

1 Chronicles

Chapter 6

Descendants of Levi

The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 2 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 3 The children of Amram: Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 4 Eleazar fathered Phinehas, Phinehas fathered Abishua, 5 Abishua fathered Bukki, Bukki fathered Uzzi, 6 Uzzi fathered Zerariah, Zerariah fathered Meraioth, 7 Meraioth fathered Amariah, Amariah fathered Ahitub, 8 Ahitub fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Ahimaaz, 9 Ahimaaz fathered Azariah, Azariah fathered Johanan, 10 and Johanan fathered Azariah (it was he who served as priest in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem). 11 Azariah fathered Amariah, Amariah fathered Ahitub, 12 Ahitub fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Shallum, 13 Shallum fathered Hilkiah, Hilkiah fathered Azariah, 14 Azariah fathered Seraiah, Seraiah fathered Jehozadak; 15 and Jehozadak went into exile when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. 16 The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. 17 And these are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. 18 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. 19 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites according to their fathers. 20 Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, 21 Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. 22 The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, 23 Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son, 24 Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uziah his son, and Shaul his son. 25 The sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth, 26 Elkanah his son, Zophai his son, Nahath his son, 27 Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. 28 The sons of Samuel: Joel his firstborn, the second Abijah. 29 The sons of Merari: Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, 30 Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, and Asaiah his son. 31 These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the LORD after the ark rested there. 32 They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting until Solomon built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they performed their service according to their order. 33 These are the men who served and their sons. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman the singer the son of Joel, son of Samuel, 34 son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Eliel, son of Toah, 35 son of Zuph, son of Elkanah, son of Mahath, son of Amasai, 36 son of Elkanah, son of Joel, son of Azariah, son of Zephaniah, 37 son of Tahath, son of Assir, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah, 38 son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, son of Israel; 39 and his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, namely, Asaph the son of Berechiah, son of Shimea, 40 son of Michael, son of Baaseiah, son of Malchijah, 41 son of Ethni, son of Zerah, son of Adaiah, 42 son of Ethan, son of Zimmah, son of Shimei, 43 son of Jahath, son of Gershom, son of Levi. 44 On the left hand were their brothers, the sons of Merari: Ethan the son of Kishi, son of Abdi, son of Malluch, 45 son of Hashabiah, son of Amaziah, son of Hilkiah, 46 son of Amzi, son of Bani, son of Shemer, 47 son of Mahli, son of Mushi, son of Merari, son of Levi. 48 And their brothers the Levites were appointed for all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God. 49 But Aaron and his sons made offerings on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense for all the work of the Most Holy Place, and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. 50 These are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, 51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerariah his son, 52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, 53 Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son. 54 These are their dwelling places according to their settlements within their borders: to the sons of Aaron of the clans of Kohathites, for theirs was the first lot, 55 to them they gave Hebron in the land of Judah and its surrounding pasturelands, 56 but the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 57 To the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of refuge: Hebron, Libnah with its

pasturelands, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its pasturelands, 58 Hilen with its pasturelands, Debir with its pasturelands, 59 Ashan with its pasturelands, and Beth-shemesh with its pasturelands; 60 and from the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon, Geba with its pasturelands, Alemeth with its pasturelands, and Anathoth with its pasturelands. All their cities throughout their clans were thirteen. 61 To the rest of the Kohathites were given by lot out of the clan of the tribe, out of the half-tribe, the half of Manasseh, ten cities. 62 To the Gershomites according to their clans were allotted thirteen cities out of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Manasseh in Bashan. 63 To the Merarites according to their clans were allotted twelve cities out of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. 64 So the people of Israel gave the Levites the cities with their pasturelands. 65 They gave by lot out of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin these cities that are mentioned by name. 66 And some of the clans of the sons of Kohath had cities of their territory out of the tribe of Ephraim. 67 They were given the cities of refuge: Shechem with its pasturelands in the hill country of Ephraim, Gezer with its pasturelands, 68 Jokmeam with its pasturelands, Beth-horon with its pasturelands, 69 Aijalon with its pasturelands, Gath-rimmon with its pasturelands, 70 and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Aner with its pasturelands, and Bileam with its pasturelands, for the rest of the clans of the Kohathites. 71 To the Gershomites were given out of the clan of the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan with its pasturelands and Ashtaroth with its pasturelands; 72 and out of the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh with its pasturelands, Daberath with its pasturelands, 73 Ramoth with its pasturelands, and Anem with its pasturelands; 74 out of the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its pasturelands, Abdon with its pasturelands, 75 Hukok with its pasturelands, and Rehob with its pasturelands; 76 and out of the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its pasturelands, Hammon with its pasturelands, and Kiriathaim with its pasturelands. 77 To the rest of the Merarites were allotted out of the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono with its pasturelands, Tabor with its pasturelands, 78 and beyond the Jordan at Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, out of the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its pasturelands, Jahzah with its pasturelands, 79 Kedemoth with its pasturelands, and Mephaath with its pasturelands; 80 and out of the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its pasturelands, Mahanaim with its pasturelands, 81 Heshbon with its pasturelands, and Jazer with its pasturelands.

