

January 11

Scriptures: Read 1 Chronicles 7

Key Verse: “All these were the children of Asher, heads of their fathers’ houses, choice men, mighty men of valor, chief leaders...” (1 Chronicles 7:40)

Overview

This chapter outlines the significant clans and mighty men of six tribes: Issachar (vv. 1-5), Benjamin (vv. 6-12), Naphtali (v. 13), Western Manasseh (vv. 14-19, the other half of Manasseh east of the Jordan is listed in 5:23-26), Ephraim (vv. 20-29), and Asher (vv. 30-40). Thus far in the book of Chronicles, a genealogy of every tribe has been made, except for Dan and Zebulun; this is possibly because they had little significance in the society of Ezra, who probably compiled the book.

Portions of corresponding genealogies are given elsewhere in the Bible (Genesis 46; Numbers 26). Upon comparison, one finds many variances in the spelling of several names, as well as some omissions and additions. The reason for these differences may be due to the origins and purposes of the genealogies; the purpose here appears to be military — the mighty men of valour are emphasized (e.g. vv. 2, 1, 9, 11, 40). It is likely that some of the information found in these genealogies, such as the numbers of men fit for battle in the tribe of Issachar, were obtained from records of the census David had ordered to be taken by Joab (7:2; 21:1-6).

In these genealogies, it is interesting to note the mention of a few important and noteworthy women (7:15, 18, 30, 32). Mention is made of the daughters of Zelophehad, the only offspring of this man from the tribe of Manasseh (7:15). It was these very women that God used to provide rights of inheritance for women in all Israel (cf. Numbers 26:33; 27:1-7; 36:2; Joshua 17:3-4). Two other noteworthy women are also honoured by having their names recorded in the genealogy of the tribe of Asher.

One sometimes wonders what happened over the centuries to the descendants of those that are named. The ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom are sometimes considered as “lost”, since it was mostly those of Judah and Benjamin (the Levites as well) that returned from the Exile. The other tribes, however, although greatly diminished in number, were never really without representation (Ezra 6:16-17). Many from the Northern Kingdom fled to Judah because of both religious (e.g. with evil King Ahab) and political persecution. Many would have escaped to the Southern Kingdom of Judah at the time of the Babylonian captivity of Israel; many others became united with Judah during the Exile (cf. Ezekial 37:15-23) and returned to the land with them. Difficult situations often bring people closer together.

In the New Testament, we read of another noteworthy and honourable woman from the tribe of Asher. Her ancestors would have been among the godly remnant who returned from the Exile. Anna, the faithful elderly prophetess, dwelt at the Temple in Jerusalem, serving God by praying and fasting day and night for the coming Redeemer. Her spirit was so in tune with God that when the eight-day-old Jesus was brought to the Temple to be presented to the Lord, she immediately recognized Him as her personal Redeemer and Israel’s promised Messiah. Immediately, she

testified about Him publicly and gave thanks to God (Luke 2:36-38). It is wonderful to read of such a godly descendant from the very people listed in this chapter. Surely one of her ancestors, possibly one among these names listed in this chapter of Chronicles, had prayed for his or her descendants to walk in the ways of God. We, too, should pray not only for our children, but for their children's children as well, that if the Lord tarries they will all, like Anna, recognize Jesus as their Redeemer.

Prayer

Lord, please raise up mighty men and women of valour in our time as You did for Israel. Please lead our leaders in paths of righteousness. We give ourselves to You so that You can make us all You want us to be.