

1 Chronicles 8:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These were heads of the fathers, by their generations, chief men. These dwelt in Jerusalem.

Analysis

These were heads of the fathers, by their generations, chief men (רָאשֵׁי אֲבוֹתֹתָם roshei avot letoldotam)—this summarizing formula designates clan patriarchs, literally 'heads of fathers' houses according to their generations.' The term **chief men** (רָאשִׁים rashim) indicates leadership status, those with authority to represent their extended families in tribal decision-making, military service, and judicial matters (Exodus 18:25; Deuteronomy 1:15).

These dwelt in Jerusalem (בִּירוּשָׁלַם יָשְׁבוּ)—Benjamin's strategic significance appears in their Jerusalem settlement. Though Jerusalem sat primarily in Benjamin's allotment, David's conquest made it a royal city transcending tribal boundaries. Benjamin's continued residence in Jerusalem through monarchy, exile, and restoration demonstrates covenant faithfulness despite political upheaval. When the northern tribes apostatized under Jeroboam (930 BC), Benjamin remained with Judah, maintaining access to legitimate temple worship.

This verse's function is administrative and theological: administratively, it marks the conclusion of several Benjamite genealogical lists; theologically, it validates post-exilic Jerusalem's population as legitimate heirs of pre-exilic Israel. The Chronicler assures returned exiles that their 'heads of fathers' houses' in rebuilt Jerusalem stand in direct succession to ancient tribal leadership, confirming covenant continuity despite Babylonian interruption.

Historical Context

Jerusalem's population dynamics shifted dramatically through history. Originally a Jebusite city conquered by David (c. 1000 BC, 2 Samuel 5:6-9), it became capital of united Israel, then Judah alone after 930 BC. Babylonian destruction (586 BC) depopulated the city; Nehemiah's reforms (445 BC) repopulated it through voluntary settlement and lots (Nehemiah 11:1-2). The Chronicler, writing during this restoration period, emphasizes Benjamin's continuous Jerusalem presence, providing historical legitimacy for current residents' claims to ancestral land.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Benjamin's faithfulness in dwelling near Jerusalem and maintaining temple worship challenge believers to prioritize spiritual community over economic opportunity?
2. What does the preservation of 'heads of fathers' houses' through exile teach about God's commitment to institutional continuity alongside personal salvation?

Interlinear Text

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|--------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| אֵלֶּה | רָאשֵׁי יָם | אֲבֹת | לְדֹרֹתָם | רָאשֵׁי יָם |
| H428 | These were heads | of the fathers | by their generations | These were heads |
| | H7218 | H1 | H8435 | H7218 |
| אֵלֶּה | יָשְׁבוּ וְ | בִּירוּשָׁלַם: | | |
| H428 | men These dwelt | in Jerusalem | | |
| | H3427 | H3389 | | |

Additional Cross-References

Judges 1:21 (References Jerusalem): And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

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