

1 Chronicles 24:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers.

Analysis

Theological Analysis: This passage falls within the section on Priestly divisions - 24 courses for temple service. The Hebrew term מִשְׁמָרָה (mishmar) - division/watch is theologically significant here, pointing to Systematic approach to ministry and worship. The Chronicler's narrative, while paralleling Samuel-Kings in places, offers a distinct theological perspective emphasizing temple worship, Levitical service, and covenant faithfulness.

Chronicles presents David not primarily as warrior-king but as worship organizer and temple planner. This verse contributes to that portrait by highlighting the spiritual dimensions of Israel's national life. The text demonstrates that true prosperity comes through proper worship and covenant obedience rather than merely military or political success.

Doctrinally, this passage teaches about Systematic approach to ministry and worship. Cross-references throughout Chronicles connect David's reign to the broader redemptive narrative, showing how God's covenant promises advance through faithful human leadership while ultimately depending on divine grace and power. The messianic implications are profound: Christ's perpetual priesthood.

Historical Context

Historical Background: This section describes events from David's reign (c. 1010-970 BCE) but was written centuries later during the Persian period (c. 450-400 BCE). The Chronicler's selectivity in retelling David's story serves his theological purposes—he omits David's sins (Bathsheba, Absalom's rebellion) while emphasizing David's worship reforms and temple preparations.

The historical setting of Priestly divisions - 24 courses for temple service occurred during Israel's united monarchy, when the nation reached its territorial and political zenith. Archaeological evidence from this period shows significant building projects and administrative development. However, the Chronicler writes for a much smaller, struggling post-exilic community, using David's golden age to inspire hope for restoration.

Ancient Near Eastern parallels show that temple construction and royal sponsorship of worship were common across cultures. However, Israel's understanding of worship centered on covenant relationship with the one true God rather than manipulation of capricious deities. This theological distinctiveness shapes the Chronicler's presentation.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse's emphasis on Systematic approach to ministry and worship challenge or affirm your current spiritual priorities and practices?
2. What does Christ's perpetual priesthood teach you about Jesus Christ and His redemptive work?
3. In what practical ways can you apply the principles of covenant faithfulness and proper worship demonstrated in this passage?

Interlinear Text

וּמָצָא וּ **found** H4672
וּלְבִנֵי י **Among the sons** H1121
אֶלְעָזָר **of Eleazar** H499
וְכֵן יִהְיֶה **And there were more** H7227
רֹאשׁ יִמְלִיךְ **chief** H7218

וְהַגִּבֹּרִים **men** H1397
מִן **Among the sons** H4480
וּלְבִנֵי י **of Ithamar** H1121
אִיתָמָר **and thus were they divided** H385
וַיִּחַלֶּק וִי **H2505**

וּלְבִנֵי י **Among the sons** H1121
אֶלְעָזָר **of Eleazar** H499
רֹאשׁ יִמְלִיךְ **chief** H7218
לְבֵית יִתְרֵם **according to the house** H1004
אֲבוֹתָם **of their fathers** H1

שָׁשָׁה **there were sixteen** H8337
עָשָׂר **H6240**
וּלְבִנֵי י **Among the sons** H1121
אִיתָמָר **of Ithamar** H385
לְבֵית יִתְרֵם **according to the house** H1004

אֲבוֹתָם **of their fathers** H1
שְׁמוֹנָה: **and eight** H8083