

## January 10

**Scriptures:** Read 1 Chronicles 6

**Key Verse:** "... the Levites were appointed to every kind of service of the tabernacle of the house of God." (1 Chronicles 6:48)

### Overview

The book of Chronicles has a priestly emphasis, and the compiler, probably Ezra the scribe, was himself a priestly descendant of Aaron through Eleazar, Phineas, and Zadok (Ezra 7:1-5); thus he had a natural interest in these genealogies. But the main reason the chronicler goes into such detail here is because accurate information was essential, since the priesthood and Levitical service was hereditary. The scattering of the tribes of Israel through the captivities necessitated the keeping of strict genealogical records, for when they returned from exile, they needed to have this information in order to settle in the territory of land their family had received as an inheritance. They also needed to be sure that those leading in worship and acting as priests were authorized to do so. In the book of Ezra, we read that some men who returned were put out of the priesthood because they could not prove their priestly ancestry (Ezra 2:62).

Only the high priestly line of Eleazar, Aaron's third son, is traced (6:3-15). It is listed successively from Eleazar to Jehozadak, the high priest at the time of the Babylonian captivity. Eleazar was the elder of Aaron's two remaining sons after Nadab and Abihu (6:3) had been struck dead by God for sacrilegiously offering "strange fire" in the Tabernacle (Leviticus 10:1-2). For this reason, we see that later on in the chapter their names are not mentioned among the sons of Aaron (6:50), and they died without offspring.

The genealogy of Aaron's fourth son, Ithamar, is also not recorded, since his line later came to be unacceptable for priesthood. Eli, the high priest in the early days of Samuel, was from the line of Ithamar; but because of his sons' corruption and their misuse of priestly functions, they were cursed (1 Samuel 2:30-34; 3:12-14) and eventually cut off from priestly service. Abiathar, in the line of Ithamar, was removed by King Solomon (1 Kings 2:26-27), and from then on only the house of Zadok, from the line of Eleazar, served as priests. The second and shorter high priestly genealogy (1 Chronicles 6:49-53) is not a mere repetition but serves to legitimize the line of Zadok.

King David has a great love for music and composed many songs. Here we read that he appointed official Levitical singers and musicians — three musically gifted men, one from each Levitical clan. Their descendants are listed (6:31-48), and they inherited the role of ministering in music, thus assisting in worship. Today God has also gifted many of His people to minister musically to the fellowship of believers and lead in worship.

The clans from the three sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, were responsible for spiritual nurturing of the nation and were to be a unifying factor in their placement throughout all Israel. The Kohathites were responsible for the most holy articles in the House of God. The other clans of Levites were appointed for other kinds of service concerning the House of God (6:48). All the Levites were given by God to the high priestly family of Aaron (the Kohathites) to be a

help to them. The priests represented God to the nation and served as mediators between the people and their God, making atonement for the sins of Israel according to the instruction of Moses (6:49; Numbers 18:1-8).

The tribe of Levi was not given an inheritance of land like the other tribes, for their inheritance was to be the Lord Himself. They were, however, given various cities scattered throughout the whole land (6:54-81; Joshua 21). The tribe of Levi, then, was indeed scattered, just as Jacob had predicted, because of Levi's treachery (Genesis 34:24-30; 49:5-7). But God turned this curse into a blessing, because the Levites alone stood loyal to Him at the time of Israel's sin with the golden calf (Exodus 32:26-28). These lists of Levitical cities and the Levites who served God in every capacity (6:48) give evidence to God's love and concern that His people have adequate spiritual leadership and are well instructed in His laws, that they might walk in ways pleasing to Him.

## **Prayer**

O God, You place great importance in the details of our worship. Help us to take great care in our worship to have as the central figure our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. In His Name we pray. Amen.