

1Chronicles 12:1 ¶ Now these *are* they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they *were* among the mighty men, helpers of the war.

1Chronicles 12:2 *They were* armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in *hurling* stones and *shooting* arrows out of a bow, *even* of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

We learned in 1Samuel 27 that David sought asylum with the Philistines during the time that his life was in danger from Saul. Achish, king of Gath, decided to give him the city of Ziklag, where he and his men lived for 16 months. He was accompanied at that time by a group of men from the tribe of Benjamin that was loyal to him. They were armed with bows and could shoot arrows and use their slings with precision with both right and left hands.

The IVP Commentary offered an interesting insight on this section: "Left-handedness was not acceptable in the ancient world because it was generally associated with evil or demons. As a result, anyone who was left-handed became ambidextrous because the use of the left hand in many situations was not approved. In battle, however, the ability to use either hand could become a distinct advantage. For instance, battle strategies were often designed to force the enemy to be moving to their left while fighting. For a right-handed soldier, this would put his shield (in his left hand) away from the enemy and expose him to attack. An ambidextrous soldier could easily switch the shield to his right hand without compromising his ability to fight as he moved. An ambidextrous bowman using a tree or rock for protection would have a wider range of target available because he could shoot from either side without exposing himself to the enemy."

The verses below identify their leader as Ahiezer, then goes on to name the rest of these men.

1Chronicles 12:3 The chief *was* Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Berachah, and Jehu the Antothite,

1Chronicles 12:4 And Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Josabad the Gederathite,

1Chronicles 12:5 Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite,

1Chronicles 12:6 Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites,

1Chronicles 12:7 And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

1Chronicles 12:8 And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, *and* men of war *fit* for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and *were* as swift as the roes upon the mountains;

There were also some men from the tribe of Gad that were loyal to David. These

courageous warriors were ready for battle and could handle shield and spear; they were known for their fleetness of foot on the mountains.

1Chronicles 12:9 Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third,

1Chronicles 12:10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth,

1Chronicles 12:11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh,

1Chronicles 12:12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth,

1Chronicles 12:13 Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh.

1Chronicles 12:14 These *were* of the sons of Gad, captains of the host: one of the least *was* over an hundred, and the greatest over a thousand.

1Chronicles 12:15 These *are* they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflown all his banks; and they put to flight all *them* of the valleys, *both* toward the east, and toward the west.

This section lists those that are identified as captains of the troops of Gad. The weakest one among them was considered worth 100 regular soldiers and the strongest worth over a thousand. They crossed the Jordan River in the first month when it was at flood stage and drove out those living in the valleys to the east and west.

The first month was in the spring when the snows were melting off the mountains and filling the rivers to flood stage.

1Chronicles 12:16 And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David.

1Chronicles 12:17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if *ye be come* to betray me to mine enemies, seeing *there is* no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look *thereon*, and rebuke it.

More men came to David from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He went out to meet them and determine if they came in peace to help him. He promised to receive them as brothers if they did. If, however, they came as enemies, he called for God's judgment upon them because he was innocent of any wrongdoing against them.

1Chronicles 12:18 Then the spirit came upon Amasai, *who was* chief of the captains, and he said, Thine *are we*, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace *be* unto thee, and peace *be* to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

The writer notes that the spirit (the Holy Spirit) came upon Amasai, who later became one of the leaders of David's mighty men. He declared that they were loyal to David and wished him only peace because they recognized that God was with him. David accepted them and gave them leadership positions.

These men knew from observation that the LORD was with David. I pray that would be true about me as others observe my life.

1Chronicles 12:19 And there fell *some* of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to *the jeopardy of our heads*

1Chronicles 12:20 As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediahel, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that *were* of Manasseh.

Some of the men of Manasseh also came to side with David while he was at Ziklag. We are reminded that the Philistines decided not to let David go to war with them because they feared he would turn against them in battle against fellow Israelites. The writer identifies seven of the captains, each a leader of a group of 1000 men from Manasseh.

1Chronicles 12:21 And they helped David against the band *of the rovers*: for they *were* all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the host.