6:1–81 This chapter is devoted to a series of lists, all pertaining to the tribe of Levi. The first section (vv. 1–15) records the line of the high priests down to the exile; the clans of Levi follow (vv. 16–30). David’s appointees as temple musicians came from the three clans of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari (vv. 31–47). The generations between Aaron and Ahimaaz are given a separate listing (vv. 49–53), reinforcing the separate duties of priests and Levites (see note on Ex 32:26). The listing of the Levitical possessions among the tribes concludes the chapter (vv. 54–81). (CSB)

Ch 6 Tribe of Levi. Combines a genealogy (vv 1–53; cf Nu 3:17–18; 26:57–62) and a list of Levitical cities (vv 54–81). Forms of the genealogies differ from section to section. E.g., vv 1–15 use the formula “X fathered Y”; vv 16–30, 50–53 use “sons of X: Y, Z”; and vv 33–47 use “X, son of Y, son of Z.” These differences indicate that the Chronicler faithfully transmitted the records before him. Compared with tribes in ch 5, almost three times the space is devoted to the Levites because their appointed ministry was essential to God’s people. Continuity of the priesthood validates the legitimacy of the temple and the faithful practice of the divinely established beliefs and rituals in the Chronicler’s own time. Its placement at the center of the genealogical section (chs 1–9) underscores that all of the human race, from Adam (1:1) through the postexilic people of Jerusalem (9:1–34), have life and salvation through the ministry of God’s Word in Israel’s divinely established beliefs and rituals. The Chronicler’s interest in the proper worship and ministry of ancient Israel is not merely one of order and regulation. It reflects desire for God’s grace found in the means that God has chosen. That same desire was formative in the sixteenth-century Lutheran confessors as they maintained the necessity of the ministry and described who God called to fulfill its duties (AC V; AC XIV). (TLSB)

6:1–30 Vv 1–15 trace the high priestly line of the Levite Aaron to the time of the exile. Supplementing this highly select group of Levi’s descendants, vv 16–30 resume the genealogy of his three sons: Gershom, Kohath, Merari. The lists are not exhaustive. All descendants of the third son of Jacob through Leah are called Levites, but not all of them performed the same functions. (TLSB)

6:1–3 A short segmented genealogy narrows the descendants of Levi to the lineage of Eleazar, in whose line the high priests are presented in linear form (vv. 4–15). The sons of Levi (v. 1) always appear in this order, based on age (v. 16; Ge 46:11; Ex 6:16; Nu 3:17; 26:57). Of Aaron’s four sons (v. 3), the first two died as a result of sacrilege (Lev 10:2; Nu 26:61); succeeding generations of priests would trace their lineage to either Eleazar or Ithamar. (CSB)

6:2 *sons of Kohath*. The priestly line through Aaron. Assumes familiarity with the older texts and thus makes no mention of the death of Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu (Lv 10:1–2; Nu 3:4). Other lists of priests are found in vv 50–53, 9:11; Ezr 7:1–5; Ne 11:10–11. (TLSB)

