

1 Chronicles 4:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply, like to the children of Judah.

Analysis

Genealogical Significance: This verse appears within the Judah's expansion and conquest section of Chronicles' genealogical framework. The Hebrew term נַחֲלָה (nachalah) - inheritance 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 God's faithfulness in land promises.

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 Genealogies of Judah's clans and territorial expansions. 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

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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 God's faithfulness in land promises connect to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises?

Interlinear Text

וְלִשְׁמַעִי י'	בְּנֵי י'	שֵׁשׁ וְשֵׁשׁ	עֲשָׂרָה	וּבָנֹת	שֵׁשׁ וְשֵׁשׁ	וְלֶאֱחָיו
And Shimei	children	and six	H6240	daughters	and six	but his brethren
H8096	H1121	H8337		H1323	H8337	H251
אֵין	בְּנֵי י'	רַב־יָמִים	וְכָל־	מִשְׁפַּחָתָם	לֹא	הִרְבּוּ וְ
H369	children	had not many	H3605	neither did all their family	H3808	multiply
	H1121	H7227		H4940		H7235
עַד	בְּנֵי י'	יְהוּדָה:				
H5704	children	of Judah				
	H1121	H3063				

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 26:22 (Parallel theme): These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

Numbers 2:13 (Parallel theme): And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

Numbers 26:14 (Parallel theme): These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.