

1 Chronicles

Chapter 5

Descendants of Reuben

The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, so that he could not be enrolled as the oldest son; 2 though Judah became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph), 3 the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. 4 The sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 5 Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, 6 Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria carried away into exile; he was a chief of the Reubenites. 7 And his kinsmen by their clans, when the genealogy of their generations was recorded: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, 8 and Bela the son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Joel, who lived in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal-meon. 9 He also lived to the east as far as the entrance of the desert this side of the Euphrates, because their livestock had multiplied in the land of Gilead. 10 And in the days of Saul they waged war against the Hagrites, who fell into their hand. And they lived in their tents throughout all the region east of Gilead.

5:1–26 The genealogical records of the Transjordan tribes: Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh (see Nu 32:33–42). The Chronicler's concern with "all Israel" includes incorporating the genealogical records of these tribes that were no longer significant entities in Israel's life in the restoration period, having been swept away in the Assyrian conquests. (CSB)

Ancestral history of the 2½ tribes located east of the Jordan. It begins with Reuben, whose territory lay mostly along the Salt Sea down to the Arnon River (vv 1–10). Instead of the usual introductory formula "the sons of," the tribes of Gad (v 11) and East Manasseh (v 23) are introduced in geographical relation to Reuben. Gad's patrimony was above Reuben's territory (vv 11–22); half the tribe of Manasseh occupied an area extending northward from Gad (vv 23–26). (See note, Jsh 12:6, for more on East and West Manasseh.) The Israelite possessions in the Transjordan frequently are said to consist of Gilead (vv 9–10, 16) and Bashan (vv 16, 23), the latter designating the northern section. Gilead is at times applied to the entire East Jordan area (Dt 34:1). See color map 2. A theological interpretation is given both at the beginning of the chapter (vv 1–2) and at the end (vv 25–26). (TLSB)

5:1–10 The necessity to explain why the birthright of the firstborn did not remain with Reuben (see Ge 35:22; 49:4 for Reuben's sin) interrupts the initial statement (v. 1), which is then repeated after the explanation (v. 3). The parenthetical material (vv. 1–2) shows the writer's partiality for Judah, even though Joseph received the double portion (Ephraim and Manasseh) of the firstborn. The Hebrew term translated "ruler" (v. 2) is used of David in 11:2; 17:7; 2Sa 5:2; 6:21; 7:8; cf. 1Ch 28:4. The use of military titles (vv. 6–7) and a battle account (v. 10) suggest that this genealogy may have functioned in military organization (see Introduction: Genealogies). The source for some of this material on Reuben is Nu 26:5–11. The Chronicler has omitted reference to Eliab and his three sons who perished in the rebellion of Korah (see Nu 26:8–10) and so were not relevant to his purpose. (CSB)

5:1–2 Explains why Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, did not inherit his birthright as leader of Israel. He violated his father when he had sexual relations with Bilhah, Israel's concubine (Gn 35:22), and lost his father's blessing (Gn 49:3–4). The birthright went to Joseph, who gained a double portion (cf Dt 21:17) by having two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh) who receive an inheritance (cf Gn 48:5). Judah prevailed and from him a "chief," or ruler, came: David (and ultimately through David came the Messiah). (TLSB)

5:4–8 *Joel*. We know nothing of him except the genealogy provided here. (TLSB)

5:6 *Tiglath-Pileser*. This Assyrian king (745–727 B.C.) attacked Israel (v. 26; 2Ki 15:29) and also imposed tribute on Ahaz of Judah (2Ch 28:19–20; 2Ki 16:7–10). (CSB)

An Assyrian king (744–727 BC) whose name is found in several variants; also known by his throne name, Pul (v 26; 2Ki 15:19). He invaded Israel c 733–732 BC and took the Reubenite leader Beerah captive. Pul also forced Ahaz of Judah to pay tribute. (TLSB)

5:9 *entrance*. Bordering the Desert of Arabia. (TLSB)

livestock. Transjordan was famous as a grazing region. (TLSB)

5:10 *in the days of Saul*. In stark contrast to their fate some 300 years later at the hands of the Assyrians (v 6), Reuben had been militarily strong. The Reubenites enjoyed success as long as they were united to Judah. The Chronicler appeals to their fifth-century descendants to reunite themselves to Judah. (TLSB)

Hagrites. See vv. 19–22. Named among the enemies of Israel (Ps 83:6), this tribe is apparently associated with Hagar, the mother of Ishmael (Ge 16). (CSB)

5:1–10 The Chronicler recounts Reuben’s weakness and relationship to Judah, which illustrates why Judah came to lead Israel. Leadership and inheritance are not blessings one can simply take for granted, because they come with responsibility. God has given you responsibility in His kingdom, no matter what your standing in life. He has also equipped and blessed you with gifts, including the blessings of life and salvation through Christ, our Head. • Lead on, dearest Jesus, and grant me the will and strength to follow Your way. Amen. (TLSB)

Descendants of Gad

11 The sons of Gad lived over against them in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah: **12** Joel the chief, Shapham the second, Janai, and Shaphat in Bashan. **13** And their kinsmen according to their fathers' houses: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia and Eber, seven. **14** These were the sons of Abihail the son of Huri, son of Jaroah, son of Gilead, son of Michael, son of Jeshishai, son of Jahdo, son of Buz. **15** Ahi the son of Abdiel, son of Guni, was chief in their fathers' houses, **16** and they lived in Gilead, in Bashan and in its towns, and in all the pasturelands of Sharon to their limits. **17** All of these were recorded in genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel. **18** The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had valiant men who carried shield and sword, and drew the bow, expert in war, 44,760, able to go to war. **19** They waged war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. **20** And when they prevailed over them, the Hagrites and all who were with them were given into their hands, for they cried out to God in the battle, and he granted their urgent plea because they trusted in him. **21** They carried off their livestock: 50,000 of their camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 men alive. **22** For many fell, because the war was of God. And they lived in their place until the exile.