6:4–15 This list of high priests from the time of Eleazar to the exile has been sharply telescoped. The following high priests known from the OT are not mentioned: Jehoiada (2Ki 12:2), Uriaah (2Ki 16:10–16), possibly two other Azariahs (2Ch 26:17, 20; 31:10–13), Eli (1Sa 1:9; 14:3) and Abiathar (2Sa 8:17). The list is repeated with some variation in Ezr 7:1–5. (CSB)

6:8 *Ahitub fathered Zadok*. This Zadok was one of David’s two priests (18:16; 2Sa 8:17). When David’s other priest, Abiathar, supported the rebellion of Adonijah, Zadok supported Solomon (1Ki 1). After the expulsion of Abiathar (1Ki 2:26–27), Zadok alone held the office (1Ch 29:22), which continued in his line (1Ki 4:2). The Ahitub mentioned here should not be confused with the priest who was the grandson of Eli (1Sa 14:3) and grandfather of Abiathar (1Sa 22:20); the line of Zadok replaced the line of Eli (1Sa 2:27–36; 1Ki 2:26–27). For the importance of the line of Zadok see Eze 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11. Ezra was concerned to trace his own priestly lineage to this house (Ezr 7:1–5). (CSB)

6:10 *the house*. The temple. (TLSB)

6:13 *Hilkiah*. Discovered the Book of the Law in the temple at the time of Josiah (2Ki 22; 2Ch 34). (CSB)

6:14 *Seraiah*. Executed by the Babylonians after the conquest of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (2Ki 25:18–21). *Jehozadak*. Father of Jeshua, the high priest in the first generation of the restoration (Ezr 3:2; 5:2; 10:18; Hag 1:1; 2:2; Zec 3:1; 6:11); his name is also spelled “Jozadak.” (CSB)

6:15 *into exile*. 587 BC. (TLSB)

6:16–30 Three branches of Levites. Short genealogies are provided for Gershom (vv 17, 20–21) and Merari (vv 19, 29–30). Kohath is far more complex (vv 18, 22–28). (TLSB)

6:16–19a Repeated from Ex 6:16–19; Nu 3:17–20; 26:57–61. (CSB)

6:22–23 *Assir ... Elkanah ... Ebiasaph*. Ex 6:24 names these men as sons of Korah, but here they are presented in the form ordinarily used for a linear genealogy of successive generations (see vv. 20–21, 25–26, 29–30). Either this is another example of genealogical fluidity, or one must understand “his son” as referring to Kohath and not to the immediately preceding name. (CSB)

6:22 *Amminadab*. The almost parallel genealogy later in this chapter lists Izhar in the place of Amminadab—who is nowhere else listed as a son of Kohath, while every other list includes Izhar (vv. 2,

37–38; Ex 6:18, 21). Either Amminadab is an otherwise unattested alternative name of Izhar, or he is an otherwise unknown son. Or this may be another example of genealogical fluidity in which the Levites are linked with the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David (see Ru 4:18–22; see also Mt 1:4; Lk 3:33) in view of Aaron’s marriage to the daughter of Amminadab of Judah (Ex 6:23; see 1Ch 2:10). (CSB)

6:24 *Uriel*. Possibly the one who led the Kohathites in David’s day (15:5). (CSB)

6:26–27 *Zophai ... Nahath ... Eliab*. Apparently variant names for Zuph, Toah and Eliel (vv. 34–35)(CSB)

6:27 *Samuel*. His lineage is also given in 1Sa 1:1, where his family is identified as Ephraimite. Either this is an example of genealogical fluidity, in which Samuel’s involvement in the tabernacle (1Sa 3) and performance of priestly duties (9:22; 1Sa 2:18; 3:1) resulted in his incorporation into the Levites, or the term “Ephraimite” is to be understood as a place of residence, not as a statement of lineage. (CSB)

6:28 *Samuel*. A Levite who lived in the territory of Ephraim. The Chronicler does not deal with his history, but by including Samuel in the genealogies, he acknowledges his significance. Textual variations exist in the names of the Samuel genealogy (cf 1Ch 6:33–38). (TLSB)

