

CHAPTER 9

This chapter intimates to us that one end of recording all these genealogies was to direct the Jews, now that they had returned out of captivity, with whom to incorporate and where to reside; for here we have an account of those who first took possession of Jerusalem after their return from Babylon, and began the rebuilding of it upon the old foundation.

I. The Israelites (v. 2-9).

II. The priests (v. 10-13).

III. The Levites and other Nethinim (v. 14-26).

IV. Here is the particular charge of some of the priests and Levites (v. 27-34).

V. A repetition of the genealogy of king Saul (v. 35-44).

<300>1 CHRONICLES 9:1-13

GENEALOGIES

The first verse looks back upon the foregoing genealogies, and tells us they were gathered out of *the books of the kings of Israel and Judah*, not that which we have in the canon of scripture, but another civil record, which was authentic, as the king's books with us. Mentioning Israel and Judah, the historian takes notice of their being *carried away to Babylon for their transgression*. Let that judgment never be forgotten, but ever be remembered, for warning to posterity to take heed of those sins that brought it upon them. Whenever we speak of any calamity that has befallen us, it is good to add this, "it was for my transgression," that God may be justified and clear when he judges. Then follows an account of the first inhabitants, after their return from captivity, that dwelt in their cities, especially in Jerusalem.

1. The Israelites. That general name is used (v. 2) because with those of Judah and Benjamin there were many of Ephraim and Manasseh, and the other ten tribes (v. 3), such as had escaped to Judah when the body of the

ten tribes were carried captive or returned to Judah upon the revolutions in Assyria, and so went into captivity with them, or met them when they were in Babylon, associated with them, and so shared in the benefit of their enlargement. It was foretold that the *children of Judah and of Israel* should be *gathered together and come up out of the land* (^{<2011>}Hosea 1:11), and that they should be one nation again, ^{<3722>}Ezekiel 37:22. Trouble drives those together that have been at variance; and the pieces of metal that had been separated will run together again when melted in the same crucible. Many both of Judah and Israel staid behind in captivity; but some of both, whose spirit God stirred up, enquired the way to Zion again. Divers are here named, and many more numbered, who were *chief of the fathers* (v. 9), who ought to be remembered with honour, as Israelites indeed.

2. The priests, v. 10. It was their praise that they came with the first. Who should lead in a good work if the priests, the Lord's ministers, do not? It was the people's praise that they would not come without them; for who but the priests should keep knowledge? Who but the priests should bless them in the name of the Lord?

(1.) It is said of one of them that he was *the ruler of the house of God* (v. 11) not the chief ruler, for Joshua was then the high priest, but the sagan, and the next under him, his deputy, who perhaps applied more diligently to the business than the high priest himself. In the house of God it is requisite that there be rulers, not to make new laws, but to take care that the laws of God be duly observed by priests as well as people.

(2.) It is said of many of them that they were *very able men for the service of the house of God*, v. 13. In the house of God there is service to be done, constant service; and it is well for the church when those are employed in that service who are qualified for it, *able ministers of the New Testament*, ^{<4706>}2 Corinthians 3:6. The service of the temple was such as required at all times, especially in this critical juncture, when they had newly come out of Babylon, great courage and vigour of mind, as well as strength of body; and therefore they are praised as *mighty men of valour*.

<1394> 1 CHRONICLES 9:14-34

THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE PRIESTS

We have here a further account of the good posture which the affairs of religion were put into immediately upon the return of the people out of Babylon. They had smarted for their former neglect of ordinances and under the late want of ordinances. Both these considerations made them very zealous and forward in setting up the worship of God among them; so they began their worship of God at the right end. Instances hereof we have here.

I. Before the house of the Lord was built they had the house of the tabernacle, a plain and movable tent, which they made use of in the mean time. Those that cannot yet reach to have a temple must not be without a tabernacle, but be thankful for that and make the best of it. Never let God's work be left undone for want of a place to do it in.

