

CHAPTER 8

We had some account given us of Benjamin in the foregoing chapter; here we have a larger catalogue of the great men of that tribe.

1. Because of that tribe Saul came, the first king of Israel, to the story of whom the sacred writer is hastening, 10:1.
2. Because that tribe clave to Judah, inhabited much of Jerusalem, was one of the two tribes that went into captivity, and returned back; and that story also he has an eye to, 9:1. Here is,
 - I. Some of the heads of that tribe named (v. 1-32).
 - II. A more particular account of the family of Saul (v. 33-40).

<1301>1 CHRONICLES 8:1-32

GENEALOGIES

There is little or nothing of history in all these verses; we have not therefore much to observe.

1. As to the difficulties that occur in this and the foregoing genealogies we need not perplex ourselves. I presume Ezra took them as he found them *in the books of the kings of Israel and Judah* (<1301>1 Chronicles 9:1), according as they were given in by the several tribes, each observing what method they thought fit. Hence some *ascend*, others *descend*; some have *numbers* affixed, others *places*; some have historical remarks intermixed, others have not; some are shorter, others longer; some agree with other records, others differ; some, it is likely, were torn, erased, and blotted, others more legible. Those of Dan and Reuben were entirely lost. This holy man wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost; but there was no necessity for the making up of the defects, no, nor for the rectifying of the mistakes, of these genealogies by inspiration. It was sufficient that he copied them out as they came into his hand, or so much of them as was requisite to the present purpose, which was the directing of the returned captives to settle as nearly as they could with those of their own family, and in the places of

their former residence. We may suppose that many things in these genealogies which to us seem intricate, abrupt, and perplexed, were plain and easy to them then (who knew how to fill up the deficiencies) and abundantly answered the intention of the publishing of them.

2. Many great and mighty nations there were now in being upon earth, and many illustrious men in them, whose names are buried in perpetual oblivion, while the names of multitudes of the Israel of God are here carefully preserved in everlasting remembrance. They are *Jasher*, *Jeshurun* — *just ones*, and *the memory of the just is blessed*. Many of these we have reason to fear, came short of everlasting honour (for even the wicked kings of Judah come into the genealogy), yet the perpetuating of their names here was a figure of the writing of the names of all God's spiritual Israel in the Lamb's book of life.

3. This tribe of Benjamin was once brought to a very low ebb, in the time of the judges, upon the occasion of the iniquity of Gibeah, when only 600 men escaped the sword of justice; and yet, in these genealogies, it makes as good a figure as almost any of the tribes: for it is the honour of God to help the weakest and raise up those that are most diminished and abased.

4. Here is mention of one Ehud (v. 6), in the preceding verse of one Gera (v. 5) and (v. 8) of one that descended from him, that *begat children in the country of Moab*, which inclines me to think it was that Ehud who was the second of the judges of Israel; for he is said to be *the son of Gera* and a *Benjamite* (^{<13072>}Judges 3:15), and he delivered Israel from the oppression of the Moabites by killing the king of Moab, which might give him a greater sway in the country of Moab than we find evidence of in his history and might occasion some of his posterity to settle there.

5. Here is mention of some of the Benjamites that *drove away the inhabitants of Gath* (v. 13), perhaps those that had slain the Ephraimites (^{<13072>}1 Chronicles 7:21) or their posterity, by way of reprisal: and one of those that did this piece of justice was named *Beriah* too, that name in which the memorial of that injury was preserved.

6. Particular notice is taken of those that *dwelt in Jerusalem* (v. 28 and again 5:32), that those whose ancestors had had their residence there might thereby be induced, at their return from captivity, to settle there too, which, for aught that appears, few were willing to do, because it was the post of danger: and therefore we find (^{<13072>}Nehemiah 11:2) *the people*

blessed those that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem, the greater part being inclined to prefer the cities of Judah. Those whose godly parents had their conversation in the new Jerusalem should thereby be engaged to set their faces thitherward and pursue the way thither, whatever it cost them.

~~<1383>~~ 1 CHRONICLES 8:33-40

GENEALOGIES

It is observable that among all the genealogies of the tribes there is no mention of any of the kings of Israel after the defection from the house of David, much less of their families; not a word of Jeroboam's house or Baasha's, of Umri's or Jehu's; for they were all idolaters. But of the family of Saul, which was the royal family before the elevation of David, we have here a particular account.

1. Before Saul, Kish and Ner only are named, his father and grandfather, v. 33. His pedigree is carried higher ~~<0900>~~ 1 Samuel 9:1, only there Kish is said to be *the son of Abiel*, here *of Ner*. He was in truth the son of Ner but the grandson of Abiel, as appears by ~~<0945>~~ 1 Samuel 14:51, where it is said that *Ner was the son of Abiel*, and that Abner, who was the son of Ner, was Saul's uncle (that is, his father's brother); therefore his father was also the son of Ner. It is common in all languages to put sons for grandsons and other descendents, much more in the scanty language of the Hebrews.

2. After Saul, divers of his sons are named, but the posterity of none of them, save Jonathan only, who was blessed with numerous issue and those honoured with a place in the sacred genealogies for the sake of his sincere kindness to David. The line of Jonathan is drawn down here for about ten generations. Perhaps David was, in a particular manner, careful to preserve that, and assigned it a page by itself, because of the covenant made between his seed and Jonathan's seed forever, ~~<0915>~~ 1 Samuel 20:15, 23, 42. This genealogy ends in Ulam, whose family became famous in the tribe of Benjamin for the number of its valiant men. Of that one man's posterity there were, as it should seem, at one time, 150 archers brought into the field of battle, that were *mighty men of valour*, v. 40. That is taken notice of concerning them which is more a man's praise than his pomp or wealth is, that they were qualified to serve their country.