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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**“THE LEVITES”**

**1 Chronicles 6:1-47**

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***I Chronicles 6:1 "The sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari."***

The line of the priestly tribe of Levi was so important to Israel that the chronicler devoted all of chapter 6 to it. The name "Levi" means joined. Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah. He is the father of the Levitical tribe, that would be separated out for service to the LORD. To the original readers, this was a vital record of the priestly descent so the Israelites who’d returned from the Babylonian exile could be assured that the priests serving them were legitimate. Gershon is sometimes called Gershom. He was the founder of the Gershonites. Levi had a daughter named Jochebed who was mother of Moses, Miriam, and Aaron. Kohath was the father of Amram who was the father of Moses. Amram was the nephew of Jochebed, whom he married. Kohath founded the Kohathites. Merari was the founder of the Merarites. We must take special note of the Levites, because they will be called to the service of the LORD.

***I Chronicles 6:2 "And the sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel."***

Kohath, it seemed, was born before the twelve sons of Jacob went into Egypt. He was about twenty years younger than Joseph. Later on the Kohathites will be called to carry the ark and the sacred vessels. His sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Amram was the most prominent of the sons, because of his children, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Izhar was the father of the Izharites. Hebron was father of the Hebronites. Uzziel is best known as being Aaron's uncle. He founded the Uzzielites.

***I Chronicles 6:3 "And the children of Amram; Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar."***

Aaron, Moses, and Miriam were Levites on their mother's side and on their father's side. Aaron was the first high priest in the tabernacle. His sons were anointed as priests to work in the tabernacle. Nadab and Abihu carried strange fire into the tabernacle, and the fire of God killed them. The strange fire, many believe, was the fact they were intoxicated while serving in the tabernacle. Eleazer became high priest after Aaron, because his two older brothers were killed by God. Ithamar was in charge of the curtains, the hangings, pillars, cords, and boards. He actually oversaw the moving of the tabernacle from place to place. The priesthood had to come through Eleazar and Ithamar, because Nadab and Abihu had no descendents.

***I Chronicles 6:4 "Eleazar begat Phinehas, Phinehas begat Abishua,"***

Eleazar's wife's father's name was Putiel. Phinehas was high priest for 19 years. Phinehas' action pertaining to the revolting sins of the people stayed the plague, and God promised him the priesthood would remain in his family forever. He ran a javelin through Cozbi and Zimri to stay the plague. Abishua became the fourth high priest in his father's stead.

***I Chronicles 6:5 "And Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi,"***

***I Chronicles 6:6 "And Uzzi begat Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begat Meraioth,"***

***I Chronicles 6:7 "Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,"***

All of the people listed in the verses above, were descended from Aaron through Eleazar and Phinehas. After Uzzi, the position of high priest would go to Eli of the descendants of Ithamar. It is not explained how this came about.

***I Chronicles 6:8 "And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Ahimaaz,"***

There are two Ahitubs mentioned. One is in the lineage of Ithamar, and one in the lineage of Eleazar. Zadok seemed to be connected in both lineages, as well.

***I Chronicles 6:9 "And Ahimaaz begat Azariah, and Azariah begat Johanan,"***

Ahimaaz seemed to, also, be connected with both lines. Azariah is in the lineage from Eleazar. Johanan, also, is in the lineage of Eleazar.

***I Chronicles 6:10 "And Johanan begat Azariah, (he [it is] that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem:)"***

Johanan and Azariah were priests during the reigns of Abijah and Asa. "Johanan" means God is gracious.

***I Chronicles 6:11 "And Azariah begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,"***

Amariah was high priest in the reign of Jehoshaphat. We discussed that Ahitub seemed to be in two lineages. In this case, it seems to be speaking of the lineage through Eleazar.

***I Chronicles 6:12 "And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Shallum,"***

There seem to be several people mentioned between Zadok and Shallum. Zadok is his great-great-grandfather.

***I Chronicles 6:13 "And Shallum begat Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begat Azariah,"***

Hilkiah and Azariah were popular names, and given several times in these lineages. The Hilkiah, mentioned here, was high priest in the time of Josiah.

***I Chronicles 6:14 "And Azariah begat Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak,"***

***I Chronicles 6:15 "And Jehozadak went [into captivity], when the LORD carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar."***

Seraiah, here, was high priest during the reign of Zedekiah. "Seraiah" means Jehovah has prevailed. He was sent as a prisoner to Nebuchadnezzar, who killed him. Jehozadak was carried to Babylon prisoner. It is not known whether he ever acted as high priest, or not. He, probably, died in Babylon. Joshua is mentioned in Haggai as the high priest after the exile.

***I Chronicles 6:16 "The sons of Levi; Gershom, Kohath, and Merari."***

This is repeating the first verse of this lesson. Gershom, Kohath, and Merari were the beginning of the three divisions of the Levitical tribe. All are to serve the LORD in some capacity.

***I Chronicles 6:17 "And these [be] the names of the sons of Gershom; Libni, and Shimei."***

***I Chronicles 6:18 "And the sons of Kohath [were], Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel."***

***I Chronicles 6:19 "The sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. And these [are] the families of the Levites according to their fathers."***

We have been primarily dealing with the descendents of Kohath, who were the priests and high priests. Merari was, probably, born just before the migration of Jacob's family to Egypt. He was the head of the third division of the Levites.

