his renewed people. This community, as the covenant people, are to resume their special role in God's plan. So it's vital for them to know and obey God's instructions, to protect their faith from being diluted and distorted, and to worship and honor God in his Holy Place.

CHRONICLES – EZRA – NEHEMIAH



The descendants of Adam were Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah.

The sons of Noah were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth.

Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from whom the Philistines came.

Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians. Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites.

The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

Arphaxad was the father of Shelah.

Shelah was the father of Eber.

Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means "division"), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother's name was Joktan.

Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan.

So this is the family line descended from Shem: Arphaxad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abram, later known as Abraham.

+ + +

The sons of Abraham were Isaac and Ishmael. These are their genealogical records:

The sons of Ishmael were Nebaioth (the oldest), Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the sons of Ishmael.

The sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine, were Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

The sons of Jokshan were Sheba and Dedan.

The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah.

All these were descendants of Abraham through his concubine Keturah.

Abraham was the father of Isaac. The sons of Isaac were Esau and Israel.

The sons of Esau were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

The descendants of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz, and Amalek, who was born to Timna.

The descendants of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

The descendants of Seir were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

The descendants of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister was named Timna.

The descendants of Shobal were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

The descendants of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah.

The son of Anah was Dishon.

The descendants of Dishon were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.

The descendants of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

The descendants of Dishan were Uz and Aran.

These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before any king ruled over the Israelites:

Bela son of Beor, who ruled from his city of Dinhabah.

When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king in his place.

When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites became king in his place.

When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king in his place

and ruled from the city of Avith. He was the one who destroyed the Midianite army in the land of Moab.

When Hadad died, Samlah from the city of Masrekah became king in his place.

When Samlah died, Shaul from the city of Rehoboth-on-the-River became king in his place.

When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Acbor became king in his place.

When Baal-hanan died, Hadad became king in his place and ruled from the city of Pau. His wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Me-zahab. Then Hadad died.

The clan leaders of Edom were Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. These are the clan leaders of Edom.

+ + +

The sons of Israel were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

+

Judah had three sons from Bathshua, a Canaanite woman. Their names were Er, Onan, and Shelah. But the LORD saw that the oldest son, Er, was a wicked man, so he killed him. Later Judah had twin sons from Tamar, his widowed daughter-in-law. Their names were Perez and Zerah. So Judah had five sons in all.

The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

The sons of Zerah were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda—five in all.

The son of Carmi (a descendant of Zimri) was Achan, who brought disaster on Israel by taking plunder that had been set apart for the LORD. The son of Ethan was Azariah.

The sons of Hezron were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb.

Ram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon, a leader of Judah.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

Salmon was the father of Boaz.

Boaz was the father of Obed.

Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse's first son was Eliab, his second was Abinadab, his third was Shimea, his fourth was Nethanel, his fifth was Raddai, his sixth was Ozem, and his seventh was David.

Their sisters were named Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah had three sons named Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. Abigail married a man named Jether, an Ishmaelite, and they had a son named Amasa.

Hezron's son Caleb had sons from his wife Azubah and from Jerioth. Her sons were named Jeshur, Shobab, and Ardon. After Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrathah, and they had a son named Hur. Hur was the father of Uri. Uri was the father of Bezalel.

When Hezron was sixty years old, he married Gilead's sister, the daughter of Makir. They had a son named Segub. Segub was the father of Jair, who ruled twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead. (But Geshur and Aram captured the Towns of Jair and also took Kenath and its sixty surrounding villages.) All these were descendants of Makir, the father of Gilead.

Soon after Hezron died in the town of Caleb-ephrathah, his wife Abijah gave birth to a son named Ashhur (the father of Tekoa).

The sons of Jerahmeel, the oldest son of Hezron, were Ram (the firstborn), Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. Jerahmeel had a second wife named Atarah. She was the mother of Onam.

The sons of Ram, the oldest son of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker.

The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada.

