

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The genealogy of Levi and Aaron, vv. 1-30. The offices of the priests and Levites, vv. 31-53. The cities assigned them, vv. 54-81.

Verse 1

The sons of Levi - It has been well remarked that the genealogy of Levi is given here more ample and correct than that of any of the others.

And this is perhaps an additional proof that the author was a priest, felt much for the priesthood, and took care to give the genealogy of the Levitical and sacerdotal families, from the most correct tables; for with such tables we may presume he was intimately acquainted.

Verse 4

Eleazar begat Phinehas - As the high priesthood continued in this family for a long time, the sacred historian confines himself to this chiefly, omitting Nadab and Abihu, and even the family of Ithamar.

Verse 8

Ahitub begat Zadok - Through this person the high priesthood came again into the family of Eleazar.

Verse 10

Johanan - Supposed to be the same as Jehoiada.

Executed the priest's office - Probably this refers to the dignified manner in which Azariah opposed King Uzziah, who wished to invade the priest's office, and offer incense in the temple. See 2 Chronicles 26:17, 2 Chronicles 26:18.

Verse 14

Seraiah - He was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings 25:18, 2 Kings 25:21.

Verse 22

Korah - See the history of this man, and his rebellion, Numbers 16:1-33.

Verse 28

The first-born Vashni, and Abiah - There is a great mistake in this verse: in 1 Samuel 8:2 we read, Now the name of his (Samuel's) first-born was Joel; and the name of his second Abiah. The word שְׁשִׁי (Joel) is lost out of the text in this place, and שְׁשִׁי (vesheni), which signifies the second, and which refers to Abiah, is made here into a proper name. The Septuagint, Vulgate, and Chaldee, copy this blunder; but the Syriac and Arabic read as in 1 Samuel 8:2. The MSS. have all copied the corrupted Hebrew in this place. Jarchi labors to restore the true reading, and yet preserve the integrity of the text, by paraphrasing thus: "And the second, (שְׁשִׁי (vesheni)), in respect of the first, he was Abiah; and the second, in respect of Abiah, he was Joel." These, Joel and Abiah, were the two sons of Samuel, who administered justice so badly that the people, being oppressed, began to murmur, and demanded a king. See 1 Samuel 8:1, etc.

Verse 31

After that the ark had rest - The Targum says, "These are they whom David set over the service of the singing, in the house of the sanctuary, or tabernacle of the Lord, at the time in which the ark was brought into it; that is, when it was brought from the house of Obed-edom."

Verse 32

According to their order - This order is specified below.

Verse 39

Asaph - This person, with Heman, the sons of Kora, Ethan, Jeduthun, etc., are celebrated in these books, and in the Psalms, for their skill in singing, and the part they performed in the public worship of God.

It is very likely that their singing was only a kind of recitative or chanting, such as we still find in the synagogues. It does not appear that God had especially appointed these singers, much less any musical instruments, (the silver trumpets excepted), to be employed in his service. Musical instruments in the house of God are, at least under the Gospel, repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, and tend not a little to corrupt the worship of God. Those who are fond of music in the theater are fond of it in the house of God when they go

thither; and some, professing Christianity, set up such a spurious worship in order to draw people to hear the Gospel! This is doing evil that good may come of it; and by this means, light and trifling people are introduced into the Church of Christ, and when in, are generally very troublesome, hard to be pleased, and difficult to be saved.

Verse 50

These are the sons of Aaron - We have already had a list of these, (see 1 Chronicles 6:3-16); this is a second, but less extensive, and is a proof that the writer of this book had several lists before him, from which he borrowed as he judged proper.

Verse 54

Theirs was the lot - All the tribes and families obtained their respective inheritances by lot, but to the sons of Aaron was the first lot; and so the Syriac and Arabic have understood this place. The first lot, says Jarchi, fell to Judah, that they might give to the priests and the Levites the cities marked below. See an account of the possessions of the priests and Levites, Joshua 20:1-9, 21.

Verse 60

All their cities - were thirteen - But there are only eleven reckoned here, Gibeon and Juttah being omitted, and the names of some of the others changed. None of the versions give the full number of names, although they all give the whole sum thirteen.

Verse 65

Which are called by their names - Probably each family gave its own name to the city that fell to its lot.

Verse 69

Aijalon with her suburbs - There are the two cities wanting here, Eltekeh and Gibethon. See Joshua 21:23.

Verses 71-77

We shall see from Joshua 21:28, etc., that several of these cities have different names.

How barren to us is this register, both of incident and interest! and yet, as barren rocks and sandy deserts make integral and necessary parts of the globe; so do these genealogical tables make necessary parts of the history of providence and grace in the maintenance of truth, and the establishment of the Church of Christ. Therefore no one that fears God will either despise or lightly esteem them.