II. In allotting to the priests and Levites their respective employments, they had an eye to the model that was drawn up by David, and Samuel the seer, v. 22. Samuel, in his time, had drawn the scheme of it, and laid the foundation, though the ark was then in obscurity, and David afterwards finished it, and both acted by immediate direction from God. Or David, as soon as he was anointed had this matter in his mind and consulted Samuel about it, though he was then in his troubles, and the plan was formed in concert between them. This perhaps had been little regarded for many ages; but now, after a long interruption, it was revived. In dividing the work, they observed these ancient land-marks.

III. The most of them dwelt at Jerusalem (v. 34), yet there were some that dwelt in the villages (v. 16, 22), because, it may be, there was not yet room for them in Jerusalem. However they were employed in the service of the tabernacle (v. 25): *They were to come after seven days from time to time.* They had their week's attendance in their turns.

IV. Many of the Levites were employed as porters at the gates of the house of God, four chief porters (v. 26), and, under them, others, to the number of 212, v. 22. They had the oversight of the gates (v. 23), were keepers of the *thresholds*, as in the margin (v. 19), and keepers of the

entry. This seemed a mean office; and yet David would rather have it than *dwell in the tents of wickedness*, ~~13810~~ Psalm 84:10. Their office was,

- 1.** To open the doors of God's house every morning (v. 27) and shut them at night.
- 2.** To keep off the unclean, and hinder those from thrusting in that were forbidden by the law.
- 3.** To direct and introduce into the courts of the Lord those that came thither to worship, and to show them where to go and what to do, that they might not incur punishment. This required care, and diligence, and constant attendance. Ministers have work to do of this kind.

V. Here is one Phinehas, a son of Eleazar, that is said to be a *ruler over them in time past* (v. 20), not the famous high priest of that name, but (as is supposed) an eminent Levite, of whom it is here said that *the Lord was with him*, or (as the Chaldee reads it) *the Word of the Lord was his helper* — the eternal Word, who is *Jehovah, the mighty one on whom help is laid*.

VI. It is said of some of them that, because the charge was upon them, *they lodged round about the house of God*, v. 27. It is good for ministers to be near their work, that they may give themselves wholly to it. The Levites pitched about the tabernacle when they marched through the wilderness. Then they were porters in one sense, bearing the burdens of the sanctuary, now porters in another sense, attending the gates and the doors — in both instances keeping the charge of the sanctuary.

VII. Every one knew his charge. Some were entrusted with the plate, the ministering vessels, to bring them in and out by tale, v. 28. Others were appointed to prepare the fine flour, wine, oil, etc., v. 29. Others, that were priests, made up the holy anointing oil, v. 30. Others took care of the meat-offerings, v. 31. Others of the show-bread, v. 32. As in other great houses, so in God's house, the work is likely to be done well when every one knows the duty of his place and makes a business of it. God is the God of order: but that which is every body's work will be nobody's work.

VIII. The singers *were employed in that work day and night*, v. 33. They were the *chief fathers of the Levites* that made a business of it, not mean singing-men, that made a trade of it. They remained in the chambers of the temple, that they might closely and constantly attend it, and were therefore

excused from all other services. It should seem, some companies were continually singing, at least at stated hours, both day and night. Thus was God continually praised, as it is fit he should be who is continually doing good. Thus devout people might, at any hour, have assistance in their devotion. Thus was the temple a figure of the heavenly one, where they *rest not day nor night* from praising God, ^{<1048>} Revelation 4:8. *Blessed are those that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee.*

^{<1388>} 1 CHRONICLES 9:35-44

GENEALOGIES

These verses are the very same with ^{<1389>} 1 Chronicles 8:29-38, giving an account of the ancestors of Saul and the posterity of Jonathan. *There* it is the conclusion of the genealogy of Benjamin; *here* it is an introduction to the story of Saul. We take the repetition as we find it; but if we admit that there are in the originals, especially in these books, some errors of the transcribers, I should be tempted to think this repetition arose from a blunder. Some one, in copying out these genealogies, having written those words, v. 34 (*These dwelt in Jerusalem*), cast his eye on the same words, ^{<1388>} 1 Chronicles 8:28 (*These dwelt in Jerusalem*), and so went on with what followed there, instead of going on with what followed here; and, when he perceived his mistake, was loth to make a blot in his book, and so let it stand. We have a rule in our law, *Redundans non nocet* — *Redundancies do no harm.*