The sons of Shammai were Nadab and Abishur.

The sons of Abishur and his wife Abihail were Ahban and Molid.

The sons of Nadab were Seled and Appaim. Seled died without children, but Appaim had a son named Ishi. The son of Ishi was Sheshan. Sheshan had a descendant named Ahlai.

The sons of Jada, Shammai's brother, were Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without children, but Jonathan had two sons named Peleth and Zaza.

These were all descendants of Jerahmeel.

Sheshan had no sons, though he did have daughters. He also had an Egyptian servant named Jarha. Sheshan gave one of his daughters to be the wife of Jarha, and they had a son named Attai.

Attai was the father of Nathan.

Nathan was the father of Zabad.

Zabad was the father of Ephlal.

Ephlal was the father of Obed.

Obed was the father of Jehu.

Jehu was the father of Azariah.

Azariah was the father of Helez.

Helez was the father of Eleasah.

Eleasah was the father of Sismai.
Sismai was the father of Shallum.
Shallum was the father of Jekamiah.
Jekamiah was the father of Elishama.

The descendants of Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel, included Mesha (the firstborn), who became the father of Ziph. Caleb's descendants also included the sons of Mareshah, the father of Hebron.

The sons of Hebron were Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. Shema was the father of Raham. Raham was the father of Jorkeam. Rekem was the father of Shammai. The son of Shammai was Maon. Maon was the father of Beth-zur.

Caleb's concubine Ephah gave birth to Haran, Moza, and Gazez. Haran was the father of Gazez.

The sons of Jahdai were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

Another of Caleb's concubines, Maacah, gave birth to Sheber and Tirhanah. She also gave birth to Shaaph (the father of Madmannah) and Sheva (the father of Macbenah and Gibeá). Caleb also had a daughter named Acsah.

These were all descendants of Caleb.

The sons of Hur, the oldest son of Caleb's wife Ephrathah, were Shobal (the founder of Kiriath-jearim), Salma (the founder of Bethlehem), and Hareph (the founder of Beth-gader).

The descendants of Shobal (the founder of Kiriath-jearim) were Haroeh, half the Manahathites, and the families of Kiriath-jearim—the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites, and Mishraites, from whom came the people of Zorah and Eshtaol.

The descendants of Salma were the people of Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab, the other half of the Manahathites, the Zorites, and the families of scribes living at Jabez—the Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites. All these were Kenites who descended from Hammath, the father of the family of Recab.

These are the sons of David who were born in Hebron:

The oldest was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.
The second was Daniel, whose mother was Abigail from Carmel.
The third was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.
The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith.
The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital.

The sixth was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, David's wife. These six sons were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven and a half years.

Then David reigned another thirty-three years in Jerusalem. The sons born to David in Jerusalem included Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. Their mother was Bathsheba, the daughter of Ammiel. David also had nine other sons: Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

These were the sons of David, not including his sons born to his concubines. Their sister was named Tamar.

The descendants of Solomon were Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah. The sons of Josiah were Johanan (the oldest), Jehoiakim (the second), Zedekiah (the third), and Jehoahaz (the fourth). The successors of Jehoiakim were his son Jehoiachin and his brother Zedekiah.

The sons of Jehoiachin, who was taken prisoner by the Babylonians, were Shealtiel, Malkiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

The sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei.

The sons of Zerubbabel were Meshullam and Hananiah. (Their sister was Shelomith.) His five other sons were Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed.

The sons of Hananiah were Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah. Jeshaiiah's son was Rephaiah. Rephaiah's son was Arnan. Arnan's son was Obadiah. Obadiah's son was Shecaniah.

The descendants of Shecaniah were Shemaiah and his sons, Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat—six in all.

The sons of Neariah were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam—three in all.

The sons of Elioenai were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani—seven in all.

The descendants of Judah were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. Shobal's son Reaiah was the father of Jahath. Jahath was the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These were the families of the Zorathites.

