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The Gershonites
First Chronicles 23: 7-11

David started making the arrangements for Temple services several years before the end of his life

Gershon was the firstborn of **Levi's** three sons **(Exodus 6:16; Numbers 3:17; First Chronicles 6:1, 16** and **23:6)**. **The Levites** fulfilled the priestly roles in **Isra'el** and bore the responsibility of caring for **the Tabernacle**. **The Gershonites**, **Kohathites** and **Merarites** each had specific roles within **the Levitical** culture. **The Gershonites** were charged with the carrying of the curtains, coverings, screens, hangings, cords and instruments of **the Tabernacle** (see the commentary on **Exodus, to see link click Au – The Clan of Gershon**) on the journeys in the wilderness, under the supervision of Ithamar the son of Aaron. **The Gershonites** were given two wagons with four oxen-half to help them transport **their** items **(Numbers 7:7)**.

Among **the Gershonites** who achieved distinction in later biblical times was the family of Asaph, the singers from the time of **David** to the days of the Second Temple **(First Chronicles 6:31-47, 9:15, 25:1-7; Second Chronicles 25:15; Ezra 2:41; Nehemiah 11:17, 12:35).** Other **Gershonites** named, are the heads of the fathers' houses in the days of **David** in connection with the dividing of **the Levites** into divisions **(First Chronicles 23:7-11)**; the superintendents of the treasuries of **the house of the LORD** of the same time **(First Chronicles 26:21-22, 29:8)**; and finally, **Gershonites** are mentioned among those who cleansed **the Temple** in the days of Hezekiah **(Second Chronicles 29:12-13)**.

As **Levites**, **the Gershonites**, **Kohathites**, and **Merarites** did not receive a specific territory in **the Promised Land**. Rather, **they** were given **cities** and pasturelands from among the territories of the other tribes by the command of **ADONAI**. **The Gershonites** received thirteen cities from **Issachar**, **Asher**, **Naphtali**, and **Manasseh**. The distribution of **the cities** was decided by the drawing of lots **(Joshua 21:1–8)**, and six of **the Levitical cities** were designated as **cities of refuge**.

The list of **the Gershonites** began with **the sons of Gershon**, **Libni,** also known as **Ladan (First Chronicles 23:7** and **26:21),** and **Shim'i (Exodus 6:17; Numbers 3:18; First Chronicles 6:17** and **20).** Therefore, there were two groups, **the descendants of Ladan** and **the descendants of Shim'i,** enumerated in the census taken in the wilderness of Sinai **(Numbers 3:21)** and in the plains of Mo'ab **(Numbers 26:57)**.

The names that follow were not the immediate children of **Gershon**, but **men** in **David's** day who came from these two branches and became leaders of **the Gershonites**. **The descendants of Ladan** were **Jehiel, Zetham and Joel – three in all. And the sons of Shim'i** (not the same **Shim'i** as below) were **Shelomoth, Haziel and Haran – three in all. These were the leaders of the families of Ladan.** The line of **Ladan**, then, produced a total of six **leaders. Jehiel, Zetham and Joel** were traced directly to **Ladan**, and **Shelomoth**, **Haziel** and **Haran** were traced through **a descendant of Ladan**, **Shim'i**.

Shim'i, son of Gershon, produced four **descendants** who became Levitical **leaders, Jahath, Ziza, (Jeush and Beriah). But** because **(Jeush and Beriah) did not have many sons they were counted as one family with one** ministry **assignment.** The line of **Shim'i**, then, produced a total of four **leaders**. **Thus, David secured ten Levitical divisions organized out of the clan of Gershon, six from Ladan and four from Shim'i.**