

1 Chronicles 6:57

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, namely, Hebron, the city of refuge, and Libnah with her suburbs, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa, with their suburbs,

Analysis

Genealogical Significance: This verse appears within the Levitical priesthood and worship section of Chronicles' genealogical framework. The Hebrew term כֹּהֵן (kohen) - priest 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 Mediatorial role of priesthood.

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 Levitical genealogies and priestly lines. 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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

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 Mediatorial role of priesthood connect to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises?

Interlinear Text

וְלִבְנֵי י	אֶהָרִן	נָתַנוּ	אֶת	עָרֵי	הַמִּקְלָט	אֶת
And to the sons	of Aaron	they gave	H853	the cities	the city of refuge	H853
H1121	H175	H5414		H5892	H4733	
חֶבְרוֹן	וְאֶת	לִבְנֵה	וְאֶת	מִגְרָשֶׁיהָ:	וְאֶת	יַתֵּר
namely Hebron	H853	and Libnah	H853	with her suburbs	H853	and Jattir
H2275		H3841		H4054		H3492
וְאֶת	אֶשְׁתֵּמוֹא	וְאֶת	מִגְרָשֶׁיהָ:			
H853	and Eshtemoa	H853	with her suburbs			
	H851		H4054			

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 15:48 (Parallel theme): And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh,