

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 5

This chapter relates the genealogy of the tribes that lived on the other side Jordan; of the Reubenites, (~~1381~~ 1 Chronicles 5:1-10), of the Gadites, (~~1381~~ 1 Chronicles 5:11-17) of the half tribe of Manasseh, (~~1383~~ 1 Chronicles 5:23,24) and of their war with the Hagarites, in conjunction with each other, and their conquest of them, (~~1385~~ 1 Chronicles 5:18-22) and who for their sins were all carried captive by the king of Assyria, (~~1385~~ 1 Chronicles 5:25,26).

Ver. 1. *Now the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel*, etc.] Are as follow in (~~1388~~ 1 Chronicles 5:3) where the account begins; for what comes between this and that is in a parenthesis:

for he was the firstborn; of Jacob by his wife Leah; that must be owned, and Jacob allows it, (~~1448~~ Genesis 49:3) and yet the genealogy in this book begins not with him, as might on that account be expected; the reason follows:

but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed: by lying with Bilhah his concubine:

his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; his beloved son by his beloved wife Rachel and so had a double portion given him; his two sons being equally ranked with the other sons of Jacob, and became distinct tribes, and each had their lot in the land of Canaan, (see ~~1485~~ Genesis 48:5,22) compared with (~~1517~~ Deuteronomy 21:17)

and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright; or, “but the genealogy”, etc. ^{f38}; neither after the birthright of Reuben, which he had by nature, being Jacob's firstborn; nor after the birthright of Joseph, which he had by his father's gift, as it might be thought it should; the reason of which follows.

Ver. 2. *For Judah prevailed above his brethren*, etc.] That is, the tribe of Judah prevailed above the rest in number, in valour, and courage, and in

dignity; wherefore the genealogy is not reckoned according to birthright, but dignity and dominion; hence this genealogical account began with Judah,

[because] of him [came] the chief ruler; David and the kings of Judah, his successors; and above all, from him the Prince Messiah was to spring, and did, according to (^{<0490>}Genesis 49:10) so both the Syriac and Arabic versions read,

“out of Judah should go forth the King Messiah:”

but the birthright [was] Joseph’s or “though” ^{f39} it was; yet Judah having the dominion and dignity, that tribe is first genealogized.

Ver. 3. *The sons, [I say], of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, were, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.*] As in (^{<0440>}Genesis 46:9).

Ver. 4,5. *The sons of Joel*, etc.] Who was either the son of Carmi last mentioned, or rather of Hanoch, Reuben’s firstborn, since the descendants of him were the princes of the tribe: his posterity in succession were, Shemaiah, Cog, Shimei, Micah, Reaia, Baal, Beerah; of whom we know no more than their names, and by these the descent is carried down to the captivity by Tiglathpileser, as follows.

Ver. 6. *Beerah his son*, etc.] The last of Joel’s posterity, who, according to the Targum and other Jewish writers ^{f40} was a prophet, and the father of Hosea, (see ^{<2000>}Hosea 1:1) but neither the name, title, time, nor tribe, agree:

whom Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria carried away captive; the same with Tiglathpileser by a transposition of letters, (^{<1550>}2 Kings 15:29) and is read the same here in the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic versions:

he [was] prince of the Reubenites; at that time; that is, Beerah was.

Ver. 7. *And his brethren by their families*, etc.] Either the brethren of Beerah, or the rest of the posterity of Reuben:

(when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned;) either in the times of Jotham and Jeroboam, (^{<1517>}1 Chronicles 5:17) or at the time of their captivity, as in the preceding verse:

[were] the chief, Jehiel, and Zechariah; these were the principals or heads of their families.

Ver. 8. *And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, etc.]*

The pedigree of Bela, another principal man in the tribe of Reuben, is traced up to Joel the father of Shema; the same with Shemaiah, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, (^{<1310>}1 Chronicles 5:4)

who dwelt in Aroer; which belonged to the tribe of Gad, and was rebuilt by them, (^{<0423>}Numbers 32:34) wherefore Kimchi observes, it may be interpreted, either from Aroer, or on the border of it, Bela dwelt:

even unto Nebo, and Baalmeon; of which ((see Gill on "^{<0423>}Numbers 32:38"))).

Ver. 9. *And eastward he inhabited, etc.]* Either Bela, or the tribe of Reuben:

unto the entering in of the wilderness; the wilderness of Kedemoth, which was near to Sihon king of Heshbon, whose land the Reubenites inhabited, (^{<0125>}Deuteronomy 2:26)

from the river Euphrates; a learned man ^{f41} thinks that this river Phrat was different from the Euphrates near Babylon, which was northward, since this was to the east or southeast:

because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead; therefore their habitation was extended further, even to the river Euphrates, as in the days of David and Solomon, (^{<0102>}2 Samuel 8:3 ^{<1021>}1 Kings 4:21).