***I Chronicles 6:20 "Of Gershom; Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son,"***

***I Chronicles 6:21 "Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeaterai his son."***

This goes back to pick up the lineage of Gershom. Another name for Libni is Laadan. He was father of the Libnites. His brother was Shimi, the father of the Shimites. Zimmah is, probably, the same as Shimei. Joah, probably, is the one who assisted Hezekiah in the restoration of the temple worship. He is called Ethan in verse 42. Iddo is, also, called Adaiah. "Zerah" means dawning, rising, or shining. Jeaterai is the same as Ethni.

***I Chronicles 6:22 "The sons of Kohath; Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son,"***

Amminidab is not mentioned in the list of the four sons of Kohath earlier in this lesson. Many scholars believe that Amminidab is the same as Izhar. Korah is, probably, the same one that was with Dathan and Abiram against Moses, because he was not called to the priesthood. "Assir" means prisoner. Nothing else is known of him.

***I Chronicles 6:23 "Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son,"***

In Exodus, the three men mentioned, in the verse above, are brothers. In this verse, it appears they are son, grandson, and great-grandson of the first Assir.

***I Chronicles 6:24 "Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son."***

***I Chronicles 6:25 "And the sons of Elkanah; Amasai, and Ahimoth."***

***I Chronicles 6:26 "[As for] Elkanah: the sons of Elkanah; Zophai his son, and Nahath his son,"***

***I Chronicles 6:27 "Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son."***

***I Chronicles 6:28 "And the sons of Samuel; the firstborn Vashni, and Abiah."***

Tahath was a Koathite. His descendants would lead to Samuel. Uriel and Zephaniah seem to be the same person. Uzziah was born about 1300 B.C. Shaul was the founder of the Shaulites. There is very little known of the rest of these all the way to Samuel. This Samuel is the son of Hannah. She prayed for a son and loaned him to the LORD all the days of his life. Eli raised him in the service of the LORD. We read in 1 Samuel chapter 8 verses 1 and 2, that Samuel's first son was named Joel. It appears, then, that Joel and Vashni are the same person. "Vashni" means strong. "Joel" means Jehovah is God. One of the names could have been a title. Verse 1 of 1 Samuel chapter 8 says, that Samuel made his sons judges. They were evil judges, and God gave the people king Saul to judge them, instead of judges.

***I Chronicles 6:29 "The sons of Merari; Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzza his son,"***

***I Chronicles 6:30 "Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son."***

Merari's son, Mushi, is not mentioned here. Those listed above are of his son, Merari. In verses 44 through 47, we will read of them.

***I Chronicles 6:31 "And these [are they] whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after that the ark had rest."***

***I Chronicles 6:32 "And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem: and [then] they waited on their office according to their order."***

This answers the question of whether we should have a choir in our churches, or not. We see that in the Levitical tribe {ministers in the things of the LORD}, there were set aside people who ministered in song. Really beautiful hymns prepare the soul to receive the message of the preacher. This singing was praise unto the LORD for the presence of the LORD. God inhabits the praises of His people.

***I Chronicles 6:33 "And these [are] they that waited with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel,"***

***I Chronicles 6:34 "The son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah,"***

***I Chronicles 6:35 "The son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai,"***

***I Chronicles 6:36 "The son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah,"***

***I Chronicles 6:37 "The son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah,"***

***I Chronicles 6:38 "The son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel."***

Let me stop for a moment here in the giving of these names and say that their ministry in the church was in song and music. Some played the instruments and some sang. We should enter God's house with thanksgiving in our hearts. Notice, that the music was their call from God. The most welcome sound coming from our churches, as we enter the door, should be soft, spiritual music.

***I Chronicles 6:39 "And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, [even] Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea,"***

***I Chronicles 6:40 "The son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah,"***

***I Chronicles 6:41 "The son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah,"***

***I Chronicles 6:42 "The son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei,"***

***I Chronicles 6:43 "The son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi."***

***I Chronicles 6:44 "And their brethren the sons of Merari [stood] on the left hand: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch,"***

***I Chronicles 6:45 "The son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah,"***

***I Chronicles 6:46 "The son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer,"***

***I Chronicles 6:47 "The son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi."***

In all of these names of people involved in the music and the singing in the church, we find many of the names that are mentioned in the Psalms of David. David addressed many of his Psalms to these very singers. In the next lesson, we will deal with the family of the priests. God calls each person to minister in his own calling. We must bear in mind that all of the Levites served God in some capacity. Each had their own expertise. It seemed, that in particular, the family of Merari was musically inclined.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who were the sons of Levi?
2. What does "Levi" mean?
3. Who was the mother of Moses?
4. Who was the father of Moses?
5. What relation was Moses's father to Moses' mother, besides being husband and wife?
6. Who were the sons of Kohath?
7. What will be the service of the Kohathites to the LORD?
8. Who were the children of Amram?
9. Who was the first high priest in the tabernacle?
10. What happened to Nadab and Abihu?
11. Who became high priest after Aaron?
12. Who was the son of Eleazar?
13. How long was he high priest?
14. Another name for Libni is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
15. Who assisted Hezekiah in restoring worship in the temple?
16. What do many scholars belive about Amminidab?
17. Why did Korah join with Dathan and Abiram against Moses?
18. Tahath's descendents led to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
19. Who was Samuel?
20. Who seems to be the same person as Vashni?
21. What does "Vashni" mean?
22. What does "Joel" mean?
23. What kind of sons were Samuel's?
24. What has the author always believed about beautiful hymns?
25. We should enter God's house with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in our heart.