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The Appointment of Military, Tribal Leaders, Stewards and Counselors
First Chronicles 27:1-34

The appointment of military, tribal leaders, stewards and counselors DIG: What monthly duties are parceled out here? What advantage might this rotation of commanders have for David? For the privates and corporals? Who among the commanders was already known for his bravery? For foolhardy pursuit of personal enemies? For killing 300 enemy with a spear in one battle? Who appears by lineage to be a clergy-under-arms? Who also is listed among the roll call of David's mighty warriors? What two tribes, normally included in the roll call of "all Isra'el" are absent here? How many are present? What can you infer from verses 23-24 about the kind of work these officers tried to do? What new insight into David's sin in taking a census is provided here? Why would this man after God's own heart need a professional friend or personal spiritual advisor (see **First Kings 2 for the sorry end to this group**)**?**

REFLECT: In listing the physically powerful jobs last (Chapter 27) and the artistic and liturgical jobs first (Chapters 24-26), what does that suggest to young Israelites who need heroes and role models? How satisfied are you with today's role models for children? For teenagers? For young adults? How does your messianic synagogue or church "guard the faith?" What qualities common to soldiers does your place of worship educational system try to develop? Like David's ill-fated census, what projects have you unwisely started and wisely terminated? The civil officials began their careers entrusted with royal resources. Where did you begin your career? Where has it led you? Anything like these men? Who is your "friend," counselor or protector?

David started making the appointments of the military and civil authorities
several years before the end of his life

Having outlined **David's** religious organization in **Chapters 23-26**, **the Chronicler** added **David's** military and civil organization. **Isra'el** was ascending to the climax of **her** military and political power, and **her** splendor would be a far cry from the impoverished condition of **the Israelites** during **Ezra's** day **(Haggai 2:16-17; Zechariah 14:10)**. But even though it would have little organizational relevance for the returned exiles (see the commentary on **Ezra-Nehemiah, to see link click Ag – The First Return in 538 BC**), and even less for us today, this rehearsal of past glories must have thrilled **Ezra's** discouraged people with the truth that tangible results are included in **God's** decree for **His** faithful servants.[533]

For **Solomon** to be able to build **the Temple**, **David** knew that **Isra'el** had to remain a strong nation and, at the same time, at peace with **her** neighbors. And because Solomon wasn't a military genius like him, David felt it was necessary to organize the army, the tribal leaders, the officials and counselors who served the king personally.[534]

The army divisions: This is the list of the Israelites – heads of families, commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and their officers, who served the king in all that concerned the army divisions that were on duty month by month throughout the year. Each division consisted of 24,000 men (First Chronicles 27:1). This was not an excessively large standing army, but if an emergency arose, the entire army could be called up. Each monthly military division was under the leadership of one of **David's mighty men** (see **Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**).



In charge of the first division, for the first month, was Jashobeam son of Zabdiel. There were 24,000 men in his division. He was a descendant of Perez, the fourth son of **Judah** and founder of its major clan, **and chief of all the army officers for the first month (First Chronicles 27:2-3).**

In charge of the division for the second month was Dodai the Ahohite, who was the father of Eleazar, the second of **the Three** (see **Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**). **Mikloth was the leader of his division,** or, as we might say, **his** executive officer**. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:4).**

The third army commander, for the third month, was Benaiah son of Jehoiada the priest. He was chief and there were 24,000 men in his division. This was the Benaiah who was a mighty warrior among the Thirty and was over the Thirty (see **Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**)**. His son Ammizabad was in charge of his division.** This last clause would indicate that **Benaiah's** position was merely honorary and it was really **his son**, **Ammizabad**, who was really in charge of **the division (First Chronicles 27:5-6).**

The fourth, for the fourth month, was Asahel the brother of Joab (see **Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**)**. His son Zebadiah was his successor** due to **his** untimely death at the hands of Abner (see **Cg – War Between the Houses of David and Sha'ul**)**. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:7).**

The fifth, for the fifth month, was the commander Shamhuth the Izrahite. This defining adjective really means *of Zerah,* the other leading clan of Judah. His name appears among **the Thirty** (see **Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**). **There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:8).**

The remaining seven generals, from **the sixth** to **the twelfth month**, were selected from among the next nine members of **the Thirty** (see **Ej – David's Mighty Warriors**). **The sixth, for the sixth month, was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:9).**

The seventh, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite, an Ephraimite. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:10).

The eighth, for the eighth month, was Sibbekai the Hushathite, a Zerahite. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:11).

The ninth, for the ninth month, was Abiezer the Anathothite, a Benjamite. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:12).

The tenth, for the tenth month, was Maharai the Netophathite, a Zerahite. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:13).

The eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah the Pirathonite, an Ephramite. There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:14).

The twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netophathite, from the family of Othniel, the first of the Hebrew Judges **(Judges 1:13** and **3:9-11). There were 24,000 men in his division (First Chronicles 27:15).**

Joab was the commander of the royal army (First Chronicles 27:34).

