

CHAPTER 7

In this chapter we have some account of the genealogies,

- I.** Of Issachar (v. 1-5).
- II.** Of Benjamin (v. 6-12).
- III.** Of Naphtali (v. 13).
- IV.** Of Manasseh (v. 14-19).
- V.** Of Ephraim (v. 20-29).
- VI.** Of Asher (v. 30-40). Here is no account either of Zebulun or Daniel Why they only should be omitted we can assign no reason; only it is the disgrace of the tribe of Dan that idolatry began in that colony of the Danites which fixed in Laish, and called Dan, and there one of the golden calves was set up by Jeroboam. Dan is omitted, Revelation 7.

<1370>1 CHRONICLES 7:1-19

GENEALOGIES

We have here a short view given us,

I. Of the tribe of Issachar, whom Jacob had compared to a *strong ass, couching between two burdens* (<1494>Genesis 49:14), an industrious tribe, that minded their country business very closely and *rejoiced in their tents*, <1538>Deuteronomy 33:18. And here it appears,

1. That they were a numerous tribe; for they had many wives. So fruitful their country was that they saw no danger of over-stocking the pasture, and so ingenious the people were that they could find work for all hands. Let no people complain of their numbers, provided they suffer none to be idle.

2. That they were a valiant tribe, *men of might* (v. 2, 5), *chief men*, v. 3. Those that were inured to labour and business were of all men the fittest to serve their country when there was occasion, The number of the respective

families, as taken in the days of David, is here set down, amounting in the whole to above 145,000 men fit for war. The account, some think, was taken when Joab numbered the people, 2 Samuel 24. But I rather think it refers to some other computation that was made, perhaps among themselves, because it is said (^{<13724>}1 Chronicles 27:24) that that account was not inserted in the chronicles of king David, it having offended God.

II. Of the tribe of Benjamin. Some account is here given of this tribe, but much larger in the next chapter. The militia of this tribe scarcely reached to 60,000; but they are said to be *mighty men of valour*, v. 7, 9, 11. *Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf*, ^{<04427>}Genesis 49:27. It was the honour of this tribe that it produced Saul the first king, and more its honour that it adhered to the rightful kings of the house of David when the other tribes revolted. Here is mention (v. 12) of Hushim the sons of Aher. The sons of Dan are said to be *Hushim* (^{<04423>}Genesis 46:23), and therefore some read Aher appellatively, *Hushim* — the *sons of another* (that is, another of Jacob's sons) or the sons of a stranger, which Israelites should not be, but such the Danites were when they set up Micah's graven and molten image among them.

III. Of the tribe of Naphtali, v. 13. The first fathers only of that tribe are named, the very same that we shall find, ^{<04424>}Genesis 46:24, only that *Shillem* there is *Shallum* here. None of their descendents are named, perhaps because their genealogies were lost.

IV. Of the tribe of Manasseh, that part of it which was seated within Jordan; for of the other part we had some account before, ^{<11823>}1 Chronicles 5:23, etc. Of this tribe observe,

1. That one of them married an Aramitess, that is, a Syrian, v. 14. This was during their bondage in Egypt, so early did they begin to mingle with the nations.

2. That, though the father married a Syrian, Machir, the son of that marriage, perhaps seeing the inconvenience of it in his father's house, took to wife a daughter of Benjamin, v. 15. It is good for the children to take warning by their father's mistakes and not stumble at the same stone.

3. Here is mention of Bedan (v. 17), who perhaps is the same with that Bedan who is mentioned as one of Israel's deliverers, ^{<0921>}1 Samuel 12:11. Jair perhaps, who was of Manasseh (^{<07103>}Judges 10:3), was the man.

