

1 Chronicles 3:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These six were born unto him in Hebron; and there he reigned seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years.

Analysis

Genealogical Significance: This verse appears within the Davidic royal succession section of Chronicles' genealogical framework. The Hebrew term מַלְכוּת (malkhut) - kingdom is central to understanding this passage's purpose. The Chronicler, writing to post-exilic Israel (c. 450-400 BCE), uses these genealogies not merely as historical records but as theological statements about covenant continuity and divine faithfulness.

The genealogical structure serves multiple purposes:

1. establishing Israel's connection to God's creation plan from Adam
2. legitimizing post-exilic community's claim to covenant promises
3. emphasizing Judah and Levi's special roles in God's redemptive plan,
4. demonstrating that despite exile, God's covenant purposes continue.

The selection and arrangement of names is intentional, highlighting Eternal covenant with David's house.

Chronicles diverges from Genesis and Samuel-Kings in its genealogical presentation, reflecting the Chronicler's distinct theological agenda. Where earlier texts focus on narrative history, Chronicles emphasizes continuity, legitimacy, and hope for restoration. This verse contributes to the larger argument that the post-exilic community is the rightful heir of God's ancient covenant promises.

Historical Context

Post-Exilic Context: The Chronicler wrote during the Persian period (450-400 BCE) to a community returned from Babylonian exile, struggling with identity and purpose. These genealogies answered crucial questions: Who are we? What is our relationship to ancient Israel? Do God's promises still apply to us?

The historical setting influences the text's emphasis on David's descendants and royal succession. Ancient Near Eastern cultures valued genealogies for establishing land rights, royal legitimacy, and tribal identity. Chronicles' genealogies served similar functions while adding theological depth. The inclusion of specific names and details reflects the author's access to temple archives, royal records, and earlier biblical texts.

Archaeological evidence from Persian-period Judah shows a small, struggling community centered around Jerusalem and the rebuilt temple. The genealogies reinforced their connection to the glorious past and provided hope for future restoration through God's covenant faithfulness.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding genealogies as theological statements rather than mere historical records change your reading of Chronicles and other biblical genealogies?
2. What does this verse teach about God's faithfulness across generations, and how does that apply to your own family's spiritual legacy?
3. How does Eternal covenant with David's house connect to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises?

Interlinear Text

וְשֵׁשׁ הָ יָלֵד לְוַ בְּחֶבְרוֹן וְשָׁם מָלַךְ
These six **were born** ^{H0} **unto him in Hebron** **and there he reigned** ^{H8033}
^{H8337} ^{H3205} ^{H2275} ^{H4427}

שִׁבְעָה שָׁנִים וְשֵׁשׁ חֳדָשִׁים וְשָׁלֹשׁ וְשָׁנִים וְשָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים
seven **years** **These six** **months** **thirty** **and three** **years**
^{H7651} ^{H8141} ^{H8337} ^{H2320} ^{H7970} ^{H7969} ^{H8141}

וְשָׁם מָלַךְ בִּירוּשָׁלַם:
and there he reigned **and in Jerusalem**
^{H4427} ^{H3389}

Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 2:11 (Kingdom): And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

1 Kings 2:11 (Kingdom): And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.