Ver. 10. *And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, etc.]*

Not with the Hungarians, as the Targum, a people not then in being; but the Ishmaelites, so called because they descended from Hagar ^{f42}, Sarah's maid; the same that are placed by Pliny ^{f43} and Ptolemy ^{f44} in Arabia, near the Batanaeans, or inhabitants of Bashan; with those the Reubenites made war, in conjunction with the Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh, (^{<1318>}1 Chronicles 5:18,19), perhaps this war might be much about the time Saul relieved Jabeshgilead, and beat the Ammonites, (^{<0101>}1 Samuel 11:1-14) by which the tribes on that side Jordan might be encouraged to it:

who fell by their hand; were worsted and conquered by them:

and they dwelt in their tents; in which the Arabians used to dwell, because of their flocks; hence some of them were called Scenites:

throughout all the east [land] of Gilead; or rather throughout all the land of the Hagarites, which lay to the east of Gilead, as the Vulgate Latin version; or otherwise the land of Gilead itself was their original possession.

Ver. 11. *And the children of Gad dwelt over against them*, etc.] Or by them, the Reubenites; and one part of Gilead was given them between them, and the other to the half tribe of Manasseh:

in the land of Bashan, unto Salcah; for though all Bashan is said to be given to the half tribe of Manasseh, (^{<RB13>}Deuteronomy 3:13) yet that is to be understood of the greater part of it; all of that which belonged to Og, but what did not, the Gadites, either from the first, or in later times, inhabited even as far as Salcah, which was one of the cities of Og, (^{<RB10>}Deuteronomy 3:10) and which Benjamin of Tudela ^{f45} makes mention of, being called by the same name in his days.

Ver. 12. *Joel the chief*, etc.] In this and the following verse are reckoned up the principal men in the tribe of Gad, and the chief of all was Joel, another from him in the tribe of Reuben, (^{<RB14>}1 Chronicles 5:4)

and Shapham the next; the second chief man, from whom, Reland ^{f46} conjectures, Shophan, a city in the tribe of Gad, had its name, (^{<RB25>}Numbers 32:35)

and Jaanai; from whom Danjaan might be called, as Michaelis intimates, (^{<RB16>}2 Samuel 24:6)

and Shaphat in Bashan; not Shaphat the father of Elisha, according to a tradition of the Jews, mentioned by Kimchi; which is not at all probable.

Ver. 13. *And their brethren of the house of their fathers*, etc.] Who were also men of eminence and note in them:

were, Michael, and Meshullam, and Shebai, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven; so they are as here mentioned by name.

Ver. 14. *These are the children of Abihail the son of Huri*, etc.] That is, the seven before mentioned; they were the posterity of Abihail, whose pedigree is traced from his father Huri to Buz, the intermediate progenitors being Jaroah, Gilead, Michael, Jeshishai, Jahdo.

Ver. 15. *Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers.*] Which Ahi was a principal man in the families the seven above

men belonged to; besides them, or those three, were everyone of them heads of families.

Ver. 16. *And they dwelt in Gilead*, etc.] In that part of it which belonged to the tribe of Gad:

in Bashan, and in her towns; ((see Gill on “^{<1351>}1 Chronicles 5:11”)),

and in all the suburbs of Sharon, upon their borders; there were two Sharons, one to the west of the land of Israel near the Mediterranean sea, which is mentioned in (^{<405>}Acts 9:35) as near Lydda and Joppa; and the other to the east or northeast, beyond Jordan, which is here meant.

Ver. 17. *All these were reckoned by genealogies*, etc.] All before mentioned:

in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel; not that those two kings reigned at the same time, and one and the same reckoning is meant; but, as Dr. Lightfoot^{f47} observes, there were two reckonings; his words are,

“in the days of Jotham there was an account taken of the families of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, (^{<1357>}1 Chronicles 5:17) and so had there been in the days of Jeroboam the second; then at their restoring by Jeroboam out of the hands of Hamath and Syria, and now at their arming against the Assyrian, under whom they fell in the time of Pekah, and are never again restored to Israel.”

Ver. 18. *The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh*, etc.] These all joined together, living together on the one side of Jordan:

of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war; strong able bodied men; and not only able to bear and carry arms, sword in one hand, and shield in another; but were men of valour and courage, and had military skill, and knew how to handle their arms to advantage:

[were] four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war: that used to go out when there was occasion, and did at this time.

Ver. 19. *And they made war with the Hagarites*, etc.] Before mentioned, (^{<1359>}1 Chronicles 5:19)

with Jetur, and Nephish: with the posterity of these men, who were sons of Ishmael, (^{<0255>}Genesis 25:15) and so was Nodab; perhaps the same with Kedemah, mentioned along with the other two there; so Hillerus ^{f48} thinks.

