

1 Chronicles Chapter 26

Verses 1-19: (compare 1 Chron. 9:17-27), for another discussion of the temple gatekeepers or guards as we would call them. They had other duties, such as checking out equipment and utensils; storing, ordering and maintaining food for the priests and sacrifices; caring for the temple furniture; mixing the incense daily burned; and accounting for gifts brought. Their “duties” (verse 12), are given in (1 Chron. 9:17-27).

1 Chronicles 26:1 "Concerning the divisions of the porters: Of the Korhites [was] Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph."

The role of the “gatekeeper” included maintaining and protecting the temple and all that was in it (see note on 9:10-32). Handling the revenue that came to the house of God whether through tithes or through plunder taken in a battle (26:26-27), and serving in a governing role (26:29). The gatekeepers ensured that the holy temple would not be defiled by anything profane or unclean. God’s holiness is supposed to be taken seriously.

The rosters here comprise three classes of Levitical duties: gatekeepers (verses 1-19; compare 9:17-27; 16:38), treasury guards (verses 20-28; compare 9:28-29; 23:5, 28-29), and important civil and judicial officials (verses 29-32).

The porters would be the keepers of the entrance to the temple. Again, David is preparing all of this ahead of time for his son, Solomon. We discussed in a previous lesson, that Solomon was probably quite young. David was helping him, so he would not make an error about the Levitical family caring for the worship in the temple. This would all be set ahead of time, and there would be no trouble about who would do the different things. All of the men above are Levites. They are in the service of the LORD, as keepers of the entrance to the temple.

1 Chronicles 26:2 "And the sons of Meshelemiah [were], Zechariah the firstborn, Jediel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth,"

And six more, who are mentioned in their order: Jediel, Zebadiah, and Jathniel, Elam, Jehohanan, and Elioenai.

1 Chronicles 26:3 "Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Elioenai the seventh."

Jehohanan (Jah bestowed), the full form of Johanan, John.

"Elioenai": Hebrew, Elyēhō-ēnai (mine eyes are towards Jehovah, compare Psalms 123), the full form of Elyō-ēnai (1 Chron. 3:24).

Meshelemiah was a Levite of the family of Kore. He, with his seven sons and brethren, were keepers of the eastern gate. Zechariah was the only exception. It was his duty to watch the northern gate.

Verses 4-8: David had left the Ark at the home of “Obed-edom” after his ill-fated attempt to bring it to Jerusalem the first time (Chapter 13). Unlike the Philistines, who suffered many difficulties because of the Ark, Obed-edom was blessed while he had the Ark, and it appears that God continued blessing him by giving him many “sons” and grandsons.

1 Chronicles 26:4 "Moreover the sons of Obed-edom [were], Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethaneel the fifth,"

The same at whose house the Ark was, before it was brought by David to Zion. His sons were porters also, as himself (1 Chron. 15:24). Mention is made of eight sons of his, according to their birth.

Shemaiah, Jehozabad, Joah, Sacar, Nethaneel, Ammiel, Issachar, Peulthai. For God blessed him; as with wealth and riches, so with a numerous offspring, and that because of his entertainment of the Ark at his house. The great increase of his family is aggravated by the Jews beyond all credit, that all in his family brought eight at a birth. The Targum here makes them eighty two in all.

1 Chronicles 26:5 "Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth: for God blessed him."

Ammiel, “a kinsman is God”, the sixth. The seventh, Issachar, “there is a reward”; the eighth, Peulthai (Hebrew, Pěullěthai), “work or recompense of Jah”.

“For God blessed him”: With a numerous posterity, and other blessings, for his respect and affection to the Ark. The increase and building up of families are owing to the divine blessing. And a great blessing it is to have many children when they are like these, eminent in the service of God.

1 Chronicles 26:6 "Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father: for they [were] mighty men of valor."

His firstborn (1 Chron. 26:4).

"Were sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father": Who were heads of families, Eminent and principal men.

"For they were mighty men of valor": Which their office sometimes required them to be. To guard the temple at night as well as day from thieves and robbers, and to hinder resolute men entering in, unfit for it. And seize on rioters, and quell tumults raised.

1 Chronicles 26:7 The sons of Shemaiah; Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren [were] strong men, Elihu, and Semachiah."

A gatekeeper in the days before the permanent temple was built in Jerusalem needed to be “able”, that is, strong. His job required him to transport an assigned part of the tabernacle (Num. Chapter 4). Later, the gatekeeper had to be able to open and close the large doors and “gates” surrounding the temple, and to help ensure that those who were not fit to enter did not come inside.

1 Chronicles 26:8 All these of the sons of Obed-edom: they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, [were] threescore and two of Obed-edom."

And grandsons.

"They and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service": Men of fortitude of mind and strength of body, as before observed.

"Were threescore and two of Obed-edom": Sixty two that sprung from him, which the Jews account for in an extravagant manner, as the effect of miraculous births.

All of those of Obed-edom were 62. Each of his sons were spoken of as being mighty men of great strength.

1 Chronicles 26:9 "And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, strong men, eighteen."

He had seven sons (1 Chron. 26:1), and therefore must have eleven brethren or kinsmen.

This eighteen, added to the 62 of Obed-edom, make the keepers of the gates, or doors, from the Korahites a total of 80.

1 Chronicles 26:10 "Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons; Simri the chief, (for [though] he was not the firstborn, yet his father made him the chief;)"

Hosah was one of the porters mentioned at the time they moved the Ark. The fact that Simri was made chief, probably indicates that the firstborn had died.

1 Chronicles 26:11 "Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah [were] thirteen."

Four sons, and nine brethren or kinsmen.

This thirteen added to the eighty Korahites, bring the count to ninety-three porters or, doorkeepers.

Verses 12-19: The gatekeepers were assigned to their posts by lot. “Parbar” is perhaps to be equated with the Parwar “court” (or suburbs”) of the Hebrew text of 2 Kings 23:11.

1 Chronicles 26:12 "Among these [were] the divisions of the porters, [even] among the chief men, [having] wards one against another, to minister in the house of the LORD."

These before named were the principal men of the porters, among which was a division or distribution of them into classes or courses, in which they served weekly in turn.

"Having wards one against another, to minister in the house of the Lord": Meaning either to watch in, as on the north against the south, and the east against the west, or "vice versa". The Jews say, the priests kept ward in three places in the house of the sanctuary. In the house of Abtines, in the house of Nitzotz, and in the house of Moked. And the Levites in twenty one places, five at the five gates of the mountain of the house, four at the four corners of it within, five at the five gates of the court, four at the four corners of it without, one at the chamber of the offering, one at the chamber of the vail, and another behind the house of atonement, the Holy of Holies. But rather the sense is, that they had wards or courses answerable to those of the priests, and the other Levites, the singers, and were distributed into twenty four classes or courses as they. Which are thus reckoned by Kimchi; at the east six, at the north four, at the south four, at Asuppim two and two, which were four, at the west four, and at Parbar two; lo, twenty four (see 1 Chron. 26:17).

These ninety-three were actually the leaders of the four thousand porters who would guard the entrances. The numbers varied from time to time.

1 Chronicles 26:13 "And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate."

To determine at which gate each should stand, who at this gate, and who at the other gate, etc.

"As well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate": Meaning, not little ones and grown persons in a family, but the smaller and poorer families, and the larger and richer ones, had their places assigned them at the several gates, as the lot directed. They did not go according to the dignity and precedence of their families, but according to lot.

The casting of lots was the same as in the other circumstances, to find out which watch they would take. It also would determine what gate they would watch. This would make it fair for everyone.

1 Chronicles 26:14 "And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward."

"Eastward": The gate assignments were based on 4 geographical points. Compare also north (26:14), south (26:15), and west (26:16).

1 Chronicles 26:15 "To Obed-edom southward; and to his sons the house of Asuppim."

Where were two gates in later times, called the gates of Huldah.

"And to his sons, the house of Asuppim": The word has the signification of gathering, hence some take it to be a council house, where the Sanhedrim or elders gathered together and sat. And others, rather a treasure house, where things of value were collected and laid up, since Obededom had the charge of gold and silver, and the vessels of the house (2 Chron. 25:24). But Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that Asuppim were two gates in the western wall, which stood most south, or nearest to Jerusalem. "and the house of Asuppim" was a large piece of building that ran between them, which was a treasury, or various rooms for treasuring or laying up something for the use of the temple".

1 Chronicles 26:16 "To Shuppim and Hosah [the lot came forth] westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up, ward against ward."

Gate Shallecheth": A gate assumed to be on the west side, but other details are unknown.

Each family was responsible for the gate they received by lot. Within the family, they took turns watching their gate.

1 Chronicles 26:17 "Eastward [were] six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward Asuppim two [and] two."

The eastern gate, being the way of entrance into the temple, required more porters.

"Northward four a day": In the daytime, or every day, where was the gate Teri or Tedi (1 Chron. 26:14).

"Southward four a day: At the two gates of Huldah (1 Chron. 26:15).

"And toward Asuppim two and two": Which were two gates, two at each gate (1 Chron. 26:15).

1 Chronicles 26:18 "At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, [and] two at Parbar."

"Parbar": Probably a courtyard, extending westward. (Verses 17-18), indicate a total of 24 guards posted at all points of entrance and exit.

We see that at each gate, there were no fewer than 2 men at any given time. There were 6 men all the time on the eastern side. There were 4 on the north and 4 on the south. There seemed to be 2 on 2 gates toward Asuppim. The 4 at the causeway and 2 at Parbar bring the total guards on duty at any one time to 24.

1 Chronicles 26:19 "These [are] the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari."

For among those Levites which descended from Kore, a grandson of Kohath, and which sprung from Merari, a brother of Kohath, the porters only wore (see 1 Chron. 26:1).

The porters were Levites, also. They were in the service of the LORD the same as the priests. They were just serving in a different area. These porters were descended from Merari and Kore.

Verses 20-32: This section list miscellaneous administrative posts handled by the Levites, by those in Jerusalem (26:20-28), and by those outside (26:29-32).

1 Chronicles 26:20 "And of the Levites, Ahijah [was] over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things."

"Treasures": The Levites watched over the store of valuables given to the Lord. This is a general reference to all the precious things committed to their trust, including contributions from David and the people, as well as war spoils given by triumphant soldiers (verses 26-27).

The Gershonites were charged with the care of the offerings and the implements of worship (verses 21-22; compare 9:28-29; 23:28-29). The Amramites had charge of the consecrated gifts (verses 27-28).

This has jumped from porters to treasurers of the house of God. Again, they were Levites. Ahijah had the special ministry of caring for the treasury of the temple.

1 Chronicles 26:21 "[As concerning] the sons of Laadan; the sons of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, [even] of Laadan the Gershonite, [were] Jehieli."

The same with Libni (see 1 Chron. 23:7).

"The sons of the Gershonite Laadan": So called, to distinguish him from another Laadan, as Kimchi thinks.

"Chief fathers, even of Laadan the Gershonite": That sprung from him: were Jehieli; and his sons next mentioned.

1 Chronicles 26:22 "The sons of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel his brother, [which were] over the treasures of the house of the LORD."

Both sons of Jehieli: which were:

"Over the treasures of the house of the Lord": That part of the trust which before was committed to Ahijah, which concerned provisions for sacred uses, before observed.

Just as in the other ministerial activities, they worked their shift and turned the ministry over to the next person in charge, so did the treasurers. These mentioned above, who were in charge of the treasures, were Gershonites. They are descended through Laadan. Libni is the same as Laadan.

1 Chronicles 26:23 "Of the Amramites, [and] the Izharites, the Hebronites, [and] the Uzzielites:"

Who sprang from the four sons of Kohath, Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel (Exodus 6:18), with respect to the concerns they severally had in the trust of the treasures, the account follows, all but the Uzzielites, who are not after mentioned.

1 Chronicles 26:24 "And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, [was] ruler of the treasures."

This is the first time that any of the posterity of Moses are taken notice of, as being in any office of honor, authority, and trust. By the Targum he is said to be Jonathan, spoken of in (Judges 18:30), but very wrongly. This man, according to Jarchi and Kimchi, had all the treasures and treasurers under him.

This family goes back to Amram through Moses. It appears from this, that Moses' descendants were to be the ruler over the treasures, and the others mentioned were to do the actual work of keeping track of it. The Izharites were the family of Izhar, brother of Amram. The Hebronites were the family of Hebron, brother of Amram.

1 Chronicles 26:25 "And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son."

His kinsmen that descended from Eliezer, the brother of Gershom, the ancestor of Shebuel. Whose descent from him in succession were Rehabiah, Jeshaiiah, Joram, Zichri, and Shelomith.

1 Chronicles 26:26 "Which Shelomith and his brethren [were] over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated."

The last mentioned in the lineage from Eliezer, the younger son of Moses.

"And his brethren": Or kinsmen.

"Were over all the treasures of the dedicated things": Which had been devoted for the service of God, and of the temple particularly.

"Which David the king": Out of the spoils he took in war (see 2 Sam. 8:11).

"And the chief fathers": Princes of tribes, and heads of families.

"The captains over thousands and hundreds": In the several tribes of the kingdom, and were concerned in the administration of justice to the people.

"And the captains of the host, had dedicated": Of the army, out of the spoils in victory that came to their share (see Num. 31:48), as follows in the next scripture.

This seems to be too many people to be over the treasures, until we remember back that David had dedicated billions of dollars' worth of gold and silver, and so much bronze it was too much to weigh. Thinking in that line, we can see the need for all of these men to work with those things dedicated to the house of the LORD. Eliezer here, is speaking of the brother of Gershom. Their father is Moses. The workers in the treasures as captains are descended from Moses.

1 Chronicles 26:27 "Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the LORD."

The "spoils won in battles" belonged to the conquering army. These army men gave a portion of their plunder to express their gratitude to God and to help maintain the temple. (See Genesis 14:17-20 for a time when Abram did something similar).

This is explaining where this great wealth came from. Most of it came from spoils of war.

1 Chronicles 26:28 "And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated; [and] whosoever had dedicated [any thing, it was] under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren."

Or prophet, won in battle with the Philistines.

"And Saul the son of Kish": In his wars with the Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, and Philistines.

"And Abner the son of Ner": The general of his army, who as such had his share in the spoils.

"And Joab the son of Zeruiah": The general of David's army, who fought with the Ammonites, Syrians, and others; all of whom;

"Had dedicated": More or less towards the building of the temple, and the support of it, it being known by them all that God would have a place to put his name in:

"And whosoever had dedicated anything, it was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren": This man had a great trust committed to him, with his brethren. Some, before mentioned, are said to be over the treasures, some over one part, and some over another; but this man was over all of them, he had the superintendence of everything.

It appears that Samuel, Saul, Abner, and Joab had all added to the dedicated things. God had been greatly with Israel in battle during the time of Saul, as well as in the time of David. Much wealth was accumulated and dedicated to the house of the LORD from the battles they were in. Abner was Saul's uncle, but he was best known for being a mighty warrior. At one time, he was commander-in-chief of Saul's army. Joab led David's army.

Verses 29-32: "Officers and judges": There were 6,000 magistrates exercising judicial functions throughout the Land.

1 Chronicles 26:29 "Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons [were] for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges."

Some of the gatekeepers had duties "outside Jerusalem," where they seemingly acted in a governing role. (Deuteronomy 17:8-13), also describes the priests and Levites in a judicial role (2 Chron. 19:4-11).

The Levites also played an important role in secular affairs (compare 2 Chron. 19:4-11). All of Israel's life was to be characterized by holy standards!

The family of Izhar was in service to the LORD as judges and officers. They were scribes, as well.

1 Chronicles 26:30 "[And] of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valor, a thousand and seven hundred, [were] officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward in all the business of the LORD, and in the service of the king."

And supposing the Izharites in the preceding verse to be 1600, these, with those on the other side Jordan, 2700 (1 Chron. 26:32), make up just the 6000 officers and judges (1 Chron. 23:4), these;

"Were officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward": In those parts of the land which were on this side of Jordan, to the west of it, yet nearer to it than those meant by Israel in the preceding verse; it may respect those that dwelt more remote from Jordan, though on this side also, towards the Mediterranean Sea:

"In all business of the Lord, and in the service of the king": In things divine and civil, what appertained to the worship of God, and the support of civil government, and to take care that all the laws were observed, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, and that both the Lord was feared, and the king honored, and both had what was due unto them.

These were of the family of Hebron. These were like keepers of the law in civil matters.

1 Chronicles 26:31 "Among the Hebronites [was] Jerijah the chief, [even] among the Hebronites, according to the generations of his fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead."

"Fortieth year": The last year of David's reign (ca. 971. B.C.).

Jerijah was the same as Jeriah. This is the end of David's reign which lasted 40 years. They were found at Jazer of Gilead at the end of David's reign. It appears, that they were part of the men that were classified as David's mighty men.

1 Chronicles 26:32 "And his brethren, men of valor, [were] two thousand and seven hundred chief fathers, whom king David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king."

These gatekeepers took charge both of “every matter pertaining to God” as well as “the affairs of the king”. Interestingly, this verse does not indicate any sort of tension between serving God and the king at the same time (Matt. 22:15-22; Rom. 13:1-7).

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were on the eastern side of the Jordan. All of the matters of the land were pertaining to God. The civil law and the moral law were both part of the Levitical law. It appears, they watched over these tribes across the Jordan to make sure they were keeping God's law. They were actually in service to the LORD, but served David, as well.

1 Chronicles Chapter 26

1. Who were the porters?
2. Why was David making great preparation for the temple?
3. Meshelemiah was a Levite of the family of _____.
4. They were keepers of the _____ gate.
5. Zechariah was keeper of the _____ gate.
6. How many were there of Obed-edom?
7. How many men of Meshelemiah were there?
8. Hosah was of the children of _____.
9. What special thing had Hosah done?
10. How many porters, or doorkeepers, who were leaders, were there?
11. The casting of lots was for what?
12. How many men were on duty at the eastern gate at any time?
13. How many total guards were there at one time?

14. Verse 20 says, that _____ was over the treasures of the house of God.
15. Who were some of the other men whose ministry was the treasures?
16. Who was ruler over the treasures?
17. Who was he descended from?
18. Why are all of these people over the dedicated things not too many men?
19. Where had the treasures come from?
20. Who had gathered these dedicated things?
21. Who was Abner?
22. _____ led David's army.
23. Who were the judges and officers?
24. In verse 30, the men were keepers of the law in _____ matters.
25. How long did David's reign last?
26. Who were made rulers of the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh?
27. What were they watching over them for?