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Warriors Join David
First Chronicles 12: 23-40

DIG: What do you think the Chronicler's point was in recounting the numbers and the nature of those joining David at Hebron, including two priests named? Why was the number of Benjamites the smallest? What do you make of such a large number of warriors listed? Why were all the tribes listed in order? Why was the religious element of the celebration was intentionally and consciously omitted from the scene?

REFLECT: What does the imagery of the scene here depicted say about the joy of those who attended this banquet? When have you had such joy? As a believer anticipating the final banquet crowning your King (see the commentary on **Revelation, to see link click Fg – Blessed Are Those who are Invited to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb**)**, what will you do with the limitless opportunity for enjoying your King?**

1010 BC

These are the numbers of the men armed for battle who came to David at Hebron to turn Sha'ul's kingdom over to him, as the LORD had said (First Chronicles 12:23). The tribes were named in order to give a picture of unity and single-mindedness of **Isra'el** making **David their king**. This was not done by strife or war, but peaceably and joyfully.

From the tribe of Y'hudah, carrying shield and spear – 6,800 armed for battle (First Chronicles 12:24).

From the tribe of Simeon, warriors ready for battle – 7,100 (First Chronicles 12:25).

From the tribe of Levi – 4,600 including Jehoiada, leader of the family of Aaron, with 3,700 men, and Zadok, a brave young warrior-priest, with 22 officers from his family (First Chronicles 12:26-28).

From the tribe of Benjamin, Sha'ul's tribe – 3,000, most of whom had remained loyal to Sha'ul's house until then (First Chronicles 12:29). The armed troops from Benjamin were the smallest group because **they** had supported **Sha'ul** to the bitter end. This demonstrates that the monarchy was still a tribal society, sometimes to a fault.

From the tribe of Ephraim, brave warriors, famous in their own clans – 20,800 (First Chronicles 12:30).

From half the tribe of Manasseh, designated by name to come and make David king – 18,000 (First Chronicles 12:31).

From the tribe of Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Isra'el should do – 200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command (First Chronicles 12:32). This is the only tribe where the number of **soldiers** is not listed, only **their chiefs**.

From the northern **tribe of Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided loyalty – 50,000 (First Chronicles 12:33). They** are the most distinguished **tribe** on the list, with the most **soldiers**.

From the tribe of Naphtali – 1,000 officers, together with 37,000 men carrying shields and spears (First Chronicles 12:34).

From the tribe of Dan, ready for battle – 28,600 (First Chronicles 12:35).

From the tribe of Asher, experienced soldiers prepared for battle – 40,000 (First Chronicles 12:36).

And from east of the Jordan, from the tribes of Rueben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh, armed with every type of weapon – 120,000 (First Chronicles 12:37). Counting **the Levites**, thirteen **tribes** are named here. Of course, there were never thirteen **tribes** at any one time in **Isra'el**. **Levi** early ceased to function as a **tribe**, but rather scattered among the others. Sometimes **the tribe of Levi** is omitted from the tribal lists, and the number twelve is retained by dividing **Joseph** into **Ephraim** and **Manasseh**. When **Levi** is included, however, **Joseph** is represented as one. The fact that thirteen tribes are named here gives us the picture of unity and single-mindedness when **Isra'el** made **David king**.[216]



All these were fighting men, about **400,000**, **volunteered to serve in the ranks. They came to Hebron fully determined to make David king over all Isra'el. All the rest of the Israelites were also of one mind to make David king. The men spent three days there with David, eating and drinking, for their families had supplied provisions for them. Also, their neighbors from as far away as Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali came bringing food on donkeys, camels, mules and oxen. There were plentiful supplies of flour, fig cakes, raisin cakes, wine, olive oil, cattle and sheep, for there was joy in Isra'el (First Chronicles 12:38-40).**

Another aspect of the celebration was its secular character. There is no doubt that the enthronement itself was done as a religious rite – **the anointing (Second Samuel 5:3; First Chronicles 11:3)**. Yes, it had happened **as the LORD had said (First Chronicles 12:23).** However, the festivities themselves were devoid of any religious element: no sacrifices, no praise of thanksgiving, no sermons and no prayers. **The priests** and **Levites**, although noted, did not serve any religious function. This aspect of the enthronement is even more conspicuous in comparison with other ceremonies so abundant in **Chronicles**. In Hebron, according to the Chronicler's view there was no sanctuary; hence, no ritual could have taken place there. That is why the religious element is intentionally and consciously omitted from the picture. But as soon as **David** captured Tziyon (see **Co – David Conquers Yerushalayim**), **his** first act was to transfer the Ark back to the Holy City (see **Cr – The Ark Brought to Yerushalayim**). The omission of the religious context **at Hebron** would soon be compensated for with the transfer of the Ark, which was a direct continuation of the enthronement. There, at Yerushalayim, all the religious aspects would be clearly seen.[217]

There is an unbreakable link between experiencing **God's** blessing and the kind of purposefulness that we see in **David's** followers. With the coming of **Messiah** and **His** indwelling in believers **(Yochanan 14:23)**, we now have access to a more profound knowledge of **ADONAI** than even the righteous of the TaNaKh enjoyed in **David's** day. Only by developing the habit of seeing **His** hand in our lives is it possible to understand how profound is **His** desire and capacity to love and bless us – both in material and other ways. And it is only when we truly know **YHVH** as **the One** who cares for *me* that we shall ever achieve a real devotion to the doing of **His** will.[218]