

CHAPTER 24

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 24

This chapter relates the distribution David made of the priests into twenty four classes or courses, and which were observed by lot, and each course had an head or principal man over it, (^{<B30>}1 Chronicles 24:1-19) and of a like distribution of the Levites into the same number of courses, to attend the priests in theirs, (^{<B20>}1 Chronicles 24:20-31).

Ver. 1. *Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron*, etc.] Into the classes or courses following:

the sons of Aaron; Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; (^{<B18>}1 Chronicles 6:3), these were the immediate sons of Aaron; but the division or distribution of them into classes are of their posterity in the times of David, who descended from the two latter.

Ver. 2. *But Nadab and Abihu died before their father*, etc.] While he was living, (see ^{<B10>}Leviticus 10:1,2)

and had no children, therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priests' office: otherwise, as Jarchi observes, had their brethren left children, they would have come into the office before them.

Ver. 3. *And David distributed them*, etc.] The posterities of Eleazar and Ithamar into certain classes or courses:

both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar; these were the two principal men of the respective families, the one was high priest, and the other “sagan” or deputy; or they both officiated as high priests alternately, until the one was removed in Solomon’s time, and the other established alone. And now their brethren the priests, who were under each of these, are the persons David divided into classes:

according to their offices in their service: to perform their office as priests in the service of the temple in their turns.

Ver. 4. *And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar, etc.*] Or heads of men, heads of their fathers' houses and families:

and thus were they divided; among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar, according to the house of their fathers; in all twenty four, and into so many classes or courses did David divide them; Jarchi says at first when the tabernacle was at Shiloh, there were but sixteen courses, eight from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar, as is explained in the treatise of fasting^{f104}; but when David saw that there were more heads of men, or chief men of Eleazar's, he divided the courses of Eleazar into two parts, and fixed sixteen courses; and the courses of Ithamar he established as at first, eight courses; left them as they were, which he thinks appears from (~~1~~1 Chronicles 24:6) but of the former number of courses, and when and by whom fixed, the Jews are divided^{f105}; ((see Gill on "~~1~~Luke 1:5"))). Perhaps there were none before David's time.

Ver. 5. *Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another, etc.*] Which course should serve first, and which next, and so on; and who should be the chief to each course; which course was to serve a week, and then go out; and this method was taken to prevent envy, strife, and contention about precedence:

for the governors of the sanctuary; or of the holy things, or who presided in things ecclesiastical:

and governors of the house of God: or rather "governors of God", appointed by him judges in civil things:

were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar: there were, of both families, some employed both in sacred and civil things, and who presided in each.

Ver. 6. *And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe, etc.*] The Targum is, Moses the chief scribe, so called: one

of the Levites wrote them: the lots, and the names upon them, put into the urn, and as they came out, which was first, second, etc. and this was done

before the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and before the chief of the fathers of the priests and

Levites; and in this public manner, before such great personages, and in the presence of those that were interested in the affair, that it might appear plainly no fraudulent methods were taken, and that there might be no suspicion of any:

one principal household being taken for Eleazar, and one for Ithamar; the sense of Jarchi as above, and other Jewish writers, is, that one was added to each family of Eleazar, and so made sixteen, and Ithamar's were retained, and left as at first, eight: but the sense is, that first one family of Eleazar was taken, and then one of Ithamar's family, and then one of Eleazar's again, and so on until sixteen were gone through; and then the other eight were divided under so many heads of the family of Eleazar.

Ver. 7-18. *Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib*, etc.] And the other twenty three to the following persons in order:

Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim, Malchijah, Mijamin, Hakkoz, Abijah, Jeshua, Shecaniah, Eliashib, Jakim, Huppah, Jeshebeab, Bilgah, Immer, Hezir, Aphses, Pethahiah, Jehezekel, Jachin, Gamul, Delaiah, and Maaziah; of all which courses we know little more than their names, though they continued in some form or other both under the first and second temple, to the destruction of it; the Jews say only four of these courses returned from the Babylonish captivity, which were those of Jedaiah, Harim, Pashur, and Immer; though Pashur is not among these here; yet they say each of these four had six lots, and that the names and the order of the other courses were retained and continued under them, and supplied by them: hence we read of Mattithiah, from whom sprung the Maccabees, as of the course of Jehoiarib,

“In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin.”
(1 Maccabees 2:1)

which was the first course, and the most honourable; wherefore Josephus^{f106}, who was of it, valued himself upon it, that he was not only of the priestly order, but of the first class or course of the twenty four; and we also read of the course of Abijah, the eighth course, of which was Zechariah the father of John the Baptist, (~~QMS~~Luke 1:5) of these courses, ((see Gill on “~~QMS~~Luke 1:5”)).

Ver. 19. *These were the orderings of them*, etc.] Their classes or courses into which they were divided:

in their service to come into the house of the Lord; to perform their service in the temple, according to their turns, and in course as fixed by lot; one class or course served one week, and then went out, and another came in, each consisting of 1000 men, (see ^{<1320>}1 Chronicles 23:4)

according to their manner; law, right, custom, here prescribed for them: under Aaron their father; that is, him who was high priest for the time being; who bore this name because his successor and representative, under whose inspection, direction, and authority, all the rest of the priests were, and whom they were to obey in all things:

as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him; to take care they should be done.

Ver. 20-30. *And the rest of the sons of Levi were these*, etc.] Who were not priests, only Levites; and from hence, to (^{<1340>}1 Chronicles 24:30) their names are given; of the sons of Amram, Shubael, and his son Jehdeiah; Rehabiah the son of Eleazar, and Isshiah the son of Rehabiah; of the Izharites, so called from Izhar, the brother of Amram, Shelomoth, and his son Jahath; and of the sons of Hebron, another brother of Amram, Jeriah, Amariah, Jahaziel, and Jekameam; of the sons of Uzziel, another brother of Amram, Michah, and his son Shamir; Isshiah the brother of Michah, and his son Zechariah: the sons of Merari, Mahli and Mushi, his immediate sons; from whom sprung by Jaaziah, Beno, Shoham, Zaccur and Ibri; of Mahli sprung Eleazar, who had no sons; and Kish, whose son was Jerahmeel; the sons of Mushi, another son of Merari, Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth; most of these names are the same with those in (^{<1326>}1 Chronicles 23:16-23),

these were the sons of the Levites, after the house of their fathers; some of the principal of them.

Ver. 31. *These likewise cast lots over against their brethren, the sons of Aaron*, etc.] These, being divided into twenty four classes also, cast lots, which class should answer to, attend upon, and serve the first course of the priests, and which the second, and so on. And this they did in the same solemn and public manner as the priests had done:

in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites; as in (^{<1316>}1 Chronicles 24:6)

even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren; the sense is, either that the one stood over against the other, to be distributed by lot,

the one as well as the other; or they were chosen by lot, let it fall as it would, without any regard to age or dignity, to the seniority or largeness of houses and families; but as they were chosen, be they younger or elder, richer or poorer, their families more or less numerous and ancient, so they took their places.