The descendants of Etam were Jezreel, Ishma, Idbash, their sister Hazzelponi, Penuel (the father of Gedor), and Ezer (the father of Hushah). These were the descendants of Hur (the firstborn of Ephrathah), the ancestor of Bethlehem.

Ashhur (the father of Tekoa) had two wives, named Helah and Naarah. Naarah gave birth to Ahuzzam, Hephher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. Helah gave birth to Zereth, Izhar, Ethnan, and Koz, who became the ancestor of Anub, Zobebah, and all the families of Aharhel son of Harum.

There was a man named Jabez who was more honorable than any of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez because his birth had been so painful. He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!” And God granted him his request.

Kelub (the brother of Shuhah) was the father of Mehir. Mehir was the father of Eshton. Eshton was the father of Beth-rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the father of Ir-nahash. These were the descendants of Recah.

The sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Seraiah. Othniel’s sons were Hathath and Meonothai. Meonothai was the father of Ophrah. Seraiah was the father of Joab, the founder of the Valley of Craftsmen, so called because they were craftsmen.

The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh were Iru, Elah, and Naam. The son of Elah was Kenaz.

The sons of Jehallelel were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

The sons of Ezrah were Jether, Mered, Ephher, and Jalon. One of Mered’s wives became the mother of Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah (the father of Eshtemoa). He married a woman from Judah, who became the mother of Jered (the father of Gedor), Heber (the father of Soco), and Jekuthiel (the father of Zanoah). Mered also married Bithia, a daughter of Pharaoh, and she bore him children.

Hodiah’s wife was the sister of Naham. One of her sons was the father of Keilah the Garmite, and another was the father of Eshtemoa the Maacathite.

The sons of Shimon were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon.

The descendants of Ishi were Zoheth and Ben-zoheth.

Shelah was one of Judah’s sons. The descendants of Shelah were Er (the father of Lecah); Laadah (the father of Mareshah); the families of linen workers at Beth-ashbea; Jokim; the men of Cozeba; and Joash and Saraph, who ruled over Moab and Jashubi-lehem. These names all come from ancient records. They were the pottery makers who lived in Netaim and Gederah. They lived there and worked for the king.

The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zohar, and Shaul. The descendants of Shaul were Shallum, Mibsam, and Mishma. The descendants of Mishma were Hammuel, Zaccur, and Shimei. Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but none of his brothers had large families. So Simeon's tribe never grew as large as the tribe of Judah. They lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, Billah, Ezem, Tolad, Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, and Shaaraim. These towns were under their control until the time of King David. Their descendants also lived in Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Token, and Ashan—five towns and their surrounding villages as far away as Baalath. This was their territory, and these names are listed in their genealogical records.

Other descendants of Simeon included Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah, Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, son of Seraiah, son of Asiel, Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, and Ziza son of Shiphi, son of Allon, son of Jedaiah, son of Shimri, son of Shemaiah.

These were the names of some of the leaders of Simeon's wealthy clans. Their families grew, and they traveled to the region of Gerar, in the east part of the valley, seeking pastureland for their flocks. They found lush pastures there, and the land was spacious, quiet, and peaceful.

Some of Ham's descendants had been living in that region. But during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah, these leaders of Simeon invaded the region and completely destroyed the homes of the descendants of Ham and of the Meunites. No trace of them remains today. They killed everyone who lived there and took the land for themselves, because they wanted its good pastureland for their flocks. Five hundred of these invaders from the tribe of Simeon went to Mount Seir, led by Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephiah, and Uzziel—all sons of Ishi. They destroyed the few Amalekites who had survived, and they have lived there ever since.

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The oldest son of Israel was Reuben. But since he dishonored his father by sleeping with one of his father's concubines, his birthright was given to the sons of his brother Joseph. For this reason, Reuben is not listed in the genealogical records as the firstborn son. The descendants of Judah became the most powerful tribe and provided a ruler for the nation, but the birthright belonged to Joseph.