6:31–48 Each of the three Levitical clans contributed musicians for the temple: Heman from the family of Kohath, Asaph from Gershon, and Ethan from Merari. The Chronicler makes frequent reference to the appointment of the musical guilds by David (15:16, 27; 25:1–31; 2Ch 29:25–26; see Ne 12:45–47). The frequent mention of the role of the Levites has led many to assume that the author was a member of the musicians. Non-Biblical literature also attests to guilds of singers and musicians in Canaanite temples. This genealogy appears to function as a means of legitimizing the Levites of the restoration period (Ezr 2:40–41; Ne 7:43–44; 10:9–13, 28–29; 11:15–18; 12:24–47). (CSB)

These Levites served vitally as musicians in the tabernacle during David’s reign and in the temple during and after Solomon’s reign (vv 31–33a). This shows an intimate connection between David and the faithful service of the divinely established beliefs and rituals, which will be important in later accounts of David’s organization of temple personnel (chs 16; 23–27). Three lines of Levites are listed: (1) Hemanites from Kohath (vv 33b–38; cf Ps 88 title) through Izhar; (2) Asaphites from Gershom through Jahath (vv 39–43; cf Ps 50 title); (3) Ethanites (Jeduthun) from Merari through Mushi (vv 44–47; cf Ps 89; 62 titles). (TLSB)

6:31 *service of song*. Musical accompaniment was an essential element of worship (cf ch 25). (TLSB)

house. The tabernacle. (TLSB)

6:33–38 Priority of the Hemanites is indicated by their appearing first, the tracing of their descent to Levi himself, the length of the account, and the title “Heman the singer.” (TLSB)

6:39 *stood on his right hand*. Position for processions or during the service. (TLSB)

6:48 Summary statement. (TLSB)

6:49–53 Repeats vv. 4–8 but presumably serves a different function: to legitimize the line of Zadok, which is traced down to Solomon’s time, as the only Levitical division authorized to offer sacrifices. (CSB)

Functions of the high priests that Moses commanded in Nu 3:5–15; 18:1–7. Only sons of Aaron could enter the sanctuary. Chronicles affirms the proper function for personnel who carried out the divinely established beliefs and rituals (cf 2Ch 13:10–11). (TLSB)

6:49 *the work of the Most Holy Place.* This special assignment to those sons of Levi who were sons of Aaron (vv 49–53) is distinguished from the “service of the tabernacle,” which the other Levites performed (v 48). (TLSB)

6:50–53 High priests to the time of David. (TLSB)

6:54–81 This list of Levitical possessions is taken from Jos 21 with only minor differences. The Levites, who were given no block of territory of their own, were distributed throughout Israel. (CSB)

Because “no portion was given to the Levites in the land,” the Lord ordered that they be given “cities to dwell in, with their pasturelands” (Jsh 14:4) within the inheritance of the other tribes (Nu 35:1–8; Jsh 21:3). The 13 cities allotted to the Kohathite priests are named first (vv 54–60). All the tribes contributed territory to the non-Aaronite descendants of Kohath and to the other two branches of the Levitical family—35 cities in all (vv 61–65), some of which are listed (vv 66–81). Cf Jsh 21:1–42; the differences in the lists are likely because vv 54–81 describe the location of the Levites in David’s time. The giving of cities and pasturelands is ascribed to the decisions of each tribe, thus connecting the priestly line with all Israel. This was vital because, according to Nu 3:11–13, the Levites served as a substitute for the firstborn of every Israelite woman. Their sustenance came from each tribe’s offering. This happened properly in Joshua’s time, in David’s time, and in the Chronicler’s time. (TLSB)

6:57 *cities of refuge.* Author is focused on pasturelands. Only city of refuge mentioned here is Hebron (v 55). (TLSB)

6:77 *the rest.* Anticipates conclusion of the list. (TLSB)

Ch 6 An overview of the priestly tribe, down to the time of David. The service of the priests helps us understand the service of Christ in the NT. Heb 5:10 declares Christ to be the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, superior to all those of Levi because He Himself is the sacrifice for our sins. He lives forever (Heb 7) and serves in the greater, heavenly temple (Heb 8–10). • Lord, through Your atoning blood, I am forgiven and united with all the faithful. Be our refuge in all adversity, and prepare us for service in Your kingdom. Amen. (TLSB)