

1 Chronicles 7:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle.

Analysis

Genealogical Significance: This verse appears within the Northern tribes and their heritage section of Chronicles' genealogical framework. The Hebrew term שֵׁבֶט (shevet) - tribe/scepter 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 All Israel included in God's covenant.

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 Northern tribal genealogies: Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Asher. 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

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 All Israel included in God's covenant connect to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises?

Interlinear Text

וְזָבָד	בֶּן־וְ	וְשׁוּתֵלַח	בֶּן־וְ	וְעֶזֶר	וְאֶלֶּאד	וַהֲרָג וּ
And Zabad	his son	and Shuthelah	his son	and Ezer	and Elead	slew
H2066	H1121	H7803	H1121	H5827	H496	H2026
אֲנָשֵׁי	גַּת	הַנּוֹלָדִים	בְּאֶרֶץ	כִּי	יָרְדוּ	
whom the men	of Gath	that were born	in that land	H3588	because they came down	
H582	H1661	H3205	H776		H3381	
לִקְחָם	אֶת־	מִקְנֵיהֶם				
to take away	H853	their cattle				
H3947		H4735				

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