The sons of Reuben, the oldest son of Israel, were Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

The descendants of Joel were Shemaiah, Gog, Shimei, Micah, Reaiah, Baal, and Beerah. Beerah was the leader of the Reubenites when they were taken into captivity by King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria.

Beerah's relatives are listed in their genealogical records by their clans: Jeiel (the leader), Zechariah, and Bela son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Joel.

The Reubenites lived in the area that stretches from Aroer to Nebo and Baal-meon. And since they had so many livestock in the land of Gilead, they spread east toward the edge of the desert that stretches to the Euphrates River.

During the reign of Saul, the Reubenites defeated the Hagrites in battle. Then they moved into the Hagrite settlements all along the eastern edge of Gilead.

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Next to the Reubenites, the descendants of Gad lived in the land of Bashan as far east as Salecah. Joel was the leader in the land of Bashan, and Shapham was second-in-command, followed by Janai and Shaphat.

Their relatives, the leaders of seven other clans, were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber. These were all descendants of Abihail son of Huri, son of Jaroah, son of Gilead, son of Michael, son of Jeshishai, son of Jahdo, son of Buz. Ahi son of Abdiel, son of Guni, was the leader of their clans.

The Gadites lived in the land of Gilead, in Bashan and its villages, and throughout all the pasturelands of Sharon. All of these were listed in the genealogical records during the days of King Jotham of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel.

There were 44,760 capable warriors in the armies of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They were all skilled in combat and armed with shields, swords, and bows. They waged war against the Hagrites, the Jeturites, the Naphishites, and the Nodabites. They cried out to God during the battle, and he answered their prayer because they trusted in him. So the Hagrites and all their allies were defeated. The plunder taken from the Hagrites included 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep and goats, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 captives. Many of the Hagrites were killed in the battle because God was fighting against them. The people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh lived in their land until they were taken into exile.

The half-tribe of Manasseh was very large and spread through the land from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. These were the

leaders of their clans: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. These men had a great reputation as mighty warriors and leaders of their clans.

But these tribes were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors. They worshiped the gods of the nations that God had destroyed. So the God of Israel caused King Pul of Assyria (also known as Tiglath-pileser) to invade the land and take away the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh as captives. The Assyrians exiled them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the Gozan River, where they remain to this day.

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The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

The descendants of Kohath included Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

The children of Amram were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.

The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Eleazar was the father of Phinehas.

Phinehas was the father of Abishua.

Abishua was the father of Bukki.

Bukki was the father of Uzzi.

Uzzi was the father of Zerariah.

Zerariah was the father of Meraioth.

Meraioth was the father of Amariah.

Amariah was the father of Ahitub.

Ahitub was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Ahimaaz.

Ahimaaz was the father of Azariah.

Azariah was the father of Johanan.

Johanan was the father of Azariah, the high priest at the Temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem.

Azariah was the father of Amariah.

Amariah was the father of Ahitub.

Ahitub was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Shallum.

Shallum was the father of Hilkiah.

Hilkiah was the father of Azariah.

Azariah was the father of Seraiah.

Seraiah was the father of Jehozadak, who went into exile when the

LORD sent the people of Judah and Jerusalem into captivity under Nebuchadnezzar.

The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

The descendants of Gershon included Libni and Shimei.

The descendants of Kohath included Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. The descendants of Merari included Mahli and Mushi.

The following were the Levite clans, listed according to their ancestral descent:

The descendants of Gershon included Libni, Jahath, Zimmah, Joah, Iddo, Zerah, and Jeatherai.

The descendants of Kohath included Amminadab, Korah, Assir, Elkanah, Abiasaph, Assir, Tahath, Uriel, Uzziyah, and Shaul.

The descendants of Elkanah included Amasai, Ahimoth, Elkanah, Zophai, Nahath, Eliab, Jeroham, Elkanah, and Samuel.