Ver. 20. *And they were helped against them*, etc.] The Israelites were helped against the Ishmaelites, to fight with them, and overcome them; either by their brethren of the house of Israel, as the Targum, those on this side Jordan; or rather by the Lord, to whom they cried, and who was entreated by them as follows:

and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that [were] with them; they and their confederates and auxiliaries, the Ituraeans, etc.

for they cried to God in the battle; which at first seems to have gone against them; and they prayed to God, as the Targum, while they were fighting, that he would appear for them, and give them victory:

and he was entreated of them; he received their prayer, as the same paraphrase; he heard them, and answered them:

because they put their trust in him; in his power and providence, and not in their own strength, courage, and military skill; the Targum is,

“because they trusted in his word.”

Ver. 21. *And they took away their cattle*, etc.] Which they brought with them, and they found in their camp when they fled, or in their fields:

of their camels fifty thousand; with which Arabia abounded, and were fit to travel with in those hot and desert countries, being strong to carry burdens, and able to bear much thirst. The Arabians, as Diodorus Siculus ^{f49} reports, brought up camels, for almost all the uses of life; as for the sake of their milk and flesh to feed upon, as well as for carrying burdens in common; and which in time of war they loaded with provisions for the army, and fought upon, one of them carrying two archers with their backs to each other, the one to meet the enemy in front, the other to annoy those that pursued them; and so the Parthians made use of camels both to fight on, and to carry provisions for their soldiers ^{f50}:

and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand; which these Hagarites kept both for food and clothing, and some of them might be now taken with them to supply their army; the Spartans carried sheep with them in their expeditions, as sacrifices to their gods ^{f51}; but it need not be supposed that these creatures, and those that follow, were in such large numbers with the Hagarites in the battle, but were afterwards found, partly in their camp, and partly in the places inhabited by them:

and of asses two thousand; used to ride on, and carry loads, and also to plough with; and in all these lay the wealth of men in those times and countries, (see ~~<800>~~ Job 1:1,3)

and of men one hundred thousand; so that they took captive above as many more as their army consisted of.

Ver. 22. *For there fell down many slain*, etc.] Many were killed in the battle, besides the great number of prisoners made, so that the army the Ishmaelites brought into the field was very great:

because the war was of God; or from the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; he stirred up the Israelites to it, directed, assisted, and succeeded them, that vengeance might be taken on this wicked and idolatrous people:

and they dwelt in their stead until the captivity; the Targum adds, of Sennacherib king of Assyria; but this captivity of the tribes referred to was not by him, but by Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, (~~<1355>~~ 1 Chronicles 5:26) and they dwelt not in the country of the Arab-hagarites, or Ishmaelites in their stead there, but in Gilead, as in (~~<1350>~~ 1 Chronicles 5:10) which belonged to the Gadites and Reubenites originally, but had been dispossessed of it, or however distressed in it by these Hagarites, which they now drove out, and dwelt in their stead; for as for the Scenite-arabs or Ishmaelites, they never were conquered and brought into subjection by any people, but always maintained their independency ^{f52}; and lived upon the plunder of their neighbours, pitching their tents here and there for their convenience, which in these parts were at this time spoiled.

Ver. 23. *And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land*, etc.] Not in the land of the Hagarites, but in the land of Gilead and Bashan beyond Jordan, given them by Moses. The writer, having reckoned the genealogies of some of the principal men of Reuben and Gad, proceeds to give a short account of some principal men in this half tribe:

they increased from Bashan; where they first settled, and extended their possessions:

unto Baalhermon and Senir, and unto Mount Hermon; mountains which lay to the north of the land of Canaan, and are what geographers call Antilibanus.

Ver. 24. *And these were the heads of the house of their fathers*, etc.] Some of the principal men of this half tribe:

even Ephher, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel; but of none of these we read elsewhere, excepting Hepher and Azriel, (^{0431b}Numbers 26:31,32)

mighty men of valour, famous men, and heads of the house of their fathers; men that obtained a name for their strength, courage, and valour, and military exploits, and were the chiefs of the families in this half tribe, and by whom they were denominated; so from Hepher were the family of the Hepherites, and from Azriel the family of the Azrielites, as in the place before quoted.

Ver. 25. *And they transgressed against the God their fathers*, etc.] Against his law, will, word, and ordinances, not only the half tribe of Manasseh, but the Reubenites and Gadites also:

and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them; that is, committed idolatry, which is spiritual fornication or whoredom; worshipped the idols either of the Amorites, who were destroyed by the Lord to make way for their first settlement; or of the Ishmaelites, whom they conquered, and whose land they dwelt in to the captivity.

Ver. 26. *And the God of Israel*, etc.] The Targum is,

“the word of the God of Israel:”

stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria: in the times of Menahem king of Israel:

and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser; in the times of Pekah king of Israel, to invade the land, and make war in it:

and he carried them away: not the former, but the latter:

even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh; these entirely together, with some other parts of the land, (see ^{<12159>}2 Kings 15:29)

and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan; to the very same places where afterwards Salmaneser carried the ten tribes, or what remained of them, (see ^{<12176>}2 Kings 17:6)

unto this day; the times of Ezra, the writer of this book, after the tribe of Judah returned from the captivity of Babylon; but the ten tribes remained where they were carried, and have not returned even to this day.