

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY

Part I: Gaining Direction From God's Work In Our History From Furthest Antiquity, 1 Chronicles 1-9

B. Gaining Direction From Noting God's INTERACTION With Past Groups In The Faith, 1 Chronicles 4-8

6. Gaining Direction By Noting God's Work With The Tribe Of Levi (1 Chronicles 6:1-81 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. The pastoral epistles reveal the great responsibility *pastors personally* have to heed and proclaim the written Word of God to God's people, cf. 1 Timothy 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 3:13-4:2 and Titus 2:1-15.
- B. Well, the men of Israel's tribe of Levi in the Old Testament were to function similarly to the Church era pastors, and though a few of them did so, the tribe as a whole failed, leading to national judgment.
- C. We view this tribe's historical highlights for applications on the role of **effective** pastoral ministry:

II. Gaining Direction By Noting God's Word With The Tribe Of Levi, 1 Chronicles 6:1-81 et al.

- A. 1 Chronicles 6:1-81 that discusses the historical chronology of the tribe of Levi speaks of those who were responsible to teach God's Word and influence all Israel for the Lord much like today's Church pastors:
 1. The Levites did not have a tribal territory as their possession, but were dispersed in 48 cities throughout Israel to where the Levites could be found every ten miles, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to Jos. 21:2.
 2. As such, they were readily available and were to have time to study and focus on Scripture so they could shepherd Israel like local pastors should do today, cf. Jeremiah 2:8 with 3:15 and 1 Tim. 4:12-16.
- B. However, the Levites failed in this calling, and 1 Chronicles 6:15 reports God carried away Judah into captivity with their Levitical high priest, Jehozadak due to such failure. The prophet, Jeremiah, who ministered in the days of Judah's fall to Captivity, detailed this ministry failure by the Levites as follows:
 1. Instead of relating to God in their own lives, the Levites and priests failed to seek the Lord, Jer. 2:8a.
 2. This failure was associated with the failure of being unable to handle the written Scriptures, 2:8b; 3:15:
 - a. The priests ministered with a lack of factual information (*dayah*), Jer. 3:15b; cf. Kittel, Biblia Hebraica, p. 708; B. D. B., Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 395.
 - b. They also lacked the knowledge of the reason behind the facts presented in Scripture (*hascayl*), Jer. 3:15c; *Ibid.*, Kittel; Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, vol. II, p. 877.
 3. Accordingly, the Levites were of no spiritual help, leaving the people of God vulnerable to spiritual ignorance that resulted in sin and spiritual defeat for the nation as a whole, Jeremiah 10:21; Ez. 34:1-3.
- C. Yet, a few great examples of the tribe of Levi revealed the blessing of effective ministry in a pastoral context, and their example reveals various applications for effective pastoral ministry in our Christian era:
 1. Samuel descended from Kohath, the ancestor of Aaron, though Samuel was not himself of Aaron's line that served as priests, 1 Chr. 6:22-30; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 597-598. Yet, **due to his godly mother's influence in 1 Samuel 1**, he grew up to minister as a Levite at the tabernacle and performed important sacrifices; he **was thus used of God to sustain Israel between the failed leaderships of the high priest Eli and Israel's first king, Saul until David could be anointed**, cf. 1 Samuel 2-16.
 2. Great musicians like Asaph, Heman and Ethan in Levi led Israel in musical worship in David's era, and **Asaph wrote psalms for the book of Psalms**, 1 Chr. 6:33, 39, 42 with Ps. 73-83; *Ibid.*, p. 598.
 3. The author of 1 Chronicles retraced the chronology of the Zadokite priesthood as this group included those **who faithfully ministered sacrifices for Israel on the days of atonement**, *Ibid.*; 1 Chr. 6:49-53.
 4. Finally, the godly prophet, Jeremiah who ministered for 40 years in the final days of Judah's apostasy, was a priest of the line of Aaron as he lived in Anathoth of the tribe of Benjamin, 1 Chr. 6:57-60 with Jeremiah 1:1; *Ibid.* In the priestly Aaronic line, Jeremiah **faithfully heeded the Lord in hard times**, being a key prophet to influence generations after him for God **by his writings**, Daniel 9:2-5, 20-27.

Lesson: (1) *The Levites were to FOCUS on LEARNING the FACTS and REASONS to the facts of God's Word and to LIVE, TEACH and MINISTER it FAITHFULLY to influence Israel for good.* (2) *Yet, they failed, and led Israel into apostasy.* (3) *However, some Levites succeeded here, and God used them to delay or hinder the development of apostasy and help the godly down through the ages.*

Application: *May we encourage pastors and teachers to study Scripture for its facts and reasons behind its facts, and faithfully apply these in life, worship and ministry to influence God's people for the good!*