The sons of Samuel were Joel (the older) and Abijah (the second).

The descendants of Merari included Mahli, Libni, Shimei, Uzzah, Shimea, Haggiah, and Asaiah.

David assigned the following men to lead the music at the house of the LORD after the Ark was placed there. They ministered with music at the Tabernacle until Solomon built the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. They carried out their work, following all the regulations handed down to them. These are the men who served, along with their sons:

Heman the musician was from the clan of Kohath. His genealogy was traced back through Joel, Samuel, Elkanah, Jeroham, Eliel, Toah, Zuph, Elkanah, Mahath, Amasai, Elkanah, Joel, Azariah, Zephaniah, Tahath, Assir, Abiasaph, Korah, Izhar, Kohath, Levi, and Israel.

Heman's first assistant was Asaph from the clan of Gershon. Asaph's genealogy was traced back through Berekiah, Shimea, Michael, Baaseiah, Malkijah, Ethni, Zerah, Adaiah, Ethan, Zimmah, Shimei, Jahath, Gershon, and Levi.

Heman's second assistant was Ethan from the clan of Merari. Ethan's genealogy was traced back through Kishi, Abdi, Malluch, Hashabiah, Amaziah, Hilkiyah, Amzi, Bani, Shemer, Mahli, Mushi, Merari, and Levi.

Their fellow Levites were appointed to various other tasks in the Tabernacle, the house of God.

Only Aaron and his descendants served as priests. They presented the offerings on the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense, and they performed all the other duties related to the Most Holy Place. They made atonement for Israel by doing everything that Moses, the servant of God, had commanded them.

The descendants of Aaron were Eleazar, Phinehas, Abishua, Bukki, Uzzi, Zerariah, Meraioth, Amariah, Ahitub, Zadok, and Ahimaaz.

This is a record of the towns and territory assigned by means of sacred lots to the descendants of Aaron, who were from the clan of Kohath. This territory included Hebron and its surrounding pasturelands in Judah, but the fields and outlying areas belonging to the city were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh. So the descendants of Aaron were given the following towns, each with its pasturelands: Hebron (a city of refuge), Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa, Holon, Debir, Ain, Juttah, and Beth-shemesh. And from the territory of Benjamin they were given Gibeon, Geba, Alemeth, and Anathoth, each with its pasturelands. So thirteen towns were given to the descendants of Aaron. The remaining descendants of Kohath received ten towns from the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh by means of sacred lots.

The descendants of Gershon received by sacred lots thirteen towns from the territories of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and from the Bashan area of Manasseh, east of the Jordan.

The descendants of Merari received by sacred lots twelve towns from the territories of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

So the people of Israel assigned all these towns and pasturelands to the Levites. The towns in the territories of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, mentioned above, were assigned to them by means of sacred lots.

The descendants of Kohath were given the following towns from the territory of Ephraim, each with its pasturelands: Shechem (a city of refuge in the hill country of Ephraim), Gezer, Jokmeam, Beth-horon, Aijalon, and Gath-rimmon. The remaining descendants of Kohath were assigned the towns of Aner and Bileam from the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh, each with its pasturelands.

The descendants of Gershon received the towns of Golan (in Bashan) and Ashtaroth from the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh, each with its pasturelands. From the territory of Issachar, they were given Kedesh, Daberath, Ramoth, and Anem, each with its pasturelands. From the territory of Asher, they received Mashal, Abdon, Hukok, and Rehob, each with its pasturelands. From the territory of Naphtali, they were given Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, and Kiriathaim, each with its pasturelands.

The remaining descendants of Merari received the towns of Jokneam, Kartah, Rimmon, and Tabor from the territory of Zebulun, each with its pasturelands. From the territory of Reuben, east of the Jordan River opposite Jericho, they received Bezer (a desert town), Jahaz, Kedemoth, and Mephaath, each with its pasturelands. And from the territory of Gad, they received Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer, each with its pasturelands.