Leaders of the tribes of Isra'el: Each of the tribes had a leader, and they were broken down into smaller units (tens, fifties, hundreds and thousands) in **Exodus 18:17-23**. For some reason the tribes of Gad and Asher are not mentioned in this list, but to reach the number twelve, **Levi** is included along with **the tribes of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh)**. **The king** could summon twelve men and through them communicate with the whole nation.[535]

Over the Reubenites: Eliezer son of Zikri.

Over the Simeonites: Shephatiah son of Maakah.

Over Levi: Hashabiah son of Kemuel; over Aaron: Zadok. While **the tribes of Isra'el** had one outstanding person chosen to be the leader, two men were appointed for **Levi**; the high priest **Zadok** to represent the descendants of **Aaron**, or the priestly branch, and **Hashabiah** for the rest.

Over Judah: Elihu, called **Eliab** in **First Samuel 16:6, David's** oldest **brother.**

Over Issachar: Omri son of Michael.

Over Zebulun: Ishmaiah son of Obadiah.

Over Naphtali: Jerimoth son of Azriel.

Over the half-tribe of Ephraimites: Hoshea son of Azaziah.

Over the half tribe of Manasseh: Joel son of Pedaiah; over the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead: Iddo son of Zechariah. Manasseh also had two officers,

corresponding to its two regional halves, west and east of the Jordan.

Over Benjamin: Jaasiel son of Abner, commanded the troops of his nephew King Sha'ul had been the power behind Sha'ul's son Ish-bosheth.

Over Dan: Azarel son of Jeroham. These were the leaders of the tribes of Isra'el (First Chronicles 27:16-22).

David did not take the number of the men twenty years or less, because the LORD had promised to make Isra'el as numerous as the stars in the sky. Joab son of Zeruiah began to count the men but did not finish. God's wrath came on Isra'el on account of this numbering (see **Ek – David Counts the Fighting Men**)**, and the number was not entered in the book of the annals of King David (First Chronicles 27:23-24).**

Stewards of the King's private property: During **Sha'ul's** reign there was some kind of tax structure **(First Samuel 17:25)**, but this is not mentioned in the records of David's reign. Under **Solomon**, the taxes became intolerable **(First Kings 4:7** and **26-28, 12:1-24)**. David owned royal farms, orchards, vineyards, flocks, and herds, and from these he met the needs of the palace personnel. **David** had storehouses for **his** produce, and since **his** tastes weren't as expensive as **Solomon's**, what **David** received from **the LORD** went much further.[536]

Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the royal storehouses. Jonathan son of Uzziah was in charge of the storehouses in the outlying districts, in the towns, the villages and the watchtowers (First Chronicles 27:25).

Ezri son of Kelub was in charge of the workers who farmed the land (First Chronicles 27:26).

Shim'i the Ramathite was in charge of the vineyards. Zabdi the Shiphmite was in charge of the produce of the vineyards for the wine vats (First Chronicles 27:27).

Ba'al-Hanan the Gederite was in charge of the olive and sycamore-fig trees in the western foothills. Joash was in charge of the supplies of olive oil (First Chronicles 27:28).

Shitrai the Sharonite was in charge of the herds grazing in Sharon.

Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the herds in the valleys (First Chronicles 27:29).

Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels. Jehdeiah the Meronomthite was in charge of the donkeys (First Chronicles 27:30).

Jaziz the Hagrite was in charge of the flocks. All these were the officials in charge of King David's property (First Chronicles 27:31).

The King's Counselors: All leaders need an inner circle of counselors who will advise them, who will force them to examine their own decisions and motives, and help them seek the mind of **ADONAI**. **Jonathan, David's uncle, was** described as **a counselor, a man of insight and a scribe.** It is uncertain whether **he** should be identified with **the son of Shimeah, David's brother** who **killed a huge man (Second Samuel 21:21; First Chronicles 20:7)**, or with some other **Jonathan** of **David's** family, such as the brother of **Jonadab**, who is described as **a very wise man (Second Samuel 13:3)**.[537] **Jehiel son of Hakmoni took care of the king's sons** in some fashion **(First Chronicles 27:32).**

Ahithophel used to be **his father's** trusted **counselor** and friend**.** But **he** sided with **Absalom** in the rebellion and hung **himself** when **Absalom** rejected **his** counsel because **he** knew **he** was doomed (see **Dx – Ahithophel Commits Suicide**). **Jehoiada succeeded Ahithophel. Jehoiada** was **the son of Benaiah, David's** trusted head of the royal bodyguard **[Abimelek] son of Abiathar** and **Zadok's** peer **(First Chronicles 18:16, 24:3 and 6),** was also a trusted counselor**. Hushai the Arkite was** the man whose counsel was accepted by Absalom (see **Du – The Advice of Ahithophel and Hushai**), which led to the defeat of the rebel army (see **Dz – Joab Kills Absalom**)**,** so **he** continued to be **the king's confidant (First Chronicles 27:33). Joab** was excluded from this inner circle because **David** didn't trust **him** and advised **Solomon** what to do about it **(First Kings 2:5-6)**.