1Chronicles 12:22 For at *that* time day by day there came to David to help him, until *it was* a great host, like the host of God.

These men helped David and his troops at Ziklag defeat the Amalekites who had raided and plundered them and retrieve all that had been stolen (see 1Samuel 30). All of them were strong men of courage and seasoned leaders.

David's army grew day by day until it seemed to number like the host of God.

In the next section we jump forward in time to when the people came to Hebron to make David king over a unified kingdom.

1Chronicles 12:23 ¶ And these *are* the numbers of the bands *that were* ready armed to the war, *and* came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD.

1Chronicles 12:24 The children of Judah that bare shield and spear *were* six thousand and eight hundred, ready armed to the war.

1Chronicles 12:25 Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valour for the war, seven thousand and one hundred.

1Chronicles 12:26 Of the children of Levi four thousand and six hundred.

1Chronicles 12:27 And Jehoiada *was* the leader of the Aaronites, and with him *were* three thousand and seven hundred;

1Chronicles 12:28 And Zadok, a young man mighty of valour, and of his father's house twenty and two captains.

1Chronicles 12:29 And of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, three thousand: for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul.

1Chronicles 12:30 And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers.

1Chronicles 12:31 And of the half tribe of Manasse eighteen thousand, which were expressed by name, to come and make David king.

1Chronicles 12:32 And of the children of Issachar, *which were* men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of

them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment. 1Chronicles 12:33 Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: *they were* not of double heart.

1Chronicles 12:34 And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and with them with shield and spear thirty and seven thousand.

1Chronicles 12:35 And of the Danites expert in war twenty and eight thousand and six hundred.

1Chronicles 12:36 And of Asher, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, forty thousand.

1Chronicles 12:37 And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, an hundred and twenty thousand.

This section lists the numbers of the men that came to Hebron ready to make David their king.

- From Judah – 6,800 men armed with shield and spear
- From Simeon – 7,100 strong, courageous warriors
- From Levi – 4,600; Jehoiada led those descended from Aaron, numbering 3,700; Zadok, a strong and courageous young man, led 22 captains from his family.
- From Benjamin, King Saul’s tribe – 3,000; it is noted that most of this tribe remained loyal to the family of Saul.
- From Ephraim – 22,800 strong and courageous men
- From the half tribe of Manasseh – 18,000 men that had been specifically chosen to represent their people in support of David.
- From Issachar – 200 leaders plus the men under their command. This tribe is noted for their wisdom in understanding the times in which they lived and in making wise choices in light of that knowledge.

It should be said of all followers of Jesus that we can recognize the signs of the times in which we live and that such knowledge guides our choices. The LORD Jesus was very clear to tell us Himself about the times that would signal His return as King. The Holy Spirit also spoke throughout scripture to inform us about those times. We should certainly be looking up expectantly for the rapture since the times detailed that announce His return as King are certainly obvious.

- From Zebulun – 50,000 disciplined warriors with undivided loyalty.
- From Naphtali – 1,000 captains leading 37,000 men armed with shield and spear.
- From Dan – 28,600 experienced warriors
- From Asher – 40,000 experienced warriors that were ready for battle
- From east of the Jordan River from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh – 120,000 men armed with all types of weapons
- This was a total of at least 339,100 men.

1Chronicles 12:38 All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel *were* of one heart to make David king.

1Chronicles 12:39 And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them.

1Chronicles 12:40 Moreover they that were nigh them, *even* unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, *and* meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for *there was* joy in Israel.

All of these men that were seasoned warriors came with a unified heart to make David king over all of Israel. All the people of Israel wanted David as their king. They stayed and celebrated with David for three days. Those from the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali in surrounding area brought lots of food to feed those that were celebrating the crowning of David as their king.

I liked this application from Meyer as quoted by Guzik: "The enthroning of David was the uniting of the kingdom. Herein is the secret of the unity of the Church. We shall never secure it by endeavouring to bring about an unity in thought, or act, or organization. It is as each individual heart enthrones the Saviour that each will become one with all kindred souls in the everlasting kingdom."