<1372> 1 CHRONICLES 7:20-40

GENEALOGIES

We have here an account,

I. Of the tribe of Ephraim. Great things we read of that tribe when it came to maturity. Here we have an account of the disasters of its infancy, while it was in Egypt as it should seem; for Ephraim himself was alive when those things were done, which yet is hard to imagine if it were, as is here computed, seven generations off. Therefore I am apt to think that either it was another Ephraim or that those who were slain were the immediate sons of that Ephraim that was the son of Joseph. In this passage, which is related here only, we have,

1. The great breach that was made upon the family of Ephraim. The men of Gath, Philistines, giants, slew many of the sons of that family, *because they came down to take away their cattle*, v. 21. It is uncertain who were the aggressors here. Some make the men of Gath the aggressors, men *born in the land of Egypt*, but now resident in Gath, supposing that they came down into the land of Goshen, to drive away the Ephraimites' cattle, and slew the owners, because they stood up in the defence of them. Many a man's life has been exposed and betrayed by his wealth; so far is it from being a strong city. Others think that the Ephraimites made a descent upon the men of Gath to plunder them, presuming that the time had come when they should be put in possession of Canaan; but they paid dearly for their rashness and precipitation. Those that will not wait God's time cannot expect God's blessing. I rather think that the men of Gath came down upon the Ephraimites, because the Israelites in Egypt were shepherds, not soldiers, abounded in cattle of their own, and therefore were not likely to venture their lives for their neighbours' cattle: and the words may be read, *The men of Gath slew them, for they came down to take away their cattle*. Zabad the son of Ephraim, and Shuthelah, and Ezer, and Elead (his grandchildren), were, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, the men that were slain. Jacob had foretold that the seed of Ephraim should become a *multitude of nations* (<1489>Genesis 48:19), and yet that plant is thus nipped in the bud. God's providences often seem to contradict his promises; but, when they do so, they really magnify the promise, and make the performance of it, notwithstanding, so much more illustrious. The Ephraimites were the

posterity of Joseph, and yet his power could not protect them, though some think he was yet living. The sword devours one as well as another.

2. The great grief which oppressed the father of the family hereupon: *Ephraim mourned many days*. Nothing brings the aged to the grave with more sorrow than their following the young that descend from them to the grave first, especially if in blood. It is often the burden of those that live to be old that they see those go before them of whom they said, *These same shall comfort us*. It was a brotherly friendly office which his brethren did, when *they came to comfort him* under this great affliction, to express their sympathy with him and concern for him, and to suggest that to him which would support and quiet him under this sad providence. Probably they reminded him of the promise of increase which Jacob had blessed him when he laid his right hand upon his head. Although his house was not so with God as he hoped, but a house of mourning, a shattered family, yet that promise was sure, ^{<1023>}2 Samuel 23:5.

3. The repair of this breach, in some measure, by addition of another son to his family in his old age (v. 23), like Seth, *another seed instead of that of Abel whom Cain slew*, ^{<1002>}Genesis 4:25. When God thus restores comfort to his mourners, *makes glad according to the days wherein he afflicted*, setting the mercies over against the crosses, we ought therein to take notice of the kindness and tenderness of divine Providence; it is as if *it repented God concerning his servants*, ^{<1903>}Psalms 90:13, 15. Yet joy that a man was born into his family could not make him forget his grief; for he gives a melancholy name to his son, *Beriah — in trouble*, for he was born when the family was in mourning, when *it went evil with his house*. It is good to have in remembrance the affliction and the misery, the wormwood and the gall, that our souls may be *humbled within us*, ^{<2819>}Lamentations 3:19, 20. What name more proper for *man that is born of a woman* than *Beriah*, because born into a troublesome world? It is added, as a further honour to the house of Ephraim,

(1.) That a daughter of that tribe, *Sherah* by name, at the time of Israel's setting in Canaan, built some cities, either at her own charge or by her own care; one of them bore her name, *Uzzen-sherah*, v. 24. A virtuous woman may be as great an honour and blessing to a family as a mighty man.

(2.) That a son of that tribe was employed in the conquest of Canaan, *Joshua the son of Nun*, v. 27. In this also the breach made on Ephraim's family was further repaired; and perhaps the resentment of this injury

formerly done by the Canaanites to the Ephraimites might make him more vigorous in the war.

II. Of the tribe of Asher. Some men of note of that tribe are here named. Their militia was not numerous in comparison with some other tribes, only 26,000 men in all; but their princes were *choice and mighty men of valour, chief of the princes* (v. 40), and perhaps it was their wisdom that they coveted not to make their trained bands numerous, but rather to have a few, and those apt to the war and serviceable men.