5:11–22 List of Gad’s descendants (vv 11–17) and the war of the Transjordan tribes with their neighbors to the east (vv 18–22) are reported only here. (TLSB)

5:11–17 Names here came from an otherwise unknown census that was taken after the kingdom was divided. An earlier genealogical tabulation of Gad is given in Nu 26:15–18. (TLSB)

5:11 *over ... in the land of Bashan.* Close relationship of Gad to Reuben arises from where they lived (cf vv 9, 16, 23). (TLSB)

5:18–22 Warfare narrative relates several themes important to how the Chronicler will treat the warfare of God's people. Large numbers of warriors (v 18) and booty (v 21) show God's favor. As in ancient war texts, valiant men "cried out to God" because they "trusted in Him" and He "granted their urgent plea" (v 20). Significantly, it is noted that "the war was of God," and through His help these tribes dwelt in the conquered lands "until the exile" under the Assyrians (v 22). The success of the OT nation of Israel (and correspondingly, the NT Church) depended on God, who called them to trust only in His help, a lesson for the Chronicler's own time and God's people of every age. (TLSB)

5:18 *valiant men.* Lit, "from sons of army." (TLSB)

5:19 *Hagrites.* Eastern tribes, who were descendants of Hagar, Ishmael's mother. Their confederates Jetur and Naphish are listed among Ishmael's sons (1:31). (TLSB)

5:21 *men alive.* Likely used as slaves. (TLSB)

5:11–22 Only a little information is recorded about the "sons of Gad" in Scripture, who lived and fought beside the sons of Reuben. When brothers support one another in godly service, how great is the blessing! But offense and envy too often divide brothers and neighbors. Through God's blessings, forgiveness, and mercy requested in prayer, He can and does restore us to one another. • Merciful Lord, grant us peace with our brethren and neighbors, that all may call on Your name and serve one another in joy. Amen. (TLSB)

The Half-Tribe of Manasseh

23 The members of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land. They were very numerous from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. **24** These were the heads of their fathers' houses: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty warriors, famous men, heads of their fathers' houses. **25** But they broke faith with the God of their fathers, and whored after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. **26** So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he took them into exile, namely, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river Gozan, to this day.

5:23–26 Manasseh is treated further in 7:14–19; the half-tribe that settled in Transjordan is dealt with here since it shared the same fate as Reuben and Gad, and possibly also so that the Chronicler could keep the total of 12 for his tribal genealogies (see note on 2:1–2). Again immediate retribution is apparent: Just as trust in God can bring victory (vv. 18–22), so also defeat comes to the unfaithful (vv. 25–26). The use of the retributive theme in these two accounts argues for the unity of the genealogies with the historical portions of Chronicles. The list of names given here is not properly a genealogy but a list of clans. Since they are described as brave warriors in connection with a battle report (vv. 24–26), this section too is likely derived from records of military conscription; see also 2Ki 15:19, 29; 17:6; 18:11). (CSB)

5:23–24 Half-tribe of Manasseh, which lived east of the Jordan (Nu 32:33–42), is listed here according to territory rather than genealogy. Additional genealogical data is given in 7:14–19. (TLSB)

5:25 *broke faith.* They strayed from the covenant. (TLSB)

5:26 *exile.* Three tribes enjoyed tremendous military victories through God's help early in their history (vv 18–22), but later met crushing defeat. Earlier wars were "of God" (v 22), and so is this war. The

difference now is that “the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria” against His own people (defeat twice referred to explicitly [vv 6, 22] and once implicitly [v 17]) because they broke faith with Him. The Chronicler deals directly with the fate of these tribes. Two phases of exile are noted: in 2Ki 15:29 (under Tiglath-pileser III) and in 2Ki 17:6; 18:11 (under Shalmaneser V and concluded by Sargon II’s siege of Samaria). The Chronicler telescopes the two into one. *stirred up the spirit of Pul*. God brings about the war (cf 2Ch 21:16; 36:22), due to the sin of the North (cf 2Ki 17; 25). The same grim assessment is offered of Judah when they go into captivity (2Ch 36:14). The Chronicler will, however, also provide an answer for both North and South. In Hezekiah’s proclamation, the North is urged to return to Yahweh, and their exile will be ended (2Ch 30:6–9). (TLSB)

Pul. Probably Tiglath-Pileser’s throne name in Babylon (the Babylonians called him Pulu). (CSB)

5:23–26 The early successes of East Manasseh did not spare them from defeat after they abandoned God’s covenant. God punished them specifically through sending the Assyrians. He still manages affairs between nations today. Remarkably, the people of Assyria came to faith centuries later when the Gospel spread to the east (cf Is 19:25). The Lord’s Word is powerful to stir hearts not only to war but also to faith and peace in Christ. • Stir our hearts, O Lord, to keep Your Word faithfully by believing in Jesus and proclaiming His name among the nations. Amen. (TLSB)