

January 9

Scriptures: Read 1 Chronicles 5

Key Verse: "...He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him."
(1 Chronicles 5:20)

Overview

The genealogies continue to list the tribes of Israel that settled east of the Jordan River. Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were granted permission by Moses to remain in Transjordan and settle in the territories of the nations that Israel had conquered before crossing over the Jordan to defeat Jericho. These two and a half tribes sent across all their fighting men to join in the conquest of Canaan, just as they had promised Moses. They are included in the records of Israel's genealogies since, though removed geographically, they were nonetheless to be considered as members of God's covenant family.

The genealogy turns to the family of Reuben, the firstborn son of Jacob. Reuben lost his privileged status to Joseph because of his sin with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22; 49:3-4). Joseph received the double portion of the birthright and thus his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were each given the status of a tribe of Israel. However, in the plan of God, it was Judah that excelled over his brothers, just as Jacob had predicted (Genesis 49:8-10); for from Judah came the "ruler" (5:2), referring to King David.

After the official genealogical record of the tribe of Gad, we read of a wonderful account of the faithfulness of these Transjordanian tribes. With a unified effort of select mighty men of war and with strong faith in God, they were able to increase their territory through a victorious war over some Ishmaelites. Although they were naturally a strong force, they did not put their trust in their manpower, but rather understood that they had to put their trust in God for the victory. As they had learned in the conquest of Canaan, if God was with them, they could be confident of victory, no matter how outnumbered they might be. If He was not with them, they would suffer defeat, even if the enemy was weaker than they (e.g. at Ai, Joshua 7). Because these Transjordanian tribes put their trust in God, "many [of their enemy] fell dead, because the war was God's." Truly, the battles faced by believers today are the Lord's as well. During times of trouble or a battle with sin in our life, we can run to God for our refuge, strength, and victory. God has never, nor will He ever, fail someone who puts his trust in Him.

Following a brief genealogy of only the heads of families of Manasseh, we read of the Transjordanian tribe's sad history. Their previous victory was probably in the early period of their settlement, but they turned from trusting God and fell into the sin of idolatry. Without God, they could not withstand the power of Assyria and, just as God had punished the sins of His people within the land of Canaan by foreign captivity, so He brought this same judgment upon Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh; they were taken captive to Assyria. How sad that, although their many names are recorded in history within these genealogical lists, they rejected the God who had poured His great love upon them. This serves as a warning to all who claim to be in the family of God to take heed and resist evil, like Jabez who petitioned God saying, "keep me from evil" (4:10).

Prayer

Lord, because You placed genealogies in the Bible, we know You place great importance on people's names. You know our names too and You've written them down in the Book of Life in heaven. Thank you Lord.