

1 Chronicles

Chapter 27

Military Divisions

This is the number of the people of Israel, the heads of fathers' houses, the commanders of thousands and hundreds, and their officers who served the king in all matters concerning the divisions that came and went, month after month throughout the year, each division numbering 24,000: 2 Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel was in charge of the first division in the first month; in his division were 24,000. 3 He was a descendant of Perez and was chief of all the commanders. He served for the first month. 4 Dodai the Ahohite[a] was in charge of the division of the second month; in his division were 24,000. 5 The third commander, for the third month, was Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the chief priest; in his division were 24,000. 6 This is the Benaiah who was a mighty man of the thirty and in command of the thirty; Ammizabad his son was in charge of his division. [b] 7 Asahel the brother of Joab was fourth, for the fourth month, and his son Zebadiah after him; in his division were 24,000. 8 The fifth commander, for the fifth month, was Shamhuth the Izrahite; in his division were 24,000. 9 Sixth, for the sixth month, was Ira, the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; in his division were 24,000. 10 Seventh, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite, of the sons of Ephraim; in his division were 24,000. 11 Eighth, for the eighth month, was Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zerahites; in his division were 24,000. 12 Ninth, for the ninth month, was Abiezer of Anathoth, a Benjaminite; in his division were 24,000. 13 Tenth, for the tenth month, was Maharai of Netophah, of the Zerahites; in his division were 24,000. 14 Eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah of Pirathon, of the sons of Ephraim; in his division were 24,000. 15 Twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; in his division were 24,000.

Ch 27 David left Solomon a kingdom with other administrative features designed to let building and maintenance operations proceed smoothly: (1) he created a well-organized army, capable of warding off invasions from neighboring enemies (chs 18–20), should they renew their attacks (27:1–15); (2) he appointed local government officials, responsible to the crown (vv 16–24); (3) he made 12 stewards responsible for supervising the income from royal estates and livestock (vv 25–31); and (4) he created a small advisory council to assist the king in directing the administrative program (vv 32–34). (TLSB)

27:1–15 The names of the commanders of David's army are the same as those found in the list of his mighty men. Those who had served David while he fled from Saul became commanders in the regular army. (CSB)

There are 288,000 troops counted in this muster. They served one month per year per division of 24,000 men. The first commanders (Jashobeam, Dodai, Benaiah) were listed as David's mighty men in 11:10–25, and the rest were among the mighty men in 11:26–47; 2Sm 23:8–39. (TLSB)

27:1 24,000. Although a national militia consisting of 12 units of 24,000 each (a total of 288,000) is not unreasonable, the stress in this passage on unit commanders and divisions suggests that here too the Hebrew word for "1,000" should perhaps be taken as the designation of a military unit. To designate a division as "1,000" would be to give the upper limit of the number of men in such a unit, though such units would ordinarily not have a full complement of men. If this approach is followed, the figures in the following verses would be read as "24 units" instead of 24,000. (CSB)

month after month. David's military system provided for a monthly rotation of duty for 12 divisions. Each of the 24 staffs of commanders of thousands and hundreds came on duty and went off duty month after month throughout the year; i.e., they reported for a month's tour of active duty. (TLSB)

27:7 *Asahel*. Asahel's successor is mentioned because Abner had slain Asahel during David's early reign in Hebron (2Sm 2:18–23). (TLSB)

27:1–15 David establishes a comprehensive military program, by which the king could call up troops for service. Soldiers play an important role in any organized society, a role blessed by God when service is carried out according to His Word. God Himself has organized the angels as the armies of heaven to fight on your behalf and to deliver you according to the purposes of His saving mercy in Jesus. • Send forth Your hosts, O Lord, to defend Your Holy Church and so aid the proclamation of the Gospel. Amen. (TLSB)

