

1Chronicles 5:1 ¶ Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he *was* the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.

1Chronicles 5:2 For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him *came* the chief ruler; but the birthright *was* Joseph's)

This chapter opens with a focus on the sons of Reuben. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn son, the son who should have inherited the birthright, the double portion of inheritance from his father. He forfeited that right when he sinned against his father by sleeping with his father's concubine, Bilhah, the mother of Dan and Naphtali.

Genesis 35:22 & 25 "And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine....the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali...."

It is noted that Joseph inherited Reuben's birthright regarding a double portion of the inheritance in the land, but Judah inherited the right of rule in that the royal lineage of David would be of his descendants, culminating in the Messiah—King Jesus.

1Chronicles 5:3 The sons, *I say*, of Reuben the firstborn of Israel *were*, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

1Chronicles 5:4 The sons of Joel; Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son,

1Chronicles 5:5 Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son,

1Chronicles 5:6 Beerah his son, whom Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria carried away *captive*: he *was* prince of the Reubenites.

1Chronicles 5:7 And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned, *were* the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah,

1Chronicles 5:8 And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo and Baalmeon:

1Chronicles 5:9 And eastward he inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates: because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead.

1Chronicles 5:10 And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the east *land* of Gilead.

This section records descendants of Reuben. It is also noted that during Saul's reign, the men of Reuben fought against the Hagarites (descendants of Ishmael) and defeated them, taking possession of their territory east of Gilead.

1Chronicles 5:11 And the children of Gad dwelt over against them, in the land of Bashan unto Salchah:

1Chronicles 5:12 Joel the chief, and Shapham the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan.

1Chronicles 5:13 And their brethren of the house of their fathers *were*, Michael,

and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven.
1Chronicles 5:14 These *are* the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz;

1Chronicles 5:15 Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers.

1Chronicles 5:16 And they dwelt in Gilead in Bashan, and in her towns, and in all the suburbs of Sharon, upon their borders.

1Chronicles 5:17 All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

The children of Gad dwelt next to the tribe of Reuben in the land of Bashan.

It is noted that these genealogies were recorded during the reigns of Jotham in Judah and Jeroboam in Israel.

1Chronicles 5:18 ¶ The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, *were* four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.

1Chronicles 5:19 And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab.

1Chronicles 5:20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that *were* with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them; because they put their trust in him.

1Chronicles 5:21 And they took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men an hundred thousand.

1Chronicles 5:22 For there fell down many slain, because the war *was* of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.

It is noted that the sons of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, all who possessed land east of Jordan, were strong and skilled warriors. Their troops numbered 44,760. When they went to war against the Hagarites, they were victorious because they called out for God's help in faith. Their spoils of war were great. They retained the land they conquered until the Babylonian captivity.

Gill provides an interesting insight on camels: "The Arabians, as Diodorus Siculus reports, brought up camels, for almost all the uses of life; as for the sake of their milk and flesh to feed upon, as well as for carrying burdens in common; and which in time of war they loaded with provisions for the army, and fought upon, one of them carrying two archers with their backs to each other, the one to meet the enemy in front, the other to annoy those that pursued them...."

1Chronicles 5:23 And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land: they increased from Bashan unto Baalhermon and Senir, and unto mount Hermon.

1Chronicles 5:24 And these *were* the heads of the house of their fathers, even Ephraim, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and

Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, famous men, *and* heads of the house of their fathers.

1Chronicles 5:25 And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them.

1Chronicles 5:26 And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

This section focuses on the descendants of the half tribe of Manasseh that possessed land from Bashan to Mount Hermon. They are remembered for following after the false gods of the people they had conquered. Tiglathpilneser, king of Assyria, took them into captivity along with the tribes of Reuben and Gad; and they were still captive at the time of this writing (after the Babylonian captivity). Many believe that Ezra was the scribe of record.

The IVP Commentary adds this note: "In this campaign the northern kingdom of Israel was reduced to only Samaria and its surroundings, which survived independently for another twelve years."