

1Chronicles 24:1 ¶ Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

1Chronicles 24:2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office.

This chapter opens with a focus on the divisions or courses of the priesthood as descended from the sons of Aaron. It is noted that Nadab and Abihu, the two sons that were killed for offering strange fire at the tabernacle, had no children. Eleazar and Ithamar were the two sons that took the place of their brothers in serving with their father Aaron

1Chronicles 24:3 And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service.

1Chronicles 24:4 And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; 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.

1Chronicles 24:5 Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another; for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors of *the house* of God, were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar.

David proceeded to organize the priests into 24 divisions. The high priests representing the two families were Zadok, representing Eleazar, and Ahimelech, representing Ithamar. Eleazar's family was larger and produced twice as many leaders as the family of Ithamar—16 to 8 respectively. Assignments were determined by lot.

1Chronicles 24:6 And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe, *one* of the Levites, wrote them 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: one principal household being taken for Eleazar, and *one* taken for Ithamar.

Shemaiah, son of Nethaneel the scribe, a Levite, recorded the list by lot in the witness of the king, recognized leaders, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar and the recognized leaders among the priests and Levites. Lots were cast by alternating between the two families, leaving Eleazar's family with the last eight.

The IVP Commentary offers this insight on the position of scribe: "Scribes in the ancient world were the accountants, the historians, the journalists, the personal secretaries, the tutors and the librarians of their day. Much of a scribe's training involved language and writing, and his apprenticeship would give him additional specialized skills."

The following verses identify the priests by lot.

1Chronicles 24:7 Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to

Jedaiah,

1Chronicles 24:8 The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,

1Chronicles 24:9 The fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin,

1Chronicles 24:10 The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah,

1Chronicles 24:11 The ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah,

1Chronicles 24:12 The eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim,

1Chronicles 24:13 The thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,

1Chronicles 24:14 The fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer,

1Chronicles 24:15 The seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Apses,

1Chronicles 24:16 The nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel,

1Chronicles 24:17 The one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to

Gamul,

1Chronicles 24:18 The three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah.

1Chronicles 24:19 These *were* the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

This verse summarizes that the preceding list identified the order in which these sons of Aaron would serve in the house of the LORD as commanded by the LORD God of Israel.

The NIV Commentary provides interesting information concerning these divisions: "With the passage of time, some of the Davidic courses died out or had to be consolidated with others, and new ones were formed to take their places. At the first return from exile in 537 B.C., only four courses were registered...By 520 twenty-two were again operative (Ne 12:1-7), but only half of them were the courses as originally organized by David.

Jehoiarib (v. 7), who received the first assignment, headed the course that later produced the Maccabees (1Macc 2:1; 14:29). The seventh course, of Hakkoz (v. 10), is documented down into the days of the Maccabees (1Macc 8:17). The eighth, Abijah, was the one under which Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, performed his priestly ministry (Lk 1:5)."

The rest of the Levites were also divided into 24 divisions to serve on a rotating basis at the house of the LORD.

1Chronicles 24:20 ¶ And the rest of the sons of Levi *were these*: Of the sons of Amram; Shubael: of the sons of Shubael; Jehdeiah.

1Chronicles 24:21 Concerning Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, the first *was* Isshiah.

1Chronicles 24:22 Of the Izharites; Shelomoth: of the sons of Shelomoth; Jahath.

1Chronicles 24:23 And the sons of Hebron; Jeriah *the first*, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth.

1Chronicles 24:24 Of the sons of Uzziel; Michah: of the sons of Michah; Shamir.

1Chronicles 24:25 The brother of Michah *was* Isshiah: of the sons of Isshiah; Zechariah.

1Chronicles 24:26 The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi: the sons of Jaaziah; Beno.

1Chronicles 24:27 The sons of Merari by Jaaziah; Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri.

1Chronicles 24:28 Of Mahli *came* Eleazar, who had no sons.

1Chronicles 24:29 Concerning Kish: the son of Kish *was* Jerahmeel.

1Chronicles 24:30 The sons also of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These *were* the sons of the Levites after the house of their fathers.

1Chronicles 24:31 These likewise cast lots over against their brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites, even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.

The lots were cast for these divisions to determine who would serve with the corresponding group of priests by lot. This was also witnessed by King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the recognized leaders of the priests and Levites.

I think we should remember that David's actions were guided by the pattern or model that had been revealed to him by the Spirit.

1 Chronicles 28:11–13 “Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites....”