Leaders of Tribes

16 Over the tribes of Israel, for the Reubenites, Eliezer the son of Zichri was chief officer; for the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah; **17** for Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; for Aaron, Zadok; **18** for Judah, Elihu, one of David's brothers; for Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; **19** for Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; for Naphtali, Jeremoth the son of Azriel; **20** for the Ephraimites, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; for the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah; **21** for the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; for Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; **22** for Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel. **23** David did not count those below twenty years of age, for the LORD had promised to make Israel as many as the stars of heaven. **24** Joab the son of Zeruiah began to count, but did not finish. Yet wrath came upon Israel for this, and the number was not entered in the chronicles of King David. **25** Over the king's treasuries was Azmaveth the son of Adiel; and over the treasuries in the country, in the cities, in the villages, and in the towers, was Jonathan the son of Uziah; **26** and over those who did the work of the field for tilling the soil was Ezri the son of Chelub; **27** and over the vineyards was Shimei the Ramathite; and over the produce of the vineyards for the wine cellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite. **28** Over the olive and sycamore trees in the Shephelah was Baal-hanan the Gederite; and over the stores of oil was Joash. **29** Over the herds that pastured in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite; over the herds in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai. **30** Over the camels was Obil the Ishmaelite; and over the donkeys was Jehdeiah the Meronothite. Over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagrite. **31** All these were stewards of King David's property. **32** Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, being a man of understanding and a scribe. He and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni attended the king's sons. **33** Ahithophel was the king's counselor, and Hushai the Archite was the king's friend. **34** Ahithophel was succeeded by Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar. Joab was commander of the king's army.

27:16–24 Chiefs of the 12 tribes of Israel. In the tribe of Levi, there was a special officer for the descendants of Aaron (v 17). Manasseh, divided by the Jordan, had an officer on the west and on the east sides of the river (vv 20–21). Asher and Gad are replaced here by the half-tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim. (TLSB)

27:16–22 The Chronicler's interest in "all Israel" appears in this list of officers who were over the 12 tribes (see Introduction: Purpose and Themes). The number is kept at 12 by omitting Gad and Asher. (CSB)

27:18 *Elihu*. Not named elsewhere among the brothers of David. Perhaps he is the unnamed son from the list in 2:10–17. Elihu could also be a variant of the name of Jesse's oldest son, Eliab, or the term "brother" could be taken in the sense of "relative," in which case Elihu would be a more distant kinsman. (CSB)

27:22 *leaders*. Not the tribal elders, but military leaders. (TLSB)

27:23 *twenty years old or less*. age when Israelite young men were considered “able to go to war” (Nu 1:3). (TLSB)

promised to make Israel as numerous as the stars. The patriarchal promises of numerous descendants (Ge 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 22:17) appear to have been the basis for the objections of Joab (v. 24) to the taking of a census (21:3; 2Sa 24:3). (CSB)

27:24 *did not finish*. Joab did not count those under age 20, nor did he include the tribes of Levi and Benjamin (21:6). (CSB)

wrath came upon Israel. Reference to the uncompleted census with which “God was displeased” (21:6–7). (TLSB)

27:25–34 Overseers of various kinds of property (vv 25–31) and David’s personal advisers (vv 32–34). (TLSB)

27:25–31 A list of the administrators of David’s property (v. 31). The large cities of the ancient Near East had three basic economic sectors: (1) royal, (2) temple and (3) private. There is no evidence of direct taxation during the reign of David; his court appears to have been financed by extensive landholdings, commerce, plunder from his many wars, and tribute from subjugated kingdoms. (CSB)

27:25 *treasuries*. Distinct from “the treasuries of the house of God” (26:20), these were the source of David’s personal wealth, which was mainly plunder taken from defeated enemies (1Sm 30:20; 2Sm 8:6–8). (TLSB)

27:28 *sycamore trees*. Trees bearing a figlike fruit, which the prophet Amos cultivated (Am 7:14). (TLSB)

27:32–34 *counselor*. List includes men such as Ahithophel and Hushai, who were members of David’s inner circle of advisers already at the time of Absalom’s rebellion (2Sm 17). Their names do not occur in a similar catalog of royal dignitaries preserved in 18:14–17 and 2Sm 20:23–26. (TLSB)

27:32 *attended the king’s sons*. Provided for their care and perhaps their education. (TLSB)

27:33 *Ahithophel*. Was replaced after he committed suicide, following his support of Absalom’s rebellion (2Sa 15:12, 31–37; 16:20–17:23). (CSB)

34 David welcomes the service of tribal leaders and appoints the treasurers, farmers, herders, counselors, and military commanders of his reign. He wisely adapts the older tribal system for the purposes of forming a united nation under the king’s central authority. As the Lord granted David wisdom to pursue his calling, He will grant you wisdom for your calling. Like David, listen to the wisdom of your family and counselors, but consider all things in view of God’s Word. Through the Word, the Lord saves you from sin and from foolish error in your service. • O Lord, my calling is too great for me to manage by my own reason and strength. Grant me Your wisdom and counsel